Assessment of Transparency Practices in Urban Land Administration: The Case of Wolkite Town Manucipality, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Good governance in land administration is becoming an important issue in both developed and developing countries. This study has been undertaken to assess transparency practices in urban land administration in wolkite town municipality, Ethiopia. The study employed a cross sectional survey research design. Data were collected both from primary and secondary sources using surveys, key informants interviews, focused group discussions and document analysis. Questionnaire survey data were collected from 380 sampled household respondents; and analyzed using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The study found that there was limited access to land information to most urban residents; and clarity of land services were failed to be transparent to its customers. The study also revealed that the decision making process was not open and participatory. The major challenges of land administration in the study area were corruption, bureaucracy, political interference, poor management and incompetence. The study concludes that the land administration services were not transparent based on the views and experiences of survey respondents. It is recommended that enlighten urban residents on urban land laws, rules and regulations, ensuring accessibility of information, capacitating service providers and increase application of information communication technologies are essential to ensure transparent land governance and administration in the study area.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been increasing interest in the importance of good governance in land administration systems. Land administration includes processes that manage public land by recording, registering private interests in land, assessing land value, determining tax, defining land use supporting the process of development application and approving (World Bank, 2007). Land administration is basically about good governance and specifically refers to the concept of land governance (Williamson et al., 2010). Good governance becomes an essential basis to ensure appropriate land administration for enabling sustainable development (Samsudin, 2014).

Good governance in land administration is not a new issue but it is increasingly recognized as a critical agenda of both developed and developing countries (Bell, 2007). Efficient, effective, transparent and accountable land administration services are as much about the administration of land as they are about the civil service that operates within any country. Good governance in land administration aims to protect the property rights of individuals and enterprises as well as of the state by introducing such principles as transparency, accountability, rule of law, equity, participation and effectiveness in to land related public sector management (Zakout et al., 2006). Conversely, weak governance in land administration leads to insecurity of tenure, land conflict, high transaction cost, landlessness inequitable land distribution, social instability, social exclusion and political instability, land grabbing, erosion of ethics and standards of behavior, un sustainable natural resources management and limited local revenue (*Ibid*).

Given the above points Earle and Scott (2010) & Bloom et al., (2007) argues that good governance reduces the possibility of corruption, bribery, enrichment and rent seeking and this in turn allows bringing comprehensive development. It also promotes accountability, transparency, participation, efficiency, effectiveness, equitability and rule of law in public organization at all levels. Furthermore, under good governance there is clear decision making procedures at the level of public authorities, civil society participation in decision making process and the ability to enforce rights and obligations through legal mechanism (Rham, 2008 cited in Mhrtay, 2014).

Ethiopia like any other African country has faced a number of challenges in building good governance in the country (Astatike, 2021). In order to address the same, the government of Ethiopia developed a multi-sectoral national capacity building strategy which advocates the principles of decentralization, regional autonomy, and efficiency to enhance popular participation and to promote good governance, accountability and transparency. Concurrently, the government has also undertaken various reforms to improve the level of governance in the

country (ECA, 2005, Cohen & Mogues, 2009). However, the country still faces huge challenges and hurdles in achieving good governance in many public sectors including land.

According to UN-Habitat (2012) urban lands faces unprecedented stress in most parts of the world the ongoing urbanization along with the increasing population create huge demands of urban land for different uses: residential, greenery, business, infrastructure, and social services; and this comes to be more problematic due to a lack of good governance in urban land administration, and such problems are common in the urban areas of developing countries including Ethiopia (Alemie et al. 2015). In Ethiopia urban land administration practice and process have been vulnerable to mismanagement and corruption due to the absence of good governance. Meanwhile, urban land administration is often perceived as one of the most corrupt sectors in the public administration (Burn & Dalrymple, 2008). Again, Takele et al. (2014) adds that land administration in Ethiopia suffers from the lack of equity, transparency, accountability, responsiveness and inclusiveness. As a consequence, most urban dwellers complain about urban land governance and Wolkite Town is no exception in this regard.

So far, some studies have been accomplished by different researchers in Ethiopia focusing on urban land governance in different places and times (Tessema et al., 2016; Hadush, 2019; Abuhay, et al., 2020; Abebe & Muleta, 2021; Berihu, 2022). However, many have failed to address clearly and contextually the status of each pillars of good governance with respect to urban land governance and administration. In addition, the extent at which each elements of good governance is effectively, equitably and efficiently practiced is not known and supported good governance future research by advocating the need to focus on the analysis of disaggregated components. As a result, this study tries to fill such a gap by assessing urban land administration via transparency in Wolkite Town municipality, Ethiopia.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY
The main objective of this study was to assess transparency practices in land administration: the case of Wolkite Town municipality, Ethiopia. More specifically, the purpose of this study include:-
❖ To explore accessibility of municipality's office land information to the general public.
❖ To examine the office's openness to community members and the general public.
❖ To scrutinize the office's means of publicizing information to urban residents
❖ To identify the challenges that hinder good governance / transparency in land administration in wolkite town municipality.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS
The study tried to answer the following research questions:
☞ How the municipal office land information is accessible to the general public?
☞ To what extent do the office's land services open to the public?
☞ What mechanisms does the office use to publicize information to residents?
☞ What were the major challenges of good governance /transparency in land administration in the study area?

4. SCOPE OF THE STUDY
This research was delimited to Wolkite Town municipal office in Gurage Zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR). For the purpose of its manageability, this study has assessed the performance of the principle of transparency in land administration at wolkite town municipality. Moreover, the study was mainly emphasized on residents' views on accessibility, clarity, openness of the land administration services and its major challenges.

5. THEORETICAL REVIEW
5.1 Good Governance
The concept of good governance is multifaceted and complex. Therefore, it is more difficult to define it exactly and to describe its characteristics. However, it is usually associated with efficient and effective administration in democratic setup (Samsudin, 2014). It is concerned with purposive and development oriented administration with commitment of improving the lives of citizens. Good governance encourages equity, participation, transparency, accountability and the rule of law, in a way that is effective, efficient and enduring (Gisselquist, 2012). In converting these principles into practice, it is likely to be gained inclusive institutions and agents that are committed towards the development of its citizens. Good governance is not considered as an end by itself; rather it was taken as a means to achieve human rights, economic growth and development, effective and efficient service delivery to the public, and fighting corruption (*Ibid*). Good governance in land administration is one of the central requirements for achieving good governance in society (FAO, 2007). Without good governance, no amount of developmental schemes can bring in improvement in the quality of life of the citizens.

5.2 Land Administration

Land administration is defined as "the processes of determining, recording and disseminating information about the ownership, value, and use of land and its associated resources" (UNECE, 2005). Such processes include the determination of rights and other attributes of the land; the survey, description, registration and recording of these rights; and the provision of relevant information in support of land markets. **According to Burns & Dalrymple (2008)** land administration typically involves processes that manage public land, record and register private interests in land, assess land value, determine property tax obligations, define land use and management governance systems, and support the development application and approval process for land use.

An effective land administration system addressing the land tenure, land use, land value, and land development at all governmental levels is of paramount importance to enable an appropriate decision-making in order to achieve sustainable land development (Navratil & Mansberger, 2017). The quality of land administration can be achieved by the rules of good governance, where indicators like equity, reliability or transparency are essential (Mansberger et al., 2012).

5.3 Benefits of Good Governance in Land Administration

Good Governance in land administration is beneficial to societies in diverse ways. Bell (2007) identifies some seven major benefits of good governance in land administration as described hereunder:-

a. Pro-poor Support: Good governance in land administration provides more equitable access to the rule of law and protects the rights of citizens, especially those vulnerable societal groups such as women and widows, orphans, ethnic minorities and the general poor. It prevents illegal evictions from land of the vulnerable groups in society and protects the inheritance rights of widows and orphans.

b. Public Confidence: Good governance in land administration enables greater public confidence, both from individuals and business, who are more likely to invest in property.

c. Economic Growth: Good governance in land administration increases the overall security of land tenure which enables better access to credit and wealth generation. Transparent, accountable public administration ensures that transaction costs are regulated and taxation is more equitably borne.

d. Stewardship of the Environment: Government becomes more responsible and accountable for its management of the environment and natural resources. Reliable and accessible spatial data underpins good environmental stewardship.

e. Protection of State Assets: Transparent state land management helps to protect state assets from illegal exploitation. It also enables legitimate use of state land for social and economic concessions.

f. Overall More Effective and Efficient Public Administration of Land: Weak governance and corruption in public land administration increases the cost of doing business both to the general public and business sectors and leads to loss of confidence in the land registration system and a higher level of informal land transactions. Good governance underpins the formal land market and the wider use of the formal land registration system, the more reliable the system and the return of benefits from taxation and revenue sharing to public services.

g. Conflict Prevention and Resolution: Overall equity, justice and social stability is enhanced through good governance in land administration. Access to affordable, transparent, efficient, equitable, timely and just dispute resolution reduces conflict.

5.4 Transparency

Transparency is recognized as a core principle of good governance. As Arko et al. (2010) has observed transparency refers to "the availability of information to the general public and clarity about government rules, regulations and decisions". It also means that information is freely available and directly accessible to those who will be affected by such decisions and their enforcement.

It is obvious; therefore, greater transparency leading to more complete and symmetric information provides a framework for the population to become informed about their rights, service standards, and performance in service delivery. Moreover, citizens are thus, empowered to hold decision- makers responsible and answerable for their actions, which in turn should help to tackle corruption, promote more effective service delivery (Hood, 2007 *cited in* Mhrtay, 2014).

Transparency is a critical component of a functioning land administration, particularly in view of the scarcity of clear and credible information on land availability and transactions, and the poor dissemination of public information on land rights and policies (UN-Habitat, 2013). Nevertheless, land administration across the world lacks transparency (Phuong, 2012 cited in Prince & Walter, 2020). This lack of transparency in land administration causes numerous land challenges which include; land tenure insecurity, high cost of land transactions due to informal payments, reduced private sector investment in land, less revenue for the state, increased land grabbing by officials, increased land conflicts, landlessness, and inequity in land distribution.

6. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In order to assess urban land administration from the perspective of transparency the conceptual frame work in figure 1 below was used. The conceptual framework addresses the relationship between transparency indicators with land administration system. The framework consists of transparency with its corresponding indicators, land administration and its challenges (Figure, 1).The indicators of transparency include: clarity and accessibility of the laws and rules regulating land, openness of the decision making process, free flow of and accessibility of land information and clarity of land services.
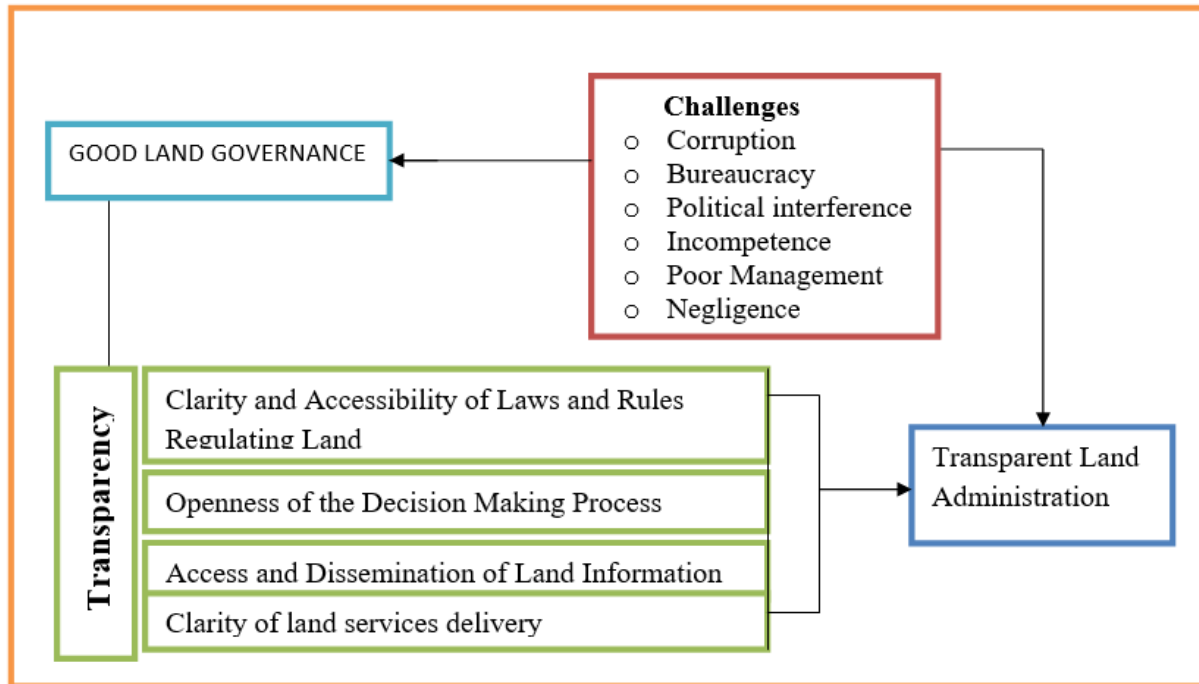

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of the study
Source: Author Construct (2022)

7. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

7.1 Research Design

Creswell (2009) asserts that a research design is a plan and the procedure for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. This study adopted across sectional survey design. Across sectional study was preferred because a researcher was able to collect data from many people at one particular point in time. It was also survey study in that it entails interacting with people and eliciting information from them using methods such as interviews and questionnaires. Besides, this study has used both quantitative and qualitative research approach in order to look at issues from different perspectives and to triangulate the findings.

7.2 Data Type and Source

Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. The primary data were sought from the administrators (service providers), service user (households) and town administration in the selected sub city and respective kebeles. On the other hand secondary data have been collected from official documents, reports, journals, articles, proceedings and books.

7.3 Sampling Techniques and Sampling Procedures

A multi stage sampling design was used in this study. In the first stage wolkite town was selected purposively due to its proximity and experience to the researcher. In the second stage out of the six kebeles of the town three of them were recruited based on their accessibility, population size and large number of users/customers in the land administration /municipality office (Table 1). List of household heads of each three sampled kebeles was used as a sampling frame to draw household survey participants. Finally, from the total 7764 household heads in the three sampled kebeles 380 of them were drawn by adopting Yamane (1973) formula as follows:-

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

Where, n = Sample Size

N = Population Size =7764
e = error (0.05) reliability level 95% or;
e= level of precision always set the value of 0.05.

$$n = \frac{7764}{1+7764 \times 0.05^2} = 380.40$$

Therefore, **n= 380**

Following the total sample size was determined; the number of sample (respondents) for each kebele was computed from the total sample size based on the heads of the household size of each kebele to ensure a proportional representation (Table 1). Sample respondents were selected for questionnaire survey through simple random sampling technique (lottery method).

Table 1: Distribution of household head respondents from each kebeles.

S.No	Name of sub cities	Name of kebeles	Targeted population	sample selected
1	Bekur	Ediget Ber	2783	136
2	Addis	Meneharia	2891	142
		Ediget chora	2090	102
		Total	7764	380

*N B: "**kebele**" refers to the smallest administrative unit in Ethiopia.*
Source: Own survey (2022)

Furthermore, in order to supplement data obtained through questionnaires key informant interviews (KII) and focus group dissections (FGDs) were held with different groups purposively. The key informant interview involved officials and experts from varied sectors based on their relation to the issue under study such as City administration/ Mayor, experts from land administration and development office, kebele managers, participants from investment office, urban development and construction office, town court office and zonal urban development and construction department totally 12 interviewees were recruited using purposive sampling method. Finally, three FGDs in each of the 3 sampled *Kebeles*, were conducted in the study area. Each FGD contained 5 members from, youth association, women association, local elders, land owners and trade union members were included in the discussion to give their ideas on transparency in land administration and development of the municipality office.

7.4 Method of data collection
The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods in order to assess transparency practices in the governance of urban land administration through generating primary and secondary data that are needed to achieve the predetermined objectives. In line with this, the study used well pre-tested structured questionnaires containing questions which composed of open ended and close ended questions, semi structured interview, Focus group discussion and desk review. The reasons behind using a combination of such methods were to reduce the limitations of each method. Therefore, all the available data instruments used in the study collectively ensured the validity and reliability of the data.

7.5 Data analysis
Overall, quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were used. In the process of mixed data analysis, qualitative data analysis was dominantly employed. The primary data collected through survey questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS version 20. The result of statistical analysis was presented using frequency distribution tables and graphs while Qualitative data obtained through key informants interviews, FGDs and document review were analyzed using narration and thematic analysis and; finally the collected data from these sources were triangulated. Inductive analysis were largely given sound caution and weights as some portion of good governance indicators particularly the sub indicator of transparency is normative and interpretive in nature.

8. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
8.1 Demographic and Socio Economic Characteristics of Respondents
The results in Table 2 shows that more than one half of the respondents 209 (55%) were males while 171(45%) were females. Majority 222 (58.42 %) of the respondents were fell within the age group 31 to 40 years, whereas an additional 70 (18.42%) of them were between the age group of 41 to 50 years. One-half of the respondents 190 (50%) had primary education, 124 (32.63%) of the respondents had high school/ secondary education and 45 (11.84%) of the respondents were attained diploma and above. Only 21 (5.52%) of the respondents were not educated. From this it can be concluded that insignificant number of respondents were uneducated. It was found in the study that 224 (58.94%) of the respondents were married, 123 (32.37%) of the respondents were single

and 21 (5.52%) of them were divorced. It was also found that 177 (46.58%) of the respondents were stayed in the study area between 11 to 15 years, 101 (26.58%) were stayed 5 to 10 years, 37 (9.73%) were reside 16 to 20 years, and only 33 (8.68%) of them resides in the study area less than five years. This vividly indicated that most of the respondents were lived long enough in the study area, so that the data collected from them was relevant and valid.

Table 2: Socio -Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (*n=380*)

S.No	Variables	Cases	Number	%
1	Sex	Male	209	55
		Female	171	45
2	Age	20-30	54	14.21
		31-40	222	58.42
		41-50	70	18.42
		51-60	23	6.05
		Above 60 years	11	2.89
3	Education level	Not educated	21	5.52
		Primary	190	50
		High school	124	32.63
		Diploma and above	45	11.84
4	Marital status	Married	224	58.94
		Single	123	32.37
		Divorced	21	5.52
		Windowed	12	3.16
5	Length of stay in the town	Below 5 years	33	8.68
		5-10 years	101	26.58
		11-15 years	177	46.58
		16-20 years	37	9.73
		Above 20 years	32	8.42

Source: Own Survey (2022)

8.2 Respondents views on Accessibility of Information in Wolkite Town Municipality.

Access to information is the legal right for citizens to request and receive information from public authorities (Holm, 2008). Access to information is a fundamental component of transparency. Again, transparency manifested in accessibility of information to the general public. In relation to this, views of respondents on accessibility of information regarding laws, rules, regulations, land information and changes in service provision were assessed in this research. As shown in Table 3, respondents were requested on whether the laws, rules and regulations related to land administration were easily accessible to the community and the general public.

Table 3: Perception of respondents on clarity and accessibility of information to the general public (**n=380**)

S.No	Items	Response By Category				
		Strongly agree	agree	undecided	disagree	Strongly disagree
1	The municipal land Laws, rules and regulations are easily accessible to the public	36 9.47%	41 10.79%	05 1.32%	232 61.05%	66 17.36%
2	Land information are directly accessible to customers	53 13.94%	70 18.42%	08 2.1%	199 52.37%	50 13.15%
3	The institution communicated newly enacted laws, directives, charters, codes , etc on urban land to the public	45 11.84%	57 15%	13 3.42%	225 59.21%	40 10.52%
4	whenever changes in service provision made the office inform the public timely and transparently	54 14.2%	86 22.63%	10 2.63%	197 51.84%	33 8.68%

Source: Own Survey (2022)

Accordingly, around 41 (10.79 %) and 36 (9.47%) of respondents replied agree and strongly agree respectively that the laws, rules and regulations about land were easily accessible to the public. However, most of the respondents 232 (61.05 %) and 66 (17.36 %) of the respondents were replied disagree and strongly disagree respectively that the laws, rules and regulations about land are easily accessible to the public. The remaining 05(1.32%) respondents preferred undecided. The survey clearly depicted that the overwhelming majority of respondents 78.42 % perceived that laws, rules and regulations related to land in the municipal office

were not easily accessible to all urban community members. Likewise, most key informants and FGD participants maintained that the office has more limited in accessing laws, rules and regulations related to land for the general public. Similar results were reported by (Mhrtay, 2014; Abrha, 2016; Tessema et al., 2016; **Nega et al., 2020;** Bekele & Ago, 2020) that laws, rules and regulations related to land were not easily accessible to urban communities. Thus, it can be inferred from the above discussion that the respondents were not able to clearly recognize the laws, rules and regulations related to land in the municipality office. This further revealed the persistence of knowledge gap in knowing and understanding about the laws, rules and regulations concerning urban land.

Accessibility of information is a key dimension of transparency in public office and has played a greater role in fostering good governance in service delivery. As UN-ECE (2005) advocates the operations of land administration must be transparent, with safe and easy access to land information for all participants to minimize the opportunities for corruption. In line with this household respondents were requested how they perceive the availability and accessibility of land information to the public in the study area. Accordingly, 199(52.37%) and50 (13.15%) respondents replied disagree and strongly disagree, while 70 (18.42%) and 53 (13.94%) respondents were replied agree and strongly agree respectively. Only 08 (2.1%) respondents were replied undecided. The survey showed that a clear majority of respondents felt that there existed difficulties in accessing land information. Most of the focus group participants affirmed that community members cannot easily access information on land and related services of the municipal office. As a result, this affects the decision making process directly or indirectly. This was supported by the findings of Hadush (2019) who reported that information was not readily accessible or effectively disseminated to the majority of urban residents in his study in Zalanbessa Town, Tigray Region. In relation to this, the key informants stated that though efforts have made urban land information to be clear and accessible to the general public still, the problem remained unresolved. They also noted that establishing a well functioning urban land information system that is clear and accessible to the majority of urban residents require skilled manpower and resources. As per FGD participant the accessibility of information from the office was highly limited and problematic. This indicates that the service provider is not open in service delivery which in turn adversely affecting the quality of service provision. Hence, information regarding land should be flow freely and directly accessible to those who will be affected by any decisions and enforcement on land. With this regard Burns & Dalrymple (2008) points out that good governance in land administration occurs where information provided by the land administration system is reliable, sufficient, and accessible at reasonable cost. However, the availability and accessibility of land information to clients were limited in the municipal office. Hence, as van der Molen (2007) suggests access to information in land systems where large amounts of data are involved, is hardly possible without use of ICT. The same author stated that automation of the system will reduce land officials' operations, minimize direct contacts between officials and customers, guaranteeing easy access, and monitoring of processes become possible, and improve transparency.

As shown in table 3, respondents were also requested on whether the office communicated newly enacted laws, directives, charters, codes, etc on urban land to the public before implementation. Accordingly around 225 (59.21%) and 40(10.52%) respondents said disagree and strongly disagree, while 57 (15%) and 45(11.84%) replied agree and strongly agree respectively. The remaining 13 (3.42 %) respondents held undecided. The survey showed that majority of the respondents disagreed with the statement the office communicated newly enacted laws, rules, directives and charters to the urban communities before implementation. Similarly FGD respondents confirmed that newly enacted laws, rules, charters and codes were not communicated enough to the urban dwellers before execution in the municipality.

Regarding the question that the office timely and transparently inform the public whenever changes in service provision made, 197 (51.84 %) and 33 (8.68%) of respondents responded disagree and strongly disagree respectively; conversely 86 (22.63 %) and 54(14.2%) of the respondents were admitted agree and strongly agree and 10(2.63%) of respondents gave neutral response. Hence, this finding indicated that the majority of respondents were said that they disagreed with the statement that the office timely and transparently informed them whenever changes in service provision made. Most FGD participants felt that the office lacks transparency and; reluctant in announcing changes in service provision to the general public whenever happening at any time. This result agreed with Abuhay et al., (2020) finding that the municipal office did not inform costumers whenever changes in service provision are made in their study in Hawassa city administration. They added that these conditions created delays and confusion on part of service users.

8.3 The office's openness to the general public
Openness is one manifestation of transparency and good governance in public institutions. And openness goes further than ensuring accessibility to relevant information for the public concerned; it is a broader process also associated with democracy involving participation of stakeholders in the policy making process (Cécile et al., 2017). Openness as a requirement to transparency helps to promote good service delivery to citizens. By taking these concepts as a base, questions were raised to respondents concerning openness of the decision making

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process, land service delivery procedures and instructions of services and land dispute resolution mechanisms of the municipal office to assess transparency of its activities.

Table 4: Perception of respondents on openness of the municipal office to the general public (*n=380*)

S.No	Items	Response By Category				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	There exists open decision making process on land issues in the office.	42 11.05%	48 12.63%	06 1.58%	219 57.63%	65 17.1%
2	The office has effective complaint handling mechanisms for community members	20 5.26%	35 9.21%	17 4.47%	255 67.10%	53 13.95%
3	The institution has open and detail land service procedures'	37 9.73%	61 16.05%	09 2.37%	217 57.1%	56 14.74%
4	There is open and clear ways in resolving disputes over land	11 2.89%	43 11.32%	10 2.63%	279 73.42%	37 9.74%
5	There are easy and understandable instructions of services for urban land administration	36 9.47%	59 15.52%	17 4.47%	225 59.21%	43 11.32%

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Transparency is important for decision making to be open and clear for stakeholders and; it also encourages stake holder's involvement in decision making. As depicted in table 4, respondents were asked their perception regarding openness of the decision making process on land use, land distribution and allocation to the general public. Accordingly, 48 (12.63%) and 42(11.05%) of the respondents responded agree and strongly agree while, 219 (57.63%) and 65 (17.1%) of the respondents replied disagree and strongly disagree and 6(1.58%) replied to undecided. The study results indicated that the decision making process on land use, land distribution and allocation in the municipal office was not open to the public. Hence, this may open for some individuals to benefit others which were against the principles of good governance. As well, the data obtained from FGD participants coincides with what the majority of respondents replied. The findings were consistent with Abebe & Muleta (2021) findings that the decision making process of the city administration concerning land policy and allocations was not open in Assosa Town, Ethiopia.

With regard to the existence of effective complaints handling mechanisms in the office concerned, the overwhelming majority of the respondents 255 (67.10%) replied disagree that there were no effective mechanisms for handling complaints of clients in the municipal office. While 53(13.95%), 35 (9.21%) and 20(5.26%) replied strongly disagree, agree and disagree respectively about the existence of effective complaint handling mechanisms in the office. As per the study result, majority of the respondents agreed with the absence of effective complaints handling mechanisms in the office. Discussion with most FGD participants also verifies the absence of an effective complaint handling mechanism in the office. Thus, if complaints are not solved on time and effectively, people will not be satisfied with the offices service, which will affect the administration of the urban land. However, most key respondents deny and argue that they are trying to solve complaints. From this result, it can be concluded that the office does not have effective compliant handling mechanisms that satisfy the needs of customers'.

Clearness in procedures for providing services to costumers/ the public is critical in improving good governance in general and transparency in particular. In view of this respondents were solicited for their opinion on the municipal office's openness and details of procedures 'in providing land services to customers. Accordingly, about 217 (57.1 %) and 56 (14.74%) of the respondent replied disagree and strongly disagree while, 37(9.73%) and 61(16.05%) of the respondents were replied agree and strongly agree respectively. And 9 (2.37%) of the respondents said undecided. So that from this survey result it could be understood that the office did not have open and detail procedures in order to provide land services to its customers. Likewise, most focus group discussants assured that the office had no clear procedures that guide its land services to clients. They also disclosed that the procedures of land services in the municipal office were tedious and tiresome for most service users. That means, there were bureaucratic delay and lengthy processes in service provision. Thus, service providers were going on their own ways because there was no open and detail service delivery procedures. According to FAO (2007) without enforceable service standards/procedures', inefficiency can develop unchecked, which in turn, creates opportunities for bribery, corruption and favoritism. Meanwhile, it also suggested that simplifying procedures can reduce opportunities for informal payments. Building on these findings, the researcher firmly argues that service procedures should be simple and clear to clients in order to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of land service provision in the municipal office.

Subsequently, respondents were asked to rate their views concerning the openness of land dispute resolution endeavors in the municipal office. As shown in table 4, out of the total respondents 279(73.42%) and 37 (9.74%)

replied disagree and strongly disagree while, 43(11.32%) and 11 (2.89%) rated as agree and strongly agree respectively. And the rest 10 (2.63%) of respondents replied undecided. Thus, the majority of respondents perceived that openness of land dispute resolution mechanism was less carried out in the town municipality. Correspondingly, data obtained from most focus group discussants confirmed that absence of openness and clarity in resolving dispute related to land issues in study area. Essentially, it is argued that the way land disputes resolution should be clear and open to the general public to prevent the possibility of corruption, misdeeds and to enhance trust between communities and municipal office.

The fourth question requested to the respondents in table 4 was whether instructions of services in land administration were easy and understandable to customers in the municipal office. The result of the survey depicted that, of the total respondents 225(59.21%) and 43(11.32%) of them replied disagree and strongly disagree respectively. However, about 59 (15.52%) and 36(9.47%) of the respondents responded agree and strongly agree and 17(4.47%) of the respondents replied undecided. The results suggest that the majority of respondents felt that instructions of land services in the institution are not easy and understandable to urban communities. In similar vein, information obtained from focus group discussants revealed that the complexity or difficulty of instructions of land services to customers in the study area. The findings of this study was consistent with Berihu (2022), who discovered in his case study in Tigrai Region selected municipalities that the absence of easy and understandable instructions of services for urban land governance.

8.4 Publicization and Means of Publicizing Information

Publicizing Information to the public increasingly plays a pivotal role in creating informed citizens. This will help the public to make the right decisions and it will build up confidence in the administration as a result sense of ownership comes up (Belay, 2018). Information can be made accessible to the public using various mechanisms. In this study the mechanisms used by the municipal office to disclose and make accessible the necessary information to the public was assessed. As it was shown in table 6, respondents were asked to identify the most common mode of disclosing land information by the municipal office to the public.

Table 6: Respondents views on Mechanisms of disseminating land Information in the municipal office

S. No	Questions	Responses	Frequency	%
1	What mechanism do the office often used to publicize land information to the public	Public meetings	219	57.63
		Notice boards	94	24.73
		Public forums	23	6.05
		Media coverage	11	2.89
		Development team discussions	33	8.68
		Total	380	100
2	Do you think that the office utilized all possible means of disseminating information	Yes	69	18.16
		No	311	81.84
		Total	380	100

Source: Own Survey (2022)

Accordingly, 219 (57.63 %) of the respondents said that the office publicize the information via public meetings while 94 (24.73%) responded that the office was publicizing information through notice board to the clients. Furthermore, 33(8.68%), 23 (6.05%) and 11(2.89%) of respondents replied that the office disseminating land information to service users through development team discussions, public forums and media respectively. The results show that public meetings and notice boards were the common mechanism that the town municipal office used to disclose information. Similarly, information from the key informants affirmed that the common mechanisms that the municipal office used to share information, decisions and other messages were notice boards and public meetings that held at different times. *In this regard, one key respondent from the municipal office noted that:*

"*In most of the time community members were not fully participated and attended meetings due to various reasons such as* lack of participation culture and time. *Further, he said that meetings are not arranged regularly for the purpose of disclosing such information to the public. As a result of this, the public does not have sufficient information concerning land administration services. Ultimately, it becomes hardly possible to offer better land services in the office to the general public*".

With respect to the question whether the office used all possible means of disseminating information to the public concerned the overwhelming majority of the respondents 311 (81.84%) replied that, the office does not use enough mechanisms to disseminate land information. Similarly, most FGD respondents said that publicization of information by the office was poor. This result confirms that the office's mode of disseminating land information to the public is problematic since it is challenging to reach all the community with timely information. Therefore, the office in addition to the existing mechanisms, it needs to be deploying information

technologies such as websites and other platforms to disseminate timely and reliable information to the public; since such means of disseminating information are easy and convenient in providing timely information to the general public efficiently and effectively.

8.5 Challenges of good governance/ transparency in land administration at wolkite town municipality
Understanding the constraints of good governance practice in land administration is very important in order to address the issues poor governance in the area under study. As such this study sought to determine some of the challenges facing wolkite town municipality in implementing good governance in its land administration sector.

As it was indicated in Table 7, the respondents were asked to rate their view corruption was the challenges of good governance practice in land administration of the town municipality. Accordingly, 83 (21.84%) and 227 (59.74%) respondents were replied strongly agree and agree while, 49 (12.89%) and 17 (4.47 %) respondents responded disagree and strongly disagree and 4(1.05%) respondents replied undecided. From this survey it could be concluded that the majority of respondents admitted that corruption was one of a setback to good governance practice in land administration. Correspondingly, Burns and Dalrymple (2008) stated that land administration is one of the most corrupted sectors in public administration. In this regard, almost all FGD participants claimed that corruption was a threat in land administration in the study area. Given the scarcity of land, it is likely that the rapid increment of the population and high demand of the people to a plot of land in the study area could escalate the seriousness of corruption in the municipal office.

As shown in table 7, the respondents were asked to rate their view bureaucracy was the challenges of good governance in land administration. Accordingly, 225(59.21%) and 64(16.84%) respondents replied agree and strongly agree while, 60(15.79%) and 21(5.52%) respondents responded disagree and strongly disagree but, 10(2.63%) respondents preferred undecided. As the survey result indicated the majority of respondents were confirmed that bureaucracy was one of the major challenges of good governance practice in land administration in the study area. This is supported by Tessema et al. (2016), Hadush (2019) and Berihu (2022), who stated that corruption, is one of the major challenges of urban land governance in urban land offices. As Deininger et al., (2011) stated there is a lot of inefficiency and unnecessary bureaucracy which create incentives for people to pay for faster service or to simply circumvent the established procedures entirely. Most key informants also pointed out that the reduction of bureaucracy should be accompanied by the use of information communication technologies rather than the manual system.

On Table 7, household respondents were asked to rate their view political interference was one of the challenges of good governance practice in land administration. Accordingly, 258 (67.89%) and 47(12.37%) respondents were replied agree and strongly agree while, 47(12.37%) and 17(4.47%) respondents replied disagree and strongly disagree and 11(2.89%) respondents responded undecided. The results suggest that the majority 305 (80.26%) of respondents admitted that political interference hindered good governance practice in land administration. The findings were congruent with findings of Banda et al.(2017) that political interference was the most challenging issue in urban land administration in Lusaka City, Zambia. They noted that land is handled by political party cadres who in some cases may even have strong connections. As a result due to political patronage some people easily get land and titles deeds.

Respondents were also solicited to rate their view incompetence was the challenges of good governance practice in land administration. As shown in table 7, around 61 (16.05%) and 249(65.53%) respondents strongly agree and agree while, 46(12.10%) and 19(5%) respondents responded disagree and strongly disagree and 5(1.32%) respondents replied undecided. According to survey results, the majority of respondents representing 310(81.57%) confirmed that incompetence was one of the major challenges of good governance practice in land administration in study area. In consistence the above idea, key respondents explained that there were lack of professionals' having the necessary technical skills and knowledge related to land in the municipal office that adversely affects land administration and governance.

As it was indicated in table 7, the respondents were asked to rate their view poor management was one of the challenges of good governance/transparency in land administration. Accordingly, 147 (38.68%) and 109(28.68%) respondents were replied agree and strongly agree while, 63(16.57%) and 49(12.89%) respondents answered disagree and strongly disagree respectively and the rest 12(3.16%) respondents replied undecided. This indicated that the majority 256 (67.36%) of respondents confirmed that poor management was one of the major challenges of good governance in land administration in study area.

Lastly, respondents were also asked to rate their view that negligence was the challenges of good governance practice in land administration in study area. As it was shown in table 7, 76(20%) and 156(41.05%) respondents strongly agree and agree while, 75(19.73%) and 66(17.36%) respondents preferred disagree and strongly disagree respectively and 7(1.84%) respondents replied undecided. From this it can be deduced that about 232(61.05%) of respondents perceived negligence as a challenge to good governance in land administration in the town municipality.

Besides to the above mentioned challenges, FGD respondents illuminates that absence of strong monitoring

and evaluation mechanisms, weak coordination among the land administrators, Absence of transparent and corrective measure on corrupt officials, lack of public participation, lack of clear rules and regulations were regarded as constraints that obstruct good governance in land administration in the study area.

Table 7: Perception of respondents on challenges of good governance /transparency in land administration in wolkite town municipality

S.No	Challenges	Response By Category (*n=380*)				
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Corruption	83 21.84%	227 59.74%	04 1.05%	49 12.89%	17 4.47%
2	Bureaucracy	64 16.84%	225 59.21%	10 2.63%	60 15.79%	21 5.52%
3	political interference	47 12.37%	258 67.89%	11 2.89%	47 12.37%	17 4.47%
4	Incompetence	61 16.05%	249 65.53%	05 1.32%	46 12.10%	19 5%
5	Poor Management	147 38.68%	109 28.68%	12 3.16%	63 16.57%	49 12.89%
6	Negligence	76 20%	156 41.05%	07 1.84%	75 19.73%	66 17.36%

Source: Field Survey (2022)

9. CONCLUSION

Based on the major findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

❖ The urban land administration system in the study area was assessed based on transparency as a core governance indicator. In the study area, the practice of good governance in land administration was not satisfactory. So, it does not address the needs of the beneficiaries.

❖ This study discovered that the majority of the respondents revealed that it is hardly possible to access land laws, rules and regulations governing land in study area. Besides, the result indicates that town municipality is not committed enough to aware the residents about land laws, rules & regulations. This indicates that there was awareness gap on land laws, rules and regulations governing urban lands on part of urban communities.

❖ It was found out that the majority of the respondents reported that urban land information system is not clear and accessible which means that information was not readily accessible or effectively disseminated to the majority of urban residents. This indicates that the service provider is not open in service delivery and this shows a symptom of poor service delivery. Given these findings the study concludes that information regarding land should flow freely and directly accessible to those who will be affected by any decisions and enforcement on land.

❖ The findings of the study also demonstrated that the decision making process on land use, land distribution and allocation in the study town was not made open and accessible to the general public. This indicated that the town land administration officials were less transparent i.e. the decision was not more open to the residents. Moreover, the study indicated that the problems of land disputes are not solved in a transparent way. Hence, there is a need to make the decision making process open and participatory and the mechanisms' of land disputes resolution to be clear to the urban residents, which in turn, help the public to make appropriate decisions on land, builds informed citizens and helps to create awareness of the stake holders.

❖ The study further found that the majority of the respondents indicated that public meetings and notice boards were the most common modes of disseminating information to the general public in the study area. As a result most community people are not reachable and thus get timely information. Based on these findings, it is possible to conclude that transparency should be promoted, and appropriate communication channels that facilitate flow of information between the town administration and communities should be established.

❖ The study also disclosed that the major challenges that impede good governance in land administration in wolkite town were corruption, bureaucracy, political interference, incompetence and poor management. As a result, addressing these challenges is very essential to ensure good governance in the study area. This will necessitate coordinated efforts from various stakeholders, including the government, development partners, and the community at large.

10. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results and conclusions obtained from this study, the following points were made as

recommendations

☞ Raising the awareness of urban residents about the laws, rules and regulations governing urban lands and making them accessible. This may bridge community knowledge gap and so as to encourage effective participation.

☞ Encouraging participation of residents and other stakeholders on the decision making process of the municipality office.

☞ Ensuring accessibility of land information to the urban community and other stake holders using a multitude of information publicizing mechanisms. This will help the public to be well informed and have comprehensive understanding concerning urban land governance and administration.

☞ The land administration/municipal office should instill newly technologies or computerizing system to store and disseminate information.

☞ Capacitating town managers and employees in the land administration/municipal office through short and long term training programs. This will enable them to develop their capacity in order to deliver effective and quality services to clients.

☞ To address the key challenges of good governance in land administration local governments, development partners and the community members collaboratively should work as much as possible.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST
The author(s) declare no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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