

Women's participation at local government
decision making bodies a case study in Amhara
regional state, South wollo zone, Ethiopia



**A thesis submitted to Larenstien University of
Professional Education in partial Fulfillment of the
requirements for the Degree of Masters of Development,
specializing Social inclusion gender and rural livelihood**

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research paper to by believed children, who continuously supported me taking responsibility for them selves, to allow me to concentrate on my study and finally reach to this success.

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ACRONYM

AIDS: Acquired Ammonal Deficiency syndrome

ANRS: Amhara National Regional State

BFED: Bureau of Finance and Economic Development

HTP : Harmful traditional Practice

HIV : Human Immuno Virus

SNNPR: Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples regional State

VAW : Violence Against Women

WAO : Women Affairs Office

WAB : Women Affairs Bureau

ABSTRACT

Despite the widespread movement towards democratization in most of the countries in the world, women still are largely underrepresented at most levels of government, decision making positions, and have made little progress in attaining political power. In accordance with this there was an attempt of Dessiezuria local government to increase women's participation from 14% to 25% at district and from 24% to 35 at village level from the year 2004-2008. These include participation of women at cabinet and council and management levels. Nevertheless there is underachievement, this study therefore examines why under achievement of women participation at local government decision making bodies. It further identifies the constraints of Dessiezuria district local government to achieve indicators above and give recommendation for the improvement of women's participation in decision making at local government bodies.

Qualitative methodology with semi-structured individual interviews, focus group discussion and observation were the methodologies and methods to collect the primary data. In addition relevant literatures reviewed and secondary data were collected. Harvard gender analytical framework and matrix analysis method used to analyze the data.

The evidence from the study reveals that the constraints of local government for under achieving women's participation in decision making are lack of technical capacity and shortage of budget; lack of strategy on accountability of staffs in addressing gender equality issues, and community negative perception towards women participation in local government decision making bodies in general. In particular there is unwillingness of husbands to allow women's participation in local government decision making bodies and women have limited network with village decision making bodies.

Some of the major recommendations are improving the skill and knowledge of staffs in planning gender sensitive project; develop accountability strategies to improve the commitment of the staffs and looking for fund to scale-up successful interventions. In addition awareness raising of community on gender relation is recommended.

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the research

Dessiezuria district local government body with the support of Sida Amahara Rural Development Program (SARDP) planned to increase women's participation in decision making bodies from 14% to 25% at district and from 24% to 35% at village in the year 2004 – 2007. According to 2007 SARDP's preliminary assessment result this target has not been fully achieved. This study will examine the constraints of local government for not achieving the above indicators.

1.2. Problem statement

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has been providing support to the rural development efforts of the Amhara National Regional State. (ANRS) since 1993. It started in an ad hoc manner with assistance to road, planning capacity enhancement and natural resources management. The ANRS Program, now known as the Sida Amhara Rural Development Program (SARDP), first phase started in June 1997, and is now in its third phase of operations (2004–2008).

The aim of the program is to enhance food security in 30 districts of east Gojam and south wollo zones of Amhara region.

Dessiezuria district is one of 21 districts in South wollo zone, Amhara region, Ethiopia targeted beneficial from Sida Amahara Rural Development Program (SARDP) since 1997. Most of the budget related to infrastructure development, agriculture and natural resource development, economic diversification and good governance is covered by SARDP. Cross cutting issues like environment, family planning, HIV/AIDs and gender equality are integrated with the above four programs which are planned and implemented by Dessiezuria district and financially and technically supported by SARDP.

Dessiezuria Women's Affairs Office (WAO), which is under the direct supervision of district administration, is coordinating gender equality issue of all sectors in the district. WAO is sharing budget allocated to good governance from SARDP with other 4-5 offices. Hence WAO submit plan as per the budget.

Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision-making, the goals of equal, development cannot be achieved. (FWCW, 1995:1), in agreement with this statement WAO planned to increase women participation in local government decision making bodies from the year 2004 – 2008, which is third phase for SARDP's support to Amhara region.

The WAO therefore developed indicators at district from 14% at present to 25% end of 2008 and at village 24% at present to 35% in the end of 2008. While WAO was planning and developing indicators to increase women's participation in local government decision making level it has considered the impediments to women participation in decision making bodies. It means interventions which will help to overcome the impediments to women participation were included in the planning. These interventions were focused at decreasing women's workload, increasing their income, strengthening women's organization, gender awareness training to change the attitude of the community and women themselves etc.

There was preliminary assessment in the end of 2007, to see whether the indicators were met or not. Its result shows the indicators are not fully met. Hence SARDP is questioning why under achievement with all those efforts made by local government particularly WAO and SARDP's support.

1.3. Objective of this study is:

To give recommendation for the improvement of women's participation in decision making at local government bodies, by identifying the constraints that local government bodies face to meet the indicators of increasing women's participation in decision making bodies.

1.4. Main question and sub-questions

Main question

What are the constraints of local government to meet the indicators of increasing women participation at local government decision making bodies?

Sub questions:

1. To what extent the impediments to women's participation were tackled by local government program interventions which were supported by SARDP?
2. What role do other organizations have in addressing women participation in decision making?
3. How effective and efficient was the support of SARDP towards achieving the indicator women's participation in decision making bodies?
4. What is the perception of male and female community members at village towards women's participation in decision making bodies?

1.5. Significance of the study

The outcomes of this study may provide useful information for the improvement of women's participation in decision making at local government bodies at Dessiezuria district, south Wollo zone Amhara region. Since SARDP is working in 30 districts in South wollo zone and east Gojam they would be the primary users as dessiezuria does.

Also for other districts in the region it would be relevant, since the majority of the ethnic groups in the region are same, and administered with the same district and regional bureaus.

1.6. Outline and delineation of the study

The research is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1, presents, introduction, background, problem statement, research objective, main research question and sub-questions; Chapter 2, looks at research methodology and methods; Chapter 3, looks at the concept participation, International and national representation of women in decision making and factors affecting women's decision making; Chapter 4, highlights the background information of the research area; Chapter 5, looks at the description of result; Chapter 6, looks at discussions of the result against the literature review and finalizes by giving conclusion and recommendations.

a) Methodology

Qualitative verses Quantitative

To collect primary data qualitative data collection method was selected. Because quantitative measurements provide numerical precision about such properties as amount and size, whereas qualitative measurements provide useful information about people's perceptions" (Winter, 2000).

A qualitative research methodology is considered the most appropriate for this study because it provides space for zone, district and village leaders and women and men community members to articulate their experiences on their own terms; It gives room for respondents interpretations and explanations in the foreground rather than erasing their individualism through quantitative numerical clumps and more information would and could be shared regarding constraints for under representation of women participation in decision making and perceptions of women and men community members through a qualitative research methodology.

A quantitative approach often builds in unnoticed assumptions regarding gender and culture. These types of assumptions can potentially overlook and ignore aspects of the research connected to the study. Hence, results may be twisted to fit certain expectations, particularly along gender and culture lines. Moreover It seemed more suitable because the participants would be able to articulate their concerns in their own words. This helps preserve respondents speech' in order to ensure an equitable environment for discussion. The qualitative approach aims at developing a stronger collaborative rather than a hierarchical relationship.

As this study is partially evaluating the relevance of interventions the last three years in tacking the impediments of women participation in decision making; and its contribution to increase their participation in local government decision making, qualitative approach integrated with other methods like observation generate relevant result.

In summary:

- ✚ It is holistic and accurate to reflect complex realities like community perceptions, attitudes etc;
- ✚ It is better to understand the processes;
- ✚ Because it requires in depth face –to-face field work better relationship with respondents and more continuous contact leading to more accurate information;
- ✚ It has helped to continuously reflect own biases and prejudice;
- ✚ Focus on information from individual as well as groups which has helped me to get detailed information, triangulation and developing good levels of rapport;
- ✚ It is important tool to generate more information, by proving;

b) Method

i. Semi-structured interview

Semi-structured interview is one of the methods I have chosen for this research. This is because:

- ✚ It obtains specific quantitative and qualitative information from a sample of the population. Hence the qualitative data obtained was supported by quantitative information, it was easier to answer the why questions;
- ✚ It also obtains general information relevant to specific issues, (ie: to probe for what is not known): for example: issues related to women's less benefit from interventions, further probe to identify reasons and etc.
- ✚ It also helps to gain a range of insights on specific issues.

Since my research is looking general issues like the constraints of the local government to participate women in decision making bodies and specifically the attitude, commitment, strategies and actions of each respondents in the research area, general and specific, as well as qualitative and quantitative information were required. Therefore semi-structured interview was used.

In addition semi-structured interview facilitates a strong rapport and empathy between those involved, allows greater flexibility of coverage, and enables the interview to enter new areas of discussion. It also produces richer data. Semi-structured interviews have also been characterized and critiqued as a helpful method to address the inter-subjectivity and non-hierarchical relationships between researchers and participants.

One of the benefits of a semi-structured interview is the rich information that is offered. In using the semi-structured interview framework, the questions that I asked were general and open-ended so that the interviewee could take the discussion to the issues that s/he felt was relevant, thus crafting a conversation with a purpose. It was for these reasons that I chose the semi-structured face-to-face interview as the best research method.

I had only checklists, but the majority of questions were created during the interview, allowing myself and the person being interviewed the flexibility to probe for details or discuss issues at the spot.

ii. Focus group discussion

The second method I have used was focus group discussion. It involved both men and women community members who have better and low awareness level in gender issues. This method helped me to validate the answers from semi-structured interview.

In addition focus groups have a high apparent validity since the idea is easy to understand, the results are believable. Also, they are low in cost, one can get results relatively quickly, and they can increase the sample size of a report by talking with several people at once. (Marshall et al1999). With only having discussion with four groups I have managed to reach 18 respondents. Moreover It is used to gather information on the perception of men and women community members towards women participation in local government decision making and why there is low representation of women.

Questions were asked in an interactive group setting where participants were free to talk with among group members.

iii. The Interview

It was planned to undertake twenty five interviews, but actually I have managed to interview 15. Four focus group discussion and eleven face –to – face semi-structured interview. The focused group discussion included men and women community members at different age and sex. A total of 18 community members participated, 44% are women. While face-to-face semi-structured interview mainly focused on senior zone, district and village government staffs. These are political party leaders, heads of the zone, district and villages and experts. It took two weeks including the week ends. Most of the interviews take place in the district main town and two villages within the district.

To facilitate free discussion women and men groups were separated in Abatokoto village, but in Dajole the women were free to speak in front of men, therefore mixed groups were interviewed.

iv. Data Collection Team

It was planned to join two experts from the regional and zonal women's affairs bureau to collect the data together with me. The purpose was to help them to understand the constraints for the under achievement and own the outcome from the research. It was not possible due to the staffs were busy with some other activities to achieve this plan rather district women's affairs office expert was with me in all the interviews.

v. Observation

In addition to the above methods observation was done to the Environment of the research area in general and interviewees in particular. It has helped to validate the information obtained with the existing situation.

2.3. Secondary Data collection

The secondary data was collect from evaluation, program documents and gender mainstreaming strategy document of SARDP and district and zone women's affairs office records. Most of the information collected from secondary data are related to impediments to women's participation in local government decision making bodies.

The secondary data was collected as background information to understand the status of the interventions planned to tackle the impediments for women participation, and the level of contribution to wards improving women's participation in decision making. In addition to refer background to this study and the research are in general.

2.4. Literature review

Relevant, statistical data on participation of women in decision making at international, regions and country level collected. The factors contributed for under representation of women in decision making at local government bodies were reviewed. The factors contributed for women's under representation: socio-cultural, economic and political; policies, legislations and actions and gender sensitive strategies identified by other researches were reviewed.

2.5. Data Analysis

The framework analysis was used to analyze the data, by categorizing a series of questions under sub questions. Then each sub question is charted by completing a matrix or table where each case has its own row and columns represent the subtopics. Cells contain relevant summaries from the data set. The collected data was compiled into tables. Using the tables the data analyzed and interpreted. Debriefing was done for Government staffs particularly district and zone women's affairs office head and experts on the outcome of the research, and their feed backs taken into consideration.

In addition the literature review was used as a framework to analyse the data. The result of the literature review that is the different factors contributing for under representation of women against factors contributing under achievement of increasing women's participation in local government decision making bodies resulting in outcomes on constraints local government to increase women's participation in decision making bodies. The following figure illustrates this.

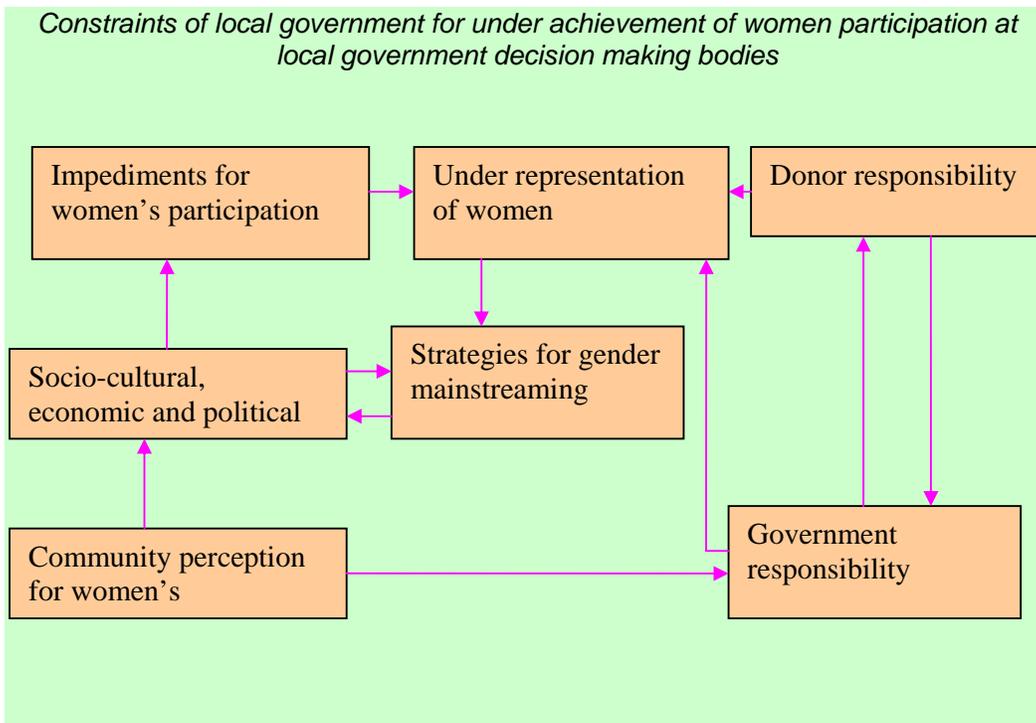


Figure 2: framework for data analysis

Gender analysis

On top of this gender analysis tools were used to analyse the gender sensitivity of target offices in the district, addressing the needs of women. Hence Harvard gender analysis frameworks have been used. Tools like division of labour, access and control, decision making and Influencing factors.

CHAPTER III: PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN DECISION MAKING AND FACTORS AFFECTING THEIR PARTICIPATION

This chapter contains the concept definition of this research which is participation and literature review of various documents on the factors contributed for under representation of women in decision making position. It starts with the level of under representation of women in decision making at international and regional levels; different factors causes for under representation like socio-cultural, economic and political and strategies international and nation were covered.

3.1 Definitions of concepts

The concepts which are defined below are taken from different literatures and are contextualised in to my working definition to give insights and guide readers about the study.

Participation

Different people defined participation in different ways. Chambers definition of participation is “ a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and decisions and resources which affect them” (World Bank, 1994).

According to Human Development Report, “participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political process that affects their lives” (1993:1). Participation has both a narrow and wider connotation. In a narrow sense participation means some specific action by which the citizen participates for a limited purpose. And in a wider sense participation refers to the role of members of the general public as distinguished from that of appointed officials, including civil servants, in influencing the activities of government or in providing directly for community needs (Rahman, 1991:14-15).

There is also participation in the form of social movements such as non-governmental organizations, civil society groups including political parties, trade unions and business organizations, which articulate interests, mobilizes support for these and lobbies governmental and non-governmental bodies to outline and implement policies addressing these interests. On the other hand there is a political participation that is representation in elected public bodies such as parliaments, state and local governments and global social and economic institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank and the World Trade Organization which responds to participatory pressures through policy making and implementation.

Participation to this research is representation of women in elected public bodies such as district and village council and cabinet and local government managerial position.

Local Government

Local government is basically an organized social entity with a feeling of oneness. By definition, local government means an intra-sovereign governmental unit within the sovereign state dealing mainly with local affairs, administered by local authorities and subordinate to the state government (Jahan, 1997:92).

In political terms, it is concerned with the governance of a specific local area, constituting a political sub-division of a nation, state or other major political unit. In

the performance of its functions, it acts as the agent of the state. In other words, the local government is an integral part of the political mechanism for governance in a country. Then, as body corporate with juristic person, it represents a legal concept (Muttalib and Khan, 1983:2).

According to the Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia , "Local Government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be entrusted to bodies. These are District and village. District is the lower government administrative unit.

3.2. Women right is human right

Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings, whatever our nationality, place of residence, sex, national or ethnic origin, color, religion, language, or any other status. We are all equally entitled to our human rights without discrimination. These rights are all interrelated, interdependent and indivisible. (Universal declaration of human right 1948)

It also states that everyone has the right to take part in the Government of his/her country. The empowerment and autonomy of women and the improvement of women's social, economic and political status is essential for the achievement of both transparent and accountable government and administration and sustainable development in all areas of life.

Human rights entail both rights and obligations. States assume obligations and duties under international law to respect, to protect and to fulfill human rights. The obligation to respect means that States must refrain from interfering with or curtailing the enjoyment of human rights. The obligation to protect requires States to protect individuals and groups against human rights abuses. The obligation to fulfill means that States must take positive action to facilitate the enjoyment of basic human rights. At the individual level, while we are entitled our human rights, we should also respect the human rights of others.

All States have ratified at least one, and 80% of States have ratified four or more, of the core human rights treaties, reflecting consent of States which creates legal obligations for them and giving concrete expression to universality. Some fundamental human rights norms enjoy universal protection by customary international law across all boundaries and civilizations. However its implementation is very low.

3.3. Status of women participation in decision making position

According to Niraja, the last ten years there has been progress towards the equal representation of men and women in decision-making. As of September 2005, the global average for women in parliaments stands at 16.0 percent. Additionally, women have achieved 30 percent representation or more in national parliaments in 19 countries. However, progress has been uneven and slow and in some cases there have been significant setbacks. Twenty-two countries out of 167 had reversals in women's representation in parliaments, while ten remained static (IPU, 2005). Table 3 shows that the number of women heads of state also regressed.

Table 1: Women decision making bodies in the world 1995 – 2005

women	1995(percentage of total)	2005 (percentage of total)
Heads or state	6.4	4.2
Presiding Officers of Parliament	10.5	8.3
Parliament	11.3	15.3
Ministerial Positions	Data not available	14.3

Source: IPU, 2005. *Women in Politics: 1945-2005, Information kit.*

Progress in the political empowerment of women in Africa as well has been very slow although isolated cases of better progress can be identified at country level. “Africa’s regional average representation of women in national legislative assemblies stands at 11 per cent reflecting little progress in achieving the 30% target of women in decision-making positions by 1995 set by the UN Economic and Social Council.”¹ Another report similarly showed that women parliamentarians constituted only 10.4% of total parliamentarians across Africa by January 1997.

So far, six countries in Africa are said to be leading (*star performers*) in terms of women’s representation in national assemblies, mainly attributed to affirmative action and quotas, : South Africa 29.3%; Mozambique 25.2%; Seychelles 23.5%; Namibia 22.2%; Uganda 21%.² Although the progress is sluggish there is some improvement than past years. The table below shows changes of women representation and the situation of Africa compared to other regions.

Table 2: Women percentage in regions

	Single House or lower House	Upper House or Senate	Both Houses combined
Nordic countries	41.4%	---	---
Americas	21.6%	20.2%	20.8%
Europe - OSCE member countries including Nordic countries	21.2%	19.0%	20.7%
Europe - OSCE member countries excluding Nordic countries	19.3%	19.0%	19.2%
Asia	18.3%	16.6%	18.2%
Sub Sahara Africa	17.1%	20.8%	17.5%
Pacific	12.9%	31.8%	14.9%
Arab state	9.7%	7.0%	9.1%

Source: IPU, 2008

3.4. Why under representation of women in political decision making

The persistent under representation of women in political life and decision-making was a “democratic deficit” and the discrimination they faced worldwide hindered them from unleashing their full potential, excluding them from benefiting equally from development-related services (UN, 2007), there are various factors affecting women’s participation in local government decision making. These are laws, practices and initiatives that insure participation; socio-cultural and economic factors

¹ ECA/ACW *Achieving Good Governance: the Essential Participation of Women*, (40th Anniversary Conference Outcome, 1998) p.1

² Africa Leadership Forum: *Index on the Status of Women in Africa*, 1998, p.28

and impact of the political system on women's participation (UN 2005). These were drawn from the strategic objectives of Beijing platform for action in improving women in power and decision making.

A, Socio-cultural, economic and political factors

So what are the impediments that women in politics face³? At the outset, the difference between legally and the practice in reality itself is a significant feature. In many, if not most, countries of the world, translating that which one is entitled to on paper (whether that is a Constitution, a law, or any legal document) to that which one can actually achieve is in itself a major challenge. However, it is important to highlight that this is not just a feature of women's rights, but actually one of all human rights issues. The word of law therefore remains elusive, but it is nevertheless one of the most important empowering mechanisms for the achievement of rights.

Also worthy of note is the fact that few of the challenges to women's legal equality in the 21st century are really new. On the contrary, many of them have been passed down, so to speak, from previous generations. Nevertheless, some, such as access to technology, are a feature of scientific breakthroughs characteristic of the last 20 years only.

Impediments differ according to countries and regions, and even within one country they are not always of the same features. For the sake of simplifying what could be a long and interminable list therefore, the challenges are broken down into social/cultural, economic, and political spheres⁴.

Social/Cultural:

Despite the fact that 'culture' and debates about it, have elicited an entire discipline within the social sciences, it still remains an elusive concept to define. However, for practical purposes, it can be assumed that culture encompasses particular lifestyles derived from history, perceived traditions, as well as both a product of and a motor for contemporary social and political dynamics. In short, therefore, culture is that which surrounds us and plays a certain role in determining the way we behave at any given moment in time. By no means a static concept, culture defines and is both defined by events that are taking place both locally as well as regionally and internationally, it is shaped by individual events as well as collective ones, and it is a feature of the time or epoch we live in. Because it is so vast, culture is also often used as a tool to validate all manners of actions - not, all of which may be acceptable to all concerned - and are often intimately, connected to issues of identity. Cultural frameworks are not always imposed, but are open to manipulation and interpretation from many angles and sources.

³ These are referred to in almost every single publication mentioned in the references list. See particularly Marilee Karl's 1995. *Women in Empowerment: Participation and Decision Making*. London: Zed Books, pp. 1-14. Also see the UNDP Human Development Report of 1995; the IPU Plan of Action; and Azza Karam, Ed. 1998. *The International IDEA Handbook on Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers* (particularly article by Nadezhda Shvedova). What follows will be a brief summary of the main challenges.

⁴ This is not the best word to use in this context, since most of the challenges are political anyway, but for the lack of another appropriate word, this will be used.

A significant social feature resides in the double - if not triple - responsibilities of women: In most countries, women are perceived to have 'primary' responsibilities as wives and mothers. But in many cases, either as a result of a preference for personal development, or out of sheer economic necessity, women also go out to work in the employment market. Hence, a political career may well come in these cases either as a second or third job⁵. Juggling these different occupations and their consequent responsibilities is no easy task for anyone - man or woman.

Societal perceptions regarding the traditional division of labor, where women are seen as bound to certain functions only, are also an important barrier that many women the world over face. This idea is closely connected with a definition and understanding of space as dichotomized between the public and the private spheres, where women are meant to belong to the latter. These notions are remarkably persistent, and are at the basis of much of the difficulties women face not only entering into the political sphere, but also gaining credibility and impacting from within it.

The stigma of politics as 'dirty' is somewhat connected to the previous notion, but is also more specific to certain countries where political scandal and intrigue dominate the headlines. Russia, with the latest events related to the murder of the woman Member of Parliament, in addition to widespread rumours about Mafia involvement, is a good example, (Azza M Karam, 2008).

Provision of social services and a support network based on family-friendly considerations are still lacking in many countries. There are many success stories of how women's actual involvement in politics have impacted favorably on this area which will be elaborated in the following sections. But it remains an important requirement if women are to be able to overcome the difficulties of the double/triple responsibilities and stereotyped roles.

Illiteracy is another problem. According to the UNDP 1995 Human Development Report, out of the developing world's 900 million illiterate people, women outnumber men two to one, and girls constitute the majority of the 130 million children without access to primary school. Further, because population growth has superseded the expansion of women's education in some developing regions, the number of women who are illiterate has actually increased⁶.

Leijenaar (1999) makes a distinction between individual and institutional factors affecting the chances of women to become involved in political decision making. Below are explained the factors and mechanism that give women a disadvantaged position.

Individual factors address the extent to which individual characteristics favour political participation. In general women are less interested in politics; both women and men often see politics as a men's affair. Women have not learned to develop political capacities, because public sector activities are usually seen as male. As a consequence women lack confidence in their own political capabilities. Their lower level of education, professional experience, income and time available disadvantages women as compared to men.

⁵ See Richard Matland, "The Effect of Development and Culture on Women's Representation", in Azza Karam. Ed. 1998. Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers. pp. 29.

⁶ UNDP. 1995. Human Development Report, obtained from Internet version

Institutional factors related to the organisation of society, its norms and values.

To become active as a politician women are hampered by their care taking tasks and their responsibility for the household. They often lack support from their husband or family.

Impediments in the structure of society for women are: limited access to leadership, managerial skills and training, lack of female role models and mentors, disproportional expectations, and violence against women.

The political participation of women also depends on the social and cultural climate of a country: religious and patriarchal norms and values may exclude women from public life. Andersen's research in Tanzania (1992) showed that all women local leaders – despite internal differences – have had to fight hard in order to get education and to conquer male resistance against their political activity. Many of them have experienced one or more divorces and today about half of the women live as single women. Accusations against female leaders of being prostitutes, witches etc. are frequent and indicate that the women leaders actually challenge some very fundamental values concerning the proper distribution of tasks and responsibilities between men and women. They challenge prevailing gender ideologies and gender identities in the area.

Economic

In many countries of the South, the greatest challenges for human development in general, and women's participation in public life in particular, are the changes in a global economic market, poverty and illiteracy. Although it is a commonly held refrain that economic and political development go hand in hand, the situation of women's empowerment in some countries with a high per capita income, such as some of the oil producing states, disproves this commonly held belief.

Hence, there is no one country, which claims to be satisfied with the situation of women's political participation. Even in Sweden, with a high per capita income and standard of living, and hailed as a model for other nations of the world with its gender equality policies and its over 40% female parliamentary representation, there are still many complaints of certain entrenched (and often subtle) macho attitudes towards women gaining influence.

Poverty is seen as a major impediment largely because it means that women are, or become, more concerned with earning their daily living than following any specific political development. Moreover, the process referred to as the feminization of poverty means that most of those affected tend to be women, so how can they be expected to find the time to actively participate in a political process? Worse still, the question needs to be asked whether there is any direct advantage accruing to these women from having women politicians as yet.

Another factor is the lack of adequate financial resources that women tend to have access to. The impact of this can be felt primarily when financing electoral campaigns, as well as the ability of women politicians to undertake certain initiatives. Although a major recommendation of many international gatherings is that both political parties as well as governments attempt to provide and set up various funds especially destined for women, women in many parts of the world still end up with less - if any - access to resources.

Political

Research indicates that the type of electoral system plays an important role in determining whether or not women get properly involved on party lists or get elected⁷. Several research results indicate that Proportional Representation systems are most conducive to women's legislative presence. As indicated earlier, however, most of the information available on this issue is specific to the Western world. Moreover, it is also a case that each electoral system does not operate in a void but is affected by other cultural and economic considerations. Hence, no one particular system can be universally advocated.

The structures and agendas of political parties are another factor in considerations of women's political participation. Many political parties, reflecting the more general conditions in the rest of society, do not easily accept or promote many women into their echelons, let alone women's occupation of important positions within these parties. This issue is particularly important in view of current discussions about the overall role and functioning of political parties, and the concerns being raised about the political viability and popularity of such vehicles in the face of emerging alternative political entities, such as NGOs.

The lack of sufficient training and communication skills, or media know-how, is also extremely problematic for women in developed and developing countries alike. In the age of the media, women politicians need to use the media and be constructively used by it for purposes of positive image building, constituency creation and consolidation, as well as the dissemination of their agendas. This issue is compounded by a corresponding lack of interest on the part of the media about women politicians. "Just being a woman politician is not enough to raise interest we need a story that is interesting and would attract attention"⁸ is not an uncommon view from media personnel.

One of the defining features of global culture today and in the 21st century, is media and its sister development - information technology. The latter will emerge as perhaps the most determining variables in events in the years to come, and the capacity to own, influence and manipulate these structures will determine where and with whom power lies. Hence the importance of situating - not only women per se - but those with strong women-friendly commitment, belief, and influence within all media institutions.

Access to technology remains an imperative that only the privileged enjoy. Previously, the statement - that was almost a cliché - was that knowledge is power. Today and in the coming century, access to technology is at the basis of global power relations, and hence also a determinant feature of gender relations and women's empowerment. Today's technology determines a great deal of the availability of information, and hence, knowledge. Women who have limited access to such things as office facilities, computers (i.e. the software and the hardware), and Internet - which have become almost basic features of any office and individual in the developed world - are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of their capacity, efficiency and potential locally as well as internationally.

⁷ See Richard Matland in *Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers*. See also the IPU Plan of Action, 1994. Serie "Reports and Documents", No. 22. Geneva

⁸ Azza M Karam interview with BBC reporter, October 1998,

In sum, few of the challenges are new, but most fall into broader frameworks of culture, economics and politics. These frameworks are not rigid however, since many of the challenges overlap, e.g. culturally-determined gendered role-allocations also play a role in media reluctance to take an interest, which in turn, reflects on how popular and/or understood women's political platforms and achievements can be, and how far their impact thus is. Also, questions around the choice of any particular electoral system are affected by the cultural and economic features of any country, as are aspects of access to technology, which are closely connected to the economic capabilities of countries. Having said that however, it remains important to note that these obstacles are not insurmountable by any means. In fact, a great deal has already been achieved as earlier sections have also indicated. The provision of international norms and the strengthening of global networking provide important tools for moving in the direction of enhancing women's political participation. The following section in particular will look at this dimension in more detail.

b) Strategies increase women participation

The strategies increasing women participation in decision making falls into three main categories. These are 1. The choice of policy options 2, equal opportunities policy and 3. positive action strategies. The second and third are more relevant to this study to Ethiopian condition. Therefore I am focused only on two of them.

i) Equal opportunities policies

Most of the equal opportunity policies stress three major areas for the advancement of gender equality for women and men: full achievement of human rights; equal access to resources and services; and equal participation in political and economic decision-making.

According to UN, (2007) equal opportunity policies should contain:

- Employment and economic activities, because most women work in the informal sectors, with low productivity and incomes, poor working conditions and little or no social protection;
- Governance, as in many countries women are marginalised as decision-makers. In order to protect the fundamental human rights of women, legislation ensuring equal rights for men and women must also be accompanied by implementation;
- Access to education, where gender equality is related in particular to the responsibility of women for everyday tasks in the household;
- Health, as women have limited access to basic health services, especially in the sphere of sexual and reproductive health;
- Gender-based violence.

In addition, International conventions on women's right should be ratified (Beijing platform action 1995, government commitments)

ii) Positive action strategies

The successful implementation of positive action strategies in political decision-making had challenged the gender distribution of political power over policy institutions and technical, human and financial resources (Maria Stratigaki, 2005). This is mainly due to the successful application of gender mainstreaming strategies, which is one of the appropriate tools to achieve gender equality, (Bruno et al., 2006).

Bruno further explaining that the effectiveness of widespread and quick adoption of mainstreaming as a gender equality strategy by prestigious international organizations (International Labour Organization, United Nations, European Union, Council of Europe, Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation) was extremely important for the adoption of mainstreaming and provided a common referential frame. Gender mainstreaming has also achieved a measure of institutionalization as a result of the dual pressures of supranational requirements and domestic demands for compliance.

Elements in gender mainstreaming

Elements of strategically effective action for gender mainstreaming that have been developed over the decade since the term was firmly lodged in global policy at the Beijing Conference in 1995. It touches upon the central issues in gender analysis that must guide gender mainstreaming activity, pointing out that although most programme officers do not need to undertake a complete gender analysis, they need have a grasp of certain foundation principles that govern that analysis. However, gender mainstreaming is about more than gender analysis. It involves all the steps between analysis and incorporating that analysis into the policy and programme decisions that will contribute to equality of outcome for men and women in all development work (Hunt 2000, UNDP 2000).

The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has identified gender mainstreaming strategies as being relevant in three linked arenas or “spheres”: (A) in an organization’s structures, policies and procedures, and in its culture, (B) in the substantive activity that it undertakes - its programme, and (C) in the impact of this work on increased gender equality in the broader community (Shalkwyk et al. 1996. p 3)

Level One: An organization’s structures, policies, procedures and culture

An organization able to contribute substantively to greater gender equality would have the following six structures, policies and procedures in place.

1. A clear policy on its commitment to gender equality, supported by the pro-active drive of senior and middle management (Morris 1999), and expressed in a written policy or mission statement;

2. Time-bound strategies to implement the policy, which are developed in broad consultation with staff, and include mechanisms to ensure that staff understand the policy and its implications for their everyday work, and have the competencies and resources required to implement it effectively; The competencies required, all of which can be developed systematically once identified, include the following (UNDP 2001):

3. Human resource practices that are sensitive to the gender needs and interests of both men and women on the organization’s staff, as well as in their constituency. Human resource strategies have a dual internal/external function in relation to gender mainstreaming:

(a) **Internally**, they advance the organization’s ability to practice and model gender equality in its own internal functioning, for example to be equitable in its hiring and promotion practices, and recognise the links between the personal and professional responsibilities of staff; and

(b) **Externally**, they enable the organization to contribute more effectively to greater gender equality in its programme and impact, for example by including commitment and competence to work for gender equality in job descriptions, terms of reference and performance criteria.

4. Internal tracking and monitoring capability to ensure that strategic milestones are being reached, and to support both organisational learning and management accountability. These might include monitoring of, for example: staff recruitment and promotion; budgetary allocations; procurement only from companies that implement ILO conventions regarding female employees; and the performance of managers and supervisors in discussing and following up on gender equality initiatives.

5. A central gender mainstreaming unit with policy responsibility, and a mandate to guide the overall gender mainstreaming process. Some organizations also have specific units to support the incorporation of gender issues into their programmes, while others combine the policy and programme functions;

6. A recognised network of staff responsible for gender equality issues in their respective work units, coordinated as a team by the policy unit (often called a Gender Focal Point Network). Ideally this network takes the form of a community of practice – self-organizing, knowledge-sharing, peer-supporting and an acknowledged channel for the integration of learning on gender equality into the organization’s functioning.

Level Two: The organization’s programme

Although gender mainstreaming involves far more than project and programme design and implementation, an organisations programme is the “heart” of gender mainstreaming. It is the arena in which commitment to gender equality takes concrete form in the community served by the organisation. Effective gender mainstreaming strategy therefore includes at least the following four programming elements:

7. Systematic on-going consultation with women, as well as men, to identify their own priorities, success stories, lessons learned tools and mechanisms. This is only possible in organisations that genuinely value consultation and the types of knowledge that it produces, and allocates the necessary staff and budgetary resources to it. Consultation does not end with the design phase of the project, but must be undertaken throughout project implementation. This is of critical importance, because the ultimate impact will be watered down if the project strays from community concerns, or does not adjust to any changes in these concerns.

8. Project management that is technically proficient, aware of the implications of gender differences for project outcomes, remains in touch with the constituency, and establishes positive incentive and accountability mechanisms to ensure consistent results is extremely important.

9. Effective monitoring and reporting mechanisms capable of reflecting how far the project is contributing to greater gender equality.

Level Three: The outcomes and impact

The outcomes and impact of effective gender mainstreaming activity in Levels One and Two are seen in progress towards measurable improvement in addressing women’s rights, meeting women’s practical needs and strategic interests, and greater gender equality (both formal and substantive) in the communities served. It is

important to show that substantive activity has not simply reached a certain number of women, but that it has improved equality between women and men.

This arena of an organization's gender mainstreaming activity provides the ultimate purpose of this activity. If gender mainstreaming strategies are not systematically linked to the end in view, and include mechanisms to measure and report upon changes in this arena, they are liable to become tautologies – ends in themselves (Shalkwyk et al, p. 7). The measurement of impact is currently the least developed of the areas for gender mainstreaming activity, just as it is for other development themes. However, strides are being made, and it is important that all internal gender-mainstreaming strategies are crystal clear on the ways in which they contribute to the ultimate goal of gender equality in the communities served.

Effective gender mainstreaming strategies therefore include the following four elements:

- ✚ Relevant baseline information, and appropriate milestones and indicators, derived from gender analysis, so that progress towards greater gender equality can be identified and described;
- ✚ Consultation with the community concerned to check and compare their perspectives with the information revealed by formal indicators;
- ✚ Clear reporting mechanisms that can get the word out efficiently; and
- ✚ Good relationships with the media, opinion leaders and decision makers both in the community being served, and in the wider society, so that lessons learned can be effectively disseminated, and absorbed into social practice.

3.5. Women's status, policies and challenges in Ethiopia

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.

Although women constitute 49.8% of the population and contribute their share in agricultural production and other household activities, they have not benefited from their labour equally with their male counterparts. The participation of women in qualified jobs and related fields is at its lowest level. For instance, the National Labour Force Survey (CSA, 1999) indicates that women account for only 23.9% in technical and professional fields. The majority of women perform tiresome, low paid and even unpaid jobs. The 1994 census on employment also shows that women represent only 27.3% of the total government employees and 93.2% of them are engaged in low-grade jobs.

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) formulated several laws and policies to promote gender equality. Particularly Article 35 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia clearly stipulates the rights of women. The government has also been promoting the mainstreaming of gender in all its development policies and strategies to address gender inequality.

Women's National Policy was formulated and adopted in 1993 in order to address gender inequality. National institutional machineries were established at federal, regional and district levels to implement the policy. The Women's Affairs Office has been re-established as a full-fledged Ministry in October 2005 with the duties and responsibilities of ensuring participation and empowerment of women in political, economical, social and cultural matters.

The Labour proclamation No 42/93 as well as the newly amended labour law 377/2004 stipulates that women shall not be discriminated against employment and equal payment on the basis of their sex. It also prohibits employment of women on a type of work that may be harmful to their health. The criminal code/penal code has been recently revised and amended to address discrimination against women and protect them from criminal acts such as rape, abduction, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation and harassment ...etc. The Criminal procedural code has also been revised and the first draft has been submitted to the Council of Ministers. The document is forwarded to the parliament for further comment and approval.

The 1997 Federal Rural Land Administration Law has provisions on equal rights of women to land. The Federal Government and 3 Regional States have enacted Land Use and Administration Laws that took into account the issue of gender. Proclamation No.9/1995 that established the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA) also ensures women's environmental rights. The Civil Service proclamation No.262/2002 provides equal employment opportunity for both sexes.

Moreover, efforts have been made to address the problem of gender inequality and gender based discrimination in the Education and training policy. Economic Reform policy that was formulated in 1992 also aims to promote economic development and improve the living standard of the most vulnerable sections of the society, particularly women. The economic policy ensured equal rights of agricultural land use, control and participation of women in extension services. The Health Policy, Developmental Social Welfare Policy, Cultural Policy, the Policy on Natural Resources and the Environment, the Civil Service Proclamation, Pension Law, Penal Code...etc. aim to improve the livelihood of women.

Gender Based Violence

The constitution has provisions that protect victims of harmful traditional practices, for all its citizens and particularly for Women. Article 35(4) stipulates that the State shall enforce the rights of women and that laws, customs and practices that oppress or cause bodily or mental harm to women are prohibited. Rape, abduction, female genital mutilation and early marriage are some of the main gender based violence perpetrated against women in our society. In addition penal and family code were revised to mitigate HTP and VAW.

Gender Parity

Article 3 of the constitution provides equal opportunity for women to participate in the decision making process by giving them the right to vote and be elected. In this regard, a number of measures have been taken in terms of advocacy, lobbying and awareness creation in order to increase the participation of women in the decision making structures of the country. Though much still remains to be done, there are noticeable achievements in the participation of women particularly in the parliament as well as in regional councils. The ruling party took an important stride by making 30% of its candidates for 2005 election to be women. As a result, the number of women in parliament has increased significantly.

The Civil Service Reform Programs also contributed a lot to women's participation in decision-making. Article 13 (1) of the Civil Service Proclamation No 262/2002

prohibits discrimination among job seeker on the basis of sex. The proclamation also incorporates an affirmative action by stating that preference shall be given to female candidates who have equal or close scores to that of male candidates. The representation of women in the different decision making structures is shown below:

Table :3 Women's Representation in Federal Parliament

	2000		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
House of People's Representative	502	42	413	117
House of the Federation	110	7	91	21

Source: House of People's Representatives

Table 4: Women's Representation in the Executive Branch

Positions	2000		2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Ministers	16	1	20	2
Deputy Minister/State Ministers	12	4	30	5
State Ministers			30	5
Ambassadors	16	4	35	3

Source: Federal Civil Service Agency

Human Rights of Women

The Ethiopian government has signed and ratified important regional and international instruments that promote and protect the rights of women. The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was ratified in September 1981 and periodical reports have been submitted on its implementation. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child was ratified in December 2002 and the National Action Plan for Children has been prepared for its implementation. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) was ratified in September 1990 and the Ministry of Women's Affairs is given the responsibility of overseeing its effective implementation.

The Human Rights Commission was established in 2000 with the objective of sensitizing the public about human rights, ensuring that they are respected and take necessary measures where they are found to have been violated. Similarly, the Ombudsman was established in 2000 with the objective of fostering good governance, the rule of law, by way of ensuring that citizen's rights are respected.

Right to Inheritance of Land and Property

The Constitution gives special attention to women's equal economic rights, equal acquisition and inheritance of property including land. According to the Federal Rural Land Administration Law (1997), the land administration law of each Administrative Region shall ensure the equal rights of women in holding, administering, and transferring land. It also provides for women's participation in decision-making on land-related matters. Article 35, number 6 clearly stipulates the right of women to land ownership. Based on this article, the Amhara state formulated a land redistribution proclamation, Article 16/1989. Following this land redistribution was made. A total of 403,028 landless farmers were given land. Of these, 135,845 (32.7 per cent) were women,(<http://www.law.emory.edu/wandl/Advocacy/day3.htm#2>). Landless women thus benefited as the policy targeted women engaged in small trading and single women.

Education

The Ethiopian government has committed itself to various national, regional, and international initiatives to eliminate gender-based disparity in terms of access to education. Progress has been made with regard to achieving the MDGs (“Goal 2: Achieve Universal Primary Education” and “Goal 3: Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women”) and implementing the Beijing commitments.

The National Education Policy, which is prepared in the spirit of achieving the Universal Primary Education by 2015, recognizes the importance of affirmative action in enhancing girls'/ women's participation in decision-making. Education Sector Development Programs, which are prepared on the basis of the "Education for All" (EFA) initiative formulated at the Jomtien (Thailand) World Conference, are being implemented throughout the country with the objective of achieving gender equality in education by 2015. There are some achievements as designated in the table below.

Table 5: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Primary School (1-8)

Indicator	2002/2003		2003/2004		2004/2005	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
GER at Primary (1-8)	74.6	53.8	77.4	50.1	88.00	71.5
GER at Secondary (9-10)	24	14	28.2	15.9	34.6	19.8

Source: Ministry of Education

The Protocol on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa

The Ethiopian government has signed the Protocol on the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa in June 2004 and the ratification process is underway. As it was mentioned above, Ethiopia has already ratified international instruments such as the CEDAW and remains committed to many of the other regional, continental and international conventions.

Opportunities and Challenges

Profound change in political, economic social and cultural relationships have dominated in Ethiopia that provided women, government as well as NGO's with challenges concerning women's status.

This has called for concert efforts to put into action the goals and strategies laid down in the constitution, the National Women's Policy and the overall Rural-Centred Development programme.

The national Gender Policy frame work and the constitution are meant to provide a frame work which all government structure and development partners can use tackle women's' in their general or specific activities.

It is also an opportunity to have not only legislative support, policy frame work but also institutional arrangements that enables the mainstreaming of gender concerns in all programs and activities as it was recommended by the Beijing platform for action for the advancement of women.

In the five-years development strategic plan every effort being made empower women. It is rural focused, agricultural led industrialization plan of development that base and try to integrate the Beijing platform for action prioritizing poverty among the twelve critical areas of concern.

Challenges

Despite all the positive and encouraging activities ahead is much more challenging when it comes to implementation of the action plan.

Despite the fact of the political commitment, legal support and institutional arrangement the bureaucratic resistance to accept the gender experts as equal partners and to the gender equitable integration of woman as subject of public policy has made it more difficult to perform effectively because of traditional set up of society and thinking.

More serious shortcoming is the absence of organizations as constituencies to the national machinery's in the civil society, because of past experience and because of lack of resources combined with reluctance of women themselves.

In order to accelerate the advancement of women in Ethiopia It is believed that trespassing from the public to the private and from the private to the public is the mechanism that generates a form of genuine grass roots feminism where solidarity links and communication networks to be set up around anew awareness of common interests. Allocation of special fund for woman organization is therefore a goal to be achieved by mid 1999, because women organizations are believed to serves as special forum for women to get exposures to be informed on their rights and to make pressures on their constitutional rights so that their participation and being beneficiaries can be guaranteed in all walks of their lives.

CHAPTER IV: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

4.1. Background

The Federal Republic of Ethiopia has nine regional states (Afar; Amhara; Benshangul-Gumuz; Gambela; Harari; Oromia; Somali; Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples (SNNP); and Tigray) and two chartered cities: Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa. The major ethnic groups are Oromo (32%), Amhara (30%), Tigre (6%), Somali (6%), Welayta (5%), Gurage (4%), Sidama (3%), Afar (2%), Hadiya (2%), Kembata (1%), Keffa (1%) and others (8%). In terms of religion, Ethiopian Orthodox are 50.5%; other Christian (11.1%), Muslim (33.3%), and others (5.1%).

Amhara regional state is one of the nine regional states established under Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The population in the region estimated to be 16 million with about 51% women (BFED, 2000). Approximately 85% of the people in the region are engaged in agriculture. The area coverage is 170,752 sq.km, and located in the north central and North West part of Ethiopia. It occupies 1/6 of the total land of the nation. Administratively it is divided into 11 zones, 106 districts and 3200 villages.

Dessie Zuria is one of the 106 Districts in the Amhara Region of Ethiopia, which is located at the eastern edge of the Ethiopian highlands in the South Wollo Zone. Based on figures published by the Central Statistical Agency in 2005, this District has an estimated total population of 272,199, of whom 139,990 were males and 132,209 were females; 3,845 or 1.41% of its population are urban dwellers, which is less than the Zone average of 12.4%. With an estimated area of 1,105.86 square kilometers, Dessie Zuria has an estimated population density of 246.1 people per square kilometer, which is greater than the Zone average of 173.56. Dessie Zuria District as 31 Villages.



Figure 3: Map of Ethiopia, North and south Wollo zones In Amhara region

4.2. The opportunities and challenges participation of women decision making in Amhaha region

The Federal Democratic Government of Ethiopia has declared its unequivocal commitment to the development of women with the announcement of the National Policy on Women in 1993 (referred to as the Women's Policy), and the promulgation of the new Constitution in 1994.

The Women's Policy primarily aims 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.

Consistent with the above policy, Article 25 of the new Constitution guarantees all persons equality before the law, and prohibits any discrimination on grounds of gender. In addition, Article 35 reiterates principles of equality of access to economic opportunities, including the right to equality in employment and land ownership. In addition Ethiopia endorsed Beijing plat of action during IV world conference.

Despite these opportunities, women's participation in decision making power in Amhara region is very low. As can be seen in the table below, the number of women political participation compared to men is insignificant particularly at members at regional council, house of representative and constitutional conference.

Table 6: Women's political participation in the Amhara region

Description	year	Total elected	No of women	%
Constitution conference	1994/95	137	12	8
House of representative	1995/96	138	1	1
Regional council members	1996/97	274	17	6.2
District council members	1996/97	16,856	1316	13.7
Village council members	1997/98	262,294	56,544	21.5

Source: WAO, March 1997, p.46

Without the active participation of women themselves and incorporation of their perspective at all levels of decision making within the region, the goal of equality development and peace can not be achieved. In this respect women equal participation in political life is a essential for the advancement of women in the region.

Up until 2007, the representation of women particularly at district and village level is still very low. The table, below is showing women's representation at speaker of the house and senior management level in Dessie zuria district.

Table 7: Women's participation Dessiezuria District and village level

Description	District			Villages		
	M	F	%F	M	F	%F
Administrator	-	1	100	31	-	0
Vice Administrator	1	-	0	31	-	0
Speaker of the house	1	-	0	31	-	0
Vice speaker of the house	1	-	0	31	-	0
Managers	39	10	20	23	5	17.8

Source Dessiezuria WAO, August 2008

4.3. Sida Amhara Rural Development Program (SARDP)

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has provided support to rural development in the Amhara National Regional State (ANRS) since 1993, starting with assistance to road construction, enhancement of planning capacity, and natural resources management. The ANRS Programme, now known as the Sida Amhara Rural Development Programme (SARDP), was initially planned in 1995-1996. Although it is supporting other institutions in the region like research institutions and Universities, the rural development program was implemented in South Wollo and East Gojam zones.

The full implementation of SARDP started in June 1997. Coverage of the SARDP has gradually grown since its establishment when it operated in two districts in East Gojam and South Wollo zones. In 1998, it grew to cover five more Districts and in 1999 it added another seven. The Districts are to use their Districts Development Funds according to a plan prepared by the Districts. In each Districts, the activities paid from the Fund should be designed and combined in such a way that the best possible contribution to poverty alleviation and food security is achieved. In addition to the receipt of Districts Development Funds, the Districts receive technical support, "backstopping", from a number of regional units, such as Regional Bureaus and Authorities. These units receive funds enabling them to provide services to the Districts in their respective technical field and also some funds for their own development. SARDP is therefore an example of an area development programme.

Phase II started in January 2002 and its overall objective was to improve the living conditions of the rural population by assisting the poor and marginalized groups to increase their agricultural production and better manage local natural resources, diversify the local economy, and promote good governance. It has included District capacity building, reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and support to the judiciary in addition to area development Programmes similar to what was done in Phase I.

The overall objective of SARDP was consistent with the national and regional government policies of keeping a focus on small-holder agriculture and promotes equity, it was criticized for not being in tune with the policy in terms of allocation of Programme resources between Districts and the regional level. Further, the Programme did not adequately address the needs of the poor and the marginalized.

In order to make the Programme reflect recent policy developments, to further enhance community and Districts participation, strengthen and ensure community ownership of the Programme, and to make it more responsive to the needs of poor and marginalized groups, four-year District plans have been prepared for each of the 25 programme District included in SARDP III. Communities have identified the development problems and how best to tackle them.

In 2004 an impact assessment was made in three sample Villages with different levels of intervention from the Programme in each of the then 16 Districts participating in the second phase of SARDP. This impact assessment has provided valuable guidance for the elaboration of SARDP III. Experiences gained and lessons learnt during phase two were basis for the preparation of SARDP III programme document.

The Programme Document, consolidated from the sixteen District-based participatory planning documents, was submitted to Sida for consideration in April 2004. After thorough discussions and negotiations an Agreement was signed between the Ethiopian and Swedish Governments in September 2004. As per the agreement,

activities within the technical components “Agriculture and Natural Resources Management” and “Infrastructure” could be carried out as initially planned, while revised sets of activities were to be developed for “Economic Diversification” and “Good Governance (population, gender issues and HIV/ AIDS)” during an inception period of one year.

On the basis of additional studies conducted by international and national consultants for the two non-approved components, new and additional sets of outputs and activities have been identified and included in this document. During this process, the cross-cutting issues have been mainstreamed under each component and the former component named good governance has been divided between cross-cutting issues and decentralisation.

During the third phase of the Programme, its coverage increased further, so at present, all 30 rural Districts are benefiting. Dessie zuria district is one of the beneficiaries of SARDP intervention for more than ten years. Although SARDP has been working for longer time compared to other districts it was focused only in two villages in phase one then moved to ten villages in phase two reached to 18 villages phase three out of 31.

CHAPTER V: RESULTS

The following are the description of the results from secondary data as well as face – to - face semi structured interviews of the zone, district and village local government staffs at senior level and focus group discussion with women and men community members and village government staffs. The responses are written under each sub question.

5.1.To what extent the impediments to women’s participation were tackled by local government program interventions which were supported by SARDP?

Different activities were carried out during the year 2004-2007. Some of the activities even started earlier than 2004. These activities are focused at decreasing women’s workload, increasing women’s income, strengthening women’s organization reducing harmful traditional practices, gender analysis and gender training.

Reduce women’s workload

To decrease women’s workload different activities were planned. These include developing water points, introduction of fuel saving stoves, establishing individual forage, fuel tree nursery and introduction of women friendly farm tools. Except the last which has been given less attention by respected bureau, others were implemented (SARDP report, 2007).

According to SARDP result draft report 2008, A total of 478 springs and 567 hand dug wells developed and constructed from 2004/05 to 2006/07. About 389,650 people (nearly 8.5% of the rural population) benefited from this intervention. Springs and hand dug wells developed and pipe lines extended to at least 500 mts from the villages. According to water technicians this intervention in addition to supply of potable water to the community it has contributed decreasing workload of women. The extension of pipe line and accumulation of water in the reservoir and establishment of hand dug wells decrease time waiting to fetch water. While at the dry season women need to wait until the water accumulate after one person fetch the water. Hence most water points located at 30 minutes walking distance, which was above 1hrs walking distance before.

Individual forage nurseries have been established, and multipurpose forage and fuel trees raised in the government nursery and distributed to community members. The beneficiaries from individual nursery and seedlings are a total of 28846 of which 22% are women. This is 17% of rural population which is 169639. Most beneficiaries planted the trees at their backyard as a hedge or on their farm using alley cropping method (office of agriculture annual report).

Nineteen male and female mixed groups organized to produce improved stoves to generate income. The members are 231 female and 19 men. In addition to these groups other community members trained to produce stoves which are locally made by mud. The total people trained in making mud and cement made local and modern fuel saving stoves are 577 of which women consists of 89% and produced 20043 modern and 19616 traditional fuel saving stoves and the beneficiaries are using it. These activities decreased the workload of women by far as well as contributed improvement of their health situation caused by fuel wood smoke. Nevertheless the overall coverage is low.

Gender analysis

Gender analysis is a well known case-method training using Harvard gender analytical framework. This is identified as a diagnostic tool. The analytical framework developed for the analysis uses four interrelated components: actively profile (who does what); access and control profile; analysis of factors influencing activities, and project-cycle analysis. The focus was on gender division of service/facilities, gender division of benefit, gender division of labor, gender division of power and gender division of resource. Further more cause and effect analysis and follow up plan of action was designed. Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) method was used while undertaking the analysis. The target groups are purposively selected households (Wives and husbands). These are wives and husbands of different age, and religion.

The purpose was to create awareness on gender relations and in the long run to change the gender relation at the household and community level.

According WAO head and experts, this exercise is very relevant and one of the successful trainings and field exercise organized to the communities since the end of 2003.

Impact of gender analysis, Dessiezuria district

A, Division of labour:

Sharing work at household level:- men and boys start sharing reproductive activities, (which was considered women's only work). Due to this intervention the workload of women which was found previously by the analysis 61% lowered to 56.6%, men increased from 39% to 43.4 %. Due to decreasing of workload for women the following were achieved.

- ✚ The women utilized time saved for development activities. They continuously participating community meetings and participate in committees.
- ✚ Some Men able to use their time efficient and effectively instead of unproductive rather distractive activities like drinking alcohol.
- ✚ Conflict at household level decreased, which is a good indicator of gender sensitivity.
- ✚ Girls now have adequate time for study
- ✚ Children raised learning and exercising, none gender based division of labor.

B, Traditional Taboos on women:

Traditional taboos like ploughing , harvesting and trashing are no more taboos: due to the attitudinal change the following outcome achieved.

Female headed households' income increased. Instead of paying for labourers or share cropping, or renting for rich Male Headed Households (MHH), Female Headed Households (FHH) are able to do by themselves and/or with their female child freely which is resulted more product than it was before.

C, Control over resource:

It was the husband who controls major resource before the gender analysis done; however after the analysis there is change. Control of resources by the wife on selling cattle and cash increased from 32% during analysis to 43.6 %, in reverse the husband decreased from 68% to 56.4%. as a result the following outcome achieved.

Unnecessary wastage of money for drink and other things by some men decreased. According to the impact assessment all households saved or utilized the money for important activities to the household as a whole. The amount of money estimated by the farmers varies between 500 to 2100 birr/three years.

D, Household decision making improved: decision making of wives to use family planning services, access to credit, decision related to child marriage etc improved. According to the impact assessment the percentage of women in decision making increased from 26% to 43.9%, while the men decreased from 74% to 56.1%.

However there is differences between those villages did gender analysis earlier and have continuous follow up and those did the analysis late (last year) and have less follow up. According to the discussion with Dessiezuria district WAO staffs the former showed enormous change in gender relation at household and community level. The above impacts mainly reflected in those households.

According to the focus group discussion with community members in two villages 15 and 35 the later showed more impact not only sharing workload but also women representation in local government bodies is relatively high.

Income generation

The major activities planned to achieve improving women's capacity to generate income are local skills training, petty trading and agricultural activities mainly poultry, dairy and fattening and vegetable gardening. Amhara Saving and Credit instruction (ACSI) lend group credit. There is additional source of credit through bank accessed by the government. It has less interest rate (7.5%) than ACSI (18%).

Household survey 2003 in Amhara region , designated that male head households have been highly accessible to credit(47.1 %) than female-headed households (38.7%). It indicates that the female-headed households, who are relatively more vulnerable segment of the society, have less access to credit. The reason may be due to the fact that female-headed households are less empowered than male headed ones. This might be also the fact that female households particularly the poor are highly risk averse so that they could not confident enough to borrow money (ANS household survey 2003).

Further more the credit accessed by SARDP channeled through ACSI to the community, poor women were not interested to take the credit due to the high interest rate and its requirement for group collateral. This year SARDP revised its agreement with ACSI and it is agreed upon to access the credit with out group collateral.

According to cooperative sector under agricultural office, there are 27 cooperatives in the district; about 70% of those are service cooperatives. The service cooperatives are engaged in selling farm inputs like, fertilizer, improved seed and goods, grinding mill services and the like to the rural community. The rest comprise 30%, and these include saving and credit, irrigation, livestock (sheep breeding and fattening, cattle fattening and milk selling), and bee keeping and selling bee products cooperatives. In general the benefit from the cooperative to women is very low. According to table 8 women cover only 12%. Women engaged more in saving and cooperative and irrigation, which is 25% and 19% respectively.

Table 8: Types of major cooperatives by sex Dessiezuria district

Types of cooperatives	Female	Male	% Female
Service coop.	4150	32278	11%
Saving & credit coop.	43	128	25%
Irrigation coop.	58	247	19%
Livestock coop	5	61	7.5%
The total number of members	4256	32714	12%

Source district Agricultural office

In addition small and micro enterprise development desk accessed revolving fund to women and men who are organized into groups since 2006. Euro 148835 (38% for women) has distributed to 1005 men and 532 women. As it is designated on figure 4 below, there was gradual growth in targeting women from the year 2006 to 2007. In 2006 the participation level of women was only 17% in 2007 37% and in 2008 it has reached to about 50% due to request by SARDP to give especial emphasis to women and the strong team work between women's affairs office at the district and micro enterprise development desk.

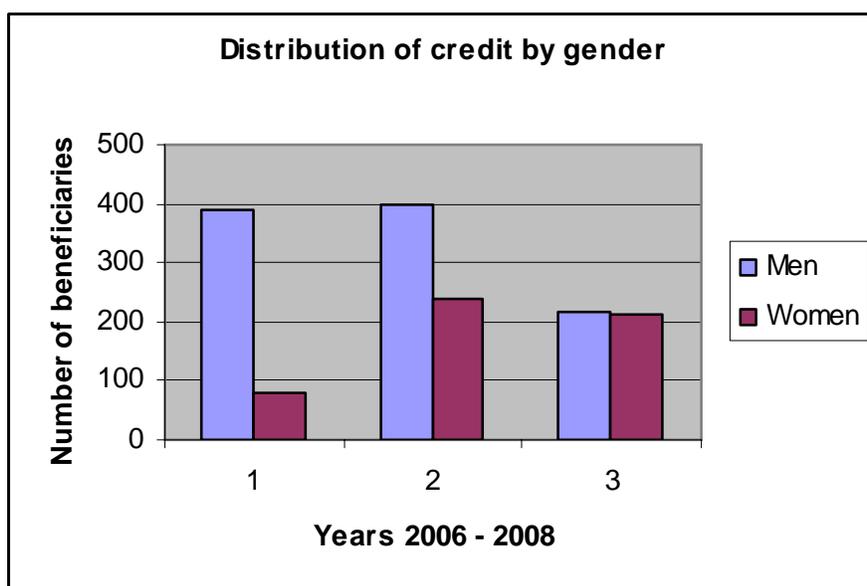


Figure 4: distribution of credit by sex against years

In addition there are a total of 50781 households got certificate to use land in their name. From these Land use certification married couples: 46686, FHH 2569, MHH 1526.

Interventions related to women's self esteem and community image

Gender and HTP/VAW training

Gender awareness raising, gender mainstream, gender and development training gender leadership trainings and awareness raising on Harmful Traditional Practices (HTP) and Violence Against Women (VAW) were organized. Different participants from different level participated in the training. These include Sector heads, experts, cabinet members, community members, women at the leadership position, gender focal persons, women's forum members and leaders. Table 9 shows participants by sex.

Table 9: Participants of gender trainee by year

Participants	2005			2006			2007		
	F	M	T	F	M	T	F	M	T
Sector heads	-	-	-	26	96	112	-	-	-
Experts	4	6	10	-	-	-	6	33	39
Teachers	32	18	50	-	-	-	-	-	-
Community	664	700	1364	122	97	219	246	136	382

Source: Dessiezuria women's affairs office

Women's forum

Women's forum is an organization at village level that are organized to empower women so that they are able to claim for their rights. The forum organized in 237 villages one in each village in south wollo zone. It has been established since 2006. At present only 87 forums are very active. This means they have regular meeting, annual action plan, and linked to various sectors working in the villages. There are 30184 members. Women forums are believed to serve as special forum for women to get exposures to be informed on their rights and as support mechanism so that their participation and their being beneficiaries can be guaranteed in every walk of their lives. Furthermore development interventions could be channelled to benefit these organized women. These groups are different from gender groups, in that the gender groups include men and those who undertook gender analysis. The women's forums are any women in the community interested to join the forum and work together for the same objectives. Initially the plan was to link them to women's association. In most districts women and their association are not closely working except collection of yearly membership fee. For some districts who have good relation the forum is working with women's association. For others they are advised to link to women's development package group. At the moment they are by themselves.

Referral system

Referral system is a system established from Got⁹ and/or ketena¹⁰ to village then to district level to reduce Harmful Traditional Practice (HTP) and Violence Against Women (VAW). The district program didn't established a new referral system, reshaped systematically the existing HTP/VAW committee at village, which is previously organized by judiciary. The existing HTP/VAW committees are at all village and some district at south wollo zone.

The committee has no extension at Got and / or Ketena levels, and its focus was reducing early marriage. Hence the parents bring their children to the committee to examine their age before marriage to get permission. If the children are physically seemed at marriage age (18years) then the committee give the permission. If not they send to village judiciary then the judiciary in turn send to health center, after age examination the result send to judiciary then to HTP/VAW committee at village. Based on the result they give the final decision. It has protected number of early marriages. However there are also early marriages carried out without their consent.

This shows the attitude of the community is not changed. Instead of only focusing giving training to some community members bringing them to district, for the following objectivities it is found important to extend the committee to Got and /or ketena level.

⁹ Got is sub, sub village

¹⁰ Ketena is sub village

Objectives:

Major objective: To establish a system from village (Got/Ketena) to district level to reduce HTP/VAW within the district.

Specific objective

1. To participate community members at Got/Ketena level to reduce HTP/VAW through informal awareness raising training using enlightened and accepted community members (HTP/VAW focal persons at Got/Ketena).
2. To get first hand day to day information on HTP/VAW and report to concerned sector there by solve the problem at the spot
3. To give counseling service to persons who's right violated using those focal persons at Got or Ketena, by similar sex
4. Give information those persons who's right violated and refer to village HTP/VAW committee
5. To expand the work to reduce all existing HTP/VAW instead of only focusing on early marriage.

Most of the districts in the zone established referral system. The members are Police, village administration, village WAO, village women's association chair person, girls club leader, school principal, PTA (Parent Teachers Association), and religious leaders at village level. Got/Ketena 2-4 members (50% Women) selected and linked to the committee at village. Committees at village again contact directly to judiciary, or committee at district which is leaded by Judiciary.

WAO is trying to convince the judiciary to work to reduce all HTP/VAW in the district in addition to early marriage. This is on discussion, and needs the consent of the zonal and regional judiciary, because the previous committee established with their understanding mainly to focus on early marriage.

To strengthen the committee training on HTP and Violence against women organized to 114627 (46% female) community and committee members, on family law, gender awareness, panel code together with judiciary, health office and WAO. Due to the training to the judiciary, police and other respective sectors and the community and function of the referral system some effective out puts achieved, 1868 early marriage discontinued, Out of 68, 123 and 17 violent of early marriage, rape and abduction respectively 13 early marriage, 36 rapists and 6 abductors were prosecuted (WAB Gender mainstreaming impact assessment March 2006).

Increase girls participation in high school

SARDP has constructed Elementary schools, and alternative basic education upgraded to elementary schools. Schools renovated and class extensions were constructed. Education materials, like blackboard and the like and furniture, combined decks and tables fulfilled. Due to the constructed, schools particularly grade 1 – 4 close to the villages the number of students increased. As shown under table 5, the participation of students increased from year to year for both sexes. There is high increase between the years 2004/05, 25%for girls and 35% for boys and 2006/07, 30% for girls and 29% for boys. Between 2005 and 2006 compared to other academic years the number of students is lower for both sexes, for boys it even decreases by 8%.

According to office of education this has happened due to low community mobilization by education office to send the child to school. So the high enrolment rate is achieved by integrated activities, like school construction, community mobilization, network of the girls club with PTA and HTP/VAW committee, and

gender training for community, students and teachers. Nevertheless the school construction closer to the village plays the most effective role, because grade 5 and above the dropout rate of students of both sexes is very high. This is mainly due to the absence of grade 5-8 schools in most District closer to villages and village.

According to HTP/VAW study done in both Zones “In areas where schools are far away from their residents or found in neighbouring district parents can not afford the required transport, school fees and provisions, and they have also the fear that their daughters might be raped, or abducted. In those cases, after completing grades 1-4, many girls usually don't have the chance to continue their junior and secondary or preparatory schoolings. Hence, girls have no other opportunities, but to be married to husbands whom they do not know and love. This is a universal reason for early marriage in all the sample district in both zones”, (HTP/VAW study page, 53).

Table 10: Student enrolment in first and second cycle, dropout by year and sex

Grade	2004/05			2005/06			2006/07		
	F	M	%F	F	M	%F	F	M	%F
1 - 4	16885	18185	48	22640	27787	48	23065	25568	47
5 - 8	6037	10063	37	8319	11407	32	13064	16239	45
Dropout	10848	8122		14321	16380		10001	9329	
	64%	45%		63%	59%		43%	36%	

Source: District Education office

The data under table 9, confirm the above statement. The average drop out rate between first and second cycle is 56% for girls and 48% for boys. The drop out rate of girls is very, very high during 2004 and 2005. In 1996, drop out for girls is 64% and boys 45%; In 1997, girls 63% and boys 59%; but, relatively better in 1998 academic years. In 1998 girls drop out decreased to 43% and boys 36%, but 1999 the drop out increased for both sexes to 53% and 50% for girls and boys respectively. The reason for this, need to be further investigated in the future. In general due to various interventions the drop out rate decreased from 2004 to 2007 consecutively and the gender gaps somehow narrowed.

5.2. What is the role of different organizations in addressing women participation in decision making?

According to the response of District Women’s Affairs office head, District women’s affairs office is accountable to district administrative council. It monitors and design ways of implementing national policy on Ethiopian women. The district women’s affairs office makes effort to raise women’s capacity in expressing their problems and monitoring the degree of their participation in every sector. In addition it insures the gender issue is properly reflected in the preparation of every development plan, research, and studies and implementation. It also supports the gender focal points in all sectors in the district to ensure gender mainstreaming in their work and inter sectoral linkages in gender activities. The district women’s affairs office oversees gender sensitization and training in the district structure. It liaises with regional gender affairs bureau and NGO on gender related activities. It ensure the participation of women’s and their organizations program cycle, promote women’s access to decision making and benefits from development activities and lobby and support for fair representation of women in decision making government bodies.

It also create awareness at all occasion, carry out quarterly evaluation regarding gender and development in the district; organizes experience sharing for a; networking with various gender focal points and self initiatives women's organization; mobilizes supports by building alliance with men and organizations in the district and receive and process information and reports from gender focal points in sector and village women's affairs office monthly quarterly and annually. It ensure the affirmative action measures in the district and villages, and monitor the progress of gender mainstreaming as well.

The district administration is administering all the sectors in the district. As one of the sectors in the district women's affairs office getting support from the district administration particularly the good political will. The political party make sure in the mobilization also women participate as voters and to be elected. However the core role lies in the hand of WAO, they follow up and assist the political party to fill the quota , select efficient candidates. The political party also set criteria for the candidates. The candidates must be member of the party; literate, at least able to read and write are some of the criteria. The political leaders in the district and Dajole village are working towards achieving the indicators. Nevertheless, Abasokotu village is strictly working with pressure to fill the quota by the district political party. They think women are not capable of undertaking administrative activities. The political party

5.3. How effective and efficient was the support of SARDP towards achieving the indicator women's participation in decision making bodies?

All government staffs agreed that the budget allocation from SARDP the last two year is on time and according to their time plan. But there was delay before those years. However the overall budget ceiling to decentralization pillar is very low. The distribution of the budget is 30-35% for agriculture and natural resource, 35-40% to economic diversification, 25-30 to infrastructure and 10-15% to decentralization. Under decentralization there are four sectors, WAO is one of those.

All respondents from government staffs from zone to district level agreed the quality of the advisory service was good. However, WAO said although the advisory service is good she complained there is no regular schedule. Due to lack of regular schedule they manage to meet some or one of the staffs. But if there is schedule for the year she said we can also schedule accordingly. On the other hand the district administration said it's the government staffs, who didn't used the service effectively otherwise the quality of the advice is good. Besides there are focal persons assigned to follow up SARDP's interventions. In addition Ahead of time before they come they make schedule.

The monitoring and evaluation was quarterly bases. There was open discussion on the appropriate utilization, time of the budget utilization as per the plan was good. According to the respondents there was no problem to reallocate budget according to the evaluation result.

SARDP has been giving capacity building support to district staffs long medium and short term trainings, with the aim of improving the development initiative of the district. Currently there are 2 women studying for their first degree and two men completed for masters degree past years. Both men who were graduated for master's degree currently working at zonal level. They got promotion from zonal office. There high turnover of staffs. One of the reasons is those improved there education to higher level get promotion to regional or zonal level or get new jobs outside the organization.

5.4. What is the importance of women's participation in decision making bodies?

This interview was forwarded to mixed, women only and men only groups. The mixed groups were in Dajole village. In this village most of the women are empowered and they are free to speak in front of men. While in village Abatokotu the women are shy and not able to explain their opinion when even they were interviewed alone. The response to importance of women participation in decision making is different women at Dajole and Abotukotu. Women groups in later village responded that women participate in decision making for their own sake. They think it is an opportunity for women on decision making position to get more training and more knowledge on women's right. While women in the mixed group in later village responded women who are at decision making position make sure that women participate and benefit from political, social and economic developments equally with men. They said, women in decision making position speak in behalf of other women in the community. They represent them.

There was also continuous follow up once every month, while in the later once every six month. The table below designates the variation clearly. Women's representation in Dajole village (43%) is far better than in Abasokotu (28%), in council 39% and 30 respectively. Although the representation in the council is 2008 election Dajole is far ahead of the indicator planed for phase three while Abasokotu is below the indicator which is 35%. There is change in the representation of women in council and cabinet from 2007 to 2008. There is almost 50% increase.

Although their representation determined through quota there is still variation between the two village due to their differences in consciousness level. The representation of women however in shared decision making good, because although villages like Abatokotu below the indicator it has fulfilled the national requirement which is 30%. Individual representation is low in all the 31 villages in Dessie district. There is no women administrator even in Dajole which is expected well followed up and most of the community members are gender aware . The same is true for committees for example out of 42 water committee members in Abasokotu 18 are women, however only 4(22%) out of 18 committee are leaders. The response from male groups is almost the same as women in mixed group in both villages

Table 11: Representation of women at decision making position in two villages Dessiezuria district 2008

Position	Year	Dajole Village			Abasokotu Village			Indicator
		F	M	F%	F	M	F%	
Cabinet	2007	2	5	28	1	6	14	35%
	2008	3	4	43	2	5	28	
Council	2007	51	144	26	40	148	23	
	2008	117	183	39	90	210	30	

Source: Dessiezuria WAO, 2008

The reason for less representation of women in local government decision making bodies was that, husbands not allow women to participate in different development activities including at decision making, except participate in food for work. There are more women participants in food for work than men because it is bringing food or money for the household which is not fully controlled by women. Those elected in the council the majority are Female Headed Households. Husbands who had gender training, participants in cabinet are not willing to allow them to participate on meeting. Women's confidence in this village is less, week women's organization. Cultural and

religious factors, no strong women's organization, high workload and husbands do not allow the participation of women in decision making and less awareness in gender relation.

Due to gender awareness training and gender analysis exercise there is equal division of labor at household level. As a result Polygamy decreased, there was restriction to marry husband after divorce for 3-4 months for women ; after divorce the husband was allowed to cancel the divorce and request marriage with out the consent of the wives. Now these practices were minimized due to the attitudinal change through training and gender analysis exercise. Besides fetching water and collecting wood and animal feed is done by both men and women using donkey, which was previously done by women's carried at their back.

The group members were requested for continuation of the gender analysis and follow up. Group members from Abotukotu village suggested experience sharing visit to Dajole village. They think only undertaking gender analysis and training or experience sharing is not enough, but government staffs particularly women's affairs office should organize regular follow up consultative meeting.

In addition women groups in Abotukotu said, network with village leaders, help women to be elected at local decision making position. Those who have no network will not be elected. Besides the working environment is not women friendly. Particularly in Abotukotu the leaders usually meeting take place in receptions. Elected women are not willing to go to this place. According to the WAO expert for about a year women cabinet members didn't participated in the meeting. The inconveniences of such happenings discourage other women in the next election.

CHAPTER VI: DISCUSSION

The primary research objective of this study is to identifying the constraints that local government bodies such as, Dessiezuria administrator, Women's affairs office, agriculture office, political affairs, small and micro enterprise development desk and village administration face to meet the indicators of increasing women's participation in local government decision making bodies.

Overall, the senior government staffs who participated in this study as respondents accepted that there are constraints for not meeting the indicators. The issues discussed with the community members and local government staffs divided in to four categories. These are institutional and individual impediments for women participation in decision making bodies; the extent of responsibilities overcome by each specific sectors who have decisive role and the strategy they followed; the effective and efficiency of support of donor agencies and the perception of women and men community members towards women participation in local government decision making bodies.

6.1. Impediments for women participation

Dessiezuria district women have low political status as compared to men. The participation of women results from their low socioeconomic status stemming from social norms of a male dominated society confining women to the household. Their unequal status in society gives them unequal access to the educational, economic and other opportunities offered by the local government and society. Hence when planning to increase women's participation in local government decision making bodies, interventions which will help to over come the impediments to women participation taken into account. These interventions include:

- ✚ Decreasing women's workload;
- ✚ Increasing their income;
- ✚ Strengthening women's organization;
- ✚ Gender awareness training to change the attitude of the community and women themselves etc.

This section will examine to what extent this intervention identified and planned, implemented and contributed towards women's participation in decision making bodies and its constraints to contribute towards women participation in local government decision making bodies.

While looking at the activities planned and implemented by Dessiezuria district government, some of it contributed to decrease socio – economic and political problems of women. However there are some activities which were not totally identified like literacy education, the gender aspect of economic empowerment and the like. Therefore the constraints of omitting some of the important activities mentioned earlier and the impacts of those planned and implemented towards increasing women's participation in decision making will be covered under this section.

Socio-cultural aspects

Socio-cultural issues affecting women participation in decision making as reviewed in chapter 4, are the role and responsibilities culturally ascribed to women as mothers and wives, illiteracy, violence against women, lack of self confidence and lack of social service. According to the secondary data presented under result, activities

planned in 2004-2008 were including only violence against women and gender awareness trainings. The status of these two activities discussed below.

Gender analysis exercise

Among gender trainings, gender analysis training encompassed with practical exercise in the field with household wives and husbands brought attitudinal change. It has been exercised since end of 2003. Since then those households who did the analysis on their own experience developed an action plan and carry out continuous meeting on monthly

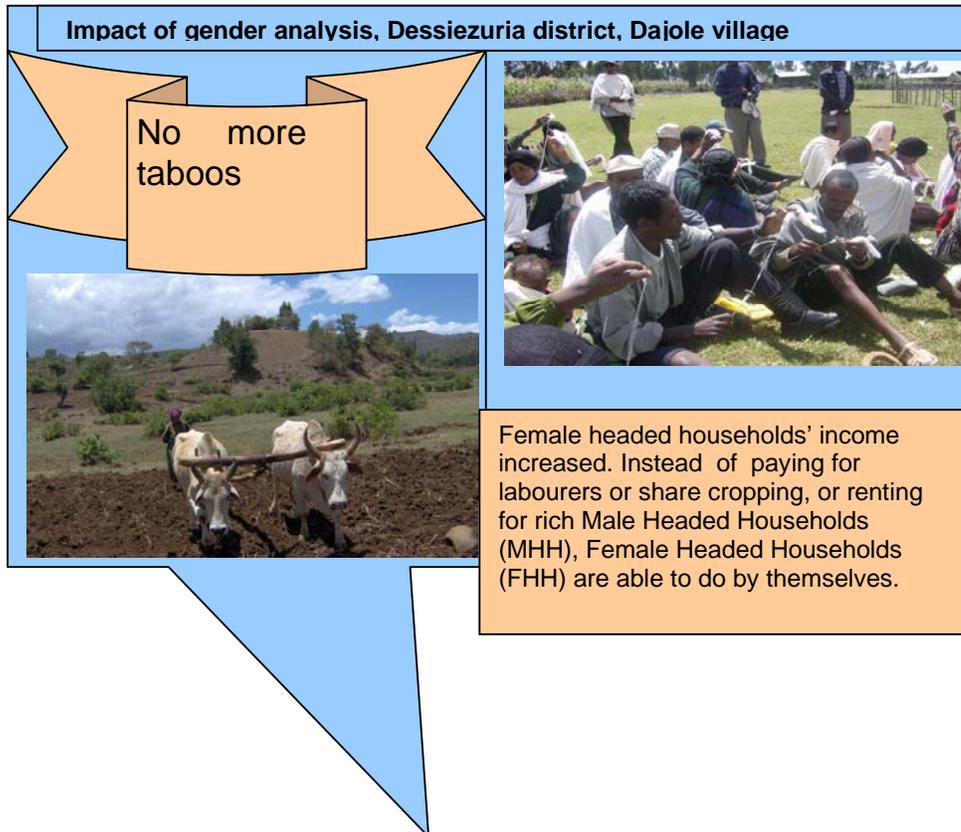


Figure 5: Impact of gender analysis

bases to review their action plan. (Refer to chapter 5, impact of gender analysis). This has contributed a lot developing self confidence on women. According to WAO expert most of the women elected at council level are from these groups. At present 4686 households (wives and husbands) exercised gender analysis. The coverage is very low, it is 14% of the total rural household in the district. Among these communities which can play as a role model are 382 households. These are habitants of Dajole village. These are 8.2% of the total households who did the gender analysis. One can question why these difference. The difference is mainly less follow up of the government staffs after the training. Dajole village is closer to the main road, and therefore it is easy for experts to use public transport, or any vehicle passing by to meet the groups. According to WAO head they visit them on monthly bases but other groups in other villages every six months. In addition to this exercise gender awareness training to other community members organized.

Gender training

According to table 3 under training in chapter 5 within 3-4 years interval a total of 2832 people were trained out of which 2552 (45% women) are community members and 280 (23% Women) government staffs. This is well organized training, but education for an hour or more in gatherings on HTP/VAW and gender has been given to 60302 community members.

According to inception report SARDP, training organizing capacity of government staffs is very low, due to their low experience in the area and background. This is reflected in low attitudinal change of government staffs who took the training. It is one of the major issues raised during individual interview with senior government staffs including zone administrator. They complain there is less attitudinal change of staffs in gender relation, which they said the main constraint for low participation not only in political decision making, but also women's benefit in all development intervention.

Therefore it can be said that, there is limited contribution from gender training due to the content, the delivery method and coverage of the population in the district. Nevertheless there is better contribution training on HTP/VAW. The trainings were organized by knowledgeable persons of the subject matter such as nurses and lawyers. The content is focused at the effect of HTP to the health of the children and the legal rights children and women against HTP/VAW. In addition the referral system also contributed to decrease the HTP/VAW (refer to chapter 5).

The local government program has education intervention which is supported by SARDP. Its focus was to improving enrolment rate of primary school students in general girls in particular. Due to the construction of schools closer to the village and material support the Enrolment rate has been improved for both male and female children (refer to chapter 5, girls' education). But the district program does not contain adult literacy, while the illiteracy rate of women is 67% and men 56%. As Identified under literature review it is one of the major problems for women less participation in local government decision making bodies. In addition it is also one of the criteria for election at decision making local government bodies. To be selected as a candidate they must at least read and write.

Economic

The benefit of women from the interventions planned to improve their capacity to generate income is low and high.

Table: 7 under chapter 5 shows the average participation of women in cooperative is very low (12%). In saving and credit cooperative women's participation is 25%; in irrigation scheme 19%; service cooperative 11% and in livestock 7.5% (dairy farm, poultry farming, oxen and small ruminant fattening). It means women's participation and benefit from cooperative organization is very low. Nevertheless women's participation in small and micro-enterprise development is higher. In recent years it even becoming equal to the participation of men (refer figure 4, under chapter five). The difference is due to gender sensitivity and insensitivity of extension strategies of the cooperative desk under office of agriculture and small and micro-enterprise development.



Figure 6: Women clients benefiting poultry farm

Seventy nine percent of the extension staffs in former organization are male to the opposite the later majority of extension staffs are women. In a traditional society where the majority of women are not directly speaking to men employing female extension worker is plays a decisive role in increasing women participation. Besides there has to have target to increase women's participation. It is when the organization looks for strategies to meet its target. That is what small and micro-enterprise development staffs doing. In addition they collaborate with women's affairs office. Women's affairs office organizes the group. Then small and micro-enterprise development office trains the group and access the credit.

In any of the case it might be possible to generate income. Who is deciding in this income, is the major question in these days. Women's accessibility to any credit and saving institution and increasing income does not guaranty the control of the income generated. There is need for proper strategy, which is gender sensitive to support women's effort to decide on the income. As women's affairs office head explained areas where gender analysis exercise takes place the control of resource of women is very high. Gender analysis impact assessment of Dessiezuria district revealed that Control of resources by the wife on selling cattle and cash increased from 32% during analysis to 43.6 %. This means, there is a limited extent of contribution for women participation.



Figure 7: Picture taken from women cooperative members using irrigation

Land use right

Giving equal opportunity for both male and female in distribution of land, improved the confidence of women. There is better respect to wives than ever before due to this intervention. A total of 50781 households have got certificate to use land in their name. From these Land use certification for married couples: 46686, Female Headed household 2569 and male headed household 1526.

Political

Political issues which are impediment to women participation as mentioned under chapter three are cooperation in women's organization and less awareness of women about politics and the electoral system.

Strong women's organization is required to support the political movement of women candidates. In Dessiezuria district situation the women's association is too weak to perform this responsibility. First the members are small in number. The number of members comprises 33342 (zone WAB 2007/08). When compared to the women population in the district the members are only 38%. It is not only the size of the members there is very loose relation between the leaders and the members. Two government senior staffs at zonal level expressed their opinion for the loose relation is less contribution of the association protection against women's rights. There are three main associations in the district. Farmers' association, youth association and women's association. Among this only woman's association has no operational budget meeting hall etc. This is due to the yearly fee collected from members and sent to the regional women's association without leaving anything to district women's

association. Other associations were using parts of their fee to construct meeting place and for operational cost while send part of it to the region. Nothing has been done to improve this situation.

To gradually link to women's association in the future, women's forum is established in 2006 (refer chapter 5). It is reported that within two years time the women start claiming for their rights. Particularly benefits related to development interventions. The members are joined women's forum on their free will. There is no fee, and the meeting time, place, agenda points all decided by the members themselves. Most of the members started benefiting from different interventions in the villages. In 2008 council election, elected members in the council were women from women's forum. Their size is comparable with women's association in the district. It is 30184 at present. When looking at its establishment year the size is good.

In 2007, One hundred four women were trained in political participation and its processes (WAB, annual report 2007). The training was organized by women's affairs office.

The intervention like women's forum, gender analysis and land use right had immense contribution to increase women's participation in government decision making bodies. While other have in significant contribution.

6.2. Responsibilities of government offices

The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995) identified institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women as one of the 12 critical areas of concern in the Beijing Platform for Action (PfA). As one of member countries of UN Government of Ethiopia has developed the National Policy on Women (Women's Policy) formulated in 1993, aimed to create appropriate structures within government offices and institutions to establish equitable and gender-sensitive public policies. The Government of Ethiopia in 1994, under its new constitution, renewed its commitment towards this policy. Article 3 of the constitution provides equal opportunity for women to participate in the decision making process by giving them the right to vote and be elected. Local government at district level is implementing the policy of the government. Accordingly for increasing women's participation the local government play role on its implementation. Among the offices in the district some play decisive role in this respect. Regarding understanding and acting on their responsibility the following were responded.

Sixty seven percent of the respondents agreed that women's affairs office have the major responsibility to do the job in relation to increasing women's participation in decision making bodies. But 33% said there is responsibility share among three offices. These are the political affairs office, district administration and women's affairs office. This means the majority of the respondents think women's affairs office is the only responsible organization to meet the indicator, increasing women's participation in local government decision making bodies. This is may be due to the plan was made by women's affairs office, due to the name 'women's affairs office' most of the issues related to women, branded to women's affairs office and the gender bias.

However those 33% believe women's affairs office should play coordinating role. In addition they have to support the organization of women's association. They should also give awareness raising training to the women on gender issue. But the political affairs office in collaboration with women's affairs office should work together in the

application of quota which is 30% for 2005 election. They further emphasized that the district administration is doing the overall coordination of all the programs. WAO being one of the district offices supervised by district administration, the later gives managerial support as well as full political will to carry out the job.

On the other hand the district administration as well as the political affairs agreed most of the activities in increasing women's participation done by district women's affairs office. This year village level election men cabinets in most of the villages refused to fill up the seat to 30-50% quota to women. With the effort of WAO this has made real. The strategy they used is to work together with women's association, women's forum and youth association at village level at the same time net work with administration and political affairs office. That is how they increased the participation of women to 39% in Dajole village which was 26 % last year; and to 30% to Absokotu which was 23%.

The constraints of the local government at this level is there is high workload to WAO and there is no clarity in the division of responsibilities among offices.

6.3. Effective and efficiency of support of donor agencies

All government staffs, who participated in responding to this study, agreed that the budget allocation from SARDP the last two year is on time and according to their time plan. But there was delay before those years. However 30% didn't deny the overall budget ceiling to decentralization pillar is very low.

All respondents from government staffs from zone to district level agreed the quality of the advisory service was good. However, some 10% of the respondents said although the advisory service is good, there is no regular schedule. But if there is schedule for the year, we can also schedule accordingly. On the other hand some 10% said it's the government staffs, who didn't used the service effectively otherwise the quality of the advice is good. The remaining 80% said the advisory service is good, they didn't complain any thing to the government side in utilizing the advice or in adviser side. This shows the advisory service has been good.

As per the timely monitoring of the program by SARDP staffs almost all of them agreed the monitoring is timely, which is quarterly bases. They said there was open discussion on the appropriateness and time of the budget utilization as per the plan was good. According to the respondents there was no problem to reallocate budget according to the evaluation result. This shows there has been effective and efficient delivery of service from SARDP side, except that the amount of budget to decentralization was lower compared to other sectors.

6.4. Perception of community on women participation in decision making bodies

The response for the importance of women participation in local decision making, 55% of the respondents said they represent women and explain economic, social and political problem of women in their behalf. They further said because of their representation, women's subordinate position will decrease. But other 45% said due to women's participation in decision making they get exposed to training and improve household management. This means more community members understand women participation in decision making is to represent other women. The others strictly think women participation in decision making bodies is for their own sake rather than representing women.

One of the reasons for the second group for less participation of women in decision making was their more limited network with local government village decision makers. But all other respondents including the later once said their husbands are not willing to participate women in decision making bodies. This means the main reason for women less participation is due to unwillingness of their husbands. They further clarified the husbands send their wives for food for work, because she is bringing income for the household which she can not decide on it most of the time. Most of them said the husbands afraid of women's participation, because women may be become more aware of their right and they may start claiming for their right. Surprisingly in this village there are high divorce cases. The other reason for low participation that all of them agreed are less confidence of women and illiteracy.

CHAPTER VII CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter is devoted to the conclusion and recommendation. The conclusion is submersing the discussion and focus at the constraints of local government to achieve women's participation, and the recommendation suggesting actions to be considered in the future.

7.1. Conclusion

This research has discussed the constraints of local government to achieve the participation of women in local government decision making bodies. The constraints of local government for under achieving the indicators, were four. These are:

Activities which were identified, planned and implemented to contribute towards improving impediments to women participation were not fully addressed its anticipated aim. There are some like gender analysis, women's forum etc which have better impact towards women's participation, but not scaled up; there are also other activities which have insignificant (income generating activities, gender training etc) contribution and there are some important activities which were not totally identified. This is mainly due to lack of adequate technical and financial capacity to identify, plan and implement gender sensitive project; scaling up of activities which brought impact on the lives of the community. The former is the result of technical capacity while the later financial.

Lack of gender sensitivity among the team of government staffs. It is attribute to attitude and lack of strategy, particularly accountability issue. The attitude of the government staff is related to gender issue is the responsibility of WAO. This is due to lack of awareness in gender issue and accountability. There is no strategy in the district to address accountability of the staff. Therefore lack of awareness and strategy of government staff to work towards achieving the indicator is the constraint to the local government.

There is also budget shortage to good governance in general women's affairs office in particular. The overall budget ceiling to good governance is very low. It is only from 10-15% of overall budget to the district. This budget further divided to judiciary, administration, community fund, HAV/AIDS and women's affairs office. The majority is going to community fund. There is limited amount of many remaining to the rest of the offices. While sharing the remaining money women affairs office are getting the least amount of budget share. There is an assumption that gender issue is addressed in other sectors from SARDP side. It is true even if it is not fully addressed there is an attempt. Nevertheless women affairs office with their facilitation and coordination responsibility to the whole offices in the district and community need adequate budget in order overcomes their responsibilities. Besides it is only SARDP which gave attention to WAO in allocating budget directly. No other donor giving such attention to WAO equally to other offices. Therefore another constraint particularly from SARDP side is less budget ceiling to good governance which is directly affecting WAO in budget shortage, and in turn constrain government to achieve the indicators. Some of the issues related to budget shortage explained under paragraph two in this chapter.

The community perception towards women's participation is good and bad. Gender aware community members have better perceive women's participation in decision making, while less aware community members perceived differently. The former think women in decision making bodies represent other women in the community. They speak in behalf of them thereby work towards improving women's situation political, social and economic aspects. The later on the other hand think women are participating for their own sake, to get training on their rights. Less participation of women is due to more limited network with the village leaders and the domination of their husbands. Since most of the communities are not thinking similarly with the former once it can be said there is high attitudinal problem in perception of women participation in decision making bodies. Because these groups are the only sample in the district as mentioned else where in this document. Although they are majority to these research groups they are not majority to the whole community. One of the constraints for the government to achieve its indicator is the attitude of the husband, more limited network and general community perception towards women's decision making.

Therefore the constraints of local government are lack of technical capacity and budget; lack of strategy on accountability of gender equality issues, and community negative perception towards women participation in local government decision making bodies. Hence the following are recommended.

7.2. Recommendation

1. Dessie zuria women's affairs office in collaboration with SARDP gender adviser should develop and implement training programmes on gender mainstreaming to enable government staffs, to identify plan and implement gender sensitive project focused at issues impeding women's participation in decision making bodies.
2. Dessie zuria district administration must promote gender mainstreaming as the main strategy recommended by the national policy of Ethiopia, and develop accountability among staffs to promote gender equality; it should be one of the core issues in performance appraisal.
3. Dessie zuria district women's affairs office in collaboration with SARDP and the district administration should establish standing or ad hoc committees and other statutory bodies on gender equality and empowerment of women, with cross-offices representation, to monitor the review and the implementation of increasing women's participation in local government decision making bodies;
4. Using existing women credit and saving groups, women forum and gender analysis group as entry point, the WAO should communicate with NGOs in the district and SARDP to start applied literacy education for the groups; Action aid is working in Amhara region. It is one of international NGOs promoting applied adult literacy education. They have also interest to fund such an attempt. Therefore WAO in collaboration with education office should use this opportunity.
5. Dessiezuria district administration should seek for fund to scale up activities which proved to bring better impact, like gender analysis, women's forum, and referral system. Some bilateral and international NGOs like concern and SARDP could be possible targets.
6. Dessiezuria WAO in collaboration with cooperative organization, small scale micro enterprise development offices and other microfinance institutions should, Integrate income generating activities with gender training: both husbands and wives should get gender awareness training, ahead of accessing women to saving and credit or cooperative organization. There are successful NGOs in this respect. For example WISDOM in Addis. It is recommended to identify such organization and share experience to improve women's control over income and resource.
7. SARDP should revise and give overall guidance in budget sharing among government offices in the district.

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Annex 1: Checklist

Questions (Sub que.1) to be collect from secondary data and interview government staffs and SARDP staffs)

1. What were interventions included to tackle women's workload?
2. How do these interventions related to the needs of women? What was the contribution of the interventions in decreasing women's workload and saving time?
3. What were the interventions planned in income and employment generation and were it related to the needs of women? Did it improved women's income, and control over the income?
4. What were interventions related improving women's self esteem and community image to wards women? What was the coverage and change towards their perception?
5. What was interventions related strengthening women's organization? What is its contribution improving women's participation in decision making bodies?
6. What are the learning points and what is the suggestion for future improvement?

Sub question 2(individual interview Local government staffs)

1. What was the role of women's affairs office, political affairs and the administrator, in addressing women's participation in decision making?
2. What was their common and / or individual responsibility in achieving the indicators set to improve women's participation in decision making bodies?
3. What were their strategies to meet the indicators, women participation in decision making bodies?
4. What are the learning points and suggestion for future improvement?

Sub question 3. (SARDP staff and local government staffs)

1. How was the timeliness of budget release related to activity action plan?
2. How was the quality of advisory service in meeting the needs of the local government in respect to women's participation in decision making bodies?
3. How was the monitoring and evaluation, timely feed back and flexibility to adjust the plan according to the outcome?
4. What are the drawbacks and suggestions for improvement?

Sub question. 4 (Focus group discussion, community)

1. What is the importance of women's participation in decision making bodies?
2. What do you think is the reason for the less participation of women in decision making bodies?
3. What is the contribution of the interventions particularly planned to decrease women's workload, increase their income, improving women's self esteem and community image towards women and strengthening women's organization, in addressing women's need and women's participation in decision making in bodies?
4. What do you think should be done to improve their participation at local government decision making bodies?

Annex 2: Name and position of respondents

N/S	Name of respondents	Type interview	Sex	Position/representation	location
1.	Abeba Yosef	SSI*	F	Head of district administration	Dessie
2.	Aynalem Nigusse	SSI	F	WAO* head	Ditto
3.	Tamitur kiros	SSI	M	WAO expert	Ditto
4.	Cheru Debebe	SSI	M	Ditto	Ditto
5	Miskir Amsalu	SSI	M	Head political affairs	Ditto
6	Dr. Hargua Teshome	SSI	F	Zone WAB*	Ditto
7	Taddese Teshome	SSI	M	Head of AO	Ditto
8	Dessie Arage	SSI	M	Expert small & micro-enterprise	Ditto
8	Siyum Mekonen	SSI	M	Head of Zone administration	Ditto
9	Fatu Hussen	SSI	F	Village WAO head	Dajole
10	Nuriye Ahimed	SSI	M	Chair person	Ditto
11	Said Hussen	SSI	M	Village manager	Abato kotu
12	Sheh Imam Hussen	FGD	M	Religious leader	Dajole
13	Aminat Ali	FGD	F	Women association	Dajole
14	Zeneba Hussen	FGD	F	Women association	Dajole
15	Ali Yemam	FGD	M	Religious leader	Dajole
16	Dabush Mehammed	FGD	F	Model farmer	Dajole
17	Hussen Mehammed	FGD	M	Edir leader (CBO)	Dajole
18	Mehammed Yimer	FGD	M	Elder	Dajole
19	Birtukan Nuri	FGD	F	Health extension worker	Dajole
20	Zenebech Yemer	FGD	F	Security police	Dajole
21	Edris Said	FGD	M	Edir leader (CBO)	Dajole
22	Yimam Ahimed	FGD	M	Social court	Abato kotu
23	Ashebire Arege	FGD	M	Field worker (Agriculture)	Abato kotu
24	Yesuf Endris	FGD	M	Chair person	Abato kotu
25	Ali Yemam	FGD	M	Edir (CBO)	Abato kotu
26	Ahimed Ejigu	FGD	M	Youth and sport	Abato kotu
27	Mehamed Hussen	FGD	M	Council member	Abato kotu
28	Fantaye Yimer	FGD	F	Women's association	Abato kotu
29	Mehamed Emam	FGD	M	Edir (CBO)	Abato kotu
30	Zeneba Yemer	FGD	F	Women's association	Abato kotu
31	Alibaba Said	FGD	F	HTP committee	Abato kotu
32	Aminat Ababa	FGD	F	Women's association	Abato kotu
33	Tesfa Manaye	FGD	F	HTP committee	Abato kotu

* Semi Structured Interview; FGD: Focus Group Discussion; WAO: Women's Affairs Office; WAB: Women's affairs Bureau; AO: Agricultural office