

Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Educational Leadership in Ethiopia

Hussien Kedir Kelil¹ and Messeret Asefa²

¹PhD (Assistant Professor) College of Education and Behavioral Studies,
Addis Abba University, Ethiopia

²PhD (Associate Professor), College of Education and Behavioral Studies,
Addis Abba University, Ethiopia



Abstract - The purpose of this research was to assess the major factors that affect women to acquire educational leadership positions in the context of Ethiopia. It was also aimed at assessing the existence of enabling environment, the extent to which gender politics has created inequality in taking educational leadership positions. A concurrent mixed research approach was employed in this study. Questionnaire, interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis were used as instruments of data collection. Among others, educational officials, policy makers, school principals and key experts were consulted in this study. It was found that, the existing political environment and policies are enabling. The ability of women to plan, organize resources and activities, create smooth communication, make sound decisions and control the entire organization, women's ability to delegate authority and responsibilities, coordinate efforts, mobilize resources, allocate budget and use resources were all found functional. On the other hand, the level of policy implementation, clarities of standards, women's claim for leadership positions, the culture of educational institutions in nominating women to leadership positions, the level of affirmative action in place, the degree to which rules and regulations support women for leadership, clarity of targets and strategies, the politics of gender in favor of male as well as the transparencies in place were found low and fragile. The current prevailing organizational culture, the established norms and procedures, women's fitness to a field work and lack of women's capacity, attitudinal and socio- cultural factors were reported among the major factors the hinders to come to educational leadership positions. Astoundingly, the attitude of women towards themselves to assume leadership position was found frail. Worse than this, the social and cultural attitudes toward women leadership, the prevailing gender politics in favor of male (culturally deep rooted), informal relationship (groups), lack of confidence (fragile self-image), low capacity (qualification, experience, skills), fear of criticism, absence of sufficient support, absence of role models, high burden of home responsibilities, sexual harassment, religious influences, cultural believes, economic challenges (dependency), the interest of their partner (husband) and the negative feelings /male dominated gender politics/ were found daunting hindrances. It is suggested the national and local level authorities should re-visit policies, guidelines, rules, and regulations primed and thereby insist their actual implementations. They should also create more appealing (workable) structures or make the existing structures more autonomous, transparent, attractive and encouraging for women to come to educational leadership positions on top giving them extra opportunities for better capacity as they should assume positions owing to their capacity and competence.

Keywords - Leadership, Educational Leadership, Implementation.

I. THE PROBLEM AND ITS APPROACH

1.1. Background Of The Study

Leadership institutes the socio - economic and political development of every nation. It influences the affluence of

countries for development. In essence, leadership is 'the process of influencing others (organized groups) towards the achievement of goals' (Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy, 2007). It is social by its nature. It manifests itself through leader's personal dispositions, followers' role and the situation

interplay. The extent to which leadership fabrics interwoven and the degree to which leaders strike balance among these constituents and the rational and emotional sides of human experience determine the quality of leadership. In fact, the situation is more complex, broader and challenging in educational organizations. The peculiar nature of educational organizations (high level of interaction, cruciality, complexity, public visibility and sensitivity) augments the claims for dynamic leadership.

Basically, education plays a pivotal role in any economy in terms of social, cultural and economic development. Owing to this, educational organizations in general and schools in particular deserve to have strong leadership for transformation. As a result, countries (both developed and developing) have started to give massive considerations for enhanced, change oriented, equitable and democratic leadership. These attempts have been manifested through policy changes - renewal, reform or restructuring (Conley, 1997; Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach, 1999). To this end, lots of countries budge their system under the banner of decentralized educational management (Jeilu, 2005; Hussien, 2007).

Ethiopia has been experiencing such reforms since 1991. The reformation and devolution of power has been on progress in an endeavor to create good governance, equal opportunities and well-built leadership. In this regard, the government has moved decisively in addressing issues that are related to inequalities via its constitution. Explicitly, issues that are related to gender inequalities have gained considerable attention as an indispensable stride to bring about sustainable development (MoFED, 2006). As a result, considerable achievements have been obtained in alleviating educational problems (access, quality, equity and relevance). The organization and management of the education system has been decentralized to the local levels. Moreover, the participation and involvement stakeholders in educational leadership have been increased when compared to the past (Jeilu, 2005; De Grauwe, et.al, 2006). In practice, however, these attempts were not free of challenges. Just to single out, the dearth of women's participation in educational leadership has remained among the daunting defies confronting the actual implementation of policies.

Global experiences and research findings have witnessed that women are dedicated, persistent, energetic and hard working. It is also believed that, women have greater tendency to strive for teamwork, collaboration, more aware of others' feeling, less corrupted, more accessible, communicative and friendly (Newman, 1995; Sarah, 2007).

This shows that women are well equipped to assume the roles and responsibilities of leadership positions in educational institutions. In practice, however, in many countries women were not given opportunities to test the zest of their talent in leading educational organizations and schools. In Ethiopia, women constitute half of the total population. Traditionally, they were socialized to domestic life of child rearing, home management and taking care of others while males were supposed to take the responsibilities of public arena (Ababayehu, 1995; Sarah, 2007).

Conceivably, owing to these cultural drawbacks, women's participation in educational leadership has been under represented in a number of developing countries in general and in Ethiopia in particular. On the other hand, experiences have shown that many of the development endeavors turn out to be nearly impossible without active and equal involvement of both men and women - in all sectors and levels of education. Acknowledging this, the government of Ethiopia has taken considerable measures to empower and attract women into various leadership positions. Regardless of the efforts made by the National and local level governments, the participation of women in educational leadership has been remained delicate. Thus, the purpose of this preliminary research is identifying the major factors that affect women to acquire educational leadership positions in the context of Ethiopia. Based on this, the following issues (basic questions) were raised.

- 1) Is there an enabling environment for woman to acquire educational leadership positions in Ethiopia?
- 2) What major factors hinder women to come to educational leadership positions in Ethiopia?
- 3) To what extent gender politics has created inequality between men and women intaking educational leadership positions in the context of Ethiopia?

1.2. The Research Design and Methodology

1.2.1. Participants

The participants of this research were regular second year and summer in-service graduating class EdPM students. They came from the entire part of the nation (9 NRS and 2 CAC). They possess rich information by working on the various echelons of the system - Region, Zone, Woreda and School. Their position include: expert (regional and zonal levels), supervisor (zone, woreda and cluster levels), school principals and teachers - before joining AAU. On top of this, key experts from the MoE, OREB and ACACEB - were also involved in this study. The participants have rich experience concerning the issue understudy. Over all, a total of 138 participants (58 regular second year, 74 final year summer

in-service program EdPM students, 6 national and regional level experts) were involved in the study. With regard to their qualification, they all possess BA/BSc degree. Their work experience extends 10-27 years. Hence, the participants were matured enough to reflect on the issue under study.

1.2.2. Instruments Of Data Collection

In the process of data collection, three basic instruments were used. These include questionnaire (developed by the researcher), structured interviews, focus group discussions and document analysis. The questionnaire was developed by using five points liker scale. Few open-ended questions were also used to get additional information from the participants. The information gathered through rating scale include: very low = 1, low = 2, medium /fair= 3, high = 4 and veryhigh = 5. The mean scores achieved from the data were interpreted as very low/very poor/very weak/ for mean scores below 1.5, low/poor/weak for mean scores between 1.51-2.50, medium or fair for mean scores that lie between 2.51-3.50, high/strong for mean scores that lie between 3.51-4.50 and extremely high/extremely strong for mean scores above 4.5. Overall, mean scores below 2.5 were considered as threat while the mean scores above 2.5 were considered as opportunities.

1.2.3. The Research Design

The purpose of this study was to identify the major factors affecting women to come to educational leadership positions. It was also to assess the extent of gender politics and the challenges behind inequalities in educational leadership. Primarily, literature review and other relevant documents (international commitments, policies and guidelines) were given due focus in gathering information regarding the issue under study. Moreover, a concurrent mixed research approach was employed to support the findings of the study with empirical evidences in the context of Ethiopia. The method was found appropriate as it enabled the researcher in assessing the major factors confronting women to acquire leadership positions in education. Interviews and focus group discussions were conducted with very few participants and experts of the national and regional levels to get better insights on the topic under study.

1.2.4. Procedures

In collecting data pertaining to the major factors affecting women to assume leadership positions in education, various steps were followed. First, review of documents (research findings, policies, strategies and international commitments) were made. Second, data gathering instruments

(questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussion guides) were developed. Third, instruments were administered and collected. Fourth, the data gathered through questionnaire, interviews and document analysis were systematically organized, analyzed and interpreted. Correspondingly, the information gathered from interviews, focus group discussions and open ended questions were systematically categorized into themes for reflection.

1.3. Methods Of Data Analysis

The data analyses of this study involved reviews of literature, documents analysis, interviews, focus group discussions and responses to open ended questions. The data collected through a qualitative approach were analyzed by using case by case and cross case analysis. The raw data collected through a quantitative approach were also tallied, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted by using mean scores.

1.4. Structure of The Paper

This research paper is organized into four parts. The first part deals with the problem and its approach (background of the study, the research design and methodology, limitations of the study and the overall structure of the paper). The second part deals with review of the related literature while the third part deals with presentation, analysis and interpretation of data. Finally, part four of the paper presents the major findings of the study, concluding remarks and implications.

II. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. The Nature and Concepts of Leadership

2.1.1. The Meaning of Leadership

Leadership is the process of influencing an organized group towards accomplishing goals or directing and influencing task related activities of group members. For some people the word leadership has an inspirational connotation, suggesting leaders who inspire followers to achieve greater objectives. For others, leadership is providing support - assisting followers rather directing them. In practice, however, leadership is a combination of both approaches (Ellison and Davies, 2006; Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy, 2007) an attempt to inspire, influence and support groups to the achievement of organizational goals (Stoner, Freeman and Gilbert, 1995). It requires strong social affiliations - formal and informal. In brief, leadership has three central components: leadership, followers and situation. Above all, leadership is characterized by involving others (followers), asymmetrical distribution of power between leader and group members (leaders have more power, though the group members are not powerless) as they

shape group activities in different ways in the context of vibrant environment (Ellison and Davies, 2006).

2.1.2. The Foundation of Leadership

Theoretically, the foundation of leadership involves trust. When followers trust a leader, the followers indeed willingly accept their leaders' action/s (Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy, 2007). 'Trust is a positive expectation that another will not-through words, actions or decision- act opportunistically'. It is a primary attribute of leadership as it contains key dimensions such as integrity (honesty and truthfulness), competence, consistency (reliability, predictability and good judgment), loyalty and openness. The other important aspect of leadership foundation is power. Power refers to the ability of individuals or groups to make their own interests or concerns count, even when others resist. It can also be defined as the extent to which individuals or groups could be able to persuade, induce or coerce others to follow certain courses of action. Essentially, the sources of power for a given leadership could be economic, social, political and legal aspects. It includes legitimate power, reward power, coercive power, expert power, referent and informational power (Yukl, 1994; Ellison and Davies, 2006; Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy, 2007).

Legitimate power refers to the person's position deemed to carry the right to command compliance or action. Reward power refers to the capacity of a leader to grant or withhold rewards. Similarly coercive power describes the capacity of a person to impose sanctions or punishments on another. Expert power exerts an individual's expertise to command either action or compliance in a particular area that he/she deemed sufficient. Referent or charismatic power refers to the results gained from personality (a special power given to certain individuals) which traditionally attached to very few people mainly male. Finally, informational power refers to the influence that a leader can generate his or her foundation on the potential use of informational resources including rational arguments, persuasions or factual data. Essentially, leadership is the use of non-coercive influence to goals, motivating behavior towards the achievement of goals and defining organizational culture (Yukl, 1994; Hughes, Ginnett and Curphy, 2007). In practice, however, global experiences have shown that, the sources of power (legitimate power, reward, coercive, referent and informational) have been under use to sway others (followers). Such aspects of leadership have been used both by men and women in various countries albeit dominated by male leaders.

2.2. Leadership in Education

Education is a gargantuan industry which involves leading various stakeholders (students, teachers, administrative personnel, parents, political authorities and the community) and mobilizing massive resources. Student's progress in school settings and the rational use of educational resources ultimately depend on the quality of educational leaders, their creativity and transformational competency. Hence, in education, leadership is a building block as it inspires transformation for real development. It demands the participation of stakeholders, availability of clear visions, team building, dynamism, collegiality and strong social relationship.

2.2.1. Women in Educational Leadership

The concept of leadership and how it applies to men and women is a concept that has been studied and discussed by business, education, psychology, anthropology, and sociology during the past 60 plus years. Women in leadership have been viewed as anomalies, as deficient, with respect to the traditional male models of leadership. The subject of leadership in women has been confined to anecdotal figures that are incredible for their tiny number manifested by a declining pattern as one move along the occupational hierarchy of educational organizations and the job market. As opposed to this, however, writers like Helgeson (1990) portray the current moves of women leadership as web-like, dynamic, continuously expanding phenomenon. Overall, the perceptions of writers have ranged from views of "think manager, think male" (Schein, 1976), to early descriptions of women leaders where they are described as fashion leaders and trend setters (Bass and Avolio, 1990), or even the description of women as the queen bee (Davidson and Cooper, 1992).

For all intents and purposes, with the growth of women in leadership roles in business and education (Klenke, 1996), more data are needed to be reviewed if stereotypes still prevail and if they still exist, what educational interventions can be used to mitigate these stereotypes and biases. The source or politics of the biases or stereotypes is difficult to identify. Martell (1996) found that gender stereotypes may be the cause for attributes of work behaviors to men rather than women. Studies also revealed that bias occurs when individual rely on a stereotype of performance rather than thinking back and reflecting on the actual performance. In effect, the phenomena of gender bias or attributing specific behaviors to males or females are a well-developed social-cognitive theory (Bauer and Baltes, 2002). Female leaders have historically been expected to perform at a lower

positional level than men due to the fact that they did not fit into the traditional image of the leadership stereotype (Maher, 1997).

More recently, research has focused on the relationship between leaders and followers, with some writers stressing the need to study followers, not only because all leaders are also followers, but also as modern notions of leadership place considerable emphasis on the power and importance of followers as the constituents of leadership, and thus, ultimately enabling those in leadership positions to have greatest effect (Lee, 1994; Martell, 1996). Although methodologies and models of leadership have changed over time, one factor has held constant that is the virtual absence of women on leadership positions. Is it surprising, therefore, that women are still largely excluded from power and influence in organizations. For instance, although 72% of K-12 educators are women in the United States, 87% of the top leaders in the school districts, are males according to the U.S. Department of Education. Lots of questions have been posed and researched about why there are so few women in the superintendent positions. A very recent study conducted on 100 giant companies of UK revealed that only 12% of the leadership positions were held by women. The situation is similar in several countries of the world though tremendously pathetic in countries of Africa and the Middle East.

Evidences show that, though new programs have been in place in recruiting women to the leadership, women's participation in leadership positions remains low (Nogay, 1996). The justification for these encompass a wide range of issues including credentials, less involvement in school boards, positions held (low level), the job structure in place and inadequate mentoring system. Despite this depressing fact, there is good news that times are changing with respect to what modern society is expecting from those in leadership roles. These changes are challenging the old models, which are essentially 'heroic' and masculine in nature. To this end, recent research findings are identifying a new form of leadership - which is far more feminine in nature - as the model of leadership that best suits modern organizations by claiming the model that women are more likely to display.

In terms of gender politics, there is a myth about gender and leadership capabilities. This holds that women are better team players than men; more open and mature in the way they handle sensitive issues; and more conscious of their impact on others and hence they stands as better managers than men. On the contrary, some studies revealed that the myth is false. An international survey by comparing top male

and female managers in the private and public sector clearly showed that women are no better or worse than men in the practice of management and leadership. It all depends on the man or woman in question, and the organization for which they work (Susan, 1999). There were also writers who tend to look at the issue by analyzing the traditional metaphor used to describe barriers for women "glass ceiling" by articulating a new framework which they named as the "labyrinth of leadership". For instance, Eagly and Karau (1992) in their Harvard Business Review Article, "Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership," described that, the main impediments of women to come to leadership positions have been swelling and more complex - as the assumptions underlying gender bias stand for a set of widely shared conscious and unconscious mental associations about women, men and leaders.

2.2.2. Women and Leadership Style

Global experiences have shown that women do have different leadership styles from men. Therefore, some private business organizations run their company based on feminine principles. However, such attempts have been confronted by intimidating challenges to map actual differences as the successful male managerial stereotype is so strongly embedded in organizational life that female managers are pressured to conform to it (Susan, 1999). Basically, the interest to examine the impact of gender politics on leadership is quite new. The first studies were conducted in US in the early 1970s. The results of these studies revealed that successful managers were tremendously identified with male traits. Since then, a number of similar studies have been carried out and all have confirmed that the successful managerial stereotype remains male. This aggravates the influence of gender politics that has been there for long. Indeed, women managers' perceptions of the successful manager are only slightly less conclusive. However, unlike the women managers in the 1970s and 1980s not all women managers affix success with male managers only. No one, male or female, ever identifies thriving manager as feminine. Male, and only to a slightly lesser extent, female, managers continue to describe successful managers as possessing masculine traits, such as self-confidence, competitiveness, decisiveness, aggressiveness and independence (Lee, 1994, Collins, 1999, Susan, 1999).

As positive difference, many managers, both male and female, agree that sex differences in management style do exist. Interestingly, both male and female describe women's difference in such positive terms. Yet when researchers ask

managers to describe their own management styles they usually find no significant differences between gender. Whatever the case, many research findings revealed that the extent to which individuals characterize themselves in terms of dominant values, in this case masculine behavior remains dominant to date. Managers describe themselves in terms that fit with the prevailing rhetoric of good management practices. In terms of gender, many female managers are uncomfortable with imposed leadership style and this, in turn, can lead to severe stress. As a result, most senior female managers have no children, believing that the combination of a career and a family is untenable. This is in stark contrast to the majority of senior male managers who have children and wife at home to support them. Today's culture of long working hours is exacerbating the problem. Many senior women managers are simply voting with their feet to spend more time with their children. Worse than this, studies show that 90% of the women had gone by partnership time even in the USA (Susan, 1999). Such problems have been extremely high in developing countries in general and Ethiopia in particular.

In Ethiopia, most of the individuals and the society as a whole favor women who go by her partnership domination (Sarah, 2007). The gender politics that let males dominate organizations has resulted in daunting challenges in many countries by widening inequalities. For instance, whilst women constitute 41% of the European workforce, they occupy only 10% of management positions and represent only 1% of executive board members. Study conducted in Addis Ababa by Action Aid Ethiopia and UNICEF (2006) described that majority of women's employment goes to elementary, technical and service areas with no significant position in terms of leadership. Incredibly, only 16.6% women occupy professional work in the formal sector. The situation in Oromia National Regional States also akin as women's participation in educational leadership residue less than 3% (OREB, 2006).

2.3. Factors Affecting Women to Come to Leadership Positions

Institutional resistances to women's participation in leadership positions in their work place have a direct influence on the socio and economic inequalities. Relatively, it is easier for women to get employment at the lower echelons of the organization while it has been found difficult to assume executive positions in an organization. Some people believe that women are challenged by invisible politics whatever they become competent, committed, qualified and talented. To this end, women entering to

educational leadership positions have been commonly influenced by male dominated policy making. On top of this, global experiences have shown that self-image of women, their capacity (qualification, experience and skill), the overall organizational culture, the structure of organizations, sex stereotyping, occupational segregation and discrimination have been among intimidating challenges for women to assume educational leadership positions (Coopers and Davidson, 1980). These challenges are mainly emanated and aggravated by gender politics.

A. Attitude and Socio-Cultural Factors - The altitude of individual and the society towards women's ability in holding the responsibility of leadership positions could influence the participation of women significantly. These challenges were aggravated by the social and cultural factors which may result negative spillovers (Sarah, 2007).

B. Attitude of Men towards Women- Studies show that the attitude of men towards themselves is more selfish and mainly characterized by male dominating character. Men should run all organizations as they feel that they are more capable, competent and efficient in leading organizations to achieve goals successfully (Smith in Sarah, 2007).

C. Attitude of Women towards Themselves- Women's perception of the ideal world and their self-concept has been among the daunting challenges faced to attain leadership positions in educational institutions. Women themselves acknowledge the world of masculine and perceive themselves as compliant, submissive, passive, and less skillful than their male counterparts. They prefer to evade competitions and appreciate collaboration in lieu of their perception that they are not suited to the educational leadership positions. They also fear that success in competitive achievement situation will lead to negative consequences like loss of femininity and unpopularity (Ouston, 1993). Women can also be distractive to each other in the same organization and end up sabotaging their own chance of success (Collins, 1983).

D. Social and Cultural Factors - According to social role theory, a division of labor between the sexes foster the development of gender roles by which each sex is expected to have characteristics that equip it for the work roles that are typical for people of this sex. For example, if caring for children is a task much more often assigned to women, they would be expected to have appropriate characteristics, such as nurturance and interest in helping others. If warfare is common in a society, and men are expected to be warriors, they would be expected to have appropriate characteristics, such as aggressiveness and willingness to take risks.

Societies ensure that both men and women develop the psychological characteristics that are generally needed for competent adult functioning, as it is defined by the culture (Eagly, Karau and Johnson, 1992). Generally speaking, society's work through socialization processes that are tailored somewhat to children's sex. These socialization processes involve some direct teaching and much modeling one after parents and other adults. Also, societies give children direct experience in practicing the kinds of roles in which they would learn components of their adult roles. Different cultures would, of course, have somewhat different emphases in socializing their boys and girls. Male leaders are viewed as more effective than female leaders as reported in the vast majority of research studies (Thompson, 2000; Vecchio, 2002). Hence, though differences are there in terms of scale, the politics of discrimination is hitherto high in general and in developing countries in particular.

All the way through time, stereotypes concerning women and men have permeated society, creating many obstacles for women, especially in the professional world. In gender politics, words like nurturing, compassionate, emotional, expressive, communal, passive, uncertain, subjective and supportive have historically been used to describe women while words like intelligent, powerful, competent, objective, independent, systematic and determined have typically been reserved to describe men almost ubiquitously (Philipkoski, 2005; Porat in Stuftt and Coyne, 2009). The social perception that men are superior and women are inferior has been supported long by gender politics. In fact, times are changing and some women are emerging as powerful leaders in various organizations disproving many long-standing skewed perceptions of females. Despite these advances, the discriminatory tags for women continue to impede the opportunities that let them to assume leadership positions.

Essentially, the landscape of woman's life is shaped and designed by history and culture which usually opens new arenas for growth and opportunity while erecting barriers to socially constructed forces of oppression (Bell and Nkomo, 2001). Although the biases of the broader society may restrict, delay, or minimize leadership, to resist these biases, women have gained support from historical and cultural foundations as the sense of community emerges from the historical and cultural aspects of women life (Gostnell, 1996). For instance, the circumstances emerging from a legacy of struggle experienced by the African American communities did create a form of resistance to which women responded by organizing efforts to survive. The oppression of African American Women emerging from this legacy of

struggle (Allen, 1996; Robnett, 1996) has centered on survival, resistance, social activism, community uplift, and transformation (Parker, 2005). These create leadership perspectives which emerged from historical and cultural foundations.

E. Leadership Capacity - The other area of challenge, which usually faces women in their way to educational leadership positions, is their own capacity (qualification, experience and skills). Essentially, leadership capacity refers to the ability to formulate policies and set strategies, anticipate needs, provide services (technical and professional support), make informed decisions, mobilize resources (human, financial, material, time, information) and implement policies and programs (Rondinelli, McCullough and Johnson, 1989; Parry, 1997; Caillods and De Grauwe, 2006). Partly, organizations have capacity if and only if key functions and activities get an adequate home, if they have effective leadership, adequate resources as well as work experiences. To this end, many writers in the realm of leadership tend to agree on trait factors that uphold relationship for an effective leadership which include: intelligence, task relevant knowledge, dominance, self-confidence, energy and tolerance for stress, integrity, honesty and emotional maturity as a vital requirement for women to come to leadership positions.

Intelligence helps a leader to solve complex problems while task-relevant knowledge helps to ensure that a leader knows what should be done, how it should be done, and what resources are required for a group and organization to achieve its goals. Dominance refers to an individual need to exert influence and control over others as it helps a leader to channel followers' efforts and abilities toward achieving group and organizational goals while self-confident assist the leaders in influencing and motivating their followers to persevere in the task of obstacles or difficulties. Energy/activity levels, when high, help a leader deal with the many demands he/she faces on a day to day basis while tolerance for stress, helps a leader deal with uncertainty inherent in leadership role. Similarly, integrity and honesty make certain that a leader behaves ethically and is worthy of his/her followers' trust and confidence while emotional maturity ensures that a leader is not overly self-centered and can control his/her feelings and accept criticism (Yukl, 1994; Susan, 1999; Ellison and Davies, 2006). To sum up, these factors affect women's desire to come to leadership positions.

2.4. Gender Politics and Discrimination

2.4.1. Gender Politics in Leadership

Leadership is a phenomenon which has a strong bond with the individual or group perspectives that has been subjected to socially constructed phenomena (race, gender, and social class). Therefore, the intersection of race, gender, and social class should be included in explaining the leadership experiences of employees in general and the marginalized groups in particular. Nevertheless, though researchers have studied leadership of a diverse workforces (Waters, 1992), studies conducted on marginalized groups, have been lacking and scholars in the field lean to look at leadership as a complete phenomenon. In reality, however, generalized approaches to leadership studies exclude the socio-cultural realities that are highly associated to the process of leading. This might be challenging for leaders as social realities have the power to curb the functions of leadership (Parker, 2005; Allen, 1996). Essentially, leadership perspectives emerged from historical, social and cultural foundations (Island, 2006). As a result, women and men have been socially associated with different traits. Many societies link men with most of the traits that connote leadership - alluring qualities which convey assertion and control - while they associated women with communal qualities which pass on concerns for compassionate treatment of others. This was resulted in gender politics and power struggles for equality. Among these, feminist theorists could serve as a case in point.

Feminist theorists fight for more attention to the condition of women. They argue that, men can not accurately portray the experiences of women around the world. Feminists argue that women around the world faced injustices and differential treatment in assuming leadership positions. They attribute these to many factors including differential access to education, patriarchy, exploitation, and male dominance (Ballantine and Hammack, 2009). Lack of accesses and opportunities to education has deprived women's position in leadership. Basically, feminist theory has strong link with postmodern theory in recognizing human diversity and cultural differences. Post modernism honors human diversity, including the variation and ambiguity in the ways different people learn and view the world.

As a politics against the feminist theorists Writers like Goldberg (1993) daringly stated that, it is the idea of male dominance which most annoys feminists. According this writer, it does not matter whether the reader enjoys the idea that the male dominates and protects the female, or detests -

it is simply, he says, a fact. He also believed that every society recognizes a particular emotional difference between men and women - the male strength and dominance, and the female gentleness and endurance. He also portrayed that science reveals empirical realities which we must recognize. According to Goldberg, Feminism was once dominated by the idea that sex-related tendencies are purely cultural in origin. Nevertheless, most feminists now recognize that physiological differences play at least some part in sex-related behaviors. They value masculine qualities than feminine ones. In supporting his idea, Dillabough and Arnot in (Ballantine and Hammack, 2009) portrayed that feminist theorists become increasingly aware of the differences in experiences of women around the world and attempt to address these differences in recent years. Writers like Mikell (1997) critic that feminists in Africa tend to emphasize on culturally relevant communal participation rather than the liberal and radical Western feminism which emphasizes individual female autonomy - uniform framework.

Goldberg (1993) also criticized the feminists approach by stating that "the higher the status--the more competitive the position--the lower will be the percentage of women," though many feminists claim that it is simply bias and discrimination that has prevented equal representation. He believed that, males occupy more high-status roles because they are motivated more strongly to achieve that high status - males occupy higher-level roles because high status motivates the male more strongly." He did not argue that either sex is uniquely associated with competence. Hedid say that few women would devote the lifelong expenditure of energy necessary to achieve such positions, and any increase of women in these positions will be slight. Whatever the case, the micro politics of gender in educational institutions, the complexities of student learner and the context of macro political developments offer provocative insights. Alternatively, other researchers highlighted the importance of cross-cultural links for feminist work in education.

Essentially, gender politics is the issue of race, color and informal relationship as leadership is primarily associated with individual/s being in a position of authority and having certain degree of power and influence in an organization. Nevertheless, this is not always true as other factors determine the situation. For instance, a study conducted on African American Women in predominantly white organizations, race, gender, and social class was found restricting the process of leadership. The whites often use their privilege to circumvent, diminish, overrule, and control the actions of blacks in the workplace (Byrd, 2009). The dilemma remains that socially constructed hierarchies of

race; gender and class together may disempower the course of leadership. Marginalized status may limit access to social relations (informal networking) and this erodes the freedom of leaders to exercise power - socially constructed forces defy leaders (Gostnell, 1996; Collins, 1999). Hence, the discrimination of gender is twofold for some women due to their color, religion and political affiliation.

Gender discrimination in leadership may also emanate from different perspectives. Leadership research, like most, if not all, of the research in leadership, has been gendered. This has been reflected by the study of men by men while the findings extrapolated to humanity in general. Even today, the popular texts on leadership blatantly disregard this fact and treated women as a peripheral variable in their discussions (Schneider, 2001; Powell, Butterfield and Parent, 2002). It can easily be argued that any investigation into women's lack of access to power in organizations, should take into account the understanding of the nature of the history of research into leadership, since the study of leadership, represents the study of individuals who are particularly effective in influencing others in the achievement of organizational objectives. It is this body of research that informs organizational assessment processes, such as selection, promotion, and performance management activities.

In general, research findings clearly indicated that the mainstream politics of education and educational leadership researchers have paid far less attention to the deeper structural issues regarding socioeconomic class, race, ethnicity, sex, gender and religion, and how they shape "who gets what, when and how" in public education (Foster, 1999). Across the disciplines and professional schools, mainstream researchers' ignorance of these controversial areas has been a cultural norm (Burke in Lugg, 2003). Nevertheless, these deep structural features are inherent to the political culture of nations and they become repeatedly manifest themselves in a range of governmental forums including public schools. In many countries, neither constitutions nor governmental institutions become totally gender neutral and consequently public education has been remained inequitably distributed (Necsu, in Lugg 2003). The politics of gender and sexual orientation have shaped and continue to shape public schools in substantial ways though it has been less scrutinized by the mainstream politics of education scholars. For more, public schools have been remained stubborn in terms of gender and sexual orientations (Lugg, 2003). As a result, the basis for entry to higher echelons leadership positions in organizations is mainly bogged by these studies. To sum up, the politics

under which women attempted to come to educational leadership positions has been more complex and challenging.

2.4.2. Gender Discrimination and Its Social Cost

The persistence of gender inequality in education is both the result of societal inequalities and means of reproducing them. Inequalities between men and women, boys and girls in opportunity, assets, rights and power correlate with the socio-cultural contexts. Hence, addressing gender inequalities in education will add a lot to the national development (Sarah, 2007). Education reform, which focuses on eliminating gender disparities effectively, can be a powerful means of accelerating social change. Tackling gender inequality is fundamental to the achievement of universal primary education. The challenge has been set out in the 2003/4 EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2003). In terms of cost, denying access of women and girls to education and leadership positions is detrimental to the development of human capital and the wellbeing of society. Above all, opportunities that women should forgo have an intergenerational impact to the society as violence against them has life-long psychological costs by robbing their self-esteem and aspirations. Overall, the social costs of gender discrimination are enormous. It barricades women's participation, reduces their productivity and competitiveness in fitting to the swiftly changing environments (UNFPA, 2000).

2.5. Gender Inequality and Policy Directions In Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, creating gender equality has been given due political importance in the last couple of years. It was high on the agenda as the government stirred decisively to make women issues as a key ingredient of the constitution of the country and thereby achieve equitable growth and balanced development. The government has also pressed ahead to ensure equality by formulating a national policy on women parallel to the national action plan by putting in place appropriate operating machineries. Moreover, the government has made significant attempts by ratifying international treaties and conventions with regard to inequity apprehensions. It has shown keen interest and political commitment by restructuring the constitution, reaffirming that women will be enabled to battle and chip in the development process on equal basis. Educational organizations cannot be outside these contexts. In view of this, the Education and Training Policy of Ethiopia (TGE, 1994), has given due attention to women participation in educational leadership at the various echelons of the system. In practice, however, women have been awfully represented in the field of educational leadership.

III. PRESENTATIONS AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

Educational inequities have been among the major problems appreciated by the government of Ethiopia. These inequalities can be expressed in terms of gender (male and female), geographical location (urban and rural) and economic background (rich and poor). In Ethiopia, the official indicators used to describe inequalities have been the first two (gender and geography). The focus of this research is to identify the major factors hindering women to come to educational leadership positions in the context of Ethiopia. About 144 copies of questionnaire were prepared and administered to the participants for rating. Of the administered questionnaires 132 copies (91.97%) were properly filled and returned. Information collected through review of documents, interviews and focus group discussions were also systematically organized. In terms of sex composition, 111 (80.43%) were male and 27 (19.57 %) were female. Evidently, the number of women involved in this study was relatively low and thus might create some favoritism towards male. Concerning experience, majority 87 (63.04%) of the participants have served for 10 - 20 years while considerable share 51 (36.96%) of the participants have served over 20 years. This implies that the participants were matured enough to respond to the questions raised with reference to the issue under study.

In this study, four major assumptions were considered as a corner stone in identifying and analyzing the major factors challenging women to come to educational leadership positions. The first basic assumption is that, educational institutions could encourage and realize women's participation in leadership if and only if the existing political (internal and external) environment is enabling. The second assumption is that organizational norms and culture may affect women to come to educational leadership. The third assumption is that women's capacity in terms of leadership and management functions affects women to come to leadership positions. The fourth assumption suggested that the attitude of individuals and socio-cultural factors significantly hinder women to come to leadership positions. Finally, women's opportunities to assume educational leadership positions are challenged by their own capacities.

3.1. The Political Environment

Global experiences have shown that efforts to alleviate gender discrimination have been commonly confronted with daunting challenges. These challenges have been aggravated by the social, cultural and political contexts. Table 1 presents 10 major items that are related to the political environment which consists of policies, rules and regulations plus issues of power relationship among different groups.

Table 1: Political Environment

Items		N= 132					X
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	The degree to which policies that encourage women to assume leadership positions are in place	0	9	16	38	69	4.27
2	The extent to which clear standards put in place to address gender inequalities in educational leadership	19	51	43	17	2	2.48
3	The extent of gender policy implementation in terms of leadership	38	49	37	8	0	2.14
4	The degree of gender politics in favor of male leadership	0	3	9	32	88	4.55
5	The degree to which women's claim for leadership positions	20	63	30	17	2	2.38
6	The level to which the culture of educational institutions in Ethiopia favors the nomination of women to leadership positions	31	41	52	8	0	2.04
7	The level to which affirmative actions are in place to attract women to educational leadership positions	29	52	33	18	0	2.30
8	The degree to which rules and regulations are primed to support women to assume leadership positions	47	27	56	2	0	2.10
9	The level to which clear strategies and targets put in place to address gender inequalities in educational leadership	64	31	22	8	7	1.81
10	The level of transparency in selecting and assigning people to leadership positions	38	49	37	8	0	2.11

Table 1 revealed the responses of participants on items that are related to the political environment. As can be seen from Item 1, the availability of policies that encourage women to assume leadership positions was rated high with mean score of 4.27. It seems that the overall policy environment is enabling. In contrast, clarities in terms of standards, the level of policy implementation, the degree to which women's claim for leadership positions, the culture of educational institutions in nominating women to leadership positions, the level of affirmative actions in place, the degree to which rules and regulations in place support women to come to leadership positions, the level of clarities of targets and strategies as well as the transparencies in place were found threat as indicated by the mean scores that range from 1.81 to 2.48. The level of gender politics (in favour of male) was found very high (mean score of 4.55). The above findings were supported by the interviews and focus group discussions conducted with participants as they confirmed the existence of enabling political environment. However, the participants did not hide the deficiencies of policy implementation at the various echelons of the system. In brief, the participants reported that the extent of policy implementation in alleviating gender inequalities has been frail throughout the various echelons of the system.

The participants also witnessed that women's claim for leadership positions, the affirmative actions in place, the culture of educational organizations in nominating women for leadership positions, the strategies, rules and regulations as well as the degree of transparency of the system as low. Similarly, the group discussions and interviews the participants depicted the absence of transparency in

assigning people to the educational leadership positions. This might be attributed to competences in creating transparency to make informed decisions otherwise deliberate acts of those who hold the leadership positions (dominated by male counterparts). To sum up, despite the existence of enabling policies and willingness primed for change, almost all the major issues raised under the political environment were found inadequate. Evidently, the interviews and focus group discussions held with the participants have shown the incidence of execution trouble than the dearth of policy and political environment. This might be attributable to gender politics or inadequate capacities in implementing policies. Previous studies also revealed that the participation of women in leadership positions as extremely low (Action Aid Ethiopia and UNICEF, 2006). Similarly, a study conducted by (OREB, 2006) revealed that women's participation in educational leadership as daunting (less than 3%). From this, it is not unwise to infer the fragile nature of women's participation in educational leadership (almost null as reported by the participants) in disadvantaged regions like Afar, Somali and Gembella.

3.2. Organizational Culture

Essentially, the environment of educational organizations affects the nature of people who assume leadership positions. Thus, it is important to examine some of the internal factors in educational organizations (organizational culture). To this effect, three major issues (the level at which the established norms and procedures support women to assume leadership positions, the level at which women communicate and the degree to which women do fit to a field work) were administered to the participants for rating.

Table: 2 Organizational Cultures

No.	Items	N = 132					
1	The level at which the established norms and procedures support women to assume leadership positions	65	38	23	6	0	1.77
2	The level at which women communicate	11	39	61	20	1	2.90
3	The level at which women fit to field work	70	43	17	2	0	1.63
4	Women's relationship with those who assumed leadership positions at the higher echelons of the organization	67	46	14	2	3	1.70

As can be seen from Table 2, the level at which 'established norms and procedures support women to assume leadership position' was found low with an average mean score of 1.77. This might be attributed to some of the hand over problems (already established culture and norms) or perhaps related to the challenges created by gender bias. It

may also in part go to the social and cultural factors which underrate the role of women in educational leadership. The level at which women communicate in an organization was rated modest with mean scores of 2.90. Conversely, the degree to which women fit to a field work and the level of the relationship (part of informal group) with those who

assumed leadership positions were rated low with mean scores of 1.63 and 1.70 respectively.

3.3. Women's Leadership Capacity

Table 3: Factors That Hinder Women to Come To Leadership Positions in Education

Item		N=132					X
		0	2	3	4	5	
Leadership Capacity							
1	Experience						
1.1.	The level of experience by working on leadership positions	6		2	3		1.83
		1	8	8	4	1	
1.2.	The level of exposure to the leadership positions	6	3	1			1.27
		9	6	6	8	3	
2	Qualification						
2.1.	The level of qualification	5	3	2	1		1.85
		1	2	3	9	7	
2.2.	The degree to which short term trainings, workshops and seminars are given				3	8	4.59
		0	1	8	5	8	
3	Skills						
3.1.	Conceptual						
	The ability to see the organization as a whole	3	4	3	1		1.93
		8	7	2	0	5	
	The ability to deal with the external environment	4	2	3	2		2.18
		1	7	1	4	9	
	The ability to prepare strategic plans	3	4	2	3		2.16
		2	7	1	2	0	
3.2	Human Relation Skills						
	The ability to build team		2	3	5	1	3.27
		7	4	2	8	1	
	The ability to communicate with others		1	2	3	5	2.83
		3	5	3	6	5	
	The ability to deal with the informal group	1	3	7			2.62
		8	1	0	9	4	
	The ability to solve conflicts		3	3	3	2	3.28
		2	9	2	6	3	
3.3.	Technical Skills						
	The know-how of the job		1		4	7	3.22
		0	2	6	3	1	
	The level of technical Expertise		4	5	3		2.96
		1	5	0	0	6	

Issues that are related leadership capacity of women were among the major aspects presented to the participants for rating. In this paper leadership capacity refers to the experience, qualification and skills (conceptual, human and technical skills) of leadership. As can be seen from Item 1 of Table 3, the level of women's experience by working on leadership positions was rated low with mean score of 1.83. The level of women's exposure to leadership positions was rated very low with mean scores of 1.27. The level of

qualification possessed by women was also rated low with mean score of 1.85. Documents also revealed that the number of women who have the required qualification such as first and second degree in the field of educational leadership were extremely few. For instance, it was only in 2001 that the first woman did graduate at MA level in Educational Administration from the department of Ed PM that has a long history in Ethiopia. On the other hand, the provision of short term trainings, workshops and seminars was rated high

with mean score of 4.59. In practice, however, as witnessed by the interviews and group discussions held with the research participants, the trainings, workshops and seminars given to women were not lucid in terms of their objectives and hence could not facilitate women's capacity for leadership.

The other area of interest in terms of women's leadership capacity refers to the skills (conceptual, human and technical) acquired by women to assume leadership positions. Conceptual skill refers to the ability of a manager to view an organization as a whole (in its entirety). In this regard, women's ability to view an organization as intact, the ability to deal with the external environment and the ability to prepare strategic plans were rated low with mean scores that

ranges from 1.93 to 2.18. The other important issue that was raised regarding the leadership capacity of women was human relation and technical skills. All the items raised under human relation skills (women's ability to build team, to communicate with other people, to solve conflicts and to deal with informal groups) were found moderate. Similarly, issues that are related technical skills were found fair. On top of the above, the participants depicted that women often do not manage their time properly primarily owing to family related responsibilities.

3.4. Managerial and Administrative Functions

The next issue, which was administered to the participants, refers to the managerial and administrative functions with regard to leadership.

Table: 4 Managerial and Administrative Functions

No.	Item	N= 132					X
		1	2	3	4	5	
1	Managerial Functions						
	The ability to plan effectively and efficiently	3	12	28	38	51	3.92
	The ability to organize	1	20	43	41	27	3.55
	The ability to coordinate resources (human, financial, material)	7	12	39	29	45	3.7
	The ability to create smooth channels of communication	10	26	36	33	27	4.31
	The ability to make sound decisions	6	30	51	26	19	3.34
2	Administrative Issues						
3	Leadership Issues						

As indicated above, the ability to plan effectively and efficiently was rated high with mean score of 3.92. Women's ability to organize resources and activities was found high with mean score of 3.55. Similarly, women's ability in coordinating resources, in creating smooth communication,

in making sound decisions and in controlling the entire organization were found high. In terms of administration, women's ability to delegate authority and responsibility, to coordinate efforts, to mobilize resources, to allocate budget and to use resources were found fine. Their ability

indelegating authority and implementing rules and regulations objectively were found high with mean scores of 3.7 and 3.62 respectively. For more, women's capacities in handling managerial and administrative functions was found high in terms of average mean score. On contrary to this however, women's capacity in terms of leadership seems questionable. Hence, women that are found at the various echelons of the education system might require a more inclusive move of capacity building to lead educational organizations.

3.5. Attitudinal and Socio Cultural Factors

The other important issue raised under this category was leadership capacity. Six items were administered to the participants for rating. The ratings of these items tend to erode women capacity in terms of leadership. This might be the reflection of male dominance or the attitude of men towards women and the self-image of women themselves when it comes to the politics of gender leadership.

Table 5: Attitudinal and Socio Cultural Factors That Hinder Women to Come To Educational Leadership Positions

No.	Items	N=132					x
		1	2	3	4	5	
1.1. Attitude of Men towards women	Women leaders are less efficient than men	4	3	4	1		2.18
		5	3	1	1	2	
	Women do not physically fit to leadership positions	1		5	1	4	3.52
		3	9	2	3	5	
	Women have high burden of family responsibility and thus face challenge in assuming leadership positions than men	0	3	3	9	7	4.36
				3	4	4	
	Women are not risk takers	3	7	3	1	8	3.94
			1	3	3	4	
	Women are less communicators as compared to men	1	4	3	6	8	3.88
			1	4	3	3	
1.2. Attitude of women towards themselves	Men are capable than women to assume leadership positions	3	1	9	6	3	3.64
			1	3	3	4	
	Men have high level of acceptance than women	4	7	1	8	2	3.73
		4	3	4			
	Men are more risk takers when compared to women	5	2	8	7	0	2.13
		5	3	2	1		
	Men are less communicators as compared to women	4	6	8	4	0	2.02
				1	6	4	
	Women do not aspire leadership positions	0	4	9	6	3	4.12
			1	2	5	4	
1.3. Social and Cultural factors	Man are capable than women to assume leadership positions	0	2	6	1	3	3.95
			2	2	4	3	
	Men have high level of acceptance than women	7	3	0	3	9	3.64
		1	2	5	4		
	Men are more risk takers when compared to women	3	2	0	7	0	2.99
			2	2		7	
	Women are more responsible to home	4	9	1	4	4	3.87
			3	2	1	5	
	Women do not aspire leadership positions	2	8	2	9	1	3.60

The other important issue lies on attitudinal and socio-cultural factors that hinder women to come to educational leadership positions. In line with this, the attitude men

towards women, the attitude of women towards themselves as well as the socio-cultural factors which influence women to come to educational leadership were admitted to the

respondents whether they agree on the issues raised or not on the specific issues raised to be rated. In this regard, 5 major issues were raised for rating by respondents on how men perceive women in relation to leadership positions in educational institutions.

Accordingly, of the 5 items rated in relation to the attitude of men towards women except for first item which was stated as 'women leaders are less efficient than men' the participants depicted that the attitude men towards women as highly negative. Amusingly, the attitude of women towards themselves was found very frail as depicted by the participants. They tend to appreciate male counterparts for leadership than women. Worse than this, as depicted by the ratings of the major items described under 1.3 on Table 5, issues that are related to social and cultural factors were rated in favor of men than women. For instance, among the major issues raised under the socio cultural factors statements which were described as 'man are capable than women to assume leadership positions', 'men have high level of acceptance than women', 'women are more responsible to home', 'women do not aspire leadership positions' were welcomed (agreed on) by the participants with an average mean scores that ranges from 3.60 to 3.95. Overall, the data gathered from the participants, reviews of documents as well as the information gathered through interviews and focus group discussions revealed the incidence of favoring men as leader than women.

IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

4.1. Summary of the Major Findings

The major purpose of this study was to identify the major factors that hinder women to come to educational leadership positions in Ethiopia. The approach of the study was mainly based on the review of related literatures supported by empirical evidences that were gathered via a descriptive survey. The instruments used were questionnaire, interviews and focus group discussions. Hence, both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed. To this effect, major themes (political environment, organizational culture, leadership capacity- experience, qualifications and skills, management functions and attitude of individuals and the society (gender politics, informal groups, social and cultural factors) were reviewed and subsequently presented to the research participants for rating. The information gathered was organized, analyzed and interpreted. As a result, the following major findings were drawn.

✓ The availability of policies that encourage women to assume leadership positions was rated high with mean

score of 4.27. It seems that the overall policy environment is enabling. In contrary, however, the level of policy implementation, clarities of standards, women's claim for leadership positions, the culture of educational institutions in nominating women to leadership positions, the level of affirmative actions in place, the degree to which rules and regulations support women for leadership, clarity of targets and strategies as well as the transparencies in place were found low (with mean scores ranging from 1.81 to 2.48). Worse than this, the politics of gender in favor of male was rated very high with mean score of 4.55. In brief, the data gathered from the participants has shown sensible satisfaction pertaining to the political environment. This was also supported by the interviews and focus group discussions conducted with participants. However, the participants did not hide the deficiencies of policy implementation at the various echelons of the system. On the whole, despite the very existence of enabling policies and willingness for change, almost all the major issues raised under the political environment were found scarce. Evidently, the interviews and focus group discussions held with the participants have shown the incidence of implementation trouble than the dearth of policy and political environment.

- ✓ With regards to organizational culture, the level at which established norms and procedures support women to assume leadership position, women's fitness to a field work and their informal relationship with those who assumed leadership positions were found low with mean scores ranging from (1.63-1.77). Of the items administered to the participants under this category the level at which women communicate in an organization was found modest (average mean score of 2.90). On top of the above, the participants also depicted the negative role played by informal groups as a daunting defy and the main cause of discrimination in educational organizations.
- ✓ The other imperative concern administered to the participants for rating refers to women's leadership capacity (experience, qualification and skills). Accordingly, the leadership capacities of women in terms of experience and qualifications were found threats as revealed by mean scores of 1.83 and 1.85. Worse than this, their exposure to leadership positions was rated as extremely low with an average mean score of 1.27. In terms of the managerial skills, women's conceptual skills were found poor while rated modest in

relation to their human relation and technical skills. In terms of short term trainings, workshops and seminar the provision was found very high though it's planning and focus was heavily criticized by the participants.

- ✓ The ability of women to plan, organize resources and activities, create smooth communication, make sound decisions and control the entire organization was rated high. As to administration, women's ability to delegate authority and responsibilities, coordinate efforts, mobilize resources, allocate budget and use resources were found sensible. Above all, women's ability in delegating authority and responsibility was rated, in implementing rules and regulations were found high with mean scores of 3.70 and 3.62 respectively. Though women seem to be moderately good in handling managerial and administrative functions their capacity appears to be questionable and become daunting as one moves down the ladder of the hierarchy to the school level as commented by the participants. In fact, this was plainly reported by the participants during interviews and focus group discussions.
- ✓ Issues that are related to attitudinal and socio-cultural factors that hinder women to come to educational leadership positions (the attitude men towards women, the attitude of women towards themselves as well as the socio-cultural) were reported negative by participants. The ratings of these items clearly depicted that the attitude of men towards women was threat or extremely negative towards women in terms of leadership. Amazingly, the attitude of women towards themselves to assume leadership position was found fragile. Worse than this, the social and cultural attitudes toward women leadership were found threat to women in their attempt to assume leadership positions. On top of this, reviews of documents as well as the information gathered through interviews and focus group discussions did reveal the prevalence of negative attitude towards women in favor men for leadership.
- ✓ Research findings, review of documents and reports depicted that women are extremely under-represented in educational leadership positions in Ethiopia. The information gained from the group discussions and interviews has witnessed the discrimination of women in assuming leadership positions. According to the participants' opinion and the research findings conducted in Ethiopia the major factors that hinder women to come to leadership positions include: gender politics in favor

of male (culturally deep rooted), informal relationship (groups), lack of confidence (fragile self-image), capacity (qualification, experience, skills), absence of clear targets, fear of criticism, lack of attractive incentive, absence of sufficient support, absence of role models, high burden of home responsibilities, sexual harassment, religious influences, cultural beliefs, economic challenges (dependency), the interest of their partner (husband) and the negative feelings /male dominated gender politics/.

4.2. Conclusions and Implications

- ✓ Efforts to create equality in educational leadership depend on the political environment. As depicted by the analysis of various documents plus the verdict of the participants of this research, the current political environment is enabling in Ethiopia. Both the national level policies and international declarations (for which Ethiopia is signatory) bring to light the worth of gender equality in all aspects of development. Evidently, this could be among the opportunities to be used in alleviating gender inequalities in educational leadership. The vigilance is, however, the local level authorities themselves are not free of gender politics (favor male supremacy) owing to their own social and cultural backgrounds. Worse than this, as evidenced by the group discussions, the authorities working at the various echelons of the system are not quite aware of the social costs of women's discrimination. As a result, the actual implementations of policies which encourages women to come to educational leadership positions were frail. This implies that, the mere existence of policies on paper could not be a guarantee for its implementation primarily in alleviating gender discrimination. The situation was also aggravated by unclear standards, weak affirmative actions, and hostile institutional culture, lack of transparency as well as fragile rules and regulations. Therefore, the national and local level authorities should re-visit policies, guidelines, rules, and regulations in place and thereby insist their actual implementations. This can be done by establishing check and balance mechanisms (reporting, monitoring and evaluation). The national and local level authorities should also create more appealing (workable) structures or make the existing structures more autonomous, transparent, attractive and encouraging for women to come to educational leadership positions.

- ✓ Leadership capacity is the function of experience, qualification and skills (conceptual, human relation and technical skills). Leaders should have capacities to lead organizations in effect. As opposed to this, however, the findings of the study revealed that the leadership capacities of women in terms of experience, exposure and conceptual skills were low. As a result, women's opportunities to assume leadership positions in education have been confronted by sober challenges as a result of capacity gaps. This implies that the national and local level governments should work hard to fill the gaps (women's capacity gaps) in terms of experience, qualification and the necessary skills. To this effect, women should be given extra opportunities in all capacity building endeavors. For instance, establishing a strong link with Federal and Regional Universities working in the field of educational leadership could be one of the strategies.
- ✓ One of the major features that hinder women to acquire educational leadership positions is attitudinal and socio-cultural factors. There should be positive attitude, support and equality in terms gender in taking leadership positions. As opposed this, however, the attitude of men towards women and the attitude of society towards women leadership were found hostile in general. Amusingly, the attitude of women towards women and their own self-image was found not brave. Worse than this, gender politics in favor male domination was found extremely high and culturally deep rooted in the context of Ethiopia. Markedly, changing such socially deep rooted attitudes could not be an easy task. Nevertheless, the future is not dark though; educational organizations and schools in Ethiopia continue to move at a glacial pace in terms of bringing women into the educational leadership positions. Therefore, the national and local governments should give substantial attention to women's discrimination (mainly hidden) to assume educational leadership positions. This can be done by empowering women, educating girls and creating awareness among all the stakeholders.
- ✓ In connection to this, efforts should be made to change perceptions from the views of "*think manager, think male*" (early descriptions of women leaders) to trend setters or the "queen bee" and thereby attract and retain women to educational leadership positions. This can be realized by initiating and creating awareness among assorted stakeholders (teachers, directors, education officials, political authorities, religious leaders, popular individuals, parents and communities). It is also advisable that, schools ought to involve female students on leadership responsibilities starting from primary school to towards higher education in the form of class monitor, club chairman, debate facilitators and other related activities - serve as a training ground for female students. It also helps to generate confidence of female students for future leadership. Overall, concrete measures should be taken to create awareness, shared vision and common understanding over the benefits (social, cultural, political and economic) of women participation in educational leadership.
- ✓ The national and local level authorities should also create mechanisms whereby all the stakeholders involve in creating awareness to restructure the power relationship at the family level to enhance equal level of socialization for both boys and girls. Essentially, family is the smallest unit of structure that characterized by power relation where the husbands and the boys enjoy more power than the wives and girls in most cases. Therefore, intervening to alleviate such socially deep-rooted traditions by sensitizing parents and communities should be primed to initiate possible changes at family or home level (upbringing) which could result in alleviating discriminatory behaviors. The national and local level authorities should also re-examine and think of possible ways to provide women leaders' friendly environment which help to balance their personal and professional roles. For instance, among the an assortment of possible ways –providing living house for women school principals inside the school campus, designing incentive mechanisms (accelerated promotion, priority and extra chances to further education, awards in kind, cash or certifications for success) can fit the purpose. For more, women themselves should instigate and promote the establishment of forums (dependable network) for women working in educational organizations in general and in leadership positions in particular. They should also design mechanisms that help them share the experience of role model women working as at the various positions (ministers, ambassadors, business leaders, educational officials and the like).
- ✓ Literature revealed that, women's aspiration to come to leadership positions have been confronted by discrimination, socialization, societal attitudes, and women's lack of confidence, conflicting discourse and

politics. Evidently, the findings of this research support the existing literature. Specifically, however, the discrimination of women in Ethiopia appears mainly attitudinal which is socially and culturally deep-rooted. This was followed by inadequate experience, lack of qualification plus absence of exposure. On the whole, there has been strong gender bias/politics - a set of widely shared conscious and unconscious mental associations about women, men and leaders. This entails that, policy makers, educational officials, women and the society as a whole should sense the danger of women discrimination and take concrete steps for real transformation. For more, the stereotypes that exist against women should be addressed as sound leadership does not depend on gender and thus women's should be given opportunities to reveal their potential in educational leadership.

To sum up, women's participation in educational leadership is indispensable for growth and development. Once they get empowered to leadership positions and supported by committed government and development oriented bureaucracies, they inevitably evolve into new and hopefully better circumstances. They can carve out a suitable progress and prove to be dynamic bedrocks for real transformation. In brief, promoting and supporting women's participation in educational leadership contributes much to the social, cultural, political and economic advancement of the nation.

REFERENCES

- [1] Abebayehu Aemero (1995). Women's Participation in Educational Administration in Ethiopia'. Master's thesis: AAU. (Unpublished)
- [2] Action Aid Ethiopia and UNICEF (2006). Assessment of the Situation of Women and Girls in Addis Ababa. Addis Ababa: EMPDA
- [3] Allen, B. L. (1996). Black Female Leadership: A Preliminary Step toward an Alternative Theory. ProQuest Dissertations, UMI No. 9540870.
- [4] Bass, B. and Avolio, B. (1990). Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire. Palo Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.
- [5] Ballantine, H. Jeanne and Hammack, M. Floyd. (2009). Sociology of Education: A Systematic Analysis. (6th Ed). New Jersey: Pearson Prentice Hall.
- [6] Bauer, C. and Baltes, B. (2002). Reducing the Effects of Gender Stereotypes on Performance Evaluations. Sex Roles, 47(9/10), 465-476.
- [7] Bell, E. L. and Nkomo, S. (2001). Our Separate Ways: Black and White Women and the Struggle for Professional Identity. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.
- [8] Byrd, M. (2009). Theorizing African American Women's Leadership Experiences: Socio-Cultural Theoretical Alternatives. Advancing Women in Leadership Journal, 29(1). http://advancingwomen.com/awl/awl_wordpress/
- [9] Caillods, F. and Anton De Grauwe (2006). 'Capacity Development in Educational Planning and Management: IIEP's Experience'. http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/networks/iwge/2006II_1a.pdf
- [10] Clarke, D. and D. Bundy. (2004). The EFA Fast Track Initiative: Responding to the Challenge of HIV and AIDS to Book Review: Why Men Rule: A Theory of Male Dominance.
- [11] Collins, N. (1983). Professional Women and their Mentors. Englewood Cliffs Prentice Hall, Inc.
- [12] Conley, T.D. (1997). Road Map to Restructuring. Michigan: ERIC/ CEM.
- [13] Davidson, M. and Coopers, C. (1980). The Extra Pressure on Women Executives. Personnel Management, Vol.12
- [14] Davidson, M. and Coopers, C. (1992). Shattering the Glass Ceiling: The Woman Manager. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd.
- [15] Davis et.al. (2005). School Leadership Study: Developing Successful Principals. Stanford, CA: Stanford University, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.
- [16] DeGuwe, et.al. (2006). In IIEP News Letter vol.xxiv.No.4, October-December 2006 on "Capacity development in Education". Ethiopia: hands on training in educational planning.
- [17] Eagly, A.H., Karau, S.J., Johnson, B.T. (1992). 'Gender and Leadership Style Among School Principals: A Meta-Analysis', Educational Administration Quarterly, Vol.28 (1) Pp76-102.
- [18] Eagly, Alice H. and Linda L. Carli. (2007). "Women and the Labyrinth of Leadership." Harvard Business Review, September.2007.
- [19] Ellison, L. and Davies, B. (2006). School Leadership for the 21st Century: A Competency and Knowledge Approach. New York: Routledge
- [20] Foster, M. (1999). Race, Class and Gender in Education Research: Surveying the Political Terrain. Educational Policy, 13(1), 77-85.

- [21] Goldberg, S. (1993). The Education Sector. DFID/World Bank: FTI.
- [22] Gostnell, G. M. (1996). The Leadership of African American Women: Constructing Realities, Shifting Paradigms. ProQuest Dissertations. UMI No. 9701103.
- [23] Hare, P. A., Koenigs, R. J., & Hare, S. E. (1997). Perceptions of Observed and Model Values of Male and Female Managers. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 18, 437-447.
- [24] Helgeson, S. (1990). The Female Advantage: Women's Ways of Leadership. New York: Doubleday.
- [25] Hickey-Gramke, Michelle. (2007). Advancing Women in Leadership Spring: Women in Leadership: Rocky Road to the Superintendency. *Online Journal* Volume 23.
- [26] Hughes R.L., Ginnett C.R. Curphy J.G. (2007). Leadership: Enhancing the Lessons of Experience. New York: Tata McGraw-Hill Edition
- [27] Hussien Kedir (2007). Implementing Decentralization of Educational Management in Ethiopia: Analysis of Capacities at the District Level in Oromia Region. Paris: UNESCO
- [28] Island, A. (2006). The Leadership Experiences of Five Successful African American Women Senior Managers: A Participatory Study. ProQuest Digital Dissertations. UMI No. 3232855.
- [29] Jackson, J. C. (2001). Women Middle Managers' Perception of the Glass Ceiling. *Women in Management Review*, 16(1), 30-41.
- [30] Jeilu Oumer (2005). Educational Decentralization in Ethiopia: Policy Analysis from Local Capacity Perspectives and Its Effects. A Case Study in Oromia and Addis Ababa. (PhD Dissertation). Andhra University.
- [31] Klenke, K. (1996). Women and Leadership: A Contextual Perspective. New York: Springer Publishing Company, Inc.
- [32] Lee, C. (1994). 'Followership: The Essence of Leadership'. In Rosenbach, W.E. and Leithwood, K., Jantzi, D., and Steinbach, R., (2000). Changing Leadership for Changing Times. Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- [33] Lugg A.C. (2003). Gender, Sexual Orientation, and a New Politics of Education? *Educational Administration Quarterly*. Vol. 39, No. 1 (February 2003) 95-134 <http://eaq.sagepub.com>
- [34] Maher, K. J. (1997). Gender-Related Stereotypes of Transformational and Transactional Leadership. *Sex Roles*, 37(3/4), 209-225.
- [35] Martell, R. F. (1996). What Mediates Gender Bias in Work Behavior Ratings? *Sex Roles*, 35, 153-169.
- [36] Mikell, G. (1997). African Feminism: The Politics of Survival in Sub-Saharan Africa. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- [37] Newman, D.M. (1995). *Sociology: Explaining the Architecture of Everyday Life*. California: Pine Forge Press.
- [38] Nogay, K. (1996). The Relationship of Superordinate and Subordinate Gender to the Perceptions of Leadership Behaviors of Female Secondary Principals (Doctoral Dissertation, Youngstown State University).
- [39] Ouston, J. (1993). Women in Educational Management. London: Longman, Inc.
- [40] Parker, P. S. (2005). Race, Gender, and Leadership: Re-Envisioning Organizational Leadership from the Perspectives of African American Women Executives. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
- [41] Parry, T.R. (1997). "Achieving Balance in Decentralization: Case Study of Educational Decentralization in Chile." *World Development*, Vol. 25, No. 2.
- [42] Philipkoski, K. (2005). Where Are All the Women? Retrieved March 19, 2005, <https://wired.com/news/print/0,1294,66603,00.html>
- [43] Powell, G., Butterfield, D. and Parent, J. D. (2002). Gender and Managerial Stereotypes: Have the Times Changed? *Journal of Management*, 28(2), 177-193.
- [44] Robnett, B. (1996). African American Women in the Civil Rights Movement, 1954-1965: Gender, Leadership, and Micro-Mobilization. *The American Journal of Sociology*, 101(6), 1661-1693.
- [45] Rondinelli, D., James, S. Mc Cullough and Ronald W. Johnson. (1989). Analyzing Decentralizing Policies in Developing Countries. A Political Economy Framework. "Development and change, Volume 20. PP.57-87. London. SAGE Publication.
- [46] Sarah Tewfik. (2007). A Survey Study of Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Educational Leadership in Addis Ababa (Master's Thesis, Unpublished)
- [47] Schein, V. (1976). Think Manager-Think Male. *The Atlanta Economic Review*, March-April, 21-24.
- [48] Schneider, M. (2001). Rating the Management Gurus. Retrieved January 16, 2002, from http://www.businessweek.com/bschools/content/oct2001/bs20011015_3309.htm
- [49] Stuft, D. and Coyne, K. (2009). Educational Leadership: Where are the Women? *Advancing Women in Leadership Journal*,

- 29(11).http://advancingwomen.com/awl/awl_wordpress/
- [50] Susan, V. (1999). The Debate: Do Men and Women Have Different Leadership Styles? Management Focus Issue 12 Summer 1999 (Cranfield School of Management)
- [51] Transitional Government of Ethiopia. (1994). Education and Training Policy. Addis Ababa: EMPDA
- [52] Thompson, M. D. (2000). Gender, Leadership Orientation, and Effectiveness: Testing the Theoretical Models of Bolman and Deal and Quinn. Sex Roles, 42(11/12), 969-992.
- [53] UNFPA (2000). The State of the World Population. New York: UNFPA.
- [54] Valentine, S. and Godkin, L. (2000). Supervisor Gender, Leadership Style, and Perceived Job Design. Women in Management Review, 15(3), 117-129.
- [55] Vecchio, R. P. (2002). Leadership and Gender Advantage. The Leadership Quarterly, 13, 643-671.
- [56] Vinnicombe S. (1999). The Debate: Do Men and Women Have Different Leadership Styles? (Cranfield School of Management)
- [57] Waters, H. J. (1992). Minority Leadership Problems. Journal of Education for Business, 68(1). 15-20.
- [58] Yukl, G.A. (1994). Leadership and Organization (3rd Ed). New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc.