

**Addis Ababa University**

**College of law and Governance**

**Center for Federal studies**

**Opportunities and Challenges of women's political participations in Ethiopia: the Case of Hadiya zone Zonal Administration in SNNPR**

**A thesis submitted to school of graduate studies Addis Ababa University in partial fulfillment of Degree of Master in Federal studies**

**By**

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May, 2015

**Challenges and Opportunities of women's political participation in Ethiopia: the Case of Hadiya Zone Zonal Administration in SNNP**

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**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Art [M.A.] in Federal Study**

**By**

**Workinesh Mitiku**

**Approved by**

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## **Declaration**

I, Workinesh Mitiku, hereby declare that the title "Challenges and Opportunities of women's political participation in Ethiopia: the Case of Hadiya Zone Zonal Administration in SNNP" submitted by me for the partial fulfillment of the M.A in Federal Study is my own original work which has not been offered for any degree in any University by others or me. The sources used by researcher have been appropriately acknowledged and I confidently declare that this thesis has not been submitted to any other institutions anywhere for the award of any academic degree, diploma, or certificate.

Name: Workinesh Mitiku

Signature  \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature  \_\_\_\_\_

## **Acknowledgment**

First and for most I thank heavenly God who helped me to come to this end. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my advisor Dr. Mulumebet Zenebe for her exhaustive review and constructive comments right from the inception up to the final of this thesis. Without her guidance and comments, the study would have remained incomplete. Moreover, her gracious care and lovely approach have far-reaching positive impact on my life and I am very grateful to her for that too.

My husband Bezabih Erchafo deserves the deepest appreciation for his unreserved care, love and encouragements throughout my life and my study too. W/ro Almaz Teffese deserves my deepest appreciation for her endless support in all regards.

I would like to extent my deep gratitude to all staff members of gender office in AAU for their cooperation and support throughout my study. My heartfelt thanks are to Samson B. and Belaynesh Erbetto for their indispensable devotion of precious time during collecting first hand information from the beginning until the end.

I would like to extent my gratitude to all staff members of civil servants in Hadiya zone zonal administration for their cooperation in providing first hand information. Finally I express my heart full appreciation to all my family for their unreserved honorable support.

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## **Acronyms**

|        |   |
|--------|---|
| AAU    | Addis Ababa University  |
| AU     | African Union   |
| AWP    | African Women Protocol  |
| BDPA   | Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action                                    |
| CEDAW  | Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination<br>against Women |
| CSA    | Central Statistics Agency   |
| FCS    | Federal Civil Service   |
| FDRE   | Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia                                       |
| IJSA   | International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology                           |
| MOWA   | Ministry of Women Affair  |
| SADC   | Southern African Development Community  |
| SNNPR  | Southern Nation Nationalities and Peoples Region                              |
| SIDA   | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency                          |
| UN     | United Nations  |
| UNDAW  | United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women                          |
| UNICEF | United Nations International Children Emergency Fund                          |
| WCYD   | Women, Children and Youth Department  |

## **Abstract**

*The main purpose of this study was to assess the challenges and opportunities of women in political arena and to address challenges that they face in Hadiya Zone zonal administration in the SNNP. The thesis employed both qualitative and quantitative data in order to attain the objectives of the study. Women have been denied from political participation and decision making merely because of the fact associated with gender based viewpoint. The political, social and economic development of a nation cannot be attained without equal participation of women. Women's political participation insures gender equality among both sexes by eradicating cultural gender based discrimination of female. Even though there have been some sorts of changes in male dominated political arena, women are not becoming politically prominent in decision making and representation of their respective society. Moreover, their unreserved roles in political sphere in the reality are still limited at a certain level. Household burdens, backward traditional outlook, low educational background, absence of self aspiration (willingness) among women to be competent in politics and male dominated political environment have restricted the possibility of women to play their prominent and persistent political role in the study area.*

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the study

In most patriarchic societies of the world, females are regarded as inferior to males. Women have been denied access to both privileged and utilitarian rights. Leadership, political representation, administration and ownership of property roles in societal affairs including religion and governance exclusively belong to males. Even the right of choice in respect to entry to conjugal union is denied to women.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, women's political participation, decision making power, leadership and representation in legislatures around the world are still limited. Despite the pronounced commitment of the international community to gender equality and bridging the gender gap in the formal political arena, reinforced by CEDAW and Beijing Platform of Action, there are only twelve countries where women hold 33% or more seats in the parliaments.<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, women in Ethiopia constitute half of the total population.<sup>3</sup> It is believed that they play immense role in the development of societies by participating in the economic and socio-cultural endeavor. Though

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<sup>1</sup> Genet, Z (2014), *Resistance, Freedom and empowerment: the Ethiopian women's struggle*, concept publishing company, New Delhi.

Ogato, GS (2013), *The Quest for Gender Responsive Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) Policy in Least Developed Countries: Policy and Strategy Implications for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ethiopia*, Int. J. Info, Technol and Bus Manag. 15(1): pp 23-44.

UNDAW (2009), *Good Practices in Legislation on Harmful Practices against women*; Report of the Expert group meeting organized by the United Nations Division for the Advancement of Women, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, 26-29 May, Addis Ababa.

<sup>2</sup> Report of UNDP (2006), *Economic Empowerment of women through small Business Enterprise*

<sup>3</sup> CSA (2013), *Statistical annual abstract report*: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

women in many societies contribute appreciable development inputs, they get fewer opportunities and unequal benefits from the activities they are involved. Their contribution to the social and economic development of societies is more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres.

In spite of their limitless contribution, women's participation in formal political structures and decision making processes concerning the use of societal resources and sharing power is limited.<sup>4</sup>

The constitution of the FDRE<sup>5</sup> affirms that women have equal rights with men in terms of participating in politics and decision making at both local and national levels. Nevertheless, the political participation and decision making of the women at national level in general and in the study area in particular has been mainly under the domination of men and the contribution of women in political decision making, leadership as well as representation in legislation is still low.

It is believe that the issue of women's political empowerment is human rights issue because human rights norms and standards guarantee women to human rights without discrimination in all aspects of political, social and economic life. Moreover, it acknowledges full, free and equal rights of participation in leadership, decision making and access to powers without discrimination based on their sexes.

As compared to prior decades, the participation of women in decision making is somehow increasing in national level. In spite of the incremental progress towards women's participation in political spheres, it is recognized that women are largely remained outside of formal leadership roles.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>UNDP (2005), *Human Development Report*: Oxford University Press, New York.

<sup>5</sup> See the 1995 constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia.

<sup>6</sup> Endale, H (2014), *Factors that affect Women Participation in Leadership and Decision Making Position*: journal Volume 1.

Accordingly, Longwe revealed that devoid of political empowerment of women to represent in parliamentary decision making processes about economic, social and other issues, it is hardly possible for the government to fully empower women in other dimensions of women's empowerment.<sup>7</sup> So it is not difficult to decide that political empowerment of women is a tool to empower women in economic and social aspects as well as it is a means to reduce even to eliminate most gender based influences of women.

Consequently, gender equality and women's empowerment in politics is center of sustainable development efforts in developing countries like Ethiopia. Ogato supposed that without gender equality and women's empowerment; policy measures are hardly possible for least developed countries like Ethiopia to realize poverty reduction goals, millennium development targets and sustainable development objectives.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, economic, legal and social empowerment policy measures are all equally important to deal with the existing gender inequalities and low status of women in Ethiopia.<sup>9</sup>

With this intention, Ethiopia has been taking policy measures towards empowering women in sustainable development and poverty reduction endeavors. Gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the priority goals towards which Ethiopia is working for poverty reduction

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<sup>7</sup>Longwe (2000), *Towards Realistic Strategies for Women's Political Empowerment in Africa: Gender and Development*. 8(3), P, 25

<sup>8</sup> Ogato, GS (2013), *The Quest for Gender Responsive Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) Policy in Least Developed Countries: Policy and Strategy Implications for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ethiopia*, Int. J. Info, Technol and Bus Manag. 15(1), pp 23-44.

<sup>9</sup> Kabeer, N (2005), *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Critical Analysis of the Third Millennium Development Goal*. *Gender and Dev.* 13(1): pp 13-24.

and sustainable development efforts. The government of Ethiopia has taken remarkable measure towards alleviating gender issues since 1993.<sup>10</sup>

Although the government of Ethiopia has been taking policy measures, adopted international commitments and acknowledged access to women's political participation in the Constitution, the involvement of women in politics and decision making position is still low.

Women of the Hadiya zone have been confronting the same challenges in the scope of political participation and decision making as any other regions' women of the Ethiopia. Without active involvement of half of populations in political, social and economic activities, development of the study area might not be healthy and effective. Furthermore, limited women's political participation/either to elect or to be elected/ would create deformed political, economic and socio-cultural society. So it is necessary to carry out research in order to improve such conditions by addressing the main problems to concerned stakeholders.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Women in Ethiopia account for nearly half of the total population.<sup>11</sup> Though half of the populations of our country are females, they are involved in Political participation, decision making and leadership role as part of society. For many years, Women in Ethiopia have been regarded as incompetent, incapable and with less confident to play political roles and make reliable political decisions. Women themselves do not admit

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<sup>10</sup>Report of UN(2002) taken from web site

<http://www1.uneca.org/Portals/awro/Publications/33Participation%20of%20Women%20in%20Public%20and%20Political%20Decision-making.pdf> date 05/18/20015

<sup>11</sup> CSA (2013) Statistical annual abstract report: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

politics as something complex that they comprehend nor have the competence to deal with.<sup>12</sup>

Male dominated political environment is familiar and taken as normal phenomena as a result of socialized ideology that marginalized women; they too shy away and distant themselves from political participation.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, they have not been equally involving in local, regional and federal elections to represent their respective society and still they are underrepresented. Low involvement of women in political sphere mainly in decision making made women less benefited from the fruits of development in the study area.

Different studies indicated that women have been out of the domain in politics as result of cumulative consequences of the historical, low socio-cultural value, poor attitudes of society, traditional thought, less psychological readiness to take political responsibilities, low educational background, lack of confidence, limitless household duties and political system that would likely delayed them from political participation and decision making this led their activities predominantly to be restricted in the household activities.<sup>14</sup> This in turn, attributed to poor role in political participation and decision making process at local and national levels and created male dominated political environment.

Correspondingly, women of the Hadiya zone face the same condition and the paucity of women in political participation, decision making, leadership, high educational access and other economic income sources may decline overall developmental success of the country in general and the study area in particular. I believe that empowering women in politics is the means to empower women in economic and social aspects and

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<sup>12</sup>Genet.Z (2014), *Resistance, Freedom and empowerment: the Ethiopian women's struggle*, concept publishing company, New Delhi.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Genet.Z (2014), *Resistance, Freedom and empowerment: the Ethiopian women's struggle*, concept publishing company, New Delhi.

Meaza Ashenafi (2009) *Factors Affecting Women Participation in Politics and Decision making*, MA Thesis

without active involvement of women in political, social and economic aspects, progressive development of the country cannot be easily attained.

To overcome this deep rooted challenges that hinder women's political participation and pave progressive avenue for women's active role in politics through diverse direction, the government of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia has designed its own assenting policy by taking international commitment like CEDAW, AWP, BDPA and SADC which assure the rights and equality of women in political participation and access to leadership and decision making, as part of law of land and attempted to implement it.

Even though the government acknowledged enhancing women empowerment and equal opportunity in the political sphere so as to make them prominent decision makers in economic, political and social affairs, their role still continued to lag behind in access and improvement of their position at different levels. Promoting of women's political participation, reservation of seat and providing chance to hold managerial position help the women to address their issues relating to equality and to reduce the gap between men and women in economic, decision making power and employment opportunities.

Active political involvement of women is very crucial to carry out governmental responsibilities in different decentralized tiers of government and make political system of study area more stable, healthy, efficient and effective. Moreover, it is presumed as one of the means to reduce the possibility of corruption. However, the role of women especially in political sphere and decision making position in the study area is still low.

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

Nowadays, women's political empowerment received special attention in most African countries including Ethiopia. The government of Ethiopia promotes different agendas that enhance women's political empowerment in both rural and urban areas of the country. Similarly, all regional states of Ethiopia are also attempting to implement it. However, the involvement of women in political positions and decision making is low and has long lasting trend in the study area. So as to deal with these, the research has the following general and specific objectives.

#### **1.3.1. General Objective of the Study**

Overall objective of the study was to identify the opportunities and challenges of women's political participation in Hadiya zone zonal administration.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives of the Study**

- I. To examine whether women of the Hadiya zone zonal administration enjoy their rights of political participation to elect/ to be elected.
- II. To identify how much women of the Hadiya zone zonal administration enjoy exercising political leadership and decision making equally with men.
- III. To assess whether the political system encourages the political participation of women or not.
- IV. To identify the main bottlenecks that restrain women from political participation and decision making.

### **1.4. Research questions**

Based on the objectives, the study has the following research questions:-

- Are women of the study area actually enjoying their rights of political participation to elect and to be elected?
- Do women of the study area take part in decision making and leadership compared to men?
- Does political system reinforce/ encourage women to participate in politics practically at different levels?
- What are the main challenges that affect the possibility of women's political participation in the study area?

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

The study was tended to assess opportunities and challenges of women's political participation and decision making in Hadiya zone zonal administration. In addition to academic essence, the findings are expected to recommend solution to the problems related to the less involvement of women in political activities in the study area. Moreover, the finding will be important document for policy makers, Administrators, Researchers and Academicians. Policy makers, Administrators and other practitioners such as non-governmental organizations that work in gender issues may find the study as supportive resource and guide for further affirmation and implementation of policies as well.

### **1.6. Delimitation /Scope/of the Study**

Low involvement of women in politics and decision making process is a national issue that demands conducting research at national level so as to address some sort of solutions. Even though the issue needs extensive inquiry at national level to make politics gender sensitive, healthy, inclusive, efficient and effective, it is -vital to delimit the scope of the research area in order to make it more legible and manageable.

Accordingly, the research is carried out in Hadiya zonal administration, in Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional States of Ethiopia.

### **1.6. Limitation of the Study**

When the researcher was conducting this study, some limitations were encountered. As the study is about opportunities and challenges of women's political participation, some respondents during the interview were showing feelings of hesitation and the sense of fear to tell what they see and the real situation of women's political participation in the study area. Another challenge that the researcher faced during the study was the scarcity of up-to-date literatures related to the research that support the study. Financial, material and shortage of times were another challenges that faced by the researcher.

### **1.7. Operational Definitions of Terms\phrases**

**Sex:** is biological difference among men and women. This dissimilarity is universal and unchangeable. Sex is considered to be based on hormones, gonads and genitalia while identity of women and men in any society is determined psychologically and socially.<sup>15</sup>

**Gender:** Gender is a socially determined characteristic. It does not refer to women and men. It refers to the relationship between them and to the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, attributes and responsibilities that are considered as appropriate to being a man (masculine) and a woman (feminine) at a given time, in a given society and as a member of a specific community within that society. Women and men's gender identity determines how women and men are perceived

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<sup>15</sup> Crespi, I. (n.d.) Socialization and gender roles within the family: a study on adolescents and their parents in great Britain, department of sociology, catholic university of Milan, Italy <http://mariecurie.org/annals/volume3/crespi.pdf>

and how they are expected to think and act in society. These attributes are learned behaviors, and they can and do change over time and vary across cultures. Crispi defines gender as the range of characteristics pertaining to, and differentiating between, masculinity and femininity. Depending on the context, these characteristics may include biological sex (i.e. the state of being male, female or intersex); sex-based social structures including gender roles.<sup>16</sup>

**Gender equality:** - is expressed in attitudes, beliefs, behaviors and policies that reflect an equal valuing and provision of opportunities for both genders.<sup>17</sup>

**Gender discrimination:** - CEDAW approved by the United Nations states that discrimination against women shall mean distinction, exclusion, or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.<sup>18</sup>

**Affirmative action:** - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines Affirmative action as positive steps taken to increase the representation of women and minorities in areas of employment, education, and culture from which they have been historically excluded. When those steps involve preferential selection; selection on the basis of race, gender, or ethnicity affirmative action generates intense control.<sup>19</sup> Affirmative action in this study is merely focused in positive discrimination of women in

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<sup>16</sup> Crespi, I. (n.d.) Socialization and gender roles within the family: a study on adolescents and their parents in great Britain, department of sociology, catholic university of Milan, Italy <http://mariecurie.org/annals/volume3/crespi.pdf>

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> See CEDAW

<sup>19</sup> Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy taken from <http://plato.stanford.edu/index.html>.

education, employments, and representation/legislation/ in order to increase the involvement of women through policy measures.<sup>20</sup>

**Empowerment:** - is the expansion of individual and collective assets and capabilities of people required to participate in, negotiate with, influence, control and/or hold accountable the institutions that affect their lives. Empowerment gives women the agency to take control over their own lives at various levels and to make their own decisions and choices. In most cases, the empowerment of women requires simultaneous changes in the domains of individual agency, social relationships, and opportunity structure.<sup>21</sup>

**Political empowerment:-** means that the ability to render power or authority to the individual or group of individuals or society to be self-independent, self- confident, the right to make decision on economic, political, social and cultural issues without influence and domination of others. It also means that the right of individual, groups and society to be free from physical, moral and psychological attack, free from discrimination and gender based violence, the right to organize for common benefit and for free expression of ideas, views, and opinion without influences of the others. It is in this context the term empowerment used for this study.<sup>22</sup>

**Political participation:** - Political participation encompasses the many activities used by citizens to influence the selection of political leaders or the policies they pursue. Political participation derives from the freedom to speak out, assemble and associate; the ability to take part in the conduct of public affairs; and the opportunity to register as a candidate, to campaign, to be elected and to hold office at all levels of government. Political participation extends beyond parties, however. Individuals can

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid

<sup>21</sup> From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empowerment> date may,20015

<sup>22</sup> Free dictionary , UN, Applied knowledge service define

also become involved in certain aspects of the electoral process through independent action particularly at the local level and by joining civil society organizations. Professional networks, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, and the media can all provide avenues for political participation.<sup>23</sup>

**Patriarchy:** - Patriarchy is defined as a set of social relationships which cause domination of men over women. Patriarchy is a social system and societal structure that institutionalize male physical, social and economic power over women. Men are regarded as the authority within the family and the community and power and possessions are passed on from father to son. According to Richard the term patriarchy is a familial-social, ideological, political system in which men by force, direct pressure or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male.<sup>24</sup>

### **3.8. Conceptual framework**

Political, social and economic development cannot easily be attained without active involvement of women at local, regional, national and international levels. For the longer period of time women have been discriminated against enjoying basic political right in Ethiopia in general and the study area in particular. Though the constitution of FDRE affirmed that men and women have undeniable equal opportunities and

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<sup>23</sup> World encyclopedia, *Politics Political participation and democracy* from <http://www2.fiu.edu/~milch002/CPO3643/outlines/participation.htm>.retrived in Decebmer,2014

<sup>24</sup> Richard, Pankhurst (1990), *The Role of women in Ethiopian economic, social and cultural life from the middle ages to the rise of Tewodros*, First National Conference of Ethiopian Studies, April 11-12, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University

benefits at all levels, women in the study area have not yet equally enjoyed political rights accredited by the constitution of FDRE.

Negative traditional outlook of the society coupled with customs and norms exercised in the society create women rights deprivation of equal opportunities in political sphere. Provision of less concern for daughter at early age and patriarchic family structure resulted in less educational attainment which in turn attributed to less competent in education as a result, most women in the study area are with low education background and hence women are not in a position to be appointed for post political position.

Continuous and restless household responsibilities together with less psychological readiness to take part in politics among women created insignificant political role to play in decision making and representing their respective society. Lack of trust by male leaders and discriminatory appointment, fewer acceptances of women candidates by the society in political position and inability to implement constitutional political rights at grass root level all together created poor conducive political environment for women candidates in the study area.

Problems associated with low confidence among women to take political responsibilities and low consideration of local communities towards women's role in political endeavor has become the most chronic challenges that restrained women from prominent decision making hierarchy and representing their respective society in the study area.

Fig. 1 conceptual framework

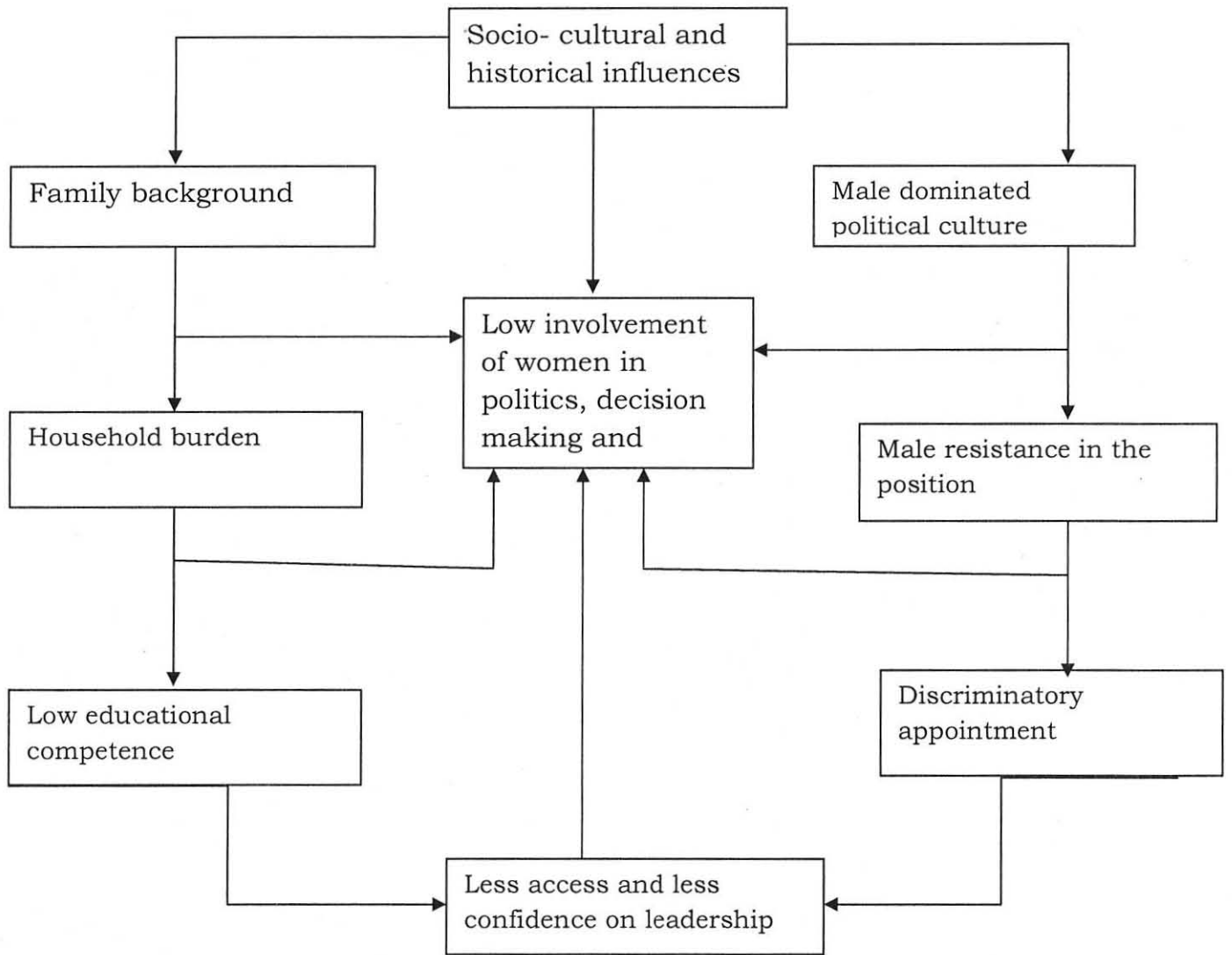


Fig 1

## **1.7. Organization of the Study**

This thesis deals with opportunities and challenges of women's political participation in Hadiya zone of zonal administration. It consists five chapters of which the first chapter encompasses background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study. In addition to these, it consists of operational definitions of terms, theoretical framework and organization of the study. Chapter two discusses about review of related literatures which involve historical, socio cultural factors, socio economic factors, political situation that hinder women participations in politics, decision making and leadership. The third chapter reveals the methodology used in research and description of the study area. Chapter four is data analysis and interpretation. Finally, chapter five underlines about conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. Review of related literature**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter encompasses historical overview of women's political participation, present national policies of Ethiopia in relation to women's political participation and socio-cultural perceptions and its impact on women's political participation. Also it points out the relationship of women's job status and economy in enabling them to political participation and decision making and impact of household responsibility in women's political participation and leadership. Finally, the roles of education in women's political participation and decision making as well as the ambition of women towards political participation and leadership are discussed.

#### **2.1. Historical overview of Women's Political participation**

Political system from the ancient Greece to the early modern times excluded women from citizenship. They have been kept outside the public domain of politics as most of the political thinkers and philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, John Lock, Thomas Hobbes and Hegel considered women fit only for household roles and maintained that there was no place for women in politics (to elect or to be elected as citizen) because of their suitability in caring roles as mothers and wives.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Phillips (1998), *Feminisms and Politics*: Oxford University Press.

Bari (2005), *Enhancing participation of women in development through an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women: p, 3*, Bangkok, Thailand.

It was only the liberal political philosophy of the 19th century that promoted the idea of free and rational individual which was used by suffragists to demand for the right for vote.<sup>26</sup>

Internationally, the involvement of women in political decision-making positions was recognized as political rights after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. UDHR Articles 2 and 21 stipulate equal enjoyment of political rights without discrimination on the basis of one's sex or any other ground. In 1966 ICCPR reaffirmed the UDHR principle of the right to participate in public and political life without discrimination<sup>27</sup>

The Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the African Women's Rights Protocol) adopted in 2003 by the AU further affirms the principle of equal participation and the use of affirmative action to ensure equal and effective participation of women in politics. By June 2009, the Protocol was ratified by 27 countries and signed by 45 African countries and Ethiopia is signatory of this.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, international women's movement has played an important role in encouraging women to seek political office and influence policy making. Although the driving forces for these changes have been internal, international pressures and norms have given added impetus to these new demands. To address the low rates of female representation, the issue was raised at the UN Beijing Conference on Women in 1995 by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU), the world organization of national

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<sup>26</sup> Rai, M (2000), *International Perspective on Gender and Governance*: Macmillan Press, Great Britain. cited in Farzana Bari (2005), *Enhancing participation of women in development through an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women* page,5; Bangkok, Thailand.

<sup>27</sup> See UDHR Articles 2 and 21

<sup>28</sup> See the African Women's Rights Protocol

parliaments. The IPU adopted a Plan of Action to address the reality that men dominate political and parliamentary life in all countries. One of the proposals adopted by the IPU included affirmative action measures to be advocated on a strictly interim basis. Quota systems, the IPU proposal states, should promote a situation where neither sex occupies a disproportionate number of seats relative to their percentage in the population.<sup>29</sup>

Accordingly, Gender equality has, over the last decades, emerged as a widely accepted and undeniable focus in the global development discourse. Following a number of world conferences on women, the number of actors that are involved in promoting gender equality and women's empowerment has increased steadily, and gender equality norms have been established as an integral part of international law.<sup>30</sup> International organizations like World Bank and the UN, a large number of civil society organizations, national governments and donor countries all have developed gender policies and strategies to which they claim their commitment.<sup>31</sup>

So far women who were organized abroad had remained on the sidelines of events taking place in the country for a long time. Their political and social consciousness remained low and their involvement in most of the male students' activities was insignificant. This started changing during the late 1960s when female students started to become actively engaged in politics through the student unions. They took part in many students' demonstrations and campaigns not only at national level, but also within the university itself, trying to fight sexism among their male colleagues.

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<sup>29</sup> Aili, M (1999), *New Trends in Women's Political Participation in Africa*: University of Wisconsin Madison.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid

<sup>31</sup> Ibid

The most radical of the female students called themselves “reform seekers”.<sup>32</sup>

Women’s participation in the demonstration against feudal regime repeatedly created immense change. Although their level of political consciousness was noted to be on the increase, their level of awareness regarding their own social status as women was absent and women were not organized. At the beginning of the 1970s, the group of female students residing abroad encountered the social upheavals in those countries. These upheavals came at the peak of the second wave of the women’s movement in the US and in Europe. Radical demands were put forward by feminists who started to question and challenge patriarchal ideologies in these countries. This did not leave the Ethiopian students untouched and its influence was so dramatic that these students initiated discussion groups on the “woman question”, looking at it through a Marxist lens. The year 1971 marked the first time that the “woman question” was discussed. That was at the eleventh congress of the Ethiopian Students Union in Europe.<sup>33</sup>

Even if women’s formal participation in the highest leadership position was formally closed, it is documented that throughout the world, women had played critical roles in times of wars and peace as community organizers and activists. In Ethiopian Women history, contributions and brilliant leadership role which Emperor Menilik’s (1877-1913) first formal wife, Bafena and second legal wife Empress Taitu had played is unforgettable history and comes first when one talks about Ethiopian

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<sup>32</sup> Balsvik, Randi R (1985), *Haile Selassie’s Students: The Intellectual and Social Background to Revolution, 1952-1977*, African Studies Center, Michigan State University in cooperation with the Norwegian Council of Science and the Humanities, USA cited in Biseswar, Indrawatie (2011), *the role of educated/intellectual women in Ethiopia in the process of change and transformation towards gender equality 1974-2005*, unpublished thesis, University of South Africa

<sup>33</sup> Biseswar, Indrawatie (2011), *the role of educated/intellectual women in Ethiopia in the process of change and transformation towards gender equality 1974-2005*: unpublished thesis, University of South Africa.

women's contributions. For instance, Taitu acted as the chief advisor of Emperor with particular influence in the area of foreign relations. She holds high profile in the history for patriotism and uncompromisingly pursuing Ethiopia's independence.<sup>34</sup>

Now a day the FDRE government has adopted various enhancing instruments to promote equal participation of women in every subject of the nation's decision making positions among which the FDRE constitution is the most promising and binding one which had ever been existed in the history of the country.

## **2.2. Present National Policies and Women's Political Participation**

In history, Ethiopian women did great contributions in both out and in door activities especially in battles and other activities. They have been actively participating in rural area in agriculture, commercial, undertaking reproduction and social responsibilities. However, their misfortunes of living in the shadow of men have hidden from view such highly notable performances. They have been forced to lose confidence in themselves and so have been unable to act on their own action directly concerning themselves.<sup>35</sup>

Since the establishment of federalism in 1995 and the formulation of the new constitution in Ethiopia, women rights have become a hot agenda that has got greater attention and focus from government and non-government organizations. Among a number of fundamental rights conferred upon women, the Constitution of Ethiopia (1995) ensures these fundamental rights as Ethiopia is a signatory to various international laws of human rights. Therefore, both under national as well as international human rights law, the state is obliged to uphold and ensure

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<sup>34</sup> Meaza Ashenafi (2009) *Factors Affecting Women Participation in Politics and Decision making*, A Dissertation of MA Thesis

<sup>35</sup> Teshome, T (2004), *Population, Youth and Unemployment: in Population and Development in Ethiopia: A decade's Overview*, January 2004, Population Media Center, Addis Ababa, pp. 25-28

whether all women are getting equal access and right to involve in development of their country. The constitution in its article 35 and 89 (7) ensured women's right. In addition, these commitment and will of the government is explained by its policy documents and in the policy documents promoting gender equality is seen as a priority in order to enhance women' involvement and reduce poverty.<sup>36</sup>

Thus, Ethiopia is party to all major human rights treaties including the most important women's conventions; Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BDPA). CEDAW Article 2 and 3 which calls for equal participation of women in public decision making that requires governments to attain a 30% benchmark for women's representation in all public decision making positions.<sup>37</sup>

Consequently, the national women's policy primarily aims to institutionalize the political, economic and social rights of women by creating an appropriate structure in government offices and institutions so that the public policies and interventions are gender-sensitive and can ensure equitable development for all Ethiopian men and women.<sup>38</sup>

Accordingly, Ethiopian women are entitled to remedial and affirmative measures to enable them to compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, economic and social life. New policies and programs which focus in women issues have been formulated and

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<sup>36</sup> Genet, G and Haftu, H (2013), Impact of gender roles on women involvement in functional adult literacy in Ethiopia: International journal of social sciences, Volume.9 No.1, pp 38-40.

<sup>37</sup> Meaza, Ashenafi (2009), Factors Affecting Women Participation in Politics and Decision making: A Dissertation of MA Thesis

<sup>38</sup> Ogato, GS (2013), *The Quest for Gender Responsive Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) Policy in Least Developed Countries: Policy and Strategy Implications for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ethiopia*, Int. J. Info, Technol and Bus Manag. 15(1), pp, 23-44.

adopted with increased gender consideration and equity.<sup>39</sup> Because the gender gap in politics cannot be redressed simply by bringing more women in the system. It is also a policy and outcome issue, which cannot be addressed unless supportive mechanisms are put in place and provided with an enabling environment to work effectively.<sup>40</sup>

Subsequently, the number of women in political leadership positions has seen a slight increase in successive elections in Ethiopia. In the 1995 elections, 15 women or 2.74 percent of the 547 members of the House of Representatives were elected. This number almost tripled to 42 women in the 2000 elections (7.6 percent), while in the 2005 elections it increased to 21 percent (116 of the 546 members). Regional councils, *woreda* and *kebele* administrations also saw small increases of women representatives. In the regional councils, the number of elected women went up from 5 percent (77) in 1995, to 12.9 percent (244) in 2000, and down again to 12.5 percent (218) in 2005. In *woreda* councils, female membership went down from 8.5 percent in 1995 to 6.6 percent in 2000 and showed a dramatic increase to 22.8 percent in 2005. Women representatives in *kebele* committees went up from 1 per cent in 1995 to 13.9 percent in 2000 and increased to 20.6 percent in 2005.<sup>41</sup>

According to the report of electoral board of Ethiopia (2010), 2,188 candidates competed for the House of Peoples' Representatives of which 1,916 (87.6%) were male 272 (12.4%) were female. In addition to this, 4,746 Candidates competed for the Regional State Councils of which

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<sup>39</sup> United Nations (2002), *Johannesburg Summit 2002: Ethiopia- country Profile*. Available from: <http://www.un.org/esa/agenda21/natlinfo/wssd/ethiopia.pdf> (Accessed 6 December, 2014).

<sup>40</sup> Bari, F (2005), *Enhancing participation of women in development through an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women*: Bangkok, Thailand

<sup>41</sup> Meron, Genene (2003), Paper presented at the conference entitled *Bridge Building between Ethiopia & Austria*, organized by Äthiopisch-Österreichische Frauensolidarität and Österreichisch Äthiopische Gesellschaft, May 9, 2003, Vienna, Austria

4,021 (84.7%) were male 725 (15.3%) were female. Furthermore, 34 independent Candidate were participated for the House of Peoples' Representatives of which 33 (97.1%) were male and 1 (2.9%) was female. In general, the total numbers of candidate participants in the 2010 General Election were 6,979, of which 5,979 (85.7%) were male 1000 (14.3%) were female.<sup>42</sup>

During this (2010) election, the government had strived to increase the number of women legislators to 30-50% of the house, through different measures. However, the constitutional commitment of the government to grant affirmative action has not been translated into concrete action at all levels and the number of elected women representatives is still low.<sup>43</sup>

From the 30 members of the Standing Committee of the House of Federation, only four (13 percent) are women, and none of the committees is chaired by a woman as well as problem of disparity between regions is remain a serious concern, with some regions (Gambela, Benshagul-Gumuz and Somali) still not recognizing women as viable candidates for leadership posts.<sup>44</sup>

Although the present policy on women's political participation in Ethiopia support and encourage women's participation in different directions, women's leadership in the country is understood merely as women in political decision-making posts. However, very few of these women do have actual decision making power. This is so because political leadership is very tricky in the sense that political placement does not

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<sup>42</sup> See report of Ethio- electoral board of 2010 election

<sup>43</sup> Ogato, GS (2013), *the Quest for Gender Responsive Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) Policy in Least Developed Countries: Policy and Strategy Implications for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ethiopia*, *Int. J. Info, Technol and Bus Manag* 15(1), pp, 23-44.

<sup>44</sup> Lenasil, Asfaw (2006), *Gender in Leadership and Decision-Making: Reflections* 14, Panos Ethiopia, Addis Ababa, pp.120-145.

necessarily translate into the power to take independent decisions. Decisions are taken by the top party leaders and are handed down to those below.<sup>45</sup> Thus, women's access to and control of productive resources, information, training and employment and decision-making is limited.<sup>46</sup> Most governing bodies are dominated by men and legislative and judicial decisions often lack a gendered perspective and do not represent women's interests. They also experience multiple forms of other deprivations such as longer working days, women specific ill health, low levels of education relative to men, and lack of adequate representation in leadership and decision making positions.<sup>47</sup>

Women are underrepresented in lower, middle and higher management positions and hence the number of women leaders and decision makers at the various level of the decentralized government structure is still very low. (See table 1 below).

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<sup>45</sup>Markakis, J (2001), *Ethiopia: An Anatomy of a Traditional Polity*, Nairobi: Oxford

<sup>46</sup> Zewdu, M (2002), *Sustainable Development in Ethiopia: Report of Assessment of Activities and Issues Relevant to the Review Process of the Earth Summit 2002 in Ethiopia*. Addis Ababa: Institute of Biodiversity Conservation and Research.

<sup>47</sup> Ogato, GS (2011), *Gendered knowledge and innovation in crop production and management practices: a case study of three rural communities in Ambo district, Ethiopia*. *J. Res. in Peace, Gend and Dev.* 1(7), pp, 216-228.

Table 1 Composition of EPRDF political leaders at all levels

| <b>Level of leadership</b> | <b>Total</b> | <b>Male</b> | <b>Female</b> | <b>Percentage</b> |
|----------------------------|--------------|-------------|---------------|-------------------|
| EPRDF Executive committee  | 36           | 35          | 1             | 2.77              |
| EPRDF Council              | 180          | 154         | 26            | 14.4              |
| Higher levels Leadership   | 2154         | 1961        | 193           | 8.9               |
| Middle levels Leadership   | 23568        | 19974       | 3594          | 17.9              |
| Lower level Leadership     | 195528       | 150337      | 45191         | 23.1              |

Source: office of EPRDF (2009) cited in (Genet, 2014).

Women of the study area /Hadiya zone/ had been facing similar conditions in federal, regional and local representation, power sharing, decision making and leadership. Accordingly, the electoral board documents show that, elected number of male candidates for the House of people’s representatives accounted for 87.5% (7) and the remaining insignificant number 12.5% (1) was female in 2010 election. However, the reality indicates that the persistent right of women is only on the paper and hence, women have not yet been held equal political and decision making power (see table 2 below).

Table 2 Representation of Women of Hadiya zone in Legislature for all levels (Percent)

| <b>Years</b> | <b>HoPR</b> |      | <b>Regional representation /SNNP/</b> |      | <b>Zonal representation</b> |      | <b>Woreda representatives</b> |      |
|--------------|-------------|------|---------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------|------|-------------------------------|------|
|              | Female      | Male | Female                                | Male | Female                      | Male | Female                        | Male |
| 2005         | 1 (11.1%)   | 8    | 5(17.8%)                              | 23   | 3(5.4%)                     | 52   | 92(9.2%)                      | 903  |
| 2010         | 1(12.5%)    | 7    | 8(29.6%)                              | 19   | 4(7.2%)                     | 51   | 170(16.9%)                    | 831  |
| 2013         | -           | -    | -                                     | -    | 12(21.8%)                   | 43   | 368(36%)                      | 654  |

Source:-Hadiya zone speakers office

## **2.3. Socio-cultural perceptions and women's political participation**

The socio economic and cultural factors are mainly concerned with women's level of education, social status and cultural attitude towards women's political participation. The major factor that affects women's political participation is the societal attitude towards women's political participation and their success outside of politics.<sup>48</sup>

Culture determines what women and men should do; the resources women and men should get including education. It plays a significant role in the construction of gender inequality in such a ways that men have dominating position in different spheres.<sup>49</sup>

In Ethiopia, culturally men are expected to be courageous, competent, domineering and to show qualities of leadership while women to be submissive, conservative, self-spoken and shy. Cultural assumptions in most societies expect men to seek achievement and dominance and women to be compliant and supportive.<sup>50</sup> There is a belief that women are docile, compliant, patient, and tolerant of monotonous work and violence, for which culture is used as a justification. Like many African Countries, the majority of Ethiopian women hold low status in the society.<sup>51</sup>

It is important to delineate the root causes of male dominance in order to understand gender inequality and inequity. This can only be done by understanding the cultural context in which the dominance manifests

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<sup>48</sup> Matland, (1988), *Women's representation in national legislatures: Developed and developing countries*. Legislative studies quarterly

<sup>49</sup> Kalkidan, B (2007), *Cultural Practices that affected the status of women in Benishagul Gumuz, Mundura wereda*. Unpublished Master's Thesis, Addis Ababa University

<sup>50</sup> Ibid

<sup>51</sup> Hirut, T (2004), *Violence against Women in Ethiopia: A Strong Case of Civil Society Concern*, In Chowdhury, S, Wais, A, and Kahsai Wolde Giorgis (Eds) *Civil Society in Ethiopia: Reflections on Realities and Perspectives of Hope*. African -Asian Studies Promotion Association cited in Endale (2014), *Factors that affect Women Participation in Leadership and Decision Making Position* : journal Volume 1, Number 2/2014 Ethiopia

itself. Because cultures have their own organized systems which determine how members of that particular culture behave towards each other and towards their environment they have the potential of empowering or disempowering men and women.<sup>52</sup>

Changing traditional structures against women in a community requires institutional reform. In other words, influencing the behaviors of local people and protecting their interests can be realized in a community only by reforming institutions which provide incentives and regulatory mechanisms.<sup>53</sup>

In addition to traditional practices and cultural norms, low commitment of African leaders and policy makers in avoiding such social bias which contributes to the economic insecurity of rural women.<sup>54</sup>

#### **2.4. Women's job status on political participation**

The majority of women in Ethiopia hold low status in the society. They have been denied equal access to education, training and gainful employment opportunities and their involvement in policy formulation and decision making processes have been minimal. Women play a vital role in the community by taking care of all social activities. However, they do not enjoy the fruits of their labor and suffer from political, economical, social and cultural involvements.<sup>55</sup>

Poverty and lack of economic safety are some of the major barriers to women's political participation in Ethiopia.<sup>56</sup> Women particularly in the

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<sup>52</sup>Geertz.C(1973), *The interpretation of culture*: New York

<sup>53</sup> Dejene (2003), *Integrated Natural Resources Management to Enhance Food Security: The Case for Community-Based Approaches in Ethiopia*, Working paper, No.16. Rome.

<sup>54</sup> see African protocol, 2003

<sup>55</sup>World Bank (2007), *Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment*

<sup>56</sup> Federal Civil Service Agency Annual report (2008), unpublished

developing countries like Ethiopia exercise hardship by undertaking triple roles, that is, productive, reproductive and community participation role in their day to day life.<sup>57</sup>

Regardless of their challenges, Ethiopian women have been contributing a lot especially in the economy though they engage mostly in informal works, agriculture and contractual low paying works. Despite their contribution to the economy and social development, they did not enjoy the fruits of development equally as their male counterpart. As the result, they do not have access to health, education, and other productive resources and they are not adequately represented in leadership and decision-making positions at all levels.<sup>58</sup> It is believed that better status of employment, job access and economic potential at local and national levels would likely pave the way and create conducive political environment for women to play strong political role and decision making.

Moreover, the pattern of wage employment of women shows that they were mostly engaged in contractual, temporary and seasonal jobs that requires low skills. Ethiopian women's participation in the formal paid sector is yet very limited. Women have less income than men because of disparities in different employment patterns.<sup>59</sup> Traditional attitudes, lack of role models, non-assertiveness and limited access to information were reported as possible reasons for concentration of women in non-professional and low paying jobs.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> Croom, Helm (1984), *Women and property: Women as properties*, St. Martin's press. New York.

<sup>58</sup> MOWA (2006), *National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE) 2006-2010*: Addis Ababa, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA).

<sup>59</sup> Genet, zewide (2014), *Resistance, Freedom and empowerment: the Ethiopian women's struggle concept publishing company*, New Delhi.

<sup>60</sup> Cherinet, H & Mulugeta, E (2003), *a Profile on Gender Relations: Towards Gender Equality in Ethiopia*, Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

Correspondingly, MOWA (2006) addressed other possible reasons like Low level education and training, lack of exposure to the business world, meager financial and human capital and problems related to ownership rights for collateral purposes as major reasons.<sup>61</sup>

Ethiopian women suffer from work stereotype and gender distribution of labor, more are engaging in economically invisible works like secretary, messengers, cleaners...etc. Women experience lower socioeconomic status in general and hence is marginalized from making decisions at all levels. Nonetheless, women are poor in terms of access to resources, services and employment. Women are underrepresented in the formal sector of employment.<sup>62</sup> Consequently, majority of women are engaged in jobs at lower level and hence failed to attain in extensive political empowerment and decision making status at local, regional and national level.

## **2.5. Women's household responsibility and political leadership**

It is traditionally accepted that women's societal roles are restricted to domestic activities like cooking, and looking after children. Although women constitute two third of the world's working hours, produce half of the world's food and above all, bear and rear children, as a result women continue to suffer from all forms of discrimination and the absence of adequate protection against violence.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>61</sup> MOWA (2006), *National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE) 2006-2010*. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA)

<sup>62</sup> Endale, H (2014), *Factors that affect Women Participation in Leadership and Decision Making* Position: journal Volume 1, Number 2/2014 Ethiopia

<sup>63</sup> World Bank (2012), *World Development Report on Gender Equality and Development*.

Women also find it hard to participate in politics due to limited time available to them because of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. With their primary roles as mothers and wives and competing domestic responsibilities and care work, they are left with little time to participate in politics.<sup>64</sup>

Accordingly, household responsibilities like food preparation, cleaning; taking care of their children, home management...etc of women in Ethiopia restricted their extensive political roles to be active participant in political sphere to make internal and external decision without doubt.

## **2.6. Education and Women's political Participation**

Education is considered to be an important means to social mobility at individual level and the driving force behind economic, social, and cultural development at the national level.<sup>65</sup> Increase in education has often been cited as one of the major avenues through which women are politically empowered. Education increases the upward socio-economic mobility of women; creates an opportunity for them to work outside the home; and enhances husband-wife communication so as enable them to be participant and competent in politics and decision making.

The church was not private, neutral or objective in its teachings. It had a strong interest in the preservation of the status quo and controlled the ideological base of the country by not only providing the state with religiously educated staff but also advising the state on political matters.<sup>66</sup> Although the church held the monopoly over traditional

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<sup>64</sup> Bari, F (2005), *Enhancing participation of women in development through an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women*: Bangkok, Thailand.

<sup>65</sup> Cherinet, H & Mulugeta, E (2003), *A Profile on Gender Relations: Towards Gender Equality in Ethiopia*. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

<sup>66</sup> Ibid

education, that form of education was also reserved for boys from the nobility and remained so throughout the historical periods in Ethiopia.<sup>67</sup> During Haile Selassie's regime a few women from the noble and elite class had access to education. Among these, only some became prominent though the issue of women's rights and emancipation was not prominent.<sup>68</sup> Different researchers in Ethiopia claim that culture influences the education of women which results in gender division of labor where women are denied of important opportunities like educational access and burdened by heavy works which is hardly acknowledged.<sup>69</sup>

In most societies, women's education is considered as of no value that they prefer men education. Ballara (1992) focused on the cultural patterns and customs as one of the obstacles to women literacy and said that Parents believe that it is not worthwhile to invest in girl's education; instead they invest time and money to educate boys.<sup>70</sup>

To compensate these, the Federal Government of Ethiopia has been taking remarkable policy measures to empower women through access to basic education since 1991.<sup>71</sup> Enrolment in Ethiopia has increased dramatically for both boys and girls since the early 1990s. But gender gaps still remain substantial, particularly at higher education level. In other words, gender gap in education prevails at all levels of the system;

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid

<sup>68</sup> Sylvain, S.Comhaire (1970), *Higher Education and Professional Training of Women in Ethiopia: Proceedings of the Third International Conference of Ethiopian Studies, III*, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Haile Selassie I University, Addis Ababa, p. 199.

<sup>69</sup> Kalkidan, B (2007), *Cultural Practices that affected the status of women in Benishagul Gumuz, Mundura wereda*: Unpublished Master's Thesis, Addis Ababa University.

<sup>70</sup> Ballara, M (1992), *Women and Literacy*: New Jersey: Zed Books Ltd.

<sup>71</sup> Ogato, GS (2013), *the Quest for Gender Responsive Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) Policy in Least Developed Countries: Policy and Strategy Implications for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ethiopia*, Int. J. Info, Technol and Bus Manag 15(1), pp, 23-44.

the gap more visible as one goes up higher the educational ladder.<sup>72</sup> A number of economic, social, and cultural problems were reported to constrain women from attending and succeeding in education.<sup>73</sup>

The traditional division of labor at home and parental unequal treatment of sons and daughters in task assignment and study time constrain girls' success in education. Moreover, school distance and harassment, shyness and feeling of discomfort to participate equally with men were reported as stumbling blocks for female students still now. In addition, dropout rate in high school was reported to be fuelled by the practice of early marriage and marriage by abduction.<sup>74</sup>

Though women's and girl's education is constrained by different multi-faceted factors, it is still possible to empower them through policy measures that focus on creating favorable social environment.<sup>75</sup>

## **2.7. Ambition of women towards political participation and leadership**

Other factor that determines women's political participation is the personal desire to take part in politics. The personal ambition becomes the first stage in the legislative recruitment.<sup>76</sup> For Matland Personal ambition by itself is not a sufficient condition to take part in politics. But there should be positive and friendly political environment for women candidates. Accordingly, the most important factor to create a good opportunity for women candidates to politics is the existence of strong

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<sup>72</sup>MOWA (2006), *National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE) 2006-2010*: Addis Ababa, Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA).

<sup>73</sup> Cherinet, H & Mulugeta, E (2003), *A Profile on Gender Relations: Towards Gender Equality in Ethiopia*. Stockholm, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

<sup>74</sup>MOWA (2006), *National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE) 2006-2010*. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

<sup>75</sup> Cherinet, H & Mulugeta, E (2003), *a Profile on Gender Relations: Towards Gender Equality in Ethiopia*. Stockholm: Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA).

<sup>76</sup>Matland, R (1988), *Women's representation in national legislatures: Developed and developing countries*, *Legislative studies quarterly*.

women's organization or movement focusing specifically on women's issues.<sup>77</sup>

## **2.8 Theoretical framework**

The study was based on Liberal feminist theory which is rooted in classic liberal thinking that individuals should be free to develop their own talents and pursue their own interests. This approach sees gender inequalities as rooted in the attitudes of our social and cultural institutions. It does not see women's equality as requiring a reorganization of society, but seek to expand the rights and opportunities of women. A main focus is protecting equal opportunities for women through legislation.

There are many theories and arguments that debating about the inclusion or exclusion of women in politics. Though the study is based on liberal feminist theory, the researcher attempted to explain some theories that discuss about inclusion of women, the ways of addressing challenges and importance of women participation in politics.

The global debate on the promotion of women's political participation/representation has been surrounded by intrinsic and instrumentalist argument. Intrinsic argues for equal participation of women in politics from the human rights perspective. Women constitute half of the world population and therefore, it is only fair that they should have equal participation and representation in world democracies where as Instrumentalist argument pushed for women's greater participation on the essentialist ground those men and women are different. Women have different vision and concepts of politics owing to their sex and

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid

their gender roles as mothers.<sup>78</sup> Therefore, it is assumed that women in politics will bring a special caring focus and female values to politics.

But liberal feminist theory disagree with instrumentalist point of view and it recognizes the all-encompassing influences of gender divisions on social life and tries to understand women's oppression and the structures in society that advocate this oppression and subordination. The liberal feminist perspective, looking at the many similarities between the genders, concludes that women and men have equal potential for individual development. Differences in the realization of that potential, therefore, must result from externally imposed constraints and from the influence of social institutions and values.<sup>79</sup>

Feminists advance three broad perspectives in trying to explain the absence of women in senior management in the public and private sector. The first perspective is personal factors in which the paucity of women in management positions is attributed to the psychosocial attributes, including personality characteristics, attitudes and behavioral skills of women themselves. Among personal factors are self-esteem and self-confidence, lack of motivation and ambition to accept challenges to go up the ladder, women's low potential for leadership, less assertiveness, less emotional stability and lack of ability to handle a crisis.<sup>80</sup> On the other hand, personal factors such as, assertiveness, confidence, resourceful creativeness, loyalty and trustworthiness help women to ascend their political positions leadership and decision making ability.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Kunovich, S & Paxton, P (2005), *Pathways to Power: the Role of Political Parties in Women's National Political Representation*, *the American Journal of Sociology*. 111(2), p, 505.

<sup>79</sup> Nzomo, M (1995), *Women in top management in Kenya*: Nairobi, African Association for Public Administration and Management.

<sup>80</sup> Boneparth, Ellen & Emily, Stoper (1988), *Women, Power and Policy: Toward the year 2000*, Pergamon Press, New York.

<sup>81</sup> Singh, N (2006), *Women's Participation in Local Water Governance: Understanding Institutional Contradictions*. *Gend. Technol. and Dev.* 10(1), pp, 60-76

There is an extensive research literature produced in support of the varied rationale or theoretical approaches to women's inclusion in politics. For instance Alexander and Christian Welzel<sup>82</sup> forwarded four major dominant themes concerning it.

*Economic Modernity* focusing on economic development, the classical modernization perspective considers increases in democracy and human choice as a direct outcome of economic development.<sup>83</sup> In relation to gender equality, this approach holds that economic development is central to increasing the pool of women eligible for positions of political power. Greater access to educational and occupational resources increases women's chances of professional development, creating a larger pool of women eligible for power positions such as political office.<sup>84</sup>

*Cultural Modernity (The Human Development Perspective)* is a more recent theory emphasizes the conversion of economic development into a cultural process of human development that gives rise to an emancipative worldview, reflected in self-expression values that emphasize human choice and autonomy, including the choices and autonomy of women. This rise in emancipative orientations develops mass expectations targeted at making elites responsive and inclusive.<sup>85</sup> In this way, rising emancipative values lead to increases in women's empowerment throughout society and in parliament.

At its core, the human development perspective links social modernization to emancipative values through changes in existential constraints. The theory highlights changes in modern societies particularly conducive to women's empowerment and therefore

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<sup>82</sup> Welzel, C, Inglehart, R. & Klingemann, H.D (2003), *the Theory of Human Development: A Cross-Cultural Analysis*, European Journal of Political Research 42, pp, 341-80.

<sup>83</sup> Bell, D. 1999. *The Coming of the Post-Industrial Society: A Venture in Social Forecasting*. New York: Basic Books.

<sup>84</sup> McDonagh, E (2002), *Political Citizenship and Democratization: The Gender Paradox*, *American Political Science Review* 96, pp, 535-52.

<sup>85</sup> Inglehart, R & Welzel, C (2005), *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: the Human Development Sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

establishes a link between cultural modernity and publics that value greater equality between genders.<sup>86</sup>

*Historical Legacies:* the human development perspective and the classical modernization perspective offer theories to explain why modern societies are more conducive to gains in gender equality. The developmental trends of social modernization may face legacies of path dependent cultural and institutional organization that affects societies' abilities to improve women's live.<sup>87</sup> The emergence of institutions, whether cultural or the result of policy, sometimes consists of types of social organization that have a continuing and somewhat determinant influence on phenomena relevant to those institutions far into the future. This influence can take the form of an inertial tendency where institutions affect relevant phenomena that would have otherwise changed due to other social forces, like modernization.<sup>88</sup> They consider four measures of path dependent processes highlighted in the literature as those capable of affecting gender equality: Protestant religious traditions, a long tradition of female suffrage, a state tradition of investing into welfares rather than coercive forces, and a tradition of leftist dominance in government formation.<sup>89</sup>

Depending on the nature of their traditions, religions vary in opportunity for women's emancipation. For instance, relative to other religious heritages, scholars like Inglehart & Norris; Inglehart, Norris & Welzel; Inglehart & Welzel; Reynold and Rule find that a Protestant religious heritage improves the status of women in a country. With its tradition of sectarianism and volunteerism, Protestantism holds a tradition

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<sup>86</sup> Inglehart, R & Welzel, C (2005), *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

<sup>87</sup> Castles, F (1981), *Female Legislative Representation and the Electoral System*, *Politics* 1, pp, 21-26.

<sup>88</sup> Kunovich, S (2000), *the Representation of Polish and Czech Women in National Parliaments: Comparative Politics* 35, pp, 273-291

<sup>89</sup> *ibid*

particularly hospitable to democratic values, such as respect for individualism, reciprocity and popular sovereignty. The secularizing trend typically occurs from the pre-industrial through the industrializing phase of modernization.<sup>90</sup>

During this transition, traditional units restrictive of women's development such as the family and the church lose their authority as individuals place greater emphasis on rationality and individualism.<sup>91</sup>

In addition to religion, path dependent processes with respect to women's suffrage policy may affect the potential to increase gender equality in particular societies. Suffragist policy represents instances when elites and dominant political groups open the system of political representation to former, politically constructed out-groups. Countries with earlier suffragist policies for reforming women's formal political exclusion are likely to have a stronger institutional legacy of women's formal political inclusion. Several studies hypothesize and establish a positive link between earlier suffragist policy and women's empowerment in parliament.<sup>92</sup>

*Institutional Design Perspective:* - In comparison to autocracies, it is not surprising that scholarship on explanations of women's social and political empowerments highlight the role of democratic institutions. The oppressive, unequal treatment of women clashes with the democratic idea of human equality. As societal foundations that preserve and

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<sup>90</sup> Inglehart, R & Welzel, C (2005), *Modernization, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P & Inglehart, R (2001), *Women and Democracy: Cultural Obstacles to Equal Representation*, *Journal of Democracy* 12, pp, 126-140.

Reynolds, a (1999), *Women in the Legislatures and Executives of the World: Knocking at the Highest Glass Ceiling*, *World Politics* pp, 547-72.

Rul, W (1994), *Women's Underrepresentation and Electoral Systems: Political Science and Politics* 27, pp, 689-692.

<sup>91</sup> *ibid*

<sup>92</sup> Kenworthy, L & Malami, M (1999), *Gender Inequality in Political Representation: A Worldwide Comparative Analysis*, *Social Forces* 78, pp, 235-268.

Moore, G & Shackman, G (1996), *Gender and Authority: A Cross-National Study*, *Social Science Quarterly* 77, pp, 273-288.

socialize free and equal citizenship, democratic institutions supply women with more rights and more channels for making their voices heard. Research indeed shows that the strength of countries' democratic traditions empowers their women.<sup>93</sup>

Most prominent among the arrangements considered is the influence of electoral systems. Electoral systems affect women's paths to parliament by structuring party elites' incentive or disincentive to run women candidates. In this line of research, the most persistent finding is the consistent, positive impact of proportional representation systems on the percentage of women in parliament.<sup>94</sup>

Due to differences in socio-economic status, occupational choice and family responsibilities, in comparison to men, women candidates are likely to have greater difficulties in becoming eligible and aspiring political candidates. In addition to the role of electoral rules, gender electoral quota systems are institutional mechanisms that consistently, positively mediate the conditions and attitudes that structure women's leadership potential.<sup>95</sup>

Moreover, structural or institutional factors paradigm advances the view that it is the disadvantageous position of women in the organizational structure (few numbers, little power, limited access to resources) which shapes and defines the behavior and positions of women. The underlying premise of this perspective is that men and women are equally capable of and committed to assuming positions of leadership. The problem is vested in the structure and the remedy is a fundamental change to eliminate inappropriate discrimination in institutional policies and practices. The structural factors that affect women negatively include: discriminatory appointment and promotion practices; male resistance to

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<sup>93</sup> Castles, F (1981), *Female Legislative Representation and the Electoral System*, *Politics* 1: 21-26

<sup>94</sup> Dahlerup, D & Freidanvall, L (2003), *Quotas as a 'Fast Track' to Equal Representation of Women*: *International Feminist Journal of Politics*.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid*

women in management positions; absence of policies and legislations to ensure participation of women; and limited opportunities for leadership training and for demonstrating competence as a result of power structure in the work place.<sup>96</sup>

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

Among different research methods the researcher employed descriptive method. The study utilized both quantitative and qualitative techniques to scrutinize concepts, characteristics, descriptions and counts to demonstrate implications of the issues under questions. Data presented in the study were obtained from primary and secondary sources. Primary data were collected from respondents using questionnaires and interviews. In addition to these, empirical observation was also employed to reveal the situation of women's political participation on decision making and leadership in the study area. Secondary data was gathered from different written related literatures.

The quantitative method was used to analyze data collected using structured questionnaires on different issues related with challenges and opportunities of women's political participation and decision making. The qualitative method was employed to analyze data collected through in-depth interview and observation.

#### **3.1. Description of the study area**

Hadiya zone is a Zone in the Ethiopian Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region (SNNPR). This zone is named after the Hadiya of the

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<sup>96</sup> Bond(1996) <http://plato.stanford.edu/index.html> Date 5/7/2015

Hadiya Kingdom. Hadiya shares its boundary line with Kembata Tembaro (KT) to the south, Dawro Zone to the southwest, the Gibe River to the west which separates it from Oromia Region and the Yem Special Woreda, Gurage to the north, Silte zone to the northeast and the Alaba special woreda to the east. The woredas of Mirab Badawacho and Misraq Badawacho form an exclave separated from the rest of the zone by KT. Based on the 2007 Census conducted by the CSA, Hadiya Zone has a total population of 1,231,196, of whom 612,026 are men and 619,170 women; with an area of 3,593.31 square kilometers, the administrative center of Hadiya is Hosaena. Hossana is a town and separate woreda in the zone and the administrative center of the Hadiya Zone. Geographically, Hossana is situated in 7°33'N - 37°53'E latitude and longitude with an elevation of 2177 meters above sea level.<sup>97</sup>

### **3.3. Sources of Data**

Both primary and secondary sources of data were used to procure tangible information. Accordingly, first hand information was collected from respondents, stakeholders and empirical observations from the study area. Second hand information was gathered from secondary sources like published and unpublished works on challenges and opportunity of women's political participation; books, journals, templates, magazine and the like. In addition to these various documents of organizations under study and certain relevant documents from Hadiya zone women, children and youth affairs department, Hadiya zone electoral board and Hadiya zone speaker office were also employed as secondary sources of data.

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<sup>97</sup> Geographical location of Hadiya zone

[http://www.Doc\Reports\statistical\\_SNNPR\Statistical\\_SNNPR\\_PartII.pdf](http://www.Doc\Reports\statistical_SNNPR\Statistical_SNNPR_PartII.pdf).retrived April , 2015

### **3.4. Data Collecting Instruments**

The instrument used to obtain the desired information on opportunities and challenges of women's political participation in the study area were structured questionnaires, interview, holistic observation and documents review from Hadiya zone speaker Office/Afa-gubea tsifet bet/ and Hadiya zone political affair office in order to examine the political participation of women in different political party at local and national election from 1995 to 2010. The questionnaires were to call on the respondents to express their opinion on several items categorized under the broad topics; respondents background information, socio-cultural factors, attitude of female about themselves, government's action as well as the present circumstance of women's political involvements.

### **3.5. Sampling Techniques**

To attain the intended objectives, addressing the specific point of the sources of data is very crucial. Even though many zonal departments might be worked with women related issues, the researcher preferred five zonal departments which have direct connection with the issues of women's political participation. Consequently, from various types of sampling techniques, purposive sampling technique was used in order to get relevant data about opportunities and challenges of women political participation in the study area.

### **3.6. Sample Size**

Although the issues related to low participation of women in politics and decision making have required to touch all sectors in the Hadiya zone's zonal administration, five departments namely Women, child and youth affair department, civil service department, Hadiya zone speakers' office, Hadiya zone political affair office and Hadiya zone administrative office were selected purposively based on the aim of the study

Table 3 Sample size of the study area

| No | Zonal departments                        | Sample size |            |       |
|----|--|-------------|------------|-------|
|    |  | Male        | Femal<br>e | Total |
| 1  | Women, child and youth affair department | 5           | 8          | 13    |
| 2  | Hadiya zone speakers' office             | 8           | 6          | 14    |
| 3  | Civil service department                 | 6           | 5          | 11    |
| 4  | Hadiya zone political affair office      | 10          | 7          | 17    |
| 5  | Hadiya zone administrative office        | 6           | 9          | 15    |
|    | Total                                    | 35          | 35         | 70    |

As to the rule of Thumb, the representative sample size is about 10% of total population.<sup>98</sup> However, to obtain more reliable and accurate data, researcher took 35% of the total population (200) of the civil servants from the selected eight departments of the Hadiya zonal administration:

### 3.7. Method of Data Analysis

The study conveniently used both qualitative and quantitative tools of data analysis. The data collected by using various data collecting instruments were organized, coded and entered in to computer SPSS /software programs for social science/. Qualitative data collected through interview and observation was also anonymously analyzed. The results of the quantitative analysis were summarized and presented using tables and percentages.

<sup>98</sup> Gerald Von Bell, (1998), *Statistical rule of Thumb*, University of Washington, USA.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. Data Presentation and Analysis**

#### **Introduction**

This portion of the study discusses about the analysis of data on background information of the respondents, socio-cultural norms and women's political participations. In addition to this, presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data on women's political participation and access to higher education are presented. Interpretation of data on the impact of household responsibilities, women's low job status and economy are identified to evaluate low involvement of women in political decision making. The issues related to aspiration and commitments of women to take part in politics are incorporated. The data collected through interview and holist observation were also presented.

#### **4.1 Background information of the respondents**

Table.1 background information of the respondents

| Variables              | Categories                     | Frequency |                |
|------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------|----------------|
|                        |                                | Number    | Percentage (%) |
| Sex                    | Male                           | 35        | 50             |
|                        | Female                         | 35        | 50             |
| Age                    | 18-45                          | 65        | 92.8           |
|                        | 46-60                          | 5         | 7.2            |
|                        | 61 and above                   | -         | -              |
| Marital status         | Single                         | 10        | 14.3           |
|                        | Married                        | 60        | 85.7           |
|                        | Divorced                       | -         | -              |
|                        | Widow                          | -         | -              |
| Religion               | Protestant                     | 68        | 97.1           |
|                        | Orthodox                       | 1         | 1.45           |
|                        | Islam                          | 1         | 1.45           |
|                        | other                          | -         | -              |
| Educational background | Primary school                 | -         | -              |
|                        | Secondary school               | 7         | 10             |
|                        | College diploma                | 5         | 7.1            |
|                        | Degree                         | 36        | 51.4           |
|                        | MA/ Msc                        | 22        | 31.4           |
|                        | PhD                            | -         | -              |
| Position at work place | Head of the department         | 2         | 2.8            |
|                        | Head of sub department         | 12        | 17.1           |
|                        | Senior expert                  | 24        | 34.2           |
|                        | Junior expert                  | 10        | 14.2           |
|                        | Clerk/Gardner/driver/messenger | 12        | 17.1           |
|                        | Other                          | 10        | 14.2           |

Source field (2015)

Table one portrays the back ground information of the respondents. According to the sex distribution in the table 1, the number of male and female were equal i.e. male accounts for 50% and female also accounts for 50%.

As indicated in the table above, the majority (92.8%) of the total respondents were in the age category between 15-45 years and the remaining (7.2%) of the respondents were in the age group between 45-60 years. None of the respondents was in the age level above 61 years.

Regarding marital status, large numbers of the respondents (85.7%) were married and the remaining (14.3%) of them were single. None of them were widow and divorce.

Concerning religion of the respondents, overwhelming numbers of the repliers (97.1%) were protestant. Only insignificant numbers of the respondents were orthodox (1.45%) and Islam (1.45%).

As shown in the table.1, slightly more than half of the respondents (51.4%) held first degree. Relatively, some of them (31.4%) held second degree. The remaining (10%) and (7.1%) of the target population accomplished secondary school and college diploma respectively.

According to the table shown below, (34.2%) were senior expert at their respective work place. Head of sub-department and workers at the lower status have equal percentage (17.1%) each. Likewise, both junior experts and workers under other categories accounted for (14.2%) each. The remaining insignificant numbers of the repliers (2.8%) were head of the departments. Though, the government of Ethiopia and other stakeholders work to improve the situation, still women's political participation and their asset to decision-making is narrow. Consequently we find women dominated staff member at lower levels and mostly they

are engaged in low paying works like secretary, cleaner...etc. Females are not beneficiaries in political participation and decision making in relation to male as well as they are inconvenient in socio-economic and cultural aspects

## **4.2 Socio-cultural norms, politics and women’s political participations**

### **4.2.1. The issue of women’s participation in politics**

Table.2 Distribution of respondent on women’s participation in politics

| Women equally participate to be elected | Status              | Frequency of the responses |                |
|---|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
|   |                     | Number                     | Percentage (%) |
|   | Yes                 | 15                         | 21.4           |
|   | No                  | 55                         | 78.6           |
|   | Difficult to decide | -                          | -              |
|   | Total               | 70                         | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

As indicated in table.2 above, the target populations of the study area were asked whether women of the study area participated in the election to be elected equally compared with men or not. Accordingly, very large numbers of the respondents (78.6%) replied no. The remaining (21.4%) of them answered yes.

From their responses, one can figure out that there was no equal participation of women with men in political election to be elected in the study area. According to the report of Hadiya zone electoral board, elected number of male candidates for the house of people’s representatives accounted for 87.5% (7) and the remaining insignificant

number 12.5% (1) was female in 2010 election.<sup>99</sup> See appendix (map of the study area).

Similarly, the targeted respondents were also required to express their view on the issues that restrained women from active involvement in politics especially to be elected. Consequently, the respondents pointed out the main reasons that restricted women from active involvement in politics as:- low level of educational background, low commitment of women to participate, low awareness of community about women's role, lack of psychological readiness to politics, less political consciousness and harmful traditional practices (Early marriage, abduction, sexual harassment...etc).

Moreover, lack of access to information about political world and politics, lack of confidence among women, traditional outlook of the society towards women, consideration of ladies to be remained in domestic works only, negative mind-set of the men towards women and low concentration of women to politics that most of them do not think that they are capable of involving in politics were listed.

Similarly, Meaza stated the main factors which have contributed for such disparities like structural barriers, unequal socio-economical opportunities, and inadequate access to mentors and support networks. Furthermore, she depicted out that rigid work place structure and gender stereotypes that relate socially defined characteristics with certain groups in most cases also dissociate women from leadership roles.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> Report of electoral board of Hadiya zone (2013)

<sup>100</sup> Meaza Ashenafi, (2009), *Factors Affecting Women Participation in Politics and Decision making*. A Dissertation of MA Thesis

#### 4.2.2. The role women in setting political agenda of empowerment

Table.3 The distribution of responses on setting political agenda of empowerment

| Women set their political agenda that encourages them to participate/empower in politics | Status              | Frequency of the responses |                |
|--|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
|  |                     | Number                     | Percentage (%) |
|  | Yes                 | 17                         | 24.3           |
|  | No                  | 38                         | 54.3           |
|  | Difficult to decide | 15                         | 21.4           |
|  | Total               | 70                         | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

According to table.3 above, (54.3%) of the concerned respondents replied that they did not set political agenda that encourage their political participation and empowerment. But (24.3%) of the target population agreed that women set their own political agenda to escalate their role in politics. Similarly, (21.4%) of the respondents replied that they were not in a position to decide whether women set political agenda to enhance their role or not.

The number of women in politics in the country has steadily been increasing over the years, but this is not a guarantee that women's interests gained a boost. The general perception is that when there are only a few women in politics, they could become the subjects of discrimination, exclusion and manipulation.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>101</sup> Biseswar, Indrawatie (2011), *the role of educated/intellectual women in Ethiopia in the process of change and transformation towards gender equality 1974-2005*: unpublished thesis, University of South Africa.

As data shows, it is clear to realize that women in the study area did not set political agenda that reinforces their extensive involvement in politics. They do not raise their issues in different political meeting with leaders in order to talk about and take measures. Even women associations like women leagues and women federations are active in setting their own agenda rather implementing whatever issues come from the leaders of the area. Regarding to inability to set their political agenda in the study area, the target respondents pointed out the main possible reason for their failure to set participatory political agenda are cultural beliefs and their own background knowledge on political participation and leadership practices, ethnic and language based political environment (for women who do not belong to a specific ethnicity), lion's share of authority and power by men, less involvement of women in politics, absence of influential power among women, provision of less attention to women in politics and inability to trust on their own potential.

*In addition to this, one expert from WCYD says..."the role and contribution of women's league and federation on the issue of politics to enhance women's status to higher position and decision making is limited. The main motive behind the structural organization of women's league and federation was to improve political capacity in order to achieve progressive political decision making but their roles on the issue of empowering women has been symbolic and like toothless lion because of their failure to set their agenda to empower women in political decision making and leadership. In addition to these, insignificant numbers of women who are at the higher political position of zonal administration have no commitment to claim on issue of less involvement of women so as to increase their competency."*

### 4.2.3. Attitudes of the society towards political role of women

Table.4 distribution of responses on the attitude of the society towards women's role

| Attitude of the society towards women's role in politics and decision making | Status | Frequency of the responses |                |
|--|--------|----------------------------|----------------|
|  |        | Number                     | Percentage (%) |
|  | High   | 2                          | 2.9            |
|  | Medium | 32                         | 45.7           |
|  | Low    | 36                         | 51.4           |
|  | Total  | 70                         | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

As portrayed in the table 4 above, more than half of the target population of the study (51.4%) answered that the attitude of the local community towards women's role in politics and decision making was low. Likewise, (45.7%) of the responses shown in the table indicates medium. The remaining (3.4%) replied high concerning societal outlook to women's roles in politics.

Depending on the data, one can presume that the attitude of the society towards women's prominent role in politics and decision making process is still very low.

In all human society, people enjoy their own culture, customs, tradition and belief in their social structure. These social structures empower men and women differently. These differences in the empowerment provide different opportunities and privileges to women and men. As men control all the resources, the men are the decision makers in major economic,

political and social issues while the women become the receptor of all issues guided by men.<sup>102</sup>

As well, the targeted respondents were also required to jot down the main reason for low attitude of the society towards political roles and decision making of women. Consequently, poor traditional outlook, inferiority complex of women, low societal trust on women's decision, wider cultural gap and economic inferiority of women to become decision maker were pointed out as the main reasons that lessen their political role. In addition to these, lack of role player in politics, expectation of women for only home responsibilities like looking after children, food preparation...., lack of role model and negative perception of the society ( society considered ladies as incapable to run politics) were also listed as other obstacles.

#### 4.2.4 Cultural acceptance of women in politics

Table 5 Distribution of responses on cultural acceptance of women in politics

|  | Frequency of responses |        |                |
|--|------------------------|--------|----------------|
|  | Responses              | Number | Percentage (%) |
| Cultural acceptance of women in politics by elders | Yes                    | 19     | 27.1           |
|  | No                     | 36     | 51.4           |
|  | Difficult to decide    | 15     | 21.4           |
|  | Total                  | 70     | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

<sup>102</sup>Croom, Helm (1984), *Women and property: Women as properties*, St. Martin's press. New York.

Concerning the possibility of acceptance of women by traditional elders when dealing with political issues, 51.4% of the respondents replied that being in front of elders to discuss in any issues with them culturally unacceptable and paves the way to curse. On the other hand, (27.1%) of the respondents agreed that it is culturally acceptable to being in front of the elders in political issues. Similarly, (21.4%) of the respondent confronted challenge to decide on the issue.

It is undeniable that most of the time traditional elders do not allow women to be in front of them to deal with political, economic and social issues due to the fact that traditional customs do not encourage women even to debate on their sensitive issues with elders that would likely undermine the possibility of being part in politics and make critical decision in their respective locality. So tradition and cultural perception of that society is the strapping shadow that hide the leadership and decision making ambition of women by categorizing their activities merely in houses giving extra power and recognition for males.

*Interviewee from Hadiya zone political affairs office tells "... most of the time women are devoid of attending communal meeting to deal with either to discuss on the outcomes of internal and external issues concerning gender prospects or local wise issues even if the matter concerns them. Male dominance, patriarchic outlook of the community, consideration of women as less assertive, backward perception of the local community and restriction of women's roles at only domestic household carriers as a barrier to less involvement of women in community meetings. Furthermore, women themselves are not in a position to resist these continuing cultural influences that would likely hold back their inclusive involvement in the community meeting."*

Most scholars agreed that traditional and persistent barriers have been seen to hinder the active pursuit of women to obtain positions of

leadership.<sup>103</sup> It is proposed that with the globalization of business practices, opportunities, technologies, and cultures, women face new and different challenges that vary depending on the context of the environment in which they operate and live.<sup>104</sup>

#### **4.2.5 Present decentralized political system and women's participation**

Table 6 Distribution of responses on women's role and current political system

| Current decentralized political system of Ethiopia and the role of women in politics | Frequency of responses |        |                |
|--|------------------------|--------|----------------|
|  | Options                | Number | Percentage (%) |
| Yes  | 46                     | 65.7   |                |
| No   | 14                     | 20     |                |
| Difficult to decide  | 10                     | 14.3   |                |
| Total  | 70                     | 100    |                |

Source: field survey (2015)

As shown in the table .6, greater part of the respondent (65.7%) agreed that the present political system of Ethiopia encourages women to become the most outstanding decision makers in politics. Conversely, (20%) of the target population answered that the current political system does not encourage women to be at the top of decision making ladder. Likewise, (14.3%) of the sample population faced dilemma to decide whether the current political system encourage women to the political power or not.

<sup>103</sup> Heyzer N (2005). *Making the Links: Women's Rights and Empowerment Are Key to Achieving the Millennium Development Goals*. *Gend. Dev.* 13(1): 9-12

Woldu A. (1999) *Factors That Affect Enrollment of Female Students in Arsi Zone*: Unpublished MA Thesis. Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa

<sup>104</sup> Ibid

Based on the responses of the target population, one can infer that the present political system of Ethiopia reinforces women to participate in political life equally with men.

The constitution of FDRE assures women to have irrevocable equal political right with men. However, the reality indicates that the persistent right of women is only on the paper and hence, women have not yet been held equal political and decision making power.

Similarly, Biseswar, Indrawatie (2011) revealed that low involvement of women in politics could be blamed on the successive political ruling groups and the traditional base of society embedded in high levels of religiosity. The dominant role of the ruling party in taking the lead on women's emancipation should be read very cautiously. First the Derg, and now the EPRDF regime, both brought their own agendas in which women's emancipation was sheltered under their unique paradigms of the woman question.<sup>105</sup>

These paradigms were and still are embedded in the overall political rule where party interest precedes all else and where the advancement of any section of society is a calculated move to political interest. This makes women's rights a remote issue to be considered.<sup>106</sup> For this fact most scholars agreed that an important approach to support women's political participation is the promotion of the participation of women in formal politics alongside support to broad programmes of democratization and good governance with a strong focus on developing civil society.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Biseswar, Indrawatie (2011), *the role of educated/intellectual women in Ethiopia in the process of change and transformation towards gender equality 1974-2005*: unpublished thesis, University of South Africa.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid

<sup>107</sup> Baden, S & Oxaal, Z (1997), *Gender and Empowerment: Definitions, Approaches and Implications for Policy*. BRIDGE (development - gender), Report No.40. Brighton, UK: Institute

#### 4.2.6 FDRE constitution and women's rights

Table .7 Distributions of responses on utilization of constitutional rights

| Women effectively enjoying political rights stated in the constitution | Frequency of responses |        |                |
|--|------------------------|--------|----------------|
|  | Options                | Number | Percentage (%) |
| Yes  | 17                     | 24.3   |                |
| No   | 53                     | 75.7   |                |
| Difficult to decide  | -                      | -      |                |
| Total  | 70                     | 100    |                |

Source: field survey (2015)

As indicated in the table 7 above, the largest proportion of the target population (75.7%) said that women have not been yet unleashed the constitutional rights effectively listed in the constitution of FDRE. One thing that should be considered is that insignificant number of women (those are heads of WCYD and offices) of the study area enjoy the main constitutional rights. On the other hand, (24.3%) of the responses indicate that women are enjoying constitutional rights. The constitution of FDRE paved extensive way for women to enjoy in all economic, political and social rights.

Genet (2014) in here work deduced that Women can participate in political, social and economic life of their country on equal terms with men, ensuring that their rights are respected and that they are not

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of Development Studies cited in Ogato, GS (2013), the Quest for Gender Responsive Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) Policy in Least Developed Countries: Policy and Strategy Implications for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ethiopia. *Int. J. Info. Technol and Bus. Manag.*

excluded from the enjoyments of the fruits of performing public functions and being decision makers.<sup>108</sup>

However, most women are away from enjoying the fruits of the constitution due to social influences, educational background, lack of understanding about the essence of the constitution, readiness problems among women, lack of encouragement by the society, lack of enough knowledge about the political benefits and lack of political consciousness.

According to Endale, Women's exclusion from political and public leadership and decision making structures and processes is observed as the result of multiple socio-cultural, individual, and institutional factors. As a result, women are denied their right over resources (economical resources, such as income generating skills, tools and opportunities; political resources such as representative organizations, education, public spheres experiences, self confidences and credibility; and time resources.<sup>109</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Genet, zewide (2014), *Resistance, Freedom and empowerment: the Ethiopian women's struggle concept* publishing compkany, New Delhi.

<sup>109</sup> Endale (2014), Factors that affect Women Participation in Leadership and Decision Making: Position journal Volume 1.

#### 4.2.7 The extent of women's representation in legislation

Table, 8 the distribution of responses on the extent of women's representation in politics

| The extent women competency in political representations. | Frequency of responses |        |                |
|---|------------------------|--------|----------------|
|   | Responses              | Number | Percentage (%) |
|   | Yes                    | 29     | 41.4           |
|   | No                     | 41     | 58.6           |
|   | Difficult to decide    | -      | -              |
|   | Total                  | 70     | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

As indicated in the table. 8 above, more than half of the respondents (58.6%) replied that women were not competent in politics to represent their own respective society. Women's participation in political parties can ensure the inclusion of gender friendly policies not only in the political platform of the parties but also in the wider society.

In the first multiparty election of 1995, women representatives were only 15 (2.56%) out of 547 seats. In the second, third and fourth elections held in 2000, 2005 and 2010 their numbers increased to 42, 117 and 152 respectively. Though the number of women who were elected to the federal parliament increased from time to time, their representation still low compared to the 30 percent minimum that is said to be required for women to have stronger voices.<sup>110</sup>

Moreover, different authors spot out almost related reason for under representation of women in all levels of governmental tiers. According to,

<sup>110</sup>Genet, zewide (2014), *Resistance, Freedom and empowerment: the Ethiopian women's struggle concept publishing company, New Delhi*

Endale, Ogato and MOW,<sup>111</sup> the basic reasons for inadequate representations of women in political and decision-making positions in Ethiopia are inadequate focus to the issue, due to lack of commitment and political will by the leadership; insufficient number of educated women; the few women who are in decision making position lack the commitment to fight for issues of gender equality; backward thinking among society, government leaders and civic leaders; the women affair offices not having power to challenge discriminatory policies; societal perception about leadership ability of women; women's low economic status; women's lack of assertiveness; and inadequate number of women in the current decision making positions.

The electoral report of Hadiya zone again is a best indicator for this. In 2005 election only 1 (11.1%) was female representative for HPR, 5(17.8%) were female for Regional representation /SNNP/, 3(5.4%) were female for Zonal representation and 92(9.2%) were Woreda representatives. Correspondingly, in 2010 election only 1 was female representative for HPR, 8(29.6%) were female for Regional representation /SNNP/, 4(7.2%) and 170(16.9%) were Woreda representatives.<sup>112</sup>

*One expert of women's capacity building work branch of WCYD says "...women have no equal tendency to represent people of their respective locality no matter how long journey the government of the FDRE travels to make equal representation of women at local, regional and federal level, women are not equally represent compared with men. Male dominated political sphere and less trust of the peoples on*

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<sup>111</sup> Ogato, GS (2013), the Quest for Gender Responsive Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) Policy in Least Developed Countries: Policy and Strategy Implications for Promoting Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Ethiopia. Int. J. Info. Technol and Bus. Manag .

MOWA (2006), National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE) 2006-2010. Addis Ababa: Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Endale (2014), *Factors that affect Women Participation in Leadership and Decision Making Position of women*: Ethiopia journal Volume 1, Number 2/2014.

<sup>112</sup> Adapted from 2013 Report of Hadiya zone electoral board

women's assertive capability are major drawback that hinders their equal representation in politics.

Moreover, other interviewee from Hadiya zone speaker's office (senior expert) says "...I trust on the prevalence of good political environment by FDRE that encourages women's vital involvement in politics but women are not as much as they were expected. Though the political environment creates conducive opportunity for ladies, the political system under the shadow of gender equality has become secrete challenges for women and it is confident on male dominated politics."

Correspondingly, Bari wrote that democracy has created relatively more space for women's participation in politics than other governmental systems. From far problem is domination of politics, political parties and culture of formal political structures that hinders women's political participation.<sup>113</sup> It is believed that often male dominated political parties have a male perspective on issues of national importance that disillusions women as their perspective is often ignored and not reflected in the politics of their parties. Also women are usually not elected at the position of power within party structures because of gender biases of male dominated leadership.<sup>114</sup>

As responses in table 8, above indicate, (41.4%) of the sample population replied that women were competent to be elected to represent people in the political environment. Despite the fact that women have struggled for equality of participation in different parties, their accession to leadership positions is still low. But here the respondent tried to show

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<sup>113</sup> Bari, F(2005), *Enhancing participation of women in development through an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women*; Bangkok, Thailand

<sup>114</sup> Ibid

the extent of change compare to former political arena of female and male dominance.

#### **4.2.8 Women’s political participation and access to higher education**

Table .9 the distribution of responses on women and access to higher education

|   | Frequency of responses |        |                |
|---|------------------------|--------|----------------|
|   | Responses              | Number | Percentage (%) |
| Women effectively attain higher education | Yes                    | 19     | 27.1           |
|   | No                     | 51     | 72.9           |
|   | Difficult to decide    | -      | -              |
|   | Total                  | 70     | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

Table 9 depicts the access of women’s attainment in higher education compared to men. Data in the table indicates that 72.9% of the sample population replied no. contrary to this, remaining respondents (27.1%) agreed that women have effectively attained higher education compared to men. Disparity between women and men in education is one of important factors that contribute to political dependency of women.

In accordance with the open ended questions responses, women in the study area have not successfully attained higher education due to sexual harassment, family responsibility (burden), early marriage, lack of interest, economic problems, academic efficiency problem and double responsibility (house hold plus education). In addition to these, weak educational back ground, economic dependency on their husbands, fear of failure (lack of confidence), and absence of family planning and lack of commitment to tackle external and internal influences.

Scholars like Alemtsehai, Zenebework and Pankhurst agreed that it has been long lasting socio-cultural discrimination that excluded women from educational rights whose consequence is still not stopped and limit the educational participation of women especially from higher education. Women within the patriarchal Islamic and Christian religions had no access to church or Islamic education. Instead, they found their individuality and independence curbed, a situation still prevalent at present.<sup>115</sup> Noted that Critical thinking is sanctioned and women are denied freedom and rights. Educated or not, they are expected to fulfill their traditional primary roles as housewives, mothers and communal servants.

Changing realities, including the legal environment and global exposure, have little impact on these traditional perceptions. They are in fact so embedded in the day-to-day lives of educated women that very few nuances remain that could eventually lead to change.<sup>116</sup> Yet the changes have been real in present time, It is concluded that women are not only kept away from higher leadership positions, but also from equal and effective involvement to higher education which makes them develop skills, and capacitate them with managerial decision making techniques, help them develop confidence in holding leadership positions.

Although a number of policies are emerging that support and encourage women's participation in development, women's access to and control of

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<sup>115</sup> Alemtsehay, Mekonnen & Kerebih Asrese (2014), Household Decision Making Status of Women in Dabat District, North West Ethiopia: 2009 Gc. Science Journal of Public Health. Vol. 2, No. 2, 2014, pp. 111-118.

Pankhurst, Richard (1990), *the Role of women in Ethiopian economic, social and cultural life from the middle ages to the rise of Tewodros: First National Conference of Ethiopian Studies*, April 11-12, Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University.

Zenebework 1986, 'Effects of Educational Policies on Women: The Ethiopian Experience', Draft paper presented for the second triannual congress of organization of social science research in Eastern Africa (OSSREA), 28-31 July, Eldoret, Kenya

<sup>116</sup> Ibid

productive resources, information, training and education, employment and in decision-making are limited.<sup>117</sup>

#### 4.2.9 Women in political decision making sphere

Table 10 distribution of responses on women politics and decision making

| Question  | Variable  | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Difficult to decide | Total response |
|---|-----------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Most women exercise political leadership effectively at zonal level | No of Re. | 2              | 8     | 35       | 17                | 8                   | 70             |
|   | Percent   | 2.9            | 11.4  | 50       | 24.2              | 11.4                | 100            |
| There is equal acceptance b/n men and women in politics             | No of Re. | 5              | 14    | 29       | 17                | 5                   | 70             |
|   | Percent   | 7.1            | 20    | 41.4     | 24.3              | 7.1                 | 100            |
| Women are given less priority in leadership                         | No of Re. | 4              | 31    | 27       | 5                 | 3                   | 70             |
|   | percent   | 5.7            | 44.3  | 38.6     | 7.1               | 4.3                 | 100            |
| Men leaders recognize female leaders at the post positions          | No of Re. | 18             | 29    | 12       | 3                 | 8                   | 70             |
|   | percent   | 25.7           | 41.4  | 17.1     | 4.3               | 11.4                | 100            |
| Women are highly encouraged by male to take part in politics        | No of Re. | 8              | 15    | 20       | 17                | 10                  | 70             |
|   | percent   | 11.4           | 21.4  | 28.6     | 24.3              | 14.3                | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

<sup>117</sup> International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology, December, 2013 Vol.5 (9). From: <http://www.academicjournals.org/IJSA>

According to table 10, half (50%) of the sample population replied that women in the study area did not effectively exercise political leadership. Similarly, 24.2% of responses show that women were not totally in a position to exercise political leadership. On the other hand, equal number of the respondents (11.4%) each answered that ladies exercised political leadership and hesitant to decide on the issue. Depending on the data, it is vital to realize that most women in the study area did not actively take part in politics and decision making.

As the table indicated above, the respondents were required to indicate the extent of equal acceptance between men and women in political arena. In view of that, more than half (65.7%) of the sample population agreed that there was no equal acceptance and respect among men and women leaders. 7.1% of the repliers confronted to decide whether male and female politicians had equal acceptance or not. From this point of view, it is reliable to deduce that men and women had no equal recognition and respect among peoples of the study area.

Women face several obstacles to participating in political life. Structural barriers through discriminatory laws and institutions still limit women's options to run for office. Capacity gaps mean women are less likely than men to have the education, contacts and resources needed to become effective leaders

*From Hadiya zone WCYD, the women's branch head (yesetoch zerf halafi) says, "...in fact the constitution of FDRE affirmed men and women to have equal political rights but women have not yet equally participation in politics. One thing undeniable is that women enjoy political rights more by electing representatives and to some extent involve in peaceful demonstration. Nevertheless, the possibility of women to be representative and acquiring higher political position at zonal level even in woredas is strongly questionable."*

Table 10 shown above indicates that nearly half of the respondents replied that women were given less concern in leadership and decision making. Likely, 7.1% of the respondents highly insisted in that they are given more priority in the leadership and political decision making. Finally, 4.3% of them were not able to decide whether women were given priority in leadership and political decision making position or not.

Based on the data it is important to infer that majority of women were not share political power and decision making position as well as male domination is still familiar irrespective of affirmative action and policy framework. So this indicates that the national policy and programs of women is not implemented at the grass root level.

According to table 10, the respondents were asked to forward their view on the issue of female leaders' recognition by male leaders at post position. Based on their responses, 41.4% of the target population replied that women were not recognized by male leaders for the post position. Similarly, 25.7% of them strongly emphasized that women were recognized by male leaders. 17.1% of them agreed that they were recognized by men leaders. 4.3% of the targeted population replied that women leaders at the post position were recognized. Finally, the remaining 11.4% of them were not sure whether women were recognized by male leaders or not.

Depending on their responses, one can recognize that women at the post decision making position were not well recognized by male leaders in the study area.

Again table 10 portrays, the targeted population in the study area were asked to reveal their own views on the issue of women's encouragements by men and society as well so as to take part in politics and decision making. Accordingly, 28.6% of the responses indicate that women were not reinforced by male leaders to take part in politics. Likewise, 24.3% of them also strongly disagree that women were not encouraged by leaders. Conversely, 21.4% and 11.4% of respondents replied women were

encouraged and strongly encourage respectively taking part in politics in the study area.

Up on the responses, one can imagine that women were not encouraged by men leaders to take part in politics and decision making.

#### 4.2.10 Socio cultural perception of the society on women’s political participation and decision making

Table .11 distributions of responses on socio cultural perception on women’s leadership and decision making.

| Question  | Variable  | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Difficult to | Total response |
|---|-----------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|--------------|----------------|
| Decisions and views of female leaders at zonal higher political position has less recognition | No of Re. | 11             | 38    | 16       | -                 | 5            | 70             |
|   | percent   | 15.7           | 54.3  | 22.9     | -                 | 7.1          | 100            |
| Women are highly encouraged by society to take part in politics                               | No of Re. | -              | 8     | 29       | 27                | 6            | 70             |
|   | percent   | -              | 11.4  | 41.4     | 38.6              | 8.6          | 100            |
| Culture of your locality allows public speech for women                                       | No of Re. | -              | 10    | 34       | 23                | 3            | 70             |
|   | percent   | -              | 14.3  | 48.6     | 32.9              | 4.3          | 100            |
| Local community of your area equally accept male and female leaders                           | No of Re. | -              | 4     | 31       | 28                | 7            | 70             |
|   | percent   | -              | 5.7   | 44.3     | 40                | 10           | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

In the table 11, above the respondents were required to put their own views of long last experience concerning the recognition of decision making of decision made by women leaders at the post political position.

Accordingly, 54.3% of the responses indicate that decisions and views of female leaders in the study area had less recognition. Contrary to this, 22.9% of the respondents abrogated this view and agreed that decision and views of women were highly recognized and accepted. 15.7% of the respondents strongly agreed that views and decision of women were not recognized and accepted. On the 7.1% of the respondents were hesitant to decide whether their decision and views were recognized or not.

In accordance with the data collected, the decisions and views of women were not taken as reliable and hence had less recognition by both leaders and society at large.

In table 11, the sample populations were asked to forward their view on situation of societal support to encourage women in political sphere so as to enable them to play pivotal in the study area. Consequently, near to half (41.4%) of the respondents tell us that women were not highly encouraged by the society to play their decisive role in politics. Likewise, 38.6% of the respondents assure that women were not totally reinforced by the society in politics. Conversely, only 11.4% of the respondents replied that women were encouraged by society in the political sphere. But 8.6% of the respondents were not sure on their responses to decide on the situation. Based on the data, it is legible to infer that women were not encouraged by the society to take part in politics and decision making process.

The respondents were also asked to judge whether the culture of the study area allows women to public speech or not. More than half (56%) of the response indicates that culture of the study area was not allows women to public speech. conversely, 14.3% of them agreed culture allows public speech.

On the other side, 4.3% of the respondents were not sure whether the culture allows women to public speech or restrict. Regardless of the

political rights that they have, cultural practice of the area is not allowing women to have public speech. Even though some changes have been seen, still male domination and lower stratum/ladder/ female based on their gender perspective from public speech in community and decision making at all is continued as the result of cultural consent to Patriarchy.

According to Eisenstein (1984) Patriarchy as a system of male domination shapes women's relationship in politics. It transforms males and females into men and women and constructs the hierarchy of gender relations where men are privileged. Again, Farzana wrote that the gender role ideology is used as an ideological tool by patriarchy to place women within the private arena of home as mothers and wives and men in the public sphere. This is one of the vital factors that shape the level of women's political participation globally.<sup>118</sup>

However, this ideological division is not reflective of the reality. The boundaries between public and private are often blurred in the daily lives of women. Nonetheless, domestic domain continues to be perceived in the North as well as in the South as the legitimate space for women while public space is associated with men. Women have to negotiate their entry into and claim on public space according to the discursive and material opportunities available in a given culture and society. Although the gender role ideology is not static rather remained in a flux while intersecting with economic, social and political systems of a particular society, women continue to be defined as private across countries which resulted in their exclusion from politics.

Similarly the respondents were asked to point out their agreement on the acceptance between men and women in decision making by the society. Consequently, (84.3%) show that women and men leaders were not

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<sup>118</sup> Eisenstein, Z (1984), *Contemporary Feminist Thought*, Unwin, London cited in Bari, F (2005), *Enhancing participation of women in development through an enabling environment for achieving gender equality and the advancement of women*; Bangkok, Thailand.

equally accepted by the society. But 5.7% of the response depicts that women leaders equally accepted by the society. 10% of the response portrays that they were not sure to say about it.

Depending on the data given below, it is very critical to resume that woman leaders in the study area were not equally accepted compare to males.

**4.2.11 Women’s Desire to participate in Politics and Decision making**

Table 12 distribution of responses on women’s desire in politics and decision making

| Question  | Variable  | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Difficult to decide | Total response |
|---|-----------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Women show their readiness to participate in politics and exercise leadership | No of Re. | 10             | 36    | 21       | 3                 | -                   | 70             |
|   | percent   | 14.3           | 51.4  | 30       | 4.3               | -                   | 100            |
| Most women are qualified for the political position and leadership            | No of Re. | -              | 13    | 38       | 11                | 8                   | 70             |
|   | percent   | -              | 18.6  | 54.3     | 15.7              | 11.4                | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

Table 12 indicates that 65.7% of the respondents agreed that women shown their readiness to being part in politics and decision making. Even though women (especially educated women) reflect their intention to take part in politics to make decision at the post position, their access is limited by lack of commitment of leaders of the area. 34.3% of the

responses revealed that women did not show their intention to take part in politics and decision making.

Due to differences in socio-economic status, occupational choice and family responsibilities, in comparison to men, women candidates are likely to have greater difficulties in becoming eligible and aspiring to political candidate.

As it is indicated in table 12, 70% of the respondents replied that women were not qualified for political to political position. Contrary to these, 18.6% of the responses indicate that women were qualified for political position. The remaining 11.4% replied that it was difficult to decide. It is undeniable that some women were qualified for leadership and decision making.

#### **4.2.12 Parental Treatment of Females at the early age, Political Participation and leadership**

Table 13 distribution of responses on parental treatment at the early age

| Question   | Variable  | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Difficult to decide | Total response |
|--|-----------|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Parental treatment encourages daughters to enhance public speech potential for the future        | No,of Re  | 20             | 34    | 14       | -                 | 2                   | 70             |
|  | percent   | 28.6           | 48.6  | 20       | -                 | 2.8                 | 100            |
| Parents reinforce female to exercise ability of speech and leadership from the beginning at home | No of Re. | -              | 17    | 36       | 17                | -                   | 70             |
|  | percent   | -              | 24.3  | 51.4     | 24.3              | -                   | 100            |
| Female at early stage have equal support with male to learn at school by parents                 | No of Re. | 3              | 15    | 39       | 13                | -                   | 70             |
|  | percent   | 4.3            | 21.4  | 55.7     | 18.6              | -                   | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

Table 13 shown above, measures the output of parental treatment of daughters to enhance public speech potential for the future. 28.6 % and 48.6 % of the respondents which account for 77.2% agreed that appropriate parental treatment at early stage inspires daughters to enhance public speech potential for the future. Opposed to this, 20% of them reflected their disagreement. Eventually, very insignificant number of repliers (2.8%) did not able to decide.

It is widely asserted that increased gender equality within the household is a prerequisite for achieving improvements in all matters of development. The Programmed of Action adopted at the 1994 ICPD claimed that improving the status of women also enhances their decision-making capacity at all levels in all spheres of life, which helps for countries development.<sup>119</sup>

Based on the data indicated, one may realize that the base for good public speech is home and it is reassumed as the first institution which shapes human futurity and destiny. When daughters undermined at home their fate might be failure. If parents reinforce them, they may be prominent /pioneer/ decision makers in the future. In addition to these, target respondents (respondent) were required to reflect their experience whether they reinforce daughters to exercise ability to speech and leadership at home.

Accordingly, 51.4% and 24.3% which represent 75.7%of the total repliers reflect their disagreement. Opposed to these, 24.3% of the repliers reflect their agreement. So, most families did not inspire their daughters to develop ability to speech and leadership compared with sons at home.

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<sup>119</sup> Alemtsehay, Mekonnen & Kerebih, Asrese (2014), *Household Decision Making Status of Women in Dabat District, North West Ethiopia*, Science Journal of Public Health. Vol. 2, No. 2, 2014, pp. 111-112.

Similarly, in the table 13, they were asked on parental support of daughters equally with sons to learn at school. Consequently, 55.7% and 18.6% which account for 74.3% of the repliers disagreed that both daughter and sons were not equally supported by parents to learn at school and study at home. 4.3% and 21% (25.7%) together replied that both sexes are equally treated to learn at school and study at home.

However, daughters were not equally supported as sons by parents to study and learn at school due to the fact that daughters have many routine house responsibilities that enable them to lag behind from sons in achievements of education and other spheres.

### 4.2.13 Husbands-Wives responsibilities and Women's Political Participation

Table 14 distribution of responses on household and political decision making

| Question  | Variable | Strongly disagree | Disagree | Agree | Strongly agree | Difficult to say | Total response |
|---|----------|-------------------|----------|-------|----------------|------------------|----------------|
| Most husbands share equal household responsibility with wives at home   | No of Re | -                 | 8        | 49    | 4              | 9                | 70             |
|   | percent  | -                 | 11.4     | 70    | 5.7            | 12.9             | 100            |
| Wives have equal decision making power with husbands at home  | No of Re | -                 | 5        | 47    | 8              | 10               | 70             |
|   | percent  | -                 | 7.1      | 67.1  | 11.4           | 14.4             | 100            |
| Most husbands allow wives to be active participant in politics especially to organized in different political parties and expend time on it | No of Re | -                 | 11       | 56    | 3              | -                | 70             |
|   | percent  | -                 | 15.7     | 80    | 4.3            | -                | 100            |
| Women are involved more in household activities than politics   | No of Re | 34                | 28       | 3     | -              | -                | 70             |
|   | percent  | 48.6              | 40       | 4.3   | -              | -                | 100            |
| Mother expends more time to take care of children than Father does  | No of Re | 37                | 28       | 5     | -              | -                | 70             |
|   | percent  | 52.9              | 40       | 7.1   | -              | -                | 100            |

Source: field survey (2015)

Table 14 portrays the distribution of responses on the equitable share of household responsibilities of husbands and wives. Accordingly, 5.7% and 70% replied strongly disagree and disagree respectively. On the other hands, 11.4% of the responses indicate that there was equal share of

house hold responsibility between wives and husband. 12.9 % of the respondents replied it is difficult to decide.

Consequently, it is deduced that husbands did not shared equal house hold responsibilities with wives at homes.

According to the data in the table below, (67.1% and 11.4%) of the respondents together disagreed on the possibilities of wives to have equal decision making power with husbands at home. Contrary to this, 7.1% of the response reveals that wives have equal decision making power at home. In addition to this, 14.4% faced difficulty to decide.

As the result, it is fundamental to infer that most wives have no equal decision making power as husbands and hence there had been male dominance in house hold decision making in the study area.

As the data in table 14 below indicated, the majority (80%) husbands did not allow wives to play political roles in different political parties. 4.3% of them strongly opposed that there were no permission for wives to take part in politics and decision making. Conversely, only 5.7%of the responses depict that husbands allow wives to be part in politics.

Consequently, one can realize the present and future fate of women's participation in politics would be solely decided by husbands and hence the role of women in politics and decision making will not be improved.

The respondents were also asked up on the extent of women's involvements in household activities. Accordingly, 48.6% and 40% which account 88.6% response realize that most women in the study area were engaged more in the household activities than political participation. Conversely, 4.3% of them replied their disagreement on more involvement of wives in house hold activities 7.1% of the respondents indicate their inability to decide.

Depending on the data one can deduce that most women were engaged in household work and looking after their child than political participation and decision making which would likely reduce the possibility of women's political participation.

Finally, the sample population required to indicate their best of response on mother and child care activities. Accordingly, the majority of the responses (92.9%) indicate that most mothers expend looking after their child and husbands do not share the responsibilities of their child care. Only insignificant number of respondents (7%) reflects their disagreement. As the result it is very crucial to realize that most women spent their time on taking care of children and families throughout their life.

*One interviewee from political affairs office of Hadiya zone, says "... very insignificant number of husbands carry out some of the selective household activities but with no doubt most of the household duties have been carried out by wives.*

*The other woman from Civil service department of the Hadiya zone tells "... the core reason for less contribution of husbands to the home activities is cultural influences of the locality in which they grown up."*

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. Conclusion and recommendations**

This chapter shows major findings, conclusion and recommendation of the study. Based on the results of primary and secondary sources of data on the challenges and opportunities of women's political participation and decision making in Hadiya zone zonal administration of SNNP, the following conclusions and recommendations are drawn.

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

This study was undertaken aimed at identifying the opportunities and challenges of women's political participation in Hadiya zone zonal administration. Even though many zonal departments might be worked with women's participation related issues, the researcher preferred five zonal departments which have direct connection with the issues of women's political participation. From various types of sampling techniques, purposive sampling technique was used in order to get relevant data about opportunities and challenges of women's political participation in the study area. Data was gathered using questionnaires and pragmatic observation. Questionnaire was administered to 70 civil servants from which fortunately 70 (100%) of them were asked get reliable information. The data collected was analyzed by using descriptive statistics.

The major findings of the study are summarized as follows:

- ❖ The majority of the total respondents were in the age category between 15-45 years. Overwhelming number of the respondents (82.8%) held degree and above and the rest (17.2%) accomplished secondary school and college diploma from which women were predominant.

- ❖ In the study area there were no equal representations of women in legislation at local, regional and federal level though the government issued affirmative action to remedy the low levels of representation of women in political leadership.

Consequently, the main reasons that restricted women from active involvement in politics were low level of educational background, low commitment of women to participate, low awareness of community about women's role, lack of psychological readiness to politics, less political consciousness, harmful traditional practices (Early marriage, abduction, sexual harassment...).

Moreover, lack of access to information about political world and politics, lack of confidence among women, traditional outlook of the society towards women, consideration of ladies to be remained in domestic works only, negative mind-set of the men towards women and depressing feelings of women to politics that most of them do not think that they are capable of involving in politics.

- ❖ Though the political environment invites women to set political agenda aimed at their own issues, they were unsuccessful to put it in to action. This is due to cultural beliefs and their own background knowledge on political participation and leadership practices, ethnic and language based political environment (for women who do not belong to a specific ethnicity of the area), lion's share of authority and power by men, absence of influential power among women, lack of role model women, provision of less attention to women in politics and inability to trust on their potential.
- ❖ The study affirmed that attitude of the local community towards women's role in politics and decision making was low as a result of Poor traditional outlook, inferiority complex of women,

hesitation of the society on women's decision and political potential, expectation of women for only home responsibility and looking after children, lack of role model and negative perception of the society (society considered ladies as incapable to run politics). Thus, women relatively at the post position were not equally accepted by the society compared with men leaders.

- ❖ The positive impact that proportional representation electoral systems make on women's recruitment is crucial. Due to differences in socio-economic status, occupational choice and family responsibilities, in comparison to men, women candidates are likely to have greater difficulties in becoming eligible and aspiring political candidate.
- ❖ The present political system of Ethiopia encourages women to become outstanding decision makers in politics equally. Moreover, the constitution of FDRE assures women to have irrevocable equal political right with men. However, the reality in the study area indicates that the persistent political rights of women are only on the paper and hence, women have not yet been held equal political participation especially in representing their respective society, power sharing and decision making.
- ❖ Although the government of FDRE disseminated equitable access to education for both male and female and take affirmative action to enhance women's involvement, women in the study area have not successfully attained higher education mainly MA/Msc and above due to family responsibility (burden), early marriage, lack of interest, economic problems, academic efficiency problem and double responsibility (house hold plus education). In addition to these, weak educational back ground, economic dependency on their husbands, fear of failure (lack of confidence), and absence of family planning and lack of commitment to tackle external and internal influences.

- ❖ The study reveals that women in the study area did not exercise political rights of leadership. Women's participation in political activities remain marginal and though there are a few women who could be seen as occupying leadership and decision-making posts, the reality is that they are placed at the peripheries of political leadership and decision-making processes.
- ❖ In addition to this, the possibility of their acceptance in leadership and decision making including representation did not get equal recognition with men in the society. Moreover, majority of women were not share political power and decision making position and male domination is still familiar irrespective of affirmative action and policy framework.
- ❖ Regardless of the political rights that they have to exercise, cultural practice and societal norms of the study area is not allowing women to have public speech in front the communal meeting and even to attend the meeting too. Even though some changes have been seen, still male domination and lower stratum female based gender perception is continued as the result of cultural consent.
- ❖ Parental treatment at early stage of childhood laid down the base and considered as the fundamental tool for developing strong assertiveness in their life. But the finding indicated that gender based discrimination begins at early stage at home which likely undermined daughters to be submissive, docile and timid by preparing them for only home responsibility and promoting sons for further dedication.
- ❖ Most wives at home have no equal decision making power compared with husbands and hence there had been male dominance in house hold decision making in the study area.

Wives were over burdened more with household responsibilities including child care.

- ❖ Finally, as the finding indicates most husbands did not permit their wives to be organized in different political parties, expend time on political issues and even to be politician.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

- ❖ Without active involvement of women in politics, it is difficult to effectively attain any governmental goals. Therefore, women should equally participate in political arena and decision making positions.
- ❖ Difficulties arise from social settings and cultures that fail to create conducive environment for women to aspire to leadership. Traditional attitude of the local community towards women's role in politics and decision making has to be transformed by bringing changes in perception and mind set up through awareness creation and capacity building.
- ❖ Political leadership and empowerment of women is important since it can provide women with the much needed support to advance their concerns. Unfortunately, political positioning of women is not sustainable and women need to struggle a new every time they enter in to politics. Despite many changes seen at legal level, the problem is that women do not aspire for leadership. Thus, continuous awareness creation and capacity building is required to enable women to show their aspiration to play their pivotal role in politics and assertion making in the study area.
- ❖ Educational policy of Ethiopia affirmed that special attention is to be given for female to get equitable educational opportunities. Its emphasis has been more given to enhance number of attainment among females. The policy as a blueprint should be well

implemented at grass root level so as to realize and equip women with academic potential and Educational programmes should give emphasis on affirming females in higher levels especially after bachelor degree because the problems of women would not ended just as they hold bachelors.

- ❖ It is very vital to raise women's consciousness through participation and organizing themselves in education, capacity building, training and other measures. Policy makers, political leaders, different governmental sectors, non-governmental organizations working with women related issues, traditional leaders and other stakeholders are expected to assure whether women are playing political role and decision making or not.
- ❖ Women's political rights must be respected by avoiding the social bias (cultural influence) which goes in contrary to the constitution of FDRE and other bill of rights. This requires the committed involvement of leaders, politicians, policy makers and other stakeholders in each governmental tier.
- ❖ There should be some sort of modification in implementation of women related programmes, policies and quota system which would likely lift up the proportion of women in legislation.

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## Appendix I

**Addis Ababa University**

**College of Law and Governance**

**Center for Federal Studies**

Dear respondent, this questionnaire is prepared to undertake research on the challenges and opportunities of women's political participation in Hadiya Zone zonal administration. The purpose of this questionnaire is to get first hand information on the pattern and the situation of women's political participation in Hadiya Zone zonal administration.

All questionnaires are to be purely utilized to academic purpose and hence your responses will be kept strictly confidential. The answers from all respondents will be anonymously combined in the research analysis. Consequently, you are kindly required to be free to respond the best of your understanding on the issue so as to realize the objective of the study which will be a futile exercise without your whole hearted cooperation.

### **I Background information of the respondents**

1. Sex:        male  female
2. Age  15- 45  46 – 60  61 and above
3. Marital status: Single  Married  Divorce Widow
4. Religion:  protestant   Orthodox  Islam  Pagan
5. Educational background: Primary school  Secondary school   
College diploma  Degree  MA/Msc  PhD
6. Position at your work place:
  1. Head of the department
  2. Head of sub department
  3. Senior expert
  4. Junior expert
  5. Clerk/ Gardner / driver /messenger
  6. Other -----

**II. Socio cultural and political prospect on women political participation**

1. Do women equally participate in the election to be elected compared with men at your locality?

Yes

No

2. If your response is no, what restrain them from their involvement in politics?

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3. Are women of your locality set their political agenda that encourages each other in political participation/empower themselves in politics?

Yes

No

difficult to decide

4. If your answer to the above question is no, what do you think that the possible reasons for their failure to set political agenda in their respective locality?

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5. Attitude of the Society towards women's role in politics especially in decision making process at your locality is:

High       Medium       Low

6. If your response to the above question is 'low' what makes them to have low attitude towards women's role in politics?

A \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

E \_\_\_\_\_

7. Do you think that standing of women in front of the elders to deal with politics is culturally acceptable?

Yes       No       Difficult to decide

8. If your answer to the above question is No, would you list out the main reasons?

A \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

9. Do you think that the present decentralized political system of Ethiopia encourages women to participate in politics?

Yes       No

10. If no, what factors do you see in your localities that restrain women's political participation at present time?

A \_\_\_\_\_

B \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

D \_\_\_\_\_

11. Are women effectively enjoying political right stated in the present constitution of Ethiopia?

Yes  No

12. If your response to the above question is No, why do you think that they don't exercise their right properly?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Are women in your locality competent to be elected for local, regional and national election in different parties to represent their respective people of the area?

Yes  No

14. If your response to the above question is No, what make them not competent?

A \_\_\_\_\_  
B \_\_\_\_\_  
C \_\_\_\_\_  
D \_\_\_\_\_

15. Do women of your area effectively attain higher education like MA and above compared with males?

Yes  No

16. If your response to the above question is No, what are the factors that make their attainment less?

A \_\_\_\_\_  
B \_\_\_\_\_  
C \_\_\_\_\_  
D \_\_\_\_\_  
E \_\_\_\_\_

**For questions listed in the table below, please use this mark (X)**

| No | Questions   | Strongly agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly disagree | Difficult to decide |
|----|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|---------------------|
| 1  | Most women exercise political leadership effectively at zonal level                           |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 2  | There is equal acceptance b/n men and women in politics                                       |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 3  | Women are given less priority in leadership   |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 4  | Men leaders recognize female leaders at the post positions                                    |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 5  | Women are highly encouraged by male to take part in politics                                  |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 6  | Male leaders at higher level of your locality have faith on women's potential in leadership   |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 7  | Decisions and views of female leaders at zonal higher political position has less recognition |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 8  | Women are highly encouraged by society to take part in politics                               |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 9  | Culture of your locality allows public speech for women                                       |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 10 | Local community of your area equally accept male and female leaders                           |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 11 | Women show their readiness to participate in politics and exercise leadership                 |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 12 | Most women are qualified for the political position and leadership                            |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 13 | Parental treatment encourages daughters to enhance public speech potential for the future     |                |       |          |                   |                     |
| 14 | Parents reinforce female to exercise ability of speech and leadership from the beginning at   |                |       |          |                   |                     |

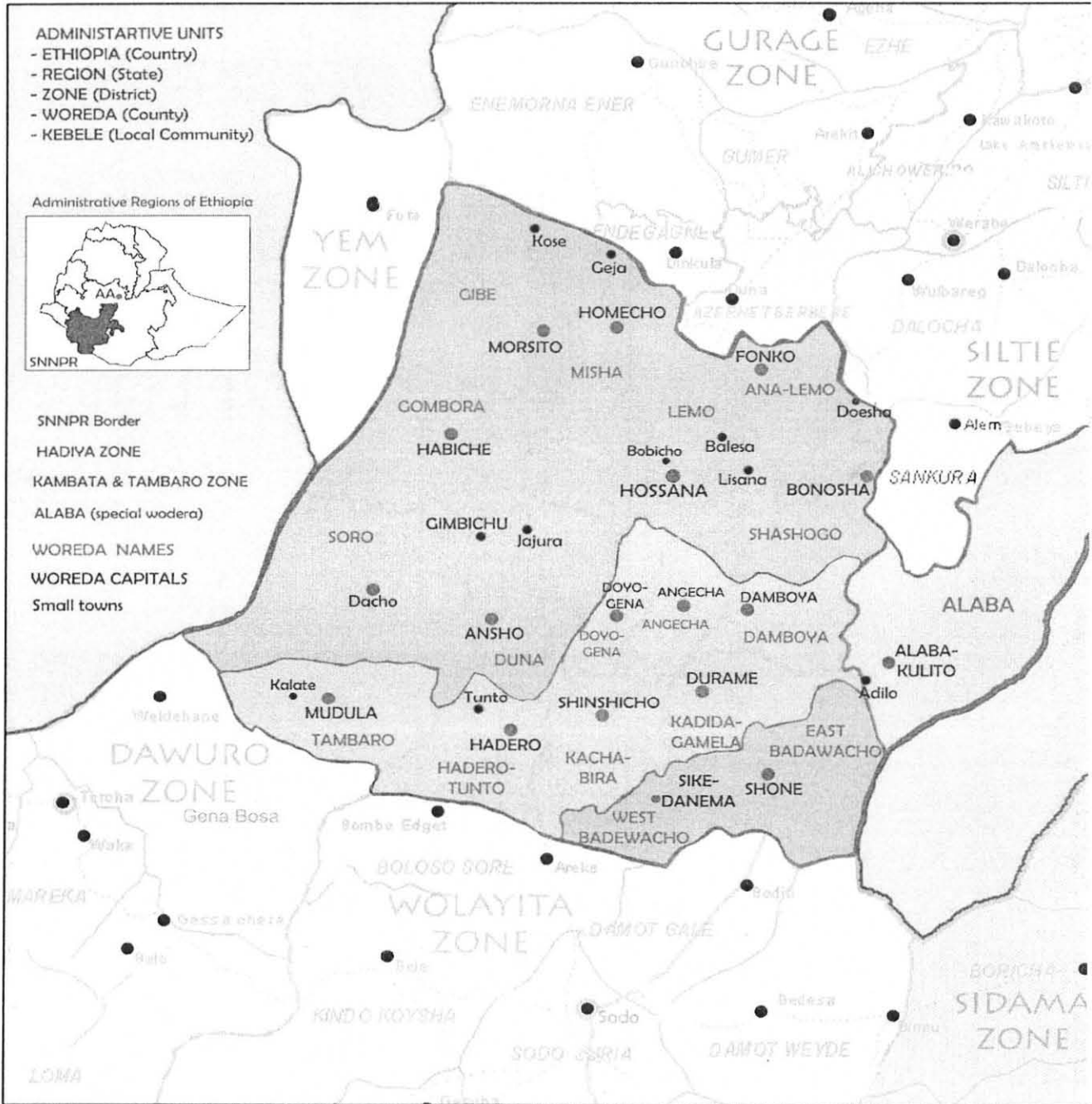
|    |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|----|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|    | home   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 15 | Female at early stage have equal support with male to learn at school by parents   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 16 | Most husbands share equal house hold responsibility with wives at home   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 17 | Wives have equal decision making power with husbands at home   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 18 | Most husbands allow wives to be active participant in politics especially to be organized in different political parties and expend time on it |  |  |  |  |  |
| 19 | Women are involved more in house hold activities than politics   |  |  |  |  |  |
| 20 | Mother expends more time to take care of children than father does   |  |  |  |  |  |

## **Interview for Female Civil Servants of Hadiya Zone Zonal Administration**

1. Do women attend in meeting and discuss community issues with males of locality? If your answer is no, why do you think?
2. Does your husband assist you at household activities like child care, cooking and so on? If not why?
3. Does the political system of FDRE create conducive political environment for women?
4. Do you think quota is necessary to modify the difficulty? How?
5. Do women in your locality equally represent their respective people compared with men? If no, what factors hinder them from?
6. Do women get equally engage in higher education with men (especially MA/Msc and above? If no what will be taken to improve the condition?

Appendix II

KAMBATA ZONE, HADIYA ZONE, AND ALABA WOREDA WITHIN SOUTHERN NATIONS, NATIONALITIES AND PEOPLES



This is an official map, customized for personal use only, and may contain errors. For questions and comments, contact: destasg@yal

Figure 2 the administrative map of Hadiya zone