

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF BUSINESS AND ECONOMICS
DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT

**CHALLENGES FACED BY WOMEN LEADERS IN THE
FINANCIAL SECTOR IN ETHIOPIA: FOCUS ON THE
PRIVATE INSURANCE COMPANIES**

BY: TIGIST GIRMAY

OCTOBER, 2015

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SECTOR: FOCUS ON THE PRIVATE INSURANCE COMPANIES**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS OF THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF EXECUTIVE
BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (EMBA)**

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APPROVAL BY BOARD OF EXAMINERS

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3. _____ Examiner (External)	_____	_____

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List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

BDPA	Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CSA	Central Statistics Agency
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against All Women
DCEO	Deputy Chief Executive Officer
ELGI	Ethio-Life and General Insurance
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
IPU	International Parliament Union
ILO	International Labor Organization
LP	Leadership Positions
SIP	Society of Insurance Professionals
TLP	Top Leadership Positions
UDHR	Universal Declaration for Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCAE	United Nations Commission for African Economy
WE	Women Employees

DECLARATION

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

Declared BY

Name : TIGIST GIRMAY

Signature: _____

Date : October 12, 2015

Confirmed by Advisor:

Name: Dr. Zewdie Shibre

Signature: _____

Date : _____

Place and date of submission: Addis Ababa University October 15, 2015.

Abstract

This study deals with women's participation and challenges faced in leadership positions of private insurance companies. The objective of this study is to identify the factors that affect women's participation in leadership positions in private insurance companies and addressing policy interventions and strategies to improve women leaders' leadership and competences. The subjects of the study were 15 women/men in top leadership, 125 senior employees who are not in managerial position, 55 women in middle managerial level(Branch managers) and 100 selected customers of the insurance companies for the study(Africa, United, Nyala, Nile, Nib, Lion, ELGI, Tsehay). The randomly selected sample sizes are mutually exclusive. Besides, documents were reviewed to supplement the data that collected from primary source. The instruments for data collection were interview, questionnaires and document analysis. The collected data were analyzed both qualitatively by using words and quantitatively by using frequency and percentage. As per the findings in the study, qualified women representation in selected private insurance companies are 51% where as the representation in middle leadership positions and top leadership positions are 16% and 11% respectively. The United Insurance Company has contributed for women participation in leadership as the only company in the industry which lead by Women executive and has 36% of the top level leadership position are occupied by women. Therefore, the study identifies different barriers for women's participation in leadership. The most frequently mentioned barriers by the 265(15 interviewees, 39 middle women leaders, 116 employees not in managerial positions and 95 customers) respondents are women's low access and success to advanced education, socio cultural barrier and lack of support and mentoring in the industry. The main contributing factors for few women's holding of leadership positions are their performance and capability level, their educational qualifications, family support. Finally, the main measures to be taken to enhance women's participation in leadership is mainly depends on better addressing gender gaps in the country and the level of attention given for gender issues in the insurance industry. To address the gender gap women themselves should create net working, support/encourage and mentoring each other and ready to enhance advanced education.

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Annex I

Interview Questionnaire for Men and Women who were/are in different positions .

Section I. General information

1. Your Department _____
2. Your Qualification _____
3. Your Position _____
4. Year of service _____
5. Gender Male () Female ()
6. Age A. 25-35 _____ B. 35-45 _____ C. above 45 _____
7. Marital Status _____

Section II

1. What do you feel about women's participation in leadership positions such as Chief Executive Officer, Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Director etc and in other branch and support positions of your organization?
2. What do you think about barriers for women's participation (coming to) in Leadership positions of your organization/private insurance companies?
 - A. In terms of socio-cultural perspectives
 - B. In terms of educational point of view
 - C. Institutional point of view; from research and publication perspectives, and recruitment criteria in the organization.
 - D. In terms of support and encouragement, both from the family and the organizations and informal relationships with others in the organization/insurance sector
 - E Any other barriers from your experience

3. How did you come to the leadership position -what are the contributory factors for your being in leadership position?

A. In terms of organization point of view; from research and publication

Perspectives and recruitment criteria of the institution

B. „ Individual factors

D. „ Role models and mentor, both from the family and organization

E. Any other contributory factors

4. What is your perception in relation to the challenges/opportunities of leadership (the gender consequences of leadership), when you were/are in leadership positions (from your experience)?

-On personal life

- On professional life

- During decision making activities

- Communication with others

5. What characteristics do you think most people associate with a women manager/leader?

6. What is your opinion of a good manager/leader?

7. What do you suggest to enhance women's participation in leadership of private insurance companies?

8. Any other comment

THANK YOU!!!

Annex II

Questionnaire For Women Employees In Managerial Positions

Dear Respondent,

My name is Tigist Girmai. I am pursuing postgraduate studies in Executive Master of Business Administration(EMBA) at Addis Ababa University. Having successfully completed the course work, I am currently working on my thesis in order to fulfill the partial requirement of the said degree. The topic of my research is entitled Challenges Faced by Women Leaders in the Financial Sector in Ethiopia(Focusing on Selected Private Insurance Companies).

Thus, this questionnaire is intended to collect relevant information from women in management/leadership posts such as yourself.

This is, therefore, to kindly request you to take a few minutes of your invaluable time to fill out the questionnaire. Your input is crucial to the success of my research. Since the research is concluded for academic purposes, the anonymity of the information you provide is guaranteed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Instructions

There is no need to write your name. To indicate your answers, please put a tick mark (✓) in the boxes or fill in the space provided and also write the desired answer for the open-ended questions (please feel free to attach additional paper if required).

Age _____

Marital Status Single ☐ ☐ Married ☐

Education 12th grade and below ☐

Certificate ☐

Diploma ☐

Degree and above ☐

Please specify _____

Occupation _____

Total number of years in managerial position _____

1. Do you have children?

Yes No

2. How do you rate your spouse in providing you with the necessary support to develop your career?

- Very supportive - Less supportive
- Moderately supportive - Not supportive at all

3. Were you able to successfully combine childbearing with your career development?

Yes No

4. Do you have the responsibility for the care of elderly relatives?

Yes No

5. Does your organization have a policy which enables you to take a leave at times of sickness in the family, or when there is a need to take care of children or the elderly?

Yes No

6. Do you find it difficult to juggle/balance work life with family responsibilities and parenting?

Yes No

7. Is it a must that women choose between their career and their family?

Yes No

If yes, what do you think are the reasons? _____

8. Has family strain at any time decreased your performance at work and thereby negatively affected your career success?

Yes No

9. Do you think you are a role model for (your daughter or) younger women in the family, insurance industry or community?

Yes No

How ? _____

10. Are you satisfied with your work?

Yes No

If no, what is the cause of your dissatisfaction? _____

11. Do you think that your supervisors or employers appreciate your work?

Yes No

If no, do you think it has something to do with you being a woman?

Yes No

12. Did you have a mentor who helped you understand the culture of your organization?

Yes No

If yes, how did they help you?

13. Do you agree on the importance of having a mentor?

Yes

No

14. What do you think are the required qualities for women to be successful in managerial positions? _____

15. Do you think it takes women a longer period of time to reach a managerial position?

Yes

No

If yes, what do you think are the reasons?

16. Were you given any type of training that prepared you to assume managerial post?

Yes

No

17. Do you believe competence is the only requirement needed to get ahead in an organization?

Yes

No

18. Do you think that the main career barrier for women is due to:

a) low self-esteem,

Yes

No

b) lack of self-confidence,

Yes

No

c) assertiveness,

Yes

No

d) not seeing themselves as managers/leaders? Yes No

If yes, what do you think is the reason? _____

What remedies do you suggest to remove this barrier? _____

19. What do you think are some of the barriers that exist and may deter career advancement of women? _____

20. What organizational barriers did you face while moving up the corporate ladder?

21. Do you believe there is equal opportunity provided to women in managerial roles to further career development as compared with their male counterparts?

Yes

No

If no, what do you think are the reasons? _____

22. Do you think women in general, and those in your organization in particular, are discriminated against because of their gender?

Yes

No

If yes, what is the nature of such discrimination? (Example: Denial of training, promotion, or transfer opportunities) _____

23. What strategies do you think can be used to increase opportunities for women to move into management roles? _____

24. In your organization

(a) How many women managers/leaders are there? _____

(b) Where are women managers concentrated?

Top level

Middle level

Junior level

What do you think are the reasons for such concentration? _____

25. Why do you think is the case that the number of women at managerial or supervisory positions is much less than that of men? _____

26. Do you think that attitudes concerning the role of women can be influenced by cultural factors?

Yes

No

If so please identify at least six local factors. _____

27. Do you think your organization's regulations are gender sensitive?

Yes

No

28. Are women workers less preferred to male ones at time of employment in fear of the organization's obligation to provide pre-delivery and maternity leaves and the effect of that on the work?

Yes

No

29. What do you think should be done by the government or individual establishments to curb the problems of work place gender discrimination and differential treatment of male and female workers? _____

30. What negative impact does your organizational culture have on women in management position? _____

31. How do you characterize your organizational culture with respect to the management style?

Male dominated

Female dominated

Balanced

32. Do you think women have less work or career motivation than men?

Yes

No

If yes, what are your reasons? _____

33. How do you evaluate the performance of women at leadership positions?

Very Good Good Fair Poor

34. Do you usually encounter a questioning or suspicion about your ability?

Yes No

If so who seems to be usually questioning your ability? _____

35. Are you excluded from the informal discussions and interactions that could help you understand the true nature of the organization in which you work just because you are a women?

Yes No

If yes, what do you think are the reasons? _____

36. How would you describe the relationship you have with your male colleagues?

37. Do you agree that networking/meeting other women managers in the same or other fields of employment plays an important part in managerial skill development, especially for women?

Yes No

38. Do you think that the networking must extend to men working within the organization in different managerial roles?

Yes No

If no, what are your reasons? _____

39. Any other comments _____

Thank you.

Annex III

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

Dear Respondent,

My name is Tigist Girmai. I am pursuing postgraduate studies in Executive Master of Business Administration(EMBA) at Addis Ababa University. Having successfully completed the course work, I am currently working on my thesis in order to fulfill the partial requirement of the said degree. The topic of my research is entitled Challenges Faced by Women Leaders in the Financial Sector in Ethiopia(Focusing on Selected Private Insurance Companies).

Thus, this questionnaire is intended to collect relevant information from employees working in private insurance companies such as yourself.

This is, therefore, to kindly request you to take a few minutes of your invaluable time to fill out the questionnaire. Your input is crucial to the success of my research. Since the research is concluded for academic purposes, the anonymity of the information you provide is guaranteed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Part 1- Personal information

Please indicate your answer by ticking where appropriate.

1. a) Gender: Male [] Female []
 b) Age: Below 40 years [] 40-49 [] above 50 years []
 c) Marital status: Single [] married [] separated []
- 2.What is your highest academic/ professional qualification?
 PhD [] Masters [] Bachelor degree [] HND [] Diploma []
 Certificate [] Secondary School [] Primary School []
- 3.What is your work experience?
 0- 5 years[] 6-10 [] 11-15 [] 16-20 [] 21-30 []
4. Please indicate your current position in your organization.....
5. In which department are you working?.....

Part 11: MAIN ISSUES OF THE STUDY

SOCIAL-CULTURAL FACTORS

1. Do you think that social/cultural factors influence the upward mobility of women?
Yes [☐] No [☐]
2. Do you think women are as capable as men in leadership capabilities?
Yes [☐] No [☐]
3. To what extent do cultural factors influence the upward mobility of women in your organization?
 - a. Very great extent [☐]
 - b. Great extent [☐]
 - c. Moderate extent [☐]
 - d. Low extent [☐]
 - e. Very low extent [☐]
4. Do you believe women are offered equal leadership positions as men in Ethiopia?
Yes [☐] No [☐]

If your answer is No. Explain the reason _____
5. Please comment briefly on how women in Ethiopia are hindered by social/cultural factors in progression to top leadership.....
.....

ORGANIZATION POLICIES

1. Do you think work policies in your organization inhibit the progression of women to the top positions?

Yes [☐] No [☐]
2. To what extent is this the case?
 - a. Very great extent [☐]
 - b. Great extent [☐]

c. Moderate extent []

d. Low extent []

e. Very low extent []

5. Does your organization have a clear policy on maternity?

Yes [] No []

6. Are women given paid time off to seek treatment while pregnant?

Yes [] No []

7. Please mention a few policies that are unfriendly to women given their family roles as mothers and wives?.....

.....

.....

ORGANIZATION CULTURE

1.Does organization culture inhibit the progression of women to top leadership?

Yes [] No []

2.To what extent do attitudes influence the upward mobility of women in your organization?

a. Very great extent []

b. Great extent []

c. Moderate extent []

d. Low extent []

e. Very low extent []

3.What are these attitudes?.....

.....

4.Please explain briefly how organization culture hinders women progression to the top?.....

.....

5.Has organization politics contributed in gender imbalance in top positions in your organization?.....

Please elaborate.....

.....

LIMITED ACCESS TO ADVANCED EDUCATION

1. Does limited access to advanced education affect the progression of women to top leadership?

Yes [] No []

2. Which of the following groups is more qualified or trained in the organization?

Men [] Women []

3. Explain the extent to which this can influence upward mobility of women:

a. Very great extent []

b. Great extent []

c. Moderate extent []

d. Low extent []

e. Very low extent []

4. Briefly explain how low education affects the progression of women to the top executive jobs.....

.....

DISCRIMINATION IN APPOINTMENTS

1.Does discrimination of women in appointments affects their progression to top leadership?

Yes [] No []

2.In your organization, is there equal opportunity in recruitment, promotion and deployment?

Please explain.....

.....

3. Who are the majority in the following levels of management?

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| a. Top management | ☐ Male | ☐ Women |
| b. Middle management | ☐ Male | ☐ Women |
| c. Lower management | ☐ Male | ☐ Women |

4. Mention a few jobs, if any, which are gender specific in your

organization.....

.....

5. Briefly explain how gender discrimination affects women progression to the top.....

.....

6. Please explain any other factors you feel have hindered the progression of women to top leadership positions.....

Thank you

Annex IV

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR CUSTOMERS(PRIVATE INSURANCE COMPANIES)

Dear Respondent,

My name is Tigist Girmai. I am pursuing postgraduate studies in Executive Master of Business Administration(EMBA) at Addis Ababa University. Having successfully completed the course work, I am currently working on my thesis in order to fulfill the partial requirement of the said degree. The topic of my research is entitled Challenges Faced by Women Leaders in the Financial Sector in Ethiopia(Focusing on Selected Private Insurance Companies).

Thus, this questionnaire is intended to collect relevant information from customers who have business relationship with private insurance companies such as yourself.

This is, therefore, to kindly request you to take a few minutes of your invaluable time to fill out the questionnaire. Your input is crucial to the success of my research. Since the research is concluded for academic purposes, the anonymity of the information you provide is guaranteed. I would like to take this opportunity to thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Part I- Personal information

Please indicate your answer by ticking where appropriate.

1. a) Gender: Male [] Female []
 b) Age: Below 40 years [] 40-49 [] above 50 years []
 c) Marital status: Single [] married [] separated []
- 2.What is your highest academic/ professional qualification?
 PhD [] Masters [] Bachelor degree [] HND [] Diploma []
 Certificate [] Secondary School [] Primary School []
- 3.What is your work experience?
 0- 5 years[] 6-10 [] 11-15 [] 16-20 [] 21-30 []
4. Please indicate your current position in your organization.....

Part II. Main Issues

Different researchers mentioned various barriers; like socio-cultural, organizational, educational, political and individual/ personal barriers for women's participation in leadership. In your opinion, **how much** do these barriers hinder women's participation in different leadership positions like as Chief Executive Officer, Department Manager, Branch Manager etc?

Please indicate your level of agreement and/or disagreement by filling in the appropriate box where SA(Strongly Agree)=5 points; A(Agree)=4 points; NC(No Comment)=3 points; D(Disagree)=2 points; SD(Strongly Disagree)=1 point

Expected barriers for women's participation in leadership	SA 5	A 4	NC 3	D 2	SD 1
Women have more family responsibility than men					
Roles assigned by society to men and women					
Masculine Corporate Culture					
Women with insufficient general or line management experience					
Few role models for women					
Men not encouraged to take leave for family responsibilities					
Scarcity of the female staffs to participate in leadership positions					
Lack of company equality policy and programmes					
Low educational qualification of women in the industry					
Limited access to advanced education affect the progression of women to top leadership?					
Stereotypes against women					
The absence of women in the informal network of men					
Lack of leadership training for women					
Lack of strategy for retention of skilled women					
Inherent gender bias in recruitment and promotion (management generally viewed as a man's job)					
The informal network of men, which favors them to be leaders and vice versa.					
The absence of role models and mentoring					
The absence of support and encouragement from the colleagues in the industry					
The absence of encouragement from the family; such as husband or parents					

Please indicate in the space below any additional comments/ observations.

Thank you

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND/RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

Nowadays there is an increasing trend in the level of awareness in gender equality in our society. Hence, there is encouragement for females who attend schools, colleges and universities although their enrollment still remains low when compared to global perspectives. Besides, even though there is improvement in the number of educated women and more women have got jobs especially in financial sectors than ever before, there are relatively very few women in managerial positions as branch managers, division heads, directors and above.

Encouraging women's roles in business leadership is critical to the growth of an economy (Afrin, 1999; Caputo & Dolinsky, 1998; Minniti, Arenius, & Langowitz, 2004). Many organizations and government institutions (*The hunger project*, 2005; ILO, 2005b; UN, 2005a; UNIFEM, 2008) have long recognized the importance of women in both developed and developing nations to the process of increased development.

However, as Maseko, 2013 thesis, most continue to suffer from occupational segregation in the workplace and rarely break through the so-called glass ceiling in public life which separates them from top-level management and professional positions. Maseko states again, even the few that push through to occupy top leadership/management positions face serious challenges that can and do restrict their performances in these positions. This is a serious concern as it reinforces existing stereotypes of women ability to perform at the top level of public life and thus perpetuates a vicious cycle of marginalization and disempowerment of women (Maseko, 2013).

As per ILO's report. 2013 for Women in Business and Management, Promoting gender equality at the workplace is not only the right thing to do, but also the smart thing to do. A growing body of evidence shows that utilizing the skills and talent of both men and women is beneficial for enterprises and for society in general. Gender balance is increasingly seen as good for business. The growing participation of women in the labor market has been a major engine of global growth and competitiveness. The ILO, 2013 report states that a growing number of studies are reaching at the conclusion that gender balance in management teams and boards appears to make

financial sense. Yet, one might wonder as to why there are still so few women at the top, especially in the Ethiopian context.

The glass ceiling that prevents women from reaching top positions in business and management may be showing cracks but it is still there. More women than ever before are managers and business owners, but there is still a shortage of women at the top of the corporate ladder. Findings show that The larger the company or organization, the less likely the head will be a woman – 5 per cent or less of the CEOs of the world's largest corporations are women (ILO report, 2008).

In Ethiopia, according to CSA (2007), women account for half of the population but they are still underrepresented compared to their male counterparts regardless of their higher contribution to every sphere of the nation's economy (Endale, 2012). According to Endale, women's equal participation in leadership and decision making shouldn't be demanded merely for the sake of justice. It should also be recognized as a necessary condition for taking their interests into account. Currently international and national documented legal and other instruments are promoting strongly for gender equality (Endale,2012). For instance, Art(21) of the universal declaration of human right affirms the right of every man and woman to participate in every aspect of the government of their country (UDHR, 1948).

In addition to this, Art(7) of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against All Women (CEDAW), requires a state party to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discriminations against women in the a country's political and public life. With specific reference to Art 7(1) of CEDAW, the convention affirms that equal rights of women to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public offices and perform all public functions at all level of government (CEDAW, 1979).

Moreover, the FDRE constitution of 1995 Art(35) is all devoted for enhancing equal participation of women in all socio-economic, political, and other aspects of legal activities in the nation. Though the government has ratified different policies, regulations and enhancing instruments, the real participation of women in formal organizations from top to down is still insignificant (Endale, 2012). In support of this idea, the UNCEA (2007) states that the

participation of women in senior leadership position in political parties is very minimal that it only accounts for 4.6% as compared to that of South Africa (25.3%) (Endale, 2012).

In Ethiopia, where the status of women and their public participation seems to be improved over the last 20 years, the failure to break through the glass ceiling and the gender-based challenges of the few women in top positions face remains a topical issue. So far the researcher couldn't find a research study conducted on women leaders on financial and private insurance sector in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia there are sixteen(16) private and one(1) government insurance companies. Out of these companies only one company(United Insurance Company) has been led by a woman Chief Executive Officer (CEO) since 2006. This number makes up only 6% of the total leadership positions. At the level of a Director, four companies (Nib, Nyala, Awash and United) have positions occupied by women. More specifically, the marketing department of NIB Insurance Company, finance department of Nyala Insurance Company, underwriting department of Awash Insurance Company and operation department of United Insurance Company are occupied by women. Out of these four women, the underwriting and operation department managers have had an opportunity to get the ceiling of CEO(Chief Executive Officer). Except these four leaders, the rest of the female employees have remained to be support staffs. Therefore, this study attempted to examine the women's participation in leadership positions of the selected private insurance companies and factors affecting women's participation in leadership.

The study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter contains background, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, limitation, delimitation, and significance of the study. The second chapter consists of the review of related literature and theoretical framework. Chapter three comprises methodology of the study. The fourth chapter consists of data analysis and discussion. The last chapter presents conclusion and recommendations of the study.

1.2 Problem Statement

In spite of efforts at transforming both the country and the public service to embrace national priorities of development and economic growth, challenges persist for women across the financial sectors. For example, while women have the potential and ability to be leaders, they often lack opportunities, resources and support for realizing their potential. This is not peculiar to the financial sector where women in leadership are fewer in Ethiopia.

According to **Meaza (2009)**, Ethiopia is a signatory of all major human right treaties including the most important Women's Convention, **CEDAW** which calls for equal participation of women in public decision making. Ethiopia is also a signatory of the Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (**BDPA**), which requires governments to attain a 30% benchmark for women's representation in all public decision making positions (**Meaza,2009**). Moreover, various literatures show that as compared to in prior decades, the participation women in decision making throughout the world is somehow increasing. But in spite of the incremental progress towards women's participation in public spheres, it is generally recognized that women have largely remained outside of formal leadership roles due to various factors. As it is contended by Meaza, the main factors which have contributed for such disparities include: structural barriers, unequal socio-economical opportunities, and inadequate access to mentors and support networks (Meaza, 2009:6). Meaza's argument and the researcher's personal observation in financial sectors in general and in the study areas of private insurance companies in particular, women's participation in leadership is insignificant.

A detailed look into the companies would help us to see the situation more concretely. A case in point is that of Nyala and Africa insurance companies. Nyala insurance company has 7 departments and 21 branches, only one department (finance) and 4 branches have been led by females respectively. This is not in harmony with the personnel manual of Nyala Insurance Company which shows that the composition of qualified staff is a 30 to 70 ratio for women. On the other hand, Africa Insurance Company has 21 branches, currently with only 2 are led by females. There are no women at higher levels, namely, a director or above it. This is against what the staff composition of Africa Insurance Company shows: 53 to 47(women to men). In the case of Awash Insurance Company, there are 34 branches and 7 directorate levels of which only 4 branches and one department have been occupied by women. There are also companies who have no female leaders at branch level (middle level managers) like LUCY.

So far the researcher couldn't found study on women's leadership on private insurance companies although the sector is fast growing with significant contribution to the country's economy. Hence the financial sectors have to interpret the challenges they face and align them to processes that would ensure efficiency and effectiveness of women in leadership positions in these sector. Besides the organizational context plays a crucial role in shaping the next

generation of leaders/managers. If women feel alienated from the advancement process, then the organization may miss out on what could be vital resource- a pool of talented and ambitious women seeking to develop their own careers to the advantage of both themselves and their employers. In spite of the seeming progress towards empowering women in public life in Ethiopia, they remain marginalized in many ways as their representation in key decision-making positions in critical areas of the financial sector remains low. Against this background, the research therefore aim at examining the challenges faced by women in leadership/management positions on selected private insurance companies. The study were supported by various literature reviews on studies in Ethiopia and Africa.

1.3 Research Questions

To be to the point, this study attempts to deal with broad questions around both what challenges women in leadership positions in the financial sector(private insurance companies) face and how can women best enter and succeed at leadership/management positions in the financial sectors. .

More specifically the study attempts the following research questions:

- What challenges do women leaders/managers face in the financial sector in Ethiopia?
- What are the underlying factors associated with successful women in leadership positions in the financial (Private Insurance Companies) sector?
- How does organizational culture impact on women leadership development?

1.4 Research Objectives

Organizations often do not tackle the issue of how their senior management's style may inhibit the progress of women into management roles, particularly as they progress from junior tiers to middle and senior management. Yet these form the backdrop of the managerial stage on which women and men's career roles are played out. The organizational context plays a crucial role in shaping the next generation of managers. If women feel alienated from the advancement process, then the organization may miss out on what could be vital resource a pool of talented and ambitious women seeking to develop their own careers to the advantage of both themselves and their employers.

1.4.1 Main Objective

This study mainly attempts to investigate the challenges and factors hindering women from occupying leadership or management positions in financial sectors with the purpose of addressing policy intervention and strategies to improve women leaders' leadership and competences.

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

More specifically the study have the following objectives:

- To examine the factors influencing the development of women/females in leadership.
- To examine the strategies that successful women/female leaders use to break through the ceiling.
- To determine how women can best enter and succeed at leadership/management positions in the financial sectors with implication to Ethiopia.
- To look into the possible barriers that impede women's career development and the extent to which and the ways organizations accommodate women and protect their interests

1.5 Scope of the Study

In Ethiopia there are sixteen private insurance companies under operation. The research was conducted focusing on only eight private insurance companies. Senior women managers who have been in their post for at least one year, directors and executives of the selected companies and influential customers are the subjects of the study. The sample size may not be representative of other women managers found in other regions. Further the study didn't include the attitude of the supervisory body on women empowerment in private financial sectors.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

Since the researcher couldn't found studies made in this regard for preliminary assessment, the findings might not be exhaustive enough. Furthermore, the study solely focused on women in private insurance companies only. The sample of the respondents didn't include women's subordinates attitude in a comparative way with men. These gaps will be expected to fill by other researchers.

1.7 Significance of the study

Some research studies were conducted on gender issues and challenges faced on women leaders on government organizations and ministries. For example, Endale in 2014 conducted a study on Factors that affect women participation in leadership and decision making on Bedele Town Administration. Yania Seidmekiye in 2008 did research on Academic Women's participation in leadership in case of Addis Ababa University. Bacha Kebede in 2008 also conducted a study on Challenges and opportunities facing women managers in Oromia Regional State.) Barring these studies, there hasn't been a study conducted on this specific area, especially on financial institutions which accommodate more qualified women. Hence, the study was significant for decision makers and academicians in the area of private financial institutions. The study was also provide up-to-date valuable information on the status of women in management and the challenges facing women managers/leaders in the study area. Since the study intends to indicate important areas of policy interventions it was also allow decision makers to revisit and correct existing gaps and thereby facilitates situations to realize gender equality in managerial occupations in financial sectors in general and private insurance companies in particular. It could also serve as a base for academicians to conduct further research in the area. That is, the possible gaps and the identified limitations of the study might initiate researchers for further research undertakings

1.8 Organization of the study

The study were organized into five chapters. Chapter One provides the introduction of the study which comprises the introductory parts of the study. Chapter Two presents pertinent literature reviewed for the purpose of the study. Chapter Three deals with the research methodology showing the methods, tools, subjects, sampling and other relevant aspects guiding the research. Chapter Four presents the data analysis and interpretation part of the study where the results of the study are discussed. Chapter Five was the last chapter and presents with the conclusion and recommendations section.

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review

2.1 The Concept of Leadership

In any society individuals play some roles, and one of such is the role of a leader. Usually a leader is the one who bears the biggest responsibility; it is the most powerful role in an organization (Byers, 1997). The most common opinions about leaders are that they deal with everything and give directions: leaders have power, all the gains and pursuing an objective is only an object of interest of a leader (Gardener, 1990).

Leadership is even used as a universal means for any social problem. Leadership exists only in relationships and perception of employees involved (Yukl, 1994). In order to define leadership it is of major importance to understand relationship (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Leadership is a process when one individual affects the rest of the group in order to achieve defined aims of an organization or a group (Byers, 1997). Other employees are called followers, even if they are leaders of a lower group or fulfill some duties of a leader. For Bryman, the concept of leadership involves relationships deeply rooted in social settings requiring leadership theory and research to integrate leader attributes and behaviors within contextual aspects of leader emergence and effectiveness (G. Yukl, 1998; G. Yukl & Howell, 1999).

According to Khabele and Victor (2008), Leadership can be defined organizationally and narrowly as the ability of an individual to influence, motivate, and enable others to contribute toward the effectiveness and success of the organizations of which they are members. Organizationally, leadership has a direct impact on the effectiveness of costs, revenue generation, service, satisfaction, earnings, market value, share price, social capital, motivation, engagement and sustainability.

Leaders must be able to guide and paint the vision with confidence, and everyone must be ready to believe that this leader is able to achieve the aim (Kouzes & Posner 1995). Most often this role is executed by men. Leadership should not be mixed up with status. It is not quite like that status stands apart from a leader, however very often position brings along only symbolic values and traditions which do not increase the role of a leader (Gardner, 1990). For example, a nation awaits a manager to govern the State, yet his/her high position does not imply that his/her

leadership is going to be successful. Status is a value, importance or a prestige attached to a position or a role in an organization.

A leader is not the same as a manager, although these two notions get confused. Different roles of a manager and a leader may be explained with an example of authority. Weber links authority with legitimacy. People will accept leadership voluntarily as long as they believe that this leadership is legitimate. Authority and leadership have developed from legitimacy and optional recognition, namely, if leadership loses its legitimacy, the ability to manage is lost as well. Obedience to leadership is more optional than forced. Kotter (1988) defines governance as planning, organizing and controlling, while leadership includes creation of a vision and formation of relationships (Bolman & Terrence 1997). Managers promote stability while leaders head for innovation, press for change and find motivation in their employees to complete their tasks. For example, Warren (1985) finds that managers do things right, but leaders do the right thing (Gardner 1990).

When it comes to leadership and gender, does gender matter? Is there a difference between women leaders and men who lead? If so, what are the unique qualities of female leadership that the most effective women leaders possess, and are they unique to women? In 2005, a year-long study conducted by Caliper, identified a number of characteristics that distinguish women leaders from men when it comes to qualities of leadership.

Women leaders are more assertive and persuasive, have a stronger need to get things done and are more willing to take risks than male leaders. Women leaders were also found to be more empathetic and flexible, as well as stronger in interpersonal skills than their male counterparts (Caliper ,2005). In her book *Why the Best Man for the Job is a Woman: The Unique Female Qualities of Leadership*, author Wachs examines the careers of fourteen top female executives - among them Meg Whitman, President and CEO of eBay - to learn what makes them so successful. What she discovers echoes the Caliper study, including a willingness to reinvent the rules; an ability to sell their visions; the determination to turn challenges into opportunities; and a focus on 'high touch' in a high tech business world. This evidence - that the leadership style of women is not simply unique but possibly at odds with what men practice - begs the question: Do these qualities have value in the marketplace? Is this type of leadership welcomed by society and

by the financial sectors? Here in Ethiopia, these are among the questions that this study intends to investigate.

Grove & Montgomery (2000) defined leaders as people who offer vision and meaning for an institution and embody the ideas towards which the organization strives. From that point of view, leaders are identical and genderless. However, there is still doubt when women lead, and in many situations gender, more than age, experience or competence determines the role one is assigned. Female leadership talents are hidden and difficult to change. Female leadership competencies are easy to see on the surface and are easy to change through leadership development. These conditions appear to be under the control of the individual. A combination of them seems to be required to improve the productivity of the organization. Female leaders need to assess their competencies and talents so that the most qualified and interested women put themselves forward for promotion to higher positions (Marie Col et al., 2001). Academics and analysts have been examining the extent that more gender balance in management teams and boards actually improves business performance and if the “bottom line” is negatively affected when all decision-makers are men only. Several important studies, some mentioned below, have concluded that women’s participation in decision-making is positive for business outcomes, though some indicated there might not be a direct causal link.

McKinsey & Company researched the relationship between organizational and financial performance and the number of women managers. It was found out that European listed companies with more women in their management teams had 17 per cent higher stock price growth between 2005 and 2007, and their average operating profit was almost double their industry average. One of the reasons why it can be more difficult for women to be selected for top management jobs is that their management experience is not sufficiently diverse. They have not been exposed to all types of company operations during their careers and thus have not gained sufficient experience in general management across several functional areas. The ILO company survey in the developing regions confirms trends already identified in a range of studies and surveys. The concentration of women in certain types of management reflects the “glass walls” phenomenon, which is segregation by gender within management occupations. While women are gaining access to more and higher levels of management, there is a tendency for them to be clustered in particular managerial functions. As per ILO’s report much has been

written about the leadership barriers for women – in popular magazines and in social and financial media columns, as well as in scholarly articles and PhD theses the world over. Common issues include age-old gender stereotypes, whereby men and women are expected to perform different social and economic roles. Family responsibilities and male-dominated corporate culture are two other concerns. These are largely influenced by cultural, religious and social norms that date back centuries but remain deeply ingrained in all regions, even though the world of work and society has greatly changed. Historically, this has translated into specific occupations being considered more suitable either for men or for women. Traditionally, management, running a business and decision-making in the public arena were viewed as the domains of men. These norms have also informed educational curriculum and recruitment and promotion policies for many decades. While these are now being addressed to eliminate gender bias, they remain deep in the psyche of a broad spectrum of men and women. In light of such developments thus, one of the objectives of the current research is to assess the mentioned barriers (recruitment, promotion policies and stereotypes influence) and recommend mitigating factors.

For over a decade, media, scholarly articles and institutions have called for the dismantling of the “glass ceiling” that bars women from top positions. The “glass walls” within hierarchal structures that reproduce occupational segregation also create subtle barriers making career pathways different for women compared to men. Yet today, women are catching up and surpassing men in academic achievement (ILO Report 2015, p.17). At the same time companies are reporting difficulties in attracting and retaining talented people in general and women in particular. While there is much unemployment, the lack of workers with the right skills sets and knowledge required by a range of economic sectors is increasingly becoming a challenge. The insurance industry in Ethiopia has similar challenge on getting the right skills on both men and women. The ILO company survey revealed that 34 per cent of the companies responding indicated that retention of women was a problem to a great extent, while another 16 per cent said it was a problem to some extent. Yet, there is plenty of evidence of the benefits to business of tapping into the talent pool that women represent – including being in tune with a consumer market increasingly driven by women, benefiting from the innovation and creativity that gender

diversity can bring, improving corporate governance and, as a result, enhancing company outcomes.

The world of work has changed dramatically in the last generation due to falling fertility, aging of populations and migration, as well as increased access to education and technology. The ILO data indicates that women now hold over 40 per cent of jobs worldwide. Research demonstrates that women's ever increasing participation in the labor market has been the biggest engine of global growth and competitiveness. Human capital has become the key for companies to maintain a competitive edge in economies around the world that are increasingly based on knowledge and technology. Business groups and development actors increasingly view gender equality as an important plank/policy for long term economic growth and development. A recent study²² by Booz & Company points out that in terms of emerging markets, women consumers and entrepreneurs across the world altogether represent the "third billion" after the first and second billion markets in China and India.

2.2 Gender Stereotypes

Differences in self-presentation between men and women are due to both descriptive and prescriptive gender stereotype, and denote differences in how women and men actually are and denote norms about how men and women should behave or should be (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Rudman & Glick, 2001). Moreover, the descriptive and prescriptive stereotype for men and women overlap in that the behavior that is prescribed for each gender is positively related to the attributes that are valued. Women are supposed to be socially sensitive. Kindness, thoughtfulness, sensitivity and other stereotypically feminine behaviors that demonstrate a concern for others are referred to as communal. Men on the other hand are supposed to behave in self-assertive fashion. Behaviors such as competence and dominance are termed agentic behaviors and are stereotypically expected from men. Social role theory explains the emergence of these characteristics. According to social role theory, behavioral gender differences are caused by Socialization where at a young age males are encouraged and rewarded for being outgoing, and achievement oriented. Conversely, females are taught to be emotionally oriented, and reserved in their interactions with others (Wade, 2001).

2.3 Challenges to Women in Leadership

A range of issues arise in restraining women's potential to aspire to positions of leadership. Sadie (2005) maintained that at the bottom of the restrictions that women face is the patriarchal system where decision-making powers are in the hands of males. In this context, traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes concerning the role and status of women in society are still common and many women who are part of this system are finding it difficult to diverge from this culture and tradition they be ostracized/banished. Regardless of women's education and access to the job market the woman's role is considered to be the typical one of homemaker. The man on the other hand is the bread-winner, head of household, and has the right to public life. Confining women's identity to the domestic sphere is one of the barriers to women's entry into politics, and politics by its nature catapults one into public life. Commonly cultural attitudes are antagonistic to women's involvement in politics. Some women were capable of transcending cultural barriers and climbing to positions of leadership whether in politics or other spheres of public life, but more often than not it meant having to cope with cultural expectations with their leadership roles. With regard to our country's context, Gender Equality International and national legal framework for gender equality (chapter 3-(72api) states that Ethiopia's constitution and national policies are consistent with international legal instruments on gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform of Action, the African Charter on Human and People's Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Ethiopian constitution guarantees the rights of women as equal to those of men in all spheres including equality in marriage, the right to equal employment, and rights to maternity leave with pay, the right to acquire, administer, control, use and transfer property, with emphasis on land and inheritance issues and the right to access family planning and education. Ethiopia is therefore making several efforts to strengthen national structures for achieving gender parity. Equality between men and women, and boys and girls, is one of the central pillars of the Growth and Transformation Plan: A new Federal Family Code, based on the principle of gender equality, came into effect in July 2000. It raised the minimum age of marriage from 15 to 18 years and established the rights of women to share any assets the household had accumulated if a couple has been living together for at least three years in an irregular union. The Ethiopian penal code criminalizes domestic violence and harmful traditional practices including early marriage, abduction and female genital mutilation/cutting.

Leadership positions entail hard work and long hours. For women this stress is additional to their child care, home and family responsibilities, a phenomenon referred to as the dual shift in Sadie (2005). These considerations are also accurate of women in higher education. One of the concerns of the current study will be to examine the roles women perceive their spouses or partners play in their families in sharing home and family responsibilities and supporting the careers of these women. In addition to issues of family responsibility that do not make it easy for women to progress, cultural beliefs concerning the roles of men and women inhibit women's progression to top leadership as much it does in politics. Pandor (2006) pointed out that women at senior level positions are not always helpful to other women who tend to want to sustain the status quo.

For many women the time demands of such positions clash with the demands of the family, and this itself is an obstacle. There are also other structural obstacles beyond culture and religion. Facts from the Danish sample of the Comparative Leadership Study indicate that certain admission situations and conditions of gender positioning appear to encode admittance to top leadership positions, in business, and in political and public leadership. Qin (2000) in investigating the progress of female college students in China found that several factors combine to restrict their wish to become victorious career women. These comprise traditional discrimination, social pressures, women's kindness to people's misconception of successful women and the propensity of men to prefer family oriented wives. These women even fear being more talented than men and as a consequence shy away from demanding jobs. Women are torn between work and family as they do not want to be housewives, but at the same time are challenged to be super women. They both desire and panic about the opportunities and challenges of the external world.

Expert women in managerial positions face many challenges and those in institutions of higher learning are no exception. McMillan & Schumacher (2001) argue that the socialization of women in the work place arises within a system of power and inequality and such systems tend to repeat a variety of forms of inequality. In many institutions women's achievement of leadership positions has been facilitated by the execution of employment equity policies and affirmative action.

Leadership for women is not a simple task. As observed by Morna & Nyakujarah (2010), moving up and staying at the top is not necessarily filled with joy. Other literature on women's leadership in higher education reveals that women are less likely than men to take part in upper levels of leadership. Acker (2000), for example, advances the theory that there is some sort of achievement prevention by women that influences their leadership aptitude or curiosity in leadership positions. Advocacy in the higher education arena has tended to rely upon and react to government legislation on equity rather than being something that women in the sector actively struggle for. Obviously lots of women do make sacrifices to achieve something whether professionally or individually. For instance, women are expected to take responsibility for bringing up their children, but less parental responsibility is expected of men. As observed by Polly (1998) if women don't care enough for their children they know their children risk neglect. If men don't care enough they know their wives will. Such a condition appears to be the case for lots of working Ethiopian women nowadays.

Maseko in her thesis stated that South African women are still facing socio-economic struggles. She argued that affirmative action has only allowed women entry into jobs; it has not determined their progress into senior positions. Perhaps suitable qualifications required for promotion into managerial positions such as an MBA might help, but most women lack these. Even qualified women such as university graduates and postgraduates still face difficulties in obtaining employment and subsequently advancing into senior positions in corporate jobs. Having an MBA has proved quite helpful in advancing women into lower and middle-level management, and has given women distinct advantages in South Africa. It would be interesting therefore to draw comparisons and to look into the case in Ethiopia as to how capable women leaders-whether they are MBA holders or with the necessary experience are coping with the existing managerial situation. Smith (2004) in an article points out that women in senior positions believe that the MBA has given them the ability to develop in areas where they can add value and develop the confidence to lead others. He further suggests that a good MBA teaches strong interpersonal skills and the ability to empower people which are significant requirements in the changing leadership paradigm. Adele Thomas, Director of the University of the Witwatersrand Business School in Johannesburg (WITS Business School), said that for the many women still battling to penetrate the glass ceiling an MBA can help to raise their profile. Given such help a

woman can get from an MBA, it would thus be a question to wonder as to why more women in Ethiopia are not pursuing MBAs.

2.4 The Role of Mentoring in Women's Leadership

There is a growing argument that in order for women to thrive in obtaining leadership positions in a workplace mentoring must occur. The following characterize the advantages of mentoring for women (Maseko thesis page 79):

- ❖ Mentoring can considerably increase income and promotion potential for individuals experiencing these relationships.
- ❖ Mentoring can convene the needs of both women and the work environment, and it can also help in attracting and maintaining women and minority professionals in the work environment.
- ❖ Mentoring of younger workers increases turnover, assists mentees in dealing with organizational issues, and hastens their absorption into the culture.
- ❖ The mentees (those women being mentored) benefit because someone cares enough to support them, recommend them and assist them construe inside information.

The advantages of mentoring are felt not only by the mentees and their organization but by the mentors themselves. The familiarity and the fulfillment of passing along hard earned wisdom, influencing the next generation of upper leadership and receiving gratitude from younger workers are also other benefits of mentoring (Cullen & Luna, 1993, Hagevik, 1998, Whitaker & Lane, 1990). It is not uncommon for women to have men mentors, but the best mentors for women are other women because interacting and sharing experiences and knowledge are important. While male mentors eagerly encouraged women to become leaders, they did not excitedly support them when seeking a position at the secondary level. The mentoring experience must help women to develop self-esteem, aggressive leadership personalities and non-traditional attitudes about women and employment. The nurturing of attitudes and uniqueness would allow for success in their organizations, whereas their male counterparts displayed qualities that made it easier to advance. The use of mentors to help recent and future leaders is a powerful tool that may be used to bring about more effective labor practice (Cullen & Luna, 1993, Daresh & Playko, 1990).

2.5 Management and Gender

Kincheloe and Steinberg (2007) assert that racial, gendered and class forms of oppression need to be understood in a structural context. There is sufficient evidence that demonstrates that women in leadership positions who display equal education and experience do not earn as much as men in comparable tasks. Singh (2005) and Snipes et al (2008) assert that generally two perspectives are often cited as explaining the above situation. The first, argues that women are not adapted to outside employment, are incapable of performing well and are therefore paid less. This position also justifies occupational segregation by asserting that women are naturally well suited to certain jobs. On the other hand, opponents offer the interpretation that women are widely discriminated against in a patriarchal and sexist society.

The 2008 ILO report argues that the nature of women's career paths blocks their progress to top positions since at lower management levels women are typically placed in non-strategic sectors, and in personnel and administrative positions, rather than in professional and line management jobs leading to the top. This is often compounded by women's limited access to formal and informal networks essential for advancement. The report also notes that in large companies and organizations where women have achieved high level managerial positions, they are usually restricted to areas considered less vital and strategic to the organization such as human resources and administration departments. Women's career trajectories/routes do not result in them moving into strategic management areas such as productive development or corporate finance. There therefore exists a pyramid structure for women's presence in management and administrative positions. The 1998 ILO report also refers to these barriers as glass walls. But in insurance industries most qualified women work on operation and marketing divisions in the same manner as men although there is some barrier to get to the ceiling. Wirth (2001) states that the glass walls ensure that women are not being trained for and offered mid-level positions that prepare them for the top. She presents the case of the United Kingdom where a 2008 survey showed that women are more likely to be personnel managers (50%), actuarial, insurance and pension managers (44%) and marketing managers (38%). The survey indicates that there are very few research and development managers (3.4%) and manufacturing and production managers (3.5%) who are women.

Given the patriarchal nature of most societies and households, and the concomitant double workloads that most working women experience (being responsible for domestic responsibilities despite entering the workforce); management is bound to have an impact on women's social and personal lives that are different from that of men. In fact these pressures may be increased for female managers whose entrance into the management domain is not viewed as being part of traditional, female occupations. Thus, as Larwood and Wood (2007) suggest, a woman entering management must decide the extent and the types of demands she is willing to accept. Although the usual definition of a manager is masculine, the management tasks are not strongly associated with either sex. Larwood and Wood (2007) and Legge (2007) therefore hold that it is conformity to sex and work roles, rather than specific tasks and preferences, which largely determine the andocentric nature of management. This is especially true today as increasingly management is viewed more as the building and sustaining of team spirit and group work. A great deal of research has documented the difficulties women have experienced in advancing through the ranks of managers (Brooks and Brooks, 1997; David and Woodward, 2008; Dipboye, 2008; 2007; 2002; Epstein, 2005; Fagenson, 2003; Gordon and Strober, 2005; Henning and Jardim, 2007; Jacobs, 2002; Larwood and Wood, 2007; Miller, 2008). However, despite these challenges women are increasingly entering management positions in greater numbers. Three explanations, summarized below, have been forwarded that attempt to interpret this process. These are the glorified-secretary hypothesis, re-segregation hypothesis and title-inflation hypothesis (Jacobs, 2005).

❖ **Glorified-secretary hypothesis:** Jacobs (2002) suggests that the Equal Employment Opportunity regulations have mandated a certain number of workers at certain levels in terms of gender, race and ethnic composition. Additionally, firms are expected to file reports in this regard. However, because the reporting categories are broad, employers are able to classify employees with little authority as managers. Miller (2008) noticed in the United States that the representation of women in management rose rapidly largely because there has been considerable re-titling of positions in some large organizations under the impetus of affirmative action the administrative secretary has become the administrative assistant or the business administrator and is therefore now classified as a managerial worker.

❖ **Re-segregation hypothesis:** This explanation is posited by Reskin and Ross (2000) who found that the entry of women into previously male-dominated fields neither represents true

desegregation nor results in the gains in earnings and other rewards usually accorded to entry into management. It was found that generally the status of these occupations was declining before women started to enter management positions (men were already leaving or joining in diminishing numbers). Bird's (2000) study of bank branch managers is worth recounting here. The findings indicated that the growth of employment in public sector during the 1970s, pressure from the Equal Employment Opportunity Council and the availability of highly educated young women interested in the field led to a rapid influx of women into bank management. However, women's gains were concentrated in lower management positions, generally as branch managers.

❖ **Title-inflation hypothesis:** This view simply holds that the entry of women into management coincides with the dissemination of managerial titles, alluded to in the discussion on the glorified-secretary hypothesis, to positions without significant status or authority. A range of strategies outlined below may be utilized by women for entering and advancing in management. Brooks and Brooks (2007) derive strategies for advancement from the experience of successful female managers. Helgesen (2005) argues that these often result in altering the conditions surrounding the current management masculine bias and creating opportunities for women. As David and Woodward (2008) illustrate, these strategies are critical for negotiating the glass ceiling and are illustrated as follows.

📁 **Visibility:** A woman is better off in a highly visible position except when her achievements are threatening to others or of a relatively poor quality.

📁 **Ability:** Women are in a better position to advance if they demonstrate their ability to do their job efficiently and effectively. The proof of ability is not easy for women who often have to demonstrate that they are better than their male counterparts and not only that they are able to do the job just as well as men. Some methods do exist for enhancing the demonstration of ability. Women are better able to advance if they invest in acquiring the necessary qualifications to support their aspirations.

📁 **Fellowship:** Women can seek assistance from other women or supportive men. This development of a support network can be crucial for recognition, information and references if needed.

📁 **Acceptance of opportunities:** Women must find and take opportunities granted to them. This is particularly important as new equity and affirmative action laws often legislate that

companies develop and create special opportunities for women and other previously disadvantaged groups.

☞ The apprentice: Service as an apprentice is virtually required at some point to successfully move up in an organization. The evolution of the gate-keeping role in most organizations is viewed as being natural. Also, the apprentice often is expected to be loyal to the gate-keeper. Within the apprentice strategy, however, the woman finds someone to learn from and to help. Often, the woman's position is solidified and she is assured of continuing to advance as rapidly as her patron advances ahead of her.

2.6 Status of Women in Ethiopia

Ethiopian women generally have lower social, economic and political status than men. This is reflected by poor access to education, training and literacy levels; and/or gender stereotyping in education and training opportunities, poor access to health services, poor access to employment opportunities including wage differences, poor political status, including representation in community and formal decision making, etc(EWAP, 1993). With regard to employment, women's access to employment in the formal economic sector is very limited. In 2006 the Federal Civil Service Commission census revealed that out of the 490,363 permanently employed people at country level only 33.87 percent were women. Women's political participation within the country is also very minimal. According to the 1998 World Bank report, women constituted only 7.6 percent, 12.9 percent , 6.9 percent , 13.9 percent of the total seats at the federal level, regional level, district level and the grass root (Kebele) level representative institutions respectively before 2000.

The percentage of women in administrative and managerial positions in Ethiopia was 8 percent between 1985/1997. The 2000 UN report indicated that out of 26 African countries for which data was available, Ethiopia belonged to the lowest group and was better than only four countries (Djibouti 2 percent, Algeria 6 percent , Zambia 6 percent , Nigeria 6 percent).Ethiopia being a UN member and also a signatory of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has recognized and made commitment to take appropriate measures to provide equal employment opportunity in the country. The 1995 Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia guarantees gender equalities in social, political and economic matters in Ethiopia. The new Constitution is thoroughly gender

sensitive that meets the standard of CEDAW. It declares that there should be equal rights of women and men in all aspects and further provides affirmative measures to hasten the true equality of women and men. Ethiopia has ratified some other Conventions in addition to CEDAW to eliminate gender discriminations. These conventions include Convention on the Political Rights of Women, Convention on the Traffic in Persons and the Exploitation of Others and Convention Concerning Discrimination in Employment and Occupations. The 1998 World Bank report considered these initiatives as great opportunities in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the government has established a Women's Affairs Ministry and respective offices to realize true gender equality in Ethiopia. Ethiopia has also formulated women's policy to guide the fight against gender inequalities. The formation of the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association is another positive step forward in the efforts to create the right climate to bring about the realization of the intended legal reform. Regardless of all these efforts, the situation is different in the Ethiopian insurance industry which is the focus of the present study. As such, there are two associations: Ethiopian Insurance Companies Association and Society of Insurance Professionals (SIP). So far it appears that there has never been an agenda on women career advancement which could contribute positively to the sector.

2.7 Women and Leadership in Ethiopia

Ethiopia is a patriarchal society that keeps women in a subordinate position (Haregewoin and Emebet, 2003). There is a belief that women are docile, submissive, patient, and tolerant of monotonous work and violence, for which culture is used as a justification (Hirut, 2004). Like many African Countries, the majority of Ethiopian women hold low status in the society. Different studies indicated the low status of women in developing countries in general and in Ethiopia in particular (Almaz, 1991; Hirut, 2004; Mukuria et al., 2005). They have been denied equal access to education, training, and gainful employment opportunities, and their involvement in policy formulation and decision making processes has been minimal. Obviously, women play a vital role in the community by taking care of all societal activities. However, they do not enjoy the fruits of their labor and suffer from political, economic, societal, and cultural marginalization. According to Meaza (2009), although there are many women who have played important political and leadership roles in the history of Ethiopia, only few are visible in the

existent literatures (Meaza, 2009). The same source has indicated that women have played important political roles mostly by wielding proxy power through birth or marriage.

Consistent with Meaza's idea, Teshome (1979) stated that in the history of Ethiopia women made great contributions in both out and in-door activities especially in battles and other activities. They have been actively participating in rural areas in agriculture, commerce, undertaking reproduction and social responsibilities. However, their misfortunes of living in the shadow of men have hidden from view such highly notable performances. They have been forced to lose confidence in themselves and so have been unable to act on their own action directly concerning themselves.

Various literatures show that even if women's formal participation in the highest leadership position was formally closed, it is documented that throughout the world, women had played critical roles in times of wars and peace as community organizers and activists. For instance, in the history of Ethiopia, contributions and brilliant leadership roles can be recounted in the likes of Emperor Minilik's (1877-1913) first formal wife, Bafena and second legal wife Empress Taitu who had made unforgettable history that comes first when one talks about major contributions women made to Ethiopia. Notably, empress Taitu acted as the chief advisor of the Emperor with particular influence in the area of foreign relations. She is held with high regard in the history of Ethiopia for her patriotism and uncompromising pursuit for Ethiopia's independence (Meaza, 2009). These outstanding historical facts make it clear that despite such strengths, contributions and demonstrated leadership abilities, it has never been easy for Ethiopian women to ascend to formal political power .

Nowadays the FDRE government has adopted various enhancing instruments to promote equal participation of women in every subject of the nation's decision making positions. This is evidenced in the ratification of the FDRE constitution which is the most promising and binding document in the history of the country. Nevertheless, regardless of some efforts made, the participation of women in leadership and decision making position is still minimal compared to their counterparts. A case in point is the low representation of women in the Ethiopian Parliament which is entitled to be the highest policy making body of the nation. Although their number may seem increasing from time to time, it is still minimal, according to the information gained from international Parliament Union (IPU). In the 2005 national election results, women

accounted for 21.3%, whereas in 2010 national election, their number has increased to 152(27.8%) out of the total 547 seats of HPR members. The proportion is far behind such African countries as Rwanda where women make up 56.3% and South Africa where they have taken 44.5% of the total parliamentary seats.

CHAPTER THREE: Research Methodology

This section presents the research methodology and the profile of the study area that were used towards the production of the research output. It is organized into seven sub sections: research design, area of the study, target population, sampling techniques, data collection methods and tools, data analysis plan, and ethical considerations. A detailed description of each of the sub-sections is made below.

3.1 Research Design

As mentioned earlier the main purpose of this study is investigating some of the major factors affecting women in leadership. Therefore, descriptive and exploratory study design was used in order to assess current state of women's participation in leadership positions of selected private insurance companies, and to elaborate some of the barriers, contributory factors and related issues in relation to women's participation in leadership positions.

3.2 Area of Study

The exploratory and descriptive study were conducted on selected private insurance companies in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Private insurance companies are one of the major financial sectors which contribute to the economic growth of the country. Besides more professional (qualified) women employees are engaged in the financial sectors although they don't appear to occupy senior positions. In Ethiopia there are sixteen (16) private insurance companies. From the private insurance companies Africa, United, Nyala, Nile, Nib, Lion, ELGI(Ethio-Life and General Insurance) and Tsehay Insurance Companies was selected in the study as sources of data. The criteria for selecting these companies are stratified and random sampling. The researcher categorized the companies into five groups based on the year of the establishment with five years gap as per the following table and the stated companies were selected randomly.

Category by year	Private Insurance Companies by category	Randomly selected companies for the study
Above 20 years	Awash, Africa, Nice, United	Africa and United
15 to 20 yeas	Global, Nyala, Nile	Nyala and Nile
10 to 15 years	NIB	NIB
5 to 10 years	Berhan, lion, Oromia, ELGI	Lion and ELGI
Less than 5 years	Abay, Bunna, Lucy, Tsehay	Tsehay

Source:- National Bank Website

3.3 Target Population

Kothari (2004) uses the term “target population” to refer to the intended population covered by a study in a specific geographical area such as country, region and town in terms of age group and gender. As indicated above, there are sixteen private insurance companies in Ethiopia. To select the eight companies, a stratified and random sampling technique were used in the research. The target population of the eight companies were 1970 qualified employees who have diploma and above. The researcher also conducted 100 top customers of the industry to search the opinion on women leadership and challenges faced as they are on stake holder of the industry.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample size is defined by Bailey (1987) to refer to the number of representative respondents selected from a research population. The number depends on the accuracy needed, the population size, population heterogeneity and resources available. The sample frame of these study are women employees in managerial position(Branch manager and above), top management level employees(Director & Executive), employees (men & women) and selected customers. The sample size for this study were 55 women in managerial position, 15 top level management(Director and Executive), 125 employees other than women managers and top level managers and 100 selected customers who own & lead companies. Total expected respondents were 295. From the target population (1970 +100), the sample size were covered 14%(10% to 20%) which is standard for descriptive & exploratory research. The researcher used a sampling method known as purposive for women in managerial position, top customers and top level managements and random probability sampling technique for other employees.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

Data were generated from both secondary and primary sources. Primary data were collected directly by administering questionnaires, interviews and observations to the sample units. This provides a snapshot of useful data from the sample to justify causal explanations for the findings. The researcher has prepared three types of questioners and one unstructured interview guide to examine the factors influencing & challenges faced women in leadership in the private insurance companies. The questionnaires contain two parts. Part one is about demographic factors, part two is the main part of the questionnaire containing questions that respondents answered regarding the challenges faced by women leaders in their respective positions and factors that hinder the progression of their career development.(see annex I,II,III,IV)

Moreover, relevant secondary data were sourced from performance report as at June 30, 2015 of the respective companies of the study, books, company documents, research reports and statistics, academic journals and internet articles, press releases, archival materials, seminar papers and theses. Secondary data is not only provide broad contextual and bibliographical information, but also support the primary source and hence illuminates the essence of the study.

3.6 Data Analysis

The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative methods of data analysis in this study. After the data were collected on the level and proportional representation of women in leadership from documents and interview of top level management, it was tallied and categorized in the table in relation to different leadership positions, and then analyzed qualitatively. Similarly the data collected from interview was categorized and divided in to four sub-topics as barriers for women's participation in leadership, contributory factors for women's participation in leadership, gender consequences of leadership and some measures to be taken to enhance women's participation in leadership, and were analyzed qualitatively. Side by side with the analysis of interview results, the data obtained through questionnaires were analyzed accordingly by using both qualitative and quantitative methods. First the questionnaires filled out by women, who are in leadership position was selected and registered and then systematically presented in tables using simple statistical methods such as frequency and percentage. Second the questioner filled out by top customers and employees were selected and registered.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

From the outset, the consent of the subjects will be secured and they will be assured that information they will provide will only be used for the purpose of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR :Results and Discussion

This chapter deals with the analysis and discussion of the data gathered through interview and questionnaire. In this chapter data gathered through interviews, which was conducted with five(5) women leaders above director level who were/are in leadership and with ten (10) male leaders was analyzed. In addition, all questionnaires, which were distributed to fifty five (55) women, who were/are in leadership thirty nine(39)were returned and analyzed in this study. Similarly, from the total one hundred twenty five (125) questionnaires distributed for employees other than women in managerial position, one hundred sixteen (116) were returned and used. And from the total one hundred questionnaires distributed for customers, ninety five (95) were returned and used. Different acronyms were used in the analysis of barriers for women's participation in leadership and measures to be taken to enhance women's participation in leadership. For instance, F represents Frequency, which used in all tables; W.EMP represents Women Employees; LP represents leadership positions. It is worth mentioning that the responses of women, who were/are in leadership positions, employees other than women in managerial posts and customers were analyzed separately because of the assumption that they are different groups from this study's perspective.

4.1 Characteristics of the sample used in the study

A total of 265 respondents out of 295 were participated interview and responding to the questioner. This represented response rate of 90%, which was considered adequate representation of the population to make conclusions. Male respondents accounted for 51% while women/female respondents accounted for 49%. These findings are contained in the table below.

Table 1: Number of Respondents and Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Male	134	51
Female	131	49
Total	265	100

Source: Primary data from questioner and interview

From the survey, the respondents composed of: 18% holders of master's degree, 70% holders of bachelor's degree, 2% Certified Institute of Insurance Certificate/fellowship/diploma, and 10% diploma. This is reflected in the table below.

Table 2: Qualifications Of The Respondents

Education	Frequency			Percent		
	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total
Masters	3	44	47	6	94	18
CII, fellowship, diploma, certificate	1	4	5	20	80	2
Bachelor degree	106	80	186	57	43	70
Diploma	21	6	27	78	22	10
Total	131	134	265	49	51	100

Source: Primary data from questioner and interview

It was observed that 8% of respondents have worked for between 0-5 years, 14% for 5-10 years, 17% for 10-15 years, 33% for 15-20 years and 28% for above 20 years. This is reflected in the table below.

Table 3: Work Experience

Duration	Frequency	Percent
0-5 years	22	8
<10>5 years	36	14
<15 >10years	45	17
<20 >15 years	88	33
>20 years	74	28
Total	265	100

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

4.2 Women's Level of Participation in Leadership Positions of the Selected Private Insurance Companies

As per the annual performance report as at June, 2015 and the interviewee, Women's level of participation in leadership positions of the selected private insurance companies has been assessed from the current point of view.

The following table shows the level of women's participation in the insurance sector and leadership positions as Branch Managers, Division Heads, Directors, Deputy Chief Executive Officer(DCEO) and Chief Executive Officer positions during the survey.

It was learnt that from the interview and the document assessment 51% of the total target population of the sector is covered by qualified women/female employees. This shows encouraging and reflects the level of awareness in our society on gender equality which was stated in the introductory part of this study. Out of the total 339 leadership positions, only 55 leadership positions were occupied by women which is 16% and out of the 149 top level posts, only 16 positions were occupied by women which is 10.7%. This shows when we come to leadership positions, the number of women in leadership become diminishing where the reason of this study. This is reflected in the following table.

Table 4. Proportion of Women in Leadership positions

Name of the company	No. of Emp.	W.Emp	% of W.Emp	No of LP	LP Occupied by W.	% of position by W	Top level posts	TLP Occ. by W	% of posts by W.
Africa	285	151	53	49	2	4	28	-	-
United	273	149	55	51	12	24	22	8	36
Nyala	265	135	51	42	7	17	21	3	14
Nile	330	182	55	59	10	17	21	-	-
NIB	390	195	50	50	8	16	21	2	9.5
Lion	234	110	47	47	7	15	20	2	10
ELGI*	92	45	50	22	6	27	8	-	-
Tsehay	101	43	43	19	3	16	8	1	12.5
Total	1970	1010	51	339	55	16	149	16	10.7

Source:- Annual Performance Report as at June 30, 2015 and Interview

*Ethio-Life and General Insurance Company

It was also observed that from the 16 top level positions occupied by women one(1) and two(2) are Chief Executive and Deputy chief executive level respectively. The remaining are directors and service heads. This brings down 2% the women as executive to total top level position ratio. It was observed also there are also differences among the selected insurance companies stated above that United insurance has more contribution in women leadership which is 36% followed by Nyala 14%. This is because United insurance company has lead by women executive and has also women in board committee. The participation of women in top leadership including in board level helps to see the competency of women in an organization. As per the interviewee opinion, considering the level of development of Ethiopia in general and specifically the insurance industry, the participation of women in the industry is encouraging though it remains in leadership position.

4.3 Factors influencing the mobility of women to top leadership positions in private insurance companies

The respondents were asked whether social-cultural factors affect the upward mobility of women. 86% of the respondents felt that social-cultural factors influence the upward mobility of women while 14% felt that social-cultural factors have no influence at all. This is highlighted on the table below. Besides out of the 15 interviewee, 7 support that the social-cultural factors have influence on mobility of women to top leadership while 8 not support because of the current political situation of Ethiopia which favors women changes the attitude of the society when compared to previous history.

Table 5 (a): Whether socio-cultural factors influence the upward mobility of women

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	100	86
No	16	14
Total	116	100

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

The table below shows that despite the social-cultural factors hindering women from advancing in top positions, 72% of the respondents felt that women are as capable as men in leadership.

28% of the respondents felt that women are not as capable as men in leadership. This was supported by the interviewee by stating the special character of women while in leadership as follows.

- They are more responsible than men
- They are smart and cooperative than men
- Women know how to get the best from their employees. They are usually polite, soft and have a quality than men do not have.
- Women lead by example when they get a higher position, they work very hard that their subordinates are encouraged to do more.

Table 5(b): Whether women are as capable as men in leadership.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	84	72
No	32	28
Total	116	100

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

The respondents were asked to state the various social cultural factors that hinder women from upward mobility. The table below shows clearly the various social-factors hindering the upward mobility of women. Besides the burden of family responsibility, lack of role models and absence of women in the informal network of men have been emphasized by the interviewee for hindrances to women in leadership.

Table 5 (c): Social Cultural Hindrances to Women

Factors	Freq.	Percent
More family responsibility than men	41	51
Few role models to women	22	27
The absence of women in the informal network of men	18	22
Total	81	100.0

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

The respondents were asked whether workplace policies inhibit the progression of women to top positions. The table below indicates that 59% of the respondents felt that work policies inhibit the progression of women to leadership. 49% felt that work policies don't inhibit the progression of women to leadership. Some of the interviewee stated that there is no clear written work policies which encourages women to leadership rather implicitly since management have doubt in executing the leadership role due to the socio cultural factors (family responsibly, etc), they hardly appoint women in leadership.

Table 6 (a): Whether work place policies inhibit the progression of women to top positions

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	59	51
No	57	49
Total	116	100

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

The respondents were asked to state the particular policies that are unfriendly to women given their unique roles as wives and mothers. These policies include; inflexible working hours, loss of annual leave incase one proceeds to maternity leave, transfers and working overtime. These unfriendly policies are illustrated in the table below.

Table 6 (b): Policies unfriendly to women

Policies	Freq	Percent
Inflexible working hours	19	37
Loosing annual leave when maternity leave has been taken	0	0
Short maternity leave	21	40
Transfer policy	4	8
Working overtime	8	15
Total	52	100.0

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

37% felt inflexible working hours is unfriendly to women, 40% felt short maternity leave, 8% felt transfer policy is not consider the gender and 15% felt working overtime is unfriendly to women. As per the interviewee opinion women by nature have more responsible and they didn't out of office before the daily work accomplished while men have postponed the work to next day instead of working overtime.

The respondents were asked whether policies addressing gender imbalance are being implemented in their organizations. The table below shows that 79% of the respondents felt that work policies addressing gender imbalance are being implemented while 17% felt that the policies are not being implemented. Besides the interviewee have discussed that though few in number companies have clearly stated the proportion of women employees to be recruited, they fail to state on leadership positions. Hence table 4 shows 51% of the employees covered by women where as the research reflects only 16% and 11% of the middle and top level leadership positions are covered by women.

Table 6 (c): Whether policies addressing gender imbalance are implemented

Yes/No	Freq	Percent
Yes	20	17
No	92	79
Silent	4	3
Total	116	100

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

The respondents were asked whether the organization culture inhibit the upward mobility of women. The table below indicates that 62% of the respondents felt that organization culture inhibit the progression of women while 38% felt it doesn't. These supported by the interviewee that since the companies are male dominated, the organizational structure might have less concern on women contribution to the company.

Table 7 (a): Whether organization culture inhibits the progression of women to top leadership.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	72	62
No	44	38
Total	116	100

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

The respondents were asked to state the particular attitudes that inhibit upward mobility of women. The table below illustrates the various attitudes that influence the upward mobility of women. The interviewee have also reflected the mentioned below attitudes. Most of the interviewee have stated that Nowadays in our country in general and insurance industry in particular there is an improvement of the male chauvinism, stereotypes due to the affirmative actions taken by the government on equality of women and men. But the interviewee have doubt in the confidence of women themselves due the burden family and social responsibilities. This will be avoided gradually.

Table 7 (b): Attitudes influencing women upward mobility

Altitude	Freq	Percent
Stereotypes	4	6
Lack of confidence	12	19
Women considered to be emotionally unstable	2	3
Inferiority complex	8	13
Some jobs considered as men's	7	11
Women considered as a lesser performer than men	13	20
Women are impatient	16	25
Women cannot travel extensively	2	3
Total	64	100.0

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

The respondents were asked whether limited access to advanced education inhibit women's upward mobility. The table below shows that 83% respondents felt that limited access to advanced education affect the progression of women to top leadership, only 17% of the respondents felt otherwise. Besides the secondary data on table 2 reflects the proportion of women/female respondents on higher education is diminishing 6% of the total respondents who have masters degree was female where as 57% of the total respondents who have bachelor degree were female. These shows women have limited access of advanced education due to social, cultural and organizational barriers.

Table 8(a): Whether limited access to advanced education affects the progression of women to top leadership.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	96	83
No	20	17
Total	116	100

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

Respondents were asked to state the various effects of lack of advanced education on women. The table below shows the various effects of limited access to advanced education which influence women's upward mobility as sited by respondents.

Table 8(b): Low education effects

Reason	Freq	Percent
Cannot compete for the top jobs	24	36
Lack of skills, communication etc	15	22
Lack of confidence	17	25
Poor interpersonal relationship	11	16
Total	67	100.0

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

Respondents were asked whether discrimination affects women upward mobility. The table below indicates that 90% of the respondents felt that discrimination affect upward mobility of women. 10% of the respondents felt that discrimination does not affect women progression to the top. As per the interviewee's opinion as the insurance industry is service rendering sector, there is no ground for discrimination at time of employment rather most of the interviewee have reflected that female/women are nominated or favored if she has equal qualification with men. Sometimes if organizations felt more women are enrolled, systematic avoidance of women employment is used. But as per the interviewee opinion it is better that there is discrimination in appointments as long as there is no gender in balance policy, affirmative actions which favors women development etc.

Table 9(a): Whether discrimination of women in appointments affects their progression to top leadership.

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	104	90
No	12	10
Total	116	100

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

Respondents were asked whether there is equality in opportunities. The table below shows that women are not offered equal leadership positions as men. 36% of respondents felt that women and men are offered equal opportunities. 64% felt that women are not given equal leadership positions as men. The interviewee stated that as long as organization have no gender in balance policy, affirmative actions which favors women in accessing advanced education, equal opportunity for leadership positions is not materialized.

Table 9(b): Whether women are offered equal leadership positions as men

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	42	36
No	74	64
Total	116	100

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

4.4 The underlying factors and strategies associated with successful women in Leadership in private insurance companies

Respondents were asked the socio-cultural factors, organizational policies and culture, impact of competency/advanced education, role of mentor and informal networking and summary of their reflection is listed below.

Table 10 Some contributory factors for women participation in leadership positions

Item No.	Issues raised in the questioner for women in managerial position	Yes		No	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	The supportive role of spouses/family contribute for women career development	28	72	11	28
2	Do you believe that your work performance helps you to get leadership position	35	90	4	10
3	Difficulty to juggle work life with family responsibilities and parenting	22	56	17	44
4	It is a must that women choose between their career and their family	24	62	15	38
5	The supervisors/employers appreciate women's work/leadership style	19	49	15	38
6	Did you have a mentor who helped you understand the culture of your organization?	18	46	21	54
7	Do you agree on the importance of having a mentor?	32	82	7	18
8	Where you given any type of training that prepared you to assume managerial post?	1	3	38	97
9	Competence is the only requirement needed to get ahead in an organization	34	87	5	13
10	Do you believe there is equal opportunity provided to women in managerial roles to further career development as compared with their male counterparts?	11	28	28	72
11	Do you think that attitudes concerning the role of women can be influenced by social-cultural factors	27	69	12	31
12	Women workers are less preferred to male ones at time of	21	54	18	46

	employment in fear of the organization's obligation to provide pre-delivery and maternity leaves and the effect of that on the work				
13	Women have less career motivation than men	19	49	20	51
14	Women in leadership position have excluded from the informal discussions and interactions that could help understand the true nature of the organization in which they work just because they are a women	23	59	16	41
15	Networking with other women leaders in the same or other fields of employment plays an important part in leadership skill development	34	87	5	13
16	The networking must extend to men working within the organization in different managerial roles	17	46	22	54

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

The table above item no 1 shows that 72% respondents have got strong support of their spouses and family to reach the leadership positions even though there is difficulty in balancing work life with family responsibilities and parenting. 56% of the respondents felt there is difficulty on balancing work life and 44% not. The women interviewee's response for the contributory factor for being in leadership position were strong support of families and spouses gets weight than the other contributory factors like recruitment criteria, individual hard work, role model and mentor. Out of the 5(five) women interviewee one women in top leadership position told me the following:-

“when I have got the opportunity of top leadership position, I took much time to accept because I am mother of two children and other family responsibility I was questioning my self whether I would be successful after the appointment of the top position. But finally my spouse, mother, father and friends encouraged me not to loose this opportunity and promise me to share the family and social responsibilities.” Fortunately now I am very glad on being in top leadership position.

Therefore the family and spouse support has significant role on women's leadership development than all factors. The other factors will be followed by the women competency to break through the ceiling.

As stated in the literature review section 2.4, There is a growing argument that in order for women to thrive in obtaining leadership positions in a workplace mentoring must occur. The above table reflects 82% of the respondents support the importance of mentor and 18% not. The interviewee have also stated that one of the contributory factors for being in top leadership position is due to role models and mentors from organization and family. This idea was supported by men and women in top leadership position though the role models and mentors in respect of insurance industry regarding women is insignificant.

As stated in the literature review section 2.3, Smith (2004) in an article points out that women in senior positions believe that the MBA has given them the ability to develop in areas where they can add value and develop the confidence to lead others. He further suggests that a good MBA teaches strong interpersonal skills and the ability to empower people which are significant requirements in the changing leadership paradigm. The above table reflects 87% of the respondents strongly agree that competence is the only way for women career development and 18% not agreed. The interviewee have also responded that nowadays being the best in any business and qualification to run the business is not a matter of choice it is a must. Therefore specially for women few in number at leadership positions and business, competency is the only strong tool to break through the other barriers.

As stated in the literature review section 2.5, the 2008 ILO report argues that the nature of women's career paths blocks their progress to top positions since at lower management levels women are typically placed in non-strategic sectors, and in personnel and administrative positions, rather than in professional and line management jobs leading to the top. This is often compounded by women's limited access to formal and informal networks essential for advancement. The above table reflects the necessary of formal and informal network for women career development was supported by 87% of the respondents though contrary to the ILO's report most women in middle level in insurance industry were assigned on operation area like branch managers not on administration or legal area.

4.5 Extent of Barriers for Women's Participation in Leadership

(Response from customers)

The issue of women's challenge in the financial sector shouldn't be limited on themselves and the sector only, it should be also the concern of other stake holders like customers, share holders, government supervisory organs. Hence the researcher have prepared questioner to some customers of the private insurance companies to indicate their level of agreement and disagreement on the possible barriers for women's participation in leadership. Hence the following table reflects their level of agreement and disagreement on social-cultural barriers, organizational culture and policies, competency, impact of informal networking and mentoring.

Table 11 Expected barriers for women's participation in leadership

Item no.	Expected barriers for women's participation in leadership	SA 5		A 4		NC 3		D 2		SD 1	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1	Women have more family responsibility than men	60	63	25	26	5	5	0	0	0	0
2	Roles assigned by society to men and women	30	32	40	42	15	16	5	5	5	5
3	Masculine Corporate Culture	20	21	30	32	40	42	0	0	5	5
4	Women with insufficient general or line management experience	5	5	30	32	10	11	20	21	20	21
5	Few role models for women	10	11	55	58	15	16	15	16	0	0
6	Scarcity of the female staffs to participate in leadership positions	5	5	30	32	5	5	50	53	0	0
7	Lack of company equality policy and programmes	5	5	50	53	20	21	20	21	0	0
8	Low educational qualification of women in the industry	10	11	25	26	10	11	40	42	10	11
9	Limited access to advanced education affect the progression of women to top leadership?	15	16	45	47	10	11	20	21	5	5
10	Stereotypes against women	10	11	45	47	25	26	15	16	0	0
11	The absence of women in the informal network of men	5	5	55	58	15	16	20	21	0	0
12	Lack of leadership training for women	5	5	50	53	5	5	35	32	0	0
13	Lack of strategy for retention of skilled women	10	11	38	40	12	13	30	32	5	5
14	Inherent gender bias in recruitment and promotion	30	32	25	26	5	5	30	32	5	5

	(management generally viewed as a man's job)										
15	The informal network of men, which favors them to be leaders and vice versa.	15	16	40	42	20	21	20	21	0	0
16	The absence of role models and mentoring	23	24	45	47	7	7	20	21	0	0
17	The absence of support and encouragement from the colleagues in the industry	22	23	35	37	13	14	25	26	0	0
18	The absence of encouragement from the family; such as husband or parents	20	21	35	37	10	11	15	16	5	5

Source: primary data from questioner and interview

The above table item no one and three reflects that 89% and 53% of the respondents are (SA + A) agreed on social cultural barriers for women's participation in leadership. This supports that though many researchers have put recommendations to decrease the attitude of the society on social cultural barriers, as per this survey it is not encouraging. Since Ethiopia is one of the developing countries, where gender disparities exist in the family, society, and in the work place. Different organizations/sectors, including private insurance sectors are the reflections of the existing reality in the society. In line with this, socio-cultural factors were mentioned as one of the hindrances for women's participation in leadership. Thus the main socio-cultural barriers mentioned were socialization of women in the family and in the society and gender division of labor; that is women's family responsibility and community responsibility and their impact on the level of women's participation in leadership. Item no. 7,12,13,14 and 17 reflects 55%, 55%, 51%, 55% and 57% of the respondents are (SA + A) agreed on the institutional /organizational barriers for women's participation in leadership. Item no. 15, 16, 17 and 18 reflects 58%, 71%, 60% and 58% of the respondents are (SA + A) agreed on informal network of men, support and encouragement barriers for women's participation in leadership. Item no. 8 and 9 reflects the educational barrier to women participation that 37% and 63% of the respondents are agreed.

4.6 Summary of the analysis

4.6.1 Socio-Cultural Barriers

Regarding the socialization, interviewees mentioned that women in the family and in the society are raised in different way from those of men. It was indicated that women in Ethiopian family are considered as a secondary sex mainly because of patriarchal relationships. Most of the family orients women to be dependent, and introvert individuals whereas men grew on the way to be extrovert and independent, which in turn affects the attitude of both men and women towards themselves and holding of leadership positions. At the result of this, participation in leadership is characterized as the masculine and women's involvement in the leadership is not as such encouraged and even the hiring bodies are also unintentionally influenced to nominate males for leadership positions. The finding is more convenient with the analysis made by Helgeson (2005) and Charles and Davies (as cited in Morely, n.d). According to these researchers women have been socialized into the believing that they do not deserve senior positions. Besides this Shakeshaft indicated that not only women socialized in ways that have not made them administratively inclined, those who hire have been socialized to believe that those qualities, which associated with females are adversative to those qualities needed to lead and, conversely, that qualities needed to lead are ones not possessed by women. In addition to socialization, interviewees mentioned the gender divisions of labor as barrier for women's participation in leadership before their employment in the insurance industry and after their employment. Before women's employment in the industry the gender division of labor affects women's level of participation in education and involvement in the public arena whereas after women's employment in the industry, the family responsibility of women hinder them to have aspiration to participate in leadership and time limitation to participate in leadership positions. This means that because of gender division of labor in the society, women are mainly occupied by the reproductive responsibilities, which in turn affect women's involvement in the public activities in general, and in the leadership position of insurance industry in particular. The women's multiple role as a barrier also expressed from the perspective that in addition to their public work, they are mothers, wives, caregivers, sisters, and children. These women in all statuses are expected to share their time and take certain responsibilities, and which in turn affect their involvement in the traditionally masculine roles- leadership.

However, after women's employment in the insurance sector the household management is mentioned mostly as a barrier for married women, who have children (kids) rather than single and relatively senior women, who are relatively free from household management. Therefore, even though socio-cultural barriers are systemic in their characteristics all of them were not mentioned as barrier for all of women's participation in leadership. Similar to the interview results, the figures in Table 5a, 10 item no 3 and 11 item no. 1 show that most of the response are above average in relation to the different items related to the social-cultural barriers. However, the figures show certain differences between the aforementioned groups in relation to the degree of agreement with the given items.

4.6.2 Advanced Educational Barriers

Educational barrier for women's participation in leadership are basically related with the socio-cultural barriers for women's advancement in the public activities of the country. Interviewees mentioned that despite recent improvement of females' education, it is discouraging on opportunities for advanced education like MBA and Insurance certification due to the above mentioned social cultural barriers. Table 2 supports the interviewee's statement that the level of education of women declines from 78% to 6% from diploma to masters level. Besides table 8a, 10 item no 8 and 11 item no 9 reflects above average that the main barrier for women's leadership position is lack of advanced education and competency to compete with men.

4.6.3 Organizational Barriers

In Ethiopia there are 16 Private Insurance Companies engaged in providing insurance services to the public. They have contributed for the country by paying profit taxes, creating awareness to the public on risk minimization activities, creating employment opportunity for the qualified personnel, and wealth creation to the share holders. However, from gender perspective the private insurance companies are still needs effort for improvement. Because as the study shows on table 4 the proportionate of qualified women were 51%, the presence on middle and top level leadership were 16% and 10.7% respectively. These shows though the presence of women at the lower level is encouraging, it is declining on middle and top level due to various social,

organizational barriers. These was supported by the reflections on table 9a, 9b, 10(item no. 9), 11(item no. 7 & 14) for the organizational barriers like discrimination of women in appointments, lack of providing equal opportunities on leadership positions, missing of company equality policy and programmes and inherent gender bias in recruitment and promotion on which above average of the respondents were felt the existence of the stated organizational barriers.

As relatively well experienced interviewees stated even though there is improvement in the sector, the gender gap in the insurance industry exists because of the internal factor of the insurance companies. As they were argued that any private insurance company does not give appropriate and practical consideration for gender issues. They pointed that, even though the negative attitude on gender in the companies is gradually changed, the responsible bodies(top management) didn't try to implement affirmative actions, policy and programmes which favor women advancement to top level for the benefit of both the companies and women. Similarly, the absence of gender policy of the private insurance companies, because of the absence of interested group and the absence of visible criteria for recruiting individuals for different leadership positions were also given emphasis as other organizational barriers. The absence of gender policy is mentioned from the perspective that it intensified the weaknesses of the private insurance companies in relation to the absence of formal and practical consideration for gender issues. In addition the absence of visible criteria for recruiting individuals for different leadership positions is mentioned from the perspective that it leads to biased recruitment of individuals for the leadership positions and perpetuates the gender gap in leadership positions. In general, some interviewees relatively for a long period of time argued that even though there is significant improvement recently and as the insurance sector is service provider which is more comfortable/tallied with women leaders characteristics, the environment of the insurance industry is more of patriarchal, which mainly favor men and not gender friendly for women's participation in leadership. Contrary to the above arguments, the women who have stayed relatively for a short period of time believe that the private insurance environment is gender friendly and therefore there is no organizational barriers for women's participation in leadership. They also mentioned that most of top leaders are positive and welcome women's participation in leadership positions. According to these interviewees, what makes women not to come to the leadership position is their being invisible for the hiring bodies because of external factors. They also argued that if women are competent and visible in the companies, they have opportunities to

participate in leadership. The difference between the aforementioned respondents shows that women who stayed in the insurance sector for a long period of time experienced different circumstances, which affect their level of satisfaction in relation to the recent significant improvement including few women's presence to leadership positions and also they want to see more change in the insurance industry. Similarly the response of relatively less experienced and young women indicates that they are more influenced by the recent change and by the positive attitude of top leaders towards them. These respondents concerned on the immediate and recent activities in the university rather than the wholesale and the impact of previous internal barriers for women's participation in leadership.

4.6.4 Informal Network of Men, and Support /mentor and Encouragement

Informal network of men is the main contributory factor for their participation in leadership, particularly where there are no criteria for recruiting leaders for leadership positions. According to some interviewees, despite competence, performance, qualification and experiences of individuals, relationship through informal network create a great opportunities for men to come to the leadership positions. Even though women are well experienced and qualified, they might be dominated in the leadership positions because of the established network of men. This finding is tallied with the study of Morely (n.d.), who revealed that even where there is an acceptance of equal opportunities there are implicit disadvantage, in which men had more fully developed informal networks in different occasions between colleagues, and used them for their career development whereas women are excluded from where networking takes place, thus they miss a lot of what is gained through this process. Moreover respondents indicated that even though nomination of leaders through informal network is unfair, women's multiple roles and patriarchal relationships do not give them a chance to be in the informal network of men and having opportunities to be selected for leadership positions. This means if women are able to be in the informal network of men, they might have the opportunities to be nominated for the leadership position. This is because nominations for leadership positions do not have formal and visible criteria except Chief Executive Officer, which needs four years experience as Operation/Underwriting/Claims Department manager. In addition, the results of questionnaire in table 11 item no. 15 and 11 shows the level of agreement of respondents on informal network of

men and the absence of women in the informal network which is 58% and 63% of the respondents have agreed that as a barrier for women's participation leadership. Therefore, the response of in the questionnaire was above average and concurrent with finding that was obtained through interview. Similarly Table 10 item no 14 reflects 87% of the respondents support the net working plays an important role in advancement of women's leadership skills. The response in the stated above table reflects that the absence of women in the informal network of men is influential barrier in the companies. This means that, even though the informal network of men is one of the factors that hinder women's holding leadership positions, the absence of women in the informal network of men is relatively the most influential barrier. This finding is most likely related with the analysis made by Handly (as cited in Shmel'ova, Parsons, and Shmel'ova, n.d). According to Handley the reason for women's exclusion from full participation in decision making is their exclusion from the informal network that their male colleagues establish. In addition to informal network, lack of support and encouragement by the colleagues was considered as additional barrier for women's participation in leadership. As interviewees demonstrated because of stereotype and relating leadership roles with masculine character, women are not encouraged by some colleagues in the private insurance industries. Contrary to this, other interviewees mentioned that not only women, but also men themselves do not support and encourage each other. This means that not only women but also men themselves do not encourage each other. However, the lack of encouragement affects women more than men. This is because of the difference between women's and men's socialization in the society and the characterization of leadership as masculine. In addition gender division of labor gives many opportunities for men in relation to public roles in general and leadership roles in particular, whereas women are mostly encouraged to be in the household and to do routine activities in the public. Therefore, even though there are few encouraging and supportive colleagues, interviewees mentioned the lack of encouragement and support in the family, society and in the insurance industry and by colleagues as a barrier for women's participation in leadership. In addition to interview results, questionnaire results in Table 11 item no. 1 shows that the absence of support and encouragement from the colleagues was given agreed and strongly agreed (60%) and disagreed value (26%) by relatively most of respondents among the customers of the private insurance companies. Similarly the same table item no. 18 shows that the absence of encouragement from the family such as husband and parents was given agreed

and strongly agreed (58%) and disagreed value (16%). Therefore in addition to the other barriers the absence of support and encouragement is a barrier for women's participation in leadership. Thus this finding is concurrent with the analysis made by Baughman and Drust (as cited Shmel'ova, Parsons, and Shmel'ova, n.d.), who revealed that women traditionally had little support, encouragement, or lacks role models in educational institutions to pursue careers in leadership. In addition to the above the finding table 11 item no. 16 reflects that 71% of the respondents were agreed and strongly agreed the absence of role models and mentoring are mentioned as barrier to women leadership positions. Similarly table 10 item no. 6 reflects that 82% of the respondents supports the importance of mentoring for their being in leadership positions. This shows that for women who don't hold leadership positions, role models and mentoring are more important. This is also in agreement with Davis, Gasser, and Schmuck (as cited in Shakeshaft, 1989) analysis. According to these researchers the lack of opportunity to see other women in a variety of leadership positions, to hear how these women describe their lives, and to compare themselves with women just one step farther up the hierarchy have been mentioned as reasons for women not to have moved into leadership positions in larger numbers.

4.6.5 Contributory Factors for Women's Participation in Leadership

Despite the barriers for women's participation in leadership, there were also contributory factors for few women in the private insurance companies to hold leadership positions. Most of the interviewees agreed that the main contributing factors for their holding leadership positions are their commitment to their job and their experiences that they obtained from different activities. Interviewees indicated that their performance in different activities of the insurance industry such as mobilizing customers, strategy preparation, forwarding valuable ideas for the industry success contributed for their holding different leadership positions. This means that as a result of being visible because of their involvement in different activities, they got opportunities to be selected by the top leaders of the insurance companies. In addition to the interview results the figure in Table 10 item no. 2 shows that the most contributing factors for women's participation in leadership position are performance and their capability (90%). The findings indicate that women, who hold leadership position, do not purposefully aspire for holding leadership position rather their success and performance in their day-to-day activities in their respective insurance

companies contribute for their participation in leadership. This means that because of their commitment in their jobs, in the lower positions like underwriting supervisors and in other activities in their organizations they were nominated for relatively middle and top leadership positions. This finding corroborate with the analysis made by Madesen in 2007(cited by Yania, 2008). According to Madesen (2007), successful women leaders do not intentionally look for leadership positions, instead worked hard in their current jobs and performed to the best of their abilities. According to Madesen, most of the women in the University took the leadership in direct path through their participation in lower leadership positions, rather than coming to the top leadership positions immediately. Consequently each position that they go through provided them with the opportunity to learn and develop essential knowledge and competencies that have been very important for their success to be in the top leadership positions. In addition to the above, educational qualification of women was mentioned relatively by most of the interviewee as the main contributing factor. For example questionnaire result on table 10 item no. 9 reflects that for 87% of women, educational qualification/competence is an important contributing factor for their holding leadership positions. According to some of the respondents, their educational qualification gives them chance to join insurance company. Therefore, their being in the private insurance company is considered as a contributing factor for coming to leadership. In addition, some interviewees, who were/are in the leadership position at department level, mentioned that they hold this position based on their experience and seniority. Interviewees, who are in different leadership positions, stated that the positive attitude of the private insurance top leaders towards women's holding leadership positions is the main contributory factor. Some of them indicated that the president of the company and some top management team members of the insurance companies insisted to nominate them for the leadership positions that they have held. This implies that the degree of stereotypical attitude of males is decreasing. Even though women are well qualified, well capable and successful in their job, in the absence of the positive attitude of the top administrative bodies, women cannot hold leadership positions. Since the private insurance companies top leadership position is predominantly occupied by males, their gender sensitivity level determines women's level of participation in the leadership positions. The finding shows that despite performance and commitment level of women, the level of top management gender sensitivity, their attitude towards women's participation in leadership positions and believing in women's discharging leadership responsibility determine women's

participation in leadership. It is also worth mentioning that the above points in relation to women's participation in the aforementioned positions mainly determined by women's capacity and experience to fit those positions. In addition in the Table 10 on page 42, 90% of the respondents considered their performance, and 72% of respondents mentioned support and encouragement from husband or family as an important factor for their holding leadership position. Similar to this, interviewees indicated that support and encouragement from the family, particularly husbands is a very important contributory factor in the sense that if there is disagreement or conflict within the family particularly with husbands, married women might not only participate in leadership but also cannot appropriately discharge the assigned responsibility. As the interview results shows most of the women, who hold leadership position are married and therefore peace and support from their husbands and family is also one of the contributing factor for their participation in leadership positions. In general, women's personal performance and capacity to hold leadership position is the leading factor for women's participation in leadership. It shows that if women do not have personal quality they might not be nominated for leadership positions. These personal qualities are related to women's hard work in their job and its output and the recognition earned from top leaders determine their level of participation in leadership.

It is worth mentioning that the main findings obtained through questionnaire about the contributing factors for women to hold leadership positions are almost concordant with the findings obtained through interview, these are women's personal performance level and capability, their education, and the attitude of top leaders of the private insurance companies.

4.6.6 Gender Consequences of Leadership

Gender consequences of leadership have been analyzed from the perspectives of challenges of women who were/ are in leadership positions. The gender consequences of leadership in relation to the challenges were mentioned from different perspectives. In relation to leadership roles, some respondents stated that they do not have challenges because of their being female but they face challenges in their personal lives. This is because of time limitation to care for their kids and for household management. Contrary to this few of them mentioned the presence of challenges related to exercising leadership roles, but not in their personal lives. The other few respondents mentioned the negative gender consequences of leadership both during exercising leadership

roles and in their personal life because of gender relations. The challenges of women in relation to exercising leadership roles are negative attitudes of some colleagues towards women leaders and their ability to discharge leadership responsibilities. It was mentioned that some male colleagues need women to be under the 'shadow' of them. This means some male colleagues want to work on behalf of women leaders with the assumption that they can not discharge the leadership responsibilities. This challenge of leadership was mentioned mainly by women who were/are at the top leadership positions. This finding is most likely concordant with the analysis made by Mabokela (as cited by Yania Seidmekiye 2008). As the research result of Mabokela (2003) in South Africa shows that societal (cultural) norms and expectations influenced the way in which colleagues interacted with women leaders and some times interfered with their ability to perform their work as professionals. It was stated by the interviewees that the negative attitude of male colleagues toward women in decision making position are not expressed directly and openly in front of women, instead they express their feelings through certain undermining behaviors, which could be understood by women themselves. For instance one interviewee stated that:

Leadership position was difficult for me only when it came to acceptance by male colleagues. I could manage my personal life and discharging the leadership role. However, I felt angered by the attitude of some of my male colleagues who made unpleasant comments or created stories about how I was given a leadership position and communication barrier among the committee due to the negative attitude of the male members on my ideas initiated by me and other women leader committee member etc.

Most of interviewees mentioned time constraint to balance private roles and leadership roles especially for women who have kids and who need close caring from their parents as the negative gender consequences of leadership on top of the attitude of colleagues. In general, as some interviewees who were/are in different leadership positions indicated, women's participation in leadership is a challenging task and needs commitment and sacrifice not because of lack of skills to exercise leadership roles, but because of time limitations to balance personal and leadership responsibilities. Similarly the figures in Table 10 item no. 3 and 4 indicate the presence of challenge of leadership on personal and work life of women. For instance 56% of the respondents mentioned that the difficulty to juggle work life with family responsibility and

parenting. Besides this, 62% of the respondents indicated that it is a must women choose between their career and their family. They feel guilty because of spending more time on their job by reducing family time. This finding shows the presence of conflict between leadership and family responsibilities. It is worth mentioning that challenges of women who were/are in leadership differ from one another. As it was observed during interview, the higher the leadership position and the more influential the women are, the higher the negative attitude of the male colleagues. Contrary to this, the lower the leadership position, relatively the lower the negative attitude of the male colleagues towards women in leadership except the stress of family responsibility particularly, for younger and married women. However, among women with kids there are also certain differences. Women who do not live by the traditional gender division of labor face less challenges of leadership than woman who live by the traditional gender division of labor in the family. Besides this for women, who are married and get support in the home, and who do not have kids, the difficulty in managing their private and leadership roles is minimal. Moreover, almost all interviewees agreed that women's participation in leadership positions is more beneficiary for the insurance sector than themselves. As almost all women leader interviewees mentioned they are responsible, serious and devoted for their leadership roles. This is also supported by some of men leader interviewees. This means, they give much attention and are committed for the fulfillment of their goals. Even some of them said that they work in their office fully committed as they work in their household. As the result of this, almost all interviewees believe that their participation in leadership is benefitting in fulfilling the mission of the company. The reason mentioned was that because of the gender division of labor, they are more responsible and managers of the household, which make them to be more careful in their leadership roles too. More specifically, some interviewees mentioned that they are sociable, share responsibilities and involve staffs in order to attain their stated goals. They also stated that most of the colleagues are supportive and their relationship is more smooth and friendly with them. Thus, they believe that their leadership style is democratic and participatory, which in turn make working environment easier when they compare with their colleagues. Thus this finding is concordant with the idea of Mabokela (2003) (as cited by Yania 2008) and many others, who revealed that leadership behaviors of women are those of nurturing, caring for others, focusing on relationships, and using interpersonal skills. In general, this researcher mentioned that women use a democratic, participative, consensus building, and collaborative decision-making approach.

4.6.7 Measures to be taken to Enhance Women's Participation in Leadership

As it was indicated, measures to be taken to enhance women's participation in leadership should start in the family and the lower school years of the students. Interviewees mentioned that addressing the socio-cultural and educational barriers that impede women's employment in the insurance sector is indirectly related to women's participation in leadership positions of the private insurance companies. However, addressing the socio-cultural and educational barriers is a national issue and can be addressed gradually through the involvement of the concerned stakeholders of the country. Similarly, interviewees stated that when women's participation and achievement in education reaches the level of men, the opportunities of women to be employed as operation, underwriting/claims supervisor and middle level in the insurance sector could be enhanced. Therefore, the fundamental measure to be taken to enhance women's participation in leadership is addressing gender issues of the country, particularly women's access and success in education. Similarly, the figure in Table 10 item no. 9 indicates that 87% of the respondents were agreed that competence is the only requirement needed to a head in an organizations. This means just mention by the interviewee if the no of qualified women who have MBA or other masters level reaches as men's, they have an opportunity to nominate for top level leadership positions. Therefore these measures were mentioned as a long term measures that can be taken by concerned stakeholders. As additional measure to enhance women's participation in leadership, it was also mentioned that in addition to their positive attitude towards women leaders, top leaders should really accept and believe in women's contribution for the insurance sector and then support and encourage them (those women who did not get the chance) to be in leadership positions. This means that because of the socio-cultural impact, women might be neutral from competition to leadership position and in the absence of support from the top leaders, the influence of socio-cultural barriers and the negative attitude of some male colleagues, who are the product of the society, impedes women's holding leadership positions. This analysis is tallied with the analysis made by Singh. As Singh (2002) mentioned that support from the top management of an institution is critical in the success of women in higher education. This is also concordant with Hanley's (as cited in Shmel'ova, Parsons, and Shmel'ova, n.d.) analysis in which it has been mentioned that for policies to work and change to be effected, top management must publicly and actively support an equal opportunity culture.

Moreover training on leadership helps them not to be challenged easily by the impacts of socio-cultural factors like patriarchal ideology of some colleagues. This finding is similar with some measures taken in the Commonwealth countries, where trainings in relation to leadership were given (Singh, 2002). According to Singh (2002) in England, the Quality Women in Leadership program (QWIL) was established to enhance women's organizational awareness and leadership skills to promote their participation in positions of leadership, related activities in the University's decision – making processes and to develop women's personal strategies for balancing career and personal life. The same to these measures private insurance companies are expected to facilitate situations and give training for women related to leadership skills and related activities. Most interviewee mentioned that eliminating the socio-cultural barriers as a remedy to enhance women's participation in leadership though it might be challenging and needs centuries to be eliminated. Some others also suggested that rather than eliminating, it is better to say addressing the socio-cultural barriers. In general, increasing women's participation in education in general and in post graduate program in particular has been given priority by the interviewees and the respondents. It is worth mentioning that side by side with enrollment and participation of female in education, the responsible bodies are also expected to realize their achievement, which in turn helps to increase the number and quality of women in the insurance sector and their holding of leadership positions.

It is worth mentioning that to enhance women's participation in leadership, increasing women's participation in education in general and in post graduate program in particular and addressing socio-cultural barriers are long term measures whereas giving leadership training for the existing women in the insurance industry to develop their leadership skills, and encouraging women, who were not ever participate in leadership and implementing gender equality policy and program are some of relatively short term measures which can be taken by the responsible bodies of the insurance sector.

CHAPTER FIVE: Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

Women's participation in leadership positions mainly depends on the number of women in the insurance industry and also which would made the expected proportional representation of women to be insignificant and unsatisfactory. There are different barriers for women's participation in leadership. These are socio-cultural, educational, organizational and informal network and lack of encouragement and support both from the family and the colleagues. Among socio-cultural barriers socialization, household responsibilities and lack of support to child care are some of frequently mentioned barriers for women's participation in leadership. In relation with educational barriers, women's low access to and success in all level of education such as masters level and its impact on the number of women with higher education level in the senior staff of the organization are the main hindering barriers for women's participation in leadership. This means the enrolment rate of women/female students and their level of success in higher education determine women's participation in leadership position. Similarly, it should be noted that without forgetting the impact of family responsibility and advanced educational access and success on women's progress in private insurance industry, particularly in leadership positions, the absence of gender policy and lack of established appointment criteria except executive level are also organizational barriers for women's participation in leadership. The study further revealed that women are discriminated against in appointments. As a result of discrimination women are denied equal leadership position opportunities. The study also revealed that men are the majority in the top management level. Even though, there are different barriers for women's participation in leadership, the performance and capability of women were mentioned as the main contributing factors for few women to participate in leadership positions. In addition to this, educational qualification of women and the positive attitude of some top leaders were also the contributory factors. This shows that even though women are capable and well qualified, in the absence of the positive attitude of top leaders, women cannot be in leadership positions. Therefore the positive attitude of leaders shows the increasing of gender awareness level in the organization.

Apart from the above contributing factors, women's participation in leadership has some gender consequences, both challenges and opportunities, which come to exist because of their gender. The challenges are the negative attitude of some colleagues, time limitation to balance private and leadership roles, and the existence of stress because of juggling in the aforementioned roles whereas the respondents believe that respect from the top leaders and its impact for the existence of smooth working environment and the positive effect of gender during coordination and motivation of colleagues in order to discharge leadership roles were mentioned as opportunities. The implication is that women leaders are more democrats, share ideas and they are more sociable, and the impact of these enhanced positive effects in relation to coordination and motivation activity of women leaders. Moreover women's being serious, responsible and committed for the fulfillment of the leadership roles as that of their household responsibilities were believed as opportunities that the insurance companies might gained from women's participation in leadership.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the main measure to be taken to enhance women's participation in leadership is realizing the women's access to and success in education and increasing the number of women in the post graduate program and higher insurance qualifications, which helps to recruit and appoint more women in leadership positions in the insurance industry. Side by side with the above measures, redressing the socio-cultural barriers that affect women educational access and success, and their involvement in leadership is additional measures that can be taken to enhance women's participation in leadership. In addition formulating gender policy, establishing criteria for recruiting individuals for leadership positions are additional measure that can be taken by the private insurance industries under consideration. Besides this encouraging women, who were not ever participate in leadership and giving training to develop leadership skills of women are additional measures to enhance women's participate in leadership positions. In general, from the study one can conclude that social cultural factors, organization policies, organization culture, limited access to advanced education and discrimination of women in appointments inhibit the upward mobility of women to top leadership positions.

5.2. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings and conclusions the following recommendations were made: -

- Education and training are a major influence on upward mobility of women since staff promotion and upward mobility is merit based and is therefore more likely to favour staff with necessary education qualifications, training and skills. Women should struggle to acquire more education and form constructive engagements and mentorship at work place to enable them access training and development opportunities.
- Culture both societal and organizational remains a barrier to women progression to top leadership positions. This is because some staff and also society still hold certain cultural values that are gender discriminatory. There is need to hammer a cultural orientation that recognizes women as capable leaders and free people from gender stereotypes.
- The negative gender consequences of leadership or challenges of women are time limitations to balance personal life particularly household responsibilities and leadership roles, and the negative attitude of colleagues towards women leaders. Therefore, women with negative gender consequence should believe that they can go after what they want and that they have the ability to reach their goals in their own way. Similarly women, who are in leadership needs to focus on their achievement of goal rather than giving attention for the negative attitude of some individuals in the industry; because the output of women's leadership goal will answer for those who have negative attitude towards women in leadership then the negative gender consequences of leadership will be reduced. But in order to do this they should develop their self confidence, should be accessible or open for others and should be honest and active.
- Females are also advised to work strategically from the school level on career choices and aspirations. This will also involve a paradigm shift from the women inferiority self-perception.
- Work and family influence on the upward mobility of women can be minimized by having family-friendly policies to alleviate the pressures of combining work and family life. These policies influence and foster work place change in that they 'create a culture of mutual commitment that make it easier to change organizations with employee commitment.

- The organizations should re-evaluate their Human resource management policies to create gender balance. They have to design an equal opportunity policy and provide guidelines on gender sensitive human resources systems.
- It is worth mentioning that the companies should try to make its human resource management system more efficient, encouraging and attractive for women to hold leadership positions and to contribute for their companies. They have to introduce mentoring scheme.
- In order to avoid biased recruitment of leaders through informal network, insurance companies need to have established recruitment criteria for each and every leadership positions and ensure that it is gender sensitive.

Despite the above fact, women themselves need to be ready for participating in leadership positions. In order to be ready and to avoid negative gender consequences, women need to encourage and support each other. This is because research shows that professional women's network enables women to easy access and to have important information, critical support, counseling and advice, which in turn helps them to enhance their performance and effectiveness level in their career (Finch, as cited in Singh, 2002). Therefore it is advantageous for women in insurance industries to get together to learn from each other and then to be part of decision makers of the industry through the Society of Insurance Professionals.

5.3 Suggestion for further study

- The researcher recommends that future studies in the subject area focus on “the attitude of subordinates towards female leadership in insurance industries.”
- The researcher also recommends a study on the leadership styles of men and women in a comparative basis in private and government owned insurance companies.