



**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**

**POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN AT LOCAL
LEVEL: THE CASE OF SEBETA TOWN ADMINISTRATION,
OROMIA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO CENTER OF FEDERAL STUDIES
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MASTERS DEGREE IN FEDERAL STUDIES**

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Declaration

The researcher here by declares that the thesis on the title, “Political Participation of Woman’s at Local Level: The case of Sebeta Town Administration, Oromia National Regional State” is my original work and that all sources that have been referred to and quoted have been dully indicated and acknowledged with complete references.

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This thesis has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university advisor.

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Approval

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Abstract

The main aim of this study was to assess the political participation of women in local government and investigate major factors that have been affecting women's participation in the governance of the Sebeta town administration. Based on the nature, scope, objectives, time and available resources, the research was conducted using descriptive research methods to collect both qualitative and quantitative types of data. In this study the researcher employed different data gathering instruments. The study makes a brief review of literature related to political participation of women at local level in general and particularly in Ethiopian. The study presents the data collected following the findings based on both qualitative and quantitative data presentation. The study revealed that, the political participation of Women's problems at Sebeta town mainly due to lack of equal education opportunity, the historically rooted gender based division of labor. More importantly, lack of economic power of women to cover their living expenses is also limiting their participation. As they lack their own income, they consider attending meeting, election campaign and other as time wasting, because they have to take care of their domestic affairs like care given children and cooking. Finally, low level of commitment from women's league, town administration, and the ruling party also worsen the case. The study recommends legal and institutional improvement, facilitate civic programs and training for women in order to increase their economic independence and knowledge and skills directly related to political participation, civic society participation by women and also gender mainstreaming, to play a positive role of political participation women at local level in order to improve Sebeta town women political participation.

Acronyms and Abbreviations

BPA-Beijing Plat form for Action

CEDAW- Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

DLDP- District Level Decentralization Programmes

EPDRE- Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front

FDRE- Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

FGD- Focus Group Discussion

GAD- Gender and Development

ICCPR- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR- International Covenant on Economics Social and Cultural Rights

LG- Local Government

MDG- Millennium Development Goals

NGO’s - Nongovernmental Organizations

ONRS- Oromia National Regional State

OPDO- Oromo People’s Democratic Organization

TPC- Transitional Period Charter

UDHR- Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN- United Nations

UNDP-United Nations Development Programmes

WID- Women in Development

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The decentralization process in Ethiopia began in 1991 when the Ethiopian Peoples' Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF) came to power. In 1995, a new Constitution was promulgated, formally established the country on a federal basis with a federal government at the centre and nine regional states. The constitution laid the foundation for further decentralization by requiring the regional states to establish and adequately empower local government. The objective that underpins the creation and empowerment of local government, as envisaged in the constitution is to enable the people to participate directly in the administration of local government (FDRE Constitution Art. 50). The regional states of the country, therefore, have a constitutional obligation to create adequately empowered local government.

Accordingly, a number of regional states transferred powers to local level through their constitutions. Oromia regional state, in particular, transferred power to local level through its revised constitution of 2002. The revised constitution of Oromia regional state declared the establishment of Woreda and Kebele administrations below the Zonal administration. The Woreda Administration in the Oromia regional state has a Woreda Council and a Woreda Administration Council. Under the Regional Constitution of Oromia, a Woreda Council, a Woreda Administration Council and a Kebele administration have similar organization, functions and powers (Revised constitution of Oromia region, Art 76, 2002).

Providing local government with a constitutional status is a reflection of the recognition of its importance. More importantly, it provides every member of the society the right to equal participation in the governance of their locality. During the transition period the government has declared its unequivocal commitment to the development of women with the announcement of the National Policy on Women in 1993 and latter with the promulgation of the new Constitution in 1994.

According to Ethiopian Women Policy of 1993 the primarily aim of the policy is to institutionalize the political, economical, and social rights of women by creating an appropriate structure in government offices and institutions so that the public policies and

interventions are gender-sensitive and can ensure equitable development for all Ethiopian men and women.

Furthermore, Article 25 of FDRE constitution guarantees all persons equality before the law, and prohibits any discrimination on grounds of gender. In addition, Article 35 provides equality of access to economic opportunities, including the right to equality in employment and land ownership. In addition, Ethiopia has also ratified and endorsed a number of international convention and declarations related with granting equal participation of women's in politics and government.

In this regard, the government in collaboration with other actors of governance has devised a number of strategies and approaches to promote women's role in local governance. Different strategies and intervention programmes were developed and implemented through the already established gender machinery. Special effort was made to bridge the gender gap in to enable them to compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political through taking affirmative action's.

Ethiopia is party to all major human right treaties including the most important women's conventions which calls for equal participation of women in public decision making. In addition, Ethiopia is also signatory of Beijing Platform for Action (BPA) which called for the mainstreaming of a gender perspective in the design, implementation and monitoring of all policies, programs, committed countries to design their own specific programs and activities in consultation with women's group and other stakeholder for its implementation..

The overall development of a nation depends on equal participation of its people in every aspect of their life. Various literatures shows that compared to prior decades, the participation of women in local governance are somehow increasing. However, in spite of the incremental progress towards women's participation in public spheres, it is generally recognized that the role of women in administration of their local affair have largely remained limited due to various factors.

According to Permanent Mission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the United Nations report (2012), in Ethiopia even though there is a progress, the participation of women in government structure is still low. For example, the Percentage of female members in Ethiopia parliament is only 22% in 2010. With regard to leadership and decision making,

in the same year, women's representation is 13% at Ministerial, 25% at Commissioner and 12.7% at Ambassador Level.

Women equal participation in local government plays a pivotal role in the general processes of the advancement of women. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's standpoint at all levels of decision-making, the goal of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved.

In Sebeta Town Administration of Oromia National Regional State, a woman consists of nearly half of the total population. In Sebeta town administration, even though Women's play some role in the local governance, the extent of their participation is an issue which should be investigated. Hence, the main aim of this study is to identify the role of Woman's in local government and investigate major factors that have been affecting women participation in the politics of Sebeta town administration.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Even though gender equality is one of the normative foundations of modern democracy and a main developmental goal promoted by the United Nations, women are still markedly underrepresented in politics. As of June 2014, only 22.3 percent of the members in single or lower houses of 190 parliaments around the world were women (Stockemer and Tremblay, 2015). Many countries experience showed that, compared to men, women are constrained by factors such as culture and tradition, religion, political turmoil, violence, money, workloads and lack of opportunities to take part in politics. According to UNDP (2007), Women's equal participation in decision-making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy, but a necessary pre-condition for women's interests to be taken into account.

In Ethiopia, though, women's are granted constitutional rights to take part in any affairs affecting their life, due to a combination of various factors, they are not equally participating in politics and their roles are closely tied to their reproductive and house hold activities where as politics and community affairs are seen as unsuitable for them. According to 2006 FDRE report on the implementation of the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa, like many African countries, the majority of women in Ethiopia hold low status in the society. They have been denied equal access to education, training and gainful employment opportunities and their involvement in policy formulation and decision-making processes has been minimal. Women play a vital role in the community by taking care of all social

activities. However, they do not enjoy the fruits of their labor and suffer from marginalization.

In their public and private lives, women have to struggle to articulate their desires and to find their own voices. For a long time, women have been seen as extensions of men; as people who cannot politically stand on their own, but have to be propped by men. To be more specific, according to a National Report of FDRE (2004), in spite of the government policy of equal opportunity for both men and women to participate in the democratization of the country, women have not been adequately represented at all levels of decision-making positions. While a few researchers have in recent past began to document on women's participation in leadership positions in Ethiopia, such documentation has not focused on factors that affect women's political participation at a local level.

There is very little evidence-based research or scholarly work on women's participation at local level which Sebeta town is one. For example, apart from the fact that there are women's that took part in the national elections of 2015, not much is known about their political participation at the local level, mechanisms extent of participation at a local level, factors that would inhibit and strategies to enhance their participation in the local government. The purpose of this study is therefore to describe women's political participation at a local level in Sebeta town, investigate into the factors that affect women's political participation local level and identify the possible strategies that can be used to enhance their participation

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based on the key issues raised in the research problem and gaps identified in knowledge related to women's participation in the democratic process at the local level and the factors that influence the level of engagement in local governance, this research will raise and investigate the following main research questions:

1. Is political participation at local level has implemented based on the principle of gender equality in Sebeta town?
2. Are women's in Sebeta town effectively participating in local politics?
3. What are the factors that hinder women's political participation in Sebeta town administration?

4. What should be the possible strategies to promote the involvement of women in politics in Sebeta town?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

General Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the women's political participation in local governance and identify factors affecting their participation in these processes.

Specific objectives of study

The study has the following specific objectives.

- To investigate whether or not political participation at local level is implemented based on the principle of gender equality in Sebeta town.
- To examine the current political participation of women in Sebeta town.
- To investigate the factors that hindering women's political participation at local level in Sebeta town.
- To forward possible strategies that will enhance the political participation of women at local level in Sebeta town.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH

This work will contribute substantially in filling the existing knowledge gap and the findings from the study will serve as useful baseline data which will inform numerous follow-up studies and point out possible strategies in improving the level of women's participation in local governance in the future. In addition it will also initiate further studies in areas and will serve as spring board to researchers who may conduct similar studies in the future. Finally, the study will provide relevant information that will be useful to LG and other stakeholders.

1.6 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

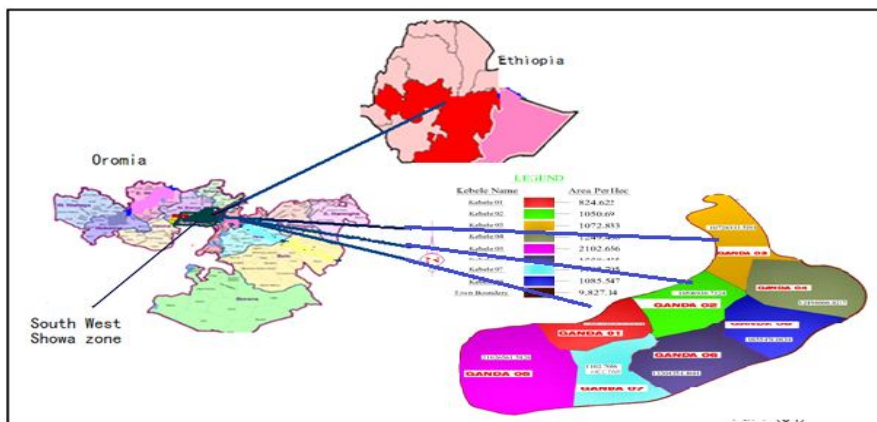
Sebata town administration has eight kebeles and the scope of this paper will limited to assessing the political participation of women in local government administration of Sebeta town. At the town administration level, the scope will be limited to town council and town

cabinet and at the kebele level; the scope will also focus on kebele council and kebele cabinet. Because, they are the executive arm of the city administration whose members of kebele council are elected by the residents and kebele cabinet represented by city administration committees and they are responsible for the running of local governance. In addition, this research will also be limited to assessing the participation of residents of sample kebeles in Sebeta town administration.

1.7 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY AREA

Sebeta is one of towns of Oromia which found in Oromia Special Zone Surrounding Finfinne, 24 kilometers southwest of Addis Ababa along the Addis Ababa -Jimma Highway. The town was established in 1933. The main roads in the town are the Addis Ababa-Jimma and Alemgena-Hosaina (Wolayita-Soddo) highway. The town lies between $8^{\circ}52'$ to $8^{\circ}59'$ N latitude and $38^{\circ}34'$ to $38^{\circ}41'$ E longitude. The town's administration falls into eight kebeles with considerable decision-making power in local affairs. The kebeles are the lowest administrative units within the administrative structure of the town.

Map. Locality of Sebeta Town



Source: ULDMA of Sebeta(2015)

Sebeta town has a slightly north-south sloping topography, bounded in the north by chain of hills and mountains including; Mogle and Wochacha and to the north-east by Furi, In the north hilly part of the town, 'Metta Abo Brewery' and 'Subba Forest (Park) are found. These places play a substantial role in balancing the ecology of the area because various types of endogenous trees are found in these areas.

The total area of the town is about 9,645.6 hectare (RUPI, 2008). The current area of the town has exceeded the area of the town five years ago. According to GTZ (2006), the total area of the town was 10 square kilometers. Many ethnic groups of the country including the Oromo, Amara, Gurage, Wolaita and Tigre as well as Chinese and Turkish investors have found home in Sebeta.

According to the CSA (2007), the total population of the town was 49,331; from this 24,356 are male and the rest 24,975 are Female. Population projection yearly report of Sebeta town administration estimates that, the total population of the town in year 2012/13 is 114,887. The Grading of Cities in the region depends on the number of residents, accordingly the cities in the region shall be grouped into four grades: grade one (greater than 90,000) residents, grade two (45,000-89999) residents, grade three (from 10,000 to 44999) residents, and grade four (from 2000 to 9999) residents (proclamation No.65/2003). As per this Principles town is grade one “A” Cities, the mayor of the town is directly accountable to the president of the Oromia National Regional State administratively (Proclamation No.65/2003). The town has administrative structures headed by the mayor and municipal functions separately since 2003 based on Proclamation No.65/2003 of Oromia National Regional State that provided for the establishment of urban local governments in the region.

1.8 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the objectives of the research and answer the research questions, the research was conducted using descriptive research methods to collect qualitative types of data. The descriptive study was designed to analyze the collected data using an interpretive means of data analysis.

This research was generated results in qualitative form. In addition, the information was gathered by using interview and document review which will result in qualitative data which will be analyzed using an interpretive means of data analysis.

1.8.1 Type and Sources of Data

The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data to gather pertinent information on the issue under study. There are eight kebeles in the study area and primary data was gathered through field work from respondents of three randomly selected Kebeles. In addition, primary data were gathered from individuals working in town and kebele council,

women affair office, women associations and other different administrative organs of Sebeta town. They are considered to be source of data due to the fact that residents and these officials will be the one that have information about the issue.

The secondary sources of data would be mainly different reports from town administration and other relevant bodies which are related to the topic under study. Moreover, relevant issues on the subject was browsed from internet and other printed materials. Relevant books, journals, articles, policy documents and reports were additional source of secondary data.

1.8.2 Population and Sampling Technique

The study population of this research paper was all residents of Sebeta town, members of city council, town cabinet, kebele council and kebele cabinets' and members of women's associations, league and federation in Sebeta town Administration. The researcher was used multistage simple random sampling technique in identifying and selecting appropriate kebeles and sample respondents from each sample kebeles. Accordingly, out of 8 kebeles of Sebeta town administration, 3 of them were selected. Then, 20 residents (5 Male and 15 Female), from each randomly selected kebeles will be selected randomly as a respondents. The rational of selecting male as a respondent is to generate data which leads to comparative analysis.

Furthermore, key informant women's in town and kebele council and cabinet members was selected using purposive sampling technique. In addition, key informants from women affair office, women league, woman's association, woman's federation city council and Mayor of the Town was selected purposively as a sample respondent.

1.8.3 Methods of Data Collection

In this study the researcher employed different types of data gathering instruments. Accordingly, interview, focus group discussion and document review was used to collect both primary and secondary data. The detail is discussed as follows:

Interviews: Semi structured interview were used to have greater insight and more in-depth understanding of the topic. Semi structured interview was held with three kebele's random sampling respondents, kebele's cabinet and council as well as town cabinet and council. Furthermore, interview was used to obtain broad information regarding women's participation in governance and also the challenges they faced so far. Moreover, the

interviews were giving respondents an opportunity to express the degree of their participation and challenges they are facing. The interview protocol was translated into Afaan Oromo and Amharic language to make it clearly understandable by all the respondents and avoid language barriers.

Focus Group Discussion: For an issue that requires more clarification and exploration of the groups view, experiences and attitudes on the topic under study, focus group discussions were conducted in each sample kebeles among individuals from woman's affairs, women federation, association, league leaders and from town mayor. In order to facilitate and direct the discussion process, guideline questions were prepared and used. In this case, the researcher was acted as a moderator and listener posing general follow up questions which the respondents was answer in any way they choose and take note.

Document Review: To obtain existing women related data, from women affairs office and town council spokes person office archival sources, annual reports and minutes, assessment made on women empowerment, Legal and policy documents of the Federal Government, Oromia National Regional state (ONRS) and Sebeta Women and Children's Affairs on women contribution was used. Moreover, relevant issues on the subject were browsed from internet and other printed materials. Relevant books, journals, articles, policy documents and reports were thoroughly being reviewed.

1.8.4 Method of Data Analysis

The data collected from primary and secondary sources used different instruments was organized and presented in to sub-sections based on their similarities and relations. The data were interpreted and analyzed thematically. Data collected through interview, Key Informants Interview (KII) and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was analyzed qualitatively based on descriptive analysis. Moreover, comparisons of facts, and views were made in order to make the findings more reliable and complete.

1.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study is organized in five chapters including this chapter. The first chapter comprised the introduction part of the study. The second and three chapters is review of related literature. In this chapter different book, journals, articles, different office reports, proclamation, published and unpublished material related to the subject under study were

reviewed. Fourth chapter part of the research includes presentation, interpretation and analyses of the data and information generated through different means of data collection. Finally, in the fifth chapter, the summary of major findings and recommendations based on the findings of the study is discussed.

CHAPTER TWO:

REVIEW OF LETRATURE

2.1 OVERVIEW OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

Local government can be defined as a sub-national level of government within a limited geographical area within larger national territory which has jurisdiction over a limited range of state functions (Miller, 2002). According to the author, the term local government refers to the institution, or structures, which exercises authority or carry out governmental functions at the local level. Miller (2002) while differentiating local government from local governance defined local governance as:

The processes through which public choice regarding what to be done how it to be done is determined, and policies are executed at the local level, and to the roles and relationships between the various stakeholders which make up the society. It can be defined as the exercise of political, economic and administrative authority to manage local affairs (p.3).

While local government is found in all federal countries, its place and role in the governance of these countries vary considerably. In some local government is considered an essential part of the federal nature of state and recognized in the constitution as such. Zemelak (2014) stated that:

Local government in many federal states is an exclusive competence of sub-national units and is barely mentioned in the national constitutions of most federal countries. However, local government units play a critical social and economic role in many countries such Germany, India and South Africa. In these countries their institutional integrity is constitutionally protected and their role recognized (p.91).

According to Watts (1999), local governments come in all shapes and sizes, performing widely divergent functions. According to the author they range from metropolitan municipalities of mega-cities, to counties, small town councils, and villages. Adding to this the author pointed out that their purpose also varies as either multi-purpose in the case of municipalities or single purpose in the case of special districts and school districts. What all

local government shares in common, however, is that there is no level of government below them and that is what makes them the closest level of the government to the people (Watts, 1999).

As it presented by Stiftung (2005), the place and role of local government vary markedly. In some, local government is a constitutionally recognized sphere of government, while in others it is merely a competence of the state/provincial. As Shah and Thompson (2005) stated, the constitutional recognition of local government as an order of government in federal systems is a modern phenomenon. As presented by Martin (2009), since the Second World War, however, federal constitutions have increasingly recognized local government as a constituent part of the federal state. A principal reason for this growing recognition of local government is the democratic potential of the government closest to the people.

Haque (2012), discussing the importance and vitality of local government, has affirmed that local government as an essential phase of the procedure of democratization and the local's participation in the process of decision making. Moreover, the author argued that without the local government, a political system of a country cannot be considered to be comprehensive and complete.

2.2 INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), which forms the basis of bills of rights included in many national constitutions, enshrines the entitlement of all persons to non discrimination, including on the basis of sex. Two instruments coming out of the UDHR, the 1966 International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the 1966 International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) contain specific provisions on the right to equality (Nhundu, 2013). In particular, the ICCPR states:

Every citizen shall have the right and the opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in article 2 and without reasonable restrictions:

- a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
- b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the electors?

- c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in his country (Article 25).

The issue of gender equality has become an area of concern in development planning during the last few decades in international arena. The marginalization, from development programs, of women for a long period of time is challenged with changing policy perspectives from Women in Development (WID), to Gender and Development (GAD), which aims to address inequalities in women's and men's social roles in relation to development (March et al., 1999). Gender mainstreaming, the integration of gender issues into every aspect of development programs, is aimed at empowering women to enable them participate in and benefit from the programs equally as men, being supported by international and national policies (Jelaludin et al., 2001).

At international level, the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action (BPA), and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are the main strategies and conventions introduced for the achievement of gender equality. CEDAW, the most comprehensive treaty on women's human rights, which came into force in 1981, has been ratified or acceded to by 165 states worldwide. It calls for equality between women and men in all civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights and it emphasizes the importance of equal participation of women with men in public life.

CEDAW incorporates the following measures that governments have to take to guarantee gender equality: elimination of discrimination against women in employment opportunities and benefits of service; ensuring gender equality in all areas of socio-economic life such as legal rights to contracts and property, and access to financial credit; equality of women in national constitutions; and abolishing existing laws, regulations, customs and practices that discriminate against women.

To be more specific, Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action of 1995 requires governments to:

Commit themselves to establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary, including, inter alia, setting specific targets and implementing measures to substantially increase the number of women with a view to achieving equal

representation of women and men, if necessary through positive action, in all governmental and public administration positions (United Nations, 1995, P.122)

The measures that are included in the BPA are Take measures, including, where appropriate, in electoral systems that encourage political parties to integrate women in elective and non elective public positions in the same proportion and at the same levels as men; protect and promote the equal rights of women and men to en-gage in political activities and to freedom of association, including membership in political parties and trade unions; review the differential impact of electoral systems on the political representation of women in elected bodies and consider, where appropriate, the adjustment or reform of those systems(United Nations,1995)

Global effort had been underway to alleviate the low status of women since the 1990s. In the framework of the general conferences held in Cairo (1994) and in Beijing (1995), direction was set and recommendations were made targeting mainly the removal of all the obstacles to gender equalities. The outcomes of these conferences recognized that the integration of gender issues into the general development plan and program of a country is crucial and unavoidable step for overall sustainable development and that needs to get proper attention by governments.

On the other hand, the key commitments of governments and other development partners set in the MDGs include gender equality and women's empowerment. The commitments include ensuring universal primary education for both boys and girls by 2015; elimination of gender disparity at all levels of education by 2015; and reducing maternal mortality ratio by three quarters between 1990 and 2015.

2.3 OVERVIEW OF PARTICIPATION

Citizen's political participation has been defined in deferent ways by different scholars based on their interest of inquiry. According to Nie and Verba (as cited in Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999), political participation involves the interactions of the individual or organized groups with the state, through representative. Depending on the methods of investigation, different scholars defined the concept broadly or narrowly. A broader definition is provided by Parry, Mosley and Day (as cited in Gaventa and Valderrama, 1999) who define it as taking part in the process of formulation, passage and implementation of public policies. The main concern

is an action by citizens aimed at influencing decisions taken mainly by public representatives and officials.

According to Smith (2003) public participation refers to:

A framework of policies, principles, and techniques which ensure that citizens and communities have the opportunity to be involved in a meaningful way in making decisions that will affect them, or in which they have an interest. The participation may involve both individual voices coming directly from citizens who choose to express their views and collective voices that able to synthesize or aggregate shared messages (p.34).

According to standards of public participation adopted by the Austrian Council of Minister (2008), public participation needs standards. Accordingly, these standards of public participation are performance standards for politics and administration to achieve optimal involvement of citizens and interest groups in the decision-making process; and quality standards for the participants as a measure which citizens and interest groups can use to assess the quality of the administrative behaviour with respect to public participation. Furthermore, effective public participation requires that citizens be informed and knowledgeable about the topic over which they are being participated. Citizens must take responsibility for the quality of their participation and be accountable to each other for effective and efficient use of time and other resources.

2.3.1 Purposes and Forms Political Participation

Different scholars have mentioned a number of purposes for the requirement of public participation. According to Innes & Booher (2004) five purposes can be identified that encompass most of the claims usually made to justify participation. One is for decision makers to find out the interest of the public and so it will incorporated their decisions. A second is to improve decisions making by utilizing local knowledge. The third purpose of public participation is the necessity of advancing fairness and justice. A fourth purpose is for the sake of legitimacy of decision making by allowing the public to take part in decision that affect their life. Lastly, participation is something planners and public officials do because the law requires it.

According to Conway 1991 (as cited in Imbrasaite, 2010) political participation modes can include conventional and unconventional actions. Conventional political participation refers to those modes that a dominant political culture recognizes as acceptable and that are related to institutionalized actions. Unconventional political participation refers to those modes that fail short of laws and customary norms of a specific society and relate to non-institutionalized actions frequently directed against the system itself that at least aim at transforming its sociopolitical structure

Oakley (as cited in Grant, 2002) differentiated participation in to two; participation as means and participation as an end. According to the author, in the former participation is used to as a means of achieving development project fruit, where as in the latter it is seen as a process in which people develop and strengthen their capability to control development initiatives that affect their interest.

In connection with political participation, it is important to distinguish between descriptive or numerical representation and substantive representation. According to United Nations (2005, p.12) the two types of representations can be defined as:

Descriptive (Numerical) Representation– Descriptive representation is based on the idea that the representative possesses common particular characteristics with the group such as race, sex, age, ethnicity or geographical area by virtue of that identity will represent that group. Accordingly, the question of women achieving descriptive representation, therefore, is simply about counting the number of women in political office and not examining what women representatives are actually saying.

Substantive representation – where the individual seeks to advance a particular group's policy preferences and interests, without necessarily being a member of the group as defined by race, sex, ethnicity, etc. The focus is on what the representative is saying/doing for a particular group in terms of the content of their positions and statements in public debates and policy discussions. The substantive representation of women, therefore, more than an increase in women representatives, it is important that representatives, both men and women, speak for women's interests.

Further, regarding political participation, Parry and Moyser (as cited in Grant, 2002) identified different forms of political participation. These are voting in periodic elections, contacting and lobbying which involves efforts to influence officials and policy makers, and

campaigning, conducted by political parties to rouse support and resources. Additionally, group action and protest which focuses on collective goals and are significant to mobilizing people to make direct demands on government.

Therefore political participation is not limited to voting in certain elections but it rather entails the representation of the interests of citizens in political decisions and their consequences. According to Gaventa and Valderrama (1999) political participation simply refers to activity that has the intent or effect of influencing government action – either directly by affecting the making or implementation of public policy or indirectly by influencing the selection of representatives who make those policies.

2.4 LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PARTICIPATION

As stated by Stiftung (2005) local government has an increasing role in the governance of federal countries, placing new demands on the theory and practice of federalism. Increasingly local government plays a significant role in government. As Haque (2012, Introduction section) stated:

The two essential purposes that local government serves are (a) supplying goods and services, (b) the representation and the involvement of masses in locating public need and objectivity to understand determine how these needs can be met. The administration and representation at local government structure is connected and formulated through the process of representation at local government level.

Adding to this, the author argued that in the process of decision making, the intensification of popular participation and democratization's process are two essential aspects that defend the existence of local governments. Hence, the author concluded that without proper functioning local government's system, it is difficult to consider any political system complete and fully democratic.

Ryan and Woods (2015) argued that the existence of local government promotes democratic decentralization. They stated that democratic decentralization may be promoted for a number of reasons. However, they stated that the major reasons are to bring government closer to people and enhance their participation and interaction with local government officers in the affairs of the locality. It entails a new form of relationship between civil society and the local government.

Likewise, Enid, Zachary, and Makram (2014) argues, the importance of decentralizing government authority is enhancing democratic participation by encouraging more people to get involved in the politics that affect them, and making government more accountable by introducing citizen oversight and control through elections. As the authors argued, if democracy lies in rule by the people, the promise of democratic decentralization is to make that rule more immediate, direct, and productive. The local level is sometimes seen as a level at which voice/participation and accountability are easier to get right (Dom, 2012).

According to Horowitz (2009) local government has long been seen considered as conducive sphere for women's participation because it is more physically accessible, may have less stringent eligibility criteria, and often deals with issues and services that have direct impact on women's private lives, such as health, education, or water. Local governments have a key role and responsibility in the implementation of international conventions and agreements. This is part of their role as the third, but critical tier of government (Khosla and Barth, 2008). As the level of government closest to citizens, local government administration can play a vital role in addressing gender inequality and in building the capacities of women by involving them in local decision making, planning and management; the importance of that role was recognized by a number of International conventions and declarations (Godwin, 2013).

2.5 ARGUMENTS FOR WOMENS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Women political participation in global politics is one of the contemporary issues of discussion in the political arena. Women constitute almost half of the world population, but their participation in decision making and general political processes is relatively low when compared to their male counterpart (Abubakar and Ahmad, 2014). In contemporary debate of why women's participation and representation in politics is important six main arguments are brought forward. Regarding arguments for women's political participation Dahlerup (as cited in Delys, 2014, p. 7-8) stated the following arguments:

- ✚ The *justice argument* claims that women have a right to half of the seats since they make up half of the population;
- ✚ The *experience argument* holds that women have different experiences that should be represented as well;

- ✚ The *interest argument* grants that women and men have conflicting interests and that these interests cannot be represented by men;
- ✚ The *symbolic argument* says that every female politician acts a role model for all women;
- ✚ The *critical mass argument* states that women are able to achieve solidarity of purpose to represent women's interests when they achieve certain levels of representation; and
- ✚ The *democracy argument* asserts that the equal representation of women and men enhances the democratization of governance in both transitional and consolidated democracies

It is important that women, as half the population, take part in politics even if they make decisions exactly the same as men. But if women bring to decision making point different interests and priorities than men, arguments for their inclusion and involvement are even more powerful (Carroll & Dodson, as cited in Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes, 2007). Due to the differences in the living conditions, responsibilities and relations between women and men, i.e. their gender differences, they experience politics and administration life in very different ways (UN-HABITAT, 2008). Since women and girls make up some 52 percent of the population in most countries, local democracy, inclusiveness and sustainability can only be achieved when this share of the population has an equal participation in the way that cities and municipalities are organized and managed.

Specifically, this means that women must be involved in local governance, so that their needs and priorities are also reflected in local government planning and design, services provision, roads and transportation, shelter, water, sanitation, solid waste management, urban environmental management, peace and security, financial management, fiscal policies, economic development and administration. This also means that local governments have a major role and responsibility to enable equality and equity for all residents. Local governments have the potential to bring about transformative change.

According to Sonja (2008) gender relations are changing in all societies across the world, and a clear recognition of this is evidenced in the number of legal and legislative changes for women's equality that have taken place over the past 50 years. Numerous countries have

enshrined women's equal rights in their constitutions, even though not all of these are as strong as many women would like them to be.

In addition, according to Desiree (2005) the equal participation of women and men in local government politics is critical to ensuring that: any decisions made and budgets allocated are relevant to the living conditions and needs of local women and men; there is equity in provision of services and planning, and municipal funds are not only being spent effectively and efficiently, but also allocated to those who are the poorest. This is one of the motivations for women's involvement with local governments. Adding to this, Desiree (2005) argued that, often the rationale behind women's mobilization is for local government accountability to women, and in particular poor women and those from marginalized communities whose priorities have not been included in municipal policies and budgets.

Furthermore, as presented by Horowitz (2009) the democratic rationale for formally empowering women through political participation is also considered as the justification for women's involvement in politics. In addition, according to the author, one can also recognize within the women-in-politics debate a second assumption: increasing some women's political involvement can improve the way government serves other women in the general population.

Supporting women's participation in local government, Khosla and Barth (2008), argued that the equal participation of women and men in local government decision-making is critical to ensuring that: any decisions made and budgets allocated are relevant to needs of both local women and men; equity exist in planning and service provision, and decision made at local level reflect women's interest. This is one of the motivations for women's involvement with local governments.

The forgoing review revealed that women's equal participation in local governments and decision-making processes is critical for creating gender sensitive policies and for promoting sustainable development. It implies that, including women in local governments is an essential step towards creating gender equal governments and gender sensitive policies. Since women have different needs and perspectives on social and political issues, it is important to involve women in governments to incorporate all of the societal viewpoints in policy and decision-making processes.

2.6 FACTORS AFFECTING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

The apparent gap between the promise of enhanced participation through democratic decentralization of local government on the one hand, and the everyday realities of participatory politics on the other, suggests the need to understand more fully the barriers and dynamics to participation in local government. The literature on gender in politics is broad, addressing gender inequality in political acts including voting, campaigning, and leading, as well as gender differences in political knowledge, socialization, and attitudes, and women's place in political theory.

In this review, the focus is on women's participation in formal politics including suffrage, voting, running for and holding political office, and political influence. To properly understand women's participation in politics, it is important to identify factors that determine women's level of political representation within a single country or across the world.

Paxton, Kunovich and Hughes (2007) distinguished between supply-side factors and demand-side factors when explaining women's levels of political representation. The authors stated that:

Supply-side factors increase the pool of women with the will and experience to compete against men to hold political office. On the other hand, demand-side factors are characteristics of countries, electoral systems, or political parties that affect the likelihood that women will be pulled into office from the supply of willing candidates (p.266).

According to Paxton et al. culture is also the third factor what they call it "traditional explanation" and they stresses that beliefs and attitudes influence both the supply of and demand for female candidates. Additional contemporary explanations also stress the role and power of international actors and institutional regulations such as gender quotas (Paxton et al., 2007).

Multiple factors contribute to the situation of today where women are underrepresented in political leadership. Women's political participation and access to formal political power

structures are linked to many different structural and functional constraints which differ across countries. Accordingly, these problems are presented as follows (Shvedova, 1998):

Political Obstacles: the prevalence of the masculine model of politics; lack of party support for women candidates; lack of sustained cooperation with women organizations; and the nature of the electoral system are among the political obstacles that women face.

Socio-Economic Obstacles: the social and economic status of women in society has a direct influence on their participation in political institutions. Lack of adequate financial resources, illiteracy and limited access to education and choice of professions; and the dual burden of domestic tasks and professional obligations are raised as the socio-economic obstacles impacting on women's participation.

Ideological and Psychological Hindrances: the socially constructed traditional roles of women; women's lack of the confidence to stand for election; women's perception of politics as a 'dirty' game; and the way in which women are portrayed in the mass media are some of the ideological and psychological hindrances for women in entering in to political life. Scholars have also studied the barriers to Women's political participation from different perspectives. Accordingly, socioeconomic status perspectives, social capital perspective and individual resources model are briefly discussed as follows:

- ✚ *Socioeconomic status* perspective refers to explanatory capacities of individual factors such as education, profession, income, age, gender and religion and concludes that socioeconomic factors have an impact on political participation (Verba and Nie. 1972). Education "promotes political participation in two ways: by giving people the knowledge and skills that facilitate participation and by placing people in social networks that inform them about politics and reward political action (Rosenstone and Hansen 1993).
- ✚ *Social capital perspective* refers to the explanatory capacities of social capital. Putnam argues that social capital is features of social organization, such as trust, norms, and social networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions (Putnam 1993).
- ✚ *Individual resources models* starts with the idea that individual resources such as money, skills, knowledge, time and self-confidence have an impact on political

participation, because they allow people to meet the economic and psychological costs of political participation ((Verba and Nie. 1972).

According to UN (2005), there are common barriers to women's participation in local government. However, it must be remembered that many women have continued to brave the odds, run for political office and participate actively in local government administration. According to UN-HABITAT (2008), the barrier includes:

- ✚ Male dominated political parties that do not support women's strong political participation. In line with this political parties are not working strategically in improving their internal philosophy that would support more women to engage in local politics.
- ✚ Culturally constructed division of labor that restrict women's role as domestic and men's role as public sphere do not encourage women to run for political office. This socially held belief has its own impact in undermining women's self confidence to run for election.
- ✚ Women have numerous responsibilities in the family which these consume a lot of their time, energy and resources. Political parties and local governments do not take account of the reality of women's role in social reproduction when organizing meetings and political events, or developing election campaigns.

The conclusion that emerges is that although local governments can be sites of innovation and potential for women participation, women may face significant hurdles to participate in local politics. While the promise is great, the foregoing discussion shows the gap and obstacles that exist in enhancing women's political participation. Despite these significant barriers, the message is not that efforts to strengthen popular participation in local governance should be abandoned. Indeed, around the world we can find a number of important innovations and interventions which show promise to make a significant impact in enhancing citizenship participation in democratic local governance.

2.7 PARTY SYSTEM AND WOMEN REPRESENTATION

In recent decades, a significant number of political parties have taken steps to increase the representation of women in national assemblies, often by introducing gender quotas. The arguments for this fall into four categories: those that dwell on the role model that successful women politicians offer; those that appeal to principles of justice between the sexes; those

that identify particular interests of women that would otherwise be overlooked; and those that see women as introducing new forms of political behaviour. The case for quotas depends on the idea that interests are gendered, but should not presume a unitary set of women's interests. The use of quotas raises new questions about the accountability of representatives to their constituents (Phillips, 1998).

As Kenny and Verge cite in (Matland and Montgomery, 2003), research on women's political presence has increasingly focused on the internal dynamics of political parties as a crucial area in need of further investigation. While systemic variables like electoral systems structure the overall context of recruitment, parties are the main "gatekeepers" to elected office in most countries—particularly in parliamentary democracies—and, as such, play a central role in shaping women's representation. Although there is a rapidly growing literature on women and politics more broadly—and gender quotas in particular few studies however look directly at the role of political parties. As several scholars have noted, party quotas that are followed, are a huge advantage to women's political presence, but the intraparty mechanisms that explain how quotas are effectively adopted and implemented in practice remain largely (Khosla and Barth, 2010).

Sanbonmatsu (2002) argued that, the explanation for variation across states in women's representation differs by party. First, the state's social eligibility pool has a greater effect on democratic women's representation than republican women's representation. Second, party shapes the political opportunity structure facing women candidates. The effects of legislative professionalism and the partisan composition of the legislature differ for democratic women compared to Republican women in USA.

2.8 HOW TO ENHANCE WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION

How women are represented within the community at the local government level and at higher levels is critical to the extent that they can actively participate in local decision-making processes. Regarding how to deal with the factors that affect women's political participation scholars has pointed out different mechanisms. According to Dom (2012) special measures such as quotas on local elected bodies or in community groups can lead to greater representation of women. However, having quota scheme is not enough in enhancing women's representation by itself. Regarding this Dom mentioned that better developed and more inclusive political parties, denser civil society, higher education levels and reforms of the electoral system have a positive effect on a quota system for the representation of women.

According to Horowitz (2009) women in local government also require more specific training in such topics as procedure, legal literacy, and leadership. Horowitz also emphasized the importance of training or support programs run by NGOs, governments, and donors as a response to the education gaps women face in political participation. Training women by focusing on politics, political parties, lobbying, advocacy, the importance of women's participation in elections, as well as participation in local government committees, consultations and other initiatives is one of the strategies (Khosla and Barth, 2008).

Different scholars, for example, Shvedova (1998) has pointed that the economic empowerment of women, along with education and access to information, will relieve women from household constraints and take them to full fruitful politics participation. Furthermore, the author added that women also must think carefully about their own goals, strategies and tactics. The author also emphasized the importance of helping women already in politics to deliver on their promises and to equip them with the necessary skills and strategies to ensure that issues raised by women are taken into account in the debate and the decision making.

As presented by Delys (2014), creating gender sensitive budgets and engaging women in the process of creation of such budgets is another means for involving women in decision making through. As the author explained, a gender sensitive budget does not exclusively target women's needs, but rather includes a gender perspective into budgetary provisions ensuring that both men and women benefit equally from social policies and public goods.

Another scholar, Horowitz (2009), point out the importance of promoting gender perspectives into policies and programs not only through increasing the number of women local administrators, but also through building awareness and sensitizing local authorities in general, which helps to mainstream gender and consider specific women's needs in the local planning and work. Empowerment and designing inclusiveness in empowerment strategies is crucial and may require different interventions strategies to accommodate all marginalized groups. Because candidate selection operates through parties, gender dynamics within political parties are extremely important (Horowitz, 2009).

One of the frequently raised arguments regarding the reason for women participation is human right justification. This implies that a local government has a lot of things to do in insuring the participation of women's through protection of human right of women in their jurisdiction. Regarding this, Thède (2005) stated that:

Individual local governments should consider how to integrate human rights protection into their decision making in more systematic and explicit ways. One mechanism is through preparing a human rights manual for local governments. This will be helpful to local politicians and officials, as well as citizens, to identify how the human rights framework can be properly followed to local government performance, governance and service delivery (p.8).

In addition, the mass media deserve to be called the fourth branch of power because of their influence on public opinion and public consciousness (Shvedova, 1998). Furthermore, according to Delys (2014) having women in local governments serves as an encouragement for other women to enter politics and leads to breaking stereotypes of women's roles in society and public space.

Regarding strategies for the promotion of Gender equity in local government, Khosla and Barth (2008) mentioned that the creation of new women's associations, partnerships and networks along with civil society organizations, to emphasize on political participation at the local level is very critical. Explaining alternative strategies, the authors underlined the importance strengthening the existing women's association and civil society groups that focus on local governance and citizen participation.

Local government is considered as the level of government that is closer to the people and this gives it a great opportunity for the people to women's to take part in government of their local affair. Different international legal framework declared the right to equal participation of both sex without any discrimination. Women are clearly entitled to participate and represent themselves in processes and institutions where decisions that affect their lives are made. Various arguments and justifications affirm the requirement of women's participation in government at all level. However, women's are still underrepresented at various levels of government throughout the world. There various hindrances to women's equal participation

that can be categorized in to political, economic, socio-cultural and psychological in its nature. Positive action and measures should be taken to assure representation that reflects the full diversity of societies, with the target of the gender-balanced political decision making.

CHAPTER THREE:

EMPERICAL REVIEWOF LETRATURE

3.1 LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNDER THE FDRE CONSTITUTION

Since 1995, Ethiopia has become federal state. The FDRE constitution which was adopted in 1995 not only divided powers between the central government and the regional states, but also decentralized power down to the woredas for the efficient delivery of public services. According to Zemelak and Yonatan (2012) the first indication that the Ethiopian constitution has envisaged the establishment of autonomous local government comes from article 39, which provides that every nation, nationality, and people have the right to self-determination). FDRE Constitution stated that:

Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to a full measure of self-government which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in state and Federal governments (FDRE Constitution Art. 39(3)).

As it is clearly stated on FDRE constitution article 50 sub article 4 the establishment of local government throughout the country is required and the mandate to do so is left to the regional states. According to this article, the local government is established to enhance democratic governance, ease development, and foster public participation. As a result, arguably, it has to be established across the country on a wall-to-wall basis. Article 50 (4) provides that:

State government shall be established at State and other administrative levels that they find necessary. Adequate power shall be granted to the lowest units of government to enable the people to participate directly in the administration of such units (FDRE Constitution: Art.50 (4)).

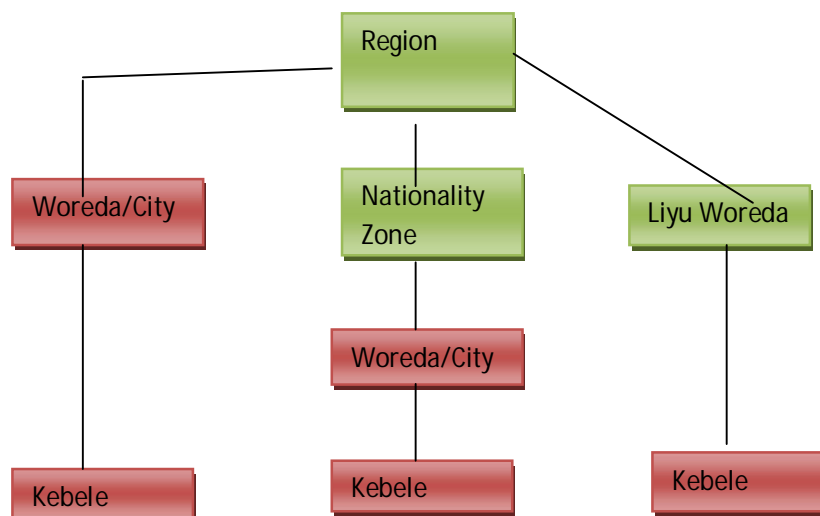
According to study conducted by Dickovick and Tegegne (2010) with regard to administrative autonomy, sub national units in Ethiopia are established as autonomous and are empowered to approve budgets, and prepare and implement development plans. In this regard, the authors argued that the extent to which local governments have

decision making authority to initiate regulatory legislation and devise policies are important areas of autonomy.

According to Zemelak (2014) adequate power shall be granted to the lowest units of government to enable the People to participate directly in the administration of such units and hence, empowerment of local government is required to increase people's participation. According to Hashim (2010) Ethiopia's federal system is underlined by the right of Ethiopia's nation, nationalities and peoples to self-determination. As Zemelak (2014) indicated local government that can be established based on Article 39 is directly linked to the right of ethnic groups to self-determination. As the author mentioned, ethnic local government which is established based on article 39 of FDRE is made up of *liyu woredas* and *nationality zones* and they are with the purpose of allowing intra-regional minority in regions to exercise some form self-government.

The foregoing review revealed that local government in Ethiopia is the result of, either the demand of the ethnic group for autonomous self-government or, the competence of regional states; for administrative purpose and to enhance citizen's participation in to administration of their local matters. It implies that as being autonomous unit of government establishing with the purpose of enhancing peoples participation, local governments have a greater role to play in promoting the participation of the citizen in their district.

Organizational Structure of Local Government



Source: Adopted from Zemelak (2014: 96)

The structure shows that below the regional states and above the elected woreda level are administrative units known as Zones. It is at this level that we observe some degree of deconcentration of authority from the regions to the zones. Many authors do not treat Zones as a local government tier and also in this paper it is also out of the domain of local government.

In Ethiopia, rural and urban local governments are established by regional states. Woredas are established in rural areas while city administrations are established in urban areas. Both administrations have directly elected representative council. Moreover, both have an executive council chaired by a chief administrator in the case of woreda and a mayor for the city (Zemelak, 2011).

As Dickovick and Tegegne (2010) stated:

Though the precise rules vary from region to region woredas are the essence of Ethiopia's local governments that has council that is directly elected by citizens of the districts and in which these councils elect their executive cabinets. They have power and authority that emanates from regional state constitutions and provisions vary modestly across regional states. However, each the woredas are the key autonomous self-governing units to which power and resources are devolved (p.9).

Kebele administrations are the grassroots governance units, serving as local-level institutions in both rural and urban areas. Kebeles has elected local councils and executive cabinets that is mandated with coordinating planning and administrative functions the area; these are selected by the members of the local councils. They respond to the woredas' directives, and rely upon the woredas for their budgets Tegegne and Kassahun (as cited in Dickovick and Tegegne, 2010).

3.2 LOCAL GOVERNMENT UNDER OROMIA CONSTITUTION

The Oromia regional constitutions were adopted after the promulgation of the federal Constitution in 1995 and underwent revision starting in 2000. They are supreme regional laws that, as discussed below, can be amended only in a special procedure, and each defines, inter alia, the structures of the local government units within the state's jurisdiction.

In Oromia regional state, according to revised constitution of Oromia region (2002), woreda administrations are created by the region and are empowered to prepare and decide on

economic development and social service plans for its territorial area. As it is stipulated on revised constitution of Oromia region (2002), members of woreda councils are elected by the citizens of the district, and these councils select their executive cabinets. While woreda are elected levels of government, they are also accountable for implementing directives from the regional state or the zones. For instance, they are in charge of implementing policies, laws, regulations and directives issued by the regional state organs. Moreover, each and every woreda is a body hierarchically subordinate to the regional government (Revised constitution of Oromia region, Art. 79, 2002).

Below the woreda administration, in the local government structure of the region, is the kebele administration. Kebele administrations are the closest government level to the community, serving as local level institutions in both rural and urban areas. In addition to elected local councils, the kebeles have executive cabinets which coordinate planning and administrative functions; these are selected by the members of the local councils. They really up on woredas for their budget and respond to the woredas' directives (Revised constitution of Oromia region, Article 95, 2002).

According to the urban local government proclamation No. 65/2003 of the Oromia region, the urban government model applicable in the region shall be the council- mayor system. The council- mayor system is an urban government arrangement whereby city council shall have the final authority on the urban issues whereas the highest executive powers are vested in the mayor and the mayor committee. Grading of Cities in the region depends on the number of residents, accordingly the cities in the region shall be grouped into four grades: grade one (greater than 90,000) residents, grade two (45,000-89999) residents, grade three (from 10,000 to 44999) residents, and grade four (from 2000 to 9999) residents, the mayor of the town is directly accountable to the City council and president of the Oromia National Regional State administratively (Proclamation No.65/2003 Art. 18(1)).

According to these Proclamation Oromia National Regional state urban local government established to succeed several objectives, accordingly, to promote self-rule or community governance by encouraging the involvement of residents in the overall activities of the city and to facilitate condition in which residents' benefits from the development; to institute good governance in which effectiveness, transparency and accountability to residents dwell; to ensure the provision of the efficient and equitable urban services to residents in a sustainable manner; to promote of locality; in encouraging investment and in particular

industrial development, so as to make cities a nucleus of progress, to promote cooperative government; to promote a safe and clean urban environment suitable for development work and residence; to promote close resident government relationship and strengthen partnership with various bodies and communities; to promote urban-rural and urban-urban partnerships for mutual benefits in supporting each other (Proclamation No.65/2003,Art.7(1-8)).

Unlike the specialized local government envisaged in Article 39 of FDRE constitution, Sebeta town administration is the local government envisaged in article 50(4). It is a local government that, like other local governments in the region, is established to enhance democratic governance, ease administration and development, and foster public participation.

3.3 NATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR GENDER EQUALITY

Ethiopia's constitution and national policies are consistent with international legal instruments on gender equality, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW); the most comprehensive treaty on women's human rights, which came into force in 1981, has been ratified or acceded to by 165 states worldwide (Shimelis, 2015). According to FDRE's national report on the implementation of the Beijing declaration and platform for action in 2000, Ethiopia adopted international agreements to promote gender equality and improve the lives of women. As a means to implement these global agreements, different policies and legislations have also been enacted. These are the National Policy on Women, National Population Policy, Education Policy, Cultural Policy, and other legal documents.

The National Policy on Women, introduced in 1993, was the first policy that is specifically related to the affairs of women (Jelaludin et al., 2001). The objectives of the policy include facilitating conditions conducive to the speeding up of equality between men and women; ensuring the right to property and other human rights are respected and that they are not excluded participating in decision making. In addition to the aforementioned national policies gender equality is guaranteed by the FDRE constitution.

Article 35 of FDRE constitution provides equal opportunity for women to participate in the decision making process by giving them the right to vote and be elected. The historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia taken into account, women, in order to remedy this legacy, are entitled to affirmative measures. The purpose of such measures shall be to provide special attention to women so as to enable them to compete and

participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social and economic life as well as in public and private institutions (FDRE Constitution Art. 35(3)).

More specifically, FDRE constitution Article 35(1) provides that women shall, in the enjoyment of rights and protections provided for by this Constitution, have equal right with men. Women have the right to full consultation in the formulation of national development policies, the designing and execution of projects, and particularly in the case of projects affecting the interests of women (FDRE Constitution Art. 35(6)).

Equality between men and women, and boys and girls, is one of the central pillars of the Growth and Transformation Plan of national development plan of Ethiopia and the Development Plan for Women and Children (2011-2028) have included specific commitments to increasing women's participation in political life and decision making, promoting women's economic empowerment and reducing violence against women (MOFED, 2010). Ethiopia is therefore making several efforts to strengthen national structures for achieving gender parity.

3.4 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMENS

The issue of discrimination against women in governance at any level is not simply an African Ethiopian phenomenon but a global one, except that the difference is in terms of magnitude type. For instance according a study conducted by Delys (2004) women's representation in Georgian politics is low and should be significantly improved in order to comply with international norms and standards on gender equality. The author stated that in 2014 local self-government election, the percentage of women's representation at the self-government level is only 11.1 percent.

Despite the fact that EPRDF has adopted global agreements and endorsed country-specific laws and policies, there are gaps and limitations in implementation, as a result of which the status of women in the country remained very low (ESP, 2005). According to A National Report of FDRE (2004), in spite of the government policy of equal opportunity for both men and women to participate in the democratization of the country, women have not been adequately represented at all levels of decision-making positions. The data presented below shows the representation of women at federal parliament and Oromia state council level. The data clearly indicates the under representation of women in different government decision making positions.

Table: Representation of women in Legislative body:

No	Position	Year									
		1995		2000		2005		2010		2015	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	House of People's Representative	534	13	505	42	430	117	395	152	334	213
	Percent (%)	97.6%	2.37%	92.3%	7.67%	78.6%	21.3%	72.2%	27.8%	61%	39%
	Total	547		547		547		547		547	

Source: HPR office, 2016

As presented on the above table, the data indicate the representation of women in House of peoples Representatives shows that there is an increasing women representation through year from first election to the fifth one. The data revealed that out of 547 seats reserved for parliamentarians in 1995, it was only 13(2.37%) that was occupied by women. However, by the next round election, an increasing trend of women's participation has been observed. During the 2000 House of People's Representative election, about 42 (7.7%) of the candidates for parliamentary seats were women compared to 15 (2.7%) in 1995 and also these trend observed during 2005, 2010 and 2015 election period. As presented on the above table there is change from election to election period by increasing a number of women representations. But, when it compare with the men representation still now there is a big gap between them.

The number of elected women in regional state council “Caffee” is also additional indicator of their representation. Oromia National regional State women’s representation status is shown as follows:

Table 3.6.2. Representation of women in Oromia National Regional state council “Caffee”

No	Position	Year									
		1995		2000		2005		2010		2015	
		M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
	Oromia National Regional State council “Caffee”	341	12	467	70	341	196	382	155	285	252
	Total	96.6%	3.4%	87%	13%	63.5%	36.5%	71%	28.8%	53%	47%
		353		537		537		537		537	

Source: Caffee (Oromia National Regional State Council)

During the 1995 general election for regional council, out of 353 members 12 (3.4%) were women. The number of Oromia regional state council increased both in terms of membership and number of women from 2000 to 2015 election. Thus, in the election held in 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015 for regional council, while the number of members increased by the same rate

to 537, from 2000 to 2015 election, 70 (13%), 196 (36%), 155 (28.8%), and 252 (46.9%), there were women respectively, which have shown an increase from one election period to the other period. As of House of people's representatives there a change that comes through a year on presenting women in Oromia National Regional State ("Caffee"). This shows that where there is greater determination and commitment by the government to enhance women equal representation in decision making body, it is possible to have equal representation of women.

3.5 BARRIERS TO WOMENS POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The literature on barriers to women's political participation in Ethiopia is very scanty. However a review of related literature from other parts of the world will suffice. The review of other countries studies related with barriers to women's political participation will be reviewed first and followed by other research conducted by focusing on Ethiopia.

Multiple factors contribute to the situation of today where women are underrepresented in political leadership. For example according to a research conducted by UNDP (as cited in Delys, 2004), the Georgian population believes politics are more appropriate for men and that women should only have a limited role in politics. Poverty is also one of the major hindrances for women to be involved in politics, namely, the disproportionate effect of poverty on women (Delys, 2004).

According to a research conducted by Kasomo (2012) the traditional female/male roles are deeply ingrained and glorified in all Kenyan society is one of the causes for the subordinate position of women in the society and it seems to legitimize their exclusion from participation in political and decision making processes. Education and literacy; access to financial resources; cultural attitudes and religion; socialization and self-reliance were also identified by the author as the obstacles for the low participation of women in Kenyans politics. It would be interesting to investigate into how far these factors impact on women in the local politics of Sebeta today.

Godwin (2013) sought to study the need for participation of women in local governance. The author found the existence of more women participation in governance at the Federal and State governments than the local level. Furthermore, the finding of the researcher indicated that male domination due to low political consciousness among women-that is associated with cultural barrier, lack of economic base for women is a basis for poor attitudinal

syndrome are some of the obstacles to achieving the 30 percent affirmative action declaration for women at the Nigeria's grassroots.

A study entitled promoting the participation of women in local governance and development conducted was conducted by Aboagye (2000) in Ghana. The author explained that women's low level of local level political participation in Ghana is mainly due to lack of finances for campaigning; time constraints for domestic responsibilities and low income. In addition, the author mentioned that the widely-held perception that political activity not for decent women is also a barrier. Husbands and families are reluctant to have their women in the public eye. Women lack public arena skills and some complain of intimidation by male opponents.

Horowitz (2009) summarized the factors that hinder women's political participation as socioeconomic disadvantage and illiteracy. According to the author, gender inequities in socioeconomic status are particularly severe at the local level, and these impede women's participation. In explaining this case, Horowitz stated that, poor women face a high opportunity cost in participation, especially if it displaces income-earning opportunities. Moreover, low levels of literacy and/or language barriers, time constraints, and lack of confidence were identified as major constraints to women's participation in politics by the author.

Effective participation requires the direct involvement of poor and marginalized people. However, many factors affect women's participation in politics. According to Dom (2012) gender inequality, religion, membership of social or ethnic groups, regions in which they live as well as their material wellbeing all affect people's access, status and influence in local politics.

In their work on gender equality and participation in local government, Khosla and Barth stated that most local government's institutions are patriarchal and their structures and procedures are made by man by considering their need only. For example the schedule of meeting, discussion and decision made by ignoring women's norm and need. These structures and processes do not consider women's multiple responsibilities in the home and community, or the different ways women have of communicating (Khosla and Barth, 2008, p.46).

In the context of Ethiopia, according to a study conducted by Shimelis (2015) there is socially held traditional belief assume women's are made to take care of children and do kitchen works than participating outside home activity. Due to this unfair labor division, Women are

overburdened with different household activities like; cooking, take caring kids, washing and so on. These all activities make women busy in the household and impede their involvement in the politics of the country.

A report made by United Nations in 2005 indicated that electoral systems had a direct impact on women's participation in decision-making bodies. According to the report women's representation is highest in countries using proportional representation (PR) systems. PR systems lead parties to balance their electoral tickets which often results in women's demands for greater equality in decision-making being heard. Contrary to this, most majoritarian systems allow for the nomination of only one candidate per district, and parties overwhelmingly in this situation choose a male candidate. The structure, organization and internal culture of political parties can be an obstacle to the participation of women (United Nations, 2005).

The problems of gender inequalities discussed above are also prevalent in Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, the socialization process, which determines gender roles, is partly responsible for the subjugation of women in the country. Ethiopian society is socialized in such a way that girls boys are expected to learn and become self-reliant, and responsible in different activities, while girls are brought up to conform, be obedient and dependent, and specialize in indoor activities.

3.6 STRATEGIES TO ENHANCE WOMENS PARTICIPATION

As Godwin (2013) argued as the level of government closest to citizens, local authorities can play a vital role in addressing gender inequality and in building the capacities of women by involving them in local decision making, planning and management; the importance of that role was recognized by the International by different international conventions and agreements.

According to United Nations report quotas have been an effective tool to increase women's access to decision-making. Sixteen of the twenty countries that have reached the target of 30 percent women in national legislatures use some type of quota. It was also noted that political parties in more than 80 countries around the world have currently implemented either reserved seats, legislated candidate quotas or have adopted voluntary quotas. Marked progress was noted in countries undergoing political transitions such as South Africa and Latin American states (United Nations, 2005).

According to a report on women's political participation and economic empowerment in countries of Great Lakes region of Africa made by Sow (2012), the 30 percent women representation quota adopted by the 2003 constitution of Rwanda was not systematically applied at the local governance level. Hence, according to the author, to correct this situation, a specific piece of legislation was passed in 2006 requiring that 30 percent of the members of district, cell and sector councils were to be women. In effect, these measures contributed to an increase in women's participation, which has now reached 30 percent in these bodies, particularly in district councils (Sow, 2012).

As Aboagye, (2000) stated that in order to enhance women's participation in local government it is important to focus on building the capacity of women to aspire to, attain and perform in local government office; and on women's groups to engage local governments. Aboagye also emphasized the role of stakeholder institutions such as training institutions and agencies providing services and implementing development initiatives to provide appropriate support to women's concerns by targeting, positive action, creating an enabling environment for their participation.

The way women participate in political parties and how these parties promote women's political involvement is crucial to the political empowerment of women. Parties need to undertake a series of measures across the electoral cycle in order to make sure that women are fully integrated in the party structure. The organization and financing of the party also needs to be more favorable for women's participation (Delys, 2004). Another effective tool in increasing women's political participation and leadership are youth programs. They create an environment where young women see themselves as capable political leaders from the early stages of their political career on. Apart from a low ratio of female representatives, young perspective in the current political landscape is often problematic as well (Ibid).

Supporting and enhancing women's participation at local level involves fostering a diversity of approaches and encouraging critical reflection and learning. Dom (2012) stated that the difference among local contexts, and the opportunities or constraints that may exist, mean that ongoing innovation is critical and there is no one best way to enhancing women's participation in politics. Hence, the review revealed that the most successful participation interventions need to be gradual, long-term, and flexible in design.

In conclusion, the empirical review made in the preceding parts revealed that the political participation of women is still an issue to be seriously considered. The political participation of women is very low compared to their male counterpart and this implies the existence of unequal representation of women in decision making level. In Ethiopia, even though the country is signatory of treaties and convention meant to ensure equal gender participation in politics, there is still underrepresentation of women's at all government level.

Across the world, women continue to encounter significant discrimination in fully exercising their right to participate and still face significant barriers to accessing positions of power at all levels of decision making, even though they constitute half of the world's population. Barriers to women's political and economic participation exist throughout the world, and Ethiopia is no exception. Such barriers of women's participation could result from the prevailing social, economic and political systems. Various strategies and measures are recommended to enhance women's political participation. Some of the strategies to fill the existing gender gap in politics were quota system, training and empowerment, restructuring of the working of political parties and revision of electoral system. Countries that have made progress have either instituted affirmative action/quotas in their constitutions or adopted rules to enforce gender quotas in their dominant parties.

CHAPTER FOUR:

DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 POLITICAL PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN SEBETA TOWN

Under this sub topic, the data collected through interview regarding political participation of women in Sebeta town is presented and interpreted. Here under; respondents view regarding equal gender participation in politics, participation of women on election, representation of woman's in town and kebele council and participation of women in town and kebele meeting is presented thematically.

4.1.1 Respondents view regarding equal gender participation in politics

The knowledge regarding ones right and obligation is a determining factor in exercising ones right. Regarding this the researcher asked respondents whether they know that women and men have equal right in taking part in politics. Majority of respondents pointed out that they clearly know that both women and men has equal right in political participation, only very few of them replied that they don't know that both women and men has equal right in political participation. Surprisingly, all 3 respondents who replied no are women. They explained that in their life they saw political participation is mainly men's role and as a matter of this they thought that it is something which is left to the males as a right.

Furthermore, in analyzing the participation of women in politics, it is important to assess the attitudes of respondents regarding equal participation of women and men in politics. The respondents were asked whether they think that equal gender participation in politics is important or not. Except one female respondent, all of them agreed in the importance of equal gender participation. They explained that it is very important to have equally participating citizens in their locality due to a number of reasons. As they replied; equal gender participation is important in solving community problem, promoting development, enhancing good governance and ensuring representation of women interest in decision making. Believing in equality of women and men in politics is an important precondition in promoting active participation of women in politics. However, it is not sufficient condition by itself. Therefore, changing this believe in some sort of action very important in changing this believe in to practice and achieving active women participation in local politics.

In order to know the views of sample respondents in relation with equal participation of women and men in the politics of Sebeta town administration, the researcher asked the respondents; whether or not they think that women and men are equally participating in the politics of Sebeta town administration. While greater than two third of respondents replied that they do not think that there is equal participation of women and men in politics, the remaining one third of respondents think that there is equal gender participation in politics in Sebeta town. On the other hand out of those who think that women and men are not equally participating in politics at local level, greater majority of them are women.

From this it is possible to understand that though almost all of respondents believe in importance of equal gender participation in politics, they still feel that there is no equal participation in politics. In addition key informant interviewed from different office also clearly indicated that they and their office also believe in the importance of the participation women in local politics. This implies consensus and awareness on the importance of women participation in politics is not lacking in the area. However, the serious problem is practically seeing women taking part in politics of their local government.

More importantly, of those who think that there is unequal political participation, more than three fourth of them stated that lack of sufficient education; lack of opportunity for women in previous time, women's in domestic affair and child rearing; and socio-cultural attitude towards women as a major factor for the absence of equal political participation in the politics of their local government. The key informants interviewed also mentioned the same reason as the cause for low level of women participation in politics. However, participants on the focus group discussion mentioned that lack of enabling environment, low level of commitment from the town administration, and lack of determination from the women themselves as a major factor that hindered participation of women.

4.1.2 Participation of women on election

One of the means of taking part in politics is by participating in election. Regarding this, the federal democratic republic of Ethiopia constitution grants equal right of electing and being elected to both women and men. In order to evaluate the participation of women in election, the researcher asked the respondents whether or not they took part in the previous local election and whether they have thought of running to be elected.

Accordingly, greater majority of the interviewed respondents stated that they have casted their vote in the previous local election. Only few of the respondents did not cast their vote on the previous local election. Those who missed the event of the election pointed out that they did not cast their vote believing that their vote will not bring change at all and others mentioned personal inconvenience as a reason of their absence from the event. Regarding the interest of women to run for local election to be elected; only one fourth of them indicated that they want to run for election and the remaining greater majority of the women interviewed replied that they do not think of running for an election. In line with this, the key informants interviewed expressed that the participation of women in election as a voter is really appreciated. However, from the focus group discussion and interview, the researcher identified that the participation of women in meaning full political participation other than vote casting is very low.

Even though attendance on the election is very promising, data shows that still there are remaining assignment to be done in achieving optimum participation of women on an election. In democratic society, the value of one vote is very determining in winning election. Therefore, due attention should be paid in encouraging women's participation on an election.

4.1.3 Representation of woman's in Town and kebele council

In analyzing the participation of woman's in politics, it is important to identify their representation in local government decision making body. There is one city council and eight kebele councils in Sebeta town administration. From the data collected through interview the researcher identified only one fourth of women respondents are member of either City or kebele council. Moreover same proportion of women interviewed are member of either political party (that is either ruling or opposition parties) and/or women association.

From this it is possible to understand that three fourth of interviewed women are not member of City or kebele councils, political party and women association. That means both councils, where the decisions regarding local issue are made, are dominated by man. It is in this scenario that the major decisions that affect the life of both are made. One can understand that it is less likely to expect decisions made in favor of woman's representation in the decision making bodies.

During the first (2008) and second round (2013) local election, the number of women who was a member of town administration council was 9 and 32 respectively. On the other hand

the proportion of men counterpart was 42 and 27 respectively. In the case of kebele administration council, the data from the town administration revealed that during the same time the number of women kebele councilor was 288 and 625 respectively. According to the data, during the second round local election, the proportion of men and women in kebele administration council become equal. This is due to the commitment made by the local government correct the imbalance of representation of women at kebele administration council. This shows that where there is greater determination and commitment by the government to enhance women equal involvement in decision making body, it is possible to have equal representation of women.

On the other hand, membership in political party and women's association is also another opportunity for women to participate in politics. However, data collected revealed that only one fourth of interviewed women are member of either political part or women association. This implies that the effort of political parties in increasing their membership is either do not directed towards women or totally non existence. In addition, even women's association which is specifically established to advance women's interest by solving their problems by them self which is respected to their political, economical and social problems is not doing much what it is established to do.

4.1.4 Participation in Town and kebele meeting

At local government level, one of the mechanisms by which people directly in engaged in politics is by participating in woreda/town and kebele meeting. Accordingly, women are expected to take part on a meeting held at local government level.

Greater than half of the interviewed women rarely take part in local meeting held by Town or kebele administration body. In addition, only one quarter of the interviewed women indicated that they always participate in a local government meeting. Rare participation in this sense means they at most attend the meeting ones per three months.

Those who never and rarely attend the meeting revealed that it is very difficult for them to frequently attend meeting due to the burden they have around their home. Moreover, they think that except for attendance purpose, their presence does not bring any change at all. However, the secretary of the OPDO party interviewed does not accept the claim made by the interviewed women. The key informant mentioned that their part values the participation of

women in local government meeting and they expect women to raise important issues on the meeting. Nevertheless, this does not practically happen in the study area.

On the other hand, the regular attendant believe it is good to attend that meeting for at least you will hear first hand information, will not be identified as absentees and you may also raise some relevant issues. This shows that the practice and value of meeting for discussion at local level does not have greater significance to the community as the people do not consider their voice and view be incorporated in the decision made by local authority. This is highly manifested by reason mentioned by both categories of women who rarely and regularly attend the meeting.

Furthermore, the researcher asked the respondents whether they have ever voluntarily brought governance-related issues to the attention of relevant government offices. While pretty majority of women interviewed replied that they have brought governance related issues to the attention of local government, the remaining stated that they did not do that. This may lead one to think that it implies that the participation of women in local politics is good.

4.2 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Almost all of the women interviewed believe in the importance of women equal participation in politics is needed in their local government. This indicates that the females have paid great attention to their role in local community's political life, expecting their interests to be represented in the local government decision making. In terms of actual participation, among all the female respondents interviewed, greater majority of them have participated in the local election recently conducted.

These two issues, i.e belief in equal participation and greater participation in vote casting, appear to be consistent throughout the three kebeles as the data collected through the interview shows. The good story, however, seems to stop here. Despite this apparently high level of electoral involvement and interest in participation, women are at great disadvantage in actual perception and participation of their local government. Based on the data collected through interview and focus group discussion, the researcher identified the following aspects related with women political participation at local level.

4.2.1 Restricted Participation

As stated by Wang and Dai (2010), political participation at local level includes various aspects such as democratic election, democratic decision-making and democratic management. Here,

democratic election is the involvement of women in recent kebele and town administration elections. Democratic decision making refers to the involvement of women in local decision making through participation in local assembly and meeting. On the other hand, democratic management is their participation in forwarding suggestion to the town/ kebele meeting and bringing governance related issues to the attention of local government body.

Each of these aspects provides opportunities for women to be involved. Response from the interview shows, however, that women's participation in these aspects is highly uneven. As Sebeta town OPDO office report shows, while a pretty majority of them do participate in election by casting a vote in the election for kebele and town administration committee, their participation in other aspects are much lower. Regarding the reason of their participation in casting vote in the election, majority of them explained that it is their political right and election is important to promote good governance. Other portion of women who participated in casting vote explained that it is due to frequent insistence from local government cadres and a fear that local government bodies may take some action on them if they do not participate. However, regarding the explained fear, the secretary of OPDO denied this. Rather, the key informant explained that their party really appreciates women participation in election and made a number of activities to encourage the women to voluntarily take part in election. Those who failed to vote in the election pointed that they missed the election due to personal inconveniency and believing that their vote has no value in determining who is going to be elected. Some of the participants of focus group discussion also supported this view.

Regarding democratic management, as it is showed on the data collected from sample respondents, while majority of the male citizens frequently take part in the deliberation and meeting at local level, the proportion for female's is very limited. That is, while about three quarters of male citizens frequently participated in deliberation of local affairs, only one quarter of the women do so. The degree of women's political involvement, either actual or psychological, continues to decline as we move to other aspects. In terms of democratic management, as it is revealed that women are much less likely than male to bring suggestions to the kebele committee regarding kebele affairs in Sebeta town administration.

However, the researcher identified that majority of the cases by which the women reported to local government body is reporting to local police on security issue or conflict, reporting when there is social service interruption and similar cases. In real political participation

sense, this does not constitute meaningful political participation like running for election, holding decision making position and raising key political issues to be considered by the government.

Therefore, it is possible to say that, like other forms of political participation, the political participation of women in Sebeta town is weak in terms of attending local government meeting, raising important political issues to get the government attention. Hence, from the interview the researcher understood that one of the causes of weak political participation of women in Sebeta town is the fear of the citizens that the ruling party cadres and police may take some action on them. However, the city mayor, OPDO secretary and women cabinet interviewed stated that their fear is baseless as the local government do not have an intention to take any action on the citizen because of their expression of their opinion. However, as the researcher understood, the experiences of women interviewed do not want to take a risk by expressing their views freely so far. Therefore, it is normal to expect women in this situation to only raise the issues that the local government of the area wants to be raised.

Women's participation in decision-making is essential for women's interests to be incorporated into governance. It has been widely experienced that governance structures which do not provide for ad-equate participation of women, often suffer from state interventions which are neither inclusive nor democratic. Including women, especially in local governments, is an essential step towards creating equal opportunities and gender sensitive policies. Since women should have an opportunity of expressing their needs and perspectives on social and political issues, it is important to involve women in governments to incorporate all of the societal viewpoints in policy and decision-making processes. Women are actively involved in household and community work and hence well aware of real issues faced by common people. This gives them insight and perspective which can be instrumental in sustainable overall development.

The presence of women in local governments serves as an encouragement for other women to enter diverse professions and leads to breaking stereotypes of women's roles in society and public space. People had gained confidence in women as good public administrators and local government representatives after seeing women making a positive difference in other people's life.

Women also suffer a serious deficit in psychological involvement, as well as daily interactions with local leaders. Given the relatively small size of the kebele community, one would expect that frequent interactions take place between kebele leaders and dwellers, and that the dwellers and their leaders know each other quite well. In fact, leaders (chairman of the kebele committee and Party secretary of the kebele party branch) are dwellers themselves, who often work on their pieces of land next to those other villagers. Indeed, the data show that close greater majority of male dwellers know their kebele chair man well. However, it is surprising that only few number of the interviewed women reported that they know their kebele chair man's well. Almost half of the women interviewed reported that they did not know the chair man at all. This indicates a far less degree of interaction between women and members in the local government bodies than the high level of voting rate would seem to suggest.

The study found that male and female show similar level of voting rates, but women appear less active in non-electoral participation. Such findings suggest that it is highly likely that when dealing with governance and politics-related issues, women tend to stay behind while their husbands, fathers, or sons handle things on their behalf.

For example, there are some women who asked their family members to write the ballot for them at an election, or when it comes to which candidate to vote, they normally take the opinion from their male family members. The data reveal a promising result regarding voting, but except for participating in the election, there is very limited space for more meaningful participation in self-governance of their community, such as in deliberation of village affairs. Even in the case of electoral participation, as it is discussed above, its quality is still problematic: many women go to vote without an aim to influence local affairs, possess very limited information about the candidates, and so forth.

4.2.2 Representation in Local Power Structure

At the local government level, the highest decision making body is woreda/town administration council. kebele administration council is the highest decision making body at the kebele level. Therefore, woreda and kebele administration council are considered to decision making body and local power structure.

Given that women account for more than half of the population, the seriousness of under-representation of women in the local governance structure is indeed staggering. While the

revised constitution of Oromia article 35 has explicitly stated that in each government body, special arrangement like affirmative action will be made to increase the representation of women, a significant portion of kebele and town administration council still have a very few female members. In many kebeles, women cadres simply do not exist.

Women's representation in branch Party organizations is also low compared to their men counterpart. Out of the total members of the OPDO branch party members (3900) in Sebeta town the female constitutes (1390) 35 percent. Women's representation in kebele administration council (cabinet) is even worse. Out of 8 kebele administration in Sebeta town administration, in 6 kebele administration council, the council does not have a female member (cadre) at all. To put it simply, out of 40 kebele administration cabinet there are only 2 female cadres. Those two women cadres presents from kebele 03 (Welate) and 04 (Furi) whereas kebele 01, 02(Alem gena) 05 (Dima), 06 (Delati), 07 and 08. This is only accounting for 5% of the total. In the kebeles where women are indeed represented in the different committees, the number of female members very rarely exceeds one.

The other critical decision making body at local government level is Town administration council. The Town administration council is also termed as Town cabinet and the members are heads of different sectors of the town administration. Accordingly, in Sebeta town administration there are 26 sectoral offices. This means there are 26 heads which are responsible for their office. Out of 26 woreda administration council or cabinets, there are only 3 female cabinets'. This means, out of the total number of Sebeta town administration cabinets', the female cabinets constitute only 11 percent. The remaining position is totally dominated by male cabinets. On the other hand, even among those women who make to the local government bodies or cabinets, the role they end up taking also suffer discrimination.

It is easy for observers to note that such arrangements coupled with low educational status of women result in women cadres were simply represented for decoration purposes, i.e. to meet the political correctness quota of including at least one female member in the government body. Meanwhile, it is often neglected that such arrangements in fact re-enforces gender inequality in public life. The result: government organization in the local level become highly gendered, as some portfolios are always kept under male cadres areas of responsibility: such as Mayor, Vice Mayor, OPDO Secretary, Revenue agency, Land Development and Management, and the like, while some others, less crucial portfolios are

often explicitly reserved for women cadres, such as: vice head of Youth and Sport Affairs, Women and children office Affairs, Women League and vice of different office heads.

4.2.3 Civic Competence

While women's participation has been characterized by a high voting turn out, the quality of their participation has also been comprised by lack of civic competence and initiatives. Civic competence generally refers to the cognitive abilities and skills necessary for participation in politics (Lawless and Fox, 2012). For example, an individual's ability to understand the platforms of two competing candidates will affect whether her vote reflects a genuine political choice.

A most important aspect of civic competence relates to a citizen's political knowledge such as her understanding of electoral rules and understanding the role each government institution is suppose to play, among others. A second aspect relates to her ability to understand political issues, such as how a raise in tax rate will affect her life, what resources are needed for a new public project, and so forth. Because a certain level of civic competence is necessary for an individual citizen to make informed decision when she participate in politics, political scientists generally believe that civic competence of citizens affects the quality of democracy to a great extent.

Many aspects that affect women's participation can be grouped into a civic competence category. The researcher first note a high level of passivity existing in the majority of women. While majority of females interviewed did cast their votes during the recent local election, the data collected through the interview reveals that, for most women, their involvement in electoral politics remains marginal and superficial. In line with this, the discussion made with participants of focus group discussion confirmed the same situation. The key informants of the study also stated the low level of women participation in events preceding the election.

In the local election, a series of events precedes the vote casting: an election committee will be formed and publically announced, electoral and campaign rules will be discussed and publicized, candidates will be announced, and campaign speeches will be held, among others. Of the female dwellers interviewed, only insignificant proportion of them participated in all these events before the election. That is, greater majority of women simply paid no attention to all those events that were supposed to be part of the election process.

Furthermore, of all the females that voted in the election, only around one fourth of them made an effort to know the background and campaign proposals of the candidates. That is, the majority of women casted their votes without knowing what the candidates stood for or what their individual merits were. It is highly possible that they casted their votes according to opinion of their husband or other male family members, or simply casted their vote according to lineage lines or fellow neighbors' views.

In fact, a very insignificant number of the interviewed women let someone else cast the vote on their behalf as the individual were unable to identify on the election card whom to elect. During the interviews, many women explained the reasons they went to the poll was that they did not —dare not to go because it is required by kebele and town administration, they went —mainly in order to finish the task as required by the government body, or —there are so many people there that it was required to attend the event with dwellers.

According to Wang and Dai (2010), a major indicator of civic competence relates to an individual's knowledge regarding democratic rules. That is, whether a citizen understands how government is organized, how his or her representative or leader is chosen, and what powers and duties the elected officials have; constitutes the basic knowledge necessary for an individual to play the role of an active citizen. The researcher found that women's command of such political or civic knowledge is highly problematic. The researcher asked their knowledge of rules and regulation of kebele and town administration, which is the legal base on which local government administration is undertaken, and the Law related with Women's Rights and Interests.

The greater majority of the interviewees have only limited understanding of rules and regulation governing their town administration and a law related to women right in politics. As it is presented by respondents during data collection, only a few of the interviewed respondents have the knowledge of rules and regulations governing their local government administration. A staggering majority reported that they did not know it at all. Comparatively, greater than half of their men counterpart stated that they know the law governing their local government very well.

Another major dimension of civic competence represents an individual's belief in her ability in participating in politics or changing government policies, something also known as political efficacy. Besides a belief in one's ability to understand politics (as shown above), a high level of civic competence only comes with a strong sense of belief in one's ability to

play an active or leading role in politics (Wang and Dai, 2010). The study conducted revealed that women show a very low level of efficacy. As it's shown on data collected through interview, and foregoing discussion, very few women would stand for an election indeed. However, majority of men interviewed in the study area replied that they would run for an election. Women in the study area, even if they do run for election, as the existing situation shows, they seldom stand for leadership positions and they often go for a marginal role.

4.3 CONSTRAINTS TO WOMEN POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Multiple factors contribute to the situation of today where women are underrepresented in political leadership. Women's political involvement, participation and access to formal political power structures are linked to many different structural and functional constraints which differ across countries. Several authors claim that women's absence in the political arena derives from the hindrances related to political, socio-economic, ideological and psychological barriers. Accordingly, the researcher identified different factors raised by respondents as a constraint for women political participation. The factors that are considered as a constraint for women political participation is thematically organized and critically analyzed as follows.

4.3.1 Educational Constraints

In relation with the issue under investigation, it is important to look at the determinants of the problematic situations in local government regarding women's political participation. Above all, a relatively low level of education makes women disadvantageous when comparing to male counterparts.

Social science research has extensively shown education as a critical factor affecting an individual's ability to harness economic, social, and political opportunities (Delys, 2014). More specific to political participation, education partially determines an individual's cognitive skills, social and political capitals, and civic competence. During the interviews, almost all women and majority of men stated girls' education as an important factor in promoting participation of women in politics. In line with the views of the respondents, key informants and participants of the focus group discussion unanimously stressed on the importance of girls education in political participation,

Data obtained from respondents of sample kebeles is highly revealing. Majority of interviewed women received maximum preliminary school education. Only one fourth of

them were able to go to some kind of college or university. By contrast, more than two third of all the males receive an education level of secondary school or higher. The proportion of men receiving at least college level education is two times that of the females.

The educational disadvantages of women in political participation is evident in how important education is a factor affecting the likelihood of a woman to be involved in local governance. In all kebeles, the females involved in local government possess a level of education much higher than an average female in the kebele. Of the town administrations' 3 cabinet members, all of them received college or university education. Further, the two kebele administration council members have attended college education.

This means that women with college education or higher are active in local government politics. Keeping in mind that this level of education accounted for only one fourth of all women in the sample kebeles, this figure can be interpreted as that on average, a woman with college education or above is more likely to become a local government cadre. Hence the small number of females who received a relatively high level of education has a much higher probability of involvement in local politics.

Education is important not only because it prepares the individual with literacy and other cognitive skills that are necessary for involvement in local politics. It is important also because it helps overcome psychological barriers within an individual that prevent her from becoming a competent citizen (Delys, 2014). For example, it is likely to find in women's a lack of confidence, even self-contempt, which disables them from actively engaging in local affairs.

During the interviews, when asked why you did not stand for the election? ; Greater than half of the women interviewed answered "I don't think I can do it at all because I lack enough education". When asked would you nominate yourself to be elected as a kebele chair person or representative? The interviewees' initial expression often indicated that they utterly shocked by the question itself. When they gave their answers, almost all of them said no, and only a few respondents indicated that they could have a try. Even for those women holding a position in a local government bodies, they often lack the self-confidence, initiatives, and assertiveness necessary for an active leader.

4.3.2 Economic Barriers

Analyzing from social history, the major element affecting females' participation in politics is their lower status in economy. In a traditionally agricultural society, division of labor is highly gendered. As the man takes charge outside the household, while the woman takes charge of domestic issues mentality still dominates many people's thinking. Hence it is normal that women are not expected to actively engage in public affairs. Men being the main breadwinners for their family, women take a subordinate position even at home. The interview shows that majority of women interviewed said the major income of the family is earned by men. There are also women who said both earn some portion of income and only very few women earn more than husband. As most women are economically dependent on their husbands, they also assume much less active roles when it comes to participating in politics.

4.3.3 The Awareness of Social Gender

According to Wang and Dai (2010), gender can be distinguished into two types: biological gender, referring to the biological differences between males and females, and social gender, referring to the different expectations, demands and limits placed on males and females by the society. Social gender, therefore, is the social construction of a different identity of women. The inadequate participation of women in politics can be attributed to inequalities resulted from social gender.

The data collected revealed that almost all of the interviewee (male and female) agreed that Male and Female dwellers should play equal role in political participation. Though such believe in equal gender participation in politics is very important in shaping people's behaviors, the reality shows that believe does not transformed to practice yet. Regarding this issue, more than half of interviewee (women and men) felt that, practically, political participation at a local level in Sebeta town is not based on gender equality and men and women are not equally taking part in local politics.

The reasons they forwarded regarding low level of women political participation in Sebeta town generally revolves around socially constructed gender role. Majority of them argued that previously existing believe of the community that limits the participation of women to domestic affairs is not totally eradicated. Others argued that there is still a limitation in bringing woman's to the party membership and the town administration's commitment in

increasing women political participation in terms of appointing them as a cabinet and other decision making positions is still not enough.

4.3.4 Institutional Factors

While the current institutions of local election and local government have provided the necessary foundation for women's involvement in local politics, to ensure a stronger representation and more active involvement of women, many problems still need to be fixed. Many have pointed out that insufficient attention is given by the ruling party in increasing the representation of women in local government. But, in very little area the government is on the way to improve women representation. For instance during the recent national government election, the greater majority of candidates nominated by the party to run for national government are Female (6 out of 9) candidates.

Regarding this, the researcher asked the secretary of OPDO of Sebeta town administration whether there is quota system or not. He replied that at a party level there is a principle that guarantees women to be represented by appropriate quota. And, he told that, it was vague to refer to appropriate quota, for no definite regulation on how many females should have membership, nor the clear method to guarantee this kind of appropriate quotas. As a result, this legal requirement has not substantially improved the political status of Women in Sebeta Town Administration. Worse, often the female member in kebele and town administration council (cadre's) is assigned the position of women's affairs, hence reproducing the gender inequality in the local political structure. Woman membership in such governing bodies becomes a decoration for political correctness. Because some nominal political position is going to be assumed to be reserved for women where as key position is left for men counterparts.

In addition, the weakness of women's league and federation also exerts substantial damages on women's enthusiasm to participate in politics. Comparing to their male counterparts, women's lack knowledge related to political participation, making the support from women's league and federation highly critical in filling information gap and enhancing their awareness. With the low level of women's dream in running for local elections and under representation in local government structure, women should be able to draw support from the associations and leagues. But the leagues and federation's presence and capacity did not resulted in what is expected.

The study found that due to the Party branch's control of the women's Federation's cadre appointment and funding, it dominates the women's Federation's branch much more than it is the case at upper levels of the government. As a result, the women's Federation is only able to play an assistant's role to integrate women into various key tasks of village's Party branch, while lacking much room for independent activities. Hence although nationwide, successful cases have been reported that women's Federations could play an active role in promoting women's participation in politics.

The interviewed respondents spoke for such a case. When asked can women's organization play positive roles in promoting women political participation?, one fifth of them stated that they can play a positive role, but not so great. The explanation they raised is, yes, meaning it can carry out routine transmission of messages in accordance with the order from the upper level government, but lacking the ability to play a more independent role. In the interviews, when asked why they did not elect women as their leaders, many respondents answered: the Women's Federation of the area does not have any influence at all, as it is actually under the control of other cadres. The researcher also noted that the data collected from key informant also revealed the weakness of women league and federation in practically improving the participation of women in local politics in Sebeta town.

Generally, based on the data collected through interview and document review, the study critically examined that the mix of numerous factors, including traditional patriarchal stereotyping of women, gendered division of labor and responsibilities, economic structures, institutional norms and procedures and inadequate state intervention, lower average educational levels of females, political culture and male-centered social practices have all been put forward to explain this phenomenon.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

The researcher has presented the study and findings of women's political participation in Sebeta town administration. With its economic and social development ranking in the upper segment of Oromia regions towns, the finding of the study on Sebeta town administration will give relevant information about women political participation at a local level. The data show that women accounted for 5% of the members in kebele administration council (cabinets) in Sebeta. At the woreda/ town administration level, women constituted 11% of woreda administration councils (sectoral heads).

Women have been more successful in casting their vote in election. More than 86% of women casted their vote in a recent election. However, lack of sufficient information about the candidates running for election and went for election merely to fulfill the task jeopardize the positive story in the study area. Very few women have made any effort to know background and merit of the candidates running for election. The involvement of women in politics is almost stops here as the only participate in vote casting. Only one tenth of women in the area would run for an election. Almost all of them feel that they are not fit for election personally and also the existing situation doesn't allow them to run for election conveniently.

Regarding the participation of women on kebele administration meeting, Majority of them don not participate on a meeting at all. While majority of the Male dwellers frequently take part in the deliberation and meeting at local level, the proportion for female's amounts to only one third. The study found that women feel that their involvement in such type of discussion has nothing to change and they prefer to stay at business and hear the decision from men who attend regularly. Hence, it is very unlikely to expect decisions made under the domination of men to fully incorporate the political interest of females.

In terms of bringing meaningful governance related issues to the attention of their local government, women show little initiatives in making government accountable to the people. They only voluntarily forward security and social service related issues like crime reporting, water service and waste disposal issues to the attention of the local government. In fact, the study identified that women's fear of intimidation and other political action by the local cadres is the reason for not raising other meaningful political issues. Given the relatively

small size of the kebele community, one would expect that frequent interactions take place between kebele leaders and dwellers, and that the dwellers and their leaders know each other quite well. However, the study found that while, the Majority of male dwellers know their kebele chairman well; almost half of women do not know the chairmen of their kebele at all.

Though the study found that male and female show similar level of voting rates, but women appear less active in non-electoral participation. Such findings suggest that it is highly likely that when dealing with governance and politics-related issues, women tend to stay behind while their husbands, fathers, or sons handle things on their behalf. Greater majority of women only participate in a political activity they consider as responsibility of citizens, mainly election.

Few would deny that since the 1990s, the system of local self-governance has promoted female participation in politics, and in the process improved female civic competence and political efficacy. But nevertheless, a wide range of institutional, socioeconomic, structural, and cultural factors still prevent a more equal representation of women in local government power structure.

The study revealed that, beside lack of equal education opportunity, one of the hindrances to women political participation is the historically rooted gender based division of labor. More importantly, lack of economic power of women to cover their living expense is also limiting their participation. As they lack their own income, they consider attending meeting, election campaign and other as time wasting, because they have to take care of their domestic affairs like rearing children and cooking. Finally, low level of commitment from women's league, town administration, and the ruling party also worsen the case. Therefore, meaningful action from the ruling party and town administration is very important in enhancing political participation of women in Sebeta town administration.

5.2 Recommendation

Based on the finding of the study and literature review showing similar cases in related situation, the researcher forwarded that the following efforts may help lead to more participation of women in politics and eventually a stronger presence of women in local government, and a more competent perception of politics by women themselves.

Legal and Institutional Improvements

There has to be a law specifying the appropriate proportion of female members in local government decision making body. As practices of other countries (for instance Norway and India) shows, the quota system is very important in increasing the number of women representation in government structure. Such practices need to be always strictly followed at all local government administration level. Furthermore, more efforts are needed to improve quality of elections by devising mechanism by which particularly women get more information about background of the candidate and election rules.

Civic Programs for Women

Purposeful education and training programs can reduce traditional backward prejudices and help females become active and competent citizens. These educations and training can enhance females' capabilities and help them break up grass ceilings in politics more easily. Meanwhile, civic education programs targeting adult citizens are also needed. In many developing countries, woman's groups play critical roles in supplying such targeted civic programs to rural women. In Sebeta town, however, such civic groups are hardly playing this role.

Most women-related civic projects need to take place under the patronage of the Women's Federation. More work is needed in order to enhance females' capabilities and promote their participation in village self-governance, many programs are needed to increase their economic independence, human, social, and political capital, as well as knowledge and skills directly related to political participation. Microfinance programs providing more economic opportunities for women, economic cooperatives that bring information and advanced technologies to women, and civic trainings that bring political knowledge and skills to women are all needed.

Civil Society Participation by Women

It is now widely agreed that involvement in civil society or voluntary groups improves social cohesion, extend social networks, and enhance citizens' ability in political participation. As has been argued, citizens belonging to organizations will more actively participate in politics. Meanwhile the awareness of being with an organized group also propels them to participate. The creation and expansion of such groups will bring significant impacts society, while

involvement in such groups will provide information, training, and networks conducive to women's participation in politics.

Gender Mainstreaming

Gender mainstreaming refers to conscious efforts to assess gendered impacts of any policy actions. A gender perspective should be built into the mainstream of political agenda, and more women should be included in decision making processes at the local government level. Many societies around the world have put in gender mainstreaming measures. Even though there are offices established for gender mainstreaming at local government level, the finding of the study shows that still they are not playing sufficient role. A large space exists for local government and advocacy non-governmental organizations to play a positive role to promote political participation of women at local level.

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APPENDEX-1:**INTERVIEW GUIDELINES FOR HOUSEHOLDS, CITY AND KEBELE COUNCIL MEMBERS AND CABINETS****I. Detail questions related with political participation**

1. What is your opinion about political participation of women in Sebeta town?
2. Do you think that women are equully participating in politics?
3. What is your opinion about kebele and woreda election?
4. Have you voted in recent local election? If yes what were your reason? If no why?
5. Have you ever let someone else cast the vote on your behalf?
6. Have you participated in electoral events preeceding the election? If no why?
7. Have made an effort to know the background and proposals of the candidate or policies of the parties? If no why?
8. Do you ever think about running for the chairperson of kebele or woreda council/ administration yourself?
9. Are you a member of any of kebele or woreda council?
10. How often do you participate in your kebele and woreda meetings?
11. Have you ever voluntarily brought governance-related issues to the attention of relevant government offices? If no why?
12. Do you have enough knowlegde of law of your kebele and town administration? If no why?
13. What is your opinion about the importance of girls' education in promoting women political participation?
14. What do you think about the role of women's organizations in promoting women's political participation?
15. Do you think that there are good conditions that promote participation of women Sebeta town local politics? If yes explain.

III. Questions related with factors affecting women political participation

16. Are there challenges/factors that hinder women from political participation in Sebeta town administration? If yes, what are the factors that hinder women's political participation at local level?
17. What do you think the possible strategies/ mechanisms to deal with these challenges and promote participation of women in local politics?
18. What are aspects of political participation do you think explain women political participation and you consider as akey?
19. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of women's political participation in Sebeta town?
20. What should be the possible strategies to promote the involvement of women in politics in Sebeta town?
21. Generally, what is your opinion about political participation of women in Sebeta town administration?

APPENDEX-2:**FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION (FGD) GUIDELINES FOR TARGET GROUPS**

1. What is your opinion about political participation of women in Sebeta town?
2. Do you think that there is equal gender participation in election, council membership, attending meeting and other political activities?
3. What is your opinion about the importance of girls' education in promoting women political participation?
4. What do you think about the role of women's organizations in promoting women's political participation in Sebeta town?
5. Do you think that there are good conditions that promote participation of women Sebeta town local politics?
6. Are there challenges/factors that hinder women from political participation in Sebeta town administration? If yes, what are the factors that hinder women's political participation at local level?
7. Is there any effort made by your office/ party that helps to promote women political participation? If so explain.
8. What do you think the possible strategies/ mechanisms to deal with these challenges and promote participation of women in local politics?
9. What are aspects of political participation do you think explain women political participation and you consider as a key?
10. How do you evaluate the effectiveness of women's political participation in Sebeta town?
11. What should be the possible strategies to promote the involvement of women in politics in Sebeta town?
12. Generally, what is your opinion about political participation of women in Sebeta town administration?

APPENDEX-3:**INTERVIEW GUIDLINES FOR KEY INFORMANT**

1. What is your opinion on general state of political participation of women in election, meeting, party membership and etc in Sebeta town?
2. Do you think that there is equal gender participation in election, council membership, cabinet election, attending meeting and other political activities?
3. What is your opinion about the importance of political parties, women office, women association and women councilors in promoting women political participation?
4. What progress have you noticed so far in the town administration in women political participation?
5. What do you think are the key aspect of political participation and determinant factors of low level of political participation?
6. What are good conditions that promote participation of women Sebeta town local politics?
7. What are the major challenges that hinder women from political participation in Sebeta town administration?
8. What do you suggest to curb the problems related with women political participation in your town administration