



**ANALYSIS OF MAJOR COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES FOR  
GIRLS' EDUCATIONAL EMPOWERMENT: THE CASE OF PLAN  
INTERNATIONAL ETHIOPIA'S PROJECT, GUANGUA WOREDA,  
AWI ZONE, AMHARA REGIONAL STATE**

**BY**

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This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Melese Negash entitled: Analysis of Major Communication Challenges for Girls' Empowerment: the Case of Plan International Ethiopia's Project, Guangua Woreda, Awi zone, Amhara regional state and submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepts standards with respect to originality and quality.

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## **Abstract**

*The main objective of this study was to analyze major communication challenges for girls' empowerment and attitudes of society towards girls' empowerment. The study examined and analyzed the major communication challenges and barriers for girls' empowerment, communities' attitude towards girls' empowerment, communication strategies for girls' empowerment employed by Plan International Ethiopia and feasible communication strategies for girls' empowerment. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods of research. 210 sample respondents were selected by systematic random sampling technique for survey questionnaire. Secondary sources, key informant interview and FGDs were also utilized for collecting the necessary data. Participants of key informant and interview were selected by using purposive sampling technique. Qualitative and quantitative data analysis procedures were employed for data presentation and analysis. It is found out that culture; lack of awareness and the actual social status of the girls are the main communication barriers in girls' empowerment. Community conversation sessions and champions of change strategies in different clubs with active participations of girls were the main communication strategies of the project. Improved the level of accessibility of the project, existence of dynamic and reliable participation of different stakeholders and incorporate more girls who are outside of schools are the main areas of increasing the feasibility of communication strategies for girls' empowerment.*

**Key Words:** Communication barrier, Communication strategy, Empowerment, Girls

## Acronyms

<b>CBO</b>	Community based organizations
<b>CC</b>	Community conversation
<b>CoC</b>	Champions of change
<b>FGD</b>	Focus Group Discussion
<b>MoC</b>	United States Agency for International Development
<b>MoFED</b>	Ministry of Communication
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>PHE</b>	Population Health and Environment
<b>PHE-EC</b>	Population Health and Environment-Ethiopia Consortium
<b>SPSS</b>	Statistical Package for Social Science
<b>SRHR</b>	Sexual and reproductive health rights
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations International Children's Fund
<b>USAID</b>	United States Agency for International Development

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Girl's empowerment is one of the imperatives development issues of developing countries. Empowerment can be defined as the expansion in people's "ability to make planned life choices where that capability was previously denied. In reality, empowerment is a vibrant progression rather than an effect or result; it is the process through which an individual increases her or his competence to manage resources and formulate knowledgeable alternatives" (Kabeer, 1999). Resources and agency are among the fundamental elements of empowerment. Resources and agency enable individuals to attain their goals by facilitating the processes of achieving their desired goals.

Moreover, Plan International Global Strategy (2017-2022) defines empowerment as a scheme to increase girls', boys' and adolescent people's group over their own lives, and their ability to pressure the affiliations and social and political circumstances that influence them. Lack of control is one of the major obstructions that avert mainly girls and young women from comprehending their deserved opportunities. This can be prevailed over by a holistic and sustainable scheme of empowerment, participating girls, boys, and adolescent people in altering gender norms to the advantage of all.

Gender-based empowerment emphasizes on encouraging concurrent transformation in: norms, thoughts and behaviours; socio-economic related resources and wellbeing; as well as strategy structure and financial provisions. It is a core strategy of any effective work promoting gender equality and inclusion. The actual processes of empowering girls and young women are essential in raising awareness about their rights. It is also necessary to involve boys and young men as acquaintances and mutual beneficial in the understanding of gender impartiality. Gender norms and labelling frequently benefit boys and adolescent men as compared with girls. However, their manners and verdict capability are also controlled and formed by inflexible social and cultural anticipations (Ibid).

Several empowerment programs of Plan International Ethiopia have administered to grant or assist girls' right to utilize resources and agency in the study area. These resources and agency are more than just material, such as food, shelter or financial assets; they are information and social resources, which enabled girls through different platforms. These platforms include champions of change agents, clubs and community discussion meetings at the market, schools, friends, the family, and the broader community (PHE-EC, 2016).

Agency is defined as "the ability to define one's goals and act upon them" (Kabeer, 1999). Agency is an essential element to empowerment; according to Malhotra (2015), it is the "essence of empowerment". For resources to be empowering, an individual must have the choice and capability to decide to use these resources to achieve desired outcomes. Thus, individuals' decisions are important in the processes empowerment.

Self-awareness is crucial to be an agent of change in different scenarios of empowerment. To have agency, one must first find out and prioritize self-interests. Frequently, this requires a transformation from submissive acceptance of socially dictated anticipations, toward a more energetic and decisive manifestation of one's preferences and rights. Agency is not just about actions that are outwardly visible; more importantly, it is about the sense, inspiration and principle which individuals convey to their action, or "the power within" (Mathews, 2016). This implies that self-confidence and ability to challenge different barriers is considerably vital for claiming and exercising one's rights and responsibilities.

According to Bandura 1977, having agency requires intentionality and consideration, which include setting targets and expecting obstacles in order to intentionally make things occur by one's accomplishment rather than by fortune or by the generosity of another. The major peculiarity of agency is self-efficacy which a confidence that one has the capacity to create and act upon tactical life alternatives including in the face of impediments. Self-efficacy is the base of agency and agency is the foundation of empowerment.

Communication is a mechanism which people attach with each other to exchange thought or meanings. Obvious and straight communication is extremely essential for meaningful connections with family, friends, peers and other people in the community. Individuals need to express her or himself well, for effective communication to take place, and the messages

should to be delivered and understood. Effective communication involves an equal exchange of information in which all parties act both as 'sender' and 'receiver'. If this exchange is unbalanced, the opportunity to connect is lost. Exchange of words, facial expression, actions and body language are among the different means of communication among people. All of these techniques of communicating require to be taken into account in order to convey a communication successfully and to make a connection (Bernard, 2017). The focus here is on the importance of a platform of commonly understandable sharing of information among different actors of communication.

According to Khwaja (2005), assertive girls' communication needs three practical steps. The first step is to converse about what girl's sense not what others are responses or saying. Then, give details evidently what is making them to feel that particular way. Finally, openly state what they are looking for. Gender norms are inclined to enforce that girls should be remained at home and expected to be pleased about it. In the study area, girls rarely have the same opportunities as boys to interact with each other, which deprive them of vital opportunities to develop social, communication and leadership skills. They are frequently trained to behave inactively, i.e. to be obedient, not opinionated, quiet and helpful that all characteristic those are opposing to being assertive. Hence, girls, in the study area, are not self-confident as compared with boys of the same area.

In condition where there are rigid gender social norms, it may be challenging to change girls' state of mind and make them assertive. Undeniably, having a safe space to reflect about what it means to be a girl, to exercise new talents and new ways of being and to come across support from other girls is essential in a girls' effort to empowerment. Assertive communication makes achievable girls to exercise vigorous communication and find out to give each other helpful comment. Assertive communication needs a dispatcher that can noticeably articulate her or his message and recipient who are polite and dynamic listeners. An vigorous listener comprehend the message and give attention in the discussion by asking questions, by not interrupt with her or his own opinion, and by means of dynamic body language. It's essential for girls to comprehend that it takes two or more to communicate assertively. On the other hand, passive communication engages providing a message without articulating one's accurate opinion or feelings and sometimes it entails not saying anything at

all (Mead, 1934). It clearly pointed out that the occurrence of girls' assertive communication paves the ways for effective exchange of information in different forms of discourses.

Consequently, the main purpose of this study is to analyze major communication challenges for Girls' Empowerment and attitudes of society against girls' empowerment in Guangua Woreda, Awi Zone, Amhara Regional State. Every development of any nation is determined by the well-being of children or adolescents as they are the successors of a country. For this reason, the researcher analyzed major communication challenges in relation to girls' empowerment, in Plan International Ethiopia project implementation area, Awi Zone of Guangua Woreda.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

The structure of society has different effects on the rights and statuses of individuals on the bases of different socio-economic variables. Even if members of society have equal rights by virtue of being human, the comprehension and communication of people's rights is influenced by the actual conditions in which a given society gives values to different social groups. And each member of a society and/or community has a sense of belongingness to these specific social groups. The social groups are varied and are related and so individuals have much distinctiveness that forms how they understand enclosure or recognition by society. Thus, accepting society's insights, manners and labeling towards various social groups is vital to communicate the root causes of gender inequality and social segregation (Ritzer, 2000).

Comprehending the record of gender inequality and segregation is also crucial in categorizing the main reasons. Girls have traditionally been prohibited from controlling their bodies, occupation and right to use and manage on different resources. Comprehending the past experiences of gender inequality and segregation implies on the main of prejudice, and on the obstacles for social change and communication. It can also show the fundamental and influential connections between gender inequality and diverse forms of segregation (Ibid).

Among the studies, Guady (2005), examined the considerable role of education especially girls' education, as a key for the preferred societal developments in Awi Zone of the Amhara regional state. The finding of the study argues regardless of extensive recognition of the importance of female education, girls in developing countries like Ethiopia have been

frequently confirmed and are still barred from education. It asserted that child marriage is one of the customary habit that can be eliminated by girls' education and empowerment, and the main obstacle of communication is having uneducated girls in our society. However, the researcher argued that strategic communication is a key to change the perception and attitude of parents against girls' empowerment to convince them to allow their girls to continue in education rather than getting married.

Major communication challenges which often restricted a girl's empowerment came from cultural expectations that limit girls' future to an early marriage and child bearing in the study area or Guangua Woreda. These social norms compromise an essential moment in a girl's life when she especially needs assistance to follow her educational ambition and fruitfully move to the subsequent phase of adulthood. Assisting youngster girls' comprehensive needs at these points in their lives by offering them with the needed resources, talents and competencies is decisive for the purpose of realizing their educational aspirations and to lead lives of self-respect, choice and opportunity.

Girls in the study area have been facing various obstacles to exercise their rights simply because of they are young and female. For successfully support girls and attain relative equality is essential to recognize and communicate that girls as a cohort represent one of the largest excluded social groups. Until now, as a group they have the potential to attain collective agency and work jointly as a movement for change and accomplish common strategic needs some of their problems in relation to empowerment.

Most researchers have conducted different researches on communication in relation to girls' empowerment in Ethiopia. Such as Ali, A.C. (2011); Ahmed, A. (2017); Geday, E. (2004); and Tsion, M. (2018) have conducted researches on the areas of communication for social change, the effects of early marriage on girl's education in rural Ethiopia and analysis of communication practices used in halting child marriage respectively. However, none of them has conducted researches in particular focus on communication challenges in girls' empowerment. Moreover, in understanding major communication barriers for girls' empowerment not much research has been conducted so far in Awi Zone of Guangua Woreda. Hence, this study will considerably contribute to fill the research gap in this specific area. It

with these all understood in mind that the researcher initiated to undertake this research work on the aforementioned topic in Guangua Woreda of Awi zone.

Therefore, this research is aimed to analyze major communication challenges for girls' empowerment. Children and adolescents especially girls are among the vulnerable who are facing multiple problems in the community in relation to empowerment in Guangua Woreda. The communication barriers including gender norms, community culture and norms, and family's preference of girls' marriage vis-à-vis sending them school are the major challenges for girls' empowerment in the study area.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

In order to examine the problem, the researcher has formulated the following research questions.

- ✚ What are major communication challenges for girls' empowerment?
- ✚ Are communication strategies employed by Plan International Ethiopia project for girls' empowerment culturally appropriate?
- ✚ What can be the workable communication strategy for girls' empowerment?

### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

#### **1.4.1. General Objective**

The general objective of this research is to analyze major communication challenges for girls' empowerment and attitudes of society in girls' empowerment.

#### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives**

The specific objectives of this research are:

- ✚ To analyze major communication challenges for girls' empowerment.
- ✚ To examine the cultural appropriateness of communication strategies for girls' empowerment employed by Plan International Ethiopia in Guangua Woreda project.
- ✚ To identify and recommend workable communication strategy for girls' empowerment.

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

The results of findings of this study have comprehensive significances. It is meaningful to mention some of the core significances as depicted below. The researcher believes that this study brought both theoretical and practical experiences in developing adequate awareness about major communication strategies for girls' empowerment in the community.

First, adolescents especially girls benefited from this research that they got awareness about the major communication barriers for their empowerment and fight in their future life to create conducive environment for their assertiveness. Secondly, the main stakeholders in the community will be benefited from the findings of this research that they comprehend major communication barriers in the community for girls' empowerment and give due consideration to parental, expertise and societal assistance for girls' empowerment.

Thirdly, the study can contribute in the policies of related issues. The researcher believes that this study contributes to the promotion endeavors being made towards inclusive development strategies to benefit girls' empowerment and involvement. There are different international and nationwide instigations and involvement which focus on girls' involvement in all the development activities and designed for empowering women and girls. This contributes to country's obligation in preparing policies, signing co-operations which creates enabling environment and provide learning platforms for girls. This ensures equivalent presence and representation of girls with boys in the society.

Finally, it has development significances. As well known, every form of research in one way or another contributes to the socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental changes in the people in the study area. Hence, the ideas raised and presented in this research initiate and helps to question the socio-cultural believes and practices of the people which try to underestimate the women and girls development in the Woreda.

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

The researcher has conducted the study in Guangua Woreda of Awi Zone, within 20 administrative Kebeles. The quantitative data collection and study has considered only children and adolescents between the ages of 15-19 years, and their families in 20 Kebeles.

The qualitative data were collected from government experts of Women and Children Affairs Office, health office, education office, school counselors, Girls advisories and unit leaders.

### **1.7. Limitations of the Study**

Due to time and financial constraints, methodologically the study applied few methods of gathering data from the primary sources. These are: FGDs, key-informant interviews and survey questionnaires. However, better information could have been gathered through in-depth interview with individual family members. This would have brought new and specific responses without group influence through the FGDs. Information gathered through the survey questionnaire had been collected by local people of the study area.

### **1.8 Organization of the Thesis**

The contents of this thesis have five main parts. The first chapter consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study, significance of the study, scope of the study, limitations of the study, organization of the thesis and ethical considerations. The second chapter contains review of related literatures on girl's empowerment and related issues. The third chapter deals with research methodology. It includes research design and methodology; study area and target population; sampling techniques and sample sizes; data collection instruments/tools; data collection procedures; and data interpretation and analysis. The fourth chapter deals with data presentation, analysis and discussion. Finally, the last chapter presents conclusion and recommendations of the study.

### **1.9 Operational Definition of Terms**

**Adolescent girls:** refers to girls' age group from 15 to 19.

**Empowerment:** refers to the activities of supporting adolescent girls in enhancing their potentials in different areas of knowledge and skills.

**Communication barrier:** refers to any obstacle that impedes the activities of girls' empowerment.

**Communication strategy:** refers to communication approach utilized in the actual processes of girls empowerment,

## CHAPTER TWO

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### 2.1. Concepts and Definition of Communication

##### 2.1.1 The Concept of Communication

There are different types of definitions of communication from different perspectives. Most commonly, it is defined as a two-way process in which participants not only exchange thoughts, emotions and information but also generate and distribute meaning for attaining common understanding. It is the exchange of ideas, feelings and messages by means of language, signals or writing. It is to articulate about oneself in such a way that one is willingly and obviously comprehends. It is a process of conveying information from the sender to the receiver with the use of the medium in which the communicated information is understood (Servaes, 1999). It implies that communication entails the participation of different people for sharing information that requires similarly shared understanding of the desired message/s.

The concept of communication is also refers to sharing or exchange of information by using spoken language, different forms writing, signals, conduct or electronic means. It is a process of sharing information, fact, ideas, or opinion between two or more parties. It is the process by which a thought is conveyed to another's insight. The information that is so spoken or converse is also known as communication. It is a multifarious and vibrant process that allows living being to exchange information by different methods of communication (Smith, 2013). To quote a few, select definitions on communication:

According to Thayer (1987), "A communication takes place when one individual, a sender, displays, transmits or otherwise directs a set of symbols to another individual, a receiver, with the aim of changing something, either something the receiver is doing (or not doing) or changing his or her world view. This set of symbols is typically described as a message". "Effective communication occurs only if the receiver understands the exact information or idea that the sender intended to send out. Many of the problems that occur in an organization are the either the direct result of people failing to communicate and/or processes, which leads to confusion and can cause good plans to fail" (Trop, 2015).

As indicated in the above definitions, communication necessitates the existence of common understanding and interpretation of the source and receiver of a given information exchange. It usually requires the transmission of information in the form of sign, written and spoken language among different actors of the communication of process. Effective communication is vital for having common understanding between the source/s and receiver/s of information. Thus, the occurrence of effective communication is fundamental for achieving the desired forms of changes and/or understanding.

### **2.1.2. The Concept of Empowerment**

Empowerment refers to the development in people's capacity to create premeditated life decisions in a circumstance where this capacity was formerly unused to to them. Changes in the capacity to work out choice can be thinking of in terms of changes in three inter-related elements which make up choice. These are resources, which form the circumstance under which decisions are made; agency which is at the center of the procedure by which choices are made; and accomplishments, which are the result of decisions. These elements are inter-reliant as transforms in each throw in to, and advantage from changes in the others. The attainments of a particular instant are interprets into improved resources or agency and therefore capability for making decisions at an afterward moment in time (Anouka van Eerdewijk, 2017). Thus, empowerment involves in nurturing different potentials of people for better utilization of their ability in different contexts.

## **2.2. Communication and Empowerment**

Access to information; involvement/insertion; responsibility; and local organizational capability are the four components of empowerment (Khwaja, 2005). There are two fundamental theoretical constituent of empowerment: information and pressure. The former is considered as both stipulation of and right to use to information. When communities are empowered, they are capable to offer information about their choices as well as gain information from exterior cause that improve their ability to make most favorable alternatives (Khwaja, 2005). Availability of information assists community members as the final result most likely equivalent the community's necessities. Right to use to information on the other hand, resultant from information dissemination from exterior institutions to community

members promotes in the creation of additional informed options. As a result, the availability of relevant information facilitates the processes of empowerment.

Involvement, social responsibility and nurturing local organizational capability are the main elements of empowerment. Information switch over as a part of empowerment entail that people are involving in communication are prepared to provide information applicable to aim attainment. Although information is compulsory, it is not adequate to create a preferred result. Communities may entirely disseminate information, however except they have the capacity to influence choices and most notably know of this capacity, the information dissemination will not be successful (Zimmerman, 2012). This clearly indicates that information has considerable enabling role in the processes of empowerment in different organizations and components of communities.

According to McIntosh 2014, communication has crucial role in the actual processes of empowerment of different groups and/or individuals. Communication in empowerment process has different elements. The most common practical elements in communication for empowerment are listed as follows.

- Favorable conditions of right to use to information.
- Place users and local community members in power.
- Capacity building of local inhabitants' capacity in communication.
- Focus on small and proper media.
- Knowledge sharing with colleagues.
- Functioning as in cooperative.
- Capitalizing and developing on actual necessitates.
- Making it pleasant.
- Providing them practical experience and sharing resources.

## **2.3. Communication Challenges and Girl's Empowerment**

### **2.3.1 Communication Challenges**

Communication is one of our basic needs for attainment of mutual understanding and actions among the people. We need communicating with many people for individual and expertise reasons. However, while communicating we may encounter many difficulties. Sometimes the

message is not approved appropriately or gets misplaced. There are likelihood of misinterpretation between the sender and the receiver. Sometimes language utilized in the communication is not understood appropriately. Consequently, communication collapse or communication malfunction may occur among people. There are many reasons behind the difficulties in the communication procedures (Marchiori and Bilgarov 2015).

Barrier to communication is defined as: 'any impediment or problem in the process of communication which block the process of communication'. Obstacles are part of process of communication. When we are communicating we predetermine and make sense of it. We make use of a variety of channels for passing messages. At any level or phase, there can be troubles in communication process. Sometimes the sender may not make use of appropriate language that the receiver can comprehend. Receiver may not be able to make sense of it properly. There can be lot of sound in the nearby which can agitate us in the communication process. It infrequently occurs that barriers do not take place in the communication process. Many times barriers occur in the brains of the sender and receiver and the proposed messages are not sent to the receivers (Holmström, 2000). This means communication barriers are any obstacle that adversely affects the accomplishment of communication processes.

According to (Debasish and Das, 2009), we may encounter many barriers while communicating with each other. These barriers can make different impediments in the communication process. These barriers are classified into the following types.

1. Physical or environmental barriers: the obstructions in the nearby or in the location are the physical barriers.
2. Language/semantic or linguistic barriers: obstruction emanating due to the different verbal communication or disparity in language can form problems in communication. Semantic barriers mean the trouble take place because of the different connotations of the words.
3. Psychological barriers: barriers occur due to the strain or psychological problems. It is not easy to admit and prevail over these barriers.

4. Socio-cultural barriers: due to differences in social position or cultural barriers many times we face differences in communication.
5. Noise: traffic sound or noise of engines in factory creates interruptions in communication.

### **2.3.2. Communication Challenges for Girls' Empowerment**

The existence of effective communication is one of the main issues in the achievement of poverty alleviation programs implemented by different NGOs in the processes of attaining social change. The process of communication must be as effective as possible in the fight against poverty. Effective communication is faced with challenges and communication is not as easy and simple as it sounds. Barriers to successful communication include mixed-up messages, language, incorrect channel, labeling, excess message and message complication obscuring its content (Debasish and Das, 2009). Communication barriers emanate from different sources and create obstacles for the attainment of effective communication among the participants. This in turn results in confusion or misunderstanding among the people who are involved in given communication which is contrary to the objective of communication.

The barriers related to attitude are socio-psychological obstacles and they come up to about as a consequence of challenges with the audience in the communication process. These may be reason such factors as reduced management, inadequate discussion with the people and personality disorders. These pressure people to holdup or repudiate to communicate when their response is necessary. Personal manners of individuals which may be due to be deficient in of inspiration or displeasure, brought about by inadequate preparation to facilitate them to accomplish particular undertakings or just confrontation to alteration due to well-established mind-set and thoughts, especially by people in the rural areas unconstructively influence communication (Ibid).

Linguistic capabilities of individuals are important in communication. The make use of of hard or unsuitable words in communication can avoid people from comprehending the shared message. Weakly elucidated or misunderstand messages can also leads to bewilderment among people in the communication process. Presentation or forwarding of information is

also significant to help the comprehending process. The communicator must think about the audience ahead of providing the actual presentation itself and in cases where it is not feasible, the sender can at least attempt to make straightforward his/her language so that the majority of people can clearly understand the messages of the sender (Debasish and Das 2009; Tyagi and Misra, 2011).

The empowerment of girls' indicates to growing the social, learning, spiritual, gender, political, or financial strength of individuals and communities of girls. It is deeply reliant on various variables that including social status, physical location, age and educational status. The policies girls' empowerment can be found local, regional and country level that involves the sectors of education, health, gender based hostility, economic prospects and political participation. On the other hand, there are noteworthy gap between policy development and real performance at the local level. Empowerment of girls is fundamentally the development of enhancing in social, political and economic the capability of girls. Right to use to and manage on resources, changes in economic interactions and changes in social communications are some of the techniques of empowering girls. In addition, provision of education, support for self-employment and organizing self-help groups facilitate the processes of girls' empowerment. These techniques definitely smooth the progress of girls' empowerment (Rajeshwari, 2015).

The existing different challenges may deter girls' empowerment in different circumstances. Particularly, in developing countries, the nature family and social norms has been encouraging the lower status of girls than boys. For instance, the most visible enduring norm of preferring for male over the birth of a girl child, that happens in most societies. Thus, most societies are more inclined in favor of male child in relation to respect of nourishment, education and other prospects. Mostly, girls accept and exercise the traditional perception of their position as normal and this imposing an inequality upon them. Different forms of poverty are widely prevalent among girls than boys. This is another feature that creates challenge in achieving girls' empowerment. Furthermore, there are numerous barriers that issues of girls' right. Focusing on these issues will openly promote the empowerment of girls (Gregory, 2015).

Socio-cultural barriers have considerable adverse effect in communication. Culture is way of life with values or principles .Cultural differences between people can create barriers. Different religious practices are followed around the world. Due to many time differences in the culture can create misunderstanding in communication. Due to globalization and liberalized policies in business, people around the world are travelling and working in multinational corporate or companies. This led to mixing or intermingling between people. Nevertheless, due to differences in language, religious practices, dressing styles, and food habits many times people get confused and are not able to understand each other properly (Fairhurst, 2007).

## **2.4. Communication Strategies**

The word “strategy” emanates from the Greek word, strategies, which plainly means constructing roads and since early times has also been used to mean “being the leader” as well as “using a ploy to win” (Muller, 1920). As Mintzberg (1994) and Whittington (1993), and more lately, Koch (2011) amongst others, explain, theoretical ideas about how to design strategy have altered over time. Classical strategy theory is about balanced long-term preparation and current strategy theory is much more about constant transformation and is much more developing and increasing. Even though, these strategy theorists do not say about strategic communication as such, we may assume that in rational long-term planning theory, strategic communication contribute in providing and advancing it. Up till now, in developing and incremental strategy development, strategic communications visibly contribute to enabling function in designing strategy.

In the expertise strategic communication part contemporary strategy theory has made little advancement, and this might restrict intellectuals to theorizing about the potential accomplishment of strategic communication as merely providing and advancing the organizational strategy or restructuring it. Strategy is more frequently labeled as extended period of strategic planning representations (Betteke, 2018).

According to Torp 2015, “in present day a strategy is often defined as a plan or action intended to accomplish specific goals”. In circumstances, “strategy” is merely another word for “plan.” An investigate for strategic communication planning representations indicated that

most representations are similar to the broadly reach public relations planning model of Smith (2013), in which planning is viewed as a procedure that contain of a few terms and a number of phases through which one must continue.

The first stage is the investigation of the circumstances the participation of public and organizations. The next stage is an action plan that includes purposes and plan and contain the activities of preparing aims and objectives, designing accomplishments and reaction strategies and formulating the message strategy. The third phase deals with schemes which denote first choosing communication schemes and then applying them. The fourth phase entails the assessment of the plan. All these representations begin with doing research followed by the formulation of the strategy including a record of tasks to be performed, if possible as exhaustive as possible, and wind up with an appraisal. Hence, in these planning representations strategy is the second stage and always defines as the result of the first stage which focuses on the investigation of the circumstances. These representations are similar with the classic model of strategy development explained by Whittington (1993) as “rational long term planning” and by Mintzberg, Quinn, and Ghoshal (1995)—in their summary of schools of thought—as “deliberate strategy” development.

Communications strategy is, thus, destined to assist organizations communicate successfully and attain main organizational objectives (Anne, 2015). Communications strategy should maintain organizational knowledge, work harmonization, decision making, and working on creating good image building and workers’ security. Communication, as a part of learning and actual performance, is fundamental for societal development. Studies have recognized that the communication processes are enabling force to empowerment application to relevant communities. Communities are capable to enter at their own comprehension of issues, negotiate, innovate, think and talk about initiatives, and take on in public discussions at the local and nationwide levels (Deepack, 2015). The primary reason to develop a communications strategy is to engage existing and potential stakeholders in a principled manner thus enhance organizational effectiveness and ensure sustainability. The need for developing communications strategy has originated from preceding analysis and recommendations.

“Strategic communication”, as a concept, implies that not every type of communication can be viewed as strategic. Its definition on Wikipedia states that “Communication is strategic when it is completely consistent with the organization mission, vision, values and when it is able to enhance the strategic positioning and competitiveness between their competitors”. In this sense, communication is merely strategic when it has a certain feature. Like the above source, authors on strategic communication quote the seminal article by Hallahan et al. (2007), who explain that the fundamental nature of strategic communication is being determined in order to move ahead an organization’s undertaking by communication communicating. At times of communication assists to move the organization’s mission forward in a decisive manner, we may address of strategic communication. For that reason, simply communication that has the purpose to precede an organization’s undertaking can be defined as “strategic.” For these scholars, it is not the excellence that defines communication strategic, rather its purpose of promoting the organization’s operation.

All aspects of communication are beginning in and pass on by organizations fit in to strategic communication. Hallahan (2004), explained regarding the diverse communication types in organizations, including public relations, promotion communication, promotion movements, administration communication and procedural communication. And all these are categorized under one comprehensive term-integrated communications. Furthermore, these different types of communication can be identified as strategic communication. On the other hand, Hallahan et al., 2007, argued that “strategic communication examines organizational communication from an integrated, multidisciplinary perspective by extending ideas and issues grounded in various traditional communications disciplines”. Although, this indicates that strategic communication is concerned about managerial communication from a definite viewpoint the authors include that the stress is on the strategic appliance of communication and how an organization operations as a public performer to press on its tasks. While academic research on organizational communication generally look at the diverse procedures include in how people work together in multifaceted organizations, strategic communication focal point is on how the organization itself provides and encourages itself through the deliberate actions of its managers, member of staffs and communication employees (Hallahan, et al., 2007).

The emphasis on how an organization operates as a public worker put forward that strategic communication is simply about the incorporation of outer communication forms. In the clarification of this definition, we can be taught that what distinguish strategic communication is the information that it is concerned with the planned communication that provides and encourages the organization in all its expression to the exterior world communications strategy would direct communication activities. It asserts that connection of information allocation with preferred amount and feature occasionally through appropriate channel of communication. It describes anticipation of the different partners and communication activities to achieve those anticipations. It also explains the circumstance inside which the organization communicates and current customized communication accomplishments that follow to segment greatest performances that are applicable to the situation (Nicotera, (2009). Strategic communication largely facilitates the processes of effective communication by considering various factors that intervene in the process.

According to Gupta 2015, the strategy is believed to add the following values.

- Promotes members faithfulness and commitment;
- Advances development efficiency;
- Increases stage of understanding about organization condition, operation and composition;
- Facilitate deliverance of information on appropriate time and constantly;
- Improves constructive insight, development communication and image improvement actions;
- Allows teamwork and harmony;
- Develop responsibility;
- Disseminate development tendency proactively;
- Regulate communications with its main partners;
- Assist flow of well-timed information;
- Assist righteous rapport and development affiliation between organization and its vital partners;
- Consolidate nationwide, local, and worldwide cooperation

- Informs both interior and exterior stakeholders about its associates and the division in general; and
- Improve segment understanding and performance.

## **2.5. Theoretical Review**

### **2.5.1. Theories of Communication**

The theories of communication are the subject that studies the standards of broadcasting information and the techniques by which it is delivered either as print or electronic. It is an effort to make clear how and why people communicate expressively with each other. These theories can initiate from a variety of diverse disciplines including philosophy, psychology and biology. Although the concrete study of the nature of communication is within the discipline. A communication theory is usually dedicated to offering a clarification of how precisely one individual is capable to communicate connotation to another and the extent to which the presenter and the listener can comprehend each other (Paul, 2011). This study is guided, depending on the overall objectives; by two theoretical frameworks. These are social responsibility theory and agenda setting theory.

#### **2.5.1.1 Social Responsibility Theory**

According to Uzuegbunam 2013, after Second World War, social responsibility theory became widely accepted and prominent in different disciplines. It is emphasized on the importance of media which broadcast to audiences without restriction. At the same time, the activities of information transmissions need to take into consideration the culture of the population. The exercise of freedom is within the acceptable or tolerance limit of society. It is expected to respect values of community and profession of communication. Communication specialists are not simply reporters rather they have responsibilities of analysis and interpretation of different activities. In other words, communication specialists should analyze different issues and reflect their interpretation within the framework of the value of the community. The theory is also focuses on the truthfulness and competent areas of media.

The theory, according to Mc Quail 2005, advocates for managing communication activities within boundaries of the norms society. It raises the importance of accurateness and sincerity

is highly valued in the accomplishment of transmitting information. Journalists or other professional should analyze different social issues and make it available for the concerned audience rather simply broadcasting events and activities by their face values. This shows that communication is not mere information dissemination rather it requires researches and reflections of the results to different groups of society.

Social responsibility theory is guided by its own values for the purpose of increasing the advantages of communication to society. The values are based on sustaining balance between professional ethics and values of society. Working in accordance with the requirements of society; providing accurate and reliable information; taking responsibility to communication activities; respecting the minorities' right and adjustment to law are among the main fundamental principles of the theory (McQuail, 2005).

#### **2.5.1.2 Agenda Setting Theory**

According to Coleman and Denis 2009, agenda-setting theory is a theory that emphasizes on the pressure of the media on the society by generating of different kinds agenda. The process of agenda setting occurs in the procedure of user-friendliness. The level of accessibility is directly determines the level of influence on a certain concept or area. In another words, the lower level of accessibility means the lower level of influencing the target audiences. The means of information dissemination is highly influential for different areas of interactions including behavioral changes, politics and business. Properly formulated agenda with systematic means of information dissemination has effective results in attaining the targeted changes in attitude of community. It shows that the activities of agenda setting become successful if its structure is well-prepared and use appropriate channels of communication.

The levels of occurrences, making decisions on different priorities, level of differences and outcomes with a certain period of time are the main elements in the activities of agenda setting. The level of occurrence is related to the level of pressure on people as evaluated with other occurrences. Making decisions on different priorities refers to the level of main concerns for audiences as contrasted with other priorities. Level of differences shows the level of contradictions appear in relation to the desired agenda. The component of outcomes with a certain period of time the influence attained in a given period of time (Nwanne, 2013).

According to Donald and McCombs 1977, the main the responsibility actors that largely determine the agenda setting in communication are political officials, role models, journalists and managers. The interest of each actor has direct impact on the processes of influencing the audiences. The interest of each role player definitely has priority as compared with other agendas. The level of repetition in information transmission has higher level of influence on attaining the concern of the target audiences. Politicians, development specialists, businessmen and public relations professionals are applying agenda setting theory to achieve their objectives. Above all, communication specialists are in a better position to employ the agenda setting theory.

Communication approaches, according to agenda setting theory, have the power of influencing large number of people. The means of information dissemination has direct and indirect outcomes in influencing the target audiences. The outcomes can be explained in terms of the processes of providing information, persuading and altering the attitude of the targeted audiences. Influencing people by communication and considering the need of people are the two levels of the agenda setting theory. The former refers to approaches used by professionals in the study of means of communication while the later refers to the concern of large number of people (Donald and McCombs, 1977).

### **2.5.2. Theories of Empowerment**

Empowerment is a process of changeover from a condition of incapacity to a position of relative management over one's living, fate and environment. This change can be apparent itself in a development in the supposed capability to be in charge of and in an enhancement in the definite capacity to control. Disempowering social processes are dependable for generate a logic of helplessness among people who fit in to groups that undergo from disgrace and favoritism. A feeling of helplessness direct to self-blame, lack of self-esteem, estrangement from the environment and to unresponsiveness. And also incapability to take action for oneself and increasing reliance on social supports and expert for the answer of difficulties in individual's living (Zimmerman, 2012).

Theories of empowerment also imply alteration from the inactive state of affairs to more vigorous circumstances of management. The requirement for it is part of the comprehension

of one's identity so much so that one can say that an individual who is incapable with considering to his/her existence and his/her environment is not apprehending his/her natural human prospective. Since the origins of helplessness are entrenched in social interactions that disempowered whole populations, the empowerment procedure aspire to pressure the subjugated human agency and the social organization inside the restriction and potentials in which this human agency survive and act in response (VanRuler, 2016).

Empowerment procedures can be understood in three intertwined procedures which contribute and harmonize to each other. The procedure of individual empowerment, which in reality can happen in an enormous assortment of situations, is exclusive of any association to the other two procedures. However, when it happens in the path of energetic contribution in social transformation processes in social associations it has a particular worth for both the environment and the individual. The procedure of community empowerment is a social amendment process which entails generating and categorizing a community (Taylor and Vanevery, 2000). This implies that empowerment is a cumulative effect of different factors that facilitate the process of creating enabling conditions for improved utilization of available potentials.

Combined with a communal significant feature that undergo from social disgrace and unfairness obtains capability to manage its applicable environment better and to manipulate its prospect. Community empowerment procedures increase a feeling of accountability, dedication, and capacity to think about for communal continued existence. In addition, abilities in addressing difficulties and political usefulness to pressure alteration in environments related to their excellence of living. Expertise performance of empowering is systematic involvement intended at cheering procedures of empowering community and individuals. It is also refers to empowering specialized action that emanates from social structure with the objective of facilitating procedures of improved management of those communities and individuals in whose life these structures interfere (Senge, 1990).

Empowerment of community can determine the power the individual and then pave the way in the process of looking for her/his private political understanding. The pursuit which is the effect of the individual empowerment procedures produces anticipations for alteration on the level of social organization. Community empowerment carried out when anticipations for

transformation which have collected in the social organization in the appearance of conceptual arrangements commence to be appeared. It is also possible to state that the empowerment of an individual produce a resource of prospective for community. Further than this prospective, empowerment of community necessitate supply of its own in order to be materialized. It takes this reserve from two foundations which must be accessible with confident harmonization between them. The first one is refers to individuals who have come up to identify that they are concerned in performing not only to attain their own private interests though until now in the structure of developing their eminence of living. The second one is related to exterior alteration agent in which experts and others who are participated in a intended alteration procedure and share sources and regulations. It implies legalizing, meaning and control which maintain the formation of a community and increasing capability to control the environment (UNICEF, 2008).

The conception of living politics focuses on the self-ruled circumstance of the notion of empowerment. The procedure of empowerment is habituated by what previously present by the social organization that restrict or permits it. Governments that do not respect the right of individuals to do something and change, and stress the responsibility of conformity as the spirit of human, form social procedures in a diverse mode than the self-governing administration. The latter relatively allows and promotes the individual's involvement in different public decision processes (Nothhaft and Schölzel, 2015).

The standard duality of configuration functions in different circumstances. In addition to the social action, the degree to which there presents a social arrangement that offers legal support to public involvement. This includes resource, strategy and political administration which control the nature and the means of the empowerment procedure and is a decisive part for the possibilities of commencing it. On the other hand, human agency has a range of approaches and methods accessible to it for the purpose of exercising management on living and in circumstances of harsh structural restrictions. Therefore, social relationships are always reciprocal and a person is never without resources to the position of complete deficiency of capacity to use power on other people (Davis, 1988).

All environments have resources of the individual and may also be revealed there on the same time. Only some communities have developed from circumstances of helplessness to

confidence in themselves and capacity to create autonomous choices through their own internal resources. The come across between the community and communication s who utilize empowering specialized techniques is not unplanned. It is usually a copied incidence entrenched in a social structure. It can emanate from intended policy of empowerment (Couto, 1989; Feldman & Stall, 1994).

The procedures of empowerment generate a synergy that promotes the protection and duplication of the procedure (Katz, 1984). In the empowerment procedure developments the empowering specialized application is strengthen and from the results of the procedure and the process itself it obtains evidence of its efficacy and in some instances also legalization from the structure. The practitioner obtains, on the activity stage, knowledge and expertise self-assurance and fresh comprehension. On the organization stage a possibility for making novel social organization on the bases of empowerment facilitating types of authority, communications and standards is created. The procedure of empowerment is also restricts the qualified application because at its climax it get rid of the requirement for its activities. The more the empowerment procedure advancements, the weaker becomes the reliance on experts, and they become less important for the persistence of the procedure. At the time when a community attains empowerment it no longer requires the specialized services that were necessary in the levels of change from helplessness (Ibid).

Social knowledge is neither objective nor unbiased; it either provides to social freedom or it support utilization and social dominance. In the same standard, empowerment implementation conditions cannot be unbiased either, a expertise who does not progress empowerment just about definitely hold back it. The regulations of empowerment implementation are too relevant to an interpretative social theory, because it is not simply the social scientist that generate and understand knowledge. However, it is also the people who are the objects of the research involve in its formation through their actions that create and recreate it (Giddens, 1982). Such double conditions is identify for in order to give validity to the knowledge created both by the people living in the society and by the social sciences.

The procedures of empowerment are reproduced in duality of structure focuses a significant active feature of the empowerment procedure. In other words, empowerment prospective is present not only in terms of people's private resources and capabilities, but also in terms of

the parameters of the social structure. The association between social structure and human agency strengthen the theoretical elucidation of the means community empowerment provides to empowerment of the individual. For this reason, empowerment may be contrasted to a spherical procedure of social change and commencement of capacities and resources in which human agents in requirement of empowerment operate jointly with empowering person agents. The social organization that is formed by ways of this action includes protection and duplication of components from the obtainable social organization and an ethical procedure of decisive social investigation.

Empowered people find out to comprehend their circumstances in a different way, in the communications field, and hence produce a figurative arrangement that they share, one which provides them a latest social sense of their conditions and their interaction with other people. People find out, in the normative field, to realize new definite social norms that influence them in different ways. They begin engaged in a vigorous component in the ethical dialogue and alter it by the information of their engagement in it. In the course of this new social involvement people can inflict permit in opposition to social organization with which they had formerly accepted to their own disadvantage (Neumann, 2008).

Empowerment can be explained in relation to individuals' capability to result in alteration. However, individuals cannot comprehend the influence of an identified individual which is articulated in her/his own particular action, without linking to the offered organizations of power that this person strengthen, understand and changes through her/his manners. Individual efficiency brings its power from organizational structures of management that are entrenched in social organization (Clegg, 1989). Hence, the empowerment process depends on what already exists in the society, but the success of the process is defined by what and how much changes on the personal level, the community level, and the social systems connected with the process.

Empowerment of the community is relied on the attainment of capacity and on right to use to necessary resources. It can be divided into distribute resources and commanding resources. The former refers to material resources including technologies, unprocessed material and material products formed through the mixture of these. The latter refers to organizational resources which can be categorized to social time-space of organization of living prospects,

formation of ways of everyday living, and association of human beings in reciprocal organization. These have implications for the foundation of prospects of self-articulation and self-enhancement (Giddens, 1984).

Helplessness happens in the social organizations which are planned to resolve different social difficulties that create the helplessness of the people who look for their services and support. Commonly, it does not come from weak intent of different actors but as a result of the faulty method that social policy is implemented and that community services are given to people who are suffering (Berger and Neuhaus, 1977; Rappaport, 1981). The processes of empowerment produce a change in human manners and in the social organization. Just as the possibility for individual empowerment exists in every human being, the prospective for community empowerment also exists in every environment. In other words, in all procedures of individual empowerment, there also exists a prospective for community empowerment and every procedure of community empowerment generates an environment. This makes possible individual empowerment and also forms and influences its appearance (Maton & Rappaport, 1984).

Empowerment theory makes a diagnosis of helplessness as a social predicament and not a personal problem and assesses the traditional inclination to diagnose depression, self-guilt, helplessness and dependence as the own problems of individuals. All conditions of incapacity have frequent characteristics of individual psychological occurrence of failure to manage which every human being can recognize sensitively. Since there is no one who has not experienced instants of vulnerability and weakness, there exists an instinctive perception of the damages caused by steady and continuing helplessness and this confirms the universality of the requirement of empowerment (Shane and Glinow, 2010).

Helplessness, similar to different circumstances, creates adaptive methods in those exposed to it and it is essential to recognize the major adaptive methods. Incapable people accept their unattainable circumstances and the blame it involves. They categorize with the unhelpful social outlooks and believe the society's opinion of their weaknesses. As a method of avoidance from their despair and their information that they tend to believe that there is no means to be out of these circumstances. And they are inclined to accept the society's beliefs,

rules of conduct and values as well as those that are heading for against themselves. Those people who are prohibited from involving in activity that describe them and from articulating ideas about their activity widen submissiveness and stop on the thought of scheming their own prospects (Gaventa, 1980). In the conditions when the submissive serenity severs and it does not completely disappear. Its miscellany creates complicated for people who have become familiar to quiescence to articulate them in a obvious and constant manners. The latest realization in the phase of rising from helplessness is a cause of volatility and can simply be controlled (Freire, 1970). The serenity of the incapable jeopardize their prospect, intended for it facilitates the society to converse for them and implicitly support the progress of a victim responsibility justification of helplessness and a legalization of its continual occurrence.

### **2.5.3. Girls' Empowerment Theory and Practice**

Girls' empowerment is a procedure of facilitating girls' abilities to make them self-determining persons. The empowerment of girls' emphasizes girls' obtaining control and influence on their own life. It usually entails raising knowledge, building self-assurance and growth of available alternatives. It also requires better power and improved right to use of resources and activities to change the arrangement and organizations which strengthen and continue gender prejudice and inequity. Empowerment is dependent on the interface between resources, agency and institutional structures (McIntosh, 2014).

The concept of agency signifies ability for intentional activities, the capacity to follow goals, articulate voice, and pressure and pass decision far from fighting and revenge. Combined action, capacity of decision-making, and management are the three main elements of agency. Institutional arrangements are the social structures of official and unofficial regulation and experiences. They form and pressure the appearance of agency and women and girls' power on resources. Institutional arrangements can be originated in the areas of state, family, community, and market. They include official rules and policies and the means these are accomplished in the framework of human interactions. Resources are concrete and insubstantial assets and basis of control that women and girls have possess or make use of independently or communally in the practice of agency (Miller, 2005).

Girls' different forms of assets, decisive awareness, knowledge and skillfulness are considered as resources. Empowerment of girls is a vibrant and transformative procedure of alteration. Change of influence relationship happens in the course of girls practicing agency and activities by the rearrangement of resources to girls and through changing the institutional arrangements that form girls' options and influence and eventually their prospective life. The elements of empowerment are circumstances or resources, accomplishments or results and procedure or agency (Anouka van et.al, 2017).

Person, social or objects are the main types of resources. Resources refer not only to predictable economic resources but also to the variety of person and social resources which use to improve the capacity to make decision. Human being resources are personified in the person and include her/his talents, comprehension, thoughts and resourcefulness. Social resources include responsibilities, anticipations and claim which inhere in the partnerships, relations and associations which succeed in diverse areas of living. And these allow people to advance their circumstances and living likelihoods over what would be achievable through their individual endeavor. Resources are dispersed by a range of diverse institutions and procedure and right to use to resources will be decisive by regulations, exercises and norms which overcome in various institutional areas. As a result, the allocation of resources inclined to be rooted within the allocation of 'authoritative resources (Giddens, 1984).

The capability to characterize one's purpose and take action on them is the subsequent element power in relation to agency. Agency in general, is more than apparent activity, includes intention, connotation and inspiration which persons convey to their action, their logic of agency or the power inside. Whereas agency frequently inclined to be prepared person choice making, mainly in the conventional economic writing, it incorporates a much broader variety of purposive activities. These activities include complaint, domination, negotiation, confrontation, treason and dishonesty. In addition, the more indescribable, cognitive procedures of expression and investigation. Agency is also incorporates combined, including person, manifestation and activity (Koch, 2011).

Agency possesses both affirmative and adverse connotation in connection to power. The former refers to person's ability to describe their own life options and to follow their own purposes even in the encounter of resistance from others. Agency can also practiced in the

more unconstructive way in which the capability of a performer or group of persons to dominate the agency of others by utilizing intimidation aggression and compulsion. On the other hand, powers can also function in the nonexistence of any clear agency. The regulation and norms leading social manners inclined to make certain that definite results are replicate without any obvious practices of agency. Where these results allow on the planned life options, they confirm to the practice of power as untenable conditions of passing decisions (Cooren, et al., 2011).

## **2.6. Empirical Review**

In Ethiopia, female are the main sources of labor in different agricultural activities. Due to the existing cultural barriers, they are denied and/or restricted from utilization of resources. Furthermore, most rural girls are facing different forms of abuses that exacerbate their livelihood. Premature marriage, genital mutilation and violence related to gender are widely prevalent in rural areas of the country. The rate of school enrollment of girls in the country has been increasing for the last three decades. However, the rate of enrollment at tertiary level of education is far more less than those of males. In addition, the rate of dropouts is higher among females as compared with males in the same educational level. Some of the main reasons for lower level of girls in education include poverty, personal safety and longer distance between residence and schools. Generally, there is an inverse relationship between girls' enrollment and higher level of education (USAID, 2021).

The utilization of communication strategies can be appropriate to the girls' in difficult circumstances and it is apparent that girls are suffering due to different challenges. On the other hand, the encounter generates the arrangement of the bureau which look for to eliminate the distress among girls. Programs exercised to alter the appalling conditions encountered by girls have not given in the preferred outcomes. It is identified the requirement to study and appraise the communication procedures and its relevance to achieve some realistic recommendation to girls (Ali, 2011).

Girls' family background has significant influence on their level of educational participation. Girls' family backgrounds with better educational level have relatively better treatment and access to different resources than families with lower level of educational status. Many

families in Ethiopia prefer using their girls' labor for different domestic chores rather than sending them school. The average estimated working domestic tasks of girls is around 28 hours per week which five times larger than boys. In addition, girls are victims of early marriage and taking responsibilities for their newly established family. Girls' are also facing different forms of structural obstacles at different stages of their growth that negatively affect their potential of achieving better level of socio-economic status. These conditions are realities for the majority of girls in the country (Meseret, 2018).

According to (Ali, 2011), the major objective of the study on girls was to examine the communication methods employed by bureau of ANRS WAB. It intended to classify and investigate the approaches utilized by the bureau. It also designed to examine the obstacles to the efficient communication in the Bureau's actions and also to propose the proper means of communication to be employed. These objectives make the study essential since they are almost the same to the current study. It is shocking to identify the circumstances still encountered by the girls. It might seem traditional but the terrible condition is worsening by lack of awareness which is empowerment. Girls' problems are made bad mainly due to lower level of literacy, pitiable infrastructure of communication, higher rates of poverty, inadequate knowledge, and higher level of child mortality and absence of good governance.

It is found out that those detrimental customary practices which are practiced including arranged marriage, female genital mutilation, preferences to large family size, gender based hostility and early marriage. It is obvious that there is legal unrestraint without the real autonomy which is essential for girls. It argues that the function of communication to ease these entrenched social challenges is important. It is crucial to employ the appropriate and incorporated methods of communication. The long range goal, a social change, can be a realized under the conditions where communication is correctly implemented. Communication is related to development and culture which is also an essential means for empowerment. It is a tool which facilitates the efforts of attaining social change and/or development schemes to realize particular objective. Generally, communication activates the involvement of the people in the activities of development that encourage the local communities to possess and sustain development and the desired type of social change (Ibid).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. Research Design and Methodology**

Research methodology entails the logical process by which the researchers begin from the first recognition of the problem to the last conclusion. The feature of the methodology is to allow the researcher to conduct the research work in scientific and applicable approach (Creswell, 2017). This chapter deals with the research design, study target population, sample size, sampling techniques and procedure, data collection instruments, the research procedure followed and the method of data analysis.

In this study descriptive research of a mixed approach that is both qualitative and quantitative methods were employed. The qualitative approach includes data from interviews, focus group discussions and secondary sources. At the same time the quantitative approach were employed in order to organize data from the closed ended questionnaires.

#### **3.2. Study Area and Target Population**

The purpose of the study is to analyze major communication barriers for girl's empowerment and its influence on the behavior of society against girls' empowerment in Guangua Woreda, Awi Zone, Amhara Regional State. Therefore, the population of the study consists of adolescents age group from 15-19 from Plan International Ethiopia's project targeted Kebeles. The study participants (adolescent) were identified from 20 Kebeles of the project by using systematic sampling technique. In addition, school counselors, unit leaders, experts from health office, women and children affair office, education office, community leaders and adolescent family members as well were targeted by the study.

#### **3.3. Sampling Techniques and Sample Sizes**

Sampling considerations or two stages sampling techniques are used in the study. The first was for Kebeles-geographic (sites) sample and the second was for participants. For selection of Kebeles from project targeted ones (20 Kebeles), the stratified sampling technique was employed based on climatic zones (Waina, Dega & Kolla) of project's Kebeles. According to

Creswell 2017, the required sample size required for descriptive study ranges 10-20% of the size of total population. And a total of 5 Kebeles were selected for study by using lottery sampling technique out of 20 project Kebeles. Systematic random sampling technique was used for the selection of study participants for quantitative survey.

In order to calculate the sample size of the study population, the researcher found it practical to use 95% confidence level and four confidence interval for adolescent girls, three for parents and 5 for community leaders are used. To this end, 210 girls, 15 parents & 20 community/religious leaders are participated in the study. According to Creswell 2017, the formula used to determine the sample size is:

$$n = \frac{z^2}{4e^2 + \frac{z^2}{N}} ;$$

Where: n= sample size

N= total population

z= standard value of the confidence level

e= the maximum allowable error.

The qualitative research participants were selected purposively based on their expertise and knowledge possessed by the respective respondents.

### **3.4. Data Collection Instruments/Tools**

Instruments that are used for collecting information for the research is known as research instrument or research tool (Creswell, 2017). The study employed both quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection instruments. Secondary sources of data, survey questionnaire, focus group discussion and key informant interview are incorporated.

First, the data collection tools such as questionnaire, key informant interview and FGD checklists were adopted both in English and translated to Amharic versions. Questionnaires were distributed to gather data from adolescent girls (target group) and from their parents. Moreover, FGDs were administered for qualitative information with adolescent girls, their parents or care givers and community/religious leaders. The government experts from Women

and Children Affairs Office, education and health offices, schools based counselors, girls' advisories and unit leaders were contacted through key informant interview.

The data collection activity was censured by using various data collection methods and tools to be developed for both qualitative and quantitative approaches. Questionnaire, key informant interview, FGD and observation checklists were the data collection tools to be employed for the study. All the data collection tools were developed in relation to the research questions for the purpose of obtaining the necessary data from the research participants.

A. Questionnaire: considered as a major data collection tool and administered to the sample adolescent girls and their parents. Survey questionnaire preferred because it allow the researcher to collect data from large sample size and of the necessitate data from many people and understood to be convenient to conduct the study.

B. The key informant interview guide were developed based on the purpose of the study. The main reason for conducting key informant interview was to look for additional and in depth information around the theme of the questionnaires from the government experts of Women and Children Affairs Office; Education and health offices, schools based counselors, girls' advisories and unit Leaders.

C. Focus group discussion (FGD): enriched information was raised and discussed by the participants of FGD. It was employed as an additional and helpful instrument to cross check the data collected through other method of data collection. Information from adolescent girls, their parents and community/religious leaders was gathered.

D. Desk review: the researcher had reviewed various theses, publications and researches to find result and support the study as secondary source of information.

### **3.5. Data Collection Procedures**

Before embarking on data collection, the researcher has developed and designed necessary data collection tools and checklists for all of target groups of the study both in English and Amharic versions. And then submitted the tools to research advisor to ask for comments and suggestions to add in the comments and finalize the tools for field data collection activities. In addition, to make sure the reliability and validity of data collection tools, the researcher had

conducted the pilot study before the beginning of actual data collection activity in the field. After the approval of the data collection tools, the researcher has contacted the selected study participants based on appropriate sampling techniques.

In addition, for sake of validity and reliability of the source data, sources of data commonly used in measuring communication behaviors are official statistics from sample schools. “Official statistics are data on the study area from agencies that react officially for the study and data, kept by social welfare agencies like schools and related agencies” (Creswell, 2017). Rigorous data validity and consistency checks will be part of the data cleaning exercises before starting the analytical work. For more in-depth cleaning, the SPSS data “explore procedure” was employed for data screening. Outlier identification and description differences among study participants and check for an internal consistency of the data are done as part of the data cleaning exercise as well.

### **3.6. Data Interpretation and Analysis**

Different techniques of data analysis were employed to analyze collected data through different methods/tools based on objectives and basic questions of the study. The data gathered through the qualitative methods were analyzed by using triangulation, compare and contrast and chronological methods, and presented by using narrative quotes. The qualitative data collected through interview and FGD were organized according to the theme of the research question and interpreted as well. Whereas the quantitative data collected by using the questionnaires were interpreted and analyzed by using percentage and frequencies since the data were loaded in to version SPSS and analyzed. To this end, the quantitative information is presented in bi-variant tables and figures/charts using frequency distributions and proportions. The document review results were grouped, categorized and analyzed based on their similarities. Finally, the findings of the research has incorporated and validated by using related review of literatures.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

The researcher has recognized and respected the approval of the study participants and applied Addis Ababa University ethical consideration principles for research. Ethical concerns were informed to all, both quantitative and qualitative methods, stages of the research process.

Informed permission was required at all stages and participants were frequently being checked for their readiness to participate and free to leave at any time. The informed consent of all the research participants was take in a verbal form and was continued by clarification about the objectives of the research. The researcher has assured the study participants that throughout of the research process and in any of publications, the identity of research participants to be anonymous.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter consists the presentation, analysis and discussion of quantitative and qualitative data obtained through focus group discussions, observation, key informant interviews and survey questionnaire. The data were gathered from two focus group discussions, ten key informant interviewees and the sample of 210 respondents. The first part of the chapter deals with the socio-demographic data. This is followed by presentation, analysis and discussion of the results on the major communication challenges for girls' empowerment and attitudes of society against girls' empowerment.

#### 4.2 Socio-demographic Data

**Table 1: Distribution of respondents by age and educational level**

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Age	15	35	16.7
	16	70	33.3
	17	35	16.7
	18	28	13.3
	19	42	20.0
	<b>Total</b>		<b>210</b>
Educational level	Unable to write and read	21	10.0
	Write and read only	14	6.7
	Primary level	42	20.0
	Secondary level	105	50.0
	Tertiary level	28	13.3
	<b>Total</b>		<b>210</b>

Source: own survey, 2022

As indicated in table 1, the majority 70 (33.3%) of respondents were 16 years old. This is followed by 42 (20%) respondents whose age was 19. 35 (16.7%) of respondents were 15 and 17 years old each. The remaining 28 (13.3%) of respondents were 18 years old. Concerning about educational level, the majority 105 (50%) of respondents had secondary level of education. 42 (20%) and 28 (13.3%) of respondents had primary and tertiary level of education. 21 (10%) of respondents were unable to write and read while 14 (6.7%) of respondents were unable to write and read. Religious affiliation of respondents showed that the majority 147 (70%) respondents were the followers of Orthodox Christian. 49 (23.3%) and 14 (6.7%) of respondents were the Muslim and Protestant respectively. The findings imply that the community in the study area was relatively homogenous in different socio-demographic variables.

**Table 2: Distribution of respondents by main occupation and marital status**

Variables	Category	Frequency	Percent
Main occupation	Student	133	63.3
	Farmer	49	23.3
	Merchant	28	13.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>
Marital status	Single	140	66.7
	Married	63	30
	Divorced	7	3.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

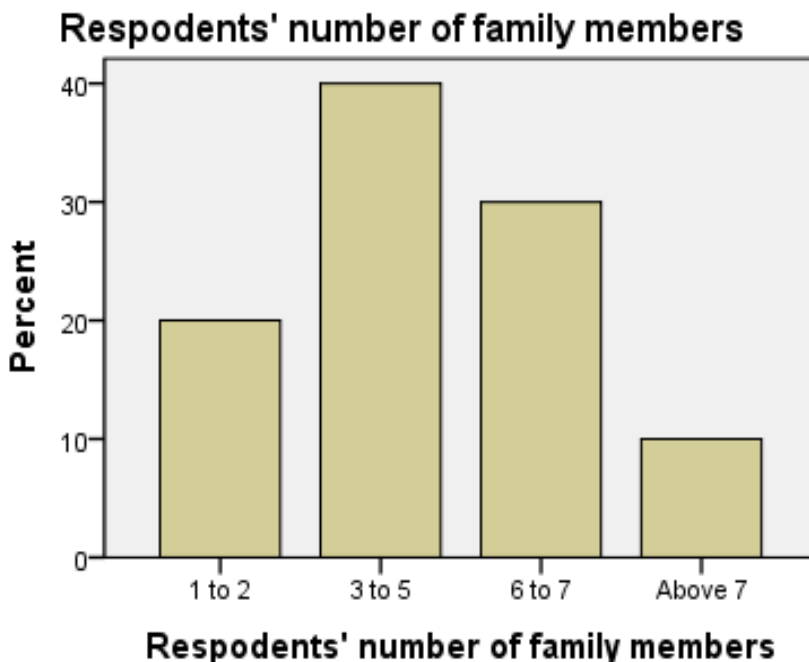
Source: own survey, 2022

Table 2 depicted that the main occupation of respondents, indicated that the majority 133 (63.3%) of respondents were students. 49 (23.3) and 28 (13.3%) of respondents were farmers and merchants respectively. The majority 98 (46.7%) of respondents' family had annual income of 40001 to 60000 birr. 49 (23.3%), 42 (20%) and 21 (10%) respondents' family had

annual income of 20001 to 40000, above 60000 and below 20000 birr respectively. It implies that since the majority of respondents were students, girls were obtaining the opportunity of education at their appropriate age category. However, there were some girls who did not get the opportunity.

Concerning about the marital status of respondents, the majority of respondents 140 (66.7%) were single. 63 (30%) and 7 (3.3%) of respondents were married and divorced respectively. Although the majority of respondents were single, large number of adolescent girls were married and divorced. This shows that many adolescent girls, in the study area, are experienced marriage and divorce at their lower age. With regard to the number of female children in the family, the majority 91 (43.3%) of respondents' family had only one female child. 77 (36.7%) and 42 (20%) of respondents' family had 2 to 3 and 4 to 6 female children respectively.

Figure 1: Respondents' number of family members



Source: own survey, 2022

As shown in figure 1, the majority of respondents 84 (40%) had 3 to 5 family members. 63 (30%) and 42 (20%) of respondents had 6 to 7 and 1 to 2 family members respectively. The remaining 21 (10%) of respondents had more than 7 family members. This indicates that the number of family members is relatively high in the study area. It is particularly true for the community in rural areas of the Woreda. It is obvious that the existence of large number of family adversely affects the wellbeing of children in different ways. Thus, the opportunities of adolescent girls are also negatively affected by their large family size.

Concerning about the socio-demographic data of qualitative part, data were collected from 8 key informant interviewees and 2 focus group discussions. All of the key informant interviewees had tertiary educational level. 60% of them were female and remaining 40% were males. With regard to the FGD, participants were selected, for the purpose of obtaining different opinion, from different social groups of the community.

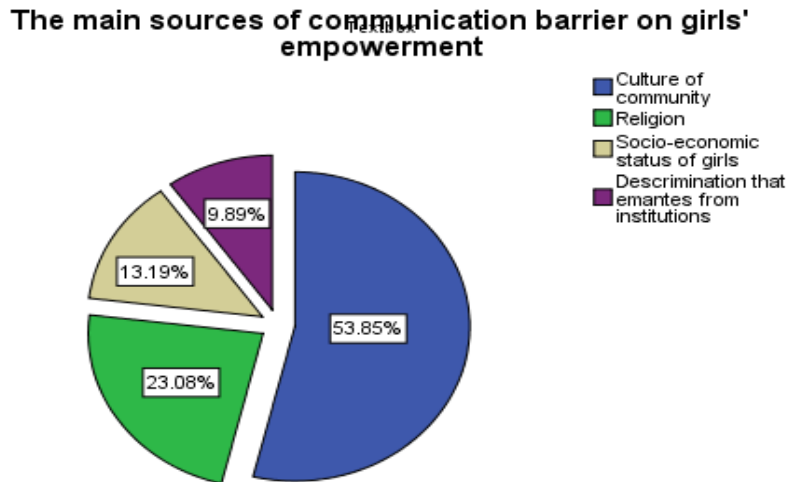
### **4.3 Communication Barriers**

Communication barriers are the challenges that hinder the occurrence of effective communication among different groups of people. These barriers have been adversely affected the attainment of communication objectives. The challenges can emanates from different sources and causes for the misunderstanding among the participants of a given communication. For this particular study, communication challenges are obstacles that impede different forms of girls' empowerment activities in the study area. Hence, the researcher has examined different challenges of communication in girls' empowerment.

Respondents were asked about whether there are communication obstacles on girls' empowerment or not and the significant majority 175 (83.3%) of respondents replied that there are communication obstacles on girls' empowerment. 21(10%) of respondents said that there are no communication barriers. The remaining 14 (6.7%) of respondents said that they do not know whether there are communication obstacles on girls' empowerment or not. This indicates that there are clearly visible communication impediments on girls' empowerment in the study area. In other words, the existing communication barriers had been adversely affecting the activities of girls' empowerment in different areas. Thus, any effort of

empowering girls should consider these communication barriers and use alternative solutions for the purpose of increasing the effectiveness of girls' empowerment.

**Figure 2: The main barriers of communication**



As indicated in figure 2, 53.8% of respondents mentioned the culture of the community as the main sources of communication barrier in girls' empowerment. Religion, next to culture, was considered as the main source of communication barrier by 23.1% of respondents. Socio-economic status of girls and discrimination emanated from institutions were identified as the main source of communication barrier in girls' empowerment by 11.5% of respondents each. This implies that the culture of the community is the main source of communication barrier, as compared with other barriers, that adversely affects the activities of girls' empowerment. The barriers are also found in religion, actual status of girls and institutions. The efforts of increasing communication effectiveness needs to consider the role of community's culture in the activities of girls' empowerment.

According to an interviewee, older male, "the major challenge is embedded on the culture of the community. Girls are not encouraged to be active participant in different communication platforms". This indicates that socialization of girls' is crucial to solve the major challenges in relation to girls' self-confidence in different processes of communication. Lower level or lack of self-confidence which is accompanied by lower level of encouragement hampers girls'

efforts in different areas of their livelihood. Effective communication strategies are required to mitigate communication barriers in the processes of girls' empowerment. Different forms of empowerment enable girls' to tackle those challenges.

Participants of FGD were asked about communication barriers in their community and middle-aged women from areas of the Woreda explained as follows.

*Of course there are different challenges that prevent girls to communicate freely to different groups of the community. Usually, girls are not encouraged to freely communicate with other members of the community. The challenges come from their family, kin, peer groups and community. They are largely expected and appreciated if they remain silent or passive. Thus, the major barrier is a belief on the importance of boys' education than girls. Girls are expected to marry early and engaged in different forms of economic activities. It is quite normal for girls to hold the statuses of older women as compared with boys of the age group.*

This shows that the dominant culture and socio-economic barriers are the main causes of communication challenge in girls' education or empowerment. Members of the community are clearly preferred for girls to be engaged in early marriage and different economic activities. From this, it is possible to conclude that culture, lack of awareness and poverty are the main barriers in girls' empowerment or education. The findings are consistent with Debasish and Das 2009, the barriers related to attitude are socio-psychological obstacles and they come up to about as a consequence of challenges with the audience in the communication process. Particularly, this is clearly visible by people in the rural areas unconstructively influence the actual processes of communication.

Different types of communication barriers have different level of impact in the communication processes. Some barriers have significant adverse impact while other barriers have lower level of negative impact in communication. Respondents were asked to rank the main obstacles of communication in girls' empowerment. The communication barriers include lower level of education; girls' inferior status in the community; living in poverty; lack of access to information communication technologies; limited opportunity to work outside of their home and unfavorable attitude of the community. The following figure presents respondents' rank on the main obstacle of communication in girls' empowerment.

Figure 3: Rank of communication obstacles in girls' empowerment from the highest to the lowest.



Source: own survey, 2022

Figure 3 illustrated the rank of the main communication obstacles in girls' empowerment from the highest to the lowest. Unfavorable attitude of the community ranked as the highest among the main communication obstacles in girls' empowerment by 34.9% of respondents. This is followed by 23.3% and 19.4% of respondents were ranked girls' inferior status in the community and lower level of education as the second and third main communication obstacles respectively. Limited opportunity to work outside of their home was ranked as fourth by 15.4% of respondents. Living in poverty and lack of access to information and communication technologies were ranked last by 4% of respondents each.

The above findings imply that the existing unfavorable attitude of the community had been adversely affecting communication in girls' empowerment. Girls' inferior status in the community and lower level of education were also largely creating communication obstacles in girls' empowerment. Thus, unfavorable attitude of the community, girls' inferior status in the community and lower level of education are the three main communication obstacles in girls' empowerment. Similarly, according to Debasish and Das, 2009, the main

communication barriers include socio-cultural, physical or environmental barriers, linguistic and psychological barriers. Correspondingly, according to Coleman and Denis 2009, agenda setting theory asserted that the lower level of accessibility means the lower level of influencing the target audiences. The means of information dissemination is highly influential for different areas of interactions including behavioral changes.

Communication barriers in girls’ empowerment are considerably affecting the efforts of empowering girls in different areas. Respondents were asked about their suggestions to overcome communication barriers in girls’ empowerment. Suggestions to overcome communication barriers in girls’ empowerment are presented as follows.

**Table 3: Respondents’ suggestions to overcome communication barriers in girls’ empowerment**

Suggestions	Frequency	Percent
Increase awareness creation activities	87	49.7
Create better communication platforms for girls	53	30.3
Increase coverage of the project many parts of the country	27	15.4
Increase access to information communication technologies	8	4.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: own survey, 2022

The above table revealed that the majority 87 (49.7%) of respondents mentioned increasing awareness creation activities as the main solution for communication barriers in girls’ empowerment. This is followed by 53 (30.3%) of respondents suggested that creating better communication platforms for girls as the main solution for communication obstacles in girls’ empowerment. 27 (15.4%) of respondents said that increase coverage of the project many parts of the country enables to overcome the barriers. The remaining 8 (4.6%) of respondents suggested increasing access to information communication technologies can overcome communication barriers in girls’ empowerment.

The above findings pointed out that expanding awareness creation campaigns are significantly useful method for preventing the communication barriers in girls' empowerment. It is similar to the other finding, in the same study, which shows unfavorable attitude of the community is the barrier communication in girls' empowerment. It is obvious that the implementation of systematic, consistent and professional awareness raising activities have considerable productive effects in attitudinal changes. Thus, contextually relevant awareness raising activities are crucial in tackling communication barriers in girls' empowerment. In other words, appropriate awareness creation activities have significant enabling effect to bring the community towards the desired attitudinal changes which is compatible with creating effective communication methods in the activities of girls' empowerment.

Social responsibility theory, according to Mc Quail 2005, is guided by its own values for the purpose of increasing the advantages of communication to society. Working in accordance with the requirements of society; providing accurate and reliable information; taking responsibility to communication activities are among the main fundamental principles of the theory.

#### **4.4 Attitude of the community**

Attitude of the community is one of the main determinants communications in girls' empowerment. Attitude of the community affects communication positively or negatively. Some communities allow or facilitate the process of communication while others hinder the existence of smooth communication among members of the community. This particular study had examined the attitude of the community in the study area with regard to communication in girls' empowerment. Importance of girls' empowerment, education equality and early marriage are the main variables utilized to examine the attitude of the community in relation to communication in girls' empowerment.

Girls' empowerment has different advantages for girls in particular and for the society in general. Respondents were asked about the importance of girls' empowerment for their community and all (100%) of respondents agreed that girls' empowerment is important for the community. This indicates that the community definitely believes that girls' empowerment

has considerable significance for their community. In other words, girls' empowerment is viewed positively by the community in the study area.

**Table 4: Respondents' attitude on girls' empowerment**

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Equal access to education is equally important for boys and girls.	210	1	5	1.97	1.113
Girls should remain in home when they reach teenage years and beyond.	210	1	5	2.77	1.362
Girls who marry at early age should remain in school.	210	1	5	2.37	1.142
Girls' empowerment means family empowerment.	210	1	5	2.26	1.104
My family always supports the empowerment adolescent girls.	210	1	5	3.71	1.105
<b>Total Mean</b>			<b>2.62</b>		

Source: own survey, 2022

Table 4 depicted the attitude of respondents on girls' empowerment. The attitude of the respondents was reflected by responses for the statements listed above. The highest value is 5 and the lower is 1. Mean and standard deviations are also included in the data. The highest mean was 3.71 with the standard deviation of 1.105 which explained by my family always supports the empowerment adolescent girls. The next highest mean was 2.77 with the standard deviation of 1.362 which is given by girls should remain in home when they reach teenage years and beyond. The third highest mean was 2.37 with the standard deviation of 1.142 that confirm girls who marry at early age should remain in school. The fourth highest mean was 2.26 with the standard deviation of 1.104 for the statement that claim girls' empowerment means family empowerment. The lowest mean was 1.97 with the standard deviation of 1.113 that favors equal access to education is equally important for boys and girls.

The finding, attitude of respondents on girls' empowerment, shows that at early years of age parents, parents send both girls and boys to school. On the other hand, the number of female students declines at higher levels of education. This implies that girls' age is inversely related to the probability of continuing their education. Thus, boys and girls do not have equal opportunity in continuing their education to the middle and high school. This is mainly related to early marriage and engagement in household chores.

According to an interviewee from the community, "We do not have frequent experience of discussing on issues related to girls. Particularly, we do not have the habit of discussion about sexual reproductive health and marriage". This shows that girls' do not have the opportunity to discuss on their own affairs. In other words, girls' important life determining affairs are largely determined by their family than by themselves. Even they are not allowed to suggest their own preferences on some life changing issues. To conclude, girls in the study area are largely denied the basic human right on discussing and deciding their future. Thus, there should be focuses on empowering girls through effective strategies and different means of communication.

Obviously, parents prefer their sons to continue to further education than their daughters. The community agrees on the empowerment of girls. However, the empowerments of girls are considered as less important than boys of the same age group. Concerning about the attitude of the community, one of the participant of FGD, young female, explained as follows.

*As we all know, our community, the area is the home of homogenous community that extremely dominated by religious and socio-economic variables. These influential determinants have considerable impact in molding the behavior of both boys and girls. Girls are expected to be submissive and inferior to boys of the same age category. If girls are acting or behaving differently, in our community, they are labeled as deviant and imposed different forms of social sanctions. They are mostly engaged in domestic household chores than participating in different private and community affairs outside of their home. Thus, all most all females in this area are confirming the norms of the community and less active than boys.*

As noted above, the community in the study area strictly forced rigid gender roles. Boys have clearly visible dominance in different social environments. These conditions has adversely been affecting the social positions of girls which deters the utilization of available opportunities and their decision making power. It shows that girls are largely influenced by

the community that requires active communication strategies for facilitating in the process of empowering girls. Similarly, according to Meseret 2018, girls' are facing different forms of structural obstacles at different stages of their growth that negatively affect their potential of achieving better level of socio-economic status. These conditions are realities for the majority of girls in the country.

According to an interviewee, expert at Women and youth affairs office, "girls' empowerment has many advantages for themselves and their community. It enables them to utilize their potential in different constructive ways for development. Their empowerment improves the conditions of their families, communities and society at large". Most of the time, according to an interviewee, the community considered girls as inferior than boys. Adolescent girls are allowed to talk or discuss with others. They are considered or expected to work and support their family in household chores.

This indicates that girls' empowerment activities definitely have many advantages. It paves the way for realizing the dreams of many girls. It also facilitates the development of the country in different areas of life. This includes improvements in social and economic statuses and reduces the level of poverty. An expert from educational office, a key informant interviewee, "currently, girls have, in urban area, relatively equal educational opportunity with boys. This is due to the increased awareness about the importance of girls' education, reduced level of household chores and reduced harmful traditional practices. Harmful traditional practices include early marriage, rape and female circumcisions".

From the above findings, from both quantitative and qualitative data, it is possible to conclude that girls' parents support the empowerment of adolescent girls. It is also indicated that the community believes that girls should remain in home when they reach teenage years and beyond and rejects the idea of girls' empowerment means family empowerment. In addition, the community hardly belief on having equal access to education is equally important for boys and girls. Although parents have willingness to support their adolescent girls, still the community resists the empowerment of girls in the study area. It implies that the general attitude of the community for girls' empowerment is not encouraging. Hence, further attitudinal studies and practical attitudinal change activities are necessary to increase empowerment of girls.

#### **4.5 Communication strategies employed by Plan International's project**

Plan international has been implementing different communication strategies in the study area. Communication strategies are crucial to solve the existing communication barriers and to achieve the objectives of the project. The organization has been applying strategies that facilitate girls' communication in the study area. According to Gupta 2015, regulate communications with its main partners; consolidation cooperation; teamwork and harmony; and facilitate deliverance of information are the main values of communication strategy.

Respondents were asked about whether they are familiar about communication strategies employed by Plan International's project and all (100%) them replied that are familiar about Plan International's project communication strategies. Concerning about the types of communication strategies employed by Plan International's project, according to an interviewee from Plan International, "there are integrated activities with different government offices and religious leaders to empower girls. It includes transforming technology tools in rural areas, establishment of clubs and preparation of modules of education for the family and community". He also added that "the project had conducted different trainings which made girls empowered. The trainings were focused empowerment of girls and awareness creation for other stakeholders. It had also provided different equipments which were necessary for the empowerment of girls".

According an interviewee, from educational bureau, "mostly, adolescent girls are discussing different issues with their peer group. This is because they believe that their peer group clearly understands their real situations. In addition, they clearly discuss with their sisters and female teachers. School clubs have been successful in facilitating girls' discussions and encourage active participation in groups". Another interviewee from Plan International asserted that Plan International has been working with Women and youth affairs; education office; health office and religious leaders to reduce communication barriers. This shows the importance of coordinated activities of different stakeholders in efforts of empowering girls in different areas that considerably supports their future.

A participant of FGD, an officer from the project, explained about the communication strategies of Plan International's project as follows.

*Plan International Ethiopia's project has been applying different communication strategies. It focuses on raising awareness among communities especially with youth groups via well tailored community conversation (CC) sessions conducted at Kebeles, champions of change (CoC) approach that enabled girls to be empowered. The empowerment is on skills, sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) and various school clubs established and strengthened by the project in targeted schools also became means of communication for children, youths and girls. It also includes on child protection issues (child or early marriage, rape, child abuse) and girls' empowerment and gender equality.*

The participant of the FGD has clearly explained the communication strategies of the project. As inferred from the data, the strategies were contextually modified and focused on awareness raising and empowering girls with different types of rights including early marriage and child abuse. These were implemented through locally available organizations including schools and Kebeles. The use of locally available organizations had facilitated to address target groups easily and empowered girls in different areas of empowerment.

Similarly, Zimmerman 2012 confirmed that participations, social responsibility and nurturing local organizational capability are the main elements of empowerment. In organizations people are involving in communication are prepared to provide information applicable to achieve the desired objectives.

The effectiveness of communication strategies is vital for achieving the objectives of girls' empowerment. The types of strategies are largely determines the successes of empowerment. Different projects have different communication strategies in the accomplishments of their tasks. Respondents were asked about on the effectiveness of communication strategies employed by Plan International's project. They were asked to identify the communication strategies the project to very effective, moderately effective and not effective. Figure 4 below presents responses of the respondents.

**Figure 4: Respondents' evaluation on the effectiveness of communication strategies employed by Plan International's project**

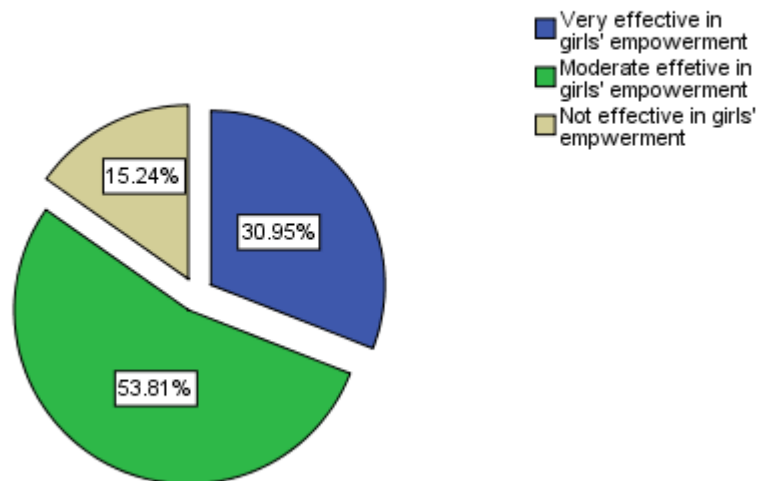


Figure 4 revealed that the majority 113 (53.8%) of respondents said that communication strategies employed by Plan International's project is moderately effective. 65 (31%) of respondents reported that the strategies of Plan International project is very effective in girls' empowerment. The remaining 32 (15.2%) of respondents replied that communication strategies employed by Plan International's project is not effective in girls' empowerment. This indicates that the project of Plan International is doing relatively beneficial support by increasing the communication competences of girls. However, still there are areas which the organization should improve for the attainment of further success in the sector. Generally, the project was effective communication strategies that empower girls in different areas.

The successes of a given project can be evaluated by comparing different variables before and after the implementation of the project. The outcomes can easily be evaluated by comparing contrasting variables before and after the project activities. Participants of the FGD were asked about to compare different variable before and after the implementation of the project.

A participant of the FGD, from elders, was elaborated the effectiveness of communication strategies by comparing conditions before and after the project

*Before the project many girls were not regularly attending schools, had lower self-esteem, highly vulnerable to harmful traditional practices and live in the community with lower level awareness about gender equality. However, after the participation of the project, girls' level of self-confidence has been improved and many girls are attending class regularly. They are equally participating with boys of the age group and reduced the record of harmful traditional practices. Moreover, peer discussion sessions were effective in solving different challenges they faced.*

The findings from the above data demonstrate that Plan International's project was able to accomplish different communication strategies in the activities of girls' empowerment. Effective implementation of communication strategies was one of the success factors in girls' empowerment of the project. Similarly, Ali 2011 confirmed that the utilization of communication strategies can be appropriate to the girls' in difficult circumstances and its relevance to achieve some realistic recommendation to girls.

The above findings are also supported by the explanations of Agenda setting theory. The theory affirmed that, Donald and McCombs 1977, communication approaches have the power of influencing large number of people. The strategies of information dissemination have direct and indirect outcomes in influencing the target audiences. The outcomes can be explained in terms of the processes of providing information, persuading and altering the attitude of the targeted audiences. Thus, the attitudinal changes attained are the consequences of the communication approaches employed for the targeted audiences.

The success of the project can be measured by the initiative of the beneficiaries in applying the acquired knowledge in different contexts. The level of initiatives is a strong indicator of effectiveness of the project. The study had assessed the level of initiative among the respondents by the categories of strong initiative, moderately strong initiative and less strong initiative. Responses, the level of initiatives, are presented in the table below.

**Table 5: Respondents’ extent of initiatives to apply knowledge and skills in communication strategies employed by Plan International’s project**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Strong initiatives	93	44.3
Moderately strong initiatives	70	33.3
Less strong initiatives	47	22.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: own survey, 2022

As indicated in table 5, the majority 93 (44.3%) of respondents had strong initiative in implementing the knowledge and skills obtained from the project. 70 (33.3%) of respondents had moderately strong initiatives in implementing what they have obtained from the project. The remaining 47 (22.4%) of respondents had less strong imitative to apply knowledge and skills obtained from the project. It implies that the project had significant enabling effect for the adolescent girls who had participated as beneficiaries of the project.

Hence, it is possible to conclude that the project was successful in initiating girls to apply communication knowledge and skills acquired from the project. This makes girls to be self-confident and active participant in different forms of communication and empowerment. It also enables adolescent girls to effectively use their potential in social, political and economic spheres of the community in particular and society in general. Such kind of applicability of the skill and knowledge obtained from the project can considerably changes the life of many girls in different areas of livelihood. In other words, the project was effective in areas of communication in the activities of girls’ empowerment. The findings are consistent with Ali 2009, communication activates the involvement of the people in the activities of development that encourage the local communities to possess and sustain development.

According to an interviewee, from health bureau, “through ‘my life choice’ project, we have discussed and raise our awareness on harmful traditional practices, child labor exploitation, gender equality, child care and family planning. This project has been able bring changes in the community by applying different communication approaches among different members of the community”.

The above findings, from survey, FGD and key informant interviewees, clearly showed that the communication strategies of the project were able to cover large number of people by facilitating discussions in different groups. Facilitating the establishment clubs different schools and areas; preparing events for large number of people and working closely with religious leaders are among the main communication strategies of the project. Implementing different communications approaches, consistent encouragement of active participation of girls, utilization of group-sensitive approaches and contextually appropriate approaches of communication were the main communication approaches. Thus, the communications strategies were fundamental for mitigating communication barriers and thereby attaining the objective of girls' empowerment.

#### **4.6 Practicable communication strategies for girls' empowerment**

Feasible communication strategies for girls' empowerment has considerable role in achieving the objectives of a given program and/or project. The more practical strategy of communication is the more successes in the activities of girls' empowerment. Some strategies effective in some areas may not be effective in other areas. In other words, projects become more effective if it is viable and compatible with the consideration of the local specific contexts. The respondents were asked about the effective and practicable communication strategies in girls' empowerment in relation to their community.

All (100%) of the respondents agreed that the communication strategies of the project are appropriate to the study area. According to an officer from project, the establishment and consolidation of school based various clubs through project are among appropriate communication strategies for girls' empowerment and child protection. The CC and CoC initiatives and approaches also became appropriate communication strategies for girls' empowerment. This is because these communication strategies have guidance appropriate to communities' culture and norm. All communication strategies employed by the project are designed by undertaking the situational assessment before onset of the project. Social responsibility theory, according to Mc Quail 2005, advocates for managing communication activities within boundaries of the norms society.

Moreover, all (100%) of the respondents agreed that the communication strategies employed by Plan International’s project is effective. This shows that the community accepts the importance and contribution of Plan International’s project communication strategies in the area. The respondents were also asked about the main areas of effectiveness. The following table depicts areas of effectiveness of Plan International’s project communication strategies.

**Table 6: Respondents’ responses on communication strategies areas of effectiveness**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Increase girls’ self-confidence	73	34.8
Improve girls communication skills	58	27.6
Increase awareness about gender roles	43	20.5
Facilitate mutual understanding	28	13.3
Foster partnerships	8	3.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: own survey, 2022

As noted in table 6, the majority 73 (34.8%) of respondents said that increased girls’ self-confidence is the main indicator of the effectiveness of the project. 58 (27.6%) and 43 (20.5%) of respondents identified improved girls communication skills and increase awareness about gender roles as effectiveness respectively. 28 (13.3%) of respondents mentioned facilitated mutual understanding as the main area of effectiveness. Only 8 (3.8%) of respondents said fostering partnerships as the main effective communication strategy areas of the project. The findings indicate that girls’, who were involved in the project, were able to increase their self-confidence which is attributed to the outcome of the project. Moreover, the project was largely successful in improved girls communication skills and increase awareness about gender roles were areas of effectiveness in communication strategies. Thus, increased their self-confidence, increase awareness about gender roles and improved girls communication skills are the main areas of effectiveness in communication strategies.

Finally, respondents were asked about their suggestions for improving communication strategies employed by Plan International’s project. Respondents were able raise different ideas that would improve the activities of the project and thereby increase its effectiveness. The following table presents respondents’ suggestion for improvement of the project.

**Table 7: Respondents’ suggestions on the improvement of communication strategies**

Responses	Frequency	Percent
Increase the involvement of older people	71	33.8
Improve the level of accessibility of the project	56	26.7
Incorporate more girls who are outside of schools	42	20
Develop viable evaluation system	27	12.9
Particular focus should be given to more vulnerable girls	14	6.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>210</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: own survey, 2022

As presented above, the majority 71 (33.8%) of respondents suggested that increasing the involvement of older people would improve the communication strategies of the project. 56 (26.7%) and 42 (20%) of respondents said that improve the level of accessibility of the project and incorporate more girls who are outside of schools could increase the communication strategies respectively. 27 (12.9%) of respondents mentioned the development of viable evaluation system improves the communication strategies. The remaining 14 (6.7%) of respondents suggested on focusing the more vulnerable girls could facilitates the improvement of communication strategies of the project.

According to an interviewee, an officer from project, “all the communication strategies employed by Plan International Ethiopia for girls' empowerment and youth engagement are very effective. All key project stakeholders (local communities, schools, health centers and Woreda level government offices including women children and youth affairs, education, health, finance and economy and Woreda administration) have to pro-actively participated

and engaged with project for girls' empowerment, child protection and gender equality from the very beginning and life cycle of the project”.

Another interviewee from the Woreda administration, suggested, creating awareness for the population of the Woreda, establishment of girls' clubs, giving more chance to girls to express their own idea in their own local language and increase the role of religious leaders is largely helpful in reducing the communication barriers. They have different platforms or programs in the Woreda. This includes peer to peer discussion, community conversation and discussions in religious centers.

From these findings, it is possible to conclude that Plan International' project should consider the active and consistent involvement of different stakeholders, advanced level of accessibility of the project and incorporate more girls who are outside of schools can largely contributes to the enhancement of communication strategies of the project. Hence, the participation of different actors in the area is vital for attaining better level of successes in girls' empowerment by significantly reducing the existing communication barriers.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

Communication is one of the main components in the activities of girls' empowerment. Girls' empowerment enables girls to be equipped with different types of skills and knowledge that makes them competent enough in different areas their future life. Different kinds of communication barriers have adversely affecting girls' empowerment. Adolescent girls in the study area have been participating in different programs of girls' empowerment. Plan International Ethiopia has a project that focuses on implementing different communication strategies in the empowerment of girls' in Guangua Woreda, Awi Zone, Amahara regional state. It has been utilizing different communication strategies for the purpose of mitigating the negative effects of communication barriers in girls' empowerment.

The population of the study is relatively homogenous in terms of religion and occupation. One third of adolescent girls was married or divorce which indicates that there are large number of girls who are married or divorced at vey younger age. They have relatively larger size of family and significant proportion of the adolescent girls has educational opportunity. Communication barriers have considerable adverse effect on the efforts of girls' empowerment. There are different sources of barriers which have potentials of ruining the processes of empowerment. It found out that the communication barriers had been affected the smooth implementation of empowerment.

From all types of barrier, culture is the main communication barrier. Religion, lack of awareness and the actual social status of the girls in the community are also the main communication barriers in girls' empowerment. Culture, religion, lack of awareness and social status of girls are reflected on institutions and institutions are also considered as one of barrier of communication in girls' empowerment. Thus, early socializations of girls is largely contributes to the barriers and adversely affects the self-confidence of girls. Culture, inferior status of girls, lower level education, limited opportunity to work outside of home, lack of access to information and communication technologies and living in poverty are the rank order of communication barriers form the highest to the lowest. Coordinated activities on

attitudinal changes and expanding opportunities communication platforms for girls' are suggested as solutions for mitigating the communication barriers.

The findings from attitude of the community showed that parents prefer boys to send to schools than girls. There is an inversely relation between the age of girls, and the probability for continuing further education and engagement to activities outside of home. Thus, there is a clearly visible imposed rigid gender role that favors boys than girls.

Mostly, girls are sharing their concern or opinion to their family member, particularly their mother, peer group and sisters. This is because they share many common characteristics that encourage them to freely communicate with them. They are not expected to share their concerns with other members of their family and community. This shows that girls are supposed to share their ideas mainly to females. This relationship reinforces the already existing gender inequalities in the community. It clearly shows that girls' communication linkage is mainly limited to their close female counterparts.

Concerning about the communication strategies employed by plan international's project, the focus is on raising the communication capabilities of adolescent girls. The strategies are based on the principle of increasing girls' active participation in community conversation sessions and champions of change strategies in different clubs which are implemented with different offices and schools of the Woreda. Generally, the project has significant enabling effect for the adolescent girls who had participated as beneficiaries of the project.

The communication strategies employed by Plan International Ethiopia is effective and appropriate to the study area. The project has enabled many girls to be self-confident and make their own decisions in different areas of their livelihood. It has facilitated mutual understanding among stakeholders. It has also increased awareness about the importance of communication for girls' empowerment. In other words, the communication strategies are vital for the improvement girls' communication capacity to take different responsibilities and participation in team work.

Improved the level of accessibility of the project, existence of dynamic and reliable participation of different stakeholders and incorporate more girls who are outside of schools are the main areas of increasing the feasible communication strategies for girls'

empowerment. Thus, the coordinated and committed involvements of stakeholders are crucial for the improvement of the contribution of the project in mitigating communication barriers in the activities of girls' empowerment.

Generally, adolescent girls have very limited platforms for sharing their opinion to different groups of people. Cultural and socio-economic barriers are the main challenges that prevent girls from sharing their ideas to different members of the community. The challenges mainly emanates not from their peers but from the wider community. Thus, the challenges are deeply rooted in girls' basic foundation of their social identity.

## **5.2 Recommendation**

Communication barriers, as indicated in the discussion of findings and conclusion, have adverse impact on the activities of girls' empowerment. The level of adverse impacts are varies from one condition to the other. The following recommendations are forwarded on the bases of the findings and conclusion derived from the study.

### **Develop communication strategies which are tailored with the norms of the community**

Contextually modified communication strategies have larger level of acceptance and thereby enable to easily implement empowerment of girls. In other words, the more tailored communication strategy is the more success achieved in the area.

### **Continuous use of local media**

Local media, FM radio and schools' mini-media, has considerable influence among audiences. Programs can be broadcasted through dramas and other means of attaining the attention of the target audience. Thus, local media can largely facilitate girls' empowerment by reducing corresponding barriers of communication.

### **Organizing mass-events**

Organizing mass-events can be utilized for the purpose of obtaining the attention large number of audiences and transmits information within the specified period of time. Public gatherings have advantages of attaining the objectives of a given communication within lower amount of energy, money and time.

### **Provision of continuous trainings and consistent awareness raising programs**

There should be provision of continuous trainings and consistent awareness raising programs for girls and other stakeholders in girls' empowerment. Role models and/or public figures have the capacity of influencing more number of target audiences. It can be more effective if it includes public figures and/or role models of the area for experience sharing and transmissions of the desired message/s.

### **Increase the inclusiveness of stakeholders**

Increase the inclusiveness of stakeholders can definitely enhance the successes of girls' empowerment by mitigating available communication barriers. This refers to the establishment of stakeholders' platforms that including NGOs, CBOs, public figures and government offices.

### **Prepare and launch different recognition ceremonies**

The preparation of recognition ceremonies for successful clubs and activities, effective communication in girls' empowerment, motivates others for better successes of their activities.

### **Particular focus for girls with disabilities**

Particular focus should be given to girls' with disabilities for mitigating communication barriers in girls' empowerment. The obstacles of communication are more severe and diverse to them than able bodied girls.

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# Appendices

## Appendix 1: Survey Questionnaire

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

Dear respondent,

The main objective of the study is to analyze major communication challenges for girls' empowerment and attitudes of society against girls' empowerment. Your answers to this questionnaire are entirely based on voluntary bases and your identity will be completely anonymous. Therefore, I kindly request you to provide me correct and complete information.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Respondent ID:

### I. Socio-demographic Data

1. Age

A. 15

D. 18

B. 16

E. 19

C. 17

2. Religion

A. Orthodox Christian

C. Muslim

B. Protestant

D. If other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

3. Educational level

A. Unable to write and read

D. Secondary Level

B. Write and read only

E. Tertiary level

C. Primary Level

4. What is your main occupation?
- A. Farmer       B. Student   
 C. Merchant       D. If other, please specify \_\_\_\_\_
5. Marital status
- A. Single       C. Married   
 B. Divorced       D. Widowed
6. Amount of family's annual income (estimated)
- A. 20,000 birr and below       C. 20,001 to 40,000 birr   
 B. 40,001 to 60,000 birr       D. Above 60,000 birr
7. Number of family members
- A. 1 to 2       C. 6 to 7   
 B. 3 to 5       D. Above 7
8. Number of female children in the family
- A. Only 1       C. 4 to 6   
 B. 2 to 3       D. Above 6

## II. Questions related to communication challenges

1. Do you think that there are communication obstacles on girls' empowerment?
- A. Yes       B. No       C. Don't know
2. If yes to the above question, what is the main source of communication barrier?
- A. Culture of the community   
 B. Religion   
 C. Socio-economic status of girls   
 D. Discrimination that emanates from institutions
3. If yes to the question number 1, what is the main obstacle?
- A. Lower level of education   
 B. Limited opportunity to work outside of their home   
 C. Lack of access to information communication technologies   
 D. Girls' inferior status in the community   
 E. Unfavorable attitude of the community   
 F. Living in poverty

4. Please rank the following main communication obstacles in girls' empowerment from the highest to the lowest.

- A. Girls' inferior status in the community
- B. Limited opportunity to work outside of their home
- C. Unfavorable attitude of the community
- D. Lower level of education
- E. Living in poverty
- F. Lack of access to information communication technologies

5. What do you suggest to overcome these communication barriers in girls' empowerment?

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### III. Questions related to the attitude of the community

1. Do you think that girls' empowerment is important for the community?

- A. Yes  B. No  C. Don't know

2. "Equal access to education is equally important for boys and girls".

- A. Strongly agree  B. Agree  C. Neutral  D. Disagree  E. Strongly disagree

3. "Girls should remain in home when they reach teenage years and beyond".

- A. Strongly agree  B. Agree  C. Neutral  D. Disagree  E. Strongly disagree

4. "Girls who marry at early age should remain in school".

- A. Strongly agree  B. Agree  C. Neutral  D. Disagree  E. Strongly disagree

4, "Girls' empowerment means family empowerment".

- A. Strongly agree  B. Agree  C. Neutral  D. Disagree  E. Strongly disagree

5. "My family always supports the empowerment adolescent girls".

- A. Strongly agree  B. Agree  C. Neutral  D. Disagree  E. Strongly disagree

**IV. Questions related to communication strategies employed by Plan International's project**

1. Do you know about communication strategies employed by Plan International's project?

A. Yes  B. No  C. Don't know

2. If yes to the above questions, what are the communication strategies employed by Plan International's project?

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3. How do you explain the effectiveness of communication strategies employed by Plan International's project?

A. Very effective in girls' empowerment

B. Moderate effective in girls' empowerment

C. Not effective in girls' empowerment

4. How do you explain the extent of initiatives to apply communication strategies employed by Plan International's project?

A. Strong initiatives

B. Moderately strong initiatives

C. Less strong initiatives

**V. Questions related to practicable communication strategy for girls' empowerment**

1. Do you think that the communication strategies employed by Plan International's project is effective?

A. Yes  B. No  C. Don't know

2. If yes, please mention the main areas of effectiveness.

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3. Which strategies are more appropriate to the study area?

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4. Which strategies are not appropriate to the study area?

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5. What do you suggest about improving communication strategies employed by Plan International's project?

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