Factors Influencing Women Participation in Community Based Development Projects: The Case of Sigmo District, Southwestern Ethiopia

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School of Social Work

A Research Thesis Submitted to the School of Social Work in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of the Degree of Masters in Social Work (MSW).

October, 2021

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Statement of Declaration

I affirm that this thesis is entirely my own work and that all the sources I have used or quoted

have been indicated and acknowledge using reference and that is has not been submitted before

to any other degree at any other institution.

Fekede Bayisa Hunde

Signature _____

Date _____

Place: Jimma University, Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia

Jimma University

College of Social Science and Humanities

School of Social Work

Thesis Approval

This is to certify that the thesis is prepared by Fekede Bayisa Hunde, entitled "Factors Influencing Women Participation in Community Based Development Projects in Ethiopia, Oromia Regional State, Jimma Zone: A Case Study of Sigmo District" and submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements of The Degree of Masters in Social Work complies with the regulation of the university and meets the accepted standards concerning originality and quality.

APPROVED BY THE EXAMINING BOARD

External Examiner: _____ Sign. _____Date_____

Internal Examiner: _____ Sign. _____ Date _____

Advisor: _____ Sign _____ Date _____

Co-Advisor: _____ Sign _____ Date _____

Table of Contents

DEDICATION

I dedicate this study to my family, Ms. Aschalech File Worke and my three lovely children Wobi Fekede, Sena Fekede and Duga Fekede. I also dedicate this study to all selfless men and women, who dedicate their lives to the service of others; those wonderful men and women who continue to touch the lives of the vulnerable, the disadvantaged and the marginalized; women and men who strive to create spaces for the once silenced voices to be heard.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

LIST OF ABBREVIATION AND ACRONYMS

CBOs – Community Based Organizations

CSA- Central Statistical Agency

FGDs – Focus Group Discussions

GOs -- Governmental Organizations

HIV/AIDS - Human Immune Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes

ILO - International Labor Organization

JICA – Japan International Cooperation Agency

MDGs - Millennium Development Goals

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organizations

PfA – Platform for Action

PRS -   Proportional Representation Systems

SDGs - Sustainable Development Goals

SLM – Sustainable Land Management

UN – United Nations

WID --- Women in Development

WLM - Women Liberation Movement

WSSD – World Summit on Social Development

ABSTRACT

Qualitative research approach and a single case study research design were employed to assess factors influencing women participation in community-based development projects, these factors include: women economic empowerment, religion, political views and gender-based discriminatory social norms in Ethiopia, Oromia Regional State, Jimma Zone, Sigmo District. Qualitative data were collected using in-depth interviews and focus group discussion with 10 interviewees and 20 focus group discussants in two groups each having 10 members respectively who were selected by judgmental or purposive participant selection method. The analysis of the data involved narrative explanations. Findings have revealed positive economic, religion, political and cultural teachings and beliefs that have empowered women and promoted equality between men and women. Nevertheless, the study has also revealed that economic, religions, political and cultural teachings and attitudinal discriminations are a reality in these institutions and have influenced not only the way women are treated in these institutions but also the way women look at themselves. In light of the findings, recommendations have been made to the government of Ethiopia, economic, religious, political and cultural institutions to take appropriate actions to promote women participation in community-based development projects in Sigmo district.

Keywords: Women participation; Empowerment, Projects, Self-help Community group, Sigmo town;

Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Women participation in development issue is a worldwide marvel which is being examined and investigated in each nation of the world. All over the world, a review of progress achieved by women in the community development is of a great concern (Wullins, 2009). However, there is still an imbalance between women and their male counterparts in the work place in the world today. According to Shah (2016), it is apparent that the progress towards women participation in development has encountered obstacles at institutional level in all the countries of the world. Among traditional societies of the world, men and women were assigned roles (Green & Haines, 2015).

With the rise of industrialization and urbanization in Western Europe during the eighteenth century, there was a shift from the traditional mode of production to modern mode of production. Accordingly, men moved to towns in search of jobs in industries and urban centers while women were left at home caring for the children, the sick and the elderly. At this point gender equality was felt, since men became the sole providers of the family while women became the homemakers. Later, some women moved to towns and were employed in specific occupations and positions that were considered to have less prestige, authority and earning. This segregation led to the Women Liberation Movement (WLM) in the 1960's. As the result of the movements, there was the realization that if men and women were given equal opportunities they could perform equally well (Nuwagaba, 2001). This realization was theoretical since it was not practically implemented.

During the past few decades, women have attained soaring levels of education in many parts of

the world and comprise 40 percent of workers worldwide (ILO, 2008). In many countries,

women have higher rates of enrollment in schools and universities and they dominate certain

economic sectors as in educational and nursing fields. This phenomenon, however, has not been

paralleled by equal access to work opportunities at higher levels of organizations or equal access

to fair and equitable pay. There is a persisting world trend affecting women managers where

their development plateaus at middle management positions (Wentling, 2003). While the number

of women qualified for management jobs continues to increase (with 1990's characterized as

periods of increasing post-secondary educational attainment for women) significant differences

persist in the numbers of men and women who achieve senior management roles worldwide

(Winn, 2004; Wentling, 2003; Wood, 2003).

When UN member states adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015, they

recognized the central role of girls and women in delivering progress for all of humanity.

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 5, gender equality and empowerment of girls and women

was created to tackle gender-based barriers and realize the rights of every girl and every woman

everywhere.

Achieving inclusive and sustainable economic growth also depends on women's economic

empowerment. Women are resilient and resourceful economic agents, who overcome persistent

gender-based barriers to advance their careers, livelihoods, and wellbeing. Boosting women's

participation in the economy, social, political and cultural affairs would benefit not only

individual women, but also their families, communities and countries. When women thrive, we

all stand to benefit; narrowing gender gap. On the other hand, if we don't invest in girls and

women including their sexual and reproductive rights, there could be negative development impact.

In Africa women lack independence and authority in decision making and have no control over their conditions of life (Nuwagaba, 2001). Despite the heavy work, women are seen by policy makers primarily as a source of voluntary labor for development activities and their invaluable socio-economic contribution goes unrecognized. In community-based project, the pervasive phenomenon of women going only so far and no further in their occupations and professions has come to be known as the "glass ceiling" (Gary, 1999). This concept assumes that women have the motivation, ambition and capacity for positions of power and prestige, but invisible barriers keep them from reaching the top even in the community-based organization. The glass ceiling refers to the artificial barriers based on attitudinal or organizational bias that prevent qualified individuals from advancing upwards in their organization in to management level positions (World Bank, 2000). This is why it is necessary to explore factors influencing women participation in community-based development projects.

The issue of women participation in development is at the top agendas across the world, as gender inequality is widespread in all cultures. In developing countries, gender disparity is highly rampant compared to the developed countries. As other countries in the world, in Ethiopia gender-based discrimination and inequalities are very much apparent. As a result, low empowerment of women and high gender gap still impede the development process of the country (Environmental Protection Authority 2012). Even though the country is on the path of development in various projects, the likelihood of its sustainability is in question given such a large gender inequality.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Studies in gender and development have indicated that there is gender inequality in both the organization and the community. Government of Ethiopia 1993 development plan clearly states that there is need to address the gender equality at every level of employment. Whitehead (2009) observed that girls are socialized for powerlessness. This means that girls are made to internalize their subordinate positions and this is transferred to the work place and the community (Anselmi and Law, 2008). Over the last decade, the status of women has actually declined and they have less control than ever before over their land, cash, other resources and even participating in the community (World Bank, 2010). Steinem (2004) on his part noted that the obstacles to women taking their rightful places in the management or running of business and even participating in management are still limited and, some would argue, growing more intractable. Gender equality and women's empowerment is at the hub of sustainable development efforts in least developed countries.

 In other words, 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. Moreover, economic, legal, social, and political empowerment policy measures are all equally important to deal with the existing gender inequalities and low status of women in least developed countries and Ethiopia (UN, 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in 2015). Many organizations including community-based organizations experience inequality at the place of work. However, the extent to which different factors like economic empowerment, religion, political views and gender-based discriminatory social norms have been influencing women participation in

different development activities has not been investigated in details. Many United Nations (UN) conferences have advocated that women's empowerment is central to sustainable development.

The Copenhagen Declaration of the World Summit on Social Development (WSSD) is a case in point. WSSD called for the recognition that empowering people, particularly women, to strengthen their own capacities is a main objective of development, and that empowerment requires the full participation of people in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of decisions determining the functioning and well-being of societies. The report of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women is another good example to mention. It called its platform for action on agenda for women's empowerment (Baden and Oxaal, 1997).

Ethiopia has been taking policy measures towards empowering women in sustainable development and poverty reduction endeavors. Gender equality and women's empowerment is one of the priority goals towards which many least developed countries like Ethiopia are working for in poverty reduction and sustainable development efforts. In other words, women's empowerment and gender equality is recognized as one of the building blocks in combating poverty and achieving sustainable improvement of livelihoods of a community.

The government of Ethiopia has taken remarkable measure towards alleviating gender issues since 1993 (United Nations, 2002). Kabeer (2005) contends that closing the gender gap in education at all levels, increasing women's share of wage employment in the non-agricultural sector, and increasing the proportion of seats held by women in national parliaments are the three main indicators towards achieving the goal of gender equality and women's empowerment. Moreover, Dejene (2003) affirms that the emergency and establishment of local and community organizations and reducing the work burden of women in key tasks and improving their decision-

making ability in natural resources management and overall status in rural society are the two critical preconditions for true women's empowerment and gender equality in urban and rural areas of least developed countries like Ethiopia.

 It is traditionally accepted that women's societal roles are restricted to domestic activities like cooking, and raising children (Mollel and Mtenga, 2000; World Bank, 2007). Changing traditional structures against women in a community requires institutional reform. In other words, influencing the behaviors of local people and protecting their interests can be realized in a community only by reforming institutions which provide incentives and regulatory mechanisms (Mollel and Mtenga, 2000; Tiruneh et al., 2001; Dejene, 2003; Baden and Oxaal 1997).

Ethiopian women are economically, socially, culturally and politically disadvantaged in the enjoyment of equal rights, in accessing opportunities, decision-making processes, and   basic resources/services (JICA; 1999; Teferi and Endashew, 2006). Although a number of policies are emerging that support and encourage women's participation in development, women's access to and control of productive resources, information, training and education, employment and in decision making is limited (Zewdu, 2002; Ogato, 2009; Ogato,2013). Therefore, this study was designed to benefit the marginalized, disadvantaged, vulnerable and voiceless community members hence, the social work practitioners should strongly work on these factors influencing girls and women's equal participation, representation and recognition in economic, social, political, cultural and religious issues so as to empower them to exercise and realize their full responsibilities and rights in the community and in the society at large these help them enable and engage in national development initiatives including community-based development projects.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does an economic factor influence women participation in community-based development projects?

2. How does religion as a factor influence women participation in community-based development projects?

3. What are the political views that influence women participation in community-based development projects?

4. What are the social factors that influence women participation in community-based development projects?

1.4 Objective of the Study

1.4.1 General Objective.

The general objective of the study is to assess same factors influencing women participation in community-based development projects**.**

1.4.2 Specific Objectives.

The study is guided by the following specific objectives: -

1. To examine the influences of economic empowerment on women participation in community-based development projects.

2. To understand as how religion influences women participation in community-based development projects.

3. To identify the influences of political views on women participation in community-based development projects.

    4. To analyze the influences of social factors on women participation in community-based development projects.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The factors influencing women participation in community-based development project was contributed to the existing body knowledge on gender issue especially on women participation in their development. The findings of the study also gave insights on what imposed women from participating in community-based development projects. The study findings would help as a gender promoting document for the community development stake- holders. Furthermore, the study findings may contribute to the current debate on women participation issues especially in relation to community-based development projects. It was assumed that the information gathered guided the interventions that were mainly needed to address women participation not only in community-based development projects but also in other sectors.

In general, the study findings have been assumed to help those concerned bodies such as policy makers, scholars or researchers and social work practitioners. For instance, it would help those researchers who are interested in conducting related research in this area and help policy designers to consider factors influencing women's participation in their own development and preparing solutions which help to overcome such challenges during policy implementation period. Here social workers and other concerned bodies are expected to play a pivotal role in conducting social work activities and other humane issues on the behalf of the disabled, marginalized, disadvantaged, vulnerable and voiceless community groups including women. This can be enhanced through education and training, fund raising, securing justice and social protection, advocacy and being an activist aiming to enable these community groups to properly address their economic, social, political, cultural and religious problems in the way they bring

valuable drastic changes in the livelihoods of themselves, their family and in the nations of country as a whole.

1.6 Scope of the Study

There are multiple topics and problems to be studied however; my research was limited to factors that influence women participation in community-based development projects in Ethiopia. Furthermore, the study did not cover all the factors that influence the participation of all the women in Ethiopia. Therefore, the study was focused directly on how economic, social, political and religion can influence women's participation in community-based development projects specifically in Sigimo District of Oromia Region, Jimma Zone

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The study focused on factors affecting women participation in community-based development projects. In conducting the study, a number of drawbacks were encountered which impended effective answering of the research questions. The first limitation was attributed to the reality of the information given by the participants. Some of the participants were reluctant to give detailed information due to some cultural and religious taboos. The others were attempted to obscure crucial and real facts, while the rest were timid away from responding to the questionnaire. However, they were reserved of confidentiality of the information given including concealing identity on the questionnaire. Also, the problem was dealt by assuring them that the information was only for the study. To keep the data saturated and satisfactory the researcher also used some possible techniques like replacing the timid away interviewees, making strong negotiations and compromise with the respective participants were the concrete measures taken in to consideration during data collection processes.

The second limitation was attributed to the number of participants and generalization of the findings. This was because different communities/villages differed on how they interacted with their members in community-based development project. All of them have different ways of managing gender issues.   Therefore, the study was restricted to the self-help women group and their leaders residing in Sigmo District and was not generalized to other places in the Ethiopia.

1.8 Definition of Significant Terms

Factor: The term refers to the influence; a phenomenon that affects the nature, the magnitude, and / or the timing of a consequence.

Community Based Development Projects: The term in the study stands for projects which will be identified, analyzed, planned and intervened by a certain community group and limited to benefit their group members.

Gender: In the study the term refers to the biological sex of an individual usually male and female. Or A socially constructed and socially learned behaviors and expectations with females and males. All cultures interpret and elaborate the biological difference between women and men in to a set of social expectations about what behaviors and activities are appropriate and what rights, resources and power women and men possess.

Gender Equality: The term refers to the state or condition that affords women and men equal enjoyment of human rights, socially valued goods, opportunities and resources, allowing both sexes the same opportunities and potential to contribute to, and benefit from, all spheres of society (economic, political, social and cultural).

Gender Inequality: The term refers to a social construct that has social backing leading to gender disparity between two sexes, with respect to functions, rights to resources, responsibility and power/positions.

Participation – The term will mean the extent at which individuals; groups and organizations are actively involved in decision making and other community issues.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Concepts of Participation

Different scholars and institutions conceptualize participation from different point of views. Here are some important concepts of participation. Participation is a voluntary by the people in one or another of the public programs supposed to contribute to national development, but the people are not expected to take part in shaping the program or in criticizing its contents (Economic Commission of Latin America). Participation includes people's involvement in decision making processes, in implementing programs, their sharing in benefits of development programs and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programs (Cohen and Uphoff, 1977).

What gives real meaning to popular participation is the collective effort by the people to pool their efforts and whatever other resources they decide to pool together, to attain objectives they set for themselves. In this regard participation is viewed as an active process in which the participants take initiatives and actions that are stimulated by their own thinking and by deliberations over which they exert effective control. People participation is essentially to do with economic and political relationships within the wider society; it is not just a matter of involvement in project activities but rather a process by which urban and rural people are able to organize themselves and, through their own organization, able to identify their own needs, share in design, implement, and evaluate participatory action (Kumar, S. 2002).

Community participation is an active process by which beneficiary or client groups influence the direction and execution of a development project with a view to enhancing their wellbeing in terms of income, personal growth, self-reliance, or other values they cherish (Kumar S., 2002).

2.2 Types of Participation

Participation is a central place in development thinking and practice. Governments, funding agencies, donors, and civil society actors including NGOs and multilateral agencies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have all arrived at a near consensus that development cannot be sustainable and long-lasting unless people's participation is made central to the development process. People of the world participate in development process in different ways. Depending on their ways of participation Brian Wall, Irish Aid (APSO) presented seven typologies of participation. Those are:

2.2.1 Passive Participation.

People participate by being told what is going to happen or has already happened. It is a unilateral announcement by an administration or project management without listening to people's   responses. The information being shared belongs only to external professionals**.**

2.2.2 Participation in Information Giving.

People participate by answering questions posted by extractive researchers using questionnaire survey or similar approaches. People do not have an opportunity to enforce proceedings as the findings of the research are neither shared nor checked for accuracy.

2.2.3 Participation by Consultation.

 People participated by being consulted, and external people listen to views. The external professionals define both problems and solutions and may modify these in the light of people's responses. Such consultative process does not concede any share in decision making, and professionals are under no obligation to take on broad people's view.

2.2.4 Participation for Material Incentive.

 People participate by providing resources, for example labor, in return for food, cash, or other material incentives. Much of the on-farm research falls in this category, as farmers provide the fields but are not involved in experimentation or the process of learning. It is very common to see this called participation, yet people have no stake in prolonging activities when the incentives end**.**

2.2.5 Functional Participation.

People participate by forming groups to meet predetermined objectives related to the project, which can involve the development or promotion of externally initiated social organizations. Such involvement does not tend to occur at the early stages of the project cycles or planning, but rather after major decisions have been made. These institutions tend to be dependent on external initiators and facilitators, but may become self-dependent.

2.2.6 Interactive Participation.

People participate in joint analysis, development of action plans, and formation or strengthening of local institutions. Participation is seen as a right, not just the means to achieve project goals.

2.2.7 Self-Mobilization.

People participate by taking initiatives independent of external institutions to change systems. They develop contacts with external institutions for resources and technical advice they need, but retain control over how resources are used. Such self-initiated mobilization and collective action may or may not challenge existing inequitable distributions of wealth and power (Source: APSO, 1966).

2.3 Factors Influencing Participation of Women in Development

Participation and involvement in economic development projects in the community is recognized as a poverty reduction intervention in both low-income and high-income countries (Ahmed et al., 2001; Salt, 2010; Schurmann and Johnston, 2009; The Microcredit Summit Campaign, 2009). In most cases community development programs target poor people who are typically neglected and cannot be able to get income from outside the community. Apart from the expansion of community development interventions and their increasing popularity among policy-makers, there is a lack of reliable data about the success of women participation in community development programs.

A few studies indicate that participation in community-based development projects improves women's socioeconomic status, raises their self-esteem, and ensures their wellbeing within the household (Mahjabeen, 2008; Salt, 2010; Schurmann and Johnston, 2009). Contrarily, other studies state that women's participation increases their family conflict leading to their vulnerability to marital violence since it threatens men's traditional patriarchal family authority (Hossain, 2002; Meade, 2010). Inconsistence data across studies related to women's active participation in community-based development projects, poverty reduction, and empowerment is also noticeable. However, this needs to be studied further. There are factors which affects women participation in community-based development projects namely: economic empowerment, religion, political views and discriminatory social norms.

2.3.1 Economic Factors

Women's economic empowerment is aimed at actively participating in decision-making circles by expanding Opportunities and alternatives. Active participation requires the development of women themselves and the development of their capacities and potentials to possess the elements of power that enable them to bring about change in their society. The sources of this power are knowledge, self-confidence and abilities. And work within the framework of the group rather than individual action. The unequal power of men and women by increasing women's self-reliance and strengthening their internal capacity through awareness-raising and capacity-building that leads to greater participation in decision-making and greater control and ultimately change the course of things, in particular the economic empowerment of women Recovery from low-paid work, and the establishment of gender equality in employment, remuneration and various economic opportunities.

Empowerment is a tool to help individuals and groups unleash their creative and productive capacities to achieve sustainable growth and development in their living conditions. More clearly, empowerment transcends any conception of democracy, human rights and participation to enable them to understand facts about their social, economic, political and cultural environment and to take the necessary steps to improve their living conditions.

A meeting on trade as a tool for women's economic empowerment was held at the Palais des Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, on 23 and 24 May 2016. The aim was to discuss the policies and measures necessary for trade and trade policy to contribute fully to the economic empowerment of women. That the term women's empowerment was meant to be understood as referring to the ability of women to be effective in changing their lives and, more generally, to change the structure that made them subordinate to men. Thus, the economic empowerment of

women could be understood as: Full enjoyment Economic rights and economic independence ".

The African Union, at its annual summit in the Ethiopian capital Addis Ababa and the 2016 city

of Mekele, under the theme 2016: African Year of Human Rights, with particular focus on

women's rights", given the empowerment of women as the most important economic component,

that the economic empowerment of women has emerged equally as an important and sustainable

aspect of accelerating the development process in developing countries. "Hence that economic

empowerment can help women to participate actively and reap more benefits from the

development process.

2.3.2 Religion as a Factor

Despite repeated claims that religions and religious beliefs represent an important yet neglected

factor in development. Marshall and Keough, (2004); Ter Haar and Ellis, (2006); Thomas,

(2005), empirical studies of the effect of religion on development efforts are scarce. Religion

may influence the perceptions and behaviors of several parties in the development arena. With

regard to the recipients of development efforts, Ter Haar and Ellis (2006) claim that religious

beliefs provide moral guidance and encourage people to improve their lives. Religion may also

influence providers of development efforts.

The relationship between religion and gender equality is a complex one. Religion plays a vital

role in shaping cultural, social, economic, and political norms in many parts of the world.

Similarly, gender roles and the status of women and men in society are deeply tied to the manner

in which religious texts have been interpreted for centuries by those in positions of authority-

positions held predominantly by men. Yet, in sharp contrast to their marked absence at the

highest levels of decision-making in religious communities, women play a pivotal role in

religious life. Within the family and the community, they implement and embody religious teachings and traditions, and pass these on to future generations.

Depending on the nature of their traditions, religions vary in opportunity for women's emancipation. For instance, relative to other religious heritages, scholars find that a Protestant religious heritage improves the status of women in a country (Inglehart & Norris 2003; Inglehart, Norris &Welzel 2002; Inglehart &Welzel 2005; Reynolds 1999; Rule 1987). With its tradition of sectarianism and volunteerism, Protestantism holds a tradition particularly hospitable to democratic values, such as respect for individualism, reciprocity and popular sovereignty. Researchers also approach the impact of religious legacy on women's empowerment through measures of publics' levels of secularization (Inglehart & Norris 2003; Inglehart &Welzel 2005). As societies secularize there is greater deference to rationality and expertise, and this typically gives rise to the modern state and widespread social services.

2.3.3 Political Factors

Despite an overall decrease in gender inequality in virtually every modern nation gender discrimination and unbalance still exist in many fields especially in politics. Women are still not involved in politics as deeply as men. Three aspects of the political system find support in this literature: the strength of democracy, the electoral system, and gender electoral quota systems. In comparison to autocracies, it is not surprising that scholarship on explanations of women's social and political empowerment highlight the role of democratic institutions. The argument is rather straightforward. The oppressive, unequal treatment of women clashes with the democratic idea of human equality (McDonagh 2002; Welzel 2003). As societal foundations that preserve and socialize free and equal citizenship, democratic institutions supply women with more rights and more channels for making their voices heard. Research indeed shows that the strength of

countries' democratic traditions empowers their women (Inglehart & Norris, 2003; Inglehart &

Welzel, 2005).

Researchers have also considered the impact of institutional variation within democracies on

women's political representation. Most prominent among the arrangements considered is the

influence of electoral systems. Electoral systems affect women's paths to parliament by

structuring party elites' incentive or disincentive to run women candidates. In this line of

research, the most persistent finding is the consistent, positive impact of proportional

representation systems (PRS) on the percentage of women in parliament (Castles 1981; Darcy et

al. 1994; Duverger 1955; Kenworthy &Malami 1999; Lakeman 1994; Norris 1985; Paxton 1997;

Rule 1994, 1987, 1981). Studies hypothesize that PR systems positively affect the percentage of

women in parliament because these electoral systems have a higher number of seats per district

and offer parties a greater chance of winning more than one seat per district. This results in

greater turnover of officeholders and reduces the costs of increasing women's elite status by

sacrificing the seat of an incumbent male (Rule 1994). The result is parties that are more likely to

concern themselves with a ticket balanced according to gender. In addition, through greater

district magnitude and party magnitude, parties are more likely to choose candidates down the

party list, who are typically women (Matland 1993; Rule 1994).

The positive impact that PR electoral systems make on women's recruitment is crucial. Due to

differences in socioeconomic status, occupational choice and family responsibilities, in

comparison to men, women candidates are likely to have greater difficulties in becoming eligible

and aspiring political candidates (Darcy, Welch & Clark 1994; Kenworthy & Malami 1999;

Norris & Inglehart 2003). In this case, women are less likely to pursue political office and are

likely to be lower on candidate lists if they choose to run. Thus, because PR electoral systems

increase women's chances of recruitment and electability despite lower placement on candidate lists, these electoral systems provide greater opportunity for the election of women.

Finally, with PR electoral systems, the greater incentive to balance tickets gives parties greater opportunity to promote gender as an option for challenging other parties. This typically results in a contagion of promotion of women's inclusion across parties as elites attempt to equalize the playing field by avoiding the appearance of their party's marginalization of women voters (Matland &Studlar 1996). In addition to the role of electoral rules, gender electoral quota systems are institutional mechanisms that consistently, positively mediate the conditions and attitudes that structure women's leadership potential. Indeed, researchers studying the recent proliferation of quota systems throughout the world have referred to quota systems as "the fast track" to the equal political representation of women (Dahlerup &Freidanvall 2003).

Beginning with Norway, over the last three decades, several societies have witnessed the introduction of some form of a gender electoral quota system in their political bodies for improving the status of women. These quota systems take the form of a constitutional amendment, electoral law or party policy. Scholars generally, find that the stronger the gender electoral quota system the greater the level of women's percentages in political office (Dahlerup 1998; Dahlerup & Freidenvall 2003; Caul 1999, 2001; Kolinsky 1991; Matland 1993; Studlar& Macalister 1998).

2.3.4 Gender-Based Discriminatory Social Norms

Social norms are frequently thought of as 'culture' in contemporary development discussions Marcus and Harper, (2014), and govern behavior within social groups and across all levels of society. Gender norms refer to contextually specific social traditions about what behaviors,

preferences and knowledge are appropriate for women and men. As such, they are the core means by which 'gender-inequitable ideologies, relationships and social institutions are maintained (Marcus and Harper, 2014).

Discriminatory gender norms pose huge barriers to women's participation in community-based development projects, notably by limiting girls' access to education and women's choices over domestic roles, early marriage and childbearing, as well as financial resources, other assets and labor force participation. Norms that see men as economic providers and women as mothers and cares inhibit women's participation in paid work in many contexts. This can be reinforced by formal institutions, including religious bodies, which link mothers' paid work to adverse outcomes for children (Samman, 2016).

As noted above norms around 'suitable' jobs for women also lead to occupational and sect oral segregation, often accompanied by gender pay gaps through the undervaluing of skills traditionally seen as 'feminine'. However, such discriminatory norms can change. Evidence suggests that women move into male-dominated sectors where males close to them, such as a father, husband or brother, are supportive (Alibhai et al., 2015). This highlights the importance of engaging men in strategies to create a supportive environment for women's engagement in previously exclusionary sectors. Violence against women and girls is a widespread manifestation of discriminatory gender norms and unequal power relations. Aside from its harmful consequences for women's physical safety, self-esteem and agency, violence is associated with lost income for women and their families and decreased productivity (Grown, 2014). For example, in Tanzania, the earnings of women in formal wage work who have experienced severe partner violence are 60% lower than those of women who are not exposed (Vyas, 2013).

The penalties to business are also substantial; in Papua New Guinea, gender-based violence was estimated to cost up to 9% of a company's total salary bill, with the total cost to one firm rising to 45% when other direct costs (for counseling, recruitment and induction and medical bills) were included (Darko et al., 2015). Processes of norm change are highly context-specific, complex and non-linear. Key drivers include changes in economic well-being; social and political collective mobilization, including community dialogue; changes in support for groups traditionally holding power; increased access to media and communications challenging discriminatory norms; legal change; education; role models; and broader changes such as urbanization and demographic or economic change (Marcus and Harper, 2014).

Changes in gendered social norms can also be reversed. For example, economic shocks requiring women to earn an income can 'contribute to new norms concerning the acceptability of female economic activity and in some circumstances to a more equal distribution of domestic responsibilities', only for discriminatory norms to reemerge when economic conditions improve (Munoz Boudet et al., 2012 cited in Marcus and Harper, 2014: 16). Some of the most effective strategies for positive gender norm change involve working with children and adolescents, including boys, to break entrenched and discriminatory social norms passed down between generations. One example is Prom undo, which carries out research and interventions in 10 countries and is geared at engaging men to work towards greater gender equality, for example by increasing their engagement in care giving (José Santos, 2015).

Complementary gender-targeted approaches can bolster girls' ability to challenge discriminatory norms, such as after-school programs that create a safe space for adolescent girls to discuss their aspirations and support them to challenge gender norms in the workplace and economic life (World Bank, 2015b).

2.4 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework identifies determinant factors in this thesis, and shows their interconnections. The study was guided by socialist feminism theory, the classical development perspective, the human development perspective and historical legacies each justifies gender equality in the place of work. These theories provided constructs that are applicable to gender equality in the place of work. The theories used to explain the causes of gender inequality and how those causes can be dealt with in order to get a community that is free of gender inequality. The theories acknowledged the inequalities and the power held by different groups and so provides an appropriate model for the study. The theories also promoted policies that are aimed at eliminating gender inequality in the place of work.

2.4.1 Socialist Feminism.

Theory Proponents of socialist feminist theory argue that class and women's subordination were of equal importance and had to be challenged simultaneously. Their aim was to revise Marxism so as to challenge both male dominance and capitalism. Socialist feminists insisted on the equal importance of the reproduction of children and the production of commodities.

 Mitchell (1983) argues that there are four interlocking structures to be considered in women's subordination. These are production, reproduction, sexuality and child rearing. Further, she argues that to understand and abolish women subordination, it is essential to examine the process by which gender characteristics are defined and gender equality constructed.

 Kate (1980) advocates for a holistic approach to the analysis of the woman's situation. In making the recommendation, she examines three areas of concern. These areas of concern are the psychosocial, socio-biological and socio-political. The psychosocial concerns focus on the

processes of acquiring masculine and feminine identities. The socio-biological concerns focus

not on whether there are biological, psychological or physiological differences between women

and men, but on why differences result in a higher value being placed on what men do.

The socio-political concerns focus on how subjectivity, or the way people feel about themselves

as members of a particular race or class, contribute to the structuring of gender equality, as well

as how gender contributes to the structuring of the political and the economic system. The

concern here is the promotion of policies that are aimed at eliminating discrimination of women

in community participation.

2.4.2 Economic Modernity: The Classical Development Perspective.

Focusing on economic development, the classical modernization perspective considers increases

in democracy and human choice as a direct outcome of economic development (Lipset1959;

Rostow 1960; Deutsch 1964; Bell 1999 Inkeles& Smith 1974). In relation to gender equality, this

approach holds that economic development is central to increasing the pool of women eligible

for positions of social power. These scholars establish that increased economic development

associates with a more broad-based distribution of educational and occupational resources.

 Greater access to educational and occupational resources increases women's chances of

professional development, creating a larger pool of women eligible for power positions such as

political office. Others note that higher levels of economic development bring more social

services to societies. Through their alleviation of the costs in labor and time of everyday

responsibilities associated with care giving (e.g., child-rearing, domestic work), increases in

these services free up time for social pursuits in women's lives.

Several studies confirm these hypotheses, demonstrating that developmental measures such as countries' levels of non-agricultural development, per capita gross domestic product, women in the workforce and women college graduates positively influence the percentage of women in their parliaments (Kenworthy & Malami 1999; Reynolds 1999; Rule 1981, 1987; Siaroff 2000; Welch &Studlar 1996).

2.4.3 Cultural Modernity: The Human Development Perspective.

A more recent theory emphasizes the conversion of economic development into a cultural process of human development that gives rise to an emancipative worldview, reflected in self-expression values that emphasize human choice and autonomy, including the choices and autonomy of women (Inglehart &Welzel 2005; Welzel 2003; Welzel, Inglehart & Klingemann 2003).This rise in emancipative orientations develop mass expectations targeted at making elites responsive and inclusive. In this way, rising emancipative values lead to increases in women's empowerment throughout society (Inglehart & Norris 2003; Inglehart &Welzel 2005) and in parliament (Welzel 2003; Inglehart, Norris &Welzel 2002).

At its core, the human development perspective links social modernization to emancipative values through changes in existential constraints. The theory highlights changes in modern societies particularly conducive to women's empowerment and therefore establishes a link between cultural modernity and publics that value greater equality between genders. Ultimately, Welzel (2003) ties the modern human resources crucial to the human development sequence to economic development. But in this view the effect of economic development is more indirect. Inglehart & Norris (2003) find that cultural modernity holds real, positive consequences for women. When controlling for alternative hypotheses, their measure of attitudes toward gender equality is the sole predictor of the proportion of women in parliament. In later work, Inglehart

&Welzel (2005) modify these findings. It is not so much gender-egalitarian attitudes in particular but the broad emancipative implications of self-expression values in general that positively predict gender empowerment.

2.4.4 Historical Legacies.

The human development perspective and the classical modernization perspective offer theories to explain why modern societies are more conducive to gains in gender equality. This section on cultural and institutional path dependency presents historical legacies potentially capable of affecting the improvement modernization brings to women's social and political status. The developmental trends of social modernization may face legacies of path dependent cultural and institutional organization that affect societies' abilities to improve women's lives (Krasner 1984; Skocpol 1992).

I consider four measures of path dependent processes highlighted in the literature as those capable of affecting gender equality: Protestant religious traditions, a long tradition of female suffrage, a state tradition of investing into welfares rather than coercive forces, and a tradition of leftist dominance in government formation. Depending on the nature of their traditions, religions vary in opportunity for women's emancipation. For instance, relative to other religious heritages, scholars find that a Protestant religious heritage improves the status of women in a country (Inglehart & Norris 2003; Inglehart, Norris &Welzel 2002; Inglehart &Welzel 2005; Reynolds 1999; Rule 1987). With its tradition of sectarianism and volunteerism, Protestantism holds a tradition particularly hospitable to democratic values, such as respect for individualism, reciprocity and popular sovereignty. Researchers also approach the impact of religious legacy on women's empowerment through measures of publics' levels of secularization (Inglehart & Norris 2003; Inglehart &Welzel 2005).

In addition to religion, path dependent processes with respect to women's suffrage policy may affect the potential to increase gender equality in particular societies. Suffragist policy represents instances when elites and dominant political groups open the system of political representation to former, politically constructed out-groups. Countries with earlier suffragist policies for reforming women's formal political exclusion are likely to have a stronger institutional legacy of women's formal political inclusion.

Several studies hypothesize and establish a positive link between earlier suffragist policy and women's empowerment in parliament (Kenworthy &Malami 1999; Moore &Shackman 1996; Ramirez, Soysal&Shanahan 1997; Rule 1981). Others scholars focus on the degree of exclusivity between state welfare investments and military investments in explaining the positive role welfare policy plays in women's lives (Inglehart &Welzel 2005). This trade-off in state policy with respect to welfare verses power orientations are additionally relevant for gender equality. Investments into coercive state power are investments into activities that are largely male-dominated (working against female empowerment) while investments into social welfare favor activities in which women play a more prominent role (Inglehart &Welzel 2005). Thus, state legacies with respect to welfare policies are an additional form of historical institutionalism that could potentially offset the empowerment modernization brings to women.

Gender places men and masculinity on one hand while women and feminity on the other hand. Men are thought to be in possession of characteristics referred to as agentic (Engle, 1970) such traits are assertiveness, control, forcefulness, independence, leadership, ambition, and dominance. On the other hand, women are traditionally believed to be in possession of rights through their husbands so long as the marriage lasts.

The proposed study derives its concept from the Socialist Feminism theory, since a number of

factors Influence gender inequality, and this fact is emphasized by this theory. The theory states

a Chance in the framework to examine socio-cultural factors, education, traditional traits and

how they affect gender at the place of work. The interrelated development of gender and the

factors influencing gender equality is central to the framework. The actual relationship between

gender and gender equality is much more complex therefore the framework will identify the key

influential factors in the proposal, and indicate clearly their interrelationships.

Conceptual Framework
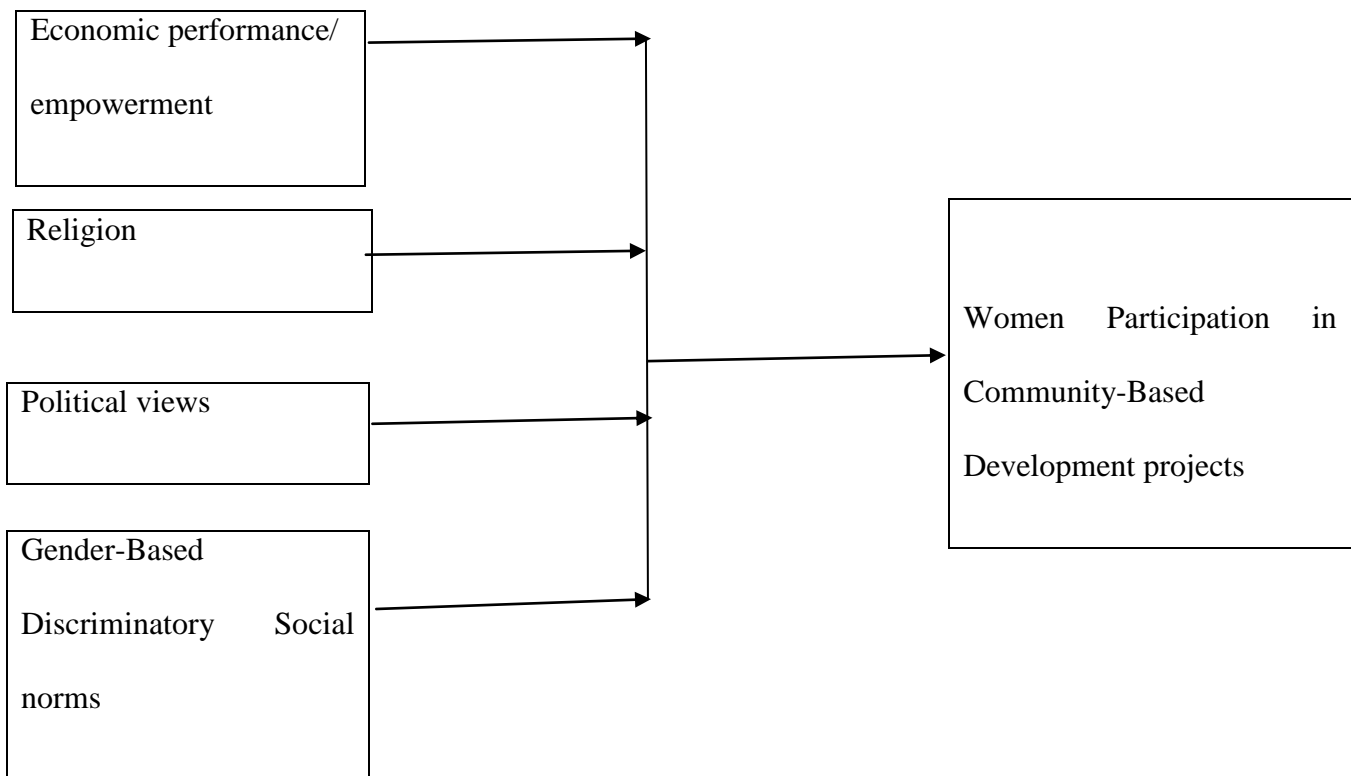
Figure 2.1 Conceptual Framework

The framework emphasizes the various issues, were investigated to find out whether there is interconnectedness between them. The community is diverse and consists of different people of different character and personality. The community provides a good environment for people to exercise their right through participation. The community-based development projects include water, health, HIV/AIDS, self-help group, sustainable community land management, integrated forest management, raising forest and coffee seedlings and school development projects among others. The participation of women in these projects will dependent on different factors such as gender economic empowerment, religion, political views and gender-based discriminatory social norms. However, if it fails to harmonize gender related issues then led to discrimination of women in community-based development projects and the community would remain in its current state of gender imbalance.

2.5. Summary of Literature Review

Gender related issues are very fastidious issues in community development today. Women participation in community development may improve their economic wellbeing (Salt 2010). The main factors influencing women participation in community-based development project are economic empowerment, religion, political views and gender-based discriminatory social norms (Karim, 2006; Bogra, 2008; Mead, 2010 and Kanter 1997)

Chapter Three: Research Methods

3.1 Description of the Study Area

The study was conducted in Sigmo District of Jimma Zone, Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia. Sigmo is both the name of the district and the name of the district's capital town. As elders confirm Sigmo is a word in Oromo language meaning a relatively higher place or a stage used by court for the judicial bodies. The district's capital Sigmo was established in 1921 by Abba Fogi Abba Jobir the district's governor. The district extends between 7^0 42- $8^0$12 north latitudes and 35^0 52-36^0 11east longitudes. It is bordered with Stemma District to the north 7 north east Gera District to the south east, Ilu Abba Bora Zone to the northwest and SNNP to the south and south west. The total area of the district is about 158,551 hectares. The dominant religion is Islam followed by Orthodox and Protestant (District Socio-economic profile Study, 2012).

 The district is situated in the western part of the Jimma Zone. Sigmo town is the farthest in Jimma zone about 443km away from Addis Ababa and 127 Km to the west from zonal capital Jmma town, because of administrative reasons the district integrated to Jimma zone in 1989 before its integration, however it was under Ilu Abba Bora zone both in Haile Silase and Dergue regimes. The total number of populations is estimated to be about 131421 among which male and female constitutes 65255 (49.7%) and 66166 (50.3 %) respectively. In the year 2012 there were a total of 53 schools at which 48 belongs to primary schools and 4 belongs to senior secondary schools and one belongs to special boarding school. During the same year the numbers of major health institutions administered and rendering health services to the population were 5 health centers, 2 clinics and 20 health posts. Ethiopia Commercial Bank, Oromia Cooperative Bank and Oromia Credit and Saving Bank are also financial institutions found in the

district providing multilateral services to the population among which saving and credit, money transfer and express are mentioned to be the prominent ones (District Socio-economic profile Study, 2012).

3.2 Research Paradigm

Constructivism is a theory of knowledge (epistemology) that argues humans generate knowledge and meaning from an interaction between their experiences and their ideas. As a theory of learning, constructivism is relevant in this study as the researcher wished to establish how learners learn and teachers teach.   Hein '2007:1' mentions that constructivism refers to the idea that learners construct knowledge for themselves, each learner individually and socially constructs meaning- as he or she learns   It maintains that individuals create or construct their own new understandings or knowledge through the interaction of what they already know and believe and the ideas, events, and activities with which they come in contact.

Constructing meaning is learning, there is no any other kind of learning other than constructing meaning. Knowledge is acquired through involvement with content instead of imitation or repetition. Teachers must provide the learners with the opportunities to interact with sensory data and construct their own world. Constructivism is thus a theory of learning that likens the acquisition of knowledge to a process of building or constructing. Each learner should actively participate in the learning processes as everyone constructs his or her own knowledge.

 Honebein (1996) describes the constructivism philosophical paradigm as an approach that asserts that people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences. It is based on the analogy or basis that people form or construct much of what they learn through experience (Cashman et al., 2008;

Hein, 1991). Thus, to the constructivist, constructing meaning is learning; there is no other kind. This nullifies the traditional concept of learning in a „chew, pour, and forget‟ thus, learning because of examination with less or no motivation on the application of the learned experience in real life settings.

The social constructivism philosophical paradigm is an efficient tool that can yield many benefits when implemented in the carrying out of research in diverse field of study as well as in undertaking teaching and learning activities at any educational level. There was the need to adopt the qualitative research's powerful tool thus, document analysis to present a literature review on the subject to enlighten researchers and teachers of the great imports, rich and useful information that they can glean/learn from this vibrant/vigorous paradigm of philosophy.

Most importantly appropriate research paradigm helps, researchers coached in their selection of research design, instrumentation, and theoretical framework and data analysis procedures. The constructivism philosophical paradigm provides a firm foundation for researches, especially in humanities, education and other behavioral researches while maximizing students' learning outcomes when employed in teaching and learning activities.

3.3 Research Design

Depending on the nature of the study the researcher preferred qualitative research approach because qualitative research approaches are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live. Qualitative research is an interpretative approach, which attempts to gain insight into the specific meanings and behaviors experienced in a certain social phenomenon through the subjective experiences of the participants. The researcher builds abstracts, concepts, hypotheses, or theories by asking such questions as "why",

"how" and "in what way?" (Yin, 2014). Unlike in experiments, the contextual conditions are not delineated and/or controlled, but part of the investigation. Typical for case study research is nonrandom sampling; there is no sample that represents a larger population. Contrary to quantitative logic, the case is chosen,

Qualitative approach used descriptions and categories (words) to study human experiences and realities from the subject's perspective. It is often an iterative process whereby the theory/hypotheses emerge from the data as it is collected, making the researcher key in the data collection and analysis processes. The study design is emergent and flexible, responsive to the changing conditions as the study progresses. The goal is to understand the phenomenon from the viewpoint of the participants; with its particular institutional and social context intact; this data and context is lost if attempts to quantify the data are made.

A single Case Study Research Design was preferably selected to conduct this research which constitutes the blue print for the accommodation, estimation and examination of information. The data collection tools used in case study research gives the opportunity to gain a greater understanding of the case in hand and reduces the potential for any, bias by diluting agenda of a particular individual or groups. Like other forms of qualitative research, the researcher seeks to explore, understand and present the participants' perspectives and get close to them in their natural settings. Because of this constructivism and interpretivism commonly permeate the implementation of this research design methods used in case study to facilitate achieving the aim of co-constructing data most often include interviews, observations, focus group discussions, documents and artifact analysis.

In case study research the researcher's, perceptions and interpretations become part of a research and as a result, a subjective and interpretive orientation follows throughout the inquiry. Subjectivity is openly acknowledged and to manage this, the researcher embraces a reflexive stance within the study, adopting methods such as memo and taking notes. A Single Case Study research is predominantly an emergent process, whereby the designs and outcomes are formed as the research takes place.

3.4 Study Population

The population of the study consisted women who were in self-help groups and women leaders in the district.

3.5 Participant Selection

Participants of 30 women who were in self-help groups and women leaders having each ten members were selected carefully and thoroughly having in mind that they generated satisfactory data for the study. This was determined using purposive / subjective/ judgmental / selective participant selection method. This method involves researcher's critical and sound judgment which resulted in appropriate representative number. Participant Selection is the process of recruiting a specific number of objects to form participants for study,

 Purposive Participant Selection method involves researcher's critical and sound judgment formed based on members' shared attributes. Alternatively, purposive participant selection method was proved to be effective when only limited numbers of people can serve as a primary data sources due to a nature of research design, aims and objectives.

In purposive participant selection method personal judgment was used to choose cases that helped answer research questions or achieve research objectives. The main advantage with purposive participant selection is how it captures key population characteristics in the participants. This method of participant selection produces characteristics in the participants that are proportional to the overall population. Purposive participant selection method works well for populations with similar attributes.

3.6 Data Collection Methods

The study used qualitative data collection method through interviews, focus group discussions and observation. These data gathering tools were designed and formulated to collect information about economic empowerment, religion, political views and gender-based discriminatory social norms that influence women participation in community development projects and these were carried out to gather information in order to verify the findings obtained through data triangulation methods. In addition, secondary data were obtained from records of administrative offices, reports from line sect oral offices, publications, journals, books and other sources related to this study. Here are the detail explanations for the data collection tools.

3.6.1 In-depth Interviews.

The researcher used an in-depth interview as it is one of a qualitative research data gathering technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews. The researcher made an interview with only ten participants and their leaders from the total thirty participants in the district and explored their perspectives, views, and experiences on the research questions. The researcher made an interview with each participant for 30: minutes and there was a chance to limit and add time for interview depending on data saturation or deficiency issues. Note taking and audio recorder were used as crucial data capturing tools.

The researcher developed an interview protocol, guidance and clear and précised open-ended questions before he began interviewing, to minimize confusions and biasness that resulted in poor data gathering which was not tough enough to answer the research questions. Probing the interviewee helped the researcher obtained relevant and viable data that were left behind the imagination of the interviewee.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions.

The researcher used a focus group discussion which involves gathering people from similar backgrounds or experiences together to discuss a specific topic of interest. It is a form of qualitative research where questions were asked about their perception's attitudes, beliefs, opinions or ideas. In focus group discussion participants were felt free to talk with other group members; unlike other research methods it encourages discussions with other participants.

The researcher made a focus group discussion with twenty members of self-help women groups and their leaders in the district categorizing them in to two small groups each consisted of ten women. The researcher made a discussion with each group for 60: minutes. The researcher developed a discussion protocol, guidance, and clear and précised open-ended questions and facilitated seating arrangements, styles and rooms which encouraged participant's confidentiality and minimizes any confusions and biasness that resulted in poor data gathering which were not tough enough to answer the research questions before the discussions began. Since a focus group discussion is not static, the moderator or an interviewer made a chance to bring any changes in order to better facilitate the discussion during the group discussion. This dynamism allowed better results in terms of information derived by a focus group. The first question was general to get people warmed up, and insights in participants' view about the topic. Note taking and written

answers to the question were used as important tools to hold the basic data while focus group

discussion was undertaken.

3.6.3 Observation

Observation was used as one of the important data collection tools and techniques which helped

the researcher captured some other practically observable additional data to conduct the research.

The researcher observed the role and contribution of each participant in their community

development project. Participant daily work time, job division and some legal contracts that the

three self-help women groups and their leaders, have with some other development partners in

the district. This was conducted using the existing written documents and verbal explanations

given from concerned participants.

3.7 Procedure of Data Collection

The researcher sought permission from the relevant authorities including Jimma University and

School of Social Work. The researcher then visited the other concerned bodies and introduced

himself and notified them of the research intentions. The researcher directed the interview with

the individual members, which include both the literate, and semi-illiterate. The respondents

assured of confidential that the information obtained were used for the proposed study only. The

information was collected from the individuals with the purpose of the proposed study only.

3.8 Methods of Data Collection

Data was gathered from both primary and secondary sources. Secondary data was obtained from

documented sources such as textbooks, journals, internet, presented papers which was used to

provide information on the factors affecting women participation in community-based

development projects. Primary data was gathered using interviews, focus group discussions and observations to get information from mainly women who have formed groups and their leaders.

The interviews, focus group discussions and observations was conducted in the local language (Afaan Oromo) and then translated into English language during data analysis. The oral questionnaires have questions that seek information on the factors affecting women participation in community-based development projects. Detail analysis include: demographic characteristics of respondents, the extent to which gender inequality affects women participation in community based development projects, examined gender-based discriminatory social norms and how they affected women participation in community based development projects, show how religion affects participation in community based development projects, assess how poor economic performance affects women participation in community based development projects and analyses the effects of political views on women participation in community based development projects in Sigimo District. The sources of data were primary data gathered from three self-help women groups and their leaders selected accordingly. Lastly data collected from self-help women groups and their leaders by interviews, FDGs and observations. Here also some secondary data relevant to the study was collected from different zonal and district government organizations these include Jimma zone Plan and Economic Development , South West region Central Statistics Agency (CSA), District Women & Children Affairs, District Industry & Enterprise Development, District Agriculture, District finance and economic cooperation, District Cooperatives Work Expansion and Development, District Land use and Administration, District Justice , District Labor and Social Affairs, District Trade Development and District Market Development were mentioned at front-line these worked in collaboration**.**

3.9 Trustworthiness of Data

The realities of qualitative research is concerned with issues of naturalistic terms include

credibility (the explanations were consistent and understandable), transferability (there was

enough information provided to allow the results to be adapted to another context or population),

conformability (there was a distinction between the researchers and the subjects (ideas) and

dependability (the process used to obtain the results was replicated). The researcher ensured the

trustworthiness of data using the following methods:

Audit Trail: Detailed documentation of all decisions made during data collection/analysis to

ensure a transparent process.

Peer Review: This was included an independent review of the themes by research team

members or a review of themes by peer(s) not involved in the research.

Member Checking: Interpretations of the data was shared with participants to ensure that

meaning has been preserved.

Triangulation: This was used to compare data with those from other sources (e.g., focus groups

with in-depth interviews).

Negative Case Analysis: This method was encompassed deliberately look for contrasting

experiences/examples to disprove emerging theories.

Data saturation: Data were gathered until all themes were exhausted

3.10 Methods of Data Analysis

 Data analysis is an important part of a research which requires multidimensional skills to ascertain the findings. All data gathered through different data collection tools like interview, focus group discussion and field observation was managed / handled carefully and thoroughly with the responses they captured. After which data preparing and organizing, reviewing and exploring, developing coding system, assigning codes, identifying recurring themes and confirming trustworthiness was conducted one after the other in the process of data analysis. Finally, the data gathered was analyzed and presented using narrative analysis.

3.11 Ethical Consideration

In preparation for data gathering, the researcher obtained a research permit from Jimma University, School of Social Work and also from the Government authority in the district. Permission was also obtained from women groups and their leaders. Confidentiality of the information gathered from each individual respondent was strictly overseen and respondents were informed of the same during researcher-respondent acquaintance time.

Chapter Four: Data Presentation and Interpretation

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the interpretation of research findings drawn from the research instrument by way of data analysis as set out in the research methodology. The research data was gathered exclusively through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observation as the primary research instrument. The in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observation were conducted in line with research objectives of the study.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics

Demographic information was collected and analyzed to determine the characteristics of the participants who took part in the interview and FGD. It covered the following areas: sex, age, marital status, religious denomination and level of education of the participants. Analysis of the data yielded the following results

4.2.1 Sex of participants

All the participants were women these who formed a self-help group to address their economic, social, political and cultural issues.

4.2.2 Age of the Participants

The participants' ages ranged from 25 years to 50 years of age. The majority of the participants (60% (n: 18) were aged between 30-39 years; 30% (n: 9) were in the range of 25-29 years; 10% (n: 3) were between 40-50 years.

4.2.3 Participant's Marital Status

The majority of the participants 90% (n: 27) were married and 10% (n: 3) were divorced at the

time of the study respectively. Marital status could influence decisions that women make in their

lives with regard to money, food, pregnancy, contraception, sexual relations and HIV prevention

behaviors. This could ultimately influence the status of women in society.

4.2.4 Participant's Religious Denomination

Three categories of religious denominations were used in line with the major religious

denominations in Sigmo. From the total 30 self-help women groups and their leaders

90 % (n: 27) of them were Muslim, 8% (n: 2) were Orthodox and 2 % (n: 1) was protestant

religion faith followers respectively.

4.2.5 Participant's Level of Education

Two levels were used in line with the schooling system in Sigmo. Level one schooling system

comprised those who had never been to school. Level two in its part comprised those who

attempted primary education but did not go as far as grade eight.

4.3 Economic Factors Influencing Women Participation in Community-Based Development Projects

The participants revealed that despite women's economic empowerment is the process of

achieving women's equal access to and control over economic resources, and ensuring they can

use them to exert increased control over other areas of their lives they do not have equal power

with that of men to pass any decision over these resources. Though access to and control over

assets: physical and financial and property are crucial for women's financial security and

underpin individual and household economic development much of these activities are driven by their counterpart men partners.

Participant 1: *Economic emancipation of woman requires changes within individuals (capability, knowledge and self-esteem); in communities and institutions (including norms and behavior); in markets and value chains; and in the wider political and legal environment.*

Participant 2: *Women's economic empowerment is enabled or constrained by some key factors directly affecting women's individual and collective lived experiences these are: education, skills development and training, access to quality and decent paid work, unpaid care and work burdens, access to property, assets and financial services, collective action and leadership, and social protection.*

Participant: 3: *Achieving women's economic empowerment requires an enabling environment in which women's choices, power and agency are not limited by discriminatory or constraining institutions.*

The researcher sought that there are a wealth of evidences confirming the importance of control of household resources, including land and housing, for women's greater self-esteem, respect from other family members, economic opportunities, mobility outside of the home, and decision-making power. But yet, women's command over resources is severely curtailed in many contexts through discriminatory legal and customary law provisions, some of which reinforce gender inequalities, as well as social norms and practices.

 All the participants agreed that many women lack enough economic resources that allowed them support the project initiatives. This is due to the fact that they are not involved in fund raising activities which can help them enhance their participation rate in community-based development

projects. Women are also hindered by limited access to resources such as credit and small-scale income generating activities which resulted from lack of collateral properties that they warrant on for gaining loan opportunities from government micro and macro financial institutions.

The other points suggested by the interviewees and the focus group discussants were family financial commitments and limited access to economic resources limits women participation in decision making and controlling over their resources which in turn limits their knowledge on community-based development project services available and benefits and their ability to engage in community-based development projects. Furthermore, the participants rose that women are not equally access to media as that of men to boost their efforts in community development initiatives. Many women work voluntarily on the ground and use their own resources to support community-based development projects.

The participants revealed that there are direct and underlying factors these affects women's economic empowerment. The process of enhancing women's economic empowerment is enabled or constrained by some key factors directly affecting women's individual and collective lived experiences these are: education, skills development and training, access to quality and decent paid work, unpaid care and work burdens, access to property, assets and financial services, collective action and leadership, and social protection. The participants also denoted that achieving women's economic empowerment requires an enabling environment in which women's choices; power and agency are not limited by discriminatory or constraining institutions.

Women's individual or collective lived experiences are determined by underlying structural factors that operate across social, political, legal and financial institutions. These underlying factors are: Labor market characteristics, Fiscal policy, Legal regulatory and policy framework, gender norms and discriminatory social norms. Here they concluded that economic factors determined by multiple key factors and underlying factors could play a pivotal role in enabling and constraining women participation in development initiatives in general and in community-based development projects in particular.

The researcher sought those furthering women economic empowerment is hugely complex, given its wide-ranging implications for different aspects of women's lives. It requires changes within individuals (capability, knowledge and self-esteem); in communities and institutions (including norms and behavior); in markets and value chains; and in the wider political and legal environment. Ultimately, no single intervention can address all these aspects and be effective for all women. The challenge, therefore, is to identify key entry points where a range of 'enablers' or 'building blocks could have a pivotal, positive effect, recognizing that interventions would necessarily differ between countries and between different groups of women, and in terms of the time needed for them to take hold. Hence economically empowering women is a part and parcel of the comprehensive women empowering initiatives that needs a subdue process of personal and social change, taking place over interlinked and mutually reinforcing psychological, political, social, religious and cultural domains, and through which women individually and collectively gain power, meaningful choices and control over their lives. It is not a linear, uncontested process but instead a journey characterized by multidimensional approaches, negotiation and compromise, and uncertain outcomes.

4.4 Religion As a Factor Influencing Women Participation in Community-Based Development Projects

All the participants agreed that religion was very important in their lives in the sense that it guides their daily lives. They also agreed that religion shape their moral values, behavior and practices. As believers, the majority of participants asserted that they believed in a world where God reigns and this world is where justice, peace and freedom prevail. Some participants further argued that the issue of gender equality and women empowerment had their basis in the holy books (Bible and Quran) and therefore the holy books influenced their perception on gender equality and women empowerment.

The participants agreed that religious teachings and beliefs have been to an extent a barrier to women participation in community-based development projects both in religious institutions and society at large. They strongly stated that religion restricts the mobility of women mostly around the homestead identifying their specific roles and responsibilities such as child bearing and rearing, caring for elderly and domestic house work which significantly impede their societal interaction that plays a substantial role in developing various community experiences, views, attitudes, opinions, knowledge and skills these help them engage in multiple community development initiatives including community - based development projects.

Participant 4: *The Protestant churches fully accept that women should not be denied an opportunity to preach whereas the Islam and the Orthodox religious institutions consider women as second class that cannot stand on the pulpit and preach in the presence of men.*

Participant 5: *In accordance with protestant religious doctrine women are possibly included in religious leadership and sacral roles whereas Orthodox and Islam religious institutions ironically do not allow women ordination, leadership and sacral roles.*

The participants also revealed that although women and women's organizations play a critical role in the life, work and ministry of religious institutions, women are largely excluded from leadership and sacral roles. Some religious institutions such as Orthodox and Islam do not permit ordination of women based on their interpretation of the holy books. Beside this Churches and Mosques have quite separate entrances for men and women widening the gender inequality gap and conjuring some critical and unanswerable questions in the insides of the feminists. Even girls and women are not allowed to go to churches and mosques for worshipping in these religious institutions during their periods of pregnancy and ministerial cycle on set. The most severe restrictions applied to women during these periods are they couldn't enter the temple or touch the Quran. On the contrary the Protestant and Pentecostal churches are very liberal with regards to giving women authority. Nevertheless, even in these churches' hierarchies are still male dominated. Additionally, the interviewees and the FGD discussants aggressively clam that despite the widespread engagement of women in their religious communities, religious leaders and those authorized to interpret religious doctrine are predominantly men. As such, the processes of the production of religious knowledge largely exclude women. Because of lack of will, capacity, and/or confidence, male leaders have not fully acknowledged or confronted gender inequality and its many implications within their faith communities.

The interviewees and the FGD discussants confirmed that socio-economic status plays an important role in determining roles that women play in religious institutions. Most of the religious institutions still believe and teach that woman is subordinate to man and they should not have the same opportunities and privileges as a man. Some of the religious institutions openly preach the submission of women to their husbands in marriage while most of the religious institutions encourage women to remain in abusive marriage.

Almost all the participants agreed that most religious institutions encourage women genital mutilation and early child marriage opposite to the interpretations enshrined in their holy books for many reasons particularly the need for reservation of high social acceptance in the community is mentioned as top agenda despite these issues are severely affecting women's psychological, physiological, sexual and reproductive health conditions in multidimensional ways.

 The researcher sought that religion influences the perceptions and behaviors of several parties in the development arena likewise religion often seen as a barrier to gender parity. Evidences abound of gender-based violence done in the name of religion. As a result, in many cases, the issues of religion and gender parity are often dismissed as too complicated to address. There appears to be no way to unwind this complex multi-institution. Unless there are religious freedom marginalized groups, including women would not be at a table and their vital, productive and creative voices won't be heard. In addition, corporations and economies would suffer if they miss out on the contribution of women. Religious freedom is not only tied to gender equality but also to more stable economies, social, political and cultural issues.

Religious intolerance affects women ability to engage in and contribute to the economy, social, political and cultural developments of the countries. So, to close the gender gap, strengthen economies, social, political, and cultural issues and empower women, it is imperative that religious freedom become a factor that is taken seriously and acted on.

4.5 Political Factors Influencing Women Participation in Community-Based Development Projects

Almost all the participants agreed that women's full and effective political participation is a matter of human rights, inclusive growth and sustainable development. The active participation of women, on equal terms with men, at all levels of decision-making and political involvement is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy and the inclusion of their perspectives and experiences into the decision-making processes. Never the less women are facing obstacles in their political participation in Ethiopia and in other countries of the world in the twenty-one-first century.

Participant 6: *The existing political space at international, national and local level couldn't largely accommodate women politicians and it need to be widened amongst states and all the political entities or parties and political institutions so that women can take hold higher political positions and can play their lion shares in ensuring their democratic rights and the democratic rights of the whole nations in the country.*

The participants noted that women's equal participation with men in power and decision-making is part of their fundamental right to participate in political life, and at the core of gender equality and women's empowerment but Women around the world at every socio-political level find themselves under-represented in parliament and far removed from decision-making levels.strategies to increase women's participation in politics have been advanced through

conventions, protocols and international agreements for gender mainstreaming are yet to prove effective in achieving gender parity in the highest government rankings.

 Ethiopian federal and regional states signed and committed themselves to promote gender parity in political participation, but end with little improvement at higher government authorities. Abuse of office and desire to acquire power through self-centered means has resulted in the state ignoring women concerns in detail. Thus, women continue to be underrepresented in governments across the nation and face barriers that often make it difficult for them to exercise political power and assume leadership positions in the public sphere at large.

Beside this the participants strongly agreed that women in every part of the country to be largely marginalized from the political sphere, often as a result of discriminatory laws, practices, attitudes and gender stereotypes, low levels of education, lack of access to health care and the disproportionate effect of poverty on women these resulted in unequal representation of men and women in politics and decision-making positions at all levels such as in Cabinet; Parliament, Council, Management of the Public Services. Such events made women voiceless and incapable to bargain for their rights and limits their participation in politics in general and in community-based development projects in particular.

The participants additionally revealed that there exists a number of additional factors act as barriers to woman political participation among which political system, socio-economic and cultural barriers predominantly constrain or prevent women's participation. Electoral violence is also one problem that has been identified as a stumbling block to robust participation of women in the political process and in governance.

The interviewees and the FGD discussants agreed that violence against women is used as a targeted and destructive tool in various ways throughout the electoral cycle to dissuade women from participating as election administrators, voters and candidates. Failure to address these electoral barriers creates an atmosphere that makes women to have a negative attitude towards political activities. Another mechanism through which violent conflict can induce structural changes that affect the supply of female politicians is institutional. Institutional constraints include barriers such as political systems that operate through rigid schedules that do not take into consideration women's domestic responsibilities, and the type of electoral quotas used.

 Additionally, the participants stated that women's ability to engage politically both within and beyond the voting booth particularly as community organizers and elected officials is often shaped by norms that drive wider social structures. Fundamental to the constraints that women face is an entrenched patriarchal system in which family control and decision-making powers are in the hands of males. Traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes especially as regard women's roles and status in society remain strong. Traditional roles and the division of labor are still clearly gendered. Social norms that make it more difficult for women to leave their traditionally domestic roles for more public roles outside of the home.

The participants agreed that women's gender identity is still predominantly conceived of as being domestic in nature, and continues to act as a barrier to women's entry in to formal politics. Socio-economic status of women to a greater extent plays a significant role in enhancing their participation and representation in political decision-making bodies. Women lack the economic base which would enhance their political participation. The lack of an economic base for women has been a factor in their participation or lack of it in politics because the cost of campaigning is

very high. Lack of financial resources can limit participation given the costs associated with elections

The interviewees and the FGD discussants revealed that despite women are lawful, responsive and tactical and committed in leadership many women depend on their husbands and male bread winners and even if they can get more income from them. They may not voluntarily participate in politics because of the control their male counterparts have on them. Hence, due to these reasons' women are forced to become lobbied to support election campaigns and they are clumsily or blindly encouraged to be vocal in elections campaigns but silent in political decision-making. When the elections are over, they are expected to be silent and this limits their political participation.

The participants also revealed that most women are financially dependent on their husbands or relatives. In Ethiopia most women are sustainably dependent on men economically which is the main cause for their low participation in politics and in other community-based development projects. It is a fact that women's participation in political life depends largely on their access to employment which gives them not only material independence but also certain professional skills and grater self-confidence. The researcher sought that women active participation in politics and decision-making process ensures their priorities and needs are reflected in the policies, programs and interventions**.**

4.6 Social Factors Influencing Women Participation in Community-Based Development Projects

 The participants agreed that gender disparities remain among the most persistent forms of inequality across all countries. Given that these disadvantages affect half the world's people, gender inequality is arguably one of the greatest barriers to human development. All too often, women and girls are discriminated against in health, in education, at home and in the labor market with negative repercussions for their freedoms. Social norms and gender-specific tradeoffs are key barriers to gender equality.

The interviewees and the focus group discussants stated that social and cultural norms often foster behaviors that perpetuate inequalities, while power concentrations create imbalances and lead to capture by powerful groups such as dominant, patriarchal elites. Both affect all forms of gender inequality, from violence against women to the glass ceiling in business and politics. In addition, gender-specific tradeoffs burden the complex choices women encounter in work, family and social life resulting in cumulative structural barriers to equality.

Gender inequality has long been associated with persistent discriminatory social norms prescribing social roles and power relations between men and women in society. Social norms held by individuals and their reference groups are values, beliefs, attitudes and practices that assert preferred power dynamics for interactions between individuals and institutions. As broader constructs, norms are operationalized through beliefs, attitudes and practices.

All the participants agreed that as other countries in the world in Ethiopia there exist gender discrimination which begins from the early infant stage and extends throughout adult ages. Even sometimes it begins during pregnancy period depending on the underlying complications of pregnancy and the types of food and beverages that pregnant mothers need to have. Here when pregnant mother needs to have food types named by the community as high value foods those specifically known in the society like meat, poultry, korisisa, fruits and from beverages tela, alcohol and other bitter beverages the families, neighbors and the surrounding communities assumes that the feats in the mother's womb is most probably male in sex.

On the contrary if pregnant mothers need to have food types called by the community as low value foods and beverages like roughages, vegetables and porridge and from beverages soft drinking the families, neighbors and the surrounding communities similarly predicts that the feats in the mother's womb is most probably female in sex. Such discriminatory societal beliefs and behaviors continued after the arrival of a new baby at the time of welcoming celebration.

On the way to celebration the families, neighbors and the surrounding communities asked the mother whether the child is male or female in sex and subsequently gave responses like, it is okay! Wonderful! and pleasing birth for male baby and let it be, good for nothing, and better than missing anyone of the sexes are the responses for a female baby which utterly discourages the moral and psychological makeup of these women's bearing only daughters and more daughters over sons.

Participant 7: *Still in the 21ˢᵗ century there exist various harmful traditional social practices these affects women participation in community based development initiatives among which early child marriage, raping, genital mutilation, polygamy marriage, gender food politics nurtured by assumption and familial forced school dropout for marriage are the few once she opined.*

 Participant 8: *Culturally, a woman is not a woman until she is married and has children of her own. This is why a woman will still stick to a man-even if the man abuses her to avoid the stigma that goes with being single. This further harms her image and self-confidence.*

Similarly, those women who gave birth to more sons over daughters have special treatment and privilege from their families and society at large. They would have a wider chance to take part in community issues and in family issue decision making processes than those bearing more daughters over sons that show traditional social norms and practices could have a discriminatory effect even between the same sexes and overtly it has an adverse effect on a single family. There is wealth of evidences that shows even women themselves are highly delighted at a time they gave birth to more sons over daughters. This implies that the way women are even looking at themselves is more reluctant, lacks confident and clearly ratifies that the perception men are naturally superior over their women counterpart is righteous.

In addition, the family and other groups of the society wish girls to be married early than go to school and capture knowledge and skills that help them engage in their personal and national issues. The family forced the girls to drop the school for marriage even adult men who are out of their age group which have quite negative impact on their lives in many cases among which sexual and reproductive health risks are more visible than other cases. Similarly, the participants

aggressively revealed that raping culture is also another traditional practice that affects women and girl's personality in many ways.

The interviewees and the FGD discussants confirmed that gender discrimination continues through how households share resources. Girls and women sometimes eat last and least in the household. The gender politics of food nurtured by assumptions, norms and practices about women needing fewer calories pushed many women into perpetual malnutrition and protein deficiency causing health risks in their life. Besides this under poor economic circumstances polygamy marriage is widely practiced among Islam faith communities resulting in large family size that absolutely pave ways for the occurrences of some factors these constrain girls and women from their educational opportunities or careers.

All the participants agreed that girls and women in Ethiopia are strongly disadvantaged compared to boys and men in several areas, including literacy, health, livelihoods, and basic human rights. Furthermore, gender disparity increases at higher levels in education where the enrollment of adolescent girls is lower than boys besides education is an important tool behind economic, social, political and cultural development at a national level.

 Furthermore, the participants revealed that the economic determinants within Ethiopia have presented an equal platform for women to become economically independent as traditional taboos have been placed up on women, their labor is under appreciated and the magnitude has gone unnoticed. There is a high prevalence in informal jobs such as childcare and house hold work within Ethiopian communities while those women continue to be under represented in the formal sector. Ethiopian women are highly concentrated in the routine type and low paying jobs.

People's expectations of individuals' roles in households, communities, workplaces and societies can determine what women and men functioning.

The participants agreed that women often face strong conventional societal expectations to be caregivers and home makers; men similarly are expected to be breadwinners. Embedded in these social norms are longstanding patterns of exclusion from household and community decision-making that limit women's opportunities and choices. So, despite convergence on some outcome indicators such as access to education at all levels and access to health care women and girls in many regions of Ethiopia still cannot reach their full potential.

The researcher sought that beliefs about what others do and what others think a person in some reference group should do, maintained by social approval and disapproval, often guide actions in social settings. So, it is useful to measure the beliefs and attitudes that create biases and prejudices towards women's discrimination in society. Social norms cover several aspects of an individual's identity gender, age, ethnicity, religion, ability and so on that are heterogeneous and multidimensional. Gender inequality within households and communities is characterized by inequality across multiple dimensions, with a vicious cycle of powerlessness, stigmatization, discrimination, exclusion and material deprivation all reinforcing each other. Powerlessness manifests itself in many ways, but at its core is an inability to participate in or influence decisions that profoundly affect one's own life.

The researcher also sought that discriminatory social norms and stereotypes reinforce gendered identities and determine power relations that constrain women's and men's behavior in ways that lead to inequality. Norms influence expectations for masculine and feminine behavior considered socially acceptable or looked down on. So, they directly affect individuals' choices, freedoms and capabilities. Social norms also reflect regularities among groups of individuals. Rules of behavior are set according to standards of behavior or ideals attached to a group's sense of identity. Individuals have multiple social identities and behave according to identity-related ideals, and they also expect others sharing a common identity to behave according to these ideals. Norms of behavior related to these ideals affect people's perception of themselves and others, thus engendering a sense of belonging to particular identity groups. The beliefs people hold about appropriate behavior often determine the range of choices and preferences that they exercise in that context norms can determine autonomy and freedom, and beliefs about social censure and reproach create barriers for individuals who transgress.

Chapter Five: Discussion

5.1 Chapter Overview

This chapter provides the discussion of the results of the study with relevant available literature in the area. The discussion focuses on major themes comparing the current study findings with results found in prior related studies on the area.

5.2 Discussions

The following studies found similar results with regard to women participation in community-based development projects. (Zewdu, 2002; Ogato, 2009; Ogato,2013), found that although a number of policies are emerging that support and encourage women's participation in development, women's access to and control of productive resources, information, training and education, employment and in decision making is still limited.

Ter Haar and Ellis (2006), claim that religious beliefs provide moral guidance and encourage people to improve their lives. Religion may also influence providers of development efforts. The relationship between religion and gender equality is a complex one. Religion plays a vital role in shaping cultural, social, economic, and political norms in many parts of the world.

Similarly, gender roles and the status of women and men in society are deeply tied to the manner in which religious texts have been interpreted for centuries by those in positions of authority held predominantly by men. Yet, in sharp contrast to their marked absence at the highest levels of decision-making in religious communities, women play a pivotal role in religious life within the family and the community; they implement and embody religious teachings and traditions, and pass these on to future generations.

 McDonagh 2002; Welzel 2003, found that the oppressive, unequal treatment of women clashes with the democratic idea of human equality. Despite an overall decrease in gender inequality in virtually every modern nation gender discrimination and unbalance still exist in many fields especially in politics. Women are still not involved in politics as deeply as men.

 Samman, 2016, found that discriminatory gender norms pose huge barriers to women's participation in community-based development projects, notably by limiting girls' access to education and women's choices over domestic roles, early marriage and childbearing, as well as financial resources, other assets and labor force participation. Norms that see men as economic providers and women as mothers and cares inhibit women's participation in paid work in many contexts. This can be reinforced by formal institutions, including religious bodies, which link mothers' paid work to adverse outcomes for children.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents conclusions, summary of findings, research implications, suggestions for further research and recommendations. The findings are summarized in line with the objectives of the study which were to assess the factors influencing women participation in community-based development projects.

6.2 Conclusion

The objective of the study was to assess some factors influencing women participation in community-based development projects. The study concludes that limited financial resources limits women participation in community-based development projects due to family financial commitment and limited donor and government funding. The study also concludes that religious intolerance affects women ability to engage in and contribute to the economy, social, political and cultural developments of the nation. So, to close the gender gap, strengthen economies, social, political, and cultural issues and empower women, it is imperative that religious freedom become a factor that is taken seriously and acted on.

In addition, the study concludes that despite women's full and effective political participation is a matter of human rights, inclusive growth and sustainable development women are not actively and deeply involved in politics due multiple economic, social, political and cultural challenges hindering them from stepping up the political ladder on equal terms and positions as that of men. Furthermore, the study concludes that culture limits women participation in community-based development projects due to gender stereotyping, conflicts at home, lack of moral frameworks

that give women a strong say in community development matters and the fact that men are the main custodians of culture

6.2.1 Summary of Findings

The study had four main objectives. To examine the influences of economic empowerment on women participation in community-based development projects in Sigmo District, to show how religion influences women participation in community-based development projects in Sigmo District, to identify how political attitude influences women participation in community-based development projects in Sigmo District, to analyze what gender-based discriminatory social norms influences women participation in community development projects in Sigmo District. The study found out that some religious beliefs hinder women from making great developmental contribution to the society; that women are not expected to speak before men, a thing that has kept many women's potential untapped or even unrealized at all hence hinders majority from community development project participation. The study also found that incorporating issues such as tradition, race, ethnicity, gender sensitization contexts in the programs leads to a community development project participation.

The study noted that politics helps in raising gender issues within the national policy arena which includes women in community development project implementation involvement through lobbying for gender equity and affirmative action legislation hence women can participate in development with a very minimal rate.

The study also found that lack of economic empowerment reinforces gender cultural stereotypes about the role of women which prevent women from engaging in business and politics hence affecting women contribution towards community development initiatives. Furthermore, the study figured out that gender inequality has long been associated with persistent discriminatory

social norms prescribing social roles and power relations between men and women in society that impedes the participation of women in community based-development projects.

Additionally, the study found that discriminatory social norms and stereotypes reinforce gendered identities and determine power relations that constrain women's and men's behavior in ways that lead to inequality. Norms influence expectations for masculine and feminine behavior considered socially acceptable or looked down on. So, they directly affect individuals' choices, freedoms and capabilities.

6.2.2 Research Implications

 Women represents half the population of world, and although they are considered internationally as one of the main pillars of economic, social, political and cultural development, they have suffered from an unjust social heritage in addition to discriminatory practices both in terms of gender equality and in the market. This reflected on their social, educational and cultural situation. Although some progress has been made in an attempt to address women in world and their role in social and economic life, there are still cultural, political, religious, social and economic challenges that mostly prevent the African and Ethiopian women from being enabled. Therefore, we seek to address the issue of Ethiopian women's role in development and economic life between the reality and challenges, by focusing on the policies, strategies, programs and projects of: economic, social, political and cultural development and ways to contribute to improving their socio-cultural status and their economic empowerment.

6.2.3 Suggestions for Further Research

The study suggests further case study on the performance of community based-development projects in regard to their sustainability and their involvement in the living standards of the community. This research should be replicated in other countries in order to establish whether there is a consistency among them on factors influencing women participation in community based-development projects. This study will also supplement the findings of this study by providing information on strength and weaknesses of this study. Additionally, further studies should be carried out in order to determined performance of community development projects. This is in relation to identifying other external influences over which they have little control and how they impact on the other community activities performance. A similar study can be undertaken in other regions in Ethiopia. So far, the study has covered Sigmo District.

6.3 Recommendations

There is a need for the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to develop a national gender policy, strategy, program and projects with broad objectives. The current gender inequality and women's empowerment issues in development will be alleviated through proper national gender policy, strategy, program, and project development and implementation. The action of the former Ethiopian Ministry of Women's Affair in developing National Action Plan for Gender Equality is a good start towards realizing gender equality and women's empowerment goals in Ethiopia. But still there exist challenges and problems to address these factors in relation to women participation in community-based development projects in particular and in the whole national development endeavors in general.

Based on the critical review of the status of gender equality and women's empowerment efforts in least developed countries and analysis of the current gender equality and women's empowerment efforts in Ethiopia, the following policy and strategy implications will be identified for Ethiopia to fully engage women in multiple national development initiatives by addressing gender issues from the grass root levels at all levels of community development stages.

1.There will be a need for a national gender policy in Ethiopia to address poverty and multidimensional empowerment of women and girls; education and training of women and girls; reproductive rights, health and HIV/AIDS; human rights and violence against women and girls; empowering women in decision-making; women and the environment; and institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women;

2. The national gender policy framework for Ethiopia will be anchored on gender equality principles, and process in which women's roles in reproduction and production are not only valued, but will be seen as the core of the nation's wealth upon which national development is anchored;

3. The main goal /thrust of the national gender policy for Ethiopia should be to promote gender-sensitive and gender responsive culture in policy planning and national development;

4. A major task in the implementation of the national gender policy for Ethiopia should be how best to confront patriarchy, exacerbated in the culture of male supremacy;

5. A key focus will be given to institutional framework in Ethiopian Gender policy which will genuinely facilitate implementation and monitoring of gender equality and women empowerment plans, programs and projects;

6. A well-coordinated gender mainstreaming framework will be ensured within and across public and private institutions for better effectiveness and accountability in the implementation process of the policy and strategy;

7. A national gender strategic framework and action plan will be developed to be reviewed every five years to guide a system-wide approach to gender mainstreaming and implementation of the policy;

8. The presidency, the Federal Executive Council, the Legislative and Judiciary will embrace and demonstrate gender equality principles and practices for any meaningful change to occur in the wider society;

9. The core strategies for achieving the objectives of the national gender policy will include: Policy, partnership and program; Gender education and capacity building; Legislative reforms; Economic reforms; Information communication; Research and data; and Monitoring and evaluation;

10. Line-ministries and all development sectors in Ethiopia will be able to develop gender-responsive development policies, programs and projects;

11. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia will have to strengthen institutional capacity of gender equality and women's empowerment national machineries and adapt gender-responsive budgeting system to enhance women participation in development.

12. Suitable information, education, and communication campaigns will be promoted by stakeholders to deal with the social structures and traditional practices challenging the enforcement of legal policy measures.

13. The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia will devise more practical and equitable gender equality and women's empowerment macro and micro economic policies by putting gender equality concerns at the Centre of macro and microeconomic policies

14. Religion plays a vital role in shaping cultural, social, economic, and political norms in many parts of Ethiopia. Similarly, gender roles and the status of women and men in society are deeply tied to the manner in which religious texts have been interpreted for centuries by those in positions of authority held predominantly by men. Hence creating a female religious leadership platform, representative of diverse faith traditions and geographic regions, and one that demonstrates a commitment to the promotion of gender equality will support the efforts of feminist faith leaders and activists to engage effectively with traditional and on-line media.

In addition, religious institutions should take concrete steps for developing gender justice, promoting gender equality and women empowerment at different levels in religious institutions. In setting out these steps, there is need for religious institutions to develop and implement programs that support women's spiritual and personal formation to become confident and contribute effectively to the running of religious institutions.

Religious institutions should also develop and implement programs that equip women with leadership skills at all levels and this should be supported by policies that deliberately create space for women in religious institutions with regards to leadership positions, governance and ordination. Moreover, religious institutions should target men with skills for participatory ministry with women. Finally, they should consider developing and implementing programs that improve the socio-economic status of women.

15. There is a need for government to engage political parties to ensure that they include more women on their candidates list. Political parties should become the institutional vehicle through which women's participation in politics is enhanced especially in facilitating their participation within party structures and over election periods. There should be more need to engage women through awareness campaigns. Women need to be educated and be informed that political participation is not limited to election campaigns and mobilization. They also need to know that for political participation to be inclusive there should be equal participation by both women and men.

In addition, government should provide more funds to independent female political politicians and also to political parties that have a considerable and accepted number of female political candidates. This will make political parties to involve more women for political office.

Furthermore, government should promote the economic emancipation of women. When women are economically emancipated, they will be able to make their decisions independently and this may pave way for them to enter politics without being restricted by their male counterparts (who may be bread winners or husbands at home). And

16. Interrogating and tackling discriminatory social norms embodied in different areas of work and especially in high-potential sectors that are targeted for government support and eradicating discriminatory legal and customary legal provisions to ensure full and equal property and asset ownership rights for women should be implemented nationwide.

Additionally, combating women's occupational segregation and associated gender wage gaps by ensuring laws and workplace policies these prohibit discrimination against women in recruitment, training and promotion. Likewise, the society should abolish different beliefs and practices these hinder women and girls from participating in community development projects and embrace different capacities bestowed on different people in the community.

Furthermore, supporting drivers of gender norm change as contextually relevant, including community dialogue; social and political collective mobilization; media and communications challenging discriminatory norms; legal change; and education and role models should be conducted at all community levels.

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Data Collection Tools

Appendix I

In-depth Iinterview Gguidance

I want to thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. My name is **Fekede Bayisa Hunde** and I would like to talk to you about your experiences, views, attitudes, opinions and perceptions regarding factors influencing women participation in community-based development projects in particular and in development in general. My interview questions are specifically, related to these factors I already identified in my research questions as critical factors these affects women participation in community-based development projects these include: economic performance, religion, political views and gender-based discriminatory social norms in order to assess and capture lessons that can be used in future interventions.

The interview should take less than an hour. I will be taping the session because I don't want to miss any of your comments. Although I will be taking some notes during the session, I can't possibly write fast enough to get it all down. Because I 'am on tape, please be sure to speak up so that I don't miss your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your interview responses will only be used for research study and I will ensure you that any information I include in my report does not identify you as the respondent. Remember, you don't have to talk about anything you don't want to and you may end the interview at any time.

Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

Are you willing to participate in this interview?

Interviewee_____ Witness_____ Date _____

1. **Personal Background**

   Name----------------------------------

   Age: -------------------------------------

   Sex-------------------------------------

   Place of birth: -------------------------------------

   Place of origin (district or kebele) -------------------

   School attendance-------------------------------------

   Marital status-------------------------------------

   Duration of Interview-------------------------------

2. **Factors influencing women participation in development.**

   a. How do you think women regarded in the community?

   b. What factors do you think affects women participation in development?

   c. What factors do you think affects women participation in community-based development projects?

   Economic factors influencing women participation in community-based development projects

   d. Do you think economic performance affects women participation in community-based development projects?

   e. Do you think women are economically empowered equally as that of men?

   f. Do you think that women can make decision and control over their resources?

   g. What consequences do you think women faces if they are not economically empowered?

h. What possible measures do you think are important to empower women

economically?

Religion factors influencing women participation in community-based development

projects

i.   How do you think religion consider women personality? Describe in detail?

j. Describe how religion protects women right equally as that of men?

k. Explain how religion defines women genital mutilation and child marriage?

l. Do you think women have religious positions in the community?

m. State how religion affects the participation of women in community-based

development projects?

n. What possible methods do you think are appropriate to combat religion as factor

inhibiting women participation in community-based development projects?

Political factors influencing women participation in community-based development

projects

o. How do you think the political class accommodates women participation in

development?

p. Do you think women are considered equally with men in the political arena?

q. Do you think women are able politicians if given a chance equal to men? Describe it

in detail?

r. Describe how gender inequality in politics affects women participation in community

development?

s. What possible solutions do you think mitigates women participation in politics?

Gender-based discriminatory social norms influencing women participation in community-based development projects

t. Do you think there are gender discrimination issues in the community? Describe.

u. Describe what types of gender-based discriminatory social norms affect women participation in community-based development projects?

v. Do you think women get the same support in the community as that of men?

w. Do you think that women have equal opportunities to express their views, opinions, perceptions, and feelings in the community as that of men?

x. What do you think are remedies to eliminate or reduce gender- based discriminatory social norms in the community?

Appendix II

Focus Group Discussion Guidance

I. Background of the Focus Group Discussion

Name of the group _____

Number of group members_____

Position/work: _____

Date of FGD_____

Place for FGD_____

Duration of FGD_____

      II Questions for Focus Group Discussion

    a. How do women regard in the community?

    b. What factors are affecting women participation in development?

    c. What factors affects women participation in community-based development projects?

    d. How economic performance affects women participation in community-based development projects?

    e. How religion affects women participation in community-based development projects?

    f. Describe how political views influence women participation in community-based development projects?

    g. How gender-based discriminatory social norms affect women participation in community-based development projects?

    h. What possible measures would you propose to mitigate the effects of the above-mentioned factors influencing women participation in community-based development projects?