RESEARCH ARTICLE

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN TIGRAY, ETHIOPIA: INSTITUTIONAL POLICY SUCCESS WITH CULTURAL CHALLENGE

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This study assesses the participation of women in public administration, specifically in Tigray by taking Woreda Tahtay Machew as case study. Basically, primary data source was employed to gather first-hand information to achieve the objectives of the research. The sources of primary data were women employees in town and rural institutions. The study area consists of 31 public institutions and nineteen rural kebeles having 1669 government employees who have diploma and above, 995 are males and 674 are females. The researchers selected 8 public institutions through lottery method sampling from the town district and purposively were selected three rural kebeles from the 19 rural kebeles institutions. From 134 women employees, 84 were selected from the town districts, and 67 were selected from 108 women employees on the rural kebeles. As to the finding, there are two conflicting value systems with regard to the participation of women on the public administration. The state value system including the laws and polices promote the empowerment of women at all levels. On the other hand, the cultural value system restrain women's from being part of the decision making process. The participation of women in public administration of woreda Tahtay Machew is still at infant level, but the rate has been increasing from time to time due to different measures taken by the government.

INTRODUCTION

The presence of women in leadership position worldwide brings development, and ensures social justice through gender equity at leadership and decision making levels (Panigrahi, 2013).It is believed that women's equal participation in decision- making is not only a demand for simple justice or democracy but can also be seen as a necessary condition for women's interests to be taken into consideration (Report of expert meeting group, 2010). Women have a vital role in the community transformation and in developing transformational leadership in one country. Ensuring women involvement and representing them in leadership across sectors and throughout all government services is essential to build good governance, transparency, accountability, and to improve the quality of women's life (the UN Global Compact, 2011). According to Nigist, 2008, equal participation of women in leadership and decision making plays a pivotal role in the advancement of women and without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's perspective at all levels of decision making, the goals of equality, development and good governance can't be achieved. Similarly the United Nations economic commission for Africa (2007) asserts that women's

equal participation is a necessary condition for the interest of women and girls to be taken into account and is needed in order to strengthen democracy, good governance and promote sustainable development. In line with this Eugenia (2010) stated that the more women we will have in leadership and management positions in the world, the more stable and dependable world will have.

However, in both developing and developed countries, women are under-represented in decision- making and leadership position in different public sectors (UNHCR, 2007). For example, participation in political, social, economic and leadership is negligible that becomes a challenge to many developing countries (the UN Global Compact, 2011). Especially, women in Africa have been faced with a multitude of challenges and obstacles to their wellbeing and development including discrimination, marginalization, violence, abuse, deprivation, exclusion among others (Kargo, 2011). In many African countries women's representation in parliament is very low except in few states. The numbers of women participation in top leadership and political arena had still a problem in African states (Awotash, 2010). She stated that Ruwanda is the leading state in terms of increasing women's representation in political leadership where 56% of the parliament members are women, except Ruwanda no other nation's legislature have

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50% women representation in parliament, for instance, in South Africa and Mozambique women's representation in parliament is about 44.5% around 48% respectively. Generally in Sub-Saharan African countries the average women's representation in parliament is 14% which is very minimal.

Though the number of women in Ethiopia represents half of the population (UNDAF, 2012), their participation of women in leadership and decision making position in Ethiopia were totally dominated by men, Surprisingly, during Haileslassie's regime when the first parliament was introduced, no woman had allowed to be nominated as a member of parliament until 1957, though two women in 1965 and five women in 1969 have joined the emperor's parliament. Similarly, though the Derg 1987 constitution and the subsequently proclaimed electoral laws had ensured the equality of citizens and their right to elect and be elected (in principles), in practice these constitutions and electoral laws were far from increasing the participation of women in leadership and decision making activities (Mintewab, 2005). It is the current government that is applying in to practice the country's constitution, national laws, national policies as well as international instrument adopted by the government to benefit women (Mintewab, 2005 and Emebet, 2007). For example, the government of Ethiopia has taken important gender and development measures which includes: relevant passages in the most recent version of the Constitution of Ethiopia (1995), the Revised Family Law (2000) and the Revised Criminal Code (2005), Ethiopian Women Development and Change Package (2006) and the National Action Plan (NAP-EG) and adoption of MDGs as guiding framework for planning (UNDAF, 2012).

Though the current government made efforts to enhance women's participation and decision making, women's representation in parliament is about 30% (Women's affair subsector, 2004). Despite all the good intentions of the government of Ethiopia to increase the participation of women in leadership, women's status in key decision-making positions in the public service especially, in middle and top leadership position is still low as compared to men (Abrham, 2010, UNDAF, 2012; Panigrahi, 2013; Gebremariam, 2013). Other sources also indicate that women in Ethiopia have been almost absent or disproportionately represented in managerial and leadership positions and their leadership skills is underdeveloped to challenge and influence the decisions that affects women's life (Indrawatie, 2011, Awotash, 2010, Mihirete, 2007; UNDAF, 2012). Like the Federal Civil Service Commission, Gebremariam (2013), Groelsema, 2004, statistics revealed that the overwhelming majority of women civil servants are concentrated in low positions such as secretary, cleaner, and others (Women's Affair subsector, 2004).

Coming to the state of Tigray, unlike the other regions, there is a good representation of women in political leadership and there is equal representation of women in the state council .i.e. 48% are women in the Tigray state council. Whereas in the executive body, there is insignificant women's representation, for instance, there are only 21% women's representations in executive body throughout the region. Whereas at district level the women's representations in higher and middle leadership position is respectively 31.2% and 47.7 % and at district and sub district level council is 50% and 51.6% respectively (Report of women's affairs office, 2013). Therefore, the researchers are initiated to conduct this research mainly because of the following reasons; unlike the regions average women's representation in the region is low (For example, Tahtay-Maichew woreda). Second, some studies for example Gebremariam (2013) has conducted a research on assessing barriers to women to hold leadership position in private organizations; there is hardly any study that identifies the barriers for women to have positions in public sector. Hence, the researchers want to conduct a research on investigating factors that affects women's participation in leadership position in public institutions, especially by focusing on institutional factors.

Basic Research Question

In general this study attempts to answer questions like: What are the factors that affect women's level of participation in leadership position in public institutions in Tigray region taking Tahtay-Maichew woreda as case study?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Study Area

The study was conducted in woreda Tahtay-Maichew, one of the five woredas in central Tigray zone in Tigray regional state. Tahtay Maychew is one of the rural administrative districts in Tigray Regional State in the north of Ethiopia and is located near the well-known historic town of Axum. It is located 1030 km north of the capital city of Addia-Abeba, and 250 km from mekelle the regional capital city of Tigray. Tahtay Maichew covers 57,468 ha of land and has 19 rural kebeles and has a total population of about 99,184 people (according to a census in 2007, CSA 2007).

Data Source

For this study, both quantitative and qualitative type of data was employed. Basically, primary data source was employed to gather first-hand information to achieve the objectives of the research. The sources of primary data were women employees in town and rural institutions which include leaders of the institutions, senior and more experienced women and men in the institutions, head of gender mainstreaming in each sector, the woreda administrator and the leaders of women affair office. Regarding secondary data, there was a detailed review of the woreda report. Special emphasis was given to reports of women's affair office which consist the files of women in the woreda. Additionally documents and reports related to the women's issue, research books, government reports, U.N. agencies and other international organization reports use, conferences, research papers, journal articles, woreda's report and own computations (2005 & 2006 E.C) were also used.

Sample of the study

The study area consists of 31 public institutions and nineteen rural kebeles having 1669 government employees who have diploma and above, 995 are males and 674 are females. The

researcher selected 8 public institutions from the town district and three rural kebeles from the 19 rural kebeles institutions. The eight institutions are education bureau, health bureau, agriculture bureau, municipality bureau, civil service bureau, finance bureau, women affairs bureau and woreda administration and the three tabias are Dimbaza, Tisha and Ferimma. The town district institutions were selected through lottery method sampling, rural kebeles were selected through purposively .i.e. one from the nearest town kebele, another one from the middle kebele and lastly one kebele from the remote kebele. Totally there are 134 women government employees in the eight institutions of the town district and 108 employees in the three rural kebeles. The target populations of the study area were women government employees who have diploma and above positions in Tahtay-Maichew woreda. Public institutions of the woreda were the unit of analysis in this study, in which the women employees were contacted to fill up the questionnaires. Finally 84 women employees were selected from the town districts and 67 women employees from the rural kebeles. Totally 151 women respondents were selected in the study area.

While to the data which was collected through interviews and focus groups discussion were analyzed using content analysis and scrutinized descriptively. Documentary data were also used to cross check, supplement and confirm information obtained from interviews and questionnaires. More over the comparative and content analysis were done.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As shown in Table 1, 70.2% of the respondents are married, while 27.8% are unmarried. As observed from the above data majority respondents of this study are married women. As shown in the above table, most respondents (75.5%) are diploma holders, and 24.5% are degree holders, surprisingly throughout the woreda, no woman is master at masters' level. As inferred from the focus group discussions and interviews most participants believe that increasing women's educational level will have contribution on the advancement of their personal statues as well as there over all involvement of socio economic and political affairs of the country.

Study area

Data Analysis

After the data has been collected, it was processed through manual editing, coding, data entry, and consistency checking. Accordingly the data collected from respondents through survey were fed into a computer and analyzed by using SPSS version 17.0 software and simple quantitative analysis techniques like percentage, frequency, and tables were used.

Even though this true in an ideal sense, practically there many obstacles that hinder the participation of women's at all levels.

Institutional Cultures, Policies and Practices

Institutional policies, cultures and practices play an important role to increasing women's role in decision making process and leadership in general. Institutional policies and practices are expected to treat women and men in equal manner;

however different studies show that still there are gender discriminations in different institutions (Mihirete, 2007 and Gebremariam 2013).

Table 1. Demographic character of respondents

Age	Catagories	Frequency	Percentage
	20-30	68	45
	31-40	77	51
	41-50	6	4
	Total	151	100
Marital status	Unmarried	42	27.8
	Married	106	70.2
	Widow	3	2
	Total	151	100
How many children do you have	Small	56	37.1
	Medium	54	35.8
	Not applicable	41	27.2
	Total	151	100
Educational level	Diploma	114	75.5
	Degree	37	24.5
	Total	151	100
Work experience	0-5 years	87	57.6
	6-10 years	41	27.2
	11-15 years	6	4
	16-20 years	3	2
	21-25 years	14	9.3
	Total	151	100

Source: Owen survey, 2014

Table 2 shows that t85.4% of the respondents 85.4% state that the work policies of their institutions did not inhibit the participation of women in leadership, while 15.6% respondents indicate that the work policy hinder women's involvement in leadership. In line with this, the participants of the focus group discussion and interview refer that the work policies of their institutions did not hinder women's participation in leadership rather such policies are in favor of women by promoting positive discriminations and quotas that empower women at every level. Moreover they indicate that the current government of Ethiopia seems to be much concerned with upgrading the statues of women as inferred from different policies, law and the constitution in general. In this regard, article 35 of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution specifically deal with the rights of women in which it recognizes equal rights of women in employment, promotion, pay and pension. Sub 3 of this article also provides that women's are entitled to special consideration and affirmative measures to compensate the historical inequalities and discriminations suffered by them.

Similarly, among other instruments dealing with the rights of women the National Policy on Ethiopian Women in 1993(Report of FDRE on the implementation of gender equality in Africa, 2006) can be mentioned.

Table 2. Institutional cultures, policies and practices that affect women's participation in leadership positions

	Categories	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think that the work policy of your institutions inhibit the participation of women in leadership	Yes	22	14.6
	No	129	85.4
	Total	151	100
Do you think that the work policies are sensitive to women	Yes	123	81.5
	No	28	18.5
	Total	151	100
Do you think women's have an experience of leadership	Yes	25	16.6
	No	126	83.4
	Total	151	100
Do you think that there is gender stereotype in recruitment, promotion and appointment	Yes	57	37.7
	No	94	62.3
	Total	151	100
Is there a traditional belief in your institution which assumes women as supportive than leaders	Yes	63	55.6
	No	88	44.4
	Total	151	100
Do you think that women leaders contribute more to the success of the organizations goal than men leaders	Yes	129	85.4
	No	16	10.6
	Equal	6	4
	Total	151	100
Is there any policy that hinder women's participation in leadership position in your institutions	Yes	29	19.2
	No	122	80.8
	Total	151	100
Are there policies that address gender imbalance in leadership position in your institutions	Yes	80	53
	No	71	47
	Total	151	100
Does the institutional politics affect women's participation in leadership	Yes	21	13.9
	No	130	86.1
	Total	151	100
Does the community of your organization accepts women's leadership	Yes	71	47
	No	80	53
	Total	151	100
Is there equal opportunity to women and men to hold leadership position	Yes	133	88.1
	No	18	11.9
	Total	151	100

Source: Owen survey, 2014

This policy under its article 2 states that the government shall facilitate conditions conducive to the participation of women in decision–making process as regards to community developments, social welfare, division of land property, education and basic social services. The article encourages women to actively participate in various developmental sectors. As a result, women's participation in decision making, management and leadership is growing, though the number is still insignificant. The finding generally implies that work policies are not hindrances to women to participate in leadership position rather it empowers them to actively participate in decision making and leadership positions. As indicated in table 2, 81.5% of the respondents think that the work polices of their institutions are sensitive to women, while 18.5% of the respondents think to the contrary. In line with this, the participants of focus group discussion and interview described that the work policies of their institutions are sensitive to women. the clear manifestations that are raised by the participants were that Pregnant women have the right to maternity leave for three months , the quota set for women's to hold leadership position ,and some of them state that women's are not sent to field works instead men's are assigned to such kind of works in their respective institutions. The practices that we notice from the finding are consistent with the Ethiopian constitution, laws and policies which promote gender equality and women's empowerment. Ethiopia adopted different laws and policies that deal with the working conditions of women in which they are relatively better than those in some African countries. For instance, according to the Ethiopian civil servants proclamation no.515/2007 under its article 88 a pregnant women has the right for maternity leave for 12 weeks with full payment. While, as to the 2010s Rwandan labor law, women on maternity leave earn 100% of her salary for the first 6 weeks, and only entitled to 60-67% of her income for the last 6 weeks. Worst than this, under the Burundi legal system a women on maternity leave earn 50% of her income for the entire 12 weeks, 25% in Botswana, and 0% in Lesotho. In Uganda, a woman is entitled to an eight weeks maternity leave with a 100% of her payment for only one month, but in Kenya a woman undertaking her maternity leave gets an eight week maternity leave with her full salary.

As we can refer from Table 2, 83.4% respondents state that most women don't have an experience of leadership, while according to the 16.6% respondents; most women's are experienced of leadership. Similarly, the participants of focus group discussion and interview refer that majority women's of the woreda have no an experience of leadership and most women are found in the supportive and lower work positions. As to the participant's opinion, this happens due to low level of education, lack of confidence, high burden at house hold level and other socio cultural influences. In addition, they imply that the main reason for the underrepresentation of women in leadership position is due to lack of experience resulted from the above mentioned factors. During the past two regimes, women were strongly excluded from holding leadership position, and they were considered as house hold workers in which the leadership position and the system as a whole was dominated by men; due to this legacy leadership is taken as the function and character of men. This finding implies that most women of the woreda have no an experience of leadership and

most higher positions are dominated by men. Table 2 shows that majority respondents (62.3%) state that there is no gender stereotype in recruitment; promotion and appointment process of employees in their institutions, while 37.7% respondents believe that there are gender stereotypes and discriminations in such process. The data obtained from focus group discussion and interview also supports the above finding in which they refer that there is no gender stereotype in recruitment, promotion and appointment rather there is positive discriminations, quotas, and other priorities are given to women in their institutions. They as also justify this are due to strong intention of the government to promote the empowerment of women at all levels. This finding is one indications of the implementation of the government policies which refer that the government is committed to abolish all discriminatory laws and regulations as well as creating conducive environment for the full participation of women in the socio-economic and political sectors. To ensure gender equality and to empower women in Ethiopia, the government has taken a number of measures which includes: affirmative action, quotas, advocacy, lobbying and awareness creation in order to increase the participation of women in the decision making structures of the country.

The above finding contradicts with the research finding of Gebremariam (2013). According to Gebremariam (2013) who has conducted a research on business organizations (private organizations) in Tigray, he has generalized that there is gender discrimination in recruitment and appointment process. As it can be seen from the above discussion, the finding implies that there is no gender stereotype in recruitment, promotion and appointment in public institutions. The contradiction of this finding implies that, there is a difference between private and government organizations on the recruitment, promotion and appointment process with regard to gender. There is gender discrimination in recruitment, promotion and appointment of employees in the private organizations, but not in governmental organizations. This difference may be created because the main objective of the government is protecting citizen's right, and particularly in this case government is in a better position to promote the rights of women mainly by empowering them to come in to leadership positions. Whereas, the main aim of a private institution is increasing its profit in any case, and it gives much less attention for the empowerment of women.

Additionally, Table 2 shows that 55.6% of the respondents state that there is a traditional belief in their institutions which assumed women as supportive rather than leaders, while 44.4% respondents refer that there is no such kind of belief. In line with this, the participants of focus group discussion and interview state that there is a traditional belief which assumes women as supportive, and this is because the organizational community did not accept that women's can be effective in leadership rather most of them believe that women's lack capacity to be equally competent with men. They also provide that women's lack of experience in leadership, and they are mostly employed in low status jobs with low payment. So, due to this, the institutional community relates leadership with men while supportive works with women. This finding is consistent with the finding of (Roslin, 2000), (Kiamba, 2008), Panigrahi

(2013), Onsongo (2004) and the theory of Alice *et al.* (2001) who argued that many societies perceived that only men make good leadership and this norm denies women from holding leadership position (Roslin, 2000). In most society women are taken as the weaker sex who cannot be trusted to handle certain responsibilities of leadership (Kiamba, 2008). According to Haftu and Genet (2013) the cultural assumptions of most Ethiopian societies expect men competent and courageous leaders while women as compliant and supportive. Panigrahi (2013) has conducted a research in Harar, and he has found that the communities belief that women are not as competent as men and women are inferior than men and women cannot maintain a role of authority. According to Kenyan researcher Onsongo (2004), there is generally a negative attitude in the Kenyan society and universities towards women in leadership positions. Society's attitude towards women role is one obstacle which identifies women as not task oriented, too dependent on feedback and evaluation of others and lacking independence (Alice *et al.,* 2001). As we discussed the finding in the above, one can understand that in most governmental institutions of the woreda, there are traditional believes which assumed women's as supportive than being leaders.

Table 2 shows that most respondents (85.4%) indicate that women leaders contribute more to the success of organizational goal than men leaders, while 10.6% respondents believe that women leaders contribute more. similar to the to the above data, the participants of focus group discussion and interview said that women leaders are better than men leaders in achieving organizational goal, because women leaders are strict to rule, less corrupted, cooperative, have smooth relationship with their followers and give immediate solution to problems. In addition to this, they state that women's work harder to achieve their organizational goal, and they are also more committed and responsible towards their job than men. This finding is consistent with the theory of Eagly *et al.* (2003) and research finding of Birhanu (2013), and Growe and Montgomery (2000). According to Eagly *et al.* (2003) in many organizations female leaders are found less hierarchal, more cooperative, and collaborative than men leaders. Women in leadership roles are more democratic and less corrupt than men, since they have nurturing roles and strict to rules (Birhanu, 2013). According to Growe and Montgomery (2000), who have conducted a research in South-African school administration, they found that school with female administrators are better managed and performed better than those managed by men. The finding contradicts with the finding of Tekabo (2010) who has a research finding in Ethiopian police force imply that male leaders are more effective than female leaders. This contradiction of findings imply that men leaders are more effective than women leaders in police force; this difference may be because police force needs more physical force and power, and it's obvious that men are better in this regard, but in civil service organizations and other organizations which are different from police and military institutions, women leaders are more effective than men leaders.

Regarding gender imbalance, 53% respondents refer that there are institutional policies that address gender imbalance in leadership position, while 47% respondents state that there is no such policy in there institution. The data obtained from focus group discussion and interview also supports the above idea, they said that there are policies which address gender imbalance in leadership position; there is a strategy in the woreda which states that there must be 50% women leaders in higher position and 30% in middle leadership positions. In addition to this there are also positive discriminations, priorities and quotas implemented in every governmental institution which aimed at avoiding the gender imbalance in leadership. This finding is similar with the finding of Genet and Haftu (2013) who argued that affirmative action in Ethiopia has increased women's participation in decision making activities in various sectors. As observed from the above discussion one can suggest that there are different strategies that address gender imbalance in leadership position in every governmental institution in the woreda. Concerning institutional politics, most respondents (86.1%) agreed that institutional politics did not hinder women from participating in leadership positions, while 13.9% respondents disagree. The participants of the focus group discussion and interview also supports the above idea, they said that institutional politics did not hinder women from participating in leadership positions rather it gives them priority. They also said that the organizational politics are encouraging and empowering them to actively participate in decision making activities and leadership positions.

The Ethiopian Government has expressed its commitment to gender equity and equality by issuing a national Policy on Ethiopian Women in 1993 and giving more emphasis on the constitution (Report of FDRE on the implementation of gender equality in Africa, 2006). One of the objectives of this national policy is eliminating step by step, prejudices as well as customary and other practices that are based on the idea of male supremacy and it enables women to hold public office and to participate in the decision making process at all levels (Women's affair 2004). This finding contradicts with the finding of Mbugua (2007) who argued that the Organization politics and stereotyping are major inhibiting factors which hinder women to participate in top leadership positions in Kenya. Table 2 shows that most respondents agreed that the communities of their organizations did not accept women's leadership 53%, while 43% respondents agreed that the communities of their organization accept women's leadership. In line with this the participants of focus group discussion and interview said that the organizational community did not accept women's leadership, because they assume that women lack professional confidence, women could not coup up challenging issues, women have low self-perception and women lacks capacity. In addition, the organizational community did not believe that women have equal capacity with men to lead one organization. They also said that in the last two regimes, women were excluded from participating in leadership position, and they were simply considered as household workers while men were assumed as leaders and managers. In addition, they said that as long as we know women's lack administrative and managerial skill for the reason that they were far away from leadership position for many years, due to this the organizational community did not have a confidence on women. This finding is consistent with the theory of Alice *et al.* (2001), and research finding of Kiamba (2008), Birhanu

(2013) and Genet and Haftu (2013). Society's attitude towards women role is one obstacle which identifies women as not task oriented, too dependent on feedback and evaluation of others and lacking independence, this denies women from participating in leadership position in Africa (Alice *et al.*, 2001). In many African countries, the traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes discourage the role and status of women in the society and it hinders them from participating in leadership and decision making activities (Kiamba, 2008). According to Birhanu (2013) in Ethiopia there is lack of confidence in women's capabilities of leader ship in which it inhibit women's from participating in leadership positions. In Ethiopia, culturally, men are expected to be courageous, competent, domineering and to show qualities of leadership while women are submissive, conservative and shy (Genet and Haftu, 2013). According to Tekabo (2010) who has conducted a research in Ethiopian police force, she has found that most males undermine the ability, efficiency and capability of females. This finding implies that the community of the organization did not accept women's leadership rather they relates leadership with men while supportive works with women. Table 2 shows that most respondents (88.1%), agreed that there are equal opportunities for women and men to participate in leadership positions, while 11.9% respondents disagree.

Women Development and Change Package (2006) and the National Action Plan (NAP-EG) and adoption of MDGs as guiding framework for planning (UNDAF, 2012). The Family Law and the Penal Laws have been amended to establish legal safeguards for women in Ethiopia. As observed from the above discussion, in most governmental organizations women are given equal opportunities to participate in leadership positions. In addition, they are also given affirmative actions, quotas and other priorities in governmental organizations.

Table 3 shows that 51.6 % of the respondents disagree 20.5% strongly disagree and 31.1% disagreed with idea that gender discrimination continues to setup barriers for women to participate in leadership position in their institutions, while 43% strongly agree 19.2% and 23.8% of the respondents agreed. Similarly, the data obtained from focus group discussion and interview also supports the above finding, the participants state that gender discrimination is not a barrier for women to participate in leadership position in their institutions, rather there is special attention and treatment for the women in their institutions. In addition, they said that women's underrepresentation in leadership position is due to lack of confidence, lack of experience, lack of commitment and low self-perception of themselves, but not due to the gender discrimination.

Table 3. Institutional Factors that affect Women's Participation in Leadership Position in Terms of Likert Type

	Catagories	Frequency	Percentage
Women's underrepresentation in leadership position results from the bias practice that reflects discriminatory promotion and appointment process	SA	29	19.2
	A	30	19.9
	UN	7	4.6
	DA	43	28.5
	SDA	42	27.8
Gender discrimination continues to set up barriers for women in leadership position in your institutions	SA	29	19.2
	A	36	23.8
	UN	8	5.3
	DA	31	20.5
	SDA	47	31.1
The policies and practices of your institutions often encourages gender discrimination	SA	17	11.3
	A	26	17.2
	UN	7	4.6
	DA	31	20.5
	SDA	70	46.4

Source: Owen survey of 2014. Note, SA= strongly agree, A=agree, UN=undecided, DA=disagree, SDA=strongly disagree

The data obtained from the respondents of focus group discussion and interview indicates that equal opportunities are given to women and men to participate in leadership positions. In addition to this, they also state that in most governmental organizations women are given equal opportunities, and also priorities, quotas, and positive discriminations are given to women. The participants also said that the government gives more attention to women, and adopts different policies, laws and international instruments to ensure gender equality as well as to empower women. This finding is one indication to the implementation of the constitution, laws and policies which advocate that Ethiopian legal and administrative environment to be conducive for the promotion gender equality, as we have noticed over the past two decades. The most important gender and development measures taken by the Ethiopian government include that the issuance of The National Policy on Women (1993), relevant passages in the most recent version of the Constitution of Ethiopia (1995), the Revised Family Law (2000) and the Revised Criminal Code (2005), Ethiopian

They also state that this days, gender discriminations in there institutions is almost avoided due to the strong effort of the existing government. This study contradicts with the finding of Gebremariam (2013) which states that in business organizations (private company) more chances and opportunities are given to men rather than women.

Table 3 shows that most respondents (66.9 %) disagree, 20.5% strongly disagree and 46.4% disagreed with the idea that policies and practices of their institutions often encourages gender discriminations, while 28.5 % (strongly agree 11.3% and agree 17.2%) respondents agreed that the policies and practices of their institutions often encourages gender discriminations. The data obtained from focus group discussion and interview also supports the above finding, the participants said that the policies and practices of their institutions did not encourage gender discrimination rather the institutional policies give more attention to gender equality and women empowerment. According to them, all institutional policies and

strategies are free from gender discrimination in which policies are promoting and empowering women in every activity. This study contradicts with the finding of Mbugua (2007) which argues that organizational policies inhibit women's progression to top leadership positions. Finally, this finding implies that the policies and practices of most institutions at the woreda are encouraging gender equality rather than discrimination.

Conclusion

The participation and involvement of women in public administration of woreda Tahtay Machew is insignificant. This low level of women's participation in leadership position affects women's life in general, because women's interest may not be reflected and addressed on decision making process of the patriarchal system. It may also lead them to be always dependent on men; it restrains them from enhancing their leadership and management skill. Most institutional policies are promoting and empowering women in every activity in governmental organizations. Similarly the work policies are also sensitive to women and it gives priority to women. The strong commitments of the current government to promote and to empower women in every activity, institutional policies are prepared and designed based on gender mainstreaming and these policies give equal opportunity to women and men in every activities. In addition, we came to know that the institutional policies give affirmative action, quota and other privileges to women in the study area. Therefore institutional policies are not hindrance to women to participate in leadership position in the study area rather the institutional cultures and practices adversely affect them. For instance, the institutional community don' want to see women on a leader ship position, because women is perceived to have supportive position while the leader ship position to be held by men. This is rooted from the attitude that women's are unfit and lack capacity for the leadership position. Despite to these cultural hindrances, the government is trying to empower women's and enhance their involvement in the leader ship position. As a result some changes have been noticed, even though it is not satisfactory enough.

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