

Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Leadership and Management in Selected Public Higher Education institutions in Amhara Region, Ethiopia

Gojjam Ademe¹ Manjit Singh²

1.PhD Research Scholar, University school of Applied Management, Punjabi University, Patiala, India

2.Professor, University school of Applied Management, Punjabi University, Patiala, India

Abstract

This paper aims to investigate factors that facilitate or constrain women to participate in leadership and management in pursuit of scrutinizing the issue of under-representation of women in selected public higher education institutions in Amhara region using a mixed research approach. The study was conducted in three Universities, namely, Bahirdar, Gondar, and Debremarkos. Questionnaire, in-depth interview and document analysis and staff profile data from human resource offices were used as data soliciting means. Survey data was gathered from a total of 414 academic staffs (321 males and 93 females) using a structured questionnaire to examine the factors (facilitators and constraints). In addition, 30 women who have administration experience were purposively selected to investigate the gap between the desired and present level of need based motivation support provided by the institutions to attract women into leadership. Data collected using the aforementioned instruments were analysed using both qualitative and quantitative (using SPSS Version 20) method of data analysis. Findings from the study revealed that women form a minority of university teachers (11.9%) despite the education policy to raise their share to 20% by the year 2014/15. They are also resentfully under-represented in leadership position; they constitute only 7.1% which is far behind the critical mass standard that women must constitute at least 30% of those in decision making. Self-confidence, Networking opportunities, Self-esteem, Conducive organizational working environment, and Assertiveness are found to be the most important factors pulling women into leadership. To other end, Stereotyping, Patriarchy, Lack of support system at work, Low academic qualification and Lack of role model are the major barriers stifling women to assume leadership positions. *Key informants* affirmed that women in some cases are even ignored and isolated from academic matters and decisions that affect them. Moreover, the affirmative action policy put in place for action is not bringing the desired change yet as there are several misconceptions about it. This calls for an ambitious interventions on gender disparity in leadership such as engendering leadership through motivating, empowering and involving women in decision making systematically to narrow down the persisting gap as women hold up half the sky.

Keywords: Ethiopia, public higher education institution, leadership, women.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION

Higher education is of paramount importance for economic and social development. By giving people access to knowledge and the tools for increasing and diversifying their knowledge, higher education expands people's productivity, as well as national capacity and competitiveness (Teshome, 2003:2). Economic growth without improvement in human resource is unthinkable. Hence, education is at the center of Ethiopian government's policies targeted at achieving middle income country status by 2025. Education contributes to economic growth, increases productivity of individual worker, contributes to the minimization of inequalities in income distribution and alleviation of poverty, improves the health status of the society, and contributes to population reduction and toward building a more cultured and politically aware society (Sewunet, n.d). The evidence from third world countries shows a close link between women's education and social and economic development, and between the sizes of the gender gap in education and national development. Nonetheless, women the world over share a common feature; they are marginalized in the sphere of public life. Although they account for roughly one half of every country's population, women are yet to be proportionately represented in public life anywhere in the world (Nwankwo, 1996). This results in a persistent social inequity and obstructs sustainable development. Gender equality and women's empowerment is at the hub of sustainable development efforts in least developed countries. Without gender equality and women's empowerment policy measures, it is hardly possible for least developed countries like Ethiopia to realize poverty reduction goals, millennium development targets and sustainable development objectives (Ogato, 2013). Hence, ensuring gender equality is a must to have sustainable development and avoid social inequity. As a result, the issue of gender equality as a central feature of all aspects of everyday life and society has become more and more widespread. Over the decades, issues concerning women have taken new dimensions and received varied treatments by the United Nations and its specialized agencies. The principle of equality of men and women was first recognized in 1945 in the United Nations Charter, and

subsequently in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). Among the influential amendments made so far, the Beijing Platform for action (BPA 1995) is the most notable. Miranda (2005) noted that the UN Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995 best recognized the key condition for women's empowerment. Women in power and decision-making are required for democratic governance and it was identified as one of twelve critical areas of concern in its Beijing Platform for Action. For this concern, the platform recommends two strategies: First, "take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making" and second, "increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership". Both strategies are proposed to be addressed by governments, national bodies, the private sector, political parties, trade unions, employers' organizations, research and academic institutions, sub-regional and regional bodies, and non-governmental and international organizations.

The argument for women's participation in decision making and leadership is based on the recognition that every human being has the right to participate in decisions that define her or his life. This right is the foundation of the ideal of equal participation in decision-making among women and men. It argues that since women know their situation best, they should participate equally with men to have their perspective effectively incorporated at all levels of decision-making, from the private to the public spheres of their lives, from the local to the global (Miranda, 2005). Women and men have different needs, interests and priorities arising from their specific roles and situations. Even when men are aware of and seek to represent this difference, they lack information in the same way that mainstream decision makers are unable to capture the perspectives and needs of minority cultures or the poor. This failure to incorporate women's concerns in decision making represents a major loss for society as a whole. Women's needs, interests and concerns are not just those of women themselves, but reflect their primary roles as mothers, wives and caregivers. Therefore, incorporating a woman's perspective in decision making should result in better decisions that more adequately reflect the needs and interests of children and families (including the male members) thereby foster sustainable development.

The Ethiopian government has been committed itself to various national, regional, and international initiatives to eliminate gender-based disparity in various sectors by introducing various policy directions and institutionalizing ministerial offices. To cite few examples, the establishment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs, its commitment on Millennium Development Goals, Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) the Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines, and the various affirmative actions taken in education and employment process. One of the major goals of the MDG also focuses on gender equality with the target of eliminating gender disparity in education, employment, and political participation by 2015 (Teklu, 2013). However, regardless of the Ethiopian government's policy of equal opportunity for both men and women to participate in the democratization of the country, women have not been adequately represented at all levels of decision-making positions. Given the nominally equal status of men and women in laws of most countries, it is only right that both sexes participate in decision making over matters that affect them. Many more literatures sullenly reveal unsatisfactory pictures of a stark gender imbalance against females.

The higher education subsystem in Ethiopia has passed through a series of policy reforms in the last two decades. Key reform areas ranged from improving quality and relevance of programs to promoting equality in access to and success in Higher Education. As a signatory to the Millennium Development Goals, Ethiopia pledged to pursue a series of benchmarks and targets relating to gender equality. The targets aim to empower women and eliminate gender disparity in all level of education by 2015. For instance, the education and training policy declared in 1994, has addressed the importance of girls education and among others it clearly stated that the government will give financial support to raise the participation of women in education. It further stated that special attention would be given to the participation, recruitment, training and assignment of female teachers. However, regardless of the vast expansion of higher education and the efforts underway, female students remain chronically underrepresented (Valerie, 2012). And, gender inequality has remained a critical challenge in Ethiopian higher education (Tebeje, 2012). Due to the various obstacles that women have such as triple role, violence against women, lack of education etc, their representation and participation in leadership and decision making position has also been limited. As a result, women are under-represented both in education and leadership in higher education institutions in Ethiopia. Thus, the genesis of this paper intends to investigate factors that facilitate or constrain women to participate in leadership and management in pursuit of scrutinizing the issue of under-representation of women in public higher education institutions in Amhara region in three reasonably selected Universities: Gondar, Bahirdar and Debremarkos Universities using a mixed research approach.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

According to the report of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) on the implementation of the AU Solemn declaration on gender equality in Africa (2006), like many African countries, the majority of women in Ethiopia hold low status in the society. They have been denied equal access to education, training and gainful employment opportunities and their involvement in policy formulation and decision-making processes has been

minimal. In Ethiopia women constitute about 50% of the population and contribute about 50% to subsistence production. However, they are subject to gender discrimination in every aspect of their life than any other women in any part of the world in economic, social, cultural and legal aspects. They do have less access to schooling and employment (Sewunet, n.d). Thus, the issue of equity in education between male and female groups has been a serious problem in Ethiopian education system at all levels in general, and in higher education in particular. The number of admission, retention, and graduates has not been proportional to the size of the population when compared to male and female students throughout the county (Habtamu, 2004). Even though, women play a vital role in the community by taking care of all social activities, they do not enjoy the fruits of their labour and suffer from political, economic, social and cultural marginalization. The presence of women in leadership position in education worldwide provides a gendered perspective on educational change and development, and to ensure social justice through gender equity at leadership and decision making levels (Panigrahi, 2013). However, women have very low representation at all educational levels, especially at tertiary level. In response to this situation, at the end of the twentieth century, a number of countries began to recognize gender underrepresentation in higher education leadership. Following a number of researches, policies have been developed to embrace women into leadership. As cited in Nwobodo (2008), however, female underrepresentation in higher education leadership continues in the twenty-first century (Carrington and Pratt, 2003; Collings et al., 2011; Kloot, 2004; Lagace et al., 2003; Edwith and Manfredi, 2000, McTavish and Miller, 2009; O'Connor, 2000; White, 2001). Ethiopian is not an exception; despite the vast expansion of higher education institutions and the efforts underway in Ethiopia, females remain chronically underrepresented in higher education and academic leadership (Tebeje, 2012). The widest gender gap is most evident in higher education. This higher education gender gap is critical because it significantly affects women's labor force participation at the professional level and women's ability to influence public policy and practice (Alem, n.d). The number of female academic staffs and leaders have not been proportional to the size of population when we compare males with females despite the national educational policy which pledged to attract 20% of the females into academic staffs thereby raising the number of female Presidents and Vice Presidents from 3 to 16 by 2015 (ESDP IV, 2010-15). Consequently, it has become very difficult for women to advance to a higher professional achievement and participate in leadership and management positions in higher education institutions. Hence, Ethiopian's government plan to uplift its nation to a middle income country status in the next decade by transforming the education sector needs to be scrutinized for it is hardly possible (if not impossible) for Ethiopia to realize its vision of poverty reduction goals, millennium development targets and sustainable development objectives without ensuring gender equality and women's empowerment in higher education. The main intent of this study is, therefore, to investigate factors that facilitate and/or constrain women to participate in leadership and management in pursuit of scrutinizing the issue of under-representation of women in selected public higher education institutions in Amhara region. Being cognizant of the dearth of study on women in leadership and decision making process, the researcher wanted to undertake the study in higher education institutions taking into account the key role higher education institutions play for change as they are believed to make a vital contribution to sustainable development through the generation, dissemination and absorption of knowledge as source of development in present and future societies. The prime motivation of this study is centered around fact that the previous studies on gender in Ethiopia focused much on factors that affect women to get access to higher education institutions (Genet and Haftu, 2013; Habtamu, 2004; Kassa, 2006; Lemessa, n.d; Seyoum, 1991; Tebeje, 2012; Teklu, 2013; Tesfaye, 2006; Wudu and Getahun, 2009; Yeshimebrat, Alemayehu, Dawit and Yismaw, 2009) and hence there was a research gap on factors that affect women to assume leadership positions in higher learning institutions. As such, factors hindering/facilitating women to assume leadership position in the country's higher education got inadequate research consideration. This research is, therefore, tasked to identify the factors that may facilitate and/or constrain women into leadership and finally evaluated the Education/Gender policy whether it considers gender balance in promotion and advancement of women into leadership and management positions by taking selected public universities as a case study in Amhara region.

Research Questions

Based on the above statements of the problem, the researcher formulated the following basic questions in order to seek an answer to them from study.

1. What is the proportion of women in academia and leadership as compared to men?
2. What factors facilitate and/or constrain women into leadership?
3. What is the gap between the present and desired level of need based motivation support provided by higher learning institutions to bring women into leadership positions?
4. Is there gender policy which considers gender balance in leadership positions, promotion and advancement?

1.3. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The general objective of the study is to examine factors that facilitate and/or constrain women to participate in

leadership and management in selected public higher education institutions in Amhara region in pursuit of investigating the issue of under-representation of women. The specific objectives are to:

Specific objectives

1. Examine the proportion of women in academia and leadership as compared to men
2. Identify factors that may facilitate and/or constrain women to participate in higher learning institutions
3. Identify the gap between current and desired level of need based motivation support provided by higher learning institutions to bring women to assume leadership positions
4. Evaluate the gender policy whether it considers gender balance in promotion and advancement of women into leadership and management positions

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

The study was based mainly on the feminist theory which recognizes the pervasive influence of gender divisions on social life and tries to understand women's marginalization and the structures in society that espouse this subjugation and subordination. The feminist perspective, looking at the many similarities between the genders, concludes that women and men have equal potential for individual development. Differences in the realization of that potential, therefore, must result from externally imposed constraints and from the influence of social institutions and values (Nzomo 1995 cited in Osongo, 2004). Osongo noted that feminist theory highlights three broad perspectives in trying to explain the absence of women from senior management in any organization. The first perspective is personal factors in which the paucity of women in management positions is attributed to the psychosocial attributes, including personality characteristics, attitudes and behavioral skills of women themselves. Among personal factors that facilitate and/or constrain women to take leadership positions, self-esteem and self-confidence, lack of motivation and ambition to accept challenges "to go up the ladder", women's low potential for leadership, less assertiveness, less emotional stability and lack of ability to handle a crisis are identified (Bond 1996). Similarly, Singh and Shahabudin (2000) identified personal factors such as, assertiveness, confidence, resourceful creativeness, loyalty and trustworthiness which could help women to ascend to senior management positions. On the other hand, a number of other researchers have identified a number of factors that function as barriers to women's career advancement. Zhong (2006) listed glass ceiling, gender discrimination and sexual harassment, organizational culture, and work and family conflict as major barriers. The glass ceiling refers to invisible, generally artificial, barriers that prevent qualified individuals, e.g. women, from advancing within their organizations and reaching their full potential (Knutson & Schmidgall, 1999). Other barriers stifling women to assume leadership roles have also been identified. Lack of education, sexual harassment, lack of mentor, lack of role model, inadequate knowledge/competence, lack of work support, family responsibility, and lack of equity in pay and training as are identified major barriers (Zhong, 2006). Osongo (2004) also noted that nepotism, political affiliation, networking, ethnicity, qualification, administration experience, willingness to take position, assertiveness, self-confidence, and self-esteem are the major factors affecting women to advance in their career ladder. Bello (1992) also identified several obstacles that prevent women from advancing to senior management positions. The study indicated the socio-cultural beliefs as the major barriers in this regard. These beliefs emphasize the superiority of men and the inferiority of women. They form an integral part of the socialization process and the gender education and training most men and women are exposed to from childhood. Based on the concept of role expectancy, an individual develops through the years his or her own set internalized values, beliefs, attitudes, ideals and aspirations. Another barrier is the institutional framework guiding the gender division of labor, recruitment and upward mobility. Moreover, Olojede (1990) affirms that since men dominate public decision-making bodies, it is the male values that are reflected in these decision-making bodies. Gender and management remain highly gendered. The differential relations of women and men to leadership and management are a key question for both theory and practice. There is a male dominance among managers and management is thus male gendered both symbolically and practice. Okafor *et al.* (2011) identified the barriers to the career advancement of women to top management positions as lack of mentoring; fewer opportunities for training and development of women; low aspiration level of women managers and gender stereotypes.

To the other end, to what extent a person is motivated to take leadership position needs to be sought. The most relevant motivation theory in this case is Maslow's needs hierarchy theory. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, the needs at different levels are linked with organizational culture and leadership. For instance, in fulfilling Safety needs, a safe working environment should be provided. As financial security is also a kind of safety needs, organizations should pay employees fairly and ensure them stable career. With regard to Social needs, institutions need to create an environment of team spirits, generate a feeling of acceptance and belonging by organizing company parties or company culture trainings. In satisfying esteem needs, leaders should recognize employees' achievement, either by financial means or spiritual means. Organizations should set specific awards for achieving certain goals and tasks. The awards should not only be financial motivations but also mental motivations like praises. Organizations should also make promotions based on achievements rather

than seniority and provide status to make employees feel valued and appreciated. With regard to Self-actualization needs, leaders who can satisfy employees' self-actualization needs are the most effective leaders. Organizations can offer challenging and meaningful assignments to encourage and explore employees' creativity and innovation ability to maximum extent. Taking into account this justification, the researcher attempted to audit the present level of need fulfilment support provided by institutions and their desire in the scale of 7 from extremely low (1) to extremely high (7). Generally, this study tried to explore to what extent the said factors affect women to assume leadership positions in Ethiopian public higher learning institutions.

3. Definition of Terms

Participation: The term in this study is used to refer to the provision of equal opportunity to women to take part in the leadership and management of higher education institutions in Ethiopia.

Management: Management refers to the attainment of organizational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organizing, staffing, directing and controlling organizational resources (Daft, 1999). The term manager in this study refers to women charged with the responsibility of planning, organizing, directing controlling people and any other organizational resources to achieve predetermined organizational objectives at any levels of the organization, in this case a university.

Leadership: Rost (1993) defined leadership as the influencing relationship among leaders and followers who intend real changes that reflect their shared purpose. Iowa state university (1976) also defined leadership as "the interpersonal influence, exercised in a situation and directed, through the communication process toward the attainment of a specified goal or goals". The term leadership in this study is refers to any women with an influencing relationship among leaders and followers to bring about changes in a university.

Leadership and Management Distinction

Lunenburg (2011) affirms that there is a continuing controversy about the difference between leadership and management. Not all managers exercise leadership. Often it is assumed that anyone in a management position is a leader. Not all leaders manage. Leadership is performed by people who are not in management positions (e.g., an informal leader). Some more scholars argue that even though leadership and management are often used interchangeably, they are two distinctive and complementary systems of action. Each has its own function and characteristic activities. Both leadership and management are necessary for success in an increasingly changing organizational environment. To mention some of them as described by Kotter (1990), management accomplishes the function of coping with complexity by planning and budgeting while leadership accomplishes change by first setting a direction. Management develops the capacity to achieve its plan by organizing and staffing, whereas leadership does so by aligning people. Moreover, management ensures accomplishment by controlling and problem-solving. Leadership does the same by motivating and inspiring.

4. MATERIALS AND METHODS

4.1. Subject of the Study

This study was conducted in three public higher education institutions in Amhara region, namely Bahirdar, Gondar and Debre markos University. These universities are selected for the study for a number of reasons. First, these Universities, as compared to the rest of other universities in Amhara Region, could relatively be a good representative and are helpful to get valuable information for the study. Second, the researcher is well aware of the problem in these institutions (worked with University of Gondar and Debre Markos University and knows Bahirdar University very well). They are also easily accessible as they are located along the high way from Addis Ababa to Gondar. Another is to save researcher's money and time as these institutions are located close to each other. The study is a descriptive analysis of women's access to leadership and management positions in public higher education institutions with a view to make recommendations to policy makers and authorities on how women could be incorporated into the mainstream of academic leadership and management. The study employed mixed research approach to integrate both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analyses methods to get a better insight about the subject. Both primary and secondary data were used for the study. Primary data was collected from selected respondents from public higher education institutions and secondary data was collected and analyzed through a critical textual analysis of educational policies and practices towards gender and leadership.

4.2. Sample size and sampling technique

A multi-stage sampling plan was used to select study area and respondents. Purposive sampling was employed for selecting the research sites (Universities) while census and simple random sampling techniques were used for selecting the respondents. All female position holders in the selected universities were the target for the survey. It was possible to take every one as they were few in number. However, the sample size for male respondents from each university was determined by using **Taro Yamane's** (1973) formula from the given population by taking into accounts 0.05 (5%) standard error or significant level.

$$S = N / (1 + Ne^2)$$

Where, S= sample size

N= population size

e= significance level or error of sampling

The computed result was 354 from a population of 3108. From a total of 420 female academic staffs, 25% were taken as a sample to have more female respondents for a fair comparison with their male counter parts. The number of female sample size could have been only 43 if this formula was used for both but it was extended to 105 when 25% sample size was taken. Taking into account the computed result, the sample units for male and female respondents were proportionately distributed to each university and final respondents were selected randomly. A total of 414 questionnaires (321 males and 93 females) were correctly filled and returned for analysis to examine the factors (facilitators and constraints). In addition, women who have administration experience were all targeted to investigate the gap between the desired and present level of need based motivation support provided by the institutions to attract women into leadership. It was believed that the female respondents who assumed leadership position could provide better information regarding what problem they faced before and after they assumed leadership position. From a total of 36 female position holders, 30 questionnaires were successfully filled and collected for analysis.

4.3. Data Collection Instruments

1. **Questionnaire** – Two self- administered questionnaires prepared in five and seven point Likert’s scale were used. The first one was designed to examine factors that constrain and/or facilitate women to assume leadership and management position. Both male and female academic staffs were randomly selected to fill up this questionnaire. The other one was designed to evaluate the present and desired level of need based motivation support provide by the respective institutions. Women leaders who are purposively selected filled up this questionnaire.
2. **Documentary Review**- The staff profiles of each university studied were collected and compiled to calculate the proportion of women in academia and leadership as compared to men. Moreover, education and training policy documents declared since 1994 including the Education Sector Development Program IV (ESDP –IV, 2010-15) Action Plan were evaluated to see whether those policies consider gender balance in promotion and advancement of women into leadership and management positions.
3. **In-depth interview**- in-depth interview with key informants (with three gender directorate directors, two college deans and one head of a department) was made to get an insight to qualitative data which was helpful to triangulate the quantitative data. Moreover, other issues uncovered in the closed ended standardized questionnaire were incorporated using this method.

4.4. Method of Analysis

Data collected using the aforementioned instruments were analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative (using SPSS Version 20) method of data analysis. The data collected through questionnaire survey and human resource profiles were presented in graphs and tables with frequency distributions and means. Inferential analysis was also made for some of the quantitative data. On the other hand, data from documents and in-depth interview were transcribed and presented in a narrative form. The qualitative data was intertwined with the quantitative data to further enrich and enhance the information collected.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

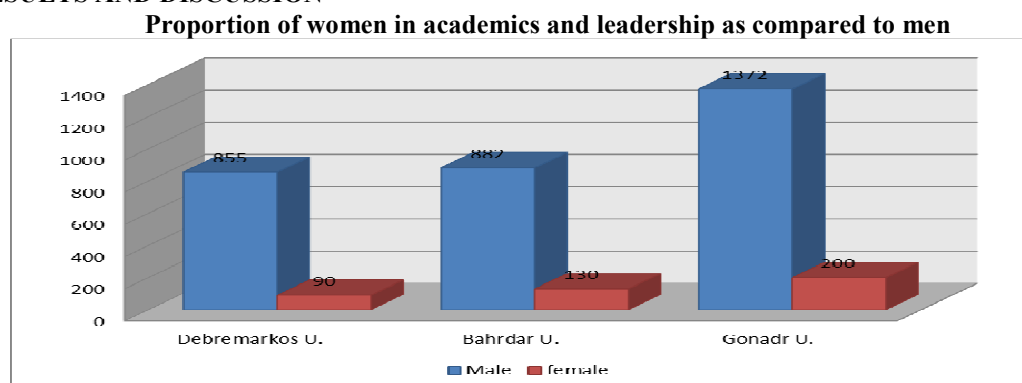


Figure 1: Proportion of academicians by sex

Source: Data compiled by the researcher from HR departments, 2014

As we can see from the above graph, women form a minority of university teachers in all Universities.

They constitute only 9.5%, 12.9% and 12.7% in Debre Markos University, Bahirdar University and University of Gondar respectively. On average, the proportions of female academic staffs constitute only 11.9% despite the policy to attract 50% of the females into teacher training thereby raising the share of female academic staffs to 20% by 2014/2015 and the affirmative action provision for higher education, employment, and promotion (ESDP IV, 2010-15).

Key informants noted that affirmative action indeed created an access to academics but not to leadership. When it is applied in leadership there are several misconceptions about affirmative action. People continued to think that incapable females are getting leadership position because of affirmative action (created an attitude of “you are supported for you are not capable”).

Table 1: Staff profile across universities in all academic ranks (N=3529)

University		Prof.	Asso. Prof.	Asst. Prof.	Lecturer	Ast Lecturer	Grad.Ast	Tech. Ast.	Total
Bahirdar University	Male	1	19	118	589	37	68	49	881
	Female	0	0	5	83	7	19	17	131
	Total	1	19	123	672	44	87	66	1012
Gondar University	Male	6	25	108	740	254	140	99	1372
	Female	0	2	5	114	37	18	24	200
	Total	6	27	113	854	291	158	123	1572
Debre markos University	Male	0	0	20	488	200	89	58	855
	Female	0	0	0	48	20	10	12	90
	Total	0	0	20	536	220	99	70	945
	Grand Total	7	46	256	2062	555	344	259	3529

Source: data compiled by the researcher from HR departments, 2014

As presented in the above table, women are non-existent in higher academic ranks across all universities and they are extremely low in all academic ranks. As it is very evident from the data, the harder it is to find women with higher academic ranks. There is a dismal lack of female from the mid to higher academic ranks. This terribly limits the number of females available to assume leadership positions in higher education institutions. This finding is consistent with the theory of glass ceiling.¹

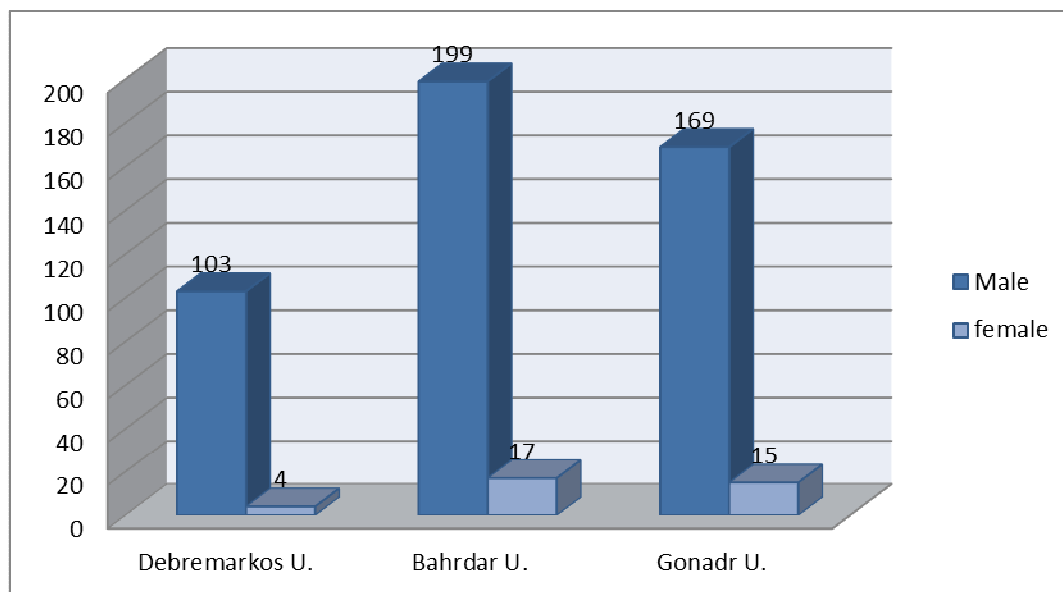


Figure 2: proportion of position holders by sex

Source: Data compiled by the researcher from HR departments, 2014

As indicated in the above graph, the fewer female teachers in higher education institutions eventually lead to a critically few female administrators. Hence, women are resentfully under-represented in leadership/management position with none of the university presidents or vice-presidents being female despite the national policy (ESDP IV) to raise the number of female presidents and Vice presidents from 3 to 16 by 2015. On average, they constitute only 7.1% which is far less than the critical mass (global standard) that women must constitute at least one third of those in decision making. The proportion is imperatively low in all universities which call for a critical consideration by the university management to mitigate the gap. Moreover, respondents

¹ The glass ceiling is a metaphor often used to describe the invisible array of barriers and obstacles in front of women which slow down or prevent the promotion of women to leadership or achieving promotions in their career (Barreto et al, 2009; Burke & Vinnicombe, 2005; Powell, 2012).

in in-depth interview affirm that female academic staffs are even ignored and isolated in academic matters and decisions that affect them.

For example, gender office director, University of Gondar confirmed that females in some departments are made optional to department council meeting. They involve them when they are around and leave them if they are not.

Need based motivation support provided by Institution to bring women into leadership

Following is the result of need based motivation support provided by higher education institutions to bring women into leadership.

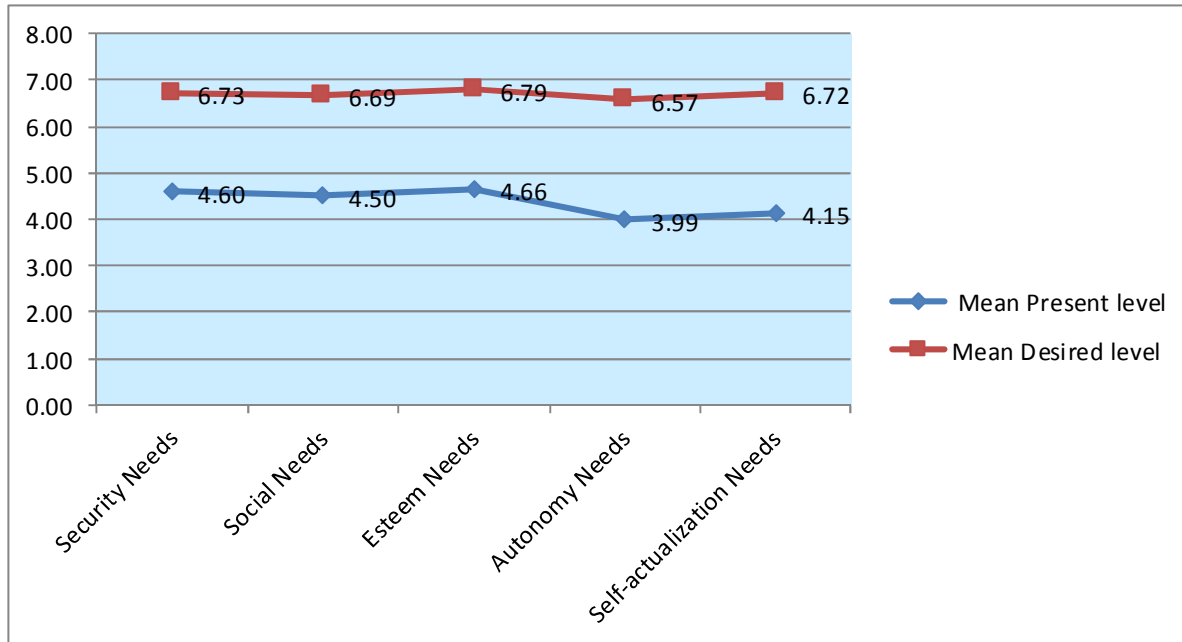


Figure 3: Mean present and desired level of need based motivation support provided (n=30)

Source: own survey, 2014

As indicated in the above figure, results from the 17 items five-fold model of classification of needs (security needs, social needs, esteem needs, autonomy needs, and self-actualization needs) used to audit the present and desired level of need based motivation support provided by institutions (Singh, 2003), results revealed that the overall present need fulfillment support provided by the respective institutions fall short by 34% as compared with what they actually desire it to be. Most of them agree that even though they have given responsibility and authority, they have little freedom to decide by their own. There is relatively a huge gap between the present and desired level of need based support provided by institution in autonomy needs. In specific, the highest gap is seen in authority in job position and opportunity for independent action which is 2.83 and 2.8 respectively. To the other end, it is also evident from the survey result that there is a huge gap on their feeling of being well informed (3.03) and provision of promotion and awards (2.88). As per the model, the lower points represent minimum or less and the higher points represent maximum and the finding reveal the overall present level of need based motivation support provided by the institutions is found to be 4.30 where they desire it to be 6.67 with respect to average mean score of 4 even though the average present level is above average.

Table 2: Paired samples test

Paired Samples Test		Paired Differences					T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	P Security Needs - D Security Needs	-2.10000	1.37339	.25075	-2.61283	-1.58717	-8.375	29	.000
Pair 2	P Social Needs - D Social Needs	-2.14444	1.07811	.19684	-2.54702	-1.74187	-10.895	29	.000
Pair 3	P Esteem Needs - D Esteem Needs	-.44074	1.07982	.19715	-.84395	-.03753	-2.236	29	.033
Pair 4	P Autonomy Needs - D Autonomy Needs	-2.57500	1.52444	.27832	-3.14424	-2.00576	-9.252	29	.000
Pair 5	P Self-actualization Need - D Self-actualization Need	-2.56667	1.14018	.20817	-2.99242	-2.14092	-12.330	29	.000
Pair 6	Overall Present Need Support - Overall Desired Need Support	-2.36863	1.05690	.19296	-2.76328	-1.97398	-12.275	29	.000

Source: own survey, 2014

As indicated in the above table, evaluation of the overall need based motivation support provided to assume leadership roles using the paired t-test and gap analysis showed that there is a statistically significant difference in mean score between the means in the present and desired level of motivation support provided by the respective institutions at $p < 5\%$ for all needs specified in the model.

Factors that affect women in leadership

The other component of this paper is about the factors that may facilitate and/or constrain women to assume leadership position in higher education institutions. The following illustration provides an insight about the subject.

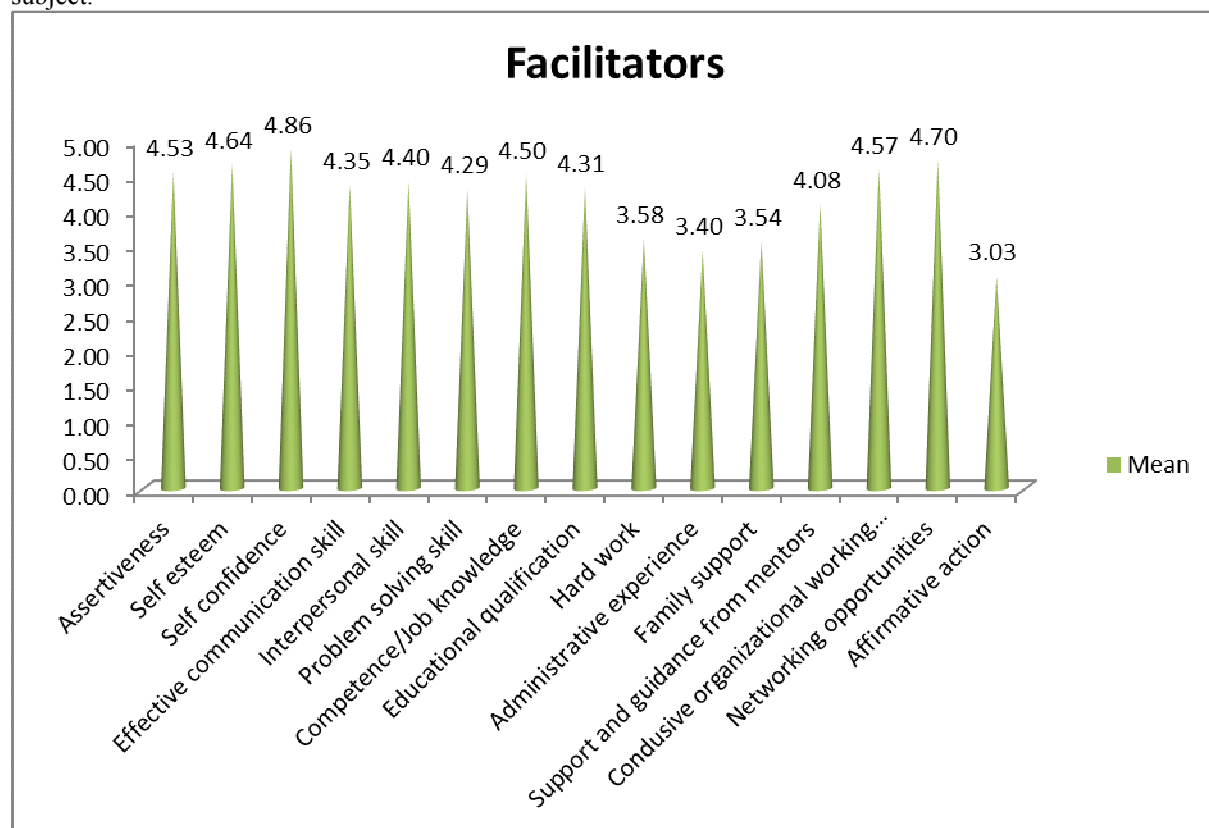


Figure 4: Factors that facilitate women to assume leadership positions (n=414)

Source: own survey, 2014

As it can be seen from the above figure, from 15 facilitating factors, Self-confidence (4.86), Networking opportunities (4.70), Self-esteem (4.64), Conducive organizational working environment (4.57), and Assertiveness (4.53) are found to be the most important factors pulling women into leadership with respect to the average mean score of 3. Moreover, Affirmative Action has the least mean (3.03) and the highest Standard Deviation (1.291) where as Self Confidence has the highest mean (4.86) and the least Standard Deviation (0.429). It is a wonder that how people have got a very diverse perception on affirmative action and this supports the finding from the in-depth interview that there are several misconceptions about affirmative action.

Independent samples t-test result showed that there is a statistically significant difference in mean score between the means in male and female groups for all constraints except educational qualification, hard work and affirmative action at $P < 5\%$ which calls different intervention for both sexes to mitigate the disparity.

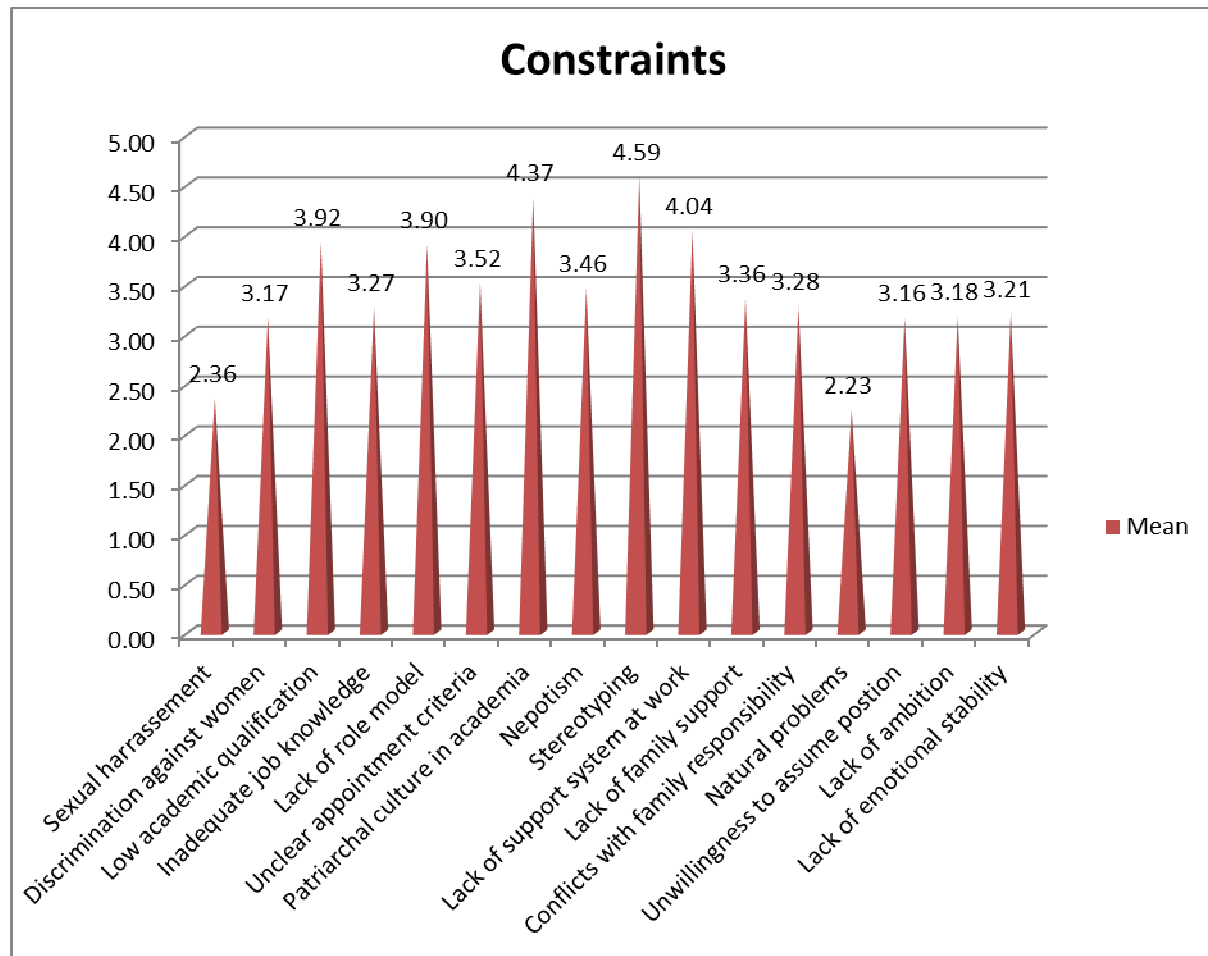


Figure 5: Factors that constrain women to assume leadership positions (n=414)

Source: own survey, 2014

As it can be seen from the above figure, from a total of 16 constraints, Stereotyping (4.59), Patriarchy (4.37), Lack of support system at work (4.04), Low academic qualification (3.92) and Lack of role model (3.90) are the major barriers stifling women to assume leadership positions with respect to the average mean score of 3.

Independent samples t-test result showed that there is a statistically significant difference in mean score between the means in male and female groups for all constraints except sexual harassment, unclear appointment criteria, nepotism, lack of support system at work, and conflicts with family responsibility at $P < 5\%$

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Women are resentfully under-represented in positions of academic leadership and management as well as in teaching professions of higher learning institutions despite gender sensitive policy frameworks. In terms of numerical equality, women lag far behind men in attainment of higher education leadership and management positions across all universities studied. With 7.1% female representation in the management cadre, the universities are far behind the critical mass (30%) minimum threshold recommended. The emphasis, however, needs to be on the importance of appointed women and the impact it has on others than the numerical equality.

Even though they are very less in number, they can pave the way for other females to enter the academic leadership process. The extent of female's impact, however, depends highly on the number of females in academic leadership and management who are motivated to represent women's issues and concerns. The presence of women in academic leadership and senior positions can act as catalyst that motivates younger women to play a more influential role in institutions of higher learning thereby mitigate the persistent gender disparity.

Results from the 17 items five-fold model of classification of needs (security needs, social needs, esteem needs, autonomy needs, and self-actualization needs) used to audit the present and desired level of need based motivation support provided by institutions, it is evident that the overall present need fulfillment support provided by the institutions fall short by 34% when compared with what they actually desire it to be. Most appointed women agree that even though they have given responsibility and authority, they have little freedom to decide by their own. Moreover, there are several factors that facilitate and/or constrain women to assume leadership positions of which some of them are personal to women and others organizational and societal in nature. Self-confidence, Networking opportunities, Self-esteem, Conducive organizational working environment, and Assertiveness are found to be the most important factors pulling women into leadership. To the other end, Stereotyping, Patriarchal culture in academia, Lack of support system at work, Low academic qualification and Lack of role model are the major barriers stifling women to assume leadership positions. Generally, it is found out that there are lots of challenges in workplace than favorable conditions. Even though women are granted equal rights in all endeavors, they are still hanged with personal, institutional and societal obstacles.

The conclusion from this is that the paucity of women in higher education management and leadership position is indicative for the presence of patriarchal culture in academia and unfriendly working environment for women. Hence, higher education institutions need to make the work place more conducive and women friendly to attract more females to the academic leadership process. Involving them in decision making and leadership and the commitment of the top management to narrow down the gap will have paramount importance. Networking, mentoring and providing leadership training aggressively can help young women to come forward. Moreover, higher education top management need to be committed to implement the education policy properly and translate their plan into action in order to mitigate the gender disparity in leadership instead of paying a lip service to the problem. Generally, an ambitious dealing with the gender disparity in leadership such as engendering leadership through motivating, empowering and involving women in decision making systematically could narrow down the persisting gap as women hold up half the sky.

REFERENCES

- Alem, H. (n.d), Women's Higher Education in Ethiopia under Three Regimes, 1950-1997. Queens College, New York, USA.
- Daft, R. (1999), Leadership Theory and Practice. *The Dryden Press*.
- Federal ministry of Education (2010), "Education Sector Development Program IV (ESDP IV) Program Action Plan", August 2010
- Habtmu, W (2004), Gender and Regional Disparities in Opportunities to Higher Education in Ethiopia: Challenges for the Promotion of Social Justice. *The Ethiopian Journal of Higher education, Vol 1, No.2, December 2004*
- Genet Gelana and Haftu Hindeya (2013), Impact of gender roles on women involvement in functional adult literacy in Ethiopia: A review. *International Journal of Social Sciences, Vol.9, No.1, March 2013*
- Kassa Shurke (2006), Factors affecting females' participation in education: the case of Tocha Wereda in SNNPR. *Unpublished MA thesis, Addis Ababa University*
- Knuston, B.J. & Schmidgall, R.S. (1999), Dimensions of the glass ceiling in the hospitality industry. *The Cornell Hotel and Restaurant Administration*
- Kotter, J.P. (1990), A Force for Change: How Leadership Differs From Management. *New York: Free Press*.
- Lemessa Mergo (n.d), Gender disparity in higher education in Ethiopia. *Proceedings of the national symposium on "Establishing, enhancing and sustaining quality practices in Education*.
- Lunenburg, F.C (2011), Leadership versus Management: A key distinction- at least in theory. *International journal of Management, Business, and Administration. Vol.14, No.1*
- Miranda, R.T (2005), Impact of women's participation and leadership on outcomes. UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), Division for the Advancement of Women (DAW) (2005). Paper presented on Equal participation of women and men in decision-making processes, with particular emphasis on political participation and leadership, Expert Group Meeting held from 24 to 27 October 2005, Addis Ababa
- Nkwankwo, N. (1996), Gender Equality in Nigerian Politics, Lagos, Deutchetz Publishers.
- Nwobodo, B. (2008). Gender Issues and leadership effectiveness Nigeria labour Union activities: An appraisal. Retrieved December 28, 2013 from

- <http://www.ilo.org/public/english/iira/documents/congresses/regional/lagos2011/3rdparallel/session3a/gender-leadership.pdf>
- Ogato, GS. (2013), The quest for gender equality and women's empowerment in least developed countries: Policy and strategy implications for achieving millennium development goals in Ethiopia. *International Journal of Sociology and Anthropology*. Vol.5, No.9, December 2013
- Okafor, E.E, Fagbemi, A.O, and Hassan, A.R. (2011), Barriers to women leadership and managerial aspirations in Lagos, Nigeria: An empirical analysis. *African Journal of Business Management* Vol. 5(16), pp. 6717-6726, 18 August, 2011
- Osongo, J. (2004), Factors Affecting women's participation in University management. Organization for social science research in Eastern and Southern Africa. *Gender issues research report Series -no. 22*. Retrieved November 20, 2014 from <http://www.ossrea.net/publications/images/stories/ossrea/girr-22.pdf>
- Panigrahi, MR. (2013), Perception of secondary school stakeholders towards women representation in educational leadership in Harari region of Ethiopia. *International women online journal of distance education*. Vol.2, No. 1, January 2013
- Prime Minister Office/Women's affairs sub-sector (2004), A national Report on progress made in the Implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action (Beijing 10+), Ethiopia, March 2004
- Report of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia on the implementation of the AU solemn declaration on gender Equality in Africa. August 2006.
- Rost, J. (1993), Leadership for the Twenty-First Century. Praeger.
- Seyoum, T. (1991), The participation of girls in Higher Education in Ethiopia. Gender Issue in Ethiopia. Addis Ababa: *Institute of Ethiopian Studies, Addis Ababa University press*
- Singh, D. (2003), Leadership Styles of Women officers in Indian Army. Unpublished doctoral dissertation .Punjabi University, Patiala. Documentation number 4078.2
- Shahabudin, S.H. and Singh, J.K. (2000), Academic leadership strategies and skills for women in higher education
- Tebeje, M. (2012), Higher Education Policy Reform in Ethiopia: The Representation of the Problem of Gender Inequality. *International Association of Universities*. No. 0952-8733/13
- Teklu, T. (2013), Disparity in academic achievement in selected college of teachers education in Oromia region. *Ethiopian Journal of education and science*. Vol.9, No.1, September 2013
- Teshome, Y (2003), Transformations in Higher Education: Experiences with Reform and Expansion in Ethiopian Higher Education System. Keynote paper presented at a regional training conference entitled "Improving Tertiary Education in Sub-Saharan Africa: Things that Work," 25-25 September 2003; Ghana, Accra
- Tesfaye, S. (2006), Higher Education Expansion and the Gender question in Ethiopia: A Case Study of Women in Public University. *The Ethiopian Journal of Higher Education*. Addis Ababa: *Institute of Educational Research*
- Valerie, L. (2012), Gender disparity in Ethiopia. HERGA report Issue No.:892004). *The Ethiopian Journal of Higher Education*
- Wirth, L. (2004), Breaking through the Glass Ceiling: Women in Management, International Labour Organisation, and Geneva. Retrieved November 15, 2014 from <http://www.ilo.org/dyn/gender/docs/RES/292/f267981337>
- World Bank (2004), Higher Education Development for Ethiopia: Pursuing the Vision. Washington, DC, The World Bank.
- Wudu Melese and Getahun Fenta (2009), Trend and causes of female students drop out from teachers' education institutions of Ethiopia: The case of Jimma University. *Ethiopian journal of Education and Science*, Vol 5, No.1, September 2009
- Yeshimebrat, M, Alemayehu, B., Dawit, A. and Yeshiwas, N. (2009), The study on policy intervention on factors affecting female students' academic achievement and causes of attrition in higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. Ministry of education gender office, March 2009
- Zhong, Y. (2006), Factors affecting women's career advancement in the hospitality industry: perceptions of students, educators, and industry recruiters. PhD Dissertation, Texas University, USA.