

**Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Department of Public Management and Policy
Collage of Management, Informatics and Economics Science**

An Assessment of Challenges and Prospects of Local Level Council in Promoting Democracy

The Case of selected Woredas in Addis Ababa City Administration

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Prepared By:

Mesfin Abebaw

Submitted To:

Mulugeta Abebe (PhD)

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Addis Ababa University

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The Case Studies of Selected Woredas in Addis Ababa City Administration

Approved by Board of Examiners:

Mulugeta Abebe (PhD)

Advisor

Signature

Date

Examiner

Signature

Date

Examiner

Signature

Date

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Acronym

ADB	-----	Asia Development Bank
NGOs,	-----	Non Governmental Organizations
IDEA	-----	International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance
CBOs	-----	Community Based Organizations
UN	-----	United Nation
EU	-----	European Union
WB	-----	World Bank
UNDP	-----	Unite Nation Development Program
UCLG	-----	United City and Local Government
COGTA	-----	Cooperative Governance and traditional Affaires
CEFFD	-----	Conclusions of the Council of Europe Forum for the Future of Democracy
EPRDF	-----	Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front
KAS	-----	Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung
CPPS	-----	Centre for public Policy Studies

Abstract

Local government is the tier of public authority that citizens first look to solve their immediate social problems. Among all the public institutions at local level, council has a special status and authority as local elected bodies. They are uniquely placed to provide vision and leadership to their local communities. They are able to make things happen on the ground where it really matters.

The government of Ethiopia in general and Addis Ababa city administration in particular establishes council at different tiers of government as parliamentary control mechanism to ensure effective policy implementation, promote local democracy and improve service delivery.

However, woreda councils in Addis Ababa city administration were not seen playing such role of democracy promotion. Moreover, studies conducted in regional woredas divulged that Woredas council have not yet managed to exercise sufficient local autonomy due to several reasons such as absence of clearly established legal mandate, lack of devolution of power, poor organization of the system and tight control and intervention by higher authorities.

Therefore, this study aimed to assess the challenges and prospects that woreda council at Addis Ababa city administration has faced in promoting democracy among grass-root people. It also examines the overall operations of the councils from the viewpoints of democratic government and decentralization

In order to pursue the objective of the study the researcher use multi-stage sampling technique and relied on both primary and secondary data source. Primary data collected through questionnaires, interview and observations while secondary data obtained from document analysis like legislation on the issue, minutes and reports complied by counsel's office.

It was found that problems prevailed in regional woreda councils are also impeded woreda councils at Addis Ababa City Administration. The internal working system of woreda councils reflected that executive domination is very soaring, and councils are not responsive to the needs of the community and most importantly democratic essence viz. accountability, transparency, participation and autonomy are not adhered principles in the councils conduct. Therefore, councils as they are impeded by the above-mentioned challenges are playing insignificant role in cultivating democratic value and improving the service delivery to the grass root people.

Therefore, it is recommended that the internal working system of councils need to be very transparent, responsive, participatory and free from any unnecessary intervention. Councilors must be sensitive to public interest; legal back up from the city administration is also needed in order to make councils strong, autonomous and powerful. The field that councilors operating also should be open to all stakeholders as the democracy promotion works calls for the involvements of different actors.

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Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

In the last 20 years, and especially in the last decade, a far-reaching global publicwdded policy network has rapidly developed to promote local democracy worldwide. The democracy promotion policy network responded to, and helped shape, the unprecedented wave of democratization in the late 1980s and 1990s. The network of actors mobilized in support of democracy promotion includes the governments of major states and their aid agencies, international organizations, international financial institutions, multilateral donors, nongovernmental organizations with global program, region and country-specific NGOs, and philanthropic organizations (IDEA, 2008).

There is consensus in development circles today that promoting democracy at the local level holds the key to reducing poverty, improving service provision and successfully undertaking other initiatives that fall under the general rubric of development. However, while the emphasis used to be placed on electoral and representative democracy at the national level, increasing attention is now being directed at citizen participation and efficient, transparent and accountable systems at the local level following realization that previous interventions have not translated into much improvement in the livelihoods of ordinary citizens (Nsubuga, 2008).

Despite the fact that, scholars might have emphasized different aspects of it, there is a general consensus that democracy has some basic principles, namely: citizen participation (meaning choosing their leaders), equality, political tolerance, accountability, transparency, regular free and fair elections, control of the abuse of power, the separation of the powers of the executive, the legislature and the judiciary, accepting the result of elections, human rights, a multiparty system, and the rule of law (IDEA, 2008).

It is now generally agreed that decentralization and local governance offer greater promise in improving people's well being than the highly centralized approaches to development that were preferred by many governments in the past. To that end, a good deal of effort is being devoted to identifying the most effective ways in which power and resources can be used to generate optimum benefits for citizens, particularly those at the grassroots who happen to be most disadvantaged. Among other things, there is animated debate over how best to enhance

efficiency and effectiveness in service provision; how to promote transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs; how to facilitate popular participation in decision-making and implementation (Nsubuga, 2008).

Democracy is preferred to any other system of governance because of its adherence to rule of law, accountability, transparency, faire dealing and good administration. Installing democracy system at national and local level of government is inevitable to bring what is known as good governance, since the manifestations of democracy are also elements of good governance.

Rule of law, accountability, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, representation, responsiveness, participation constitutes the input geared to produce the cherished output – ‘Good Governance’, find its proper manifestations through the institutional mechanisms of representative legislature, responsive bureaucracy and committed executives. Thus democracy and good governance are systematically interrelated. Democracy and Good governance are two intermingled terms, if democracy can establish its objectives that it thrives for. Again without good governance, democracy would be hollow within or at least formal than real. Therefore, symbiotic relationship between democracy and good governance does always exist (Obaindullah, 2001).

Local democracy as discussed refers to a viable political and development process that allows for cross-fertilization of ideas, resources and decisions for good governance. Evidence of local democracy includes the presence of an active civil society, enabling legislation, a fair local electoral system, free access to information and an administrative structure that facilitates this process (UN-HABITATE, 2002).

Local government is the tier of public authority that citizens first look to solve their immediate social problems. It is also the level of democracy in which the citizen has the most effective opportunity to actively and directly participate in decisions made for all of society (IDEA, 2008).

Considering the importance of installing democracy at local level, the government of Ethiopia has been putting efforts tailored to promote local democracy in an attempt to maintain good governance usually through the system of local council directly elected by local people.

The government of Ethiopia in general and Addis Ababa city administration in particular establishes council at different tiers of government as parliamentary control mechanism to ensure good governance, promote local democracy and efficient & effective service delivery.

Ethiopia is a federal state consisting of the federal government, the regional level involves the nine "national regional states" as well as two "city administrations" (that is, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa). At local level *woreda* administration exist which are considered to be the key local units of elected government since they play key roles in prioritizing the provision of public services.

Similarly, *woredas* have existed as the lower tier of government or basic unit of administration in Addis Ababa city administration, and they were entrusted with a range of responsibilities over matters such as education, health, law and security within their jurisdiction. There exist councils at every *woredas* of Addis Ababa city administration meant to oversees the *woredas* overall service provisions and promoting democratic essence among grass root people.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the challenges and opportunities that *woreda* level councils have faced while discharging their role of promoting democracy at *woreda* administration.

1.2. Problem Statement

Since 1991, and the coming to power of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), the regime has been following a policy of regionalization in building democratic systems of governance. In 1992 nine ethnic-based regional state governments and two autonomous administrative areas were established with legislative, executive and judicial functions. Together these comprise the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE).

In FDRE, the government structure at regional, *zonal*, *woreda* and *kebele* level follows the same tripartite structure-an elected head of administration, a council with an executive committee, and a sector bureau (Yilmaz and Venugopal, 2008). In Ethiopia, local governments (mainly *Zone* and *Woreda*), there are councils; formed as part of the strategy to introduce local democracy, elected by direct election and universal suffrage and meant to oversee executive policy implementation, service delivery and hold the local bureaucracy accountable for its performance.

Addis Ababa City Administration, as part of FDRE is a chartered city having the necessary power, structure, duties and responsibility that an autonomous city demanded. The city charter specifies all organs of the city with their duties and responsibility along with their corresponding power. The Charter (Proc No, 361, 2003) establishes councils at City, Sub-City and *Woreda* level as parliamentary control mechanism to ensure good governance, democracy and efficient and effective service delivery.

The *woredas* council is the legislative branches of *woreda* administration and the highest political organ of *woredas*. Members of the *woredas* council are directly elected by the residents of the *woreda* and serves for five-year term and accountable to the people who elected them and to sub-city councils.

Nevertheless, it has been felt that *Woreda* councils have not yet managed to exercise sufficient local autonomy due to several reasons such as absence of clearly established legal mandate, lack of devolution of power, poor organization of the system and tight control and intervention by higher authorities (Yilmaz and Venugopal, 2008).

Moreover, the city charter failed to clearly disclose *woredas* council as independent and autonomous legislative organ of *woredas* administration and do not explicitly state the structure, power, duties and functions of councils as well.

For example, unlike the *Amhara* and *Tigray* regional constitution, the Addis Ababa city charter do not clearly stipulate the power, duties and function of *woredas* council rather Article 38(2) of the city charter states that the powers and functions of *woredas* council determined by law which the City Council shall issue. But the law supposed to be issued by the city council is not yet enacted and councils at *woreda* level working under customary without legal support.

Practical experience drawn reveals that *woredas* council does not have the power to issue directives that are compatible to the existing circumstance of their jurisdiction and pertinent to the needs and interests of the community. Rather every policy and decision issue is already decided by the higher authorities and pushed down to the *woredas* for the sake of blessing. Most of the time *woredas* council held discussion on the issue that are party concern and imposed by higher authorities even though they established to identify and respond the felt need and interests of the grass root people.

However, the prevalence of democracy at local level is essential for over all development and national democracy, it is the most overlooked and only rhetoric is divulged when we deeply observed local council system in Addis Ababa city *woredas* administration. Even though there exists elected councils that are supposed to be functioned as the highest principal organs at *woreda* level, the researcher observed that they are not active and functional to the level that they should have been.

Therefore, gaps has been identified in local council system as the mere existence of council is nothing for improving service delivery and serving national democracy base unless it should be active and functional with complete autonomy of power and democratic organization. So it is necessary to assess the practical circumstance of councils at Addis Ababa city *woreda's* and determine the root causes of the problems that cripple councils role in promoting democracy.

Hence, this study seeks to identify the challenges that *woreda* level councils have faced while attempting to promote democracy and perform their duties and responsibility.

1.3. Research Questions

On account of the above issue, the study addressed the following basic questions:

- Does the democracy practiced at the local level contribute to the democratization process?
- To what extent has decentralization been promoted and reflected at local level by the council?
- How has the absence of legal support affected the performance of the council in promoting democracy
- What are the challenges and prospects that the councils at *woreda* level have faced?

1.4. Research Objective

1.4.1. General Objective

The overriding objective of the study was to determine the role of local level councils in promoting democratic essence among grass root people and identify the challenges that *woreda* councils faced in the conduct of its business.

1.4.2. Specific Objective

- To describe the operations of the councils
- To identify the councils effort in improving the service delivery of *woredas*
- To disclose the challenges faced during the councils operation
- To check the councils activity against the stated principles of democracy
- To identify the promising endeavors of the council

1.5. Methodology of the Study

1.5.1. Research Designs

This study was conducted in selected *woredas of Kirkos* (01, 03, and 09 *woredas*) and *Yeka* (01, 05, 10 *woredas*) sub-city of Addis Ababa City Administration. It is both qualitative and quantitative research of descriptive and explanatory type that employed survey method to collect the necessary data. As the main objective of the study was to identify the councils role and challenges they faced, descriptive and explanatory research methods was found to be worth importance in describing and explaining the exact situation and problems that the councils at *woreda* level actually faces.

1.5.2. Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

The total population of this study was 116 *woredas* found in ten (10) sub-cities of Addis Ababa city Administration. The researcher clustered the sub-cities into two groups as inner-sub-city and partly border sub-city based on geographic location and socio-economic condition. The inner sub-cities cluster comprises of *kirkos, Arada, Addis Ketema, and Ledeta* sub-cities while *Bole,*

Kolfe-keranio, Gullele, Yeka Nifasilk-lafto and Akaki-Kality sub-cities are partly border sub-cities. The two clusters comprises of different number of *woredas* as a result, for the sake of traceability simple random sampling technique were used to select one sub-city from each cluster and from the two selected sub-city three *woredas* were taken as sample for the study, and purposive sampling technique was used to select *woredas* as well.

The rational for adopting purposive sampling technique lies due to the difference in socio-economic condition, population and geographical disparities observed among *woredas* of the city administration. It is also hoped that the good governance issue and development questions rose in the two clusters probably not similar. Moreover the researcher intended to select equal number of *woredas* from the two sub-cities. Therefore, through the use of purposive sampling, six (6) *woredas* of the two clusters was sampled for this study, i.e. three (3) *woredas* council from each clustered sub-city of Addis Ababa City Administration selected so as to analyze the council's conduct of business.

After, identifying six (6) *woredas*, the researcher purposively selects twenty-(20) *woreda* council's members from six (6) *woredas* for the purpose of administering questionnaire. Each *woreda* council constitutes three hundred (300) members, but only twenty (20) individual (council members) who regularly attained and seriously perform their duties and responsibility were purposively selected.

Therefore, twenty (20) council members from each six (6) *woredas* was sampled individual hence a total of one hundred twenty (120) council members were sampled for this study. Moreover observation and key informant interview were also held with purposively selected secretariats of standing committee, secretary and spokesperson of the councils, customers and workers of chairperson office.

However democracy promotion work demanded the involvement of state and non-state actors, non –state actors are totally discriminated from the field and the researcher forced to consider only the above respondent groups while highly devoting himself to triangulate the responses so as to maintain the validity and reliability of the data obtained.

1.5.3. Data Source and Data Type

The researcher identified *woreda* councils of *Kirkos* and *Yeka* Sub- City as the main data source and both primary and secondary data were used to make the analysis.

1.5.4. Data Collection Instrument

Data essential for this study gathered through the use of different instrument and the details of each techniques of data collection stated below. Primary data pertinent to the study collected through questionnaire, interview, key informant, observation, and secondary data were obtained through the analysis of published and unpublished document sources.

Primary Data

Questionnaire

The researcher designed questionnaire of both open and closed end so as to elicit data from the respondents. The questionnaire was prepared in both Amharic and English and administered on the convenience of respondents. Prior to the distribution of questionnaires the researcher contacted the chairperson of *woredas* councils in order to identify those members of the councils who regularly attained council meeting and properly discharge duties. So that, twenty (20) questionnaires in each sampled *woredas* were distributed to these members of the council.

Key informant Interview

Unstructured interview were held with different service users in the *woreda* in order to triangulate and determine the council's effort to be democratic; transparent, responsive, accountable in its conduct and in the process of improve service delivery. Key informant interview were held with chairpersons of sample *woreda* council. Again by the recommendation of chairpersons of the council's key informant interview were held with workers of chairperson office, selected members and secretariat of the standing committee. The recommendation of the chairperson demanded in order to identify those respondents who have sufficient knowledge about the issue under study.

Observation

Field observation as a tool to gather first hand information were done in six regular meeting and discussion time of councils and standing committee meeting too. In order to determine the councils overall operation and internal working procedure, observation was conducted during the council's report hearing session and meeting time and the standing committee as well.

Secondary Data

The secondary data more or less collected from published and unpublished documents, and magazines that were made available. Other books, reports and internet source were also be used in the process of data gathering. FDRE constitution, Addis Ababa city charter, minutes, and reports compiled by the spokesperson office and standing committee were also consulted.

1.5.5. Method of Data Analysis

The data are summarized and organized thematically. Data collected through questionnaires' were analyzed quantitatively using simple tables and percentages while data collected through Key Informants Interview was analyzed qualitatively based on descriptive analysis. Data obtained from secondary source were also analyzed using content analysis techniques.

1.6. Significance of the Study

Research studies are mainly conducted to solve practical societal problems and/or add valid knowledge to the existing ones. As the prevalence of good governance and local democracy is the key to development, the researcher hopes that the study helps to articulate the council role in ensuring and local democracy and the challenges they have faced as well. The empirical findings that the researcher may get from this study are significant due to the following reasons:

- The findings and workable recommendations there on are expected to have many help to the concerned authorities in the *woredas* in directing their attentions to the areas that require corrective measures and also may enable to indicate future direction in designing the system.
- This study may help to identify the major challenges and prospects of local democracy at *woredas* council of Addis Ababa City Administration.

- The research findings of this study would provide valuable information to information seekers regarding local level councils and their operation
- The output of this study will serve as a springboard for other interested researchers to undertake wider scope and in-depth analysis on the same or related issues.

1.7. Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is confined to describing *woreda*'s council activity and mainly focused on explaining the council's effort to ensure local democracy along with its element like accountability, transparency, responsiveness, participation. It was also limited to selected *woredas* of Addis Ababa City Administration and covers the time period of one term of the council's term of office. I.e. five years (5), (from 2009-2013.) Moreover, it is delineated to explaining the challenges that state actors faced in the process of democracy promotion work.

Nonetheless the democracy promotion work calls for the participation of state and non-state actors, non-state actors are not in place due to several reasons and the study hence, exclusively focus on state actor, the only actors practically exists in the context of *woreda* administration for the promotion of democratic governance.

1.8. Limitations of the Study

In conduct of this study, the researcher faces some constraints, which might be factors that contributed to the limitation of the study. This included poor collaboration from concerned people in some offices, reluctance and lack of interest to fill and return questionnaires on time, unwillingness to take interview, lack of time, and some of the financial constraints were major limitations of the study.

1.9. Organization of the Study

The paper structured in the following manner:

- The first chapter deals about the proposed strategy of the study;
- The second chapter present the literature review that assess the empirical and theoretical aspects of the issues ;
- The third Chapter deal with data analysis, presentation and interpretation of the collected data;
- Finally, a summary and conclusion provided in Chapter 4.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1. Introduction

This chapter deals with the review of related and relevant literatures in order to lay the theoretical framework of the study. The major areas the chapter treats include the general overview of local democracy, good governance, decentralization and local government. The chapter also highlights the empirical experience local democracy in selected countries around the world.

2.2 An overview of Local Governments and Local Democracy Issues

2.2.1. Basic Concepts about Local Government and Administration

The existence of local governments has always been defended on the basis that it is crucial aspects of the process of democratization and intensification of mass participation in the decision making process. No political system is considered complete and democratic if it does not have a system of local government (Mawhood, 1993).

Local government is the third level of government deliberately created to bring government to the grass-root population and gives the grass roots population a sense of involvement in the political process that controls their daily lives (Robson, 1937).

Local governments are established to give residents of their areas a say in the government and administration of local affairs and are vested with specific powers to enable them to make laws, which are not inconsistent with the legislation passed by parliament and higher legislature in the tier. They are usually headed by councils consisting of elected members. In other words local governments are intended to be democratic institutions which are responsive to real needs and the justifiable expectations of people. They are thus subject to public accountability and therefore, it is important to focus on local government democracy (Belinda, 2002).

Local government serves two-fold purposes. The first purpose is the administrative purpose of supplying goods and service; the other purpose is to represent and involve citizens in determining specific local public needs and how these local needs can be met. Local representative government is a process that spans and connects representation and administration at local level within local government structure (Belinda, 2002).

Local governments are created to render service in defined geographical areas, primarily because of the inability of central government to address in detail all the requirements of society that have to be satisfied by a government institution. The range of urban service provided by local authorities in developing countries, more particularly in Africa, are inter alia, parks, street cleaning, sanitation, refuse collection, road construction and maintenance, housing, water and sewerage, primary education, clinics, residential and industrial estates, planning and zoning, fire and ambulance service, camping sites and recreational service (Meyer, 1978).

2.2.2. The Concept and Principles of Local Democracy

Democracy and democratic reform are not limited to a specific level of governance or governmental administration. Practical experience has shown that government administration based on democratic principles and frameworks can only be achieved by addressing all related issues at all levels of governance, both individually and collectively. This starts from the local level (that of villages or cities or their equivalents), through intermediate levels if they exist (such as governorates, provinces, prefectures, districts or sub-districts), to the central or national level, in addition to other intermediary levels sometimes found in countries that have adopted a federal structure (Ayoub, 2010).

However, the essential thing is to adhere to the general principles of democracy and to determine how to organize relationships among the different levels so that each is given the powers and responsibilities it needs in order to contribute to the management of public affairs in an integrated and democratic manner (Ayoub, 2010).

Governance at the local level is the ‘school’ in which citizens first learn to practice democracy in its various forms. It is critical to assess the issues of democracy at the local level, as experience has shown that this level contributes significantly to achieving further progress towards the consolidation and promotion of democracy at the other levels of governance (IDEA, 2001:9).

Consequently, discussion of democratic reform almost always touches on the issue of decentralization and its importance for completing and sustaining the process of the construction of democracy. After all, how can people govern themselves if they lack the tools and frameworks that enable them to exercise direct and genuine control over matters that have a direct impact on their lives, needs and aspirations?

Ayoub (2010) noted two different schools of thought on local democracy. According to the first, ideal democracy entails involving citizens directly in all matters related to their society and country. According to the second, modern units of local administration are too large for direct participation in them to be feasible. Thus, the best, and only practical, form of democracy that we can aspire to is representative democracy, through which citizens choose their representatives who in turn adopt policies and decisions which are binding on all citizens.

In Ethiopia context it is hard to use direct democracy at *woreda* level since *woreda* is established on a geographical area in which 100,000 more people reside. Therefore it is the researcher's position to advocate representative democracy at *woreda* level but it should be backed by active public involvement so as to realize the public interest

Local governance is the level of democracy in which the citizen has the most effective opportunity to participate actively and directly in decisions made for all of society. A vigorous and effective local democracy is the underlying basis for a healthy and strong national-level democracy (Idea, 2008).

Ferreira and Roque, (2003) identified some basic concepts that to help clarify the comprehensive sense of local democracy in both its representative and its participatory aspects.

- ❖ Local governance is one of the foundations of citizenship, and community participation is the cornerstone of the idea of modern citizenship. Community based institutions and their decision-making processes open up for the increased practice of direct or participatory democracy (as opposed to representative democracy), allowing people's voices to be more easily heard at this level.
- ❖ The concept of democracy is not only about elections. It also involves an ongoing and sustainable process of dialogue and consultation. Meaningful dialogue and constructive deliberation are means to address and resolve the problems faced by the community. Fishkin (1991) argues that 'democratic choices cannot be fully exercised without public consultation'. The concept of public consultation should not be limited to listening to citizens' complaints. True participatory democracy is based on continuous and mutual dialogue among various groups and interests in society on the key decisions and important operational steps they encounter together.

- ❖ Many advocates of local participatory democracy believe that unleashing the collective wisdom and intelligence of the populace contributes to creating good and effective governance and promoting social welfare. Democracy tends to enhance good relations among citizens and build a self-managed society that displays a community spirit.

2.2.3 The Core Characteristics of a Good System of Local Administration

Stocker (2001) averred that three essential elements are needed for good local administration: a system of local administration should have a capacity for *openness*, *deliberation*, and *integrated action*. These are not the only relevant values but they deserve the highest priority; they are essential in the search for a new legitimacy for local administration.

Openness

In a democratic system the participation of all is not required; rather its defining characteristic is its *openness* to all. Many people prefer to spend their time on non-political activities. Some face social and economic constraints that limit their time for political activity. In this light the very ease of participation at the local level gives a particular value to local democracy. The crucial value for good governance is that the system is open, has low barriers to the expression of dissent, and limits the disadvantages of the poorly organized and resourced.

Deliberation

People are recognized as having the right and the opportunity to take part in local public life. Many of their interventions may be specific to the consumption of a particular service. Those interventions should be expected to be short-term, of low cost to the individual, and to bring forth a rapid response from the appropriate service organization. They are likely to deal with a matter of direct material interest to the person. Good local administration requires opportunities for *deliberation* in addition to the general quality of openness.

A Capacity to Act

Openness and deliberation are to be valued but they lose their luster in a system that lacks the capacity for effective action. Good local administration requires the *capacity to act*. Effective bureaucracy and professional expertise will continue to be central to good local governance. The management context may vary and the particular organizational forms may change but a large part of the daily work of government is going to be undertaken by full-time professionals,

administrators, and other employees. From the point of view of the citizen there are many advantages in letting these people get on with their complex variety of tasks. The issue is rather how to check the classic faults that emerging in all organizational systems of service delivery: insensitivity, rigidity, and lack of responsiveness. Many “customers” will be satisfied but mechanisms are necessary to allow those that are dissatisfied to make themselves known.

2.3 Local Government and Democracy

2.3.1. What is democracy?

The word *democracy* comes from the Greek words *demos* meaning: ‘people’, and *kratos*, meaning ‘power’. Accordingly, democracy is often defined as ‘the rule of the people’: a system of making rules determined by the people who are to obey those rules. In today’s world most people and most countries consider democracy to be the only valid and viable system of government.

Democracy could take several forms. For example, in direct democracy citizens personally participate in decision-making. The most widespread form of democracy, however, is liberal or representative democracy, in which citizens elect representatives who create laws and policies and appoint the government officials. In theory, representative democracy involves the free and fair election of a government by a majority vote of the people being represented. A liberal democracy is characterized by the rule of law, separation of powers, protection of human rights and protection of minorities. The rule of law is the principle that the government and judiciary function only in accordance with written rules. It is closely linked with the principle of separation of power, according to which the legislative (parliament), executive (government) and judiciary (courts) act independently of each other. (CEFFD, 2007)

Democratic governments can take several forms, including presidential (as in France, Romania or Russia) or parliamentary (as in the United Kingdom, Slovakia or Spain). Others, such as Germany, have federal governmental structures. Some voting systems are proportional while others are majoritarian. The common principles, however, are the equality of all citizens and the right of every individual to some degree of personal autonomy. (Stoker, 2001)

Democracies differ greatly in the degree to which they respect equality and allow their citizens to influence decisions. People who live in poverty may have a weaker voice. Women, who are less

present in the public arena, may have fewer opportunities to influence decisions, even those concerning women specifically. Some social groups, such as children and foreign workers, may not be allowed to vote. At the same most people believe that rules have been imposed on them by elected officials who do not represent their interests. (CEFFD, 2007)

Supporting the development of a culture of democracy at the local level that is open, transparent and inclusive directly benefits the strengthening of democracy for all. Locally elected authorities can act to promote and establish public municipal forums, task forces, committees and structures for residents and civil society and for the strengthening of a professional and responsive civil service within municipal administrations. (Baskin, 2004)

2.3.2. Democratic Local Government

Local governance refers to the institutions, influences, and processes that lead to the authoritative resolution of public decisions at the tier of government closest to the people. This definition of local governance implies that local government is the tier of public authority that citizens first look to solve their immediate social problems. Increasingly, in many instances, democratic governance involves publicly elected politicians, administrative officials, NGOs, and citizen-led community based organizations, all playing vital roles in managing the commons (Sisk, 2001).

It was realized that one of the main rationales for opting for decentralized system of governance is the need to create democratic system at local level. A democratic local government exists when it is participatory, accountable and responsive for local interests. In order to create such a democratic local government, therefore, local government should be constituted by elected official rather than by centrally appointed officials (Betham, 1996).

Democratic local government is rarely given the means - discretionary authority, technical support, equipment or finances - to represent or to engage local people in public affairs (Crook & Manor 1998; cited by Ribot 2003). Numerous cases illustrate how local government has been fettered in this manner while others show that central government or external actors have successfully - even if not wholeheartedly - promoted greater local representation (Chhatre 2008; Larson 2008; Lankina 2008; & Ito 2007; Grindle 2007 cited by Ribot, 2011).

Democratic local governance is autonomous levels of local government, vested with authority and resources that function in a democratic manner. That is, they are accountable and transparent, and involve citizens and the institutions of civil society in the decision-making process. Democratic local governance looks beyond local government administration and service delivery to institutions and structures that enable people to decide things and do things for themselves. It emphasizes the presence of mechanisms for fair political competition, transparency, and accountability, government processes that are open to the public, responsible to the public, and governed by the rule of law (Barnett & et al, 1997)

Holding periodical election of local authorities is a quintessential of democratic local governance. However it is not sufficient. A democratic system of local governance should also be participatory. Thus a system in which, the local people can take part in the decision making process of local governance system should be devised. As De Visser states there should be a mechanism for “an ongoing process of debate, dialogue and communication between the local government authority and the community” (Zemelak, 2008).

2.3.3. Challenges of Democracy at the Local Level

It has to be noted that while the principles and standards for a functioning democracy are the same at both national and local level, the challenges in ensuring their effective implementation and sustainability are different in many respects.

Democracy at the local level-the tier of governance to which citizens turn to meet their immediate needs-is a critical but underappreciated factor in the world’s new democracy. Since mid-1970s, the numbers of democracy worldwide has doubled, yet insufficient attention has been paid to the particular challenges of facilitating meaningful local elections, appraising the performance of local authorities, such as city councils and mayoral offices, and understanding the ways in which direct citizen participation is essential to the creation and maintenance of a high-quality, sustainable democratic political system (Baskin, 2004).

The incomplete nature of many democratic transitions in recent years, combined with the concern that democratic systems are not delivering socio-economic development efficiently and quickly, has led to a renewed sense of urgency to comprehend better how democracy at the local level contributes to improvements in governance (Baskin, 2004).

One facet of a healthy local democracy is the effectiveness of government and the leadership of elected officials. But a more fundamental aspect – and the more important one to funders – is the broader relationship between citizens and the institutions that provide services, make public decisions, and react to people's concerns (Leighninger, 2009).

One of the great challenges ahead for the building of effective local democracy is to furnish elected local authorities with sufficient and meaningful discretionary powers to enable them to represent their populations. Meaningful discretion in the hands of leaders will provide local populations with the motivation to engage as citizens. (Ribot, 2011)

Decentralization reforms have legislated for the creation of elected local governments across the developing world. But these democratic decentralizations are rarely implemented in the manner that is expected to add up to local democracy. –Hence, the benefits predicted by economists, political scientists, and management specialists as consequences of decentralization provide a palette of possibilities, not of realities” (Grindle, 2007 cited by Ribot).

There are, of course, good reasons for why it is difficult to establish local democratic authorities (Ribot, Agrawal & Larson 2006; Agrawal & Ribot 1999; Grindle 2007). There are now many elected local governments in place. But, they rarely hold the powers that would enable them to respond to local needs and aspirations. (Ribot, 2011)

Harriss, Stokke & Tornquist (2004) argued —.the test for democracy is not about the existence of formal democratic rights and institutions, but whether they have real meaning for people.” Such meaning in local democracy is contingent on whether democratic local institutions have anything to offer to local people. Mkandawire (1999 cited by Törnquist 2004) describes some African countries as ‘choice less democracies’ due to the ways in which their discretion is constrained in the global political economy. Local or sub national democracies are all-too-often like these choice less national democracies. Their meaningful discretion is constrained.

2.3.3.1. Challenges of Local Democracy in Africa

Despite these compelling reasons, most "experiments" in decentralization and local democratic governance suggest that African local democracy and governance has failed in virtually every place it has been tried (Olowu, 1990 cited by Wunsch, 1999)

Debate and discussion about effective local governance in Africa since independence has often hinged on these as alternative strategies. For example, the operating policy of most African states has reflected a bias toward deconcentration. Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania, Zambia and others have several times trumpeted "decentralization" revolutions. Overtime, however, it became clear that these were really only modest policies of deconcentration. Scholars, in contrast, have often argued instead that real improvement in local government performance (e.g., efficiency, energy, effectiveness, and local participation) could only be expected when devolution was pursued (Wunsch and Olowu, 1990).

Recently, a third factor has also been found to be important for effective local governance: a viable local political process. Dele Olowu and Wunsch, for example, found that substantial decentralization efforts in Nigeria during the later 1980s and early 1990s were weakened by the absence of viable local political processes to convey information to the public about government decisions, to organize publics to be attentive to government actions, to mobilize public opinion regarding local government, and to hold local officials accountable for their performance. The absence of attentive local publics and of close linkages between officials and citizens appeared to explain many of the problems found in local governmental performance in Nigeria (Olowu and Wunsch, 1995; Wunsch and Olowu, 1996).

Representative democracy in Africa poses some problems that have yet to be solved, such as: the role of political parties; women's political participation in electoral processes and in local elective office; the routine of many consecutive terms of office; and local participation of legitimate though non-elected entities (civil society, conspicuous traditional groups and so on). In other words, local democracy is not fully realized through the electoral process alone. There is increasing popular demand for greater inclusion in local decision-making, yet few countries have the appropriate institutions and mechanisms in place to ensure more effective participative democracy.(UCLG, 2007)

In spite of the progress made in the institutional and democratic components of decentralized governance, the real extent of decentralization has been limited by a number of persistent obstacles. Difficulties remain within the states concerning the transfer of financial resources needed to match the devolved responsibilities. Ensuring the availability of qualified human

resources at local level and improving access to local public services are also critical areas that require concerted action. . (UCLG, 2007)

In Africa, implementation of the decentralization process has rarely been properly planned. Many countries, especially south of the Sahara, have undertaken reforms in the field of organization of the state and public life, particularly by adopting decentralization policies. These countries have organized local elections, which have seen local authorities emerging as new public authority figures alongside the national authorities. In almost all these countries, this splitting of public authority has caused problems, as this major institutional change has not yet been reflected in the behavior of most national authorities. But in West and Central Africa, apart from Mali, Senegal and Burkina Faso, there is no real plan to implement decentralization, which seems to rest on policy announcements. And in North African countries the autonomy of local government is still restricted overall in relation to the central state. . (UCLG, 2007)

Yet, how exactly that “democratization” is to be achieved has been the great challenge of the past decade. There is far from consensus on that point. Drawing on Western models, multi-partyism, along with the interlinked institution of parliamentary democracy, has been a generally preferred medium. But, the experience of quite a few countries has revealed that those two institutions do not necessarily guarantee democratic governance. In other words, one-party rule could flourish beneath the façade of multi-party politics and a parliamentary system. (Zewdie, 2002).

2.3.3.2. Challenges of Local Democracy in Ethiopia

Some preliminary studies on Ethiopia’s decentralization experiment suggest that the wereda level of government does not exercise sufficient decision-making power and self-rule to act as an autonomous local government entity. Formally, the wereda level of administration is a legally recognized independent local government authority and has been given powers and functions guaranteed by the different regional constitutions. In practice, however, it does not exercise sufficient local autonomy on budgetary, economic and social affairs and is tightly controlled by zonal administrations in each region. Inadequate administrative and personnel capacity to carry out socio-economic functions and a poor revenue base are the main reasons for the continued dependence of the wereda on the central and regional governments. (Mehret, 2001)

As part of their administrative autonomy, local government need to have a minimum set of powers, and capacity to initiate regulatory legislation on critical issues affecting their jurisdiction. In administrative function such as enforcing regulatory decision and governing the procurement system, the laws are in place providing discretionary power to the local authorities but because of capacity constraints and party interference, de facto discretion does not exist. Local governments also seems to lack the power to control and manage their workforce as all hiring and firing have to go through zonal or regional offices.(Yilmaz and Venugopal, 2008)

At the local level as well, while the letter of the law is generally obeyed, the spirit of the law is mostly compromised. The separation of executive and legislature is blurred and all local government employees are beholden to the party administration. Women have reserved seat in woreda council but they lack voice when it comes to local planning and decision-making. While the kebele assemblies and mass association should act as mechanism of social accountability, in the current political system, they seem to function mostly as arms of central control at the local level. (Yilmaz and Venugopal, 2008)

A typical feature of wereda government is that it is top-down. Although formally elected, most wereda councilors and administrators have been able to secure their positions because of their membership of the ruling EPRDF. This has generated a great deal of upward accountability. This will not help the emergence of a democratic self-government system that is responsive to local demands and needs.(Mehret, 2001)

There was a considerable overlap in cadre and committee membership, and at higher levels, the border between government administrative structures and the party became increasingly blurred. For the layman, there was hardly any difference between party and government officials; both categories merged into one as representatives of the state or government (Aspen, 2000).

2.3.4. Local Democracy and Good Governance

There are many conceptual and operational overlaps between the democracy agenda and the governance agenda within the international development community. To a large extent, democracy and good governance are two complementary and interdependent concepts. Both look at the reform of political systems, institutional structures and governing processes in developing and transitional countries, the former from the political perspective and the later from an

economic perspective. Beyond traditional approaches to the modernization of public administration and public sector management, they address key aspects of the reform of the state, namely its capability and its legitimacy. They are concerned with reliability and predictability, openness and transparency, accountability, as well as efficiency and effectiveness of public policy (SANTISO, 2001).

The extent to which good governance has influenced the operations on the ground will likely affect its relevance. The current debate on democracy and good governance is certainly re-focusing the attention on the necessity to reform and modernize the state and strengthen democratic institutions to achieve sustainable development. (SANTISO, 2010)

Rule of law, accountability, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, participation constitutes the input geared to produce the cherished output – ‘Good Governance’, find its proper manifestations through the institutional mechanisms of representative legislature and [...] responsive bureaucracy and committed executives. Thus democracy and good governance are systematically interrelated. Democracy and Good governance are two intermingled terms, if democracy can establish its objectives that it thrives for. Again without good governance, democracy would be hollow within or at best formal than real. Therefore, symbiotic relationship between democracy and good governance does always exist (Obaindullah, 2001).

2.4. Local Government and Decentralization

Through the years people wanted to be involved more in decision-making processes that influenced their lives. To have the involvement needed there can be reforms at different levels. Decentralization is the reforms to do so.

There is no commonly accepted definition of decentralization. Nevertheless, almost all authors who attempted to define the concept often hold that decentralization involves, even if in varied forms, transferring responsibilities, powers, functions and resources from a centre to peripheral governmental institutions (kuzya, 2005).

The World Bank describes decentralization as the transfer of fiscal, political and administrative powers to sub national governments (Hadiz, 2004,). Another definition is that (Bergh, 2004), the

transfer of powers and resources to authorities representative of, and downwardly accountable to, local populations, and can be considered and institutionalized form of participatory development.

Decentralization refers to the principle that public decisions should be made, when possible, at the level of authority closest to the people. (Idea, 2008) Decentralization refers to the further devolution of power within various districts or urban arenas (Sisk, 2001).

Yet, decentralization is not meant to deprive the centre of all political powers (UNDP, 1998). There are certain areas of authorities which are appropriate to the national actors and other areas of authorities which are appropriate to sub national actors. –Both national and sub-national actors have a complementary role to play. However, their role needs to be –determined by analyzing the most effective ways and means of achieving a desired objective” (UNDP, 1998).

Bergh (2004) outlined the benefit of decentralization: the citizens are closer to the ones who represent them. Therefore it is easier to be in contact with each other and have interaction for example about policy matters. At a local level there can be more experimentation with different projects and there are better opportunities for participation at the local level.

According to Sisk, the perceived benefits of decentralization to democratizing countries are: *Political*, increasing the power of citizens and elected representatives; *Spatial*, diffusing population and economic activities geographically; *Administrative*, transferring responsibility for planning, management, revenue raising, and allocation from the central to field offices of central government, or to subordinate levels of government, or to other semi-autonomous institutions; and *Economic*, increasing the efficiency of governmental management of the economy through stimulation and regulation.

2.4.1. Forms of Decentralization

Decentralization takes various forms. The most known ones are de-concentration (also known as administrative decentralization), devolution (democratic decentralization) and delegation

De-concentration or Administrative Decentralization

De-concentration, also known as administrative decentralization, is the transfer of responsibilities, authorities and resources from a centre to local units of the centre. Through de-

concentration, powers and responsibilities are transferred to governmental institutions within the jurisdictional authority of the central government. Therefore, a local unit which enjoys de-concentrated power is ultimately answerable to the centre; even if it may have certain discretion. De-concentration may be either general or functional. General de-concentration takes place when a variety of tasks is de-concentrated to local level (Manor, 1999).

Delegation

Delegation refers to a situation where decision-making and administrative authority and responsibility for definite tasks are transferred from a centre to an autonomous sub-national unit. The central government defines the powers which are to be transferred. It also puts conditions under which the delegated powers are exercised. Moreover, the centre can take back the powers which are so transferred through delegation. Yet, the sub-national government is viewed as an autonomous entity. Hence, it is left with a wide range of discretion in the exercising of the powers and responsibilities transferred to it. The relationship of the central government and the sub-national government which is entrusted with delegated powers is characterized as a ‘principal-agent relationship’. Therefore, the central government bears the ultimate responsibility for the decisions of the local unit (Degefa, 2003 cited by Zemelak, 2008).

Devolution or Democratic Decentralization

Devolution refers to a situation where a local level government is constituted legally as a ‘separate governance body’ and that power and responsibilities are transferred to such unit on permanent basis. This form of decentralization is referred to as ‘genuine decentralization.’

Devolution implies the autonomy of the lower level unit. The lower level unit has distinct and legally recognized geographical boundaries and legal personality. The powers and responsibilities are transferred to it through constitutional or other similar legislative instruments. Hence, as De Visser states, the power so transferred will become an original power of the sub-national entity. As a result, the sub-national entities will not be accountable to the central government for its decisions (Zemelak, 2008).

The political dimension is especially critical for democratic decentralization because it reconstitutes the state in a democratic way. It provides a process at the local level through which

diverse interests can be heard and negotiated and resource allocation decisions can be made based on public discussions. Democratic local governance does not exist in a vacuum. Authorities beyond the local level must be persuaded or influenced to support the legitimization and empowerment of local governments. Genuine political power sharing is a key element often missing in the political dimension of decentralization (Barnett, Minis, and VanSant, 1997).

2.4.2. Fostering Dynamics and Articulated Local Democracy through Democratic Decentralization

In practice, designers of democratic decentralization are choosing 1) powers to transfer, 2) means by which to make those transfers, and 3) local institutions (ostensibly democratic local government) to receive powers. Each choice has an effect on the relation between higher and lower authorities and between those lower-scale recipient authorities and their constituents. In very few reforms are appropriate and sufficient discretionary powers transferred to local institutions that are not private or dependent on and accountable to higher-scale authorities. In most transfers to elected bodies, few powers of significance are transferred other than mandates - which are often underfunded. While the choice of powers to transfer and the means of transfer affect local empowerment (Ribot, 2010).

Under democratic decentralization reforms, the public justifications for the choices of local institutions vary widely. They include efficiency and equity arguments, democracy arguments, pro-poor agendas, virtues of civil society, superiority of community-based and/or indigenous systems, and advantages of direct participation. Lurking beside the public justifications are other interests such as donor pressure, fear of loss of power and authority, fiscal crises, political crises, maintaining privilege, or cultivating political constituencies. Understanding the rationale behind institutional choices can shed light on ways to influence decentralization policy processes. Understanding the effects of recognition helps to identify approaches most likely to foster dynamic and articulated local democracy (Ribot, 2010).

Democratic decentralization is the development of reciprocal relationships between central and local governments and between local governments and citizens. It addresses the power to develop and implement policy, the extension of democratic processes to lower levels of government, and measures to ensure that democracy is sustainable. Democratic decentralization

incorporates both decentralization (the relationship between the central government and local government) and democratic local governance (the relationship between local government and citizens). (Barnett, Minis, and VanSant, 1997)

2.5. Local Election and Local Councils/Parliaments

2.5.1. Local Election

The right to vote and hold those in office accountable at the ballot box is a necessary element of democracy. As such, local elections are a central element of democratic governance closest to the people. In local elections citizens can personally know the candidates, can offer direct knowledge and information on the issues, and can communicate with elected officials on a frequent basis. Local elections can have distinct advantages over national elections: as bellwethers of national political trends; as a first step towards a country's democratization process; or as a way to determine what matters most to voters. Without a system of local elections, the transition to democracy remains incomplete (IDEA 2001).

In many African countries today, local elections are contested with much more passion, precisely because they are perceived to have much more significance for the daily lives of citizens than national polls. Nigeria's first local government elections, held in March 2004, are a case in point. During the polling, some 50 people were killed in political clashes between rival factions. Ethnic and religious tensions were heightened, and there were widespread allegations of irregularities. The turnout was very low, in part due to voters' concerns about safety. (IRIN News, 30 March 2004.) Nonetheless, the holding of local elections in Nigeria was a milestone, as well as a step forward in the halting process of democratization in Africa's most populous state. In Nigeria and elsewhere, local elections are vital in so far as they provide a training ground for the next generation of national leaders (IDEA 2001).

For example once as he was the Secretary General of UN, Kofi Annan (2000) said:

Experience has demonstrated ... that local elections often provide the first direct link between a voter and an elected official. The performance of that individual will determine whether he or she is removed, re-elected or elected to higher office. This connection between elector and elected, and the accountability of those

elected at the local level, provides an important training ground for promoting democracy at the national level. In addition, the pool of locally elected and often younger officials may serve as an important source of the next generation of national politicians. (Kofi ANNAN, 2000)

In most African states today, the process of decentralization has been ineffective in establishing viable democratic local institutions and processes. More attention needs to be paid to the design, conduct and administration of local elections and to the functioning of locally elected councils. Most election observation missions focus on legislative and executive polls at the country level: there is no major resource centre that systematically tracks local elections around the world. Similarly, democracy promotion organizations need to concentrate more on the complexities of electoral system choice in cities where minorities are excluded from political life. Surely elections in cities with tens of millions of people deserve the focused attention of the international community. In the most conflict or corruption - prone arenas, therefore, international election observation and monitoring operations should be extended to the city level (IDEA, 2008).

2.5.2. Electoral systems

Beetham (2006) averred that there are numerous types of electoral system currently in operation, but the three most common types are:

1. The plurality or 'first past the post' system

Under this system electors vote for one candidate in single-member constituencies, and the candidate who wins the most votes is elected, whether or not he or she wins a majority of the votes cast. In some countries an alternative vote or second round ballot ensures that a candidate can only be elected by a majority of votes in each constituency.

2. The party-list system

Here political parties draw up lists of candidates in a ranking order for multi-member districts, which may be region- or nationwide. The number of candidates elected from each party list will be proportionate to the total votes cast for the respective parties in that district.

3. The mixed-member or additional-member system

Here electors have two votes, one for a constituency member elected under the plurality system, and one for a party list. The effect of the party-list component is to make the

overall balance between the parties in parliament more proportionate to their total vote; how proportionate will depend on the respective number of members elected under each system.

Of these systems, the plurality system can produce a parliament that is quite disproportionate as between the national votes for the respective parties, and thus one that is not truly representative of popular opinion in the country. A party-list system, on the other hand, is designed to produce a parliament that will broadly reflect the electorate's choices for the respective parties, and hence the spread of political opinion in the country.

2.5.3. The Who? What? When? and How? of Local Elections

The Who? of elections refers to the traditional distinction between individuals standing for office, or voting for political parties who have pre-selected candidates running on their ticket (for example, in a proportional representation system). The positions for which elections are held vary widely, but the actors in local elections often include: candidates standing alone or under the banner of a political party; the voters, who cast ballots; election officials, who ensure the procedural fairness of the vote including issues of security and honesty in vote counting; the press, which reports on the campaign and outcomes; political party volunteers and other civil society actors; and official and unofficial monitors.

The What? Of local elections refers to the institutional forum for which elections are held. These are often described in terms of executive positions – mayors, city administrators, ombudsmen, judges, law enforcement officers, and so on. And elections can occur for legislative functions – city councils, district councils, neighborhood committees, and the like.

The When? Elections for local office may be held coincidentally with national or provincial/state polls, or they may be held at other times. Issues related to *When?* include the periodicity of elections, the term of office, whether they are staggered around the country or held all at once, and the length of the election cycle (over one day or even several weeks).

The How? How voting occurs is a matter of electoral system choice. But other administrative aspects of elections impinge. Recent innovations and issues in the *How?* of voting include voting by mail, online voting, “queuing” (lining up publicly behind a sign for a candidate or party)

versus secret balloting (in which individual vote preferences are not made public), and the increasing use of referendums in some countries.

Source: (IDEA, 2001)

2.5.4. Evaluating Local Elections

The critical test for evaluating the efficacy of local elections is to examine whether the issues of immediate relevance to citizens are debated and tackled. The following questions can be used as a checklist to analyze the integrity of a given election:

Criteria	Description
Will of the people.	Do local elections indicate that the will of the people has been expressed and the authority of governance approved as legitimate?
Possibility of alternation(change in government)	Does the election allow for possibility of alternation in winning political coalitions, that is does the opposition party have a real chance of winning?
Confidence- building.	Does the election build confidence in the political system, namely that the leaders are exercising public power in pursuit of the common good?
Educated choices	Do the elections provide voters and candidates an opportunity to clearly define the issues and to make choices among solutions to community problems and options for seizing opportunities?
Level playing field	Is the playing field among the various candidates and parties a level one? That is, does any given candidate have an inherent advantage?
Voter participation	How important is voter turnout to the legitimacy of the results and the ability of elected officials to formulate and implement certain policies?
Mandate	Is the primary purpose of the election to generate adversarial, winner-take all choices among parties and candidates or are the elections designed to produce representatives of various elements of the voting population,

	leaving the resolution of contentious issues to subsequent bargaining among these officials?
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Source: Adopted from: (Sisk, 2001) with little own modification

2.5.5. Local Parliaments / Councils

The council is the main representative organ of local government. A council is an essential part of every unit of local representative government. The role of the council as a representative body varies with the evolution and mechanism of the process of local government in each country. The degree to which a local unit has a representative government depends largely on two factors. The one factor is the extent to which the membership of a council represents and is answerable to the public, and the other factor is the extent to which the council has the authority and power to define local policy objectives and to have these objectives implemented (Humes & Martin, 1969).

A unit of local representative government has one or more representative organs with some authority to govern. Almost invariably one of these organs is the council, which offers the opportunity to discuss and give advice on local issues, but also has the responsibility for making decisions authorizing or directing the local staff to perform tasks. The council makes decision by such acts as passing the budget, enacting ordinance and by-law and making or approving appointment (Humes & Martin, 1969). The council approves in any cases and amends proposal submitted to it, and generally may take the initiative in making proposals. A council with decisive authority may take decision regarding matters of overall policy objectives or of relatively more minor matters concerning the routine co-ordination of staff (Humes & Martin, 1969).

The number of members of local councils varies, in general, with the population of the unit of local government. The size of councils, however, is also closely interrelated to their role in local government structures. The largest or the smallness of the council affects its representative character, its effectiveness and the nature of its deliberations (Humes & Martin, 1969).

2.5.6. A framework for a democratic local parliament/council

In the light of the above discussion, Bethame (2006), able to set out the key characteristics of a democratic parliament. It is one which is:

- ❖ **Representative:** that is, socially and politically representative of the diversity of the people, and ensuring equal opportunities and protections for all its members;
- ❖ **Transparent:** that is, being open to the people through different media, and transparent in the conduct of its business;
- ❖ **Accessible:** this means involving the public, including the associations and movements of civil society, in the work of parliament;
- ❖ **Accountable:** this involves members of parliament being accountable to the electorate for their performance in office and integrity of conduct;
- ❖ **Effective:** this means the effective organization of business in accordance with these democratic values, and the performance of parliament's legislative and oversight functions in a manner that serves the needs of the whole population.

2.6. Local Democracy and Governance around the World: The Experience of Some Selected Countries

Malaysia

Malaysia has three levels of government: Central, State and Local. There are 146 local councils in Malaysia made up of city councils, municipal councils, district councils, and special authorities. Local government elections were suspended in the mid 1960s. The abolition of local government elections took place when the Local Government Act was passed in 1976(CPPS, 2008).

Local council elections were practiced in the past, but were however abolished in the 1960s. Today, local councilors are appointed by State governments without consultation with the Federal Government or the minister in charge of local government in this matter. Deputy Minister of Housing & Local Government Datuk Azizah Mohd Dun told Parliament that there was no plan of reintroducing local government elections as they had implications on costs, time and manpower, and might disrupt municipal services (CPPS, 2008).

Transparency International Malaysia Public Opinion Survey, 2001, found that municipal councils were seen as more corrupt than: the land office, judicial office, environment department, health department, police and road transport department. Only 13 cases or 5.4% of arrests for corruption in the public sector were local council officers (Anti-Corruption Agency). Few reports of specific allegations of corruption in local councils are mainly due to opaque processes of what actually takes place.

There are no local government elections held in Malaysia. They are appointed by State governments without needing consultation with Federal government. Local Government Act states councilors “shall be ...ordinarily resident in the local authority area, have wide experience in local government affairs or... have achieved distinction in any profession, commerce or industry or are capable of representing interests of their communities” but in practice councilors are members or supporters of the political parties in control of state governments. Some councilors have been reappointed for more than 20 years (CPPS, 2008).

England

England has since 1994 been subdivided into nine regions. One of these, London, has an elected Assembly and Mayor, but the others have a relatively minor role. Below the region level and excluding London, England has two different patterns of local government in use. In some areas there is a county council responsible for services such as education, waste management and strategic planning within a county, with several district councils responsible for services such as housing, waste collection and local planning. These councils are elected in separate elections. Some areas have only one level of local government, and these are dubbed unitary authorities.

Councils in England have historically had no split between executive and legislature. Functions are vested in the council itself, and then exercised usually by committees or subcommittees of the council. The post of leader was recognized, and leaders typically chair several important committees, but had no special authority. The chair of the council itself is an honorary position with no real power.

In 2000, Parliament passed the Local Government Act 2000 requiring councils to move to an executive-based system, either with the council leader and a cabinet acting as an executive

authority, or with a directly elected mayor — with either having a cabinet drawn from the councilors — or a mayor and council manager.

Councilors cannot do the work of the council themselves, and so are responsible for appointment and oversight of officers, who are delegated to perform most tasks. Local authorities nowadays have to appoint a 'Chief Executive Officer', with overall responsibility for council employees, and who operates in conjunction with department heads. The Chief Executive Officer position is weak compared to the council manager system seen in other counties.

Councils also have a general power to "promote economic, social and environmental well-being" of their area. However, like all public bodies, they are limited by the doctrine of ultra vires, and may only do things that common law or an Act of Parliament specifically or generally allows for — in contrast to the earlier incorporated municipal corporations which were treated as natural persons and could undertake whatever activities they wished to.

Source: Wikipedia (2010)

USA

Local government in the United States is structured in accordance with the laws of the various individual states, territories, and the District of Columbia. Typically each state has at least two separate tiers of local government: counties and municipalities. The local government system in the USA displays tremendous structural diversity, both across and within states. (Wikipedia, 2010)

Most cities have city councils. These are sometimes elected officials who meet for a portion of the year on designated days and hours. City councils propose and make laws for the city. Many resemble what is done in congresses or parliaments around the world, except they are for the local levels. Some smaller cities or towns do not operate under city councils. In many cases city councils pass bills that can get vetoed by the mayor and the city council can override the veto. Sometimes the mayor is even a member or presiding officer of the council. Members of the council usually are a part of committees for the city they represent (e.g., parks and recreation, finance, etc.) There is a president and a president pro tempore in city councils. Usually the

majority party (i.e., Democrat or Republican) has the president in their party. Each member is usually (in most cities) elected by the people of that city. The city is split into districts in which the councilman or councilwoman represents. On The first meeting of the session, the president is chosen. The president then chooses a president pro tempore among the other council members. (Wikipedia, 2010)

Local government powers in US are not enumerated in national constitutions, and are generally more circumscribed than those found in many other developed countries are. US local governments have considerable power and status and fewer constraints compared with counterparts in many developing countries that do have formal constitutional protections. American and Canadian local governments have considerable discretion in raising their own revenues, are not closely supervised by territorial representatives of higher-level government, hire employees locally rather than through a national civil service, and have an unusual degree of choice in determining the shape of their own institutions. (UCLG, 2007)

Expansion of local powers has been only one of several local government reforms. Along with enhanced local powers, legislation has articulated local responsibilities in greater detail, and has specified mechanisms for accountability in a variety of specific functional domains, such as local educational services, environmental regulation, and planning. (UCLG, 2007)

Participation in local elections is relatively low (an average turnout between 10-29% in USA, 31% to 49% in Canada). In Canada and the United States the overwhelming proportion of local elections are non partisan. Canadian candidates tend to be listed either as independents, or to be affiliated with local, rather than national parties. Electoral terms are short (three years in USA), elected offices often more numerous, direct democratic procedures like recall and referenda more widespread, and citizen commissions have long been a regular feature of local government.(Wikipedia, 2010)

Nigeria

For many years, from independence to date local government administration in Nigeria, have seen many structural and other changes. Because of long period of military rule in Nigeria, under the military regimes local government has been an extension of the state to the community. Local

government councils derive their legal existence from the state and, all their human and financial resources as well. Also they do not possess any independent discretionary authority apart from the state (Joseph, 1996). However, the current period of democratization gives some hopes for the local governments to become independent of the state and map their own agenda of political and economic development. Constitutionally, they have direct access to financial resources. They carried the burden of the provision of most of the basic social and infrastructure services, and basic health and educational services as well as agricultural extension. Accordingly, local government councils are expected to play a critical role in the democratization of their administrations and communities.

Unfortunately, in spite of appearance of party competition, democracy is far from being a reality in local government administrations in Nigeria. The most threatening problem is that local governments in Nigeria became “a cesspool of political and administrative corruption”. Indeed, it is logical to argue that local governments are to show to people the image of good governance by promoting accountability, but most of them are involved in a most crude form of corruption, which send to people a great hatred of the democracy (Olowu, 1996).

The local government is the closest tier of government to the people in Nigeria, yet the resident population in it is denied the benefits of its existence. The failure of the local governments in the area of service delivery has made the citizens to lose trust in government as an institution. In some areas, council officials are better known for the harassment of citizens than service delivery. Many Nigerians crave for change in the local government system as presently constituted in order to not only bring it in conformity with present day realities but also to make it live up to the expectations of the people who have been yearning for grassroots development. But this will however require many processes like constitutional amendments and inputs from the civil society (Yusif, 2008)

South Africa

South Africa government structure divided into four levels of administration: national, provincial, district, and municipal. There are currently 283 municipalities and the government divides them into three categories, A, B, and C. Category A encompasses the six largest cities.

Category B consists of all other inhabited areas. Category C municipalities have populations that are very small and widely scattered. (Hoffman, 2008)

When the ANC (Africa National Congress) took power in 1994, two of its most important priorities were to reduce economic inequality and increase political accountability (McDonald and Pape 2002 cited in Hoffman, 2008). To carry out these efforts at the local level, the ANC government allocated local governments important political and economic powers (RSA 1998, RSA 2004 cited by Hoffman, 2008).

Economically, the central government delegated to local governments the responsibility to provide almost all public services, with the exception of education and housing. The government attempted to create strong political accountability, and hence the incentive for local governments to provide these services, through direct elections for local councilors. (Hoffman, 2008)

The Local Government Transition Act (Act 209 of 1993) defined a three-stage process for the restructuring of local government. Elections were held for transitional local councils in 1995/96, 24 which allowed for some continuity of delivery until the second phase of local government reform were launched. The councils were established by Local Government Negotiating Forums comprising, on a fifty-fifty basis, former local authority personnel (mainly white) and new interest groups previously excluded from the apartheid structures (mainly black). While this did much to broaden the access, presence and influence of formerly disadvantaged groups, women were not well represented on the Local Government Negotiating Forums, which in turn were not well attuned to gender issues. (Beall, 2004)

The White Paper on Local Government announced a new vision for local democratic government, known as *developmental local government*. This means _local government committed to working with citizens and groups within the community to find sustainable ways to meet their social, economic and material needs and improve the quality of their lives(Cooperative Governance and traditional Affaires (COGTA) 2009)

India

In India, there is a system of local government that was in place since the fifties, called the panchayat system, in which block and district level council are responsible for the administration

of deliverance of public goods.(Chqttopadhyay and Duffo, 2001 cited by Avrtizer,2007). The Panchayata system was strongly reinforced by constitutional amendment number 73, approved in 19192, which established a general framework for the functioning of local democracy in India with a three tiers electoral system of participation with regular election (Matthew, 2000 cited by Avrtizer, 2007).

Indian central government justified decentralization with two main arguments: (i) the traditional argument that village councils, as nodal points of rural development, must be strengthened institutionally; and (ii) a new argument, emphasizing democratization as inclusion. Decentralization was supposed to –enlarge the funnel of representation” by creating a large number of new, local, elected positions; and by reserving a substantial number of seats for women (Gbaffou & Rewal, 1998).

Indian states enjoy significant powers and play a central role in development. But local elected governments – that is municipalities and Panchayats (rural governments) have few resources and very limited authority. Local democratic government in India is very week, even non-existent in many states (Heller, 2009).

2.7. Conclusion

In this part of the study the researcher tries to review conceptual and theoretical issues related with the topic under study. Theoretical issues related with local administration, democracy, good governance and decentralization were reviewed and empirical review of the experience local democracy in some selected countries also made.

Local government is the third level of government deliberately created to bring government to the grass-root population and gives the grass roots population a sense of involvement in the political process that controls their daily lives.

This level of government as they are close to the public need to be democratic and should promote good governance so as to satisfy the needs and interests of the people. Similar to other tiers of government local governments they have three organs viz legislative, executive and judiciary.

Local governments are established to give residents of their areas a say in the government and administration of local affairs and are vested with specific powers to enable them to make laws, which are not inconsistent with the legislation passed by parliament and higher legislature in the tier. They are usually headed by councils consisting of elected members. In other words local governments are intended to be democratic institutions which are responsive to real needs and the justifiable expectations of people. They are thus subject to public accountability and therefore, it is important to focus on local government democracy.

In this literature the researcher supports the idea that democracy and governance has symbiotic and complementary relationships. As Obaindullah (2001) argued that Rule of law, accountability, transparency, efficiency, effectiveness, representation, responsiveness, participation constitutes the input geared to produce the cherished output – ‘Good Governance’, find its proper manifestations through the institutional mechanisms of representative legislature, responsive bureaucracy and committed executives. Thus Democracy and Good governance are two intermingled terms, if democracy can establish its objectives that it thrives for. Again without good governance, democracy would be hollow within or at least formal than real

Ayoub (2010) noted two different schools of thought on local democracy. According to the first ideal democracy entails involving citizens directly in all matters related to their society and country. According to the second, modern units of local administration are too large for direct participation in them to be feasible. Thus, the best, and only practical, form of democracy that we can aspire to is representative democracy, through which citizens choose their representatives who in turn adopt policies and decisions which are binding on all citizens.

In Ethiopia context it is hard to use direct democracy at *woreda* level since *woreda* is established on a geographical area in which 100,000 more people reside. Therefore it is the researcher’s position to advocate representative democracy at *woreda* level but it should be backed by active public involvement so as to realize the public interest.

In order to promote democracy and good governance at local governments’ power and resources should be devolved to this level of government and this brings the idea of decentralization. It was realized that one of the main rationales for opting for decentralized system of governance is the need to create democratic system at local level. A democratic local government exists when it is

participatory, accountable and responsive for local interests. In order to create such a democratic local government, therefore, local government should be constituted by elected official rather than by centrally appointed officials (Bethams 1996).

Democratic local governance is autonomous levels of local government, vested with authority and resources that function in a democratic manner. That is, they are accountable and transparent, and involve citizens and the institutions of civil society in the decision-making process. Democratic local governance looks beyond local government administration and service delivery to institutions and structures that enable people to decide things and do things for them. It emphasizes the presence of mechanisms for fair political competition, transparency, and accountability, government processes that are open to the public, responsible to the public, and governed by the rule of law.

Therefore, it is based on the above theoretical framework that the researcher wants to assesses democratic public institution called local level councils found at *woreda* government of Addis Ababa City Administration. Using the above theoretical concepts as an underpinning the researcher aims to identify the challenges and prospects that the councils face in the process of promoting democracy and good governance

Chapter Three: Data Presentation and Analysis

3.1. Introduction

The findings of the study are discussed in this chapter. The chapter attempts to highlight and restate methodology of the study and overview of the councils operation followed by presentation of primary and secondary data along with their analysis and implications.

This is descriptive and explanatory study designed to look into the operation of *woreda* council in relation with local democracy principles. The study is aimed at explaining factors that challenged the activity of *woreda* councils in promoting democracy. It also seeks to identify the *woreda* council's activity in promoting democracy among local people and analyze their position against the stated principle of democracy.

Woreda's of Addis Ababa city administration taken as a focal point for this study, because of their strategic place in the current city structure and it is the only actors engaged in the democracy promotion work. *Woredas* in the city administration are the prime contact that citizens first consult for service and related issues and a viable for socio-economic development at the local level. *Woredas* in the city currently hold strategic position and are close to the public so that they need to be functional and alert to respond to the public demand.

The city administration has three tiers viz. centre, sub-city and *woredas*. Currently, a total of 10 sub-cities and 116 *woreda* found in the city administration. Most *woreda* and sub-city have similar structure but hardly any different in terms of socio economic conditions and geographic disparity.

Given this fact the researcher clusters the sub-cities into two groups: partly border sub-city and inner sub-city and randomly selected one sub-city from each cluster. Therefore, *Kirkos* sub-city from inner cluster and *Yeka* sub-city from partly border cluster were selected in order to further select sample *woredas*. Accordingly, *Woreda* 01, 03, 09 from *Kirkos* sub-city and *Woreda* 01, 05, 10 from *Yeka* sub-city were purposively selected on the bases of socio-economic and development condition.

After, identifying six (6) *woredas*, the researcher purposively selects twenty-(20) *woreda* council's members from six (6) *woredas* for the purpose of administering questionnaire. Each

woreda council constitutes three hundred (300) members, but only twenty (20) individual (council members) who regularly attended meetings and seriously perform their duties and responsibility were purposively selected. Therefore, twenty (20) council members from each six (6) *woredas* were sample individual hence a total of one hundred twenty (120) council members were sample for this study.

With the help of chairpersons of the sample *woreda* councils, the researcher identified the respondents and distributes 120 questionnaires to be filled. However, only 102 (85%) of respondent correctly filled and return the questionnaire.

In addition all chairpersons and secretariat of the council and selected members of the standing committee, staff of chairperson office and members of the community were also interviewed in order to get primary data.

To raise the quality of data obtained and triangulate the responses, field observation and analysis of the necessary document were also made. During the regular meeting of the council the researcher attended six (6) regular meeting in order to determine; how the meeting is conducted, agenda issues, and the overall conduct of the council. The city charter, election proclamation, reports, minutes and other necessary legislations were also consulted to examine the formal power, duties and responsibilities of *woreda* council.

3.2. An Overview of Woreda Council: Legal Status, Structure, Duties and Responsibilities

Since 1991, Ethiopia has been experimenting with decentralization program, which is aimed at devolving government power from the center to the regions as well as to the local level. The policy has created nine ethnic-based regional state governments and two autonomous administrative areas that comprise the Ethiopian federal structure (Mehret, 2001).

The decentralization process has taken place in two waves: the 1990s decentralization from the center to the regional states and the early 2000s *woreda* decentralization that devolved power to the district level. The regional decentralization of the 1990s featured stability and ethnic federalism as the central issues, while the *woreda* decentralization was directed more at the goals of development and democracy (USAD, 2010).

Addis Ababa city Administration as part of FDRE is a chartered city having the necessary power and duties to deliver basic municipal service to its residence. The revised charter of the city provide that the administrations of the city are structured at, city, sub city *woreda and kebele* level. This tier of government of Addis Ababa city administration further follows tripartite structure of an elected council, a cabinet and sector office. In 2009, the city council decided to shrink down the structure by abolishing *kebles* and merging them to form *woredas*. Therefore, currently the city administration contain three tiers of government viz city, sub-city and *woreda*.

The decision of city council/ statute also indicated that *woredas* are the lowest unite of the city government and performs duties and responsibilities formerly carried out by *kebeles* and all the power and function mentioned in the charter concerning to *Kebeles* are applicable to *woredas*.

The *wereda* is a multi-purpose local government unit in the current state structure in Ethiopia. Although not mentioned in the federal constitution, it is recognized by all regional constitutions and has been given elaborate powers and responsibilities. As an autonomous self-governing unit, *woredas* has an elected council, executive committee and administrative structure (Mehiret, 2001).

Formally, this level of government can prepare and approve its own budget, prepare and implement economic and social development projects, set up and manage public services and exercise democratic decision making at the local level. In addition, *woredas* has an independent court structure and has been given the authority to mobilize the people for participatory governance and development (Mehiret, 2001).

Among the principal organs of *woreda* administration this research focuses on the elected council and below issues concerning to *woreda* councils are presented in an elaborated manner.

The power and function of elected councils at city and sub-city level are clearly stipulate in the city charter (Art 13, and Art 32 respectively), but the power and responsibilities of *woreda* council do not indicated in the charter rather Art 30 sub-art 2 ambiguously averred that the power and function of *Kebeles* (Current *Woredas*) shall be determined by the law to be issued by the City Council.

Yet, from the period of carter revision (2003) until now there is no legislative act by the city council that gives power and function for *woreda* councils. All interviewed *woreda* council chairperson indicates that there is no law that clearly determine *woreda* councils function and power and this seriously affect their business while making a loophole and exposing the council to the domination of *woreda* executives. This lack of legal backup creates some gape in the conduct of the councils business, as they are not clear of their authority and responsibilities.

Due to the absence of clear guideline from the top, *woreda* council's way of doing things is not in well-organized manner and much is not known about their duties and responsibility. In the interview held with chairpersons of sample *woreda* council the researcher realizes that councils are not clear about what they are supposed to do but they just engaged on some activities which are by default /custom given to council or they follow similar pattern with the city council.

Even though there is no legal reference/backup, all interviewed respondent indicate that *Woreda* council is the highest political organ of *woreda* level administration in Addis Ababa city administration. Members of the *woreda* councils in the city are directly elected by the residents of *woreda* to serve for a five years term. It has dual accountability: upward to its sub-city and downward to its electorate.

A *woreda* council has speaker and deputy speaker who convene and preside over its proceedings. The council meets once in every three months. However, the speaker may call an extra-ordinary session anytime when the council is not due to undertake its regular meeting. Although it is not mentioned in the charter, the chairpersons mentioned that *woredas* council has the power and duty to plan and implement its own programs, implement the policies and laws of the federal government and city administration, approval of budget and work plan of *woreda* administration, approval of appointment, ensuring laws and regulation are implemented, monitoring and follow up the sector office of *woreda* administration, mobilizing the community for development and hearing the complain of citizens about the service delivery and taking the appropriate measures.

Currently *woreda* councils in Addis Ababa city administration have total members of 300 elected representatives. All members belong to the ruling party, and chairperson, and secretariat of the council selected from members. Most of the duties of council carried out through the

establishment of standing committee that selected from member of the council and meant to oversee the sectoral office service delivery.

The function of chairperson is to promote and maintain orderly discussions within the council. The chairperson is responsible for order and his/her unique position of being the focus of all members in the course of a council meeting provide him/her with ample opportunities for guiding the discussions. The chairperson has some unique opportunity to influence council's decision by virtue of his/her participation in the developing of agenda for the council session.

The chairperson developing the agenda for discussion in co-operation with the secretary or clerk. The chairperson is expected to exercise an impartial role though he/she is member of the ruling party. The secretariat of council has the task of recording the minutes, keeping the records and usually the actual preparation of the agenda. Chairperson, secretary, and clerk who are working in the chairperson office of *woreda* administration are full time paid individuals.

The standing committees are established to oversee and closely monitor the service delivery of sector office and for each sector office there is a standing committee. Members of the standing committee selected on the bases of education, willingness, experience and skill that correspond to the skill needed to investigate a particular office work. Most committees specialized in a matter dealing with one particular issue. For example committee members usually assigned to oversee the health office should come across from health field but given to the low educational status of councilors this is practically not feasible.

The size of the committee varies from *woreda* to *woreda* but often contains an average member of 12-15 individual. The committee has chairperson and secretary who facilitate its activity and organize timetable and discussion. In connection with this arrangement there are groups literally called "*Budine*" whose members recruited from the council based on highly affiliation to the ruling party. Those highly affiliated individual has categorized in a group by the chairperson and authorized to recruit grass root people for party membership. The duties of "*budine*" are mainly related with executing the political will of the party and only political activities are being carried out by them. "*Budins*" are well financed and stronger than the standing committee is. This indicates that more emphasis is given for political issues of local levels while service provision monitoring by the standing committee, and strengthening the council has been overlooked.

The researcher also forward questions about the election process of councilors to the chairperson and the necessary documents were also consulted so as to compare and contrast the local election process with the national election. Hence the following paragraphs outlines election and related issues of local council.

According to Art 8 of the city charter, election process of local councilors are similar to the national election law of the country. Elections for the councils at any level of the City Government shall be conducted in accordance with the Electoral law of the country (Art 8).

Woreda people votes for two type of candidates; independent candidates who are not affiliated to a party and individuals affiliated to the party. The electoral system is ‘first past the post’ system where the winning party takes all the council seats allocated through the election. The oppositions party have demanded a change in the constitution allowing for proportional representation but the prime minister has not accepted this proposition (Yilmaz and Venugopal 2008: 9)

The electoral system of local council is skewed against opposition’s party members in a number of ways. Firstly, members of the National Election Board (NEB), which organize the *woreda* election, are nominated by the prime minister and approved by the parliament dominated by the ruling party. Thus their impartiality is questionable. Secondly, even if an opposition party were to win sufficient seats to win the local election, the federal government can ensure that they remain powerless (Yilmaz and Venugopal 2008). For example, in *Shako Majangier woreda* the opposition *Shkko Majanjare* Democratic Unity Party won the election of 2000. But the regional government controlled by the ruling party allocated minimum resources to the *woreda* and it was made to face extreme budget allocation problem throughout its tenure (Edjeta, 2008).

Given to the above facts the election system of local councils is not faire and oppositions party do not have real chance of winning. Democracy principle states that faire, and a free election is mandatory for democracy exist but the election system of local level councils fares from this principle. Therefore, under such circumstance local councilor who are expected to: treat communities with impartiality, instill democracy to local people, oversee executive policy implementation and service delivery become office with unclear objectives and duties.

In the next section of this study the researcher deeply analyzed councilors response concerning to their activity and role in promoting democracy and good governance. Moreover, the researcher tries to present the responses of the respondents in an argumentative manner by triangulating responses from different sources and perspectives.

3.3. General Characteristics of the Respondent

In this part of the study, the researcher presents personal information of respondents and the necessary meaning and implication of their response were also made. Therefore, from the perspectives of democratic value of representation necessary analysis in-terms of gender and age were given below.

Table 1: Personal information of Respondents

No	Item		Sub -Cities				Total	
			Kirkos		Yeka		Freq	%
			Freq	%	Fre q	%		
			50	49	52	51	102	100
1	Sex of the Respondents	A. Male	33	32.3	25	24.5	58	56.8
		B. Female	17	16.7	27	26.5	44	43.2
2	Age of the Respondent	A. 25-35	5	4.9	3	2.9	8	7.8
		B. 36-45	10	9.8	11	10.7	21	20.5
		C. 46-50	9	9	19	18.6	28	27.4
		D. 51-55	23	22	16	15.6	39	38.2
		E. 56 and above	3	4	3	2.9	6	5.8
3	Educational status	A. Read & write	22	22	19	18.6	41	40.1
		B. 10 th /12 th complete	2	2	11	10.7	13	12.7
		C. College diploma	20	20	13	12.7	33	32.3
		D. TVT	-	-	-	-	-	-
		E. Degree	5	5	7	6.8	12	11.7
		F. MA and Above	1	1	-	-	1	0.9
4	Political part respondents belong	A. Ruling party	50	49	52	51	102	100
		B. Oppositions						
		C. Self/ private						

Source: Own Survey (2013)

As it is depicted in the table above, the sex composition of the respondent reflected that 56.8% (32.3% from kirkos and 24.5% from yeka) of the total respondent were male and the remaining 43.2% (16.7% from kirkos and 26.5% from yeka) were female respondent. This composition of gender implies that male councilors are actively involved in the council business as the sample selection is done based on active involvement. When we look at the general profile of all councilors in the sample *woreda*, female representation is low and their active involvement as well (See Annex B)

With regard to age composition, young respondents with the age range 25-35 constitute 7.8% of the total respondent. While majority of the sample respondent were adult that fall under the age range of 35-45 constitute 20.5% of the respondent, age range of 46-50 holds 27.4% and age ranged 51-50 accounts 38.2% of the total respondents. Hence young people are not actively involved in the council's activity.

Similarly the researcher reviewed personal record of all councilors in sample *woredas* and identified that majority of councilors are between the age group of 41- 50 and above. But young people who are expected to be the future leaders of the system are underrepresented and it is more likely that issues concerning to the youth might not be well entertained in the council operation since youths did not have sufficient seats. In terms of enabling future leader and politicians, and creating learning environment, much has not been done as the youth are still underrepresented in the political and social arena that the council is meant to deal with.

Item 3 of table 1 shows the educational profile of respondents. Accordingly 40.1% of the total respondents who are able to only read and write (primary education background) constitute the majority. 12.7% and 32.2 % of the total respondents are 10th/12th complete and diploma holders respectively. First-degree holder and above are rare, i.e. 11.7% and 0.9 % respectively.

In general the overall educational status of councilors in the sample *woreda* is meager since majority of councilors are elementary education status (See Annex B). Moreover in the document analysis it is found that limited number of councilors are also illiterate who could not read and write. But the duties and responsibilities of councilors demanded well aware, qualified and educated councilors who are able to oversee the service delivery process, review budget of *woredas*, and amplify the needs & interests of communities. With this given educational status it

is not viable to imagine that councilors successfully accomplish their assigned duties unless they equipped with the necessary knowledge of governance, budget and public service delivery.

In item 4 of table 1 respondents were also asked to which party they belong and, 100% of the total respondents replied that they belongs to the ruling party and there is no oppositions party and private candidate as well in the sample *woreda*.

A document review also confirmed the fact that there are no opposition parties and private candidates' councilor though the country officially declared the multi party politics and democratization. As it was learnt from interview held with chairpersons, there was no opposition part presented for election contest by the time and the ruling party single-handedly competes and wins the race. It is also reflected in various study, reports and media that the opposition put certain condition so as to make the election track faire but the ruling party narrow down the space thereby forcing opposition to egress the race.

The local councils system should serve the purpose of aiding good governance process & training ground for democracy. Therefore it is necessary to have diversity of ideas, alterative policies, debate etc that can happen if and only if opposition parties are in the council, thereby democracy flourished and realized.

It is also not exaggeration that every council at different tires of government in the entire country does not have a place for opposition's party. This phenomenon extends the democratization building process and cripples multi-party system which is the corner stone of democracy thrive.

N.b. See the annex B for the clear understanding of councilor's personal profile

3.4. Importance of Local Level Council System to Local Administration

The inevitability of the local level council should not been questioned given that, ideally it furnished all the way to democracy, good governance and maximum benefit of the society. But all these virtue realized when all the stakeholders are conscious of it and strive for implementation. Accordingly in the following table respondents were asked few questions that can disclose the above issues.

As it is clearly indicated in item 1 of table 2, 51-80% of the councilors attended regular meetings of the council as replied by 62.7% (38% from Kirkos and 25.5 from Yeka) of total respondents. But 21.5% of the total respondent (6.8% from Kirkos and 14.7 from Yeka) replied that less than 50% of the total councilors attend regular meeting and discussion of the council.

Table 2: Importance of Local Council Set up System

No	Item		Sub -Cities				Total	
			Kirkos		Yeka		Freq	%
			Freq	%	Freq	%		
			50	49	52	51	102	100
1	Are council's regular meeting well attended by councilors?	A. 50% and less attended	7	7	15	14.7	22	21.5
		B. 51%-80% attended	38	38	26	25.5	64	62.7
		C. 81%-100% attended	5	5	3	2.9	8	7.8
		D. Don't know	-	-	8	7.8	8	7.8
2	Do you believe that local level council system set up in necessary?	A. Yes	45	44.1	50	49	95	93.1
		B. No	-	-	-	-	-	-
		C. Don't know	5	5.9	2	1.9	7	6.9

Source: Own Survey (2013)

These respondents rationalize that the low attendance level of councilors is due to the meeting place and time as meeting are usually held on Sunday, a day that for most social, religious and related practice carried out and make councilors often busy. In addition the meeting avenue also not reachable for most councilor as there is long distance from there domiciles.

7.8% of the total respondents responded that 81-100% of councilors well attended the regular council meeting and the rest 7.8% of the respondents did not know the attendance status of councilor.

In any parliament/council conduct, the attendance level should be 50%+ 1 since majority members supposed to be presented to launch discussion and passed decision. This code of conduct is acceptable for any form of councils. The document analysis by the researcher confirmed that 50- 80 % of the councilor well attended the regular meeting however in some

instance especially in *wereda* 10 & 05 of Yeka sub-city, meeting were held and decision passed in situation where the attendance level is below 50%. However, this phenomenon violates the democratic principle of majority rule and the code of conducts of parliament not adhered. Therefore, in the conduct of its business councils need to be reverential of democratic principle and code of conducts that are acceptable to any parliamentary procedure.

Item 2 of table 2 also depicted that, 93.1 % (44.1 from kirkos and 49% from yeka) of the total respondents replied that the system is very necessary and essential. But the remaining 6.9% (5.9% from kirkos and 1.9 from yeka) do not know whether the local council system is necessary.

The respondent and interviewed individuals further averred that, it is no doubt that the system is very necessary and when they justify their answer they replied that if it is correctly made ground the system is very important to solve community problem as there is no government institution close to the public like the council at *woreda* level. The interviewee also rationalize that the system is good mechanism to teach democracy-building process at local level, helps the community to have a sense of part of government, introduced government policies & programs and it is a training ground for future political leadership as well.

Nevertheless, what the entire respondent justify is the ideal virtue of local democracy while the existing reality at *woreda* level reveals that council practically do not provide the intended benefit to the local people. Therefore, it can be deduced that councilors and workers of the council office have better understanding of the system and its ideal benefit even though they had never been offered to training program that can boost up their awareness.

3.5. The Councils Effort in Promoting and Securing Public Interest

The idea of installing democracy at local level is with the intention to address the needs, interests and problems of local people by closely interacting with people who really face the problem. Democratically organized Council at local levels is meant to serve as a bridge between the public and bureaucracy through a mechanism of amplifying the community interests and taking back the executives response to the local community. The following table shows the councils response towards the community problem and the benefit they perceive.

Table 3: The councils and public interests

No	Item	Sub -Cities				Total	
		Kirkos		Yeka		Freq %	
		Freq	%	Freq	%		
		50	49	52	51	102	100
1	Do you perceive any benefit from being a councilor?	A. Yes B. No	15 35	14.7 34.3	28 24	27.4 23.6	43 42.1 59 57.9
2.	If your answer is yes of Q. 1, what kind of benefit do you perceive?	A. Financial B. Material C. Psychological D. Knowledge	- - 10 5	- - 9.8 4.9	- - 28 -	- - 27.4 -	- - 38 88 5 12
3	Do you believe that councils at woreda level effectively addressing community problem?	A. Yes B. No C. Don't know	22 28 -	21.56 27.44 -	25 27 -	24.5 26.5 -	47 46 55 53.9 -
4	Have you ever raised your community problem in the council's meeting & discussion?	A. Yes B. No	27 23	26.46 22.54	33 19	32.4 18.6	60 58.8 42 41.2
5.	If your answer is yes for Q 4, what was the council's response to your questions?	A. The problem get resolved B. The council give me promising response C. The council doesn't give attention D. Other	15 6 6	24.9 9.9 10	13 8 12	21.7 13.3 20	28 46.6 14 23.3 18 30
6	If your answer is no for Q 4, why didn't you raise such issues? A. There is no problem in the community that I represented B. I couldn't recognize the problem of my community C. I didn't have time to consult the community to identify common problem D. I know that the council will not give me positive response whether I raise community problem		- - 13 10	- - 30.9 23.8	- - 11 8	- - 26.1 19.1	- - 24 57.1 18 42.9

Source: Own Survey,(2013)

Item 1 of table 3 below divulges that, 57.9 % of the total respondent (34.3% from Kirkos and 23.6 % from Yeka) did not perceive any kind of benefit from being members of the council. While the remaining 42.1% of the total respondents (14.7% from Kirkos and 27.4 from Yeka) responded that they perceive some kind of benefit from being councilor.

The sample respondents who are getting benefit were also asked to specify the kind of benefit they have got. Accordingly 88% of the respondents who said ~~yes~~ are getting psychological benefit. The rest 12% are getting a kind of benefit related with acquiring knowledge of governance, democracy, public interest and government. The psychological benefit that 88% of the respondent earns includes a change in status that society attached to them, a sense of serving the public and sense of importance.

In the interview held with members of the community it was learned that some of the community members do not know even the existence of the council and they do not know that the council is meant to serve them. Given to this circumstance, it is difficult to look for psychological benefit from the society wherein people have law attitude towards the council and their importance. Moreover most community members do not have confidence over the council ever since as they do not get any promise fulfilled made by the council.

Another interview was also held with selected members of the standing committee, chairperson, and chairperson office workers. And the interviewed individuals confirmed that there is no financial and material benefit forwarded to councilors.

The duties and responsibility of councilors demanded hard commitment and perseverance but without benefit offered, they could not be motivated and strives to the discharge of their duty. As there is no benefit that the councilor enjoyed, they will not be motivated to serve the public since it is natural that people get awake when they perceive some kind of benefit.

Item 3 of table 3 indicates that 46.1 % of the total respondents (21.56% from Kirkos and 24.5 from Yeka) answered that the council at *woreda* level are effectively addressing community problem. However, the rest majority 53.9% (27.44 % from Kirkos and 26.5 from Yeka) replied that the councils are not effective in addressing community problems.

During the observation in the council's regular meeting, the researcher identified councilors

complaining about the unresolved problems presented to the house. Few councilors was talking about sever problems resides in their *woredas* that are not yet get resolved. For example problems like garbage collection, water supply, power, security, road maintenance, illegal settlement, drainage, public toilet were frequently mentioned.

In analyzing the minutes and recorded document, it is also found that majority of the issue brought to the *woredas* executive that seeks solution were not effectively dealt with and resolved though strong claim is made by few councilors. Surprisingly enough council has not been made any measure on the executives for their failure to address community questions.

With this regard it is faire to say that councils are putting efforts to effectively resolve community problems but they are failed to hold the administration accountable for its failure to address community questions.

Table 3 item 4 shows that majority of the respondent 58.8% (26.46 % from Kirkos and 32.4 from Yeka) amplify their community problem during the council's meeting. As the very essence of local democracy is presenting community need to the concerned body, councilors are presenting their community problem and needs to the *woreda* executives.

During the observation the researcher saw councilors' amplifying their community problem and the way they did it is not systematic rather like *_hear say_* manner. As it is also observed, the way councilors bring community problem to the house is not in a manner that the problem is clearly identified, articulated and its severity is not also well mentioned. The rest 41.2% (22.54 % from Kirkos and 18.6% from Yeka) did not present the problems of the community that they represent, to the regular meeting of councils.

In item 5 of table 3, a question was forwarded to those respondents who have been presenting their community problem, about the status of the issue they raised. Accordingly 46.6% of the total respondent (24.4from Kirkos and 21.7 from Yeka) responded that the community problem they raised have got resolved with the help of the council. The council has also give a promising response to 23.3% (9.9% from Kirkos and 13.3 from Yeka) of the respondents who has raised their community question as well. The remaining 30% (10 % from Kirkos and 20 % from Yeka) replied that the council after all did not give attention to the question they have raised.

Despite the fact that the very reason for the existence of the council is to alleviate community problem and serve as bridge between the community and *woreda* executives, substantial amount of community problem raised remain unresolved or unrealizable promise is given to the community. The researcher as well observed that councilors repeatedly raising the problem that are not yet solved.

Item 6 of table 3 shows the rational for councilors for their failure to raise community question in the council regular meeting. Among those respondents who said “no” for question item 4, 57.1% (30.9% from Kirkos and 26.1 from Yeka) justify that their failure to raise community problem is due to lack of time to consult the community to identify common problem. The remaining 42.9% (23.8 from Kirkos and 19.1 from Yeka) replied that during their term in office they do not seen a problem resolved and positively deal by the council. So they would rather to keep questions since the council does not give them positive response.

3.6. Councilors and their Agenda Concerning the People

The system of local council function well when the system is well designed and players in the system have better understanding of its objective ,characteristics and their role. Elected councilors as representatives of the grass root people need to have the characteristics features expected from a councilor and should have certain rational objective that they wants to pursue in favor of the electorate.

In item 1 of table 4 below, respondents were asked to put the following statements according to their order importance that best describes the council’s conduct of business. Accordingly, majority of the respondent 38.2% (20.5% from Kirkos and 17.6% from Yeka) describes that councils made hot debate before decision passed. However, the researcher observed that in all sample *woredas* council regular meeting councilors are passively confirming and blessing whatever idea that comes from the chairperson. Majority of councilor support the idea mentioned by *woreda* executive & chairperson of the council and raise their hand when the chairperson asked.

The second ranked statement by 25.4% (12.7% from Kirkos and 12.7 % from Yeka) of the respondent was councilors put party interest before the interests of the community. As they elaborate it, during their term in office some councilor strives to fulfill their party interest instead

of community interest and they prefer party interest than public interest when these two interests are in a state of conflict.

Table 4: Statement that best describes councilors and their intention

No	Item	Sub -Cities				Total	
		Kirkos		Yeka		Freq	%
		Fre	%	Frq	%		
		50	49	52	51	102	100
1	With regard to the councilors, which of the following statement do you agree with?						
	A. councilors are committed to improve the life of community	9	8.8	15	14.7	24	23.5
	B. councilors put party interest before the interests of the community	13	12.7	13	12.7	26	25.4
	C. councilors abuse their positions for personal gain	2	1.9	3	2.9	5	4.9
	D. councilors frequently consult their constituency	5	4.9	3	2.9	8	7.8
	E. councilors make hot debate before decision passed	21	20.5	18	17.6	39	38.2
2	Why do you think councilors want to be in office?						
	A. To amplify the needs of the community	31	30.3	44	43.1	75	73.5
	B. To promote political agendas	8	7.8	-	-	8	7.8
	C. For personal gain	6	5.8	6	5.8	12	
	D. For career ambitions	5	4.9	2	1.9	11.7	
	E. Other, (Please specify)					7	6.8

Source: Own Survey (2013)

The third ranked issue by 23.5 % (8.8% from Kirkos and 14.7% from Yeka) of respondent was, councilors are committed to improve the life of community. Councilors consult their constituency about the issue they amplify in the council discussion was ranked fourth by 7.8% (4.5% from Kirkos and 2.9% from Yeka) of the respondent. Councilor’s abuse their position for personal gain was fifth ranked by 4.9% of total respondents (1.9 from Kirko and 2.9 from Yeka). This is because of the fact that the system do not have ample resources and power that could be manipulate for wrong.

Item 2 of table 4 also shows that the rationale for why councilors want to be in office. Accordingly 73.5% (30.3 from Kirkos and 43.1 from Yeka) of the total respondents ranked that councilors become office to amplify the needs of the community. Personal gain was ranked second by 11.7% of the total respondent, (5.8% from Kirkos and 5.8% from Yeka). In the interview held with chairpersons, it was learnt that some councilors become office with the intention to secure job and position in the *woreda* administration while others also have the intention to get free house, and other benefit.

To promote political agenda and for career ambition was ranked third and fourth by 7.8% and 6.8% of the total respondent respectively. As career ambition was ranked the list it is possible to say that most of the respondent does not want to serve as being councilor of the community since they do not want to move upward with their current duty and responsibility. This might negatively affect the sustainability of the system and its contribution to the national democracy as councilors may not consider to the system as training ground to their future political life.

3.7. Operational Autonomy of *Woreda* Council in Conducting its Business

Since the coming of EPRDF in power Ethiopia has embarked up on massive decentralization of power and resources among different layer of government created for the purpose. The decentralization program has been aimed to create autonomous regional and local governments. Accordingly power and resources are required to devolve to lowest unit of government so that they independently act and decide on their issues. The following table shows the autonomy of *woreda* council in performing their duties and responsibility.

Item 1 of table 5 attempts to disclose how much the council is autonomous in conducting its business. Accordingly 11.7% (6.8 from Kirkos and 4.9 from Yeka) of the total respondents replied that the council is very much autonomous in discharging its duty and the same percent of respondents also answered that the council is independent of any unnecessary interference.

Table: 5 Autonomy of the council.

No	Item	Sub –Cities				Total		
		Kirkos		Yeka		Freq	%	
		Freq	%	Fre	%			
		50	49	52	51			102
1	How much independent is the council from the higher tier in making decision?	A. Very High	7	6.8	5	4.9	12	11.7
		B. High	5	4.9	7	6.8	12	11.7
		C. Middle	15	14.7	13	12.7	28	27.4
		D. Low	20	19.6	25	24.5	45	44.1
		E. Very Low	3	2.9	2	1.9	5	4.9
2	Does the council bring its own agenda for discussion?	A. Yes	41	40.1	49	48	90	88.2
		B. No	9	8.9	-	-	9	8.8
		C. I don't know	-	-	3	2.9	3	2.9
3	If your answer is –No” for Q.2, who propose the agenda?	A. Higher government at tier	-	-	-	-	-	-
		B. Ruling party	9	8.9	-	-	9	8.9
		C. Woreda executive	-	-	-	-	-	-
		D. Other	-	-	-	-	-	-
4	Does the council have the power and resource to carry out its duty responsibility?	A. Yes	9	8.8	14	13.7	23	22.5
		B. No	41	40.2	38	37.3	79	77.5

Source: Own Survey (2013)

In the normal conduct of its business the council at *woreda* level is moderately independent from higher tier of government as it was answered by 27.4% (14.7% from Kirkos and 12.7 from Yeka) of the total respondents. But the majority of the respondent that constitutes 44.1 % (19.6% from Kirkos and 24.5 % from Yeka) confirmed that the autonomy of the council is low and unnecessary intervention in the business of council is paramount and abundant. A few number of

respondent, 4.9% (2.9% from Kirkos and 1.9 % from Yeka) also agreed that the council autonomy is very low and interventions by higher body is apparent in the conduct of the system.

In general almost close to 50% of the respondent depicted that the council is not independent enough to carry out its business. If sufficient autonomy is not in place the essence of decentralization is in question while crippling the council's capacity to act independently and gives response to local problem.

In item 2 of table 5 respondents were also asked to determine the proposer of agenda for discussion. Accordingly majority of the respondent 88.2% (40.1% from Kirkos and 48% from Yeka) responded that the council independently proposes the agenda for discussion. But 8.8% of the respondents replied that the council does not propose its agenda rather they indicate that it is the ruling party cadres who determine the issue to be discussed and it is not in consultation with the chairperson and secretary who formally assigned the duty of preparing agenda for discussion. They also further explained that issue for discussion is already decided from the top and pushed down to councilors for the sake of meaningless discussion. The remaining 2.9 % do not know who propose the agenda.

However, the chairpersons and secretary of the councils are nominated by the cadre and officials of the ruling party, it is difficult to imagining them independently prepares the agenda while they are under the control of party operates. Therefore, the impartiality of the chairpersons and the agenda they raised is in question as there is indirect domination over the council via the secretary and chairperson

In item 4 of table 5 respondents were asked about the availability of sufficient resources and power to accomplish duties and responsibility of the council. Accordingly 22.5 %(8.8 from Kirkos and 13.7 from Yeka) of the respondent confirms that the council have sufficient resources and power to do its business but majority of the respondent 77.5 % (40.2 % from Kirkos and 37.3 % from Yeka) replied that the council do not have sufficient power and resources.

During the visit in the chairperson office of selected *woreda* councils and from document analysis the researcher understood that that there is a shortage of resource in the council and standing committee as well. It is also confirmed by interview held with chairperson and secretariat of standing committees that they face finance and material problem in the process of

doing their business. The standing committee members' interviewed added that let alone the payment for what they work; they could not get even stationary materials and telephone service.

With regard to power, the council could not take any measure even if they detect problem in the service delivery and the executive of *woredas* are more likely powerful. The council alone could not have the power to take any measure and for every action they need to respond, first they have to secure conformation from sub-city and *woreda* cabins. Nevertheless what they did is just identify the problem and send it to the sub-city and for their activity they have to secured approval and blessing from *woreda* executives and sub-city council.

Theoretically elected council in local administration holds the highest authority but the practice reveals that the executive domination is strong and *woreda* cabinet is the mover and shakers of the system.

3.8. Woreda Councils Relationship with the People and Woreda Administration

Woreda level council as a principal organ of *woreda* administration should serve as a bridge between the *woreda* service provider and service seeker. In doing so, they need to maintain close relationship with the community and *woreda* administration.

Item 1 of table 6 below shows that 23.5% of the total respondents (12.7% from Kirkos and 10.8% from Yeka) replied that they have frequently consulted their constituencies to determine problems and questions of community. But majority of the respondents 76.4% (36.3% from Kirkos and 40.2% from Yeka) do not have a culture of consulting and visiting their community. During meeting time the researcher observed that councilors report community issues based on their feeling and intuition since they failed to consult their respective communities.

Item 2 of table 6 shows to what extent the *woreda* administration and *woreda* council are integrated and coordinated. Accordingly 9.8 % (3.9 % from Kirkos and 5.8 % from Yeka) of the total respondent replied that there is very healthy relationship and cooperative spirit between *woreda* administration and *woreda* council.

13.7% (4.9 % from Kirkos and 8.8 % from Yeka) of the total respondents said that there is healthy relationship while majority respondents 36.2 % (16.6 % from Kirkos and 19.6 % from Yeka) confirmed that there is not good not bad kind of relationship exist between *woreda* council

and *woreda* administration. The remaining 28.4 % (13.7 % from Kirkos and 14.7 from Yeka) and 11.7 % (9.8% from Kirkos and 1.9% from Yeka) of the total respondent replied that there is bad and very bad relationship between the two respectively.

Information gathered through interview indicated that there is hostile and diluted attitude towards council by the cabin and administration. Moreover, *woreda* sector offices are not cooperative to the standing committee who are formally assigned to oversee the service delivery of each sector office. According to committee members interviewed, sector offices hide information and close their door when committee members visit their office to observe the quality of service delivery.

Table 6: Democratic decentralization in council's activity

No	Item		Sub –Cities				Total	
			Kirkos		Yeka		Freq	%
			Freq	%	Freq	%		
			50	49	52	51	102	100
1	As member of the council, Do you have a habit for frequently consult your constituency?	A. Yes	13	12.7	11	10.8	24	23.5
		B. No	37	36.3	41	40.2	78	76.4
2	How do you evaluate the council's relationship with woreda administration?	A. Very healthy	4	3.9	6	5.8	10	9.8
		B. Healthy	5	4.9	9	8.8	14	13.7
		C. Moderate	17	16.6	20	19.6	37	36.2
		D. Bad	14	13.7	15	14.7	29	28.4
		E. Very bad	10	9.8	2	1.9	12	11.7
3	Does the council has the ability to influence policies, and laws initiated and promulgated by higher bodies?	A. Yes	14	13.7	11	10.8	25	24.5
		B. No	36	35.3	30	29.4	66	64.7
		C. Don't know			9	8.8	9	8.8

Source: Owns Survey (2013)

The cabinet members are also skeptical of the council and frequently shows disharmony to the council in general and standing committee in particular. As it is identified by one chairperson, the sector office holder attitude towards the council is not good and they do not know the fact

that the council is meant to help them but rather as something that detect their failure and fired them from office.

In general the environment in all sample *woreda* has reflected that there is a spirit of “thief and police” as the *woreda* executives and sector offices remain uncooperative and follows close door approach towards the council.

Item 3 of table 6 also shows the ability of *woreda* councils to influence upward in the tier. Accordingly 24.5% (13.7 % from Kirkos and 10.8 % from Yeka) of the total respondent replied that the council at *woreda* level has the ability to influence policies and laws initiated and issued by sub-cities and/or city administration. But majority 64.7 % of the respondent (35.3 % from Kirkos and 29.4 % from Yeka) confirmed that *woreda* council lack the ability to influence policies and programs initiated at the top.

In the interview made with committee member, chairperson and staff of chairperson office; the researcher determines that *woreda* council does not have the capacity to do so and most programs and issues initiated by higher government. In the process of designing a program or law, the city administration and/or sub- city do not invite representatives of *woreda* councils and the draft law do not sent to *woreda* council discussion. As a result some programs did not consider the context of *woredas* and no mechanism is installed to get input for policies from *woreda* council members no matter how *woreda* councilors knows the grassroots situation better than city administration and sub-cities. The remaining 8.8 % (8.8 % from Yeka) of the total respondent do not know whether the council has the ability or not.

3.9. Decision Making Issues of *Woreda* Level Council

Woreda councils in Addis Ababa City Administration are the legislative organs of *woredas* and formally empowered to deal with major issues in the *woreda* administration. Although the legal status of *woreda* council is not clearly known as the city charter failed to stipulate the power, duties and responsibilities of council, by customary working procedure they are allowed to play certain role that expected from a formal elected representative/ parliament.

Item 1 of table 7 clearly shows that 56.8% (24.5% from Kirkos and 32.3 % from Yeka) of the total respondent replied that the council made decision that is responsive to the needs and

interests of *woreda's* people. But 39.2 % (22.5% from Kirkos and 16.6 % from Yeka) of the total respondent do not agree with the responsiveness of councils decision and the remaining 3.9 % (1.9% from Kirkos and 1.9 % from Yeka) do not know whether the decision is responsive or not.

As the document analysis indicated that council in the sample *woredas* makes decision that could be a panacea for some social and economic problems of the community. But the researcher identified the gap that decisions passed remain on paper and councilors frequently raised the unexecuted decision that has been made previously.

Table 7: Decision-making structure of the council

No	Item	Sub –Cities				Total		
		Kirkos		Yeka		Freq	%	
		Freq	%	Freq	%			
		50	49	52	51	102	100	
1	Does the council make decisions that are responsive to the need of the people?	A. Yes	25	24.5	33	32.3	58	56.8
		B. No	23	22.5	17	16.6	40	39.2
		C. Don't know	2	1.9	2	1.9	4	3.9
2	Who is more powerful in making decision?	A. The council	11	10.7	12	11.7	23	22.5
		B. Woreda's executive	32	31.3	33	32.3	65	63.7
		C. Party	7	6.8	7	6.8	14	13.7
		D. Others						
3	Is there any opportunity that decision made by the councils overturned by woreda's administration and /or by the party?	A. Yes	15	14.7	26	25.5	41	40.1
		B. No	35	34.3	19	18.6	54	52.9
		C. Don't know			7	6.8	7	6.8
4	If your answer for Q 4 is –yes”, how frequently the decision has been overturned?	A. Always	-		-		-	
		B. Sometimes	15	14.7	26	25.5	41	
		C. Seldom	-					

Source: Own Survey (2013)

Item 2 of table 7 shows the powerful organs of *woreda* in making decision. Accordingly majority of the respondent 63.7 % (31.3 % from Kirkos and 32.3 % from Yeka) replied that it is the cabinet who are more powerful in making decision concerning to *woreda's* issue. While 22.5% (16.7% from Kirkos and 11.7% from Yeka) confirmed that the council is more powerful in the *woreda*. The remaining 13.7% (6.8 % from Kirkos and 6.8% from Yeka) of the respondents replied that it is the ruling party cadres who are more powerful in making decision in the *woreda*.

It is clearly shown in item 3 of table 7, out of the sample respondent 40.1 % (14.7 % from Kirkos and 25.5% from Yeka) of the total respondent replied that the decision made by *woreda* council occasionally overturned by *woreda* cabinets and/or by party cadres.

In the interview held, the interviewee indicate that though it is *woreda* councils who has the final power over issues in the *woreda*, it is the party and cabinets who practically controls decision making authority and overturns decisions that seems incompatible with their interest and wishes

Therefore, concerning to decision issues councils are not freely decided over matters that affects the people and those decisions made are also remain in paper as the executives of the *woredas* hesitates to accept.

3.10. Democratic Essences Reflected in the Conduct of Woreda Councils

Good governance in its broadest sense implies a form of administration characterized by accountability, transparency, rule of law, participation, representation... etc. *Woreda* councils are the highest public institution in the *woreda* administration and supposed to be participatory, accountable and transparent in dealing with the community.

Table 8 below tries to grasp some information related to accountability, transparency and participation issues reflected in the conduct of the councils business. Accordingly item 1 discloses that 12.7% (5.8 % from Kirkos and 6.8% from Yeka) of the respondent agreed that the council internal structure and procedure very highly allows citizens to provide input for decision, while 13.7% (5.8 % from Kirkos and 7.8 % from Yeka) and 25.4% (9.8 % from Kirkos and 15.6 % from Yeka) of the total respondent replied that the councils procedure suitability for the participation of *woreda* people are high and moderate respectively.

The remaining majority of the respondent 48.1% (27.4 % from Kirkos and 20.5% from Yeka) replied that the system openness is low and it is not acquiescent for citizens to provide input for decision

Analysis of the document like member's code of conduct and procedural rules of the council (rarely and variably available) indicated that, the system do not systematically allows the involvement of citizens in decision. The council in general and councilors in particular do not formally consult communities to get input and feedback for decision. Additionally, consulted document, failed to mentions issues of how and when to consult communities. Similarly, interviewed members of the community confirmed that they have not seen any attempt by the council to make them part of the decision maker.

Table 8: Procedural amenability of the councils to promote democracy

No	Item	Sub –Cities				Total		
		Kirkos		Yeka		Freq	%	
		Freq	%	Freq	%			
		50	49	52	51	102	100	
1	To what extent the council's procedure allows citizens to provide input before decision made?	A. Very high	6	5.8	7	6.8	13	12.7
		B. High	6	5.8	8	7.8	14	13.7
		C. Medium	10	9.8	16	15.6	26	25.4
		D. Low	28	27.4	21	20.5	49	48.1
		E. Very low	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	How effective is council in informing the public about its work, through a variety of channels?	A. Very high	-	-	2	1.9	2	1.9
		B. High	8	7.8	7	6.8	15	14.7
		C. Medium	13	12.7	10	9.7	23	22.5
		D. Low	29	28.5	19	18.6	48	47.3
		E. Very low			14	13.7	14	13.7
3	How systematic are arrangements for councilors to report to their constituents about their performance in office?	A. Very high	3	2.9	4	3.9	7	6.8
		B. High	4	3.9	11	10.7	15	14.7
		C. Medium	10	9.8	14	13.7	24	23.5
		D. Low	13	12.7	20	19.6	33	32.3
		E. Very low	20	19.6	3	2.9	23	22.5

Source: Own Survey (2013)

In general it is possible to say that there is no systematic way of getting input from citizens, and councilors informally recognize the problems, as they are members of the community too and forward it to be used for input for decision.

Item 2 of table 8 shows the transparency of *woreda* councils in the conduct of their business. Accordingly 1.9 % of the total respondents replied that the councils at *woreda* level are very good in informing the community about their work. 14.7% (7.8% from Kirkos and 6.8% from Yeka) and 22.5% (12.7% from Kirkos and 9.7% from Yeka) of the total respondent, reported that the council effort to inform the public about its activity is good and moderate respectively. While majority of the respondent that constitutes 47.3% (28.5% from Kirkos and 18.6% from Yeka) of the total respondent answered that the effort to inform community is low and the remaining 13.7% of the respondent also confirmed that the council's effort is very low and unable to disclose its activity to the residence of *woreda*'s

Information gathered through interview also confirmed that there is no system installed in the council working procedure to inform the public. Meeting and discussion of the councils were not open to the community and concerned stakeholders.

The council under study conceals the decision and necessary information was not available to the public. Likewise the communication office of *woreda*'s that are supposed to disclose information through various media, do not have connection with *woreda* councils. Interviewed community members also mentioned that meetings are not open to them and *woreda*'s communication and chairperson office did not furnish them information about the activity, decision and performance of the council.

Item 3 of table 8 shows the reporting system/accountability of the council to their constituency. Accordingly, 6.8% (2.9% from Kirkos and 3.9% from Yeka) of the total respondents replied that there is very good systematic arrangement for councilors to report to their constituency about their performance in office. For 14.7% (3.9% from Kirkos and 10.7% from Yeka) and 23.5 % (9.8 % from Kirkos and 13.7% from Yeka) of the total respondent there is good and moderate arrangement available for councilors to report to their constituency respectively. The remaining respondent 32.5% (12.7% from Kikos and 19.6% from Yeka) and 22.5% (19.6% from Kirkos

and 2.9% from Yeka) replied that the arrangement was bad and very bad respectively and it is not amenable for them to make contact and report to constituency.

Information gathered through document analysis shows that there is no arrangement installed to make councilors accountable to their constituency and even code of conduct of the council failed to specify how and when to report. The chairpersons interviewed also confirmed that there is no councilor who report what he/she accomplished in the office to his/her constituency. They also acknowledge the limitation of the structure and code of conduct and there is no mechanism available to bound councilors to report to their constituencies.

Therefore, as the above presentation discloses, the participatory, accountability and transparency of councils at the sample *woreda* is low and with the absence of this basic democracy elements it is easy to understand the insignificant role of the council in the process of democracy promotion.

3.11. Oversight Function of Standing Committee and Legislative Power of *Woredas* Council

Table 9: oversight function and legislative power of the council

No	Item		Sub -Cities				Total	
			Kirkos		Yeka		Freq	%
			Freq	%	Freq	%		
			50	49	52	51	102	100
1	Do you believe that absence of legeslative power affects the Councils operation?	A. Yes	11	10.7	13	12.7	24	23.5
		B. No	32	31.3	28	27.4	60	58.8
		C. Don't know	7	6.8	11	10.7	18	17.6
2	Do you believe that members of the council has the expertise to review plan, community development program and budget of <i>woreda</i> 's administration	A. Yes	4	3.9	21	20.5	25	24.5
		B. No	44	43.1	29	28.4	73	71.5
		C. Don't know	2	1.9	2	1.9	4	3.9
3	How effective are standing committees in carrying out their oversight function?	A. Very high	3	2.9	1	0.9	4	3.9
		B. High	4	3.9	3	2.9	7	6.8
		C. Medium	10	9.8	11	10.7	21	20.5
		D. Low	26	25.4	19	18.6	45	44.1
		E. Very low	7	6.8	18	17.6	25	24.5

Source: Own Survey (2013)

Woreda councils in Addis Ababa City Administration are denied of promulgating law and regulation that could be binding for their jurisdiction. In the table below the researcher asked respondents whether the absence of legislative power affects councils business.

As it is shown in item 1 of table 9 above, 23.5% (10.7% from Kirkos and 12.7% from Yeka) of the total respondent believes that absence of promulgative power affects the council business but majority 58% (31.3% from Kirkos and 27.4% from Yeka) of the respondent replied that the absence of promulgative power do not affect the councils business. The remaining 17.6% (6.8% from Kirkos and 10.7% from Yeka) of the respondent replied that they do not know whether the absence of promulgative power affects the councils business or not.

As 23.5% of the respondent believes that absence of promulgative power denied the councils enjoying from the virtue of alleviating local problem through the use of local strategy that feet the context wherein the problems emerged. Since there is no organ of government close to the people like *woreda* councils, they should not expect and wait problems to be rectified by higher body. Instead it is wise to empower *woreda* councils to promulgate laws and rule that considers the context of their *woreda*.

According to table 9 item 2, 24.5% (3.9% from Kirkos and 20.5% from Yeka) of the respondent replied that member of the council has the expertise to review work plans, community development programs and budget of *woreda* administration. But 71.5% (43.1% from Kirkos and 28.4% from Yeka) of the respondent believes that members of the council do not have the expertise to review work plan, community development program and budget of *woredas* administration while the rest 3.9% (1.9% from Kirkos and 1.9% from Yeka) do not know whether the council has the expertise.

Woreda's council in general has the duty and responsibility to review plan, community program and budget of the *woreda* administration. It is apparent that councilors should equip with and acquired the necessary skill & expertise to discharge their duty. A glance look at the overall profile of all members of the council under study shows that majority of members are elementary education background. (See Annex B). Hence with this educational qualification, it is hard to imagine that councilors have the ability to carry out duties and responsibility.

Item 3 of table 9 shows the effectiveness of *woreda's* standing committee in carrying out their oversight function over *woredas* sector office. Accordingly 3.9% (2.9% from Kirkos and 0.9% from Yeka) of the respondent replied that the effectiveness of standing committee to perform its duty is very high while 6.8% (3.9% from Kirkos and 2.5% from Yeka) and 20.5% (9.8% from Kirkos and 10.7% from Yeka) of the respondent answered that the effectiveness of the standing committee was high and medium respectively. The remaining 44.1% (25.4 % from Kirkos and 18.6% from Yeka) and 24.5% (6.8% from Kirkos and 17.6% from Yeka) of the total respondent replied that the effectiveness of the standing committee in oversees the sector office was low and very low respectively.

Most of the council activity carried out through the arrangement of standing committee and for each sector office there is a standing committee assigned to oversee their performance in delivering service. As the interviewed persons and document analysis indicates that, the standing committees assigned to oversee the service delivery do no work properly and full heartedly because of partly personal and partly external problem. Personally most committee members do not have time, expertise, commitment and willingness to do their job. Externally lack of cooperation from sector office and lack of finance and material challenged the tasks of standing committee.

As the committees are impeded by internal and external problem they do not have significant contributions towards improving the service delivery of *woredas* under study.

3.12. The Election Process and Related Issues of Woreda Councils

The way councilors assume office has great implication on their own performance and on the overall performance of the council. Democratically elected councilors have a tendency to listen their constituency and perform to the maximum of his potential. Among the five kind of election in Ethiopia, Local level election is among one and held at five years' time interval to elect individuals for *woreda* council. Some of the issues that can highlight the election process of local councilors presented below and in 3.1 section of the study an elaborated analysis of the election process was made as well.

Table 10 attempts to show some issues of local level election. Accordingly 39.2% (20.6% from Kirkos and 18.7% from Yeka) of the total respondent believes that they made sufficient and fair campaigns in order to make themselves acquainted with the electorate. But majority of the respondent 60.7% (28.5% from Kirkos and 32.4% from Yeka) replied that they themselves and their party did not make sufficient campaign to clarify policies and to introduce candidate with the electorate.

Table 10: Election process of council members

No	Item	Sub -Cities				Total		
		Kirkos		Yeka		Freq	%	
		Freq	%	Freq	%			
		50	49	52	51	102	100	
1	The campaign is sufficient and fair	A. Yes	21	20.5	19	18.6	40	39.2
		B. No	29	28.5	33	32.4	62	60.7
2	Communities are interested to participate in the election	A. Yes	17	16.6	17	16.6	34	33.3
		B. No	33	32.4	35	34.4	68	66.7
3	Do you believe that the absence of opposition party in the council affects the councils function?	A. Yes	24	23.5	29	28.4	53	51.9
		B. No	23	22.5	16	15.6	39	38.2
		C. Don't know	3	2.9	7	6.8	10	9.8

Source: Own Survey (2013)

In the interview held with chairpersons it was learnt that campaign was not sufficient and the electorate were not clear about the candidate and their policy. To the worst of all most of the candidates by the then time were not regular members of the ruling party but all affiliated and interested individuals were nominated as if they are members. These individual candidates even do not know the ideology, policies and strategy of ruling party who nominate them. The ruling party mass membership strategy reflected in the council as the cadres went to village-to-village in order to get 300 members required for *woreda* council. This strategy of getting mass nominees had been influencing the spirit of the council. But all interviewed individuals mentioned that there is a promising effort for the coming election because the ruling party becomes careful

enough in recruiting nominees and the problem that has been envisaged during the past five years will not seen in the next term of the council.

From item 2 of table 10, it is easily depicted that 33.3% (16.6% from Kirkos and 16.6% from Yeka) of the total respondent observed community participation in the election but the majority 66.7% (32.4% from Kirkos and 34.4% from Yeka) of the total respondent observed the community disinterest to participate in the local election.

Information gathered through interview of members of the community indicates that some people were not interested to participate in local election. Moreover, recently conducted opinion pool by *Sheger* Radio Station discloses that regardless of the effort made to create awareness, local people do not actively participated in the current election as they have been had bad memories and some of them believes that they do not seen the essence of election since only one party compete.

The whole seats of *woreda* council under study occupied by ruling party since the opposition party did not contest in the past local election because of internal and partly external problems. Considering this situation the researcher in item 3 of table 10 asked respondents that whether the absence of opposition party affects the council business in-terms of availing alternative idea and debate. Accordingly, 51.9% (23.5% from Kirkos and 28.4% from Yeka) of the total respondent believes that the absence of oppositions affects the councils business as there is no alternative idea and debate over what is best to the people. 38.2 % (22.5% from Kirkos and 15.6% from Yeka) of the total respondent replied that the absence of oppositions do not affect the councils business while the remaining 9.8% (2.9% from Kirkos and 6.8% from Yeka) replied that they do not know whether the councils business affected or not.

During the observation secession the researcher understands that there is no alternative idea brought to the stage and all what councilors forwarded is idea that supports what is already said in the stage. Since every member belongs to the ruling party, no members in the observation time dare to criticize policy and attempts to bring alternative idea. If oppositions had some place/seats in the council, it will be good for the flourishing of democracy as it seeks diversity of idea, debate and argument over what is best, and the public will get maximum benefit out of it

3.13. Conclusion

This part of the research attempts to provide the responses of the sample individual along with its analysis and implication. Even though the democracy promotion works demands the participation of different actors, but what actually going on is the work in the sample *woredas* has been undertaken only by government and other actors are not in the promotion field.

The responses of sample respondent indicated that *woredas* councils are highly surrounded by number of problems while they attempt to do their business. Based on the presentation and analysis of the data it is found that *woreda* councils are not representative in terms of gender, and age. Moreover, the council's educational status is very disappointing.

It is identified that the challenge that impede *woreda* councils are internal and external. Internally members of the council have low level of education, they are less motivated to do their job, they do not consult the community, and do not disclose the decision of the council to their constituency. Externally the councils are not independent enough in terms of decision-making as there is strong intervention and influence from the executive and higher bodies of government. There is no enough resources allocated to the council, the charter also failed to clearly stipulated the duties, and power of *woredas* council so that they are not aware of their duties and this legal gap also creates a loophole for others organs of the administration to intervene.

However there are also some promising efforts of the council as they strive to amplify the community interests and try to bring the community agenda to the concerned bodies. In general as they are engulfed by internal and external problems that councils play insignificant role in the process of democracy promotion process.

Chapter Four: Summary of Major Findings, Conclusion and Recommendation

This section of the research provides summary of issues presented in the preceding chapter and elaborated the implication of the data explained in depth as well. Based on, the implication of the data feasible conclusion provided and recommendations that could be a solution for the identified problem also given at this section of the study

4.1. Summary of Major Finding

Among all the public institutions council have a special status and authority as local, elected bodies. They are uniquely placed to provide vision and leadership to their local communities. They are able to make things happen on the ground where it really matters. However, practically councils in sample *woredas* were not seen playing such role and they are challenged and impeded by several problems in providing democratic leadership.

As it was presented in the previous chapter there are bundle of challenges that hampers the council business and here under the researcher summarizes the challenges in the following manner.

Representativeness is an attribute of democratic local governance. The term is used to refer to the involvement and presence of different group and interests in the leadership and management of local government (Mehret, 2002).

For example, *woredas* in Addis Ababa City Administration are sorely lacking in this respect. The data presented implied that the overall organizations of the councils under study are not representative enough in terms of gender and age. Women and youth are underrepresented though they constitute equal part of the community. Moreover, ethnically the council lacks representation of different ethnic group. For instance, in the area that presumed to be domiciling of Oromo population (*Ankorcha area of Yeka sub-city*), majority of councilors are *Amhara* ethnic (see Annex B). Other ethnic like Afar, Somalia...Etc were not members of the council under study.

The structural arrangement of councils at *woreda* level supposed to be well designed so as to pave the way for the participation of communities. However the council in general and councilors in particular do not have mechanisms to get input for decision and they do not invite

community members to furnish the necessary information that could be used for decision. In this way the council conducts its business without the involvement of *woreda* people. Therefore, as it was confirmed by majority of the sample respondent, there is no feature for councils which are outward looking and more concerned for creating participatory and representative environment.

The overwhelming majority of councilors are elementary education background (See Annex B). Similarly majority of the respondent indicated that councilors do not have the ability to review work plan, community development program and budget of *woreda*'s administration. With this given educational qualities of councilors it is not logical to assign such challenging and demanding role for councilors. Surprisingly enough few members of the council are illiterate and they are assigned to overview the service delivery of sector offices. To the worst, there is no training program offered to councilors so that most of the parliamentary activities being carried out there are more of customary.

Members of the council entirely belongs to the same party in the sample *woreda* and there is no private candidates and opposition parties who are the source of alternative ideas, diversity of interest and initiators of debate over what is best for the community.

Council at *woreda* level conducts regular meeting quarterly and majority of members were well attended the meeting. However, few members were unable to attend regular meeting primarily because of the time and venue of the meeting. It is more likely that the good attendance level of councilors might become as a result of councilors awesome awareness about the system. As, majority of the respondent acknowledged the fact that setting up local council system at *woreda* level are important and provides plenty benefit to the society.

Nevertheless, majority of council are not actively involved in the councils business but merely presented in the meeting time. For example the standing committees are not functional because committee members lack the commitment and motivation to meet weekly on permanent bases and to carry out their oversight function. This lack of commitment and motivation attributed to the failure of the system to provide benefit and motivating factors to members. For example, as majority of the respondent indicated there is no financial and material benefit offered to councilors. Lack of motivating factors and benefit makes councilors not to be active and alert to discharge their responsibility in both the council and standing committee business

Councils in the sample *woreda* are unable to: protect the interests of the electorate, visiting and lead their communities. Although the primary role of the council is dealing with community problem, in this regard council are not effective. As majority of the respondent indicates that *woreda* level council are not effectively addressing community problem to the extent that the people demanded and they could not amplify the vested interests of the community as well,

Individual members of the council strive to raise community problem during regular meeting of the council. But most issues raised remain unresolved because part of the problem is beyond the council's capacity and part of the problem also demanded the cooperation and willingness of the cabinet/*woreda* executives. The failure of *woreda* councils to dominate *woreda* executive are the causes of problem to remain unresolved. Since *woreda* council are not dare to take measures over the executives, many public problem related to service delivery and infrastructural questions of the community remain unresolved.

In spite of the fact that *woreda* councils are the highest organs in the *woreda* administration, the power balance in the sample *woreda* are more likely to resemble to the executive. This fact is reflected in the situation that the cabinet members and *woreda* executives practically has the power to remove the chairperson and secretariat of the council. In the name of evaluation the *woreda* cabinet can remove chairperson and leaders of the council who put pressure over the executive. Since the chairperson & secretariat of the council and cabinet members belongs to the same party they could do the above issue through the internal working procedure of their party.

Moreover the respondents indicated that the decision made by the council occasionally overturned by the cabinet and cadres of the ruling party if it is against their interest and wishes. It is also identified by the majority of the respondents that autonomy of the council in making decision is very low and unnecessary intervention in the business of the council is paramount and abundant

Concerning to the availability of sufficient resources and authority to do their business, majority of the respondents indicated that there are shortages of resources and the authority devolved to the council does not commensurate with the duties assigned to it.

As majority of the respondents outlined members of the council failed to regularly consult their constituencies and the council's relationship with the *woreda* executive is diluted and characterized by disharmony, as the latter remain uncooperativeness.

Majority of the respondent also confirmed that the councils do not have the capacity to influence upward. They also indicated that in the process of designing program or issuing directives, the city council and sub-cities do not invite representatives of *woreda* councils and the draft law do not sent to *woreda* council discussion.

Majority of the respondent also indicated that there is no mechanism installed in the councils working procedure to inform the public about the councils work. In addition meetings and discussions of the council were not open to the community and interested stakeholders.

Therefore, as majority of the respondents indicated that internal and external problems challenged the councils business and prevents them from promoting democracy.

4.2. Conclusions

Formally, *woreda* level of government can prepare and approve its own budget, prepare and implement economic and social development projects, set up and manage public services and exercise democratic decision making at the local level. In addition, it has an independent court structure and has been given the authority to mobilize the people for participatory governance and development. (Mehret, 2001)

Woreda governments follow tripartite structure of an elected council, executive committee and sector office so as to pursue the above-mentioned role and duties. *Woreda* level council system created with multi faceted objective of improving service delivery, monitoring the executives and institute democratic and responsive administration to the grass root people.

Rhetorically, *woreda* councils are best to solve local problem, improves the service delivery, and ensures responsiveness of *woreda* administration through their oversight function. However, practically the path that councils moved so far divulged that full of challenges and problems impeded the capacity of councils to realize the intended purpose. For example:

Woreda councils who are supposed to promote democracy are not representative enough in terms of age, sex and ethnicity of members. Women and youth are underrepresented as compared to

their number in the society. Hence with this regard councils missed one elements of democracy as the idea of all segments of the society might not been reflected during meeting and discussion time.

Councilors at *woreda* level are assigned to perform challenging and impressive role but their educational achievement is elementary background and with this educational status it is impossible to perform those tasks that demanded knowledge of public service, governance, and democracy. In addition due to low educational background the overwhelming majority of councilors are unable to review the service delivery, work plan, community development project and budget of *woreda* administration.

In the *woreda* council meeting and discussion time there is no alternative idea, debate and policy option provided since members overall belongs to the ruling party and opposition party and private candidate who are the source of diversified idea and needed for the flourishing of democracy missed from the council. Thus because of lack of any real competition at local level, all *woreda* councilors belongs to the same party. This reality envisaged in the sample *woredas* might cripple the multi party system which might be a milestone for democratization process.

Even though the councilors are well aware of the virtue of local democracy they are not alert and motivated, as there is no benefit offered to them. This lack of benefits coupled with absence of monthly payment (salary) puts restricts on the motivation, willingness and performance of councilors in office and ambush the initiatives of those councilors who wants to venture national political arena.

Democratically elected council need to be participatory but in the sample *woreda* councils there is no framework for the participation of citizens and the relationship between the electorate and councilors are awfully non-existence as there is no systematic arrangement to consult the electorate. Moreover there is no way that *woreda* people take part in the decision of the council.

For the successful realization of democracy there must be integration and coordination between different organs of government and stakeholders. However, *woreda* councils and *woreda* executive are not well integrated, as there exists hostile and non-harmony relationship. The executive of *woredas* undermine the role and skeptical of the council and the sector office as well are not cooperative enough to the council and standing committee.

The separation of role among organs of *woreda* is blurred as the executive of *woredas* powerfully involved in the councils business. The oversight function of the council are seriously compromised due to lack of cooperation and conflict of interests as most cabinet members and sector office head in sample *woredas* are also members of the council and are thus unable to objectively oversee the cabinet.

Nonetheless, the council is the highest organ of *woreda* administration but its decision sometimes overturned by the executive and party cadre. Every decision that the council wants to make, needs to be first confirmed by the sub city and should be reviewed by party cadres to make sure that the decision is in line with the party interest. Thus, the autonomy of the council is undermined and councils independently do not decide over most important issues of the *woreda*.

There is also high executive and party cadre domination in the council business as they control the chairperson and secretary of the council. As the cabinet and party cadres are the prominent figure in the internal structure of the ruling party they can remove leaders of the council who seems out of their wish or interest. The “*gimgema*” evaluation mechanism installed in the internal working system of the ruling party gives the cabinet and cadres a potent tool to influence the agenda and decisions since the chairperson and secretary are under the ambit of the cabinet and cadres. Thus they use evaluation to weed out chairpersons who hesitate to accept their proposal.

The city charter failed to clarify the power, duties and responsibilities of the council and the legislative act supposed to be issued by the city council concerning to the power and responsibilities of *woreda* council are not yet issued. Thus, the absence of legal support/status exposes councils to constantly and unduly intervene by the executive and cadre.

While acting as the legislative branches of *woreda* administration, councils do not have promulgative power and issued directive that could be a cure for immediate problem of the community like security issue and other. Moreover councils at *woreda* level do not have the ability to influence policies, laws and directives issued by the city or sub-city council as they are not invited during law making process and the draft law also could not reached to them for comment. Therefore, the absence of promulgative power coupled with lack of qualified work

force, financial and material resource prevents the council from issuing directives that considers the context of their respective *woreda*.

In the council conduct of business the issues of transparency is very low as there is no mechanism to inform the public about the decision passed and the activity being carried out by the council. To the worst, meetings and discussion of the council are not open to the public and concerned stakeholders and the chairperson office and communication office of *woreda* administration who are obliged to furnish information to the public failed to do so. In addition the council's relation with the community is weak, as they do not consult their constituency frequently. Therefore, it is not exaggerating to say that the councils are not responsive to the community need and its openness to the community is poor.

Woreda councils have dual accountability to the sub-city (upward) and to the electorate (downward). Upward accountability is highly maintained and regular reporting system to the sub-city strongly adhered as the council regularly reports their status to the sub-city. However, downward accountability to the electorate is poor, as there is no systematic arrangement available to the council in general and councilors in particular to report to their constituencies about their performance.

Finally, it was found that the internal working system of *woreda* councils reflected that executive domination is very soaring, and councils are not responsive to the needs of the community and most importantly democratic and essence viz. accountability, transparency, participation and autonomy are not adhered principles in the councils conduct. Therefore, councils as they are impeded by the above-mentioned challenges are playing insignificant role in cultivating democratic value to the grass root people.

4.3. Recommendations

As the findings of the study reveals that *woreda* level councils are engulfed by dozens of challenges that make them dormant and dysfunctional. The following recommendation forwarded by the researcher in order to get rid off the problems that hamper *woreda* councils and to make them vibrant and active in the promotion of democracy and good governance.

- The *woreda* councilor who are supposed to deal with public issues need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge so as to carried out their duties and responsibility. Trainings related to the conduct of parliament, governance, public service delivery, and democracy should be offered to councilors. It is also inevitable if individuals‘ members of the federal parliaments and city councilor who represent *woredas* share their experience to their respective *woreda* councilors. Aggressive promotion and awareness creation work concerning to the objective, role and importance of council need to be done in order to make the community and councilors awake.
- Councilors must be sensitive to public problem and needs, feel responsible for satisfying those needs and problems and realize their accountability to the public. This calls for frequent interaction between councilors and the electorate.
- Sufficient resources and authority need to be devolve to *woreda* councils in order to make them able to discharge their assigned duties. There should be enough financial and material resources allocated for councils and they should also grant with commensurate authority with their responsibility.
- The internal working system of councils required to be transparent enough to the constituency mainly by availing necessary information to the public and making meetings open to those actors who play prominent role in the process of securing good governance and democracy. As much as possible, representative number of councilors from all segments of the society needs to be nominated for the coming election. It is appreciated that councils are more concerned to upward accountability but it is equally important to maintain downward accountability to the constituency usually through reporting system and consulting the community.
- The city charter and other relevant legislation need to be amended in a manner that clearly articulate the duties, responsibility and power of *woreda* council or the directives that specifies the councils authority supposed to be issued by the city council should be issued as soon as possible. Since there is no organ of government like *woreda* council in

the position of understanding community problems, it is wise to grant them promulgative power in order to enact directives that could be a panacea for the immediate problems of the community.

- The electoral system currently in use is “first past the post” in which the winning party takes all the seats must be replaced with an electoral system that gives proportional number of seats to the parties in the contest. Hence the democratic values like free flow of idea, alternatives and debate will be the manifestation of *woreda* councils and from such act the community can draw maximum benefit. The availability of oppositions and debate close the gap between the citizen and administration and provides opportunity for grievances to be aired and wrong remedied.
- Strong committeemen and willingness of government in general and ruling party in particular required to level the playing field in the process of election and obstacles that hinder oppositions needs to be removed and they should have real chance of winning. Thus, public confidence over election and active opposition involvement in the contest will be improved.
- The government and other concerned agents should make the system of local council very attractive by availing or inducing benefits to the council. If once the system became full of benefit candidate will be motivated and committed to serve the purpose. In relation with this the number of councilor need to be shrink down while maintaining the representative nature of the system thereby making councilors a paid one. Therefore, each councilor will become a champion of their community defending the public interest in the council and channeling the grievances, needs and aspirations of their electorate into the scrutiny process.
- There should be development of a new framework for the participation of all interested stakeholders as the democratic promotion work demanded networks of actors. A mechanism should also been developed to create active community group to protect public interest while working harmoniously with the councils.

- Finally, intervention from the executive, party cadre and sub-city need to have a rein. The abolishing of intervention will give all councilors a new enhanced and more rewarding role. Currently, councilors can in practice be excluded from the real decision-making and yet have no power to challenge or scrutinize those decisions.

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Annex : A

Addis Ababa University
College of Management, Informatics, and Economics Sciences
School of Business and Public Administration
Department of Public Administration and Management

I, Mesfin Abebaw, post graduate student of Addis Ababa University currently undertaking a research to determine the challenges and prospects of woreda level council in promoting democracy and good governance. To this end I kindly request you to complete the following questionnaire regarding the operation of the woreda council that you are currently a member. It will not take longer than 30 minutes of your time. Although your response is of the utmost importance to me, your participation in this survey is voluntary.

The purpose of this questionnaire is to collect pertinent data regarding the challenges, prospects face and overall operation of woreda council over the last five years, i.e. since 2007; and also to identify the major role councils played in promoting democracy and good governance in the same period.

Hence, I earnestly request you to fill the questionnaire carefully. The quality and quantity of information you provide determine the reliability of the study. Thank you in advance for your relentless co-operation in filling and returning this questionnaire.

Note that:

1. No need of writing your name
2. This questionnaire has no other intention than the academic purpose and its confidentiality is maintained
3. Please circle or indicate your answer by putting “~~X~~” for questions with options
4. Write your opinion for open-ended questions.
5. If it is needed, you can give more than one answer.
6. The questionnaire has three part: part one, personal information, part two about the council operation and activity, part three about election, democracy and good governance issues.

If you have any queries or comments regarding this survey, you are welcome to contact me telephonically at 0911 73 51 75/ 0911 17 82 06 or e-mail me at mes_abebaw@yahoo.com

Part One: Personal information

1) Sex

A. Male

B. Female

2) Age

A. 18-25 years

D. 41-50 years

B. 25-30 years

E. 51 years and above

C. 31-40 years

3) Educational background

A. read and writes

B. Below grade 10

C. 12th complete

D. College diploma

E. BA/BSC

F. PhD.

4) If your answer for Q 3. Is D, E, F, what is your field of study? _____

5) Which party do you represent?

A. Ruling

B. Opposition

C. Private

Part 2: issues related with council system and their function

1. Are council meetings usually well attended by councilors?

A. 50% or less usually attend

B. 51% - 80% usually attend

C. 81% - 100% usually attend

D. Don't know

2. If your answer is A for Q 1, what is the reason for low attendance of councilor?

A. there is no motivation to attained

B. lack of time and role conflict

C. lack of interest

D. lack of confidence on the essentialness of the system

E. the venue and time of meeting is inaccessible

F. other, please specify _____

10. If your answer is no for Q 9, why did not you raise such issue?

- A. there is no problem in the community that I represented
- B. I could not recognize the problem
- C. I do not have time to consult with the community to identify the common problem
- D. I know that the council will not give me positive response, if I raise it

11. On a scale of 1-5, with regard to the council, which of the following statements do you agree with? (Ranking is in ascending order i.e 5 denotes ‘strongly in agreement’)

- A. Councilors are committed to improving the quality of life of the residents of the woredas
- B. Councilors put party interests before the interests of the community
- C. Councilors abuse their positions for personal gain
- D. Councilors frequently consult their constituencies
- E. councilors always make hot debate before decision passed

12. Why do you think councilors want to be in office? (Rank responses on a scale of 1-5).

- A. To represent the needs of the community
- B. To promote political agendas
- C. For personal gain
- D. For career ambitions
- E. Other, (Please specify)

13. Do you have a habit for frequently consult your constituency?

- A. Yes
- B. No

14. Does the council made decisions that are responsive to the needs of the people?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know

15. Does the councils pass decisions with full consensuses and vote?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know

16. How much independent is the council from the higher tier?

- A. Very High
- B. High
- C. Ambiguous
- D. Low
- E. Very Low

17. Does the council bring its own agenda for discussion?

- A. Yes
- B. No
- C. I don't know

18. If your answer for Q. 23 is no, who proposed the agenda for discussion?
- A. The higher body at the tier
 - B. Party organizers
 - C. The woreda executives
 - D. Other, please specify
19. Do you have the power and resource to carry out your responsibility?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
20. Do you believe that absence of promulgative power affects the councils operation?
- A. Yes
 - B. No.
 - C. I don't know
21. Who is more powerful in making decision?
- E. The council
 - F. Woreda's executive
 - G. Party cadres
 - H. Others, please specify
22. Is there any opportunity that decision made by the councils overturned by woreda's administration and /or by the party cadre?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. I don't know
23. If your answer for Q 22 is yes, how frequently the decision has been overturned?
- A. Very High
 - B. High
 - C. Medium
 - D. Low
 - E. Very Low
24. Does the council have the ability to influence policies, and laws initiated and promulgated by higher bodies?
- A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. I don't know
25. Do you believe that members of the council have the expertise to review plan, community development program and budget of woreda's administration
- A. Yes
 - B. No
 - C. I don't Know
26. To what extent the council's procedure allows citizens to provide input before decision made?
- A. Very High
 - B. High
 - C. Medium
 - D. Low
 - E. Very Low
27. Do you believe that the absence of opposition party in the council affects the councils business in terms of debate, free flow of ideas and alternatives?

A. Very High B. High C. Medium D. Low E. Very Low

7. How effective is council in informing the public about its work, through a variety of channels?

A. Very High B. High C. Medium D. Low E. Very Low

8. How systematic are arrangements for members to report to their constituents about their performance in office?

A. Very High B. High C. Medium D. Low E. Very Low

9. How effective is the electoral system in ensuring the accountability of councils, individually and collectively, to the electorate?

A. Very High B. High C. Medium D. Low E. Very Low

10. What is the contribution of the Council in promoting democracy and good governance among local people?

11. What are the Best qualities of local level council by your imagination?

12. What is the problem that the council faces?

13. What is your suggestion for the overall improvements the council?

Thank you

Interview Guide

Interview questions for chairpersons of Woreda Council and staff of the chairperson office

1. What activity does the council at the woreda level accomplish? Would you please explain the overall operations of the council?
2. What are the duties and responsibilities of the woreda council? Where did you get the power and resources to carry out your duties?
3. What approach the council adapts to deal with community problems? and Its role in solving practical community problem?
4. How do you evaluate the contribution of woreda council in promoting democracy and good governance?
5. What is the most frequently discussed agenda? How do you select the agenda? And is there any external influence during agenda setting?
6. What is the key decision making structure of the council?
7. What are the mechanisms for getting input for decision from the public?
8. Is the council meeting open to the public? How are members of the public informed about council meeting?
9. How do you explain the council activity in line with absence of law making power?
10. How do you explain the coordination and integration between the council and woreda administration?
11. how do you evaluate the participation of local people?
12. What seems the relationship of the council with :
 - A. Woreda people
 - B. Higher authority
13. What challenges the woreda council faces in their business?
14. What is your suggestion for improvement?

Thank you

Interview with standing committee members

1. What are the main activities, duties and responsibility of the standing committee?
2. What mechanism does the standing committee uses to influence the way services are deliver to communities?
3. What is the contribution of the standing committee to improve service delivery, and promote democracy and good governance?
4. What are the mechanisms that the standing committee uses to hold the local bureaucracy accountable?
5. How systematic is the committee in dealing with community problem?
6. How do you explain the qualities of standing committee in terms of manpower and resources?
7. How frequently the committee visits the service delivery of woreda and what measures it takes when problems in the service delivery is detected?
8. How do you describe the local council system in terms of introducing democratic value and good governance to grass root people?
9. Do you accomplish your activity in most coordinated and integrated manner between committee members and woreda administration?
10. What seems the relationship of the committee with council, woreda administration, woreda people and higher body?
11. What are the challenges the committee faced during its operation?
12. What is your suggestion for improvement?

Thank you

Annex B:
General Profile of Councilors in the Sample Woreda

		Sub -cities											
Item		Kirkos						Yeka					
		W,01		W,03		W0,9		W,01		W,05		W,10	
		Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
Gender	Male	173	58	167	56	164	54	158	53	183	61	200	67
	Female	127	42	133	44	136	46	142	47	117	39	100	33
Education	Illiterate	21	7	28	9.5	7	2.5	29	9.6	25	8.3	33	11
	Elementary	128	43	101	33.5	130	43.5	73	24.4	91	30.3	114	38
	High School	53	17.5	37	12.5	66	22	76	25.3	117	39	29	9.6
	certificate	16	5.5	40	13.5	19	6.5	37	12.3	6	2	35	11.4
	Diploma	42	14	56	18.6	66	22	40	13.3	46	15.3	42	14
	Degree	37	12	38	12.5	59	19.5	45	15	15	5	47	16
	MA and PhD	3	1	0		2	0.5	0	0	0	0	0	0
Age	25-35	22	7.5	41	13.5	58	19.5	37	12.3	30	10	13	4.3
	35-45	69	23	57	19	80	26.5	62	20.7	146	48.5	87	29
	45-55	123	41	137	45.5	92	30.5	119	39.6	53	17.5	112	37.3
	Above 55	86	28.5	65	22	70	23.5	82	27.4	71	24	88	29.3
ethnicity	Tigray	53	17.5	30	10	63	21	32	10.6	25	8.3	37	12.3
	Amhara	121	40.5	149	49.5	113	37.5	143	47.6	172	57.3	170	56.6
	oromo	119	39.5	98	33	92	30.5	108	36	72	24	68	22.6
	SNNPR	7	2.5	21	7	28	9.3	17	5.8	31	10.3	25	8.2
	others	0	0	2	0.5	4	1.6	0	0	0	0	0	0

Source: Owns Survey (2013)

Declaration

I hereby declare that, the thesis entitled as –An Assessment of Challenges and Prospects of Local Level Councils in Promoting Democracy” has been carried out by me under the guidance of Dr. Mulugeta Abebe as part of Master Degree in Public Management and Policy specialized in Public Policy Studies.

I further declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been submitted to any other University or Institution for the award of any degree or diploma and all sources of material used for this thesis have been dully acknowledged.

Mesfin Abebaw _____

Signature

Date

This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as a University advisor.

Mulugeta Abebe (PhD.)

Advisor

Signature

Date

School of Graduate Studies

Department of Public Administration and Management

Addis Ababa University