

**WOMEN POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT AND
DECENTRALIZATION IN ADDIS KETEMA SUB-CITY,
ADDIS ABABA**

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**INSTITUTE OF REGIONAL AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT
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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**



THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

Addis Ababa University

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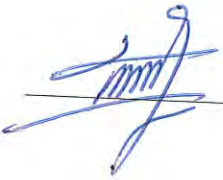

Institute of Regional and Local Development Studies

WOMEN POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT AND DECENTRALIZATION IN ADDIS

KETEMA SUB-CITY, ADDIS ABABA

By FREW YIRGALEM

Approved by Board of Examiner

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ACRONYMS

AACGRC	Addis Ababa City Government Revised Charter
AKSC	Addis Ketema Sub City
BPA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women
DLDP	District Level Decentralization Program
EPRDF	Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
GAD	Gander and Development
MoCB	Ministry of Capacity Building
MoFED	Ministry of Finance and Economic Development
MoWUD	Ministry of Works and Urban Development
NWP	National Women Policy (Ethiopia)
NEBE	National Electoral Board of Ethiopia
PASDEP	Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty
SDPRP	Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program
SNNP	Southern Nation, Nationalities and Peoples
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
WAO	Women Affairs Office
WID	Women in Development
WPE	Women Political Empowerment

ABSTRACT

Despite decentralization is one of the major policy concerns in Ethiopia, studies regarding its impact on women political empowerment is largely missing. This study assessed the opportunities, challenges and prospects of women political empowerment within the decentralization framework in Addis Ketema Sub-City. To this end, data was gathered using both qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments.

The study has found that decentralization is accompanied by institutional opportunities such as local council system that enable women to participate in politics in the sub-city. Currently women constitute on average 39% of local councilors. They also constituted 33% of heads of executive offices. Decentralization has also resulted in the creation of women affairs office.

Nevertheless, women participation and representation in local government institutions is found to be low compared to their percentage share in the total population of the sub-city. More importantly, the over all situation of women political empowerment is found to be at its nascent stage. This has greatly to do with low level of gender awareness amongst the society, absence of institutionally capable women organizations dedicated to women's concerns, seasonality of political parties mobilization strategy, limited resources and power available to local institutions. Moreover, there is low level of coordination among concerned stakeholder so as to properly exploit available opportunities of women political empowerment in the study area. Therefore deepening the decentralization process and installing affirmative measures such as reserved seats or quota system for women deemed a key way outs.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND APPROACH OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background to the Study

The modern use of empowerment can be traced back to the 1960s particularly to the civil rights movement (Commission on Women and Development, 2007). Since then empowerment has been increasingly used by development and social justice activists, local and international organizations, institutional and political actors with reference to disadvantageous groups (Oxaal and Baden, 1997; Luttrell et al, 2009).

In the context of women rights advocacy, the use of empowerment is deeply related to women movements in general and feminist critics of the traditional development approaches in particular (Rathgeber, 1989). Feminist argued that “instead of improving women’s rights and status, the development process appeared to be contributing to a deterioration of their position” ((Razavi and Miller, 1995: 2). As such, they demanded for improving the status of women at household, community, and societal levels by ensuring their access to and control over resources and equitable representation in public decision-making bodies

At international level, the establishment of the United Nations and its emphasis on human rights ushered in new opportunities to address women concerns. The United Nations established the Commission on the Status of Women in 1946 to organize international women’s rights efforts (Tinker and Jaquette 1987: 419). In the 1970s there came a more favorable climate to women rights advocates as they won an important victory with the UN’s declaration of the year 1975 as International Women’s Year and in the same year the first ever international conference on women’s was also held in Mexico City. The conference legitimized the international women’s movement by elevating women’s issues to visible international debate (Tinker and Jaquette 1987: 419).

The UN has also launched the Decade for Women (1975 – 1985), a ten-year effort to focus on women issues and improving their socio-economic and political status. The Decade for Women culminated in the 1985 UN Nairobi Conference on Women, thousands of women gathered from around the world to review national accomplishments of the International Decade for Women.

In 1995, the UN World Conference on Women was held in Beijing, China. The Conference declared that:

‘Women empowerment and their participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievements of equality, development and peace’ (quoted in Commission on Women and Development, 2007: 9).

Since then women empowerment has widely been used in feminist discourses. The kernel of the empowerment approach is the conceptualization that the genesis of inequality between man and woman rests on the powerlessness of women in controlling over crucial resources, such as decision making power (Luttrell et al, 2009).

Ethiopia has expressed its commitment to women concerns both internationally and at domestic levels (Majitu and Bedria, 1999). The government has ratified international human rights instruments and conventions such as Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Beijing Platform for Action (BPA). It has also issued the National Women Policy, which stipulates that women’s participation in the political, social and economic affairs of their country on equal terms “facilitate the conditions to speed up the achievement of equality between men and women” (WAO: 4).

In addition, the constitution of the republic (Article 35 (3)) considering the historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia, it stipulates that:

Women... are entitled to affirmative measure... the purpose of such measures shall be to provide special attention to women so as to enable them compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in politics, social and economic life as well as public... institutions (FDRE, 1995).

Women empowerment has various aspects: economic, social, political, educational, and health and well-being (Carlos and Zahidi, 2005). Women political empowerment generally refers to removal of barriers and creating opportunities for women to gain access to, participate in, and control over decisions in the public sphere (Majitu and Bedria, 1999). Women political empowerment can take place at different administrative levels: national, district or local levels (Alsop and Heinsohn 2005). Though available studies on women political empowerment at the local level are limited both in quantity and scope, the recent wave of governments' decentralization of power to their lower levels of administrative units has triggered interest amongst researchers in the area (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005: 9).

There are scholars who argue that decentralized governance enhances women participation in local politics. The reasons why it is thought that women participate more easily in decentralized local governance are mentioned by Evertzen (2001b:3) as:

Eligibility criteria for the local level are less stringent, and local government is the closest to the women's sphere of life, and easier to combine with rearing children. It can be the first level that women can break into and as such it may serve as a springboard to national politics, by developing capacities and gaining experiences.

Evertzen also argues that decentralized governance makes easier for effective implementation of affirmative actions and local government positions are the first level where women can get experience in political leadership and break into public power hierarchy. Similarly, Betham (1996) claims that local government positions and activities are more accessible and open to women as in most cases they are part-time in character. Thus, from the above arguments one can conclude that decentralized governance holds the promise for greater women political empowerment and participation.

On the contrary, others contend that the extent to which decentralization advances women political empowerment is a function of various factors. Local political culture, the institutional context and nature of the decentralization drive itself; nature of local party politics and electoral system; women socio-economic background and the level of mobilization of women associations and gender equality advocates both at local and

national levels are amongst the major factors (Goetz, 2004; Mukhopadhyay and Meer, 2004).

In Ethiopia following the ouster of the dictatorial and centralist *Derge* regime in 1991, decentralized governance has become one of the policy concerns and political agenda of the government. Decentralization is seen by the government as a key strategy, among others, to alleviate poverty through inclusion of the communities and districts in all areas of decision-making /empowerment and provision of services (MoFED, 2002). It is also hoped to bring about harmony and cooperation between different groups, and promote local self-rule and good governance, and facilitate the conditions for the implementation of legislations and programs favoring women (Tegegne, 2006; Zenebework, 2001).

Since 2001, with these and other motives, the decentralization program has been further instituted in districts and lower level administrations of regional states and the two city administrations of the country. Cognizant of such measures, the City Administration of Addis Ababa has initiated a city-wide decentralization program by transferring powers and responsibilities to sub-cities and kebeles especially since the promulgation of the Revised Charter of the City in 2003. As such, sub-cities and kebeles are entrusted with powers and resources to undertake their respective duties. In accordance with this decentralization process various offices and local government institutions, presumably having huge impact on women political empowerment, were installed at the local levels.

1.2 The Research Problem

The 1991 regime change in Ethiopia has ushered in a nation-wide decentralized system of governance in the country. Decentralization is considered as strategy, among others to: promote local self-rule; ensure gender equality and women empowerment, participation and representation; and facilitate conditions for implementing “women-friendly policies and programs” at gross-root levels (Zenebework, 2001; MoFED, 2002; Tegegne, 2006).

Though most of the studies on decentralization in Ethiopia are more or less mute on the impact of the process on women political empowerment, available studies reveal that women political empowerment within the decentralization drive has not been as expected (Zenebework, 2001; Yigremew, et al, 2005). For instance, “they [women] remained under-represented in local political and administrative structures and the resources allocated for women affairs seem ever diminishing” (Yigremew et al., 2005: 30).

Even in situations where women do participate in local politics, their involvement is limited to electoral politics as they participate mostly as voters (Zenebework, 2001: 13). In cases where they compete for an office, Zenebework reveals that they mostly do it through membership to the ruling party (Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic Front/EPRDF) or parties that are affiliated to it as this ensure them easy access to offices. Zenebework also noted that female presence in representative bodies has not challenged any gender biases in the society or in the structure of governance and elected women are less accountable to fellow women in that constituency (ibid).

Bari (2005) argues that the common pattern of women’s under representation or exclusion in politics stem from political structures and institutions, and the socio-cultural and functional constraints that put limits on women’s individual and collective agency. Male domination of local politics, political parties and culture of formal political structures are among factors that hinder women’s political participation.

Bari also mentions that women also find it hard to participate in politics due to limited time available to them because of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. “With their primary roles as mothers and wives and competing domestic responsibilities and care work, they are left with little time to participate in politics” (Bari, 2005: 5). Bari also remarked the impact of the level of development in civil society organizations and the media should not be downplayed.

Similarly Goetz (2004) noted that the extent to which whether decentralization works for women political empowerment largely depends on the interplay among factors such as level of gender awareness amongst the society, development of women organizations, competitive party and electoral politics at lower level of administration, power and resources available to local institutions.

In Ethiopia however studies concerning the extent to which these factors affect the decentralization-women empowerment nexus are largely missing. Even with the very few studies (such as by Zenebework, and Yigremew) available to-date, the major challenge underlying women’s under-representation in local political affairs hinges upon the low level of gender awareness among the society and sensitization of women’s concern in the structure of local governance. Though socio-cultural issues could be important constraint for women equitable representation in the structure of local governance, it is not the only challenge as there are other factors worth investigation. These include, among other the nature and scope of organizational strategies and politico-legal environments of political participation as well as the institutional context of the decentralization drive itself.

Hence, this study assesses the opportunities, challenges and prospects of women political empowerment in Addis Ketema Sub-City in view the Sub-city’s decentralization framework.

1.3 Research Questions

This study is based on the following general and specific questions. The general question of the study is: what are the opportunities, challenges and prospects of women political empowerment in Addis Ketema Sub-City? Specific questions include:

- What avenues has decentralization created for the political participation and representation of women in the sub-city?
- What are the gains in the area of women political empowerment since decentralization is initiated in the sub-city?
- To what extent does the decentralization process address the challenges of women political empowerment in the sub-city?
- What should be the way forward for successful political empowerment of women within the decentralization framework in the Sub-City?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the challenges, opportunities and prospects of women political empowerment in Addis Ketema Sub-city in view of the decentralization drive in the Sub-City. Specific objectives include:

- Assess the governance structure of Addis Ketema Sub-City
- Examine the organizational strategies, institutional and policy approaches available for women political involvement in the Sub-City
- Identify and explain the opportunities, and challenges hindering the successful political participation of women in the Sub-City, and
- Forward feasible recommendations on how to better exploit the opportunities and also transcend these challenges

1.5 Methodology

According to Dawson (as cited in Kumera, 2006) methodology is a philosophy or general principle which guides a given scientific inquiry or study. Research methodology generally relies on qualitative and quantitative research techniques. While qualitative technique helps to undertake in-depth study through exploring attitudes, behaviors and

experiences by using such instruments as key informants, focus group discussion, document analysis, quantitative research generates statistical and produces numeric data through survey instruments such as questionnaire.

Methodologically, this study employed a mix of qualitative and quantitative approaches. Mixed approach is preferred because of the nature of the problem under study that is women political empowerment. According to Alsop and Heinsohn (2005: 8) women political empowerment is a function of both agency and opportunity factors. Agency factors can be psychological, informational, organizational, material, social, financial, or human. Some assets are easier to measure than others. For example, it is easier to quantify human assets (such as literacy) than psychological assets (such as the capacity to envision) or social assets (such as social capital). This implies that quantifying all types of agency factor is difficult as such requires a “mixed-methods approach”, combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005: 8).

Similarly, measuring opportunity factors (regulatory frameworks and institutional context governing people’s behavior) require mixed-method approach (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005: 9). For instance, Alsop and Heinsohn noted that “information on the presence of particular legislation can be drawn from secondary sources, but data on the actual operation of that formal institution within a particular community would likely require interviews with or surveying a range of respondents” (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005: 12).

According to Babbie (1983: 97) mixed method approach has also the advantage of triangulation. Babbie noted that each research method has its own particular strength and weaknesses, and as such there is always the danger of getting unreliable data by employing single method approach, particularly in situation where the issue under investigation is sensitive. Therefore, mixed method approach has the advantage of getting reliable data based on which credible findings are to be generated (Babbie, 1983: 97).

The study is conducted in Addis Ketema Sub-city of Addis Ababa City Administration. Surveying more sub-cities could have been done if that had not required more time, experience and resources. The researcher has also been informed during preliminary

assessment that Addis Ketema Sub-City has better performance in women political participation in governance structure and it will be valuable experience if supported by empirical study.

Accordingly, the study has assessed the context, institutional measures, gains and processes of women political empowerment and participation in the sub-city in view of the decentralization process in the sub-city. The central aim was to establish configurations and patterns of relationships between decentralization and the various opportunities and challenges for women political empowerment so as to throw light into the prospects. To this end, both primary and secondary data are gathered using both quantitative and qualitative data collection instruments. Questionnaire, key informant and expert interview, observation and document analysis are the instruments through which data are gathered. Data gathered through these instruments are triangulated so as to address the research questions and arrive at credible findings.

1.6 Methods of Data Collection and Analysis

A. Sampling

The target populations of this study, from which the units of data collection and analysis are drawn, ideally comprise all women in the sub-city. But for various reasons (such as resource and time constraints) only incumbent women councilors in Addis Ketema sub-city council and councils of the nine *kebeles* in the sub-city are chosen as target population. 25 are chosen randomly from Addis Ketema Sub-City's council and 125 women councilors are selected from councils of five *kebeles*. A questionnaire consisting of both open and close ended questions is administered to elicit first hand information from the sample 150 women councilors. The data thus collected is categorized, coded and entered into SPSS 12.0 version computer software for quantitative (simple statistic) and descriptive analysis.

B. Interview and Observation

Interview is held with nine key informants and three experts in order to obtain qualitative data that could not otherwise be gathered by the survey questionnaire. Informants are chosen purposively considering the positions they assumed in government institutions in the sub-city and their knowledge on the issue of women political empowerment as well as the decentralization process in the sub-city. Informants approached include both male and female informants drawn from sub-city and kebele councils, women affairs and other offices, such as capacity building, and planning and finance, and representatives of political parties. In addition, the researcher employed personal observation by attending conferences and councilors' discussions and debates so as to gain insights particularly on the extent of the participation of women representatives and sensitization of gender issues in decision making.

C. Analysis of Documentary Sources

In addition to reviewing books and journal article to render for the problem of the study a conceptual and theoretical framework; a variety of documentary materials such as constitutional provisions, proclamations, periodic reports and files from government institutions are consulted in order to substantiate the validity and reliability of the primary data that are generated through sample survey, interviewing informants and observation. Data obtained through documentary search and interviews are analyzed qualitatively using quotations and thematic/reflective interpretations.

1.7 Significance of the study

In recent years, given the recognition of gender equality as crucial aspect of development as well as the widespread promotion of decentralization as essential ingredient of democratization and empowerment strategy, it is quite significant to look into the role of decentralization for gender equality in decision making. In Ethiopia, though the number and scope of studies made on decentralization is growing, attention given to the influence and role of decentralization for women political participation and empowerment is very limited. This study is therefore basically meant to show to what extent decentralization reform process redresses gender disparity in local governance and politics while

empowering women politically. To this end, particular attention is made on the assessment of the opportunities, challenges and prospects of women political empowerment in Addis Ketema Sub-City. By doing so, the research tried to fill the existing research gap in the area. It is also hoped to provide some information to policy makers and women right advocates interested to uphold the political situation of women in lower levels of administration. Moreover, the study could also serve as background information for further and in-depth study on the same problem or other similar studies in the future.

1.8 Scope of the Study

Women political empowerment is one of the five aspects of women empowerment identified by Carlos and Zahidi (2005). Women political empowerment can take place at different administrative levels: national, district or local levels. This study however looks into women political empowerment in the local level. Specifically the study makes an assessment of the opportunities, challenges and prospects of women political empowerment within the decentralization framework of Addis Ketema Sub-City. As such, the assessment is made on the formal political contexts, institutional frameworks and organizational strategies of political participation and representation in the sub-city from women's angle.

The time framework of the study though ideally ranges from the period since the launching of decentralization in the city of Addis Ababa with the promulgation of proclamation 87/1997, the period since 2003 is the central focuses of the study. This is because it is with the proclamation of the revised charter of the Addis Ababa city Administration in 2003 that the existing decentralized administrative structure and institutional set-up of the sub-city has come into effect.

1.9 Limitations and Challenges

The concept of women empowerment is not so easy to define and measure. There is no universally agreed upon measurement criterion of women empowerment (Luttrell et al,

2009). Nevertheless, the study made use of the combination of women empowerment measurement frameworks and indicators developed by Carlos and Zahidi (2005) and Alsop and Heinsohn (2005). For the Carlos and Zahidi, women empowerment has five dimensions of women empowerment: economic, social, political, educational, and health and well-being while for Alsop and Heinsohn it can take place at national, district or local level.

Concerning the challenges, the main challenge during the survey period was inaccessibility of women councilors. As most of them engaged in politics on part-time basis as well as due to the hustle-bustle in the 2010 national election they were very much inaccessible. Some officials also expressed their discomfort about the 'safe use' of the data they provide. Nevertheless, in order to ensure the quality and credibility of the research triangulating data from various sources is used as a bulwark.

1.10 The Study Area

With the constitutional declaration of the Ethiopian state as 'Federal Democratic Republic' following the change in regime in 1991, Addis Ababa became the capital of the federal state and a chartered city having its own autonomy and administrative set-up. Accordingly, with Proclamation no. 87/97 its organizational structure was put in place as consisting of 6 zones, which were divided into 28 weredas (districts), which were again divided into 328 kebeles (sub districts). Nevertheless, this administrative system was restructured following the ratification of the revised charter the city of Addis Ababa which came into effect in 2003. With that reform, weredas were renamed as sub cities and their number was reduced to ten. The number of kebeles was also reduced to 203 and in 2005 to 99.

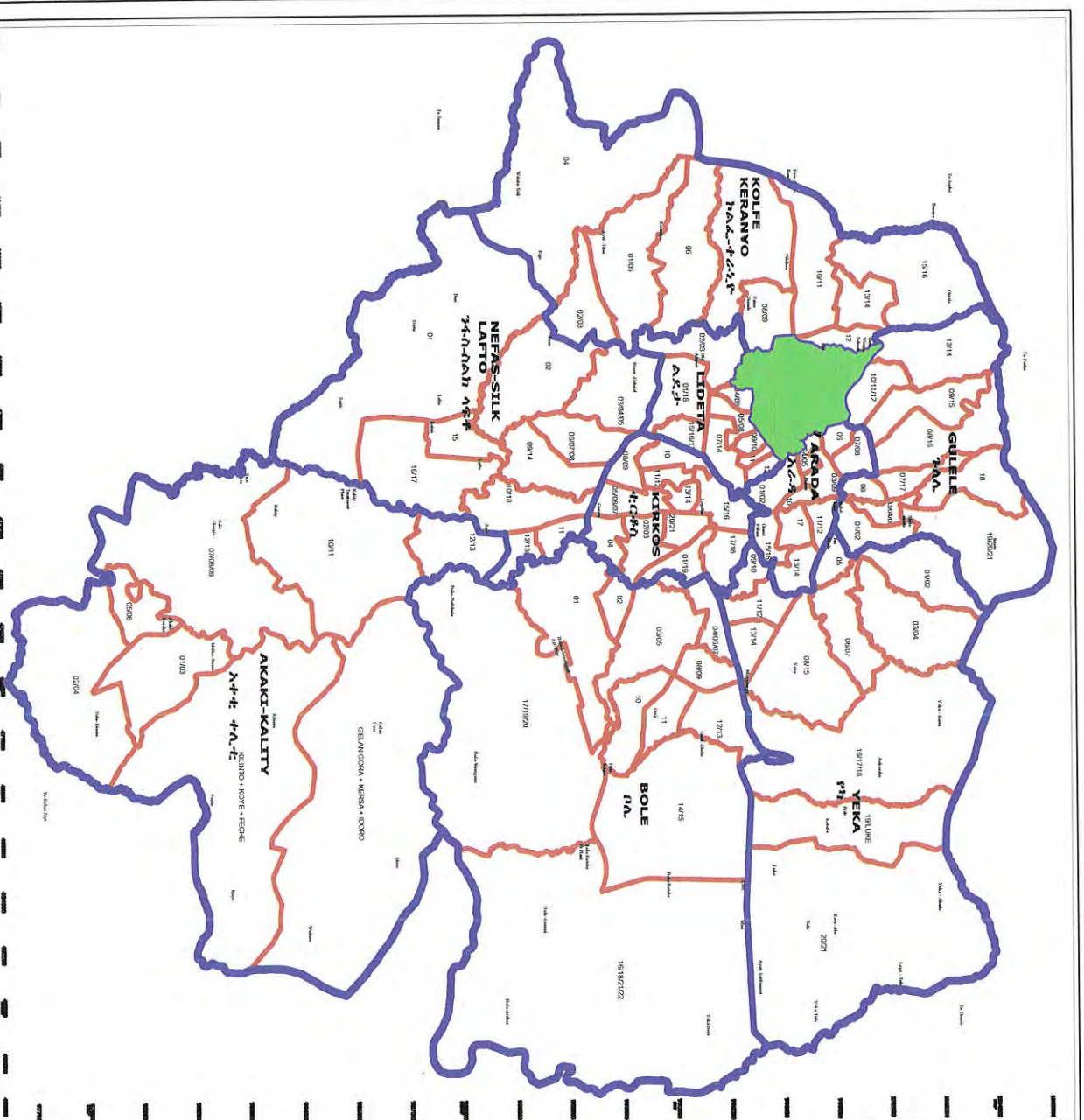
Addis Ketema Sub-city, where this study is taken place, is one of the ten self-administering sub-cities of the city of Addis Ababa. Addis Ketema sub-city is located in the central part of Addis Ababa (see Appendix 1) bounded by Arada in the east, Gullele in the north, Kolfe Keranyo in the west and Lideta sub-city in the south. The sub-city

covers an area of 7.42 sq.km and currently has a total population of 255,092 of which 124,741 (48.9%) are male and 130,351 (51.1%) are female.

In addition to hosting various historical heritages, religious, government and non-governmental institutions and organizations, Addis Ketema sub-city is where the biggest open market and commercial center of the country, *Merkato*, is found.

Since 2003, and in accordance with the decentralization framework and for administration purpose the sub-city is divided into nine kebeles (since July 2010 kebeles are renamed as wereda and the sub-city now consists of 10 weredas) which are acknowledged as “center for development and direct popular participation as well as a location of the delivery of basic services” (AACGRC proclamation 361/2003: 2351). As similar to the sub-city, the governance structure of each and every kebele is organized into popularly elected council, executive offices and kebele social court. The sub-city council which has 270 seats, is entrusted with powers and responsibilities, among others, approve economic, social and municipal service plans of the sub-city, receive, examine and decide upon the annual and periodic reports from the chief executive; allocate budget to different offices and also kebeles, and other appointment powers. Nevertheless, the council at kebele level has total seats of 300 and it is entrusted with similar power and responsibility except on decisions on the allocation of budget (it is usually done at sub-city level) over kebele jurisdictions.

The term of office of members of the council both at sub-city and kebele levels is five year and councils in both levels work on the principle of majority vote. Members of the council especially at the sub-city level are involved in various standing committee that are responsible for deliberating on plan and budgetary allocation proposal, and implementation of policies, programs, regulations and decisions of the council (AKSC Council, 2005). Currently there are twelve standing committees, of which women affairs committee is the one. This kind of institutional arrangement is however not the case at kebele levels. Concerning the number of shares of seats of women is concerned; at sub-city level out of the 270 seats women have occupied 76 (28.1%) seats. Whereas at kebele



City Government of Addis Ababa
 አዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር



Sub-City and Kebele Administrative Division
 የቀበሌ ከተማ እና ቀበሌ አስተዳደር ክልል

- KEBELE BOUNDARY
 የቀበሌዎች የአስተዳደር ወሰን ክልል
- KIFLE KETEMA BOUNDARY
 የቀበሌ ከተማዎች የአስተዳደር ወሰን ክልል
- ADDIS KETEMA SUB_CITY



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DATE: 5, OCTOBER, 2004 Scale: 1:50,000 UTM Projection Sheet: 39

levels, from the total of seats, that is 2700 from all the nine kebeles, women have occupied 1054 (39%) seats (AKSC Council speaker office, 2002). The last figure is almost equivalent with the percentage share of women in the council of the five kebeles included in the survey. The total number of seats of the councils of these kebeles is 1500 of which women have occupied 579 (38.6%) seats (ibid).

The executive wing of local administration in the sub-city is organized into twenty one and twenty-four sector based offices at kebele and sub-city levels respectively. At both levels the executive is headed by the chief executive whose nomination is to be approved by the respective kebele and sub-city councils. Concerning the share of women in top positions of executive offices, one-third (33.3%) of such positions both at kebele and sub-city administrative levels are reserved for women (ibid). Women Affairs Office (WAO) is one of these institutions entrusted with a range of responsibilities so as to ensure the betterment of women in economic, social and political areas.

The social court both at sub-cities and kebele levels is however very flimsy and its mandate is very much limited. The court has no formal judicial arrangement as its jurisdictions are limited to 'insensitive' social cases. In most cases juries are non-professional and not-paid. This shows that judicial decentralization in the sub-city seems completely missing. As such this could be an important area of research concern for scholars.

1.11 Organization of the Study

The research report is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is devoted to background information to the inception of the research and the problem as well as approach of the study. Chapter two makes a review of both theoretical and empirical literatures of the study. As such, it identifies and deals with relevant conceptual and theoretical issues of the study so as to set out and establish certain form of configuration or pattern of relationships among the identified organizing concepts. The same chapter also chapter makes a review of literatures on the decentralization-women political empowerment nexus in Ethiopia so as to clearly identify existing research gap in the field. Chapter three

presents and as well as discusses data results generated especially through quantitative instruments. This chapter also gives a general picture of the socio-demographic as well as channels of political participation, opportunities and challenges of women councilors in the study area. Chapter four discusses and analyses the opportunities, challenges and prospects of women political empowerment by integrating data results generated through both qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments. Accordingly, the chapter assesses the national and sub-national institutional and politico-legal environments of women political empowerment. Finally, chapter five draws important conclusion and suggests feasible alternatives so as to exploit existing opportunities and transcend the identified challenges so as to move steps forward in the drive for the political empowerment of women in the study area in particular.

Operational Definition of key Terms and phrases

Challenges, in this study refers to constraints or impediments that hinder the effectiveness opportunities and practices of women political empowerment in the study area

Decentralization, political and administrative reform processes involving the transfer of varying amounts and combinations of powers, responsibilities and resources to sub-national and local government units.

Women Political Empowerment, which can be conceived as either a goal or method, and an outcome or a process, implies creating opportunities for women to gain access to, participate in and control over public decisions shaping their community.

Gender the economic, political, and cultural constructions, attributes and opportunities associated with being male or female in a particular society.

Gender equality (political) refers to a situation where men and women have equal access to political resources and opportunities so that one's (dis)involvement in politics is not determined by his/her sex.

Gender equity refers to fairness of treatment (equal treatment or treatment that is different but considered equivalent in terms of rights, benefits, obligations, and opportunities) for women and men, according to their respective needs.

Opportunities, in the context of this study refers to the existing national and sub-national institutional and organizational frameworks, politico-legal instruments and policies that determine and define the availability, nature and scope of conducive situations for women political empowerment in the study area.

Sex refers to the biological (natural and innate) identity of being either feminine or masculine.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Theoretical Approach and Conceptual Framework of the Study

The crisis in the traditional development discourse which could not view development beyond an issue of increase in the per capita income of a nation, paved the way for rigorous and continuous attempt by scholars including feminists to set-out gender sensitive development approaches (Rathgeber, 1989). Women empowerment is one of the contemporary outcomes of such attempts by feminists. Review of literature reveals that, the empowerment approach to women is located within the two major streams of theoretical approaches on women and development and especially the shift from 'Women in Development' (WID) to 'Gender and Development' (GAD) approach (Razavi and Miller, 1995). Specifically, "empowerment is associated with the gender and development approach that challenges the argument which claim the inclusion of women in the development process can decrease their work burden" (Luttrell et al, 2009: 3). For detail discussion on WID and GAD see Razavi and Miller (1995) and Rathgeber (1989).

The kernel of empowerment approach is gender analysis of power and the conceptualization of the subordination of women in terms of the powerlessness of women in terms of access to and control over decision making positions and material resources (Luttrell et al, 2009).

This chapter therefore sets out major theoretical issues and trends in the empowerment approach in the way women's issues have been approached in a wider development context and establishes the conceptual framework of the study especially by identifying the manner and pattern of relationship between decentralization and women political empowerment. In addition, the chapter reviews empirical literatures on decentralization and women political participation in Ethiopia.

2.1.1 Empowerment: Conceptualization

Before conceptualizing empowerment it is of paramount importance to briefly look into the concept of gender as it is essential in understanding women empowerment. Gender refers to the socially constructed roles and status that a particular society assigns to the two sexes both in private and public spheres of life (Ostergrad, 1992). In many societies however such assignments limited “women's access to social, economic, and especially political resources despite their triple roles” (Ostergrad, 1992: 4).

Politically, the difference is in the way in which man and woman assume and share state power and authority. As such, men are mainly involved in public and higher levels of politics while women’s activities are linked to domestic sphere perpetuating their powerlessness (Ostergraad, 1992; Jalele, 2005). Accordingly, gender assignments determine women’s capability to have access to, participate in, negotiate with, control and hold accountable state institutions that affect their lives (Majitu and Bedria, 1999). Gender is therefore a concept that entails power and power relations that exist not only between men and women but also women and state institutions.

One of the implications of gender analysis is the advocacy for the empowerment of women as an effective strategy for the betterment of women and to ensure equality between male and female (Rathgeber, 1989; Razavi and Miller, 1995; Luttrell et al, 2009).

The modern use of the term empowerment can be traced back to the 1960s particularly to the Afro-Americans movement in the struggle for the protection and promotion of Blacks’ civil and political rights (Commission on Women and Development, 2007). Since then empowerment has been increasingly used by development and social justice activists, local and international organizations, institutional and political actors with reference to disadvantageous groups (Oxaal and Baden, 1997; Luttrell et al, 2009).

In the context of feminist movement and women's rights advocacy however the use of the term got momentum especially following the Beijing Conference in 1995 when the significance of women empowerment was declared as:

'Women empowerment and their participation on the basis of equality in all spheres of society, including participation in decision-making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievements of equality, development and peace' (quoted in Commission on Women and Development, 2007: 9).

The basic assumption for the elevation of empowerment as a strategy for achieving equality, development and peace is the conviction that the prime factor for the inequality between men and women is the powerlessness of women in controlling over crucial resources. This implies that power is the key to better comprehend the concept of empowerment. Within in the context of empowerment, Foucault (cited in Commission on Women and Development, 2007) identifies four types of power: power to, power over, power with and power within. Power to, implies the ability to make decisions, have authority and find solutions to problems and access to resources needed for decisions.

Power over, refers to a mutually exclusive relationship of domination and/or subordination. Power with, refers to the social and political context that enables people to get together, negotiate and defend a common goals. Whereas, power within refers to the degree of individual's self-awareness and self-esteem. From the above discussion of the different types of power, empowerment can be defined as the process of acquiring power individually and/or collectively.

In a more subtle way, Alsop and Heinsohn (2005: 5) define empowerment as "enhancing an individual's or group's capacity to make choices and transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes." Alsop and Heinsohn definition of empowerment entails empowerment both as a process (of empowering groups or individuals) and an outcome (a person or group is empowered). According to Alsop and Heinsohn (2005), the degree to which a person is empowered can be measured by assessing (1) whether a person has the opportunity to make a choice, (2) whether a person actually uses the opportunity to choose, and (3) once the choice is made, whether it brings the desired outcome or not.

For example, if a woman in Addis Ketema wants to campaign for local election, is there local council for her to compete for? If yes, does the woman actually make the decision to campaign for the election? If yes, does she actually campaign?

According to Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) the degree of empowerment is influenced by personal agency and opportunity structure. Agency is defined as “an actor’s ability to make meaningful choices; that is, the actor is able to envisage options and make a choice” (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005: 7). Agency factors include psychological, informational, organizational, material, social, financial, or human assets. Nevertheless, according to the scholars it is difficult to measure all the assets as some assets are easier to measure than others. For example, it is easier to quantify human assets (such as skills or literacy) than psychological assets (such as the capacity to envision).

Moreover, Alsop and Heinsohn (2005: 8) make an insight that understanding the complex interaction among agency’s assets also presents challenges stating that “an actor’s or group’s command over one asset can affect the endowment of another asset”. For example, education (a human asset) often gives an actor greater access to information (itself an asset) and at times improves his/her capacity to envision alternative options (a psychological asset) (ibid).

Alsop and Heinsohn define opportunity structure as the formal and informal contexts within which an actor(s) operate. Opportunity structure is measured by the presence and operation of formal and informal institutions, including the laws, regulatory frameworks, and norms governing actors’ behaviors (ibid). According to Alsop and Heinsohn opportunity structure is important not only it determines degree of empowerment but also it defines “whether individuals and groups have access to assets, and whether these people can use the assets to achieve desired outcomes” (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005: 9).

Drawing from the above conceptualization and in the context of women, empowerment implies an action oriented strategy aimed at increasing the individual and collective capacity of women to make choices and to transform those choices into desired actions and outcomes (Commission on Women and Development, 2007: 4) Empowerment

enables women to build individual and collective assets and to improve the efficiency and fairness of institutional structure and context which govern the use of these assets (ibid).

As an action-oriented concept, women empowerment can take various forms, viz economic, social, political, educational attainment and health and well-being (Oxaal and Baden, 1997; Carlos and Zahidi, 2005). This implies that women empowerment is a very wide notion having various dimensions. For Oxaal and Baden all the dimensions of empowerment are interrelated in such a way that, in the long run, empowering women in one sector may carry through into other areas; and as such “empowerment in one area may not be sustained without attention to other facets” (Oxaal and Baden, 1997: 7). This however does not mean that it is impossible to demarcate the boundary between each of the dimensions and treat each of them separately.

That said, given various constraints and arguments set below, this research only looks at the political (formal politics) dimension of women empowerment. Of course, all the other aspects of women empowerment are still important and may influence the degree of success of political empowerment; yet women political empowerment needs particular attention. The significance of women political empowerment is captured in the Emma Frankl’s (2004: 10) reflection on analysis of the traditional definition of politics and the famous ‘public-private divide’ and the three feminist political strategies (inclusion, reversal and displacement) as identified by Judith Squires. According to Frankl, the aim of inclusionists (which were common during the 19th century in the West) was to include women in political forms from which they are traditionally excluded. By the time, they focused on women’s right to vote and stand in elections and the adoption of positive discrimination to increase the number of women in government institutions.

Nevertheless, in 1960s and 1970s many feminists chanting the slogan ‘the personal is political’ become popular and challenged the orthodox definition of politics and adopted a strategy of reversal. They defined politics in a wider context so as to include what has traditionally been ‘private’. With such conceptual shift of politics it becomes evident that women have long been key political actors of course from disadvantageous position.

Hence, they argued that it was not meaningful to work within the existing political institutions and electoral politics. Instead, political work should be conducted within and by women's autonomous organizations which claimed to be open to all and non-hierarchical. However, in practice, many women's groups were largely unrepresented which made many women feel excluded and silenced.

By the 1980s many feminists had become more concerned with the importance of increasing the numbers of women present within parties and legislature as well as in pursuing policies in the interests of women. This gave for the rise of feminists pursuing a strategy of displacement. Unlike the first two categories of feminists 'displacementists' emphasize instead of the apparent dichotomy between formal and informal political activity a reconsideration of the inter-relation between the two. They also emphasize the need for rethinking the state arguing that instead of looking at the state as a coherent unity which simply reflects gender inequalities, one need to see the state as:

'Diverse set of discursive arenas which play a crucial role in organizing relations of power. Rather than abandoning the state as an analytic or political category, it is important to analyze the strategic possibilities available at one time' (Pringle and Watson quoted in Frankl, 2004: 12).

The state is a historical product and not structurally given. The outcomes of different policies do not simply depend on the structures, but on discursive struggles which define and constitute the state and specific interests from one moment to the next (Pringle and Watson cited in Frankl, 2004: 12).

Accordingly, for feminists in the displacement school of thought formal politics is still an important arena where women should be active. Emma Frankl argues (which this study also shares) formal political domain is significant not only it is where collective decisions are made but also it provides women with an arena of struggle and strategy to transform the traditional sexual division of labor which makes it harder for women to enter the public domain. In this regard, Squires (quoted in Frankl, 2004: 12) states that this does not signify a "return to an unmodified liberalism, but a recognition of the importance of the representation of women in the institutional political arenas in which decisions are

made, with implications for the routes into and the organization and conduct of those arenas.”

From the above quote it is possible to drive the idea that representation of women in the institutional political arenas is also vital as in most cases it is those institutions that define and determine the range of assets and opportunities available for women to make their own choices. This implies that political empowerment is of vital importance for the overall empowerment of women.

2.1.2 Women Political Empowerment

Oxaal and Baden (1997) define women political empowerment as an approach for promoting the participation of women in formal politics. As such, political empowerment involves a range of mechanisms to increase women’s participation in politics. According to Oxaal and Baden (1997: 6) these mechanisms include,

- Reform of political parties, quotas and other affirmative action;
- Training to develop women’s skills and gender sensitivity;
- Work with women’s sections of political parties; and
- The development of women’s political organizations.

According to Oxaal and Baden, the indicators of women political empowerment include, percentage seats held by women both at national and sub-national councils and decision making bodies; percentage of women registered as voters or election candidate; percentage of women in decision making positions within political parties.

Carlos and Zahidi (2005: 6) also define women political empowerment as the “equitable representation of women and their voice in collective decision-making structures and in the formulation of policies affecting their life and the lives of their societies.” Specific indicators of women political empowerment includes number of women in government’s executive and legislative offices as well as women in managerial positions and the number of years women held those positions (ibid).

Nevertheless, a mere representation or participation of women in decision-making bodies does not necessarily ensure that the demands of women is got fulfilled. So there has to be mechanism (that need to be included in the conceptualization of political empowerment) that ensures the numeric representation of women will bring substantive changes in sensitization of gender and women issues in policy formulation and implementation.

The later idea is captured in Vanessa Griffin (quoted in Farduars, 2006: 78) conceptualization of women political empowerment that sees political empowerment in terms of, among others,

- Having control or gaining further control over decision making bodies
- Having a say and being listened to
- Being able to influence collective decisions affecting the whole society
- Being recognized and respected as equal citizens in human beings with a contribution to make.

Accordingly, women political empowerment implies control over recourses and establishes the means to acquire ability and opportunity to participate in decision-making process and its implementation at various levels (ibid). This does not mean that women political empowerment is only process as it can be conceived as an outcome too since each level can be taken as an outcome by-itself (Luttrell et al, 2009).

Moreover, Majitu and Bedria (1999) define women political empowerment as an action-oriented concept with a focus on removal of barriers and creating opportunities for women to gain access to, participate in and control over state's politics and decision-making so as to transform the power relations between women and men and women and state's institutions. According to Majitu and Bedria's definition women political empowerment has four different but interrelated aspects (see Table 2.1). These are access, participation and representation, control, and transformation. The access dimension of women political empowerment basically entails the extent of constitutional recognition of women civil and political rights, and prevalence of other 'enabling' conditions for them to engage in public affairs of their society. It also includes the degree

of availability of institutional avenues (such as system of elected council, and competitive party and electoral politics) and measures (such as affirmative actions targeting women), informational and other personal assets such as education for women to engage in politics (Majitu and Bedria, 1999).

The participation dimension of women political empowerment refers to the situation of women political mobilization, and their numerical representation in decision-making in national and local representative bodies or councils, and associational politics such as political parties on basis of gender equality. Specifically it can be measured in terms of the number of women in government's executive and legislative offices as well as the number of years women held those positions and women in political and civic organizations such as women associations.

Though women numeric representation in decision making is crucial to their political empowerment, it makes sense only when their participation has substantive impact and control over decisions (Luttrell et al, 2009). This entails whether there exists system to ensure that the voice of women is weighted effectively in decision making, efforts to offer training programmes to build women leaders' capacity to engage in decision making, incentives to encourage elected officials to respond to the concerns of women (ibid). These issues are important because the quantitative representation of women by itself would bring less success unless the quality of women participation is assured through institutional means (ibid). Once women have effective control and substantive impact on decisions the chance for transforming gender based power relationship that exist between man and women is very high. Transformation in this case implies a situation where man and women have equality of opportunities so that their political (dis)involvement is not determined by their sex (ibid).

Table 2.1 Levels of Women Political Empowerment

<i>Levels</i>	<i>Description</i>
Transformation	Equality of opportunities so that one's political (dis)involvement is not determined by his/her sex
↑	
Control	Having a say and being listened to, and influence collective decisions sensitizing women concerns
↑	
Participation	Women mobilization and numeric representation in decision-making, local government, and associational politics on basis of gender equality
↑	
Access	Gaining access to political resources and institutions, information, recognition of women civil and political rights, and prevalence of other 'enabling' conditions

Source: developed by the author taking Sara Hlupekile Longwe's empowerment framework (as cited in Luttrell et al, 2009) and Majitu and Bedria (1999) definition of women political empowerment into account

According to Alsop and Heinsohn (2005) women political empowerment can take place at different administrative levels: national, district or local levels. Though, to-date, available studies on women political empowerment are limited both in quantity and their scope to national level, "there is growing interest amongst researchers on women political empowerment at lower levels of administration" (Alsop and Heinsohn, 2005: 9). This development has partly been triggered by the wave and process of governments' transfer of power and resources of one kind or another to their lower levels of administrative units (ibid). As such, a growing number of scholars in the feminist camp engage in finding out the 'blessings' and 'curse' of decentralization for women empowerment in general and their political empowerment in particular. Below, before dealing with the nexus between decentralization and women political empowerment, I will briefly discuss the concept, motives and types of decentralization.

2.1.3 Decentralization

Though decentralization is so familiar in contemporary development literatures, there is no single and commonly agreed upon definition for the concept. This is partly because, decentralization is a very complex phenomenon which takes many forms and has various

dimensions. Decentralization process can also vary from country to country and even within a single country. Moreover, motives for which decentralization is initiated, designed and implemented in different countries determine its meaning as it could be defined in that context (Kumera, 2006).

MacLean (2003: 2) defines decentralization as “political and administrative reform processes involving the transfer of varying amounts and combinations of functions, responsibilities and resources; and political and fiscal autonomy to lower tier of the state.” MacLean’s definition entail decentralization as process of reforming the state in areas of politics, administration and finance with the aim to enable lower levels of government to initiate, plan, make and implement decisions concerning local public needs. The definition also makes distinction among three dimensions of decentralization: administrative, political and fiscal decentralization. Some scholars in the field also include divestment /privatization as a fourth dimension (Rondinelli, 2002).

2.1.3.1 Types of Decentralization

Decentralization can be of three types: administrative, political and fiscal decentralization. Administrative decentralization implies the transfer of responsibility from higher level of administrative hierarchy to lower levels. As such it can take two forms: *deconcentration* and delegation. *Deconcentration* refers to the intra-governmental transfer of authority and functions among units of administration in the same organizational structure (MacLean, 2003; Meheret, 2002). In deconcentration, the transfer process does not involve transfer of authority, as such sub-national entities function as field administration rather than legally independent decision making entities (Turner and Hulme: 1997).

Delegation is the other form of administrative decentralization in which authority and responsibility is dispersed from the center to its local government or agencies or semi-all autonomous bodies that are not under the direct control of the central government (MacLean, 2003). Delegation resembles ‘principal-agent’ relationship between the delegating authority, central government, and semi-autonomous bodies in which the later

act as closely as possible in accordance with the needs the former (Litvack et al cited in Derese, 2003).

Generally, the promise of administrative decentralization for people's, including women political empowerment is very less as the role of local actors are limited to participation in execution of centrally determined decisions (Manor, 1999).

Political decentralization, also known as devolution, denotes the constitutional distribution of decision making and implementation power to elected sub-national units with the fundamental aim of enabling and empowering people to determine and govern their political and economic choices (Meheret, 2002; MacLean, 2003). Political decentralization involves the constitutional creation of new tiers of government or the change in the way existing sub-national government are structured by (re)defining the range of their power and responsibilities (Smith, 1985; Turner and Hulme: 1997).

Devolution enhances local democratic governance by transferring decision-making and implementation authority to lower levels of government (Smith, 1985). It provides citizens with opportunities to access to, participate in and control over local governance; promote accountability and responsiveness of local governments to public demands; and promote democracy through periodic and competitive local elections (Turner and Hulme, 1997; Meheret, 2002). It promotes equity at local level by ensuring the fair representation of different societal groups including women (Zenebework, 2001).

Fiscal decentralization refers to the transfer of financial resources in which high level system cedes control over budget and financial decisions to lower levels so that the later will not get difficulty in discharging the constitutionally assigned responsibilities for it (Manor, 1999; Turner and Hulme: 1997). Fiscal decentralization involves the reallocation of resources or transfer of resource decision to local governments to allow them to undertake their functions properly. Manor (1999) affirms that the combination of fiscal and political decentralization is it the heart of democratic decentralization which he characterizes as a process which enables local governments to initiate, plan, make and implement decisions in partner with citizens and their various organizations over issues that affect their lives directly.

2.1.3.2 Rationale for Decentralization

In the mainstream development thinking, including major donor institutions, 'efficiency' is the primary reason for supporting decentralization (MacLean, 2003; Turner and Hulme, 1997). With decentralization lower tiers of governments are believed to mobilize and manage resources so as to engage in development efforts more efficiently (than the central government) because of their physical, social and psychological proximity to the people who use and benefit from them (World Bank as cited in Zenebework, 2001). Proximity is also supposed to reduce cost of decision making as a result of better access to information about local preferences, needs and conditions including that of women (Smith, 1985; Derese, 2003).

Meanwhile, in many developing countries, decentralization is advocated against the backdrop of socio- economic and political crisis in the 1980s to promote democracy. Decentralization has been initiated with the aim "...engendering a situation where ordinary people take charge of their live by becoming actively involved in their own governance..." (Okome quoted in MacLean, 2003: 6). It was also believed "to bring eventual recovery from economic and political crisis," and put in place, "accountable, efficient and effective government in smaller political units..." (ibid)

According to the quotations above, decentralization is believed to engender institutionally capable local government that provides stable, predictable and transparent rule based regime where ordinary people and their various organizations have access to, control over and participate in decision that affect their lives. Advocates argue that decentralization empowers politically weak people at the local level enabling them better opportunity to participate in decisions and held local officials and institutions accountable for decisions that affect their lives. With decentralization, accountability is enhanced because "local representatives are more accessible and open to the people and can thus be held answerable for their decisions than distant authorities at the center" (Turner and Hulme, 1997:157-58)

Decentralization is also advocated with the assumption that it enhances political participation of people at the local level. In this regard, Manor (1999) forcefully argues

that when democratic decentralization works well, it can yield substantial benefits. These include greater political participation and the creation of new opportunities for people who want to pursue politics while helping them develop political skills. As a result, decentralization is considered as vehicle for empowering people so as to engender local democratic governance a situation where different actors will have access to, control over, and participate in decisions that affect their lives.

Some scholars in the field, however, argue that though in principle decentralization has the promise for greater political empowerment, in practice there are many limits to achieve such a targets. Opponents claim that decentralization by shifting more power to the local level may pave the way for the capture of local political process by local elites, or reinforce local elites existing domination (Robit, 2002). As such, traditionally marginalized groups including women remain disadvantageous. Moreover, the extent to which development in popular democracy, multiparty system mass media and civil society also determine the effectiveness of decentralization as vehicle for participation and empowerment (Owolu, 2001). Gaventa and Valderrama (cited in MacLean, 2003:12) also point out other obstacles for effective citizens' participation, such as education, level and nature of society organizations, skill, and experience and so on.

Therefore, though the speed and shift towards decentralization seem unfolding, it should not be tally perceived as panacea as there are numerous impediments to the successful implementation of the process. Moreover, when examined with a gender lens, this long list of impediments often tends to be doubly challenging.

2.1.4 Decentralization and Women Political Empowerment

As discussed above, decentralization of powers, resources and responsibilities to lower levels of government is given an important focus and as integral part of democratic reform: improving the quality and efficiency of services and increasing local participation in decision-making processes. The assumption is that with decentralization government will be nearer to citizens and that they will take a closer interest in local matters as they are related to their daily lives (Goetz, 2004: 3). Quite often, feminists also site similar

assumption concerning the promises of decentralization for women political empowerment.

Accordingly, though research on the role of decentralization reform process on women empowerment has no strong track record, there is an increasing 'consensus' amongst feminists that decentralization has certain promises for women political empowerment. The reasons why it is thought that women participate more easily in decentralized local governance are clearly mentioned by Evertzen (2001b:3) as:

Eligibility criteria for the local level are less stringent, and local government is the closest to the women's sphere of life, and easier to combine with rearing children. It can be the first level that women can break into and as such it may serve as a springboard to national politics, by developing capacities and gaining experiences. Likewise local politics can be more interesting to women as they are well acquainted with their community, being the major users of space and services in the local community (water, electricity, waste disposal, health clinics, and other social services). They also participate actively in organizations in their neighborhood, and it's easier to involve these organizations in formal political decision making at the local level

Likewise, Betham (1996: 4) argues that barriers to women's entry—such as the need to travel and spend time away from home, a large disposable income, a reasonable level of education, experience of political competition and social connections—are lower and less stringent at the local level. According to Betham, less entry barrier means that local politics is the right place for the effective implementation of affirmative actions measures targeted to enhancing women political empowerment. Accordingly, it is believed that local politics serves as a political and leadership teaching ground and the first level where women can break into public power hierarchy (Betham, 1996; Philips, 1996; Beal, 2005).

Betham (ibid) also mentions that local government positions and activities are more accessible and open to women because of their physical and psychological proximity and part time characteristic. Such characteristics of local politics makes easier for women to combine their triple roles with the public sphere of activities and to have access to information.

As such, optimists claim that the promise of decentralization rests on creating and reinforcing those opportunities available at the local level in a way of bringing local government institutions closer to people.

On the contrary, pessimists contend that the extent to which decentralization advances gender equality goals and women political empowerment in local governance and politics is a function of various mediating factors. According to Bari (2005) the local structural and functional constraints faced by women are shaped by social and political relations in a society in general. For Bari, the common pattern of women's political exclusion stem from political structures and institutions, and the socio-cultural and functional constraints that put limits on women's individual and collective agency.

According to Bari (2005) male domination of local politics, political parties and culture of formal political structures are among factors that hinder women's political participation. Bari argues that, often male dominated political parties have a male perspective on issues of women concern. Bari also notes that women are usually not elected at the strategic position of power within party structures because of gender biases of male leadership.

Women also find it hard to participate in politics due to limited time available to them because of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. "With their primary roles as mothers and wives and competing domestic responsibilities and care work, they are left with little time to participate in politics" (Bari, 2005: 5).

Pessimists further argue that even once women enter government structure it is not possible to conclude the problem is over. In this regard, Goetz and Maire (as quoted in Zenebework, 2001: 6) make the difference between women representation and the representation of women interest in government structures. Accordingly, they underscore that women representation in governance structure does not necessarily mean the representation of women's interest. Using their words,

'There is deference between numeric increase in women representatives and the representation of women's interest in government decision making. The one does not automatically lead to the other, not just because individual women politicians cannot be assumed to be concerned with gender equity, but because of institutionalized resistance to gender equity with the apparatus of governance' (ibid).

Implicit to the above quotation is that whether women representation is fruitful or not depends on the degree to which institutionalized gender biases in government structures are effectively dealt or not. Local political culture, the institutional context and nature of the decentralization drive itself (see appendix 1); nature of local party politics and electoral system; women socio-economic background and the level of mobilization of women and gender equality advocates both at local and national levels are also among the factors most emphasized in determining the level of women political empowerment and participation within decentralization framework (Goetz, 2004; Mukhopadhyay and Meer, 2004).

The implication to be derived from the above two sets of arguments is that decentralized system of governance facilitate the conditions needed both to encourage women's participation in local government, and to make local governments accountable to female constituents. Women's participation in local governments will not make these institutions more responsive to women's needs unless measures are put in place to transcend the various socio-cultural and institutional challenges encountering women.

2.2 Decentralization and Women Political Empowerment in post 1991 Ethiopia

2.2.1 Decentralization in Ethiopia

Ethiopia was a country with a tradition of strong political and administrative centralization up until the ouster of the Derge regime in 1991. Since then, however the country has been implementing decentralization process as one of its leading political

agenda long with economic development and building democratic system considerations (Tegegne, 2006; MoFED, 2007).

The decentralization process in Ethiopia is mainly in the form of the devolution of power and resources from the central government to constitutionally created sub-national and lower units of administrations (MoFED, 2007). As such, a four-tier system of government consisting of the federal government, regional governments, *wereda* and *kebele* has been put in place (here zone is excluded as it is not formally recognized unit of administration by the FDRE constitution). According to such arrangement *wereda* and *kebele* are considered to be the key local units of government as they play key role in addressing people demands and prioritizing the provisions of public services (ibid). Especially, the lowest level of administration, *kebele*, is meant “to further enhance community and grass-root public participation in socio-economic development process” (MoFED, 2007: 4).

According to Tegegne, (2006: 1-2) the decentralization process in Ethiopia has preceded in two phases: the first phases extended from 1991 to 2001 and the second covers the period since 2001 onwards. The first phase which Tegegne termed as ‘mid level decentralization’ was centered on creating and empowering regional governments. The point of entry in this regard was the promulgation of the transitional period charter. The charter outlined the framework for the process in a manner that regional governments were empowered to run administrative and other undertakings in areas under their jurisdictions as stipulated in various Proclamations in 1992.

More importantly with the promulgation of the FDRE constitution in 1995, the Ethiopian state was structured into an ethnic-based federal system composed of nine regions and two city administration. Accordingly, constituent units are entrusted with legislative, executive and judicial powers in respect of their area and with the exception of those that come under their jurisdiction of the federal government (which include conduct of foreign relations, administering the national defense force, issuing currency and so on). Specifically, regional governments are empowered, among other to issue their own

constitutions and other laws, administer their own affairs within their own defined territory and plan and execute social and economic development (FDRE, 1995).

Moreover, to enable regional governments to undertake their responsibilities the country has also undergone fiscal decentralization. Proclamation 33/1992 (as cited in Tegegne, 2006) for instance defines the sharing of revenue between federal and regional government as well as intergovernmental transfers. Nevertheless, studies on the fiscal dimension of Ethiopia's decentralization reveal that fiscal imbalance between regions and entities within a single region and heavy dependence of regional governments on transfer and subsidies from the center are persistent challenges (Derese, 2003; Solomon, 2008).

The first phase of the decentralization process though it registered significant achievements in establishing the framework and structure for regional self-rule, it was not capable of transferring decision making power to lower level of administration (such as wereda and kebele) where decentralization matters most (Yigremew et al, 2005; Tegegne, 2006). For instance, according to Tegegne, (2006: 2) "despite the constitutional creation of weredas with their elected councils, they were found to be a deconcentrated units of regional and zones." Weredas had little fiscal and administrative autonomy to respond to the demands of their constituency and engage in democratic self-rule (Yigremew et al, 2005; Tegegne, 2006).

Such circumstance promoted the federal government to undertake the second phase of decentralization so as to further devalue power and resources to wereda and kebele levels (MoFED, 2002; Tegegne, 2006). To this end, District level Decentralization Program (DLDP) was initiated since 2001. DLDP was initially launched in four regional states namely Oromia, Amhara, Tigray and SNNP and since 2004 it has been implemented throughout the country (Yigremew et al, 2005; Tegegne, 2006). DLDP was also intended to serve and taken as one of the important components of the country's poverty reduction program, Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) for the period between 2001 and 2003/4 (MoFED, 2002).

The overall objective of DLDP was to enhance institutional capacity, working systems and human capital in an integrated manner at wereda and kebele levels so as to ensure democratic empowerment and good governance (ibid). Specifically, it was intended to deepen devolution of power and resources to weredas and kebeles, institutionalize decision making power to enhance democratic participating and good governance in these levels (ibid). Moreover, deepening decentralization through DLDP has been justified on the grounds of bringing gender equality and political empowerment at grass-root levels (ibid).

In urban area similar process of deepening decentralization has been initiated especially with the launching of SDPRP's successor that is Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) in 2004. Accordingly, PASDEP acknowledges the significance of deepening decentralization in urban areas on the grounds, among other, promoting urban good governance, enhancing wider public participation and empowering people including women in urban areas (MoWUD, 2007).

Nevertheless, the extent to which these objectives especially with regard to women empowerment have been achieved is not yet well known. To data empirical information and research is largely missing. Specifically there is no adequate information about the degree to which the decentralization process in Ethiopia in general and urban areas such as Addis Ababa in particular has opened 'new' path for women political involvement and empowerment at grassroots level. Survey of existing literatures on Ethiopia's decentralization process in view of gender equality and specifically women political empowerment reveals that rigorous and comprehensive study is awaiting tasks for researchers (Tegegne and kassahun, 2006). Even with the very few studies in the area there are a number of shortcomings. Before I summarize existing literatures on the gender aspect of the decentralization process, I will briefly review the national legal, policy and institutional context of women political participation in Ethiopia.

2.2.2 Women and Politics in Ethiopia: Review of Legal, Institutional and Policy Frameworks

According to Jalele Erega (2005: 10) though women involvement in politics and decision making was not new in Ethiopia, “prior to 1991 there were no clear-cut legal, institutional and policy approaches regarding their (particularly ordinary women) participation.” But following the change in regime in 1991 and as part of the democratization process women’s political participation and representation received legal and constitutional recognition (Bedria and Majitu, 1991; Jalele, 2005).

Accordingly, the Ethiopian constitution of 1995 provided the backbone of recognition and exercise of women’s human and democratic right in the national body of law and politics. The constitution, in addition to the guarantee of similar sorts of human and democratic rights for all citizens (male and female) and prohibition of discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, color and sex, exceptionally guarantees women to special rights. In this regard, in article 35 (3) of the constitution it is widely stated that given the historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia,

Women... are entitled to affirmative measure... the purpose of such measures shall be to provide special attention to women so as to enable them compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in politics, social and economic life as well as public and private institutions (FDRE, 1995).

The provision is of particular importance and can be considered as fundamental shift from the past because it does not only recognize the deep-rootedness of discrimination against women but also it guarantees, women for affirmative measure in various settings and along with economic, social and political dimensions.

Moreover the Ethiopian government has subscribed to and ratified the major international human right instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and conventions including the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of

Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). The government is also one of the signatory parties to the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA).

Domestically, the government has issued the National Women Policy in 1993 (WAO, 1993). The policy “has been formulated to focus on what the Government ought to do for women and what women must do for themselves through their own free association” (WAO: 4). Moreover the document indicates the factors influencing the formulation of the policy and the government’s commitment to the case of women stating that:

The necessity of planning out what must be done, drawing lessons from past failures and experiences, and believing that gender issues concern not only women but also society at large and that women’s problems cannot be solved by women alone, but by the coordinated efforts of the society, the government and women, is no longer disputable. To that end, it is necessary to plan and facilitate conditions conducive to making women initiate ideas and work in a coordinated manner. Hence, the government has the obligation to give its unreserved support and create favorable conditions for promoting their interest (ibid).

The policy is issued with the objectives among other,

- To enable women to hold public offices and to participate in decision making processes at all levels,
- To facilitate the conditions to speed up the achievement of equality between men and women, and
- To enable women to participate in the political social and economic life of their country on equal terms (ibid).

To achieve these and other objectives at federal level a machinery has been put in place first as Women’s Affairs Office under the Office of the Prime Minister and currently as an independent ministry bearing the name Ministry of Women’s Affairs. Similarly, in accordance with the decentralization framework, women affairs bureaus and offices are set up at regional wereda and kebele levels of administration.

On the other hand, the constitutional guarantee of freedom of association, multi-party and electoral politics are all important developments that in one way or another define the context for the political participation and empowerment of women in Ethiopia.

2.2.3 Decentralization and Women Political Participation in Ethiopia

As for gains with regard to the political participation and representation of women is concerned, though women are yet under-represented especially compared with their percentage share of the country population and the various roles they shoulder, their involvement in the national body of politics is increasing from time to time (Zenebework, 2001; Jalele, 2005; Lenasil, 2006). For instance, out of the 547 seats in the House of People's Representatives of Ethiopia, women shared only 2.7% (10) in 1995-2000 periods (Zenebework 2001). But their share increased to 7.7 (42) in 2000-2005 and 24.1% in 2005-2010 (Lenasil, 2006). Similar trend has also been observed by Lenasil in regional councils. Accordingly, out of the total 1355 seats of all regional councils including Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa woman share has increased from 5.7% in 1995-2000 period to 14% in 2000-2005 period. But according to Lenasil there exists regional disparity in women representation. Gambella, Somali, Afar and Benishangul-Gumuz were found to be having no/less women representative in their councils.

With regard to the share of women in managerial positions in ministries and commissions Lenasil (2006) founds that their share, was 20.3% in 2005 predicting that the figure will increase in the future. However, at lower level of administration, especially wereda levels, it is not the case. Out of the 218 weredas assessed by Lenasil, it was founded that only 3 wereda administrators were women.

Another area of concern is the level of women political involvement in party and electoral politics. In this regard, for instance a comparative research in party programs from gender perspective by Mekuria Yilma 2003 (cited in Jalele, 2005) reveals two common features for the majorities of the parties. These are low percentage of women membership and men domination, and in certain cases, monopolization of strategic decision making positions. According to Jalele this is because on one hand, party politics has no positive reputation, especially in the past and thus it is considered to be risky (specifically for women) to belong to a party in Ethiopia. On the other hand as many political parties are new and lack strong organizational structure and maturity, they do not

address women issues and concerns adequately so as to attract wider women membership and mobilization (ibid). Jalele therefore concluded that women involvement in electorate and party politics is predominantly as electorate than candidate.

Concerning women political participation within the decentralization framework, though Ethiopia's decentralization is a growing area of research interest, to date, rigorous and comprehensive study on the gender dimension of the process is largely missing (Tegegne, 2006). Nevertheless, few assessments have been conducted by Zenebework Tadesse and Yigremew Adal and his research colleagues

The major concern of Zenebework's work was to find out the extent to which decentralization process has facilitated the implementation of "women friendly legislation and policies" that the country has enacted (Zenebework, 2001: 10). To this end she assessed the socio-demographic, economic and political situations of women in all the nine regional states, Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city Administrations.

According to her findings, though the numbers might not be impressive, decentralization created additional employment for women, increased school enrolment and reproductive health services for girls (ibid). She also found that decentralization enabled lower levels of administration to set up Women's Affairs Bureaus (WAB), whose main task is to facilitate the socio-economic and political betterments of women.

Nevertheless she found out that WABs have many challenges emanating from lack of human power, budget and other resources in achieving their objectives. Moreover, the relationship between WABs and other core institutions especially planning and finance in most cases is very much unclear.

As for the level of women political participation and empowerment is concerned, Zenebework found that women participate in their constituency mostly as voters. In cases where they compete for an office, Zenebework reveals that they do it through membership to the ruling party (Ethiopian People Revolutionary Democratic

Front/EPRDF) or parties that are affiliated to it. As far as women candidate and the manner of accountability to their constituency is concerned Zenebework reveals that they are mostly selected by their party and ensured easy victory especially out of Addis Ababa and thus “those [elected] women are not accountable to [fellow]women in that constituency” (Zenebework, 2001: 13). At the end, she concludes that,

Female presence in representative bodies has not challenged any gender biases in the society or in the structure of governance. Until a gender sensitive electoral process is put in place women quo women and as advocates of gender equality will continue to have no presence in representative bodies (ibid)

On the other hand, Yigremew and has research colleagues study focused on assessing the degree to which District Level Decentralization Program (DLDP) has worked for poor people including women at grass-root level. Unlike Zenebework’s study, they were confined to four regional states: Amhara, Somali, Benishangul-Gumuz, and SNNP regions. As a sample, one wereda and two kebeles within the study regions were selected by the research team.

Accordingly the research team declared that “women were not empowered and have not benefited from the decentralization as expected” (Yigremew et al, 2005: 30). Specifically they found that

- Economic resource ownership among women is extremely low Women access to education, health services and other opportunities is limited.
- Women have little representation in leadership and decision making positions.
- Institutional and mechanisms for gender work are weak and are getting weaker, evidenced in their relegation from office to desk as well as suffering from budget and human resources inadequacy (ibid).

At the end the research team concluded that despite the many initiatives to improve the situations of women, they continue to be disadvantaged. “They remained under-represented in local political and administrative structures and the resources allocated for women affairs seem ever diminishing” (Yigremew et al, 2005: 30).

Despite the differences in emphasis, approach and research context, there are certain communalities for both the studies discussed above. First both tend to be generalist in nature and try to capture every aspect of women concerns while comprehensive detail for each is missing. Of course it is not unwise to look into the different dimensions (social, economic, political) of women concerns as in most cases they influence each other. Nevertheless it is still important to make rigorous and comprehensive explanation about each dimension. In this regard, for instance both Zenebework and Yigremew and his research colleagues found out that in almost all cases women are underrepresented in local political structure and institutions. But both failed to sufficiently explain why this was the case.

Moreover it seems that their conceptualization of the relationship between women and local government is only in terms of the former participation /representation in the later. Though participation or representation is still important, there are other areas such as accessibility of local government for women, the degree of women influence in decision making that need to be examined. Otherwise to look into the number of women in local government council and to conclude that that are underrepresented would be misleading.

As such, based on the above background information, this study therefore looks into the dynamics of the opportunities, challenges and prospects of women political empowerment in Addis Ketema Sub-city of Addis Ababa.

CHAPTER THREE

DATA PRESENTATION AND RESULTS

3.1 Respondents Socio-Demographic Description

I. Age Composition

The age composition of the sample female councilors in the study area (see Table 3.1) is found to be that 113 (83.7%) respondents are in the category between age 26 to 35, while 13 (9.6%) are between 36 to 45 and the remaining 9 (6.7%) are above 45 year old. This indicates that most of female members of kebele councils are young politicians.

II. Marital and Family status

According to my survey results (see Table 3.1) reveals that 105 (77.7%) of the respondents are married having 1 to 4 children. 26 (19.2%) are not married while the remaining 4 (2.1%) are either divorced or widowed. This implies that most of female members of kebele councils in the study area have motherhood and correspondent household responsibilities. The result therefore seems consistent with the arguments of (Evertzen, 2001) who claimed that decentralization of governance makes easier for women to combine their household roles with the public sphere of activities. The result however seems refuting Bari's argument who claimed that women find it hard to participate in politics due to limited time available to them because of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres.

III. Educational Attainment

Table 3.1 also shows that the current educational attainment of the sample population ranges from secondary education to master's degree level. Accordingly, 26 (19.3%) have completed secondary education, 68 (50.4%) hold diploma, 38 (28.1%) have first degree and just 3 (2.2%) hold masters degree. The result from the table shows that all the respondents, in relative terms, do possess one of the assets of empowerment, that is, education. Moreover, the majority hold diploma indicating implying that educational requirement for local level politics is less stringent

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Percentage
83.7
9.6
6.7
100
77.7
19.2
2.1
100
19.3
50.4
28.1
2.2
100
92.6
5.9
1.5
-
100

4.1 Women and Formal Politics

As conceptualized in chapter two, participation in formal politics is basically understood as taking part in party and associational politics, campaigning in an election and holding political/ leadership (public decision making) positions in state machineries. Having this in mind, a number of survey questions regarding the opportunities and channel of political participation; and when, why and how they took part in formal political activities in their community was administered to the sample population.

4.1.1 Channels of Local Political Participation

In the survey instrument used for this research, the respondents were asked regarding the channels for women to have access to and participate in formal political activities of their community. Accordingly, electoral and associational politics are amongst the widely mentioned channels and areas of women political participation in the sub-city. One of these channels is the local electoral system.

The respondents also mentioned that the institutionalization of popularly elected council system both at kebele and sub-city levels, the establishment of women affairs office both at kebele and sub-city level, and the existence of various women organizations and political parties as important institutional frameworks and channel available for women to have access to and participate in the political and governance structure of the sub-city. Nevertheless, the degree to which these channels are really exploitable is questionable as there are potent challenges (to be discussed in chapter five in detail) mentioned by the respondents that hinder women to actively participate in the political activities of their community.

The respondents were also asked questions regarding when, how and why they began their formal political career. With regard to the first question, that is when did they begin their formal political career, my survey result (see Table 3.2) reveals that 18 (13.4%) respondents began formal political participation since the last five years. 76 (56.7%) indicated that they have been active in the formal political domain of their community

since the last five to ten years. 28 (20.9%) responded that their participation in the formal political affairs of their community goes back to the last ten to fifteen years and while 12 (9.0%) of the respondents have answered they have been endowed with over fifteen years of experience in formal political activities of their community.

Table 3.2: Respondents' experience in formal political Participation (N=134)

Number of years	Frequency	Percentage
less than 5 years	18	13.4
5 to 10 years	76	56.7
10 to 15 years	28	20.9
More than 15 years	12	9.0
Total	134	100

Source: Own survey

Accordingly the result indicates that 94, that is about 70% of the respondents are relatively less experienced and were not active in formal political domains before the launching of the decentralization drive and the setting-up of the current administrative structure of the kebeles since 2003. Of course this does not mean that decentralization is the sole driving force behind their involvement as there are other forces which are mentioned by the respondents. In any way, the result seems to support the argument of Evertzen (2001) who strongly claimed that local government positions and institutions are best suited for women as in most cases experience in politics and leadership (which most women are lacking) for the local level are less stringent. Consequently, it seems that local government institutions are best suited for affirmative action measures targeting women.

In the survey instrument used for this study, the respondents were also asked how they began their formal political career in the community. Accordingly, the majority 98 (73.1%) of the respondents indicated that they began their formal political career through membership to political associations. The remaining 36 (28.6%) of the respondents indicated that they began their political career through individual, independent campaigning.

Question was also asked to the respondent concerning the deriving force (their main goal to achieve) that prompted them to engage in formal political activities. Accordingly, the result indicates that almost all the respondents were determined to solve the various problems facing women. In this regard, one respondent replied that "Since I was high school student I had the dream to free women from all forms of household chores." One respondent however rote that she was highly inspired by former British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher and expressed that "I was very much inspired by Thatcher who made the impossible possible and that I had the dream to attain that level one day."

Concerning the question that asked the respondents whether they have fulfilled their dream or not, majority 83 (61.5%) of the respondents replied that their dream is not yet fulfilled. 45 (33.3%) of the respondents indicated that their dream has been partially fulfilled. Whereas only 7 (5.2%) respondents indicated that their dream has been fulfilled. The fact that only 5.2% of the respondent indicated their dream has been fulfilled shows the existence of potent challenges against women's influence in public institutions and sensitization of women's concern in decision making processes.

In the survey the respondents were also presented with list of possible favorable conditions them to engage in formal politics. Accordingly, it is found that (see Table 3.3) for 81 (60%) respondents party mobilization and recruitment for membership is the main favorable condition for their involvement, while for 40 (29.6%) respondents physical proximity of the kebele administration and access to information has contributed a lot for their involvement in politics. 9 (6.6%) and 5 (3.8%) respondents rated encouragement from family and their ethnic identity have contributed much respectively. Almost all the respondents rated measures of affirmative actions as a very low contributory factor.

The survey result (see Table 3.3) shows the importance of party mobilization and recruitment for membership as an important factor in women political participation and empowerment. The result also indicates that the kebele administration's physical proximity and respondents' access to information is also an important factor as 97 (93.5%) respondents rated it as highly contributory factor. The result, therefore, seems

partly supporting Betham's (1996) statement that local government positions and activities are more accessible and open to women simply because of their physical proximity.

The respondents were also asked about their personal view regarding the overall degree of women political participation in their community. Accordingly, the survey result (Table 3.3) revealed that 113 (83.7%) respondents rated the level of women political participation in their community as 'low'. 18 (13.3%) respondents rated the extent of women political participation in their community as 'extremely low'; whereas 4 (3.0%) respondents replied they do not have any idea about the issue. No respondent however rated the level of women political participation as 'high' or 'extremely high'.

The majority of the respondents have also indicated the underlying factors for the low level of women political participation in their locality. Accordingly, result indicated that 'society consideration of politics as men's affair and the low level of societal reputation towards women political participation'; and 'absence of sufficient political participation channels' as the two most important factors scoring frequencies of 131 and 125 respectively. In addition, the factors 'lack of sufficient information' and 'most women feel they lack enough influential power' have been rated as 'high' by 118 and 106 respondents.

Moreover 98, 83 and 72 respondents rated that 'participating in local politics is too complicated, requires women to meet many criteria' and 'women have other social responsibilities and thus difficult for them to engage in local politics'; and 'absence of affirmative measures' as 'average' in hindering women's access to and participate in local politics. Nevertheless, 77 respondents are not sure about the low level of women political participation in their community is due to whether 'the channels through which women could engage in political participation are ineffective' or not.

Table 3.3: Role of Party mobilization and Degree of women political participation

Indicators	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Role of Party mobilization for women political empowerment	Very high	81	60.0
	High	52	38.5
	Average	12	8.9
	Low	-	-
	Very low	-	-
	Total		135
Degree of women Political participation	Very high	-	-
	High	-	-
	Average	113	83.7
	Low	18	13.3
	Very low	4	3.0
	Total		135

Source: Own survey

According to the above table, though the contribution of party mobilization and membership recruitment strategies is rated as a very high contributory factor for women political participation in AKSC, the degree of women political participation is of high rate. This could be, as interview with key informants reveals, because of the seasonality (during elections) of political parties mobilization strategies as well as the low level of competitive party and electoral politics that is so prevalent in the sub-city.

Moreover, the interview with key informants on the issues indicates that there are other challenges (will be discussed in detail in chapter four) emanating from socio-cultural, organizational, informational and personal factors. As such, This result seems consistent with Alsop and Heinsohn argument that claims the degree of a person's political empowerment is determined by whether a person has the opportunities (political resources, in this case information, institutional spaces, societal recognition so on) to involve in politics, and whether the person has the actual determination to use these opportunities.

4.1.2 Women and Local Elections

Generally, women involvement in the local electoral system is mainly as voters, as well as candidates competing for people's advisory councils at wereda and kebele levels. According to data from the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (see Table 3.4), the total number of female voters registered for the 1984 (E.C) wereda and kebele councils election was found to be 34, 642. Nevertheless, the figure has increased to 65,913 in the 1989 (E.C) elections. The figure climbed to 68,408 in the 2000 (E.C) sub-city and kebele councils election. According to these figures (in Table 3.4) the number of female voters getting involved in electoral politics in the sub-city has been increasing from time to time as it increased by 47.4% in the 1989 election compared to the 1984 election and by about 50% in election 2000 as compared to the 1984 election.

4.1.3 Women and Electoral Candidacy

Concerning female candidacy for government offices, available data from the National Electoral Board of Ethiopia (see Table 3.4) reveals that a total of 1135 female candidates were registered for the 1984 (E.C) wereda and kebele council's elections. The figure however has increased to 1893 in the 1989 (E.C) wereda and kebele level elections respectively. The figure climbed to 3,567 in the 2000 (E.C).

As far as candidates' party affiliation is concerned (see Table 3.4), in the 1984 election 1123 candidates (1089 (95.9%) candidates were EPRDF's nominees and 34 (2.9%) were opposition parties' nominees) were party affiliated while 12 (1.2%) were independent candidates. In subsequent elections, however the percentage share of independent candidates has declined and in election 2000 no independent candidate was registered for campaign. In the 2000 local election all the candidates were EPRDF's nominee. Though the Oromo Federalist Party (OFP) and the Ethiopian Democratic Party (EDP) had presented a total of 7 female candidates in the sub-city, both parties boycotted the election complaining that their candidates have been intimidated and harassed by EPRDF's cadres (NEBE, 2001 E.C). The incidence gave EPRDF the opportunity to monopolize all councilor's seats both at kebele and sub-city levels.

Table 3.4: Women Involvement in Electoral Politics in Addis Ketema Sub-City

Election Year (E.C)	female voters	Female Candidates	Candidates Affiliation		
			EPRDF	Oppositions	Independent
1984	34,642	1,135	1,089 (95.9%)	34 (2.9%)	12 (1.2%)
1989	65,913	1,893	1,823 (96.3%)	62 (3.3%)	8 (0.4%)
1994*	-	-	-	-	-
2000	68,408	3,567	3,560 (100%)	7**	-

Source: computed by the author from 1984, 1989 and 2000 election reports of the NBE

*Election was not held

** boycotted the election

From the figures (see table 3.4) one can simply observe that on the one hand the number of female candidacy is growing from time to time while most of the candidates in all the elections are affiliated to the ruling party. Specifically, compared to election 1984 the number of female candidates in election 1989 has increased by 66.7 %. Similarly, the number of female candidates has increased by 88.4% in election 2000 compared to the previous election in 1989.

On the other hand, (see table 3.4) the percentage share of independent candidates has been declining from 1.2% in 1984 election to 0.4% in 1989 election. In election 2000 no independent candidate has been registered for campaign. This might be due to the various costs associated with independent candidacy. Candidacy from the opposition political parties does not match expectations.

Concerning the success rate of female candidates in winning electoral campaign, in the 1984 election only six female candidates were successful in winning seats in local councils (AKSCC, 2002 E.C). The figure has increased to 54 in the 1989 election. Currently,

however women have occupied 76 (28.1%) of the 270 seats of the Addis Ketema sub-city council. Whereas at kebele levels, from the total of 2700 seats of all the nine kebeles, women have occupied 1054 (39%) seats (AKSCC, 2002) EC.). The last figure is almost equivalent with the percentage share of women in the council of the five kebeles included in the survey. The total number of seats of the councils of these kebeles is 1500 of which women have occupied 579 (38.6%) seats (ibid).

4.2 Women in Local Leadership Positions

Women participation and representation in the leadership positions of both sub-city and kebele administration is also assessed. Currently, there are twenty-four and twenty-one leadership positions (sector based executive offices) at sub-city and kebele level administrations respectively. Heads of these executive offices are nominated by their respective council upon the recommendation of the party with majority seats in the council.

Concerning the representation of women as head of these office both at kebele and sub-city levels, it is found that one-third (33.3%) of these positions are reserved for women (Addis Ketema Sub-City Chief Executive Office, 2001). Nevertheless, from the total of twenty-four leading executive positions in the sub-city women's share is found to be only six, which is 25%. Accordingly, Offices such as Women Affairs, Youth and sport, Culture and Tourism, Trade and Industry, Social Affairs, and communication affairs are headed by women (ibid).

At kebele level however there is no any clearly defined measure or affirmative action that reserves certain amount of leadership positions for women. Nevertheless, the average share of women in the kebeles included in the survey is found to be five. In almost all the kebeles women are heads of offices mentioned above. It is only in kebeles 16/17 and 08/09/18 that women are heads of finance and budget, and education and training offices (ibid).

Accordingly, it is found that on one hand the share of women in leadership position both in the sub-city and kebele administration is minimal as compared to the percentage share of women in the total population of the sub-city. On the other hand, women are not/less represented in core institutions such as planning, budget and finance, Urban Plan and Development, capacity building and so on.

Moreover, at sub-city level though one-third (eight seats) of the concerned leadership position is reserved for women in practice however women have occupied seven. Asked about as to why this was the case, one of the official (key informant) in the sub-city answered that “we have reported to the concerned body”, the political party in power. The other side of the problem is that the reserved seat is taken as maximum number of positions women to take. This is essentially against the principle of affirmative action. At kebele level however there is no such affirmative measure which reserves certain number of leadership position for women.

In the survey instruments used for the study (indicated in Table 3.5) the respondents were asked about their experience in political leadership such as leading local political parties or women organizations, or departments in such organizations. Accordingly the result revealed that 114 (84.4%) respondents expressed that they have not ever lead such organizations. Whereas 21 (15.6%) respondents expressed that they have experience in leadership. Similarly, question was administered to the respondent regarding their experience in leadership in the various executive offices of their kebele or sub-city. The result revealed that 18 (13.3%) respondents indicated they have such experience in leadership. Whereas the overwhelming majority of the respondents that is 117 (86.7%) revealed that they do not have such experience.

The result reveals that the overwhelming majority of the respondents are not endowed with organizational as well local government leadership experience. This might be due to various factors such as absence of institutional measures and organizational strategies to bring women into leadership positions.

Table 3.5: Women and leadership in local government

Indicators	Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
<i>Organizational leadership experience</i>	Yes	21	15.6
	No	114	84.4
	Total	135	100
<i>Leadership experience in local government institutions</i>	Yes	18	13.3
	No	117	86.7
	Total	135	100

Source: Own survey

4.3 Woman and Local Councils

One of the arguments raised by those who elevate decentralization as an effective strategy for women political empowerment is that decentralization creates local institutions such as local council system whose entry criteria (such as experience in leadership) is less stringent. Having this in mind, question was forwarded to generate information regarding respondents experience as councilors. The survey result (Table 3.6) revealed that 119 (88.1%) respondents have less than five years of experience, while 16 (11.9%) have five to ten years of such experience and none of the respondents have answered the have endowed with over ten years of such experience. Accordingly the result in the table below indicates that the overwhelming majorities of the respondents are relatively less experienced.

Table 3.6: Respondents' Experience as Councilor (N=135)

Number of years	Frequency	Percentage
less than 5 years	119	88.1
5 to 10 years	16	11.9
10 to 15 years	-	-
More than 15 years	-	-
Total	135	100

Source: Own survey

Asked about whether they are political party affiliated or not, all the respondents approached through the survey instruments of this study indicated that they are affiliated to a political party. Nevertheless, concerning why and due to what factors they are nominated by the political party to which they are affiliated and representing, the respondents hold different views. Accordingly, the survey result of the study shows that, 98 (72.6%) respondents rated that their commitment to the party's programs even if they are not specific to women's affairs as a very significant factor for their nomination. Whereas, for 17 (12.6%) of the respondents the party's approach for religious and/or ethnic composition in the nomination process is a very critical factor. 13 (9.6%) and 7 (5.2%) respondents thought that they are nominated because they fulfill other nomination requirements (educational, experience and etc); and of their commitment to the party's program on women respectively. All the respondents have however replied that 'low women membership in the party' as least contributory factor for their nomination.

Similarly, interview with key informants drawn from political parties reveals that commitments to the program of the party as well as religious and ethnic considerations are crucial factor in selecting candidates for elections. However the informants disclosed that there are additional issues taken into account when candidates are nominated for electoral campaign. The informants mentioned that candidates are also nominated based on their individual's social acceptance as well as academic status. Nevertheless, the informants affirmed that these factors are not as such hard-and fast rule for nomination implying clear cut nomination criteria is absent.

In the survey instrument used for this study, the respondents were also asked how often they go to their constituency (where they are elected from) and held discussion or meeting with the electorates and fellow women. The result reveals that no respondent has ever gone to the constituency where she elected from so as to discuss on the problems of the electorate. Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents indicated that they meet with the electorate in various occasions, most of which are organized by the political party which they are affiliated to. From the combination of the above two survey results it

looks that on the one hand affiliation to party politics and party loyalty are very important factors when it comes to women access to formal political positions in the study area.

On the other hand, accountability of women councilor as partly measured by their visit to and consultation with the electorate is a missing link in the study area. These results are consistent with Zenebeorke's findings that in cases where women campaign for an office, they do it through membership to a political party (especially to the ruling party or its affiliates as this assures them with an ease victory that probably make them less accountable to their fellow women in their constituency.

The respondents were also asked whether they will campaign for local, regional or national elections in the future. Accordingly, the survey result revealed that 66 (47.7%) respondents answered 'yes'; while 27 (20.0%) and 42 (32.3%) answered 'no' and 'undecided' respectively.

Table 3.7: Respondents View on Next Term Electoral Campaign
(N= 135)

Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	66	47.7
No	27	20.0
Undecided	42	32.3
Total	135	100

Source: Own survey

The fact that 42 respondents are undecided whether they compete in election in the future may be because that in most cases it is up to the political party they are affiliated to which decide on the issue as per the electoral law of Ethiopia.

4.4 Challenges of Female Councilors

Asked about the level of their agreement/disagreement concerning the degree of their participation in their respective council's discussions and debates, the respondents answered in the following ways. Accordingly, the survey result (see Table 3.8) revealed that 70 (51.8%) respondents expressed the view that the instance that men are dominant

during discussions is very high and as such the majority of women lack influential power in decisions. Whereas, for 46 (34.1%) of the respondents have highly agreed that even when given the opportunity, women usually tend to be passive in debate and decision making as such this has created the instance for male domination in decision in the council. 19 (14.1%) respondents expressed the view that in most cases it is women relatively with better educational status and experience that are active during councilor discussions. All the respondents however indicated that the instance that 'women councilor will be active on discussions directly relating to women' as very low.

Accordingly, the survey result entails that women are not active as they are expected to be in decisions in the council indicating on the one hand the need to cultivate the decision making ability of women through such as training and on the other hand establishing an institutional framework of women- for women in the councils.

Table 3.8: Degree of male dominance in councilor's decision (N= 135)

Indicators	Frequency	Percentage
Very high	70	51.8
High	55	41.0
Average	10	7.2
Low	-	-
very low	-	-
Total	135	100

Source: Own survey

As literatures reviewed for the study indicated, it is not only limited access to political spaces that women are facing but also they encounter various obstacles even once they enter into these spaces. Taking this general fact into consideration, interview was made to key informants drawn from the council concerning the challenges women are facing in councils. Accordingly, the informants indicated that lack of experience in leadership and political representation, absence of training opportunities and remuneration scheme for councilors, lack of internal regulation and code of conduct regarding women's active involvement in various committees in the council are amongst the formidable challenges

female councilors are facing. In addition, household responsibilities and patriarchal attitude of few male members of the council are also amongst the challenges emphasized by the informants.

One informant however mentioned the problems that exist around the various standing committee of Addis Ketema Sub-city council. According to this informant:

Though there are various standing committees which deliberate on plans and programs before they pas on to the council, there is no any affirmative measure that reserves certain amount of committee membership for women. The overwhelming majority of committee members are male.

Accordingly, the informants forward their suggestions so as to better deal with these challenges. Raising societal awareness regarding women political involvement through both formal and informal education and creating opportunities so that women have access to media and other sources of information, the ratification and introduction of gender-sensitive internal regulation and code of conduct, remuneration scheme, creating training opportunities and experience sharing forums for female council members are among the key instruments that the informants have forwarded.

In addition, the informants recommended that women must realize their human and democratic rights by forming and joining various organizations. In this regard one informant expressed the significance of associational life in such a way that:

The experiences, skills and confidence we gain from such organizations allow us to play a stronger and more active role in the household, to talk with our male-counterpart at a more equal level, to participate in public meetings and to enter the public space more broadly.

According to the above quotation organizational life is important to build one's personal capacity which is one of the dimensions of empowerment. It also enables women to further exploit institutional opportunities available to them. In this regard, the issue of confidence as one element of personal (psychological) asset is worth emphasizing. This is because the degree of confidence and self-esteem of a woman highly impacts her ability to participate in and play an active role in public life.

CHAPTER FOUR

OPPORTUNITIES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS OF WOMEN POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT IN AKSC

This chapter of the thesis mainly integrates and analyses data results generated from the survey instrument used for this study and information gathered from key informants and expert interview so as to set-out the major opportunities and challenges of women political empowerment in the study area. Based on results gained from the analysis of these opportunities and challenges the chapter also pictures-out the prospects of women political empowerment in the sub-city.

4.1 Opportunities

According to information gathered from the key informants consulted for the study, the opportunities available for the political empowerment of women in Addis Ketema Sub-City has both national as well as local dimensions. From the national angle, according to the informants, these opportunities include the national legal and political frameworks which among other define the nature and scope of women rights and entitlements as well as women place in the country body of politics. Specifically, the informants noted the significance of the stipulation and constitutional guarantee of the various rights of women by the supreme-law of the land, that is, the FDRE constitution; and the role of institutional settings and enabling environments created by the constitution.

In addition, according to these informants, the constitutional grantee of freedom of associations, multi-party politics and electoral system, parliamentarian and decentralized system of government can be considered major institutional opportunities for women political empowerment. In this regard one of the informants succinctly acknowledged the significance of the constitution in such a way that:

The FDRE constitution has done a great deal in recognizing women rights and their empowerment in the country body of law and politics. As the constitution is the supreme law of the nation defining both the scope and nature of such measures targeting women political empowerment it implies that constitutionally affirmed and backed-up empowerment measure is an empowerment indeed, (Interview with key informant).

Cognizant of the those constitutional developments, according to the above quoted informants, the establishment of institutions (such as women affairs ministry, bureaus and offices) specifically responsible for women's concerns both at national and sub-national levels, proliferation of various women's and other civic organizations which one way or another advocate for the protection and promotion of the various rights and concerns of women are important opportunities.

Interview with key informants during field survey for this study has also revealed that the ratification of many international conventions and treaties, such as UDHR, CEDAW, and Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) by the Ethiopian government is also another important issue that presumably having huge impact on the political empowerment of women in Addis Ketema Sub-City.

In addition, officials approached for interview in the Sub-City have noted the importance of issuing National Women Policy and National Action Plan for Gender Equality (NAP-GE), and Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) Women's Development Package as important opportunities for women political empowerment.

Moreover, the informants have noted that these opportunities at national level are also important as in most cases they define the framework, nature and extent of opportunities for women political empowerment available at sub-national levels. According to them, the constitutional undertaking of decentralized governance and the associated institutional set-up is one of the major opportunities available at sub-national levels. According to interview with one of the informants, "the decentralization process in our Sub-City [Addis Ketema] resulted in the creation of public political institutions such as

popularly-elected sub-city and kebele councils, and various sector-based executive offices.” The quoted informant further noted that:

Availability of these institutions means that at least it may promote various political parties to compete for councilor seats. This in turn opens women with the opportunity to involve in associational politics as these political parties strive for mobilization of support and membership recruitment (interview with key informant).

The same informant also expressed the view that:

prevalence of local councils provide elected female officials with opportunities to build their skills and experience in public speaking and debate, managing public meetings, dealing with constituents' demands, mobilizing supports, and compromising to achieve results. These are all vital skills for women councilors who want to uphold their political career to national positions.

Of course, these institutions can be taken as opportunities, as the analysis of the survey result in chapter three also revealed they seem accessible to women because of their physical proximity, par-time characteristics and demand less leadership and educational experiences.

Nevertheless, this view is not shared by some of the interviewee. In this regard, for instance interview with expert approached for the study reveals that local institutions such as local council are not equally accessible for all women in the community arguing that “these institutions seem equally accessible for all women, in political terms however, they are more accessible to members of the ruling party than anyone else in the community” (expert interview). Of course, issues of similar sort will be discussed in the section on the challenges of women political empowerment in the study area.

The other opportunity factor mentioned by the informants approached for the study include the institutionalization of an affirmative action which reserves one-third of top executive positions in the various offices both at sub-city and kebele levels to be occupied by women. According to the informants this can have enabling effect in cases where female leaders who have gained political and leadership skills and experience in

decentralized local government seek elected office at higher levels of government. In this regard, one informant expressed the view that:

Women leaders in local governments build experience in managing public affairs and in running a campaign. Hence they acquire skills and credibility that can assist when running for higher office at city or federal levels. The process can also expand the range of choices cadre of political leadership and hence can have a significant impact on the contestability of political markets, and may deepen the countries democratization process (interview with key informant).

Despite these opportunities mentioned by the key informants consulted, as discussed in chapter three of this study, the proportion of women representation both in local councils and executive offices is insufficiently small compared to the percentage share of women in the total population of the sub-city. However there is relatively better representation of women in kebele and sub-city councils than in executive offices.

The creation of independent machinery, women affairs office (WAO), which specifically deals with the various concerns of women, is another important opportunity that informants drawn from women affairs offices in the sub-city have emphasized. Interview with heads of women affairs offices both in the sub-city and the kebeles revealed that upholding the institution from the status of 'desk' to 'office' since 2005 is an important measure. According to these informants such move has brought glaring gains. Interview with one of the informants, for instance reveals that:

The move apart from having the advantage of institutional consolidation as it made the powers and responsibilities of the office very clear; it enables the office to translate and integrate the national women policy and other similar programs in to sub-city and kebele level plans. Moreover, the move enables the office to mainstream the proper inclusion of the felt interests of women in local development process (interview with key informant).

Of course as a result of institutional upgrading of the Women Affairs office from the status of desk to office the powers and responsibilities of the office have been clearly defined. Accordingly, the office is now entrusted with the following rights and responsibilities (AKSC Women Affairs Office, 2006):

- Ensure the political, social and economic betterment of women as stipulated in the national women policy;
- Ensure that the rights of women are respected in the implementation of policies and laws as well as the overall rights of women are protected during the issuance of new laws;
- Follow up, and monitor various activities undertaken by other offices in the kebele from a gender perspective;
- Conduct investigations upon receiving complaint of violation of the rights of women and ensure that measures are taken by the appropriate government institutions;
- Provide continuous education through various mechanisms on gender and equal rights of women;
- Organize and provide educational, professional and additional skills training; prepare projects that benefit women and facilitate their implementation;
- Facilitate the establishment of women's organizations, and
- Provide the necessary support for the establishment and strengthening of associations advocating the rights and welfare of women

It is true that the existence of such constitutional and institutional machinery, policies and development plans, in one way or the other contribute a lot for ensuring gender equality and empowering women along economic, social and political considerations. Nevertheless, according to interview with key informants and experts consulted for the study, there are various challenges that hinder the successful empowerment of women in local political practices.

4.2 Challenges

Although there are glaring national and sub-national opportunities, there are still potent challenges that could undermine the effectiveness of women political empowerment in the study area. According to interview with key informants consulted in the sub-city, one of the major challenges of women political empowerment in the study area is found to be

the low level of gender awareness amongst the society. In this regard, for instance one informant expressed the view that,

Despite we are urbanites and living in the age of globalization, considerable section of our society still considers politics as men's affair and as such female politicians command less recognition and reputation as compared to men" (interview with key informant).

The essence of the informant's expression of the situation indicates how the society's attitude concerning the women-politics divide is deep-rooted. The informant has also noted that successful women political empowerment needs to transcend such societal awareness through a range of gender awareness mechanisms and strategies. Specifically, the informant has made an insight that,

Raising the gender awareness of the society essentially demands the coordinated efforts of various actors such as government institutions, women organizations, political parties, civic associations, the media and individuals from all walks of life. This is because low level of gender awareness and resistance to gender equality principles and practices amongst considerable section of the society can not be tackled only by the efforts of single actor (interview with key informant).

Of course, for women political empowerment to be successful, the role of these actors, especially government, women organizations, and political parties is of course beyond mere raising the gender awareness of the society. They have important roles in informing and mobilizing women to get organized themselves; and creating space for women to participate and articulate their demands and bring pressure on the state so as to make the decision-making and implementation process more responsive to the needs and demands of women.

Assessed in view of these general principles, according to interview with key informants and experts, the role that these actors play both individually and in coordination is found to be having mixed results. Most of the informants interviewed expressed the view that local government institutions have many constraints to translate women friendly legal and policy measures. These constraints, according to interview with one of the informants include "human power and financial constraints in addition to limited decision making power devolved to these administrations." Specifically, the informant noted that

“availability of well trained human power and especially gender experts in local institutions is a very crucial factor that limits the extent of gender mainstreaming in local development plans and initiatives.”

Interview with heads of the women affairs offices reveals that the office suffer from a list of handicaps such as shortage of staff , budgetary limitations and lack of technical capacity to give assistance for line sector offices in the process and practice of gender mainstreaming. This is similar to what Zenebework has found that “horizontal relationship between these offices and other offices such as planning and finance is found to be weak.” These factors have also hindered the limited role of the office in local decision making processes as well as to offer various forms of assistantship the office is expected to offer to women organizations.

During interview, one of the informants from women affairs office noted that

Inadequate budget available to us has limited our capacity in the execution of the national women friendly plans and legislations. Lack of sufficient budget has also constrained the office to offer continuous and systematic training program that could have build the capacity women and girls in the sub-city (interview with key informant).

The limited role of local institutions is also another challenge that interview with key informants and experts has identified. In this regard for instance with reference to the powers and responsibilities of kebele councils, the expert informant consulted noted that “despite the council is an elected and deliberative institution, in reality however its role is to approve what is directed from the city administration” (expert interview). The informant has also added that

Upward accountability of these institutions to the city administration in stead of downward accountability to the electorate is a critical issue that needs special focus if any measure of empowering the community especially women is to succeed(interview with informant).

According to interview with the above quoted informant, most of these institutions especially local councils lack formal internal code of conduct and regulatory frameworks. The informant also mentioned that there is weak institutional linkage

and coordination in problem identification and prioritization as well as resource utilization. The result is of course consistent with the result generated in survey instrument in chapter three.

Competitive political party at the local level is also an essential input for engendering women political empowerment. One of the great advantages of peaceful and democratic competition among political parties is that they offer policy and program choices to women; and widen the political space for them to participate in decision making. An open party politics that allows open policy debates and free flow of alternatives and information is necessary for engendering women political empowerment.

However according to interview with experts the state of party politics is far from competitive because of the domineering of EPRDF and the flimsy opposition forces. According to interview with one of the expert “though the ruling party has gone far more in mobilizing the women community, affiliation to EPRDF has become the single most important avenue to assume political membership and leadership positions in the sub-city” (interview with expert). The interviewee has also noted that

Key sector offices such as finance, planning and mass mobilization and capacity building are headed by people who are members of the ruling party. Apart from giving particular advantages to the incumbent, single party dominance of the sub-city political landscape does not augur competitive politics as an essential input for women political empowerment (interview with expert).

Nevertheless, according to the interview with another expert, the domination the sub-city’s political landscape by the ruling party has both pros and cons for women political empowerment. According to the interviewee,

On the positive side, it means the party has strong leverage at the local level to insure the effective implementation of both national and local legislations and policies that favor women. The situation also gives ample opportunities for those women who want to join the party so as to peruse their political career. On the negative side, EPRDF’s dominance in local politics has the danger of encouraging upward accountability and party loyalty at the expense of the felt interest and demands of the community at

large and ordinary women in particular. Equally important, single party dominance perhaps leads to the narrowing of the political space, policy and associational alternatives available for women in the sub-city (interview with expert).

Moreover on the negative side, the above quoted interview noted that one party domination has also “sever limitation on opposition political parties which otherwise could have provide women with alternative avenues and opportunities of political participation and representation.” The interviewee argues that due to EPRDF’s dominance and the complicated internal challenges facing opposition political parties, the role and contribution of opposition political parties in women political empowerment is very minimal.

The interviewee is also very skeptics concerning the role of political parties for women political empowerment in the sub-city as he noted that these parties does not go beyond mobilizing women on seasonal basis. The interviewee further noted that “I am afraid that they [opposition parties] have mobilization strategy especially at grassroots levels as they only come here during elections.” Moreover, the interviewee claimed that membership to opposition parties seems costly due to harassment and intimidation. In this regard, the interviewee has noted succinctly

Everyone knows the kind of political atmosphere we are living and operating in. Unless there is a change in the political atmosphere that allows opposition political parties to operate freely, without fear of harassment and intimidation, the role of opposition parties as alternative avenues for women political participation and representation continues to be minimal (expert interview).

Women political empowerment is predicated both on the level of developments of various types of women organizations and the approach and strategy they adopt both at national and sub-national levels so as to promote and protect the various human and democratic rights of women. Women organizations, for instance play important roles in an advocacy capacity, in creating space for women to help them articulate their demands

and bring pressure on the state so as to make the policy-making process more responsive to the needs of women.

In Addis Ketema Sub-city though women organizations have no strong track record, currently four types of such organizations are found both at sub-city and kebele levels in the study area. These are Women league, Women Forum, Women Association and Women Federation. Women League is an organization formed by members of the ruling party (Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front /EPRDF) in the sub-city (Addis Ketema Sub-city Chief Executive Office, 2001 EC).

Whereas, forum is a mixed member organization whose members are drawn from not only members of the ruling party but also from members of opposition political parties and women from all walk of life. In reality however, critics say its membership is overwhelmingly dominated by EPRDF members. Women association is a 'non-political' organization which aimed at facilitating conditions for its members to have access to credit, training and get self employment or create various activities that are productive and beneficiary. The women association also looks for sources of fund and projects that improve the lives of its members and satisfy their basic necessities. Women federation is an umbrella organization that subsumes and draws its member from all the other three organizations (ibid).

Nevertheless, interview with experts reveals that the various women's organizations in the sub-city are short of institutional and functional neutrality as one interviewee described them as "organizations created of EPRDF, by EPRDF, for EPRDF" (expert interview). According to the quoted informant

These organizations are not only partisan they are also trapped with a number of challenges. They have institutional weakness in identifying women problems, prioritizing and planning women needs. They proper structure and mechanisms of mobilization, participation, and decision-making and standardize internal procedures and accountability. In addition they have serious trained and experienced human power and financial constraints so as to respond to the minimum (interview with expert).

Moreover, interview with experts claim that “most of women that approach the organization are simply interested in improving their individual socioeconomic status without much social consciousness in fighting for gender equality” (interview with expert). In addition, the interviewee noted that there are few resources available to these organizations to provide and facilitate conditions for training management, leadership formation or information dissemination. They have also limited institutional and experts’ capacity to tap resources and build a non-partisan network and partnership with governmental and non-governmental organizations to foster women’s political participation.

Existence of well functioning and vibrant local mass media is also indispensable input for engendering and sustaining the political empowerment of women. Vibrant local media is essential not only in enhancing the gender awareness of the society but also it can serve as a channel of communication and disseminating information between the government and the society at large. It can also serve as a watchdog and enhances local accountability. It can serve as in setting local agenda through identifying and prioritizing local needs. According to interview with the informants however both the sub-city and kebele administrations do not have their own media links and as such they recommend an urgent effort to establish reliable and transparent local media.

4.3 Prospects

It is quite challenging exercise to preview and outline what would be the prospect of women political empowerment in the study area simply because the future is full of uncertainties. Nevertheless based on the results and discussions presented so far it is possible to highlight some of the issues worth mentioning in that regard.

According to interview with informants, any positive outcome and ultimate success in women political empowerment in the study area depends on the extent to which existing opportunities are exploited to the fullest and new ones are created. According to Alsop and Hiensohn (2005) opportunities factors do not only guarantee but also define the range

of agency assets and bundle of political and democratic rights available to women. Women capacities to empower themselves are dependent on the availability of opportunities that build capabilities and enlarge their political choices and strategies both are at the heart of women political empowerment. These opportunity factors include among other, the laws, organizational, institutional and policy contexts which establish the arena and framework for governance, and determine whether women have access to assets, and whether women can use the assets to empower themselves.

In this regard, from interview with key informants it is noted that the constitutional and politico-legal environment in Ethiopia seem women-friendly as not only the various political and democratic rights of women have received constitutional recognition but also measures (though not as it is expected to be) have also be taken at various levels of administrative units to effect these rights into reality. Interview with key informants has also disclosed that, in the study area, in accordance with the national constitutional and politico-legal commitment for gender equality in governance, decentralization has brought about new avenue and institutions (such as system of elected council and various executive offices including an independent machinery that specifically deals with women) through which women engage in local politics and governance structure. According to the interviewees, though the result is found to be encouraging, a lot is still remaining. The future of women political empowerment is therefore, interviewees claim, partly impinges up on the extent to which these success stories are upheld.

Yet, it is too far to conclude that decentralization has resulted in greater women political empowerment as there are daunting challenges that makes the future of women political empowerment gloomy in the study area. The prospect of women political empowerment hence also rests on the extent to which these challenges are overcome through the creation and exploitation of new opportunities in sustainable manner. In his regard, it has been repeatedly said that traditional attitudes that view politics solely as man's business and low level of gender equality awareness is one of the challenges that hinders women political empowerment in the study area.

Hence it requires no prescience to suggest that nurturing gender awareness amongst the society and urging for the translation of women-friendly policy outputs and legislations into action at the local level is indispensable. The responsibility to create such supportive environment for gender equality and advancement of women is essentially shared responsibility falls on the shoulders of national and sub-national governments, political parties, women organizations and other stakeholders including individuals.

It is also important to note that women political empowerment is related to the commitment and political will of government actors to deepen the current decentralization drive and ultimately to consolidate local democracy. Deepening the decentralization drive defines and determines the width and level of space for women to participate in governance processes and decision making structures. It also defines the space available for greater interaction between the state and rights advocacy organizations including women associations.

Moreover the deepening process strengthens the capacity of local institutions by expanding the range of their power and responsibilities. Such efforts, in the long run perhaps enhance a symbiotic linkage between local democracy and women political empowerment whereby the former promotes the level ground for women to realize their individual and collective entitlements while the later ensures the fairness and legitimacy of the system.

The prospect of women political empowerment is also to a large extent dependent on women's consciousness of their political rights and effort to exploit their individual and collective potentials. Political consciousness through democratic political socialization is the sustainable way to transform local politics where one's participation is not determined by his/her sex. Engendering institutionally capable and non-partisan women organizations and strong national and local civil society and competitive party politics is another condition of enabling environment that can influence the direction of local politics in favor of women.

It is therefore safe to conclude that ensuring gender equality in local politics and successful women political empowerment to a large extent depends on the genuine partnership and political commitment of both national and sub-national governments, political parties, civil society and women organizations, the media and the society at large to engender gender sensitive local democracy.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Summary and Conclusion

Decentralization has been widely acknowledged as potent strategy for the political empowerment of women. Decentralized governance is believed to enhance women participation in local politics mainly because entry criteria for the local level politics are less stringent and local institutions are suitable to effect affirmative measures targeting women.

Promoting local self-rule and women empowerment, as well as facilitating the conditions for implementing women-friendly policies and programs at gross-root levels are among the stated objectives of the nation-wide decentralization drive in Ethiopia. Nevertheless, the extent to which whether decentralization has facilitated the conditions for the implementation of policies and programs targeting women and their political empowerment is not well researched. In view of the decentralization process in Addis Ketema Sub-City, this study has made an assessment on major institutional contexts and policy approaches and organizational strategies political participation so as to identify the opportunities, challenges and prospects of women political empowerment in the sub-city.

Accordingly, it is found that the decentralization drive in the sub-city has been accompanied by the creation of local government institutions of political participation and representation such as local council system, various sector based offices and local electoral system. Due to the system of elected local council in the sub-city women's opportunities for access to political participation and representation have generally been improved. Currently women have occupied 28.1% and 39% of seats in sub-city and kebele councils respectively. This system of elected local council can have a trickle-up effect in case where female councilors seek elected offices or so at higher level (national) politics.

In addition, as a consequence of the affirmative measure, which reserves one-third of top leadership positions in the sub-city for women delegates, women's participation in leadership has generally been improved. Moreover, due to the decentralization drive in the sub-city, institutional machinery, women affairs office, concerned with the various demands and needs of women in the sub-city has been put in place.

Albeit these gains, it is difficult to conclude the decentralization drive in the sub-city has fully worked for the political empowerment of women. This is because there are various issues that the decentralization drive has not dealt with them yet and which constrain women political empowerment in the sub-city. The traditional view that depicts politics as men-business and the low level of gender awareness amongst the society is one of the challenges.

Women friendly local council system is not well institutionalized. Women participation and representation in local councils is low compared to their percentage share in the total population of the sub-city. There is no mechanism that reserves or allocates quota seats for women in the councils. Local councils lack proper regulations and internal code of conduct that help them set and deliberate on their own agenda. In most cases, male are found to be dominant in councilor's discussions and voting implying that female councilors possess limited influential power. This leads to conclude that despite women have accesses to and participated in decisions, there influence to shape decisions is yet to be achieved.

The decentralization process in the sub-city is not also accompanied by the mushrooming institutionally capable women organizations. Organizational weakness in identifying women problems, prioritizing and planning women needs, lack of structure and mechanisms of mobilization, participation, and decision-making and standardize internal procedures and accountability in addition to serious trained and experienced human power and financial constraints describe these organizations. Hence, strong and autonomous women's organization as an engine to debate priorities, to legitimize women

policy demands, and press them upon political parties and government leaders have still a long way to get alive.

Women affairs offices have still a long way to go in sensitization of women's needs in political participation and representation. In addition to resource constraints, the WAOs have weak institutional linkages with other similar sector offices and partnership with non-governmental organizations in addressing the various needs and demands (such as training in leadership, organizing forums for experience sharing and education) of women in the society in general and female councilors in particular.

Moreover, the decentralization drive in the sub-city has not enhanced the contestability of the sub-city's political market and mobilization strategies of political parties through engendering competitive party politics that could enhance women political empowerment. Most political parties lack clear program concerning women empowerment as well as their mobilization strategies are seasonal (during election times) in nature.

5.2 Recommendations

Though decentralization has made the availability of new avenue and institutional opportunities for women to have access to political participation and representation in the study area, there are still daunting challenges in this regard. As such, in order to transcend these challenges and ensure effective women political empowerment, the following recommendations may be taken into consideration. In doing so however functional attempt may not be the best way and as such it is believed that only integrated approach and orchestrating coordination and partnership among the various concerned stakeholders yield the desired outcomes.

- The decentralization drives in the sub-city should be deepened through the devolution of more power and resources to kebele level administrations. Power and responsibilities of local government institutions should be clearly defined while responsibilities are fairly distributed between male and female.
- Affirmative measures such as reserved seats or designing a quota system should be put in place in the local councils so that women have more access to and participate in local governance. Clear guidelines for implementation of such measures should also be developed.
- Measures to increase the quantity of women representatives need to be accompanied by measures to improve the quality of their participation by creating various opportunities, such as, education, training in leadership and interest articulation, networking and other motivational programs.
- Political parties should also reconsider their mobilization and membership recruitment strategies and their internal systems of governance and accountability mechanisms so that women take-up strategic decision-making positions.

- Priority should be given to create opportunities for women to build their collective assets and establish their own non-partisan and institutionally capable organizations to help them articulate their demands and bring pressure on the state.
- Establishing new media links in the sub-city as well as expanding the coverage of existing ones is also needed for women and their organizations to inject their views and needs into the policy-making and service delivery process.
- Further research should also be undertaken, documented and disseminated regarding women's access to and participation and influence in local politics, their voting behavior, and leadership style.

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Appendix 1: Typologies of Decentralization and Women Political Empowerment

Typologies	Administrative	Financial/fiscal	Political	Women Political Empowerment/WPE
Decentralization	<p>LG follows central policies, plans according to central norms. Form & structure of LG centrally determined.</p> <p>LG staff are employees of central ministries, accountable to center.</p> <p>LG is service delivery arm of center, little or no discretion in service choice or mix, modes of provision.</p> <p>LG provides information upwards to center.</p>	<p>LG is dependent on center for funds; sectoral ministries that provide spending priorities & budget envelope.</p> <p>LG has no independent revenue sources.</p> <p>LG reports to center on expenditure according to central formulas and norms.</p> <p>Center conducts LG audits.</p>	<p>LG, officials not elected but appointed by center, & serve central interests.</p> <p>Civil society & citizens rely on remote & weak links to central government for exercising accountability.</p> <p>Little political space for local civil society, central elites control politics.</p>	<p>Very limited/low institutional opportunities through which women involve in local politics</p> <p>LG has little capacity & few incentives to seek input from or be responsive to women needs.</p> <p>No incorporation of women preferences in service mix.</p> <p>Limited availability of institutional opportunities for women</p>
Delegation	<p>LG follows central policies & norms, has some discretion to tailor to local needs, & to modify form & structure.</p> <p>LG staff may be mix of central and LG employees;</p> <p>LG has authority on hiring & placement; center handles promotion & firing.</p> <p>LG provides service menu set by center, some discretion in mix to fit local needs, & in modes of provision.</p> <p>LG provides most information upwards to center & selected information to local officials, citizens.</p>	<p>LG is dependent on center for funds; LG has some discretion on spending priorities within budget envelope.</p> <p>Block grants & conditional transfers from center offer some autonomy.</p> <p>LG has no independent revenue sources.</p> <p>LG reports to center and local officials on expenditure according to central formulas and norms.</p> <p>Center and LG conducts LG audits.</p>	<p>LG may be a mix of elected and centrally appointed officials.</p> <p>Local officials often tied to national party platforms, little discretion.</p> <p>Some local accountability, but strong central orientation.</p> <p>Some political space for local civil society.</p>	<p>limited institutional opportunities available for women to involve in politics</p> <p>Citizens, including women may have some local voice & accountability links, but local decisions may be overridden by center.</p> <p>Some incorporation of local preferences.</p> <p>Blended center-local accountability offers some limited options for citizens and women empowerment.</p> <p>Local officials have relatively weak incentives to respond to citizen demands women special interest.</p>
Devolution	<p>LG is subject to national norms, but sets local policies & priorities, plans autonomously in response to local preferences & needs.</p> <p>LG determines own form & structure.</p> <p>LG staffs are employees of LG, which sets salaries, numbers, assignments, & handles hiring/firing.</p> <p>LG determines service mix, modes of provision, eligibility, & allocation.</p> <p>LG provides information to local officials, citizens.</p>	<p>LG sets spending priorities, plans how to meet service delivery obligations given resource availability.</p> <p>LG has mix of own-source revenues, revenue sharing, central transfers.</p> <p>LG may have some authority for debt financing, but is subject to a hard budget constraint.</p> <p>LG reports to local officials and citizens on expenditure according to central formulas and norms.</p>	<p>Locally elected officials lead LG, may or may not be linked to national parties, platforms respond to constituent demands and needs. Strong local accountability, LG shapes budget priorities, investments, service mix to fit local preferences and needs.</p> <p>Broad political space for local civil society.</p>	<p>availabilities of institutions institutional opportunities for women involve in local politics is high</p> <p>Women have physical, social & psychological proximity & access to campaigning for local election, demand for service delivery, exercising accountability, forming local women associations, joining political parties competing for local election.</p> <p>Women have also strong incentives to involve in local government politics as entry criteria are less stringent, & to develop leadership & other experiences to involve in higher level politics</p>

Source: Adapted with modification from Brinkerhoff and Goldsmith (cited in Brinkerhoff and Azfar, 2006)

Appendix 2: Questionnaire

Addis Ababa University
School of Graduate Studies
Regional and Local Development Studies

To: Respondent

Subject: Research Questionnaire

Dear respondent, this questionnaire is meant for gathering first hand information for Master's degree thesis research entitled '*Women Political Empowerment and Decentralization in Addis Ketema Sub-city, Addis Ababa*'. The central aim of the research is to assess the decentralization process in Addis Ketema Sub-city in view of the opportunities, challenges and prospects of women political empowerment.

The researcher believes that, to attain such aim and for the ultimate success of the research project as a whole, your genuine, frank and timely response is very crucial. Please, respond to the questions honestly and responsibly and while doing so, please do not mention your name, phone or house numbers.

Of course, I assure you that your response will be kept confidential and as such you will not be responsible for the outcome/finding of the research what ever let it will be.

I sincerely appreciate your consideration and cooperation,

The researcher

A. Personal Data

1. Age _____
2. Marital status and family situation _____
3. Level of education _____
4. In addition being councilor in the sub-city/kebele, you are
 - a. Government's employee
 - b. trader/ business women
 - c. Civic association/NGO's employee
 - d. Housewife
 - e. Other (please, specify) _____

B. Women Participation in Formal Politics

5. How many years is it since you start your formal political career (such as member to a political part, campaigning for an election)?
 - a. less than 5 years
 - b. 5 to 10 years
 - c. 10 to 15 years
 - d. More than 15 years
6. How did you begin your formal political career in the community?
 - a. membership to a political associations
 - b. individual campaigning
 - c. Other (please, specify) _____
7. What was the deriving force (your main objective) behind your formal political participation?
8. Do you think that your plan has been fulfilled
 - a. yes
 - b. Partially fulfilled
 - c. not yet
9. To what extent do the following factors have contributed you to start your formal political career? (Indicate your answer by putting 'X' mark along your favorite response 5= very high, 4= high, 3= average, 2= low and 1= very low).

Contributory Factors	Response				
	5	4	3	2	1
9.1 Encouragement from family or relatives					
9.2 Belonging to a certain ethnic group					
9.3 Physical proximity and access to information about the kebele/sub-city administration					
9.4 Reform in kebele/sub-city administration					

9.5 Affirmative actions of the kebele/sub-city administration					
9.6 Party mobilization and recruitment for membership					

10. If you have additional or different response please write here _____

C. Women's Access to and Participation in Local Politics: Opportunities and Challenges

11. What opportunities do you think women have to participate in the political affairs of their community in your kebele/sub-city?

12. Generally, how do you think the overall degree of women political participation in your kebele/sub-city?

- a. extremely high
- b. high
- c. low
- d. extremely low
- e. I do not have clear idea

13. If your answer to question 12 is either 'a' or 'b', what do you think are the reasons? Please write your answer below

14. If your answer to question 12 is either 'c' or 'd' to what extent do the following factors hinder women to have access to and participate in local politics in your kebele/sub-city(indicate your answer by putting 'X' mark along your favorite response 4= very high, 3= high, 2= low, 1= very low and 0 = do not know)

Challenges	Response				
	4	3	2	1	0
14.1 Society considers politics as men's affair and does not give reputation for women political participation					
14.2 Women have household and reproductive					

responsibilities and thus difficult for them to engage in politics					
14.3 Most women feel that they will not be heard and accepted (do not feel having enough influential power)					
14.4 Most women have not sufficient information					
14.5 There is no sufficient political participation channels					
14.6 The channels through which women engage in political participation are ineffective					
14.7 Participating in local politics is too complicated, requires women to meet many criteria which they do not					
14.8 Lack of affirmative action					

15. If you have additional point, please write it here _____

D. Women and Local Council System

16. For how many years have you served as councilor at sub-city/kebele levels?
- less than 5 years
 - 5 to 10 years
 - 11 to 15 years
 - More than 15 years
17. How did you become a councilor? (if your answer is 'b' or 'c' please go to question number 14)
- Through political party affiliation
 - Through independent candidacy
18. If your answer to question 17 is 'a', to what extent do you think the following factors contributed for you to be nominated by the political party you are affiliated to (indicate your answer by putting 'X' mark along your favorite response 5= very high, 4= high, 3= average, 2= low and 1= very low)

Contributory Factors	Response				
	5	4	3	2	1
18.1 You are known for your commitment to your party's program on women					
18.2 You are known for your commitment to the political program of your party even if they are not specific to women's					

affairs					
18.3 You were amongst these who meet the requirements (educational, experience and etc) of the nomination					
18.4 balancing religious and/or ethnic composition in party nomination					
18.5 low women membership in the party					

19. If you have additional or different response please write here

_____.

20. As elected councilor, how often do you go to your constituency (where you are elected from) and held discussion or meeting with the electorates? Never

- a. Never
- b. Once in 6 months or more
- c. Once every year or more
- d. Other (please, specify) _____

21. If your answer to question 20 is '*a*' please write the reasons why you have never gone to your constituency below

22. If your answer to question 20 is any choice other than 'a', how did you find the participation of women

23. Will you campaign in the next kebele/sub-city elections?

- a. no
- b. yes
- c. undecided

24. Have you ever lead any political organization, such as political party or women organization, or departments in such organizations in your community?

- a. yes, I have
- b. no I have not

25. Have you ever been head, deputy head of any executive office in the sub-city or kebele?

- a. yes I have,
- b. no I have not

E. Challenges of Women Councilors

26. From your experience, to what extent do you agree or disagree about the following observation during debates and discussions in assembly (indicate your answer by putting 'X' mark along your favorite response 5= very high, 4= high, 3= average, 2= low and 1= very low)

Challenges	Response				
	5	4	3	2	1
26.1 Men dominate discussion and women councilor lack influential power in debate and making decision					
26.2 Even when given the opportunity, women usually tend to be passive in debate and decision making					
26.3 Women with educational and experience are active during councilor discussions					
26.4 Women councilor will be active on discussions directly relating to women					
26.5 while voting women are dominated by men					
26.6 Men are heard more than women during discussions					

27. If you have additional point, please write it here

28. From your experience, what do you think are the challenges facing women councilor in your area (please, write on the space provided)

29. What do you suggest to solve these challenges (please, write on the space provided)

F. Measures to Enhance Women's Access to and Participation in Local Politics

30. What measures do you suggest to improve women political participation in local politics in your kebele/sub-city? Please write your answer below

THE END!!!!

Appendix 3: Interview Guide

1. How do you assess the situation of women political participation in this sub-city/kebele?
2. What do you think are the opportunities available for women political participation in your locality?
3. Do you think the decentralization process in the sub-city/kebele has created any opportunity for the political involvement of women?
4. How do you assess the level of developments and women involvement in party politics in your sub-city/kebele?
5. How do you assess the level of developments in women organizations in your sub-city/kebele?
6. What are the challenges of women political empowerment in your community?
7. What do you recommend to tackle these challenges?

DECLARATION

I declare this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university and that all sources of materials and references used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

Declared by

Name: Arar Yirgalem

Signature: 

Date: 15/11/2010

Confirmed by

Name: Falek Alem Tesfaye

Signature: 

Date: 17/11/10

November, 2010, Addis Ababa University, Addis Ababa