*ASSESSMENT OF WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT DECISION MAKING BODIES: A CASE STUDY IN OROMIA NATIONAL REGIONAL STATE, JIMMA TOWN ETHIOPIA*

*A Thesis  Submitted to the Department of Governance and Development Studies for the Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement of Masters (MA) Degree in Governance and Development Studies*

By:

**Zebiba Seid**

# JIMMA UNIVERSITY
## COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE
## DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

JUNE 2022

JIMMA, ETHIOPIA

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Under the Guidance of;

Main Advisor: Bisrat Gebru (Assistant Prof.)

And

Co-advisor: Gemechu Fikadu (MA)



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# CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the thesis entitles "*Assessment of Women's Participation in Local Government Decision Making Bodies: A Case Study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma City Ethiopia"*, submitted to Jimma University for the award of the Degree of Master of Governance and Development  and is a record of bonafide research work carried out by Ms.  *Zebiba Seid*, under our guidance and supervision.

*Therefore, we hereby declare that no part of this thesis has been submitted to any other university or institution for the award of any degree or diploma.*

| *Main Adviser's Name* | *Date* | *Signature* |
|---|---|---|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| *Co-Advisor's Name* | *Date* | *Signature* |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

# DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis entitled "*Assessment of Women's Participation in Local Government Decision Making Bodies: A Case Study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma City Ethiopia",* has been carried out by me under the guidance and supervision of Bisrat Gebru (Assistant Prof.) And Gemechu Fikadu (MA).

The thesis is original and has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma to any university or institutions.

| Researcher's Name | Date | Signature |
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| _____ | _____ | _____ |

# JIMMA UNIVERSITY

## COLLEGE OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

### DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Assessment of Women's Participation in Local Government Decision Making Bodies: A Case Study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma City Ethiopia

**Approved by Board of Examiners:**

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# 'Acknowledgment'

## 'Abstract'

*This study was aim to investigate women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in a Case Study in Oromia National Regional State, Jimma town Ethiopia. To address this data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The main sections seen in this study are the status of women in decision-making in local government; the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies; the challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies. To conduct this study the researcher used a descriptive research design. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews and the collected data were analyzed in terms of frequency and percentages. The major findings indicate that the status of women in decision-making in local government is low and below expected, and there is no full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security in decision-making in local government under the study area and there is no equal representation of women and men in decision making at the local government of the study area. Based on the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies, findings of the study reveal that local government can't ensure women's equal access to and full participation in decision-making, and the local government is unable to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making, a local government unable to engage women in decision making institutions such as in court by participating in bureaucracies, there is no assessing and grading the equal participation of women and men in decision making at local government and there is also no training regard to skills development given to women from local government. The findings reveal that several challenges faced by women such as poor public relations, women have problems with time management, an absence of enabling environment, and women being too busy with domestic chores that challenge them to participate in decision-making in local government. Based on the findings of the study the researcher forwarded the recommendations as Jimma town administration must promote gender mainstreaming as the main strategy recommended by the national policy of Ethiopia, and develop accountability among staff to promote gender equality; it should be one of the core issues in performance appraisal. Jimma town administration women's affairs office in collaboration with the SARDP gender adviser should develop and implement training programs on gender mainstreaming to enable government staff, to identify the plan and implement a gender-sensitive project focused on issues impeding women's participation in decision-making bodies.*

**Key Words: Women's Participation,  Local Government, Decision-Making Bodies**

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# Lists of Acronym

**BDPA** -Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action

**CEDAW**-Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women

**FDRE-**Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

**NGOs**-None-Governmental Organizations

**NCTPE** -National Committee for Traditional Practices Eradication

**WB-** World Bank

**SARDP** - Sida-Amhara Rural Development Program (SARDP)

**FGD**- Focus Group Discussion

# CHAPTER ONE

# INTRODUCTION

## 1.1Background of the Study

Every human being has the right to participate in decisions that define her or his life. This right is the foundation of the ideal of equal participation in decision-making among women and men (Hanssen, N. 2011). This right argues that since women know their situation best, they should participate equally with men to have their perspective effectively incorporated at all levels of decision-making, from the private to the public spheres of their lives, from the local to the global.

Women around the world have been organizing for greater representation and participation in politics and other decision-making arenas. The right to vote has been one of the first themes around which women activists of the 19[th]century, known as the "suffragettes" mobilized to demand the right of women to vote on equal terms with men in the United Kingdom and the United States (Beijing Platform for action, 2008). Women gained their voting rights at different times in the US in 1920 and in Britain in 1928. In the West, some countries guaranteed women their right to vote quite late. For example, in Switzerland women were only granted the right to vote in 1971, after an all-male electoral referendum on the subject. For example; in 2005, Kuwait was registered as the last country in the world to allow women the right to vote. The law granting female suffrage was passed in 2005 in preparation for the Parliamentary election that took place in June 2006. Women were allowed to vote for the first time during this election and they represented 57% of the voters. Twenty-seven of the 249 candidates were women though, in this first attempt, no women managed to get elected to parliament (Reuters, 2006).

Globally, in the past thirty years, the case for expansion and comprehensive realization of human rights by women in a comprehensive manner has been more or less accepted as legitimate. This is manifested in the growing number of movements and organizations advocating for the rights of women, by the adoption and ratification of international and national legal instruments intended to improve social and economic conditions, and by the participation of women in leadership and decision-making positions (Staffan I., 2004).

According to some social movement theories, groups organize around their respective interests when they realize that their social conditions are not necessarily their failings but are rather caused by structural inequalities (Springer 2005). Women get involved in community activism to change their

working conditions, family relations, or social or economic empowerment. Bookman and Morgen argue that "empowerment begins when they (women) change their ideas about the causes of their powerlessness, when they recognize the systematic forces that oppress them, and when they act to change the conditions of their lives (Brookman and Morgen, 2008).

Participation of women in decision-making in politics and other arenas is a civil right and a matter of justice and equality. It is also crucial that women are represented in decision-making positions to represent, reflect and protect the interests of the female constituency. On the point of women's representation, the former Speaker of the South African parliament, Frene Ginwala says: "The seed of democracy lies in the principle that the legitimacy of the power to make decisions about people's lives, their society, and their country should derive form a choice by those who will be affected" (IDEA, 2005).

In most patriarchal societies, females are regarded as the inferior of the species. Because of this, women are denied access to both honored and utilitarian roles open only to males. Such roles as administration and disposal of property, and leadership roles in societal affairs including religion and governance exclusively belong to males. Even the right of choice in respect to entry to conjugal union is denied to women. While it is known that such discriminatory practices exist in these countries, their prevalence and cultural value systems and norms that perpetuate them are not adequately understood. Sustainable and all-around developments of a society cannot be brought about without the full and unreserved participation of both women and men in the development process, and such a balanced development should also call for the elimination of all forms of discrimination and the protection against all forms of violence against women. According to WB (2008), although women constitute two-thirds of the world's working hours, produce half of the world's food and above all, bear and rear children, women continue to suffer from all forms of discrimination and the absence of adequate protection against violence (WB, 2008).

According to Meaza (2009), Ethiopia is a party to all major human rights treaties including the most important women's conventions, i.e., CEDAW which calls for equal participation of women in public decision-making, Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BDPA), which requires governments to attain a 30% benchmark for women's representation in all public decision making positions (Meaza,2009). Moreover, various literature argues that as compared to prior decades, the participation of women in decision-making throughout the world is somehow increasing. But, despite the

incremental progress toward women's participation in public spheres, it is generally recognized that women have largely remained outside of formal leadership roles due to various factors.

Accordingly, as was stated by Meaza, the main factors which have contributed to such disparities include structural barriers, unequal socio-economic opportunities, and inadequate access to mentors and support networks (Meaza, 2009). Furthermore, the same source has depicted that rigid workplace structure and gender stereotypes that relate socially defined characteristics with certain groups in most cases also dissociate women from decision-making positions.

According to the Permanent Mission of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to the United Nations report (2012), in Ethiopia even though there is progress, the participation of women in a decision-making positions is still low. For example, the percentage of female members in the Ethiopian parliament is only 22% in 2010. Concerning decision-making in the same year, women's representation is 13% at Ministerial, 25% at Commissioner, and 12.7% at Ambassador Level.

Women's equal participation in local government plays a pivotal role in the general processes of the advancement of women. Without the active participation of women and the incorporation of women's standpoint at all levels of decision-making, the goal of equality, development, and peace cannot be achieved.

In the case of Jimma City, women's participation in the decision-making role is still very low. As the data obtained from the Jimma City administration office, and human resource department, many public organizations in the city are dominated by the male Decision maker (Jimma City Administration Office, 2013). Women are underrepresented in politics and civil service, especially in Decision-making positions. There are several laws and policies which guarantee equal pay and employment right, in practice; however, women do not stand an equal chance of promotion.

Having this background, the researcher was motivated to assess the status of women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in some selected public institutions of Jimma city.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

The African Gender and Development Index which compiled and analyzed pilot studies in 12 African countries, provides recent data on the participation of women in decision-making. Some countries such as Mozambique, South Africa, and Ethiopia have made remarkable progress while in other countries progress has been very slow. Some have made moderate significant progress and others have made a little improvement. In many countries, women are participating in areas of the public where they were

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not previously visible. Women are slowly but increasingly occupying senior positions in the public and private sectors, including the judiciary, the Academia, and the media. There was less evidence in the discussion of women in leadership roles in trade unions, professional associations, and non-traditional areas. Men are still overwhelmingly the decision-makers as senior executives and board members of corporations. Public sector officials, judges, lawmakers, media executives, negotiators, trade unions, and leaders in civil society organizations may not have women's issues as their primary concern (Women Watch, 2007).

There are some related local studies regard to women's participation. For example, Emebet Gessesse (2012) conducted on "Women's Participation in Educational Leadership in Government and Private Secondary Schools of Addis Ababa City Administration". The findings of this study indicated that there is still low participation of women in secondary school principals ship and the attitude and challenges like misperception of stakeholders, women's conflict of role between their professional duty and family issues, and women's poor self-image remain unchanged.

It also revealed that there is a gap in increasing awareness of the implementation of policies, rules, and regulations in people's attitude towards women's secondary school principals' ship. Endale Alemu (2014) conducted on "Factors that affect Women Participation in Decision Making Position in Bedele Town". His findings revealed socio-cultural attitudes and a lack of acquisition of the necessary experience for taking part in public decision-making and over the burden of domestic responsibilities. Concerning the above information on the area concerned, there is no study conducted here in Jimma city on women's participation in local government decision-making.

Now a time women have a nominal representation from the Ethiopian parliament up to kebele council but in decision making and participation of political issues was very less, Especially in local government.  In the study area (Jimma Town) the problem of gender difference in decision making process and holding power in government sectors and organs also the serious issue. Even if today''s government encouraged women participation by using affirmative action, there was no practical change in area of politics. Still in woreillu woreda the numbers and quality of women in position of power and decision making capacity are not achieved due to different problem. For instance in institution of court in the area of judge, police and security service only a few women have participated. In almost all kebele leaders or Decision making bodies were men. In case of appointee as a decision making process was also very low. From the total numbers of government's employers **1625**,

the numbers of women civil servants were 612 in 2020. This number is better than those who were represented in executive organs and woreda council (Jimma Town civil service office, 2020). From 612 women civil servants 8.9% only Participate in Decision making positions. The Difference rose from different factors. Those factors are; individual factors, political factors, economic factors and social factors. So to identifying those factors the study would focused on Decision making body of local government and City council.

Therefore, the researchers are initiated to conduct this research mainly because of the following reasons; in the participation of local government decision-making bodies in Jimma city, averagely women were less considered in decision-making bodies and male domination is there. Hence, the researchers want to conduct a women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in a case study in Oromia regional state, Jimma town Ethiopia.

## 1.3 Objectives of the Study

This study has both general and specific objectives to be achieved.

## 1.3.1General Objective of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in a Case Study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma City Ethiopia.

## 1.3.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

This study achieved the following specific objectives in line with basic research questions:

➢ To examine the status of women in decision-making in local government
➢ To assess the condition of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies
➢ To identify the challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies

## 1.4 Research Questions

1. What is the status of women's participation in decision-making in local government?
2. What are the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making?
3. What are the challenges that women face in participating in local government decision-making bodies?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The outcomes of this study will provide useful information for the improvement of women's participation in decision-making at local government bodies in Jimma city, Oromia National Regional State. Therefore, the research will be a very valuable resource material for providing baseline data upon which further studies may be carried out. The finding of the research, enable the public sector organization in general and the study area in particular to identify the challenges that women's faced in the participation of local government decision-making bodies and the contributions of local government to empower women. And also it would help to implement the FDRE policy of gender equality in local government.

In addition to the above significance, it will help to promote public awareness-raising campaigns to combat negative stereotypes, emphasize the legitimate role of women in decision-making processes at all levels, and encourage women's participation in decision-making. Hence, it will help to create awareness on knowledge about women's participation in local government decision-making bodies.

## 1.6 Scope of the Study

The research covered only the public sectors in Jimma City. Indeed, the paper assesses women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in the study area. This research focuses only on women's participation in local government decision-making bodies of public offices in Jimma City. The study is bounded to the assessment of the status, contributions of local government to empower women, and the challenge faced by women to participate in decision-making bodies in the study area. Accordingly, the study was confined to the study area as a consequence of time and availability of information.

## 1.7 Limitations of the Study

The researcher faced some limitations while doing this Study. A few targeted respondents were unwilling to co-operate, they were unwilling to read the questionnaire due to lack of interest. A few respondents who were targeted were not available due to commitments thus necessitating a substitution. Some interviewees misplaced the questionnaires, hence necessitating extra expenses and time in producing more. Finally, the overcrowding of officials due to meetings and other related work.

## 1.8 Organization of the Thesis

This study is organized into five different chapters with heading and sub-heading titles. The first chapter presents with background, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, and significance of the study. The second chapter reveals a review of related literature and empirical works and it begins with concepts of women's participation and decision-making as well as local government. The third chapter deals with research methods including research design, data collection tools, data sources, and method of data analysis. The fourth chapter presents data analysis and presentation. The final chapter reveals a summary of major findings, a conclusion, and possible recommendations.

# CHAPTER TWO
## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter deals with definitions of women's participation, decision-making bodies, local government, women's roles in decision making, challenges to women's participation in decision making, and scholars' assumptions and empirical works regard to women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in the world and local levels.

## 2.1 The Concepts of Participation

Different people defined participation in different ways. Chambers's definition of participation is "a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and decisions and resources which affect them" (World Bank, 2010). According to Human Development Report, participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural, and political process that affects their lives. Participation has both a narrow and wider connotation. In a narrow sense, participation means some specific action by which the citizen participates for a limited purpose. And in wider sense participation refers to the role of members of the general public as distinguished from that of appointed officials, including civil servants, in influencing the activities of government or in providing direction for community needs (Rahman, 2011).

There is also participation in the form of social movements such as nongovernmental organizations, civil society groups including political parties, trade unions, and business organizations, which articulate interests, mobilize support for these, and lobby governmental and non-governmental bodies to outline and implement policies addressing these interests. On the other hand, there is political participation that is represented in elected public bodies such as parliaments, state and local governments, and global social and economic institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization which response to participatory pressures through policymaking and implementation. But, Participation in this research is a representation of women in elected public bodies such as district and village councils and cabinet and local government decision-making positions (World Bank, 2010).

## 2.1.1. The Concept of Women's Participations

Different people defined participation in different ways. Chambers's definition of participation is " a process through which stakeholders influence and share control over development initiatives and decisions and resources which affect them" (World Bank, 1994).

According to Human Development Report, "participation means that people are closely involved in the economic, social, cultural and political process that affects their lives" (1993:1). Participation has both a narrow and wider connotation. In a narrow sense, participation means some specific action by which the citizen participates for a limited purpose. And in wider sense participation refers to the role of members of the general public as distinguished from that of appointed officials, including civil servants, in influencing the activities of government or in providing direction for community needs (Rahman, 1991:14-15). There is also participation in the form of social movements such as nongovernmental organizations, civil society groups including political parties, trade unions, and business organizations, which articulate interests, mobilizes support for these, and lobby governmental and non-governmental bodies to outline and implement policies addressing these interests. On the other hand there is political participation that is represented in elected public bodies such as parliaments, state and local governments, and global social and economic institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the World Trade Organization which respond to participatory pressures through policy making and implementation.

Participation in this research is the representation of women in elected public bodies such as district and city councils and cabinet and local government Decision making positions.

According to UN Asian pacific definition, Women's Participation is conceived as the process and an outcome related to women's engagement in political and economic institutions by participating in bureaucracies, policy-making bodies, and representative organizations. The efficiency of a democratic system cannot be assessed without considering the degree of citizens' representation in decision-making fo ra Real democracy cannot be strengthened in a society where a considerable share of the electorate is not constantly represented. A system based on political competition where inequality is perpetuated is not an open system and it does not take into account the principle of meritocracy and competencies. If such a representation imbalance persists, it will generate in the future a democratic deficit. (Daniela (2013))

The increase of political participation of women in governance structures is considered as one of the basic ways to strengthen gender balance in the society. In fact, the representation of women in the

decision-making process is very inhomogeneous and it depends on the administrative level and on political events occurred each year. Political participation of women depends on a number of factors, such as: awareness of one's own rights and claiming them, access to information on the legislation in force, on policies, institutions and structures which "govern" their life; self-confidence, self-esteem and capacity to provoke and to face (if needed) the existing State structures; networks and relationship providing support and models of positive role; an environment "empowering" them a political, legal, economic and cultural environment favorable for full involvement of women in decision-making processes. Other factors include: economic dependence and shortage of appropriate financial resources; different employment opportunities (and, implicitly, career development); discriminatory social-cultural attitudes and negative stereotypes perpetuated within families and in public life; overload with domestic responsibilities; intimidation, harassment and violence; lack of access to information. (Daniela (2013))

## 2.2. Theories related to women participation in Decision Making

### 2.2.1 Personal Factors Theory

Feminists advance three broad perspectives in trying to explain the absence of women from senior management in the public and private sector. The first perspective is personal factors in which the paucity of women in management positions is attributed. This includes, psychosocial attributes, including personality characteristics, attitudes and behavioral skills of women themselves. Among personal factors, we see self-esteem and self-confidence, lack of motivation and ambition to accept challenges "to go up the ladder", women's low potential for leadership, less assertiveness, less emotional stability and lack of ability to handle a crisis (Bond, 1996). According to Singh and Shahabudin 2000), personal factors such as, assertiveness, confidence, resourceful creativeness, loyalty and trustworthiness are major diversion women to ascend to senior management positions.

### 2.2.2 Cultural Factors Theory

Smulders (1998) explores how the cultural factors at the work place, are carried into the work place and kept in place because the actors involved, both dominant and subordinate, subscribe to social and organization reality. She stated that cultural factors lead to stereotypical views about women's abilities within the cultural context. The view that top management positions are only suitable for men relegates women to secondary roles. The emphasis is placed on women's role as mothers, caregivers and nurturers. In this context, women are only seen as mothers, wife or daughter.

### 2.2.3 Liberal Feminist Theory

There are several feminist theories that are used in gender studies. They attempt to explain issues involved in decision making, policies and practices of organizations. Liberal feminism is rooted in the tradition of the16th and 17th century liberal philosophy. Liberal feminism focused on the ideas of equality and liberty (Wollstonecraft, 1792). According to Wollstonecraft western feminist theorist argued, that women's capacity to reason was equal to that of men and that biological sex differences were irrelevant in granting any rights. She further argued that the reason women appeared to be intellectually inferior was due to their inferior education and therefore, was a result of inequality, rather than justification for it.

Liberal feminist see women subordination as resulting from gendered norms, rather than biological sex, and aim to change these norms. Liberal feminists focus on equal opportunities for men and women in education and all sphere of life. The same education provided to a man if provided to a woman will allow a woman to assume responsibility for her own development and growth. But unless society provides equal education with the same civil liberties and economic opportunities a man has. A woman will only exercise her hard won autonomy only within the private or domestic realm. These feminists are also concerned with ensuring that laws and policies do not discriminate against women. Liberal feminists are further looking forward to the removal of barriers that prevent women from operating effectively in public spheres on equal terms with men. Despite the fact that several policies on affirmative action are in place, women are still lagging behind in all aspects. For example, though women are employed, very few women are in senior management positions but are concentrated in technical and support staff positions only.

## 2.3 The Concepts of Local Government

The local government is an organized social entity with a feeling of oneness. By definition, local government means an intra-sovereign governmental unit within the sovereign state dealing mainly with local affairs, administered by local authorities and subordinate to the state government (Jahan, 2007). In political terms, it is concerned with the governance of a specific local area, constituting a political subdivision of a nation, state, or another major political unit. In the performance of its functions, it acts as the agent of the state. In other words, the local government is an integral part of the political mechanism for governance in a country. Then, as a body corporate with the juristic person, it represents a legal concept (Muttalib and Khan, 2013). According to the Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, "Local Government in every administrative unit of the Republic shall be

entrusted to bodies. These are District and village. The district is the lower government administrative unit.

## 2.3 Women's Ability to Make a Difference

A most critical determinant of women's ability to make a difference is the nature of governance and the political mainstream where women are beginning to participate. Decision-making in public offices is supposed to be positions of public trust, i.e., those who assume these positions are responsible or accountable to the electorate or the taxpayers, or the general public. But the degree of observance of public accountability varies among countries. The more feudal governance is with patronage well-entrenched as a tradition, the more accountability will tend to be defined by narrower personal, family, or clan interests as well as those of one's political group and patrons (Leijenaar. T and Monique K. 2009).

The interests of the greater public would be of lower priority, if not easily ignored, were it not for security concerns and ensuring peace and order which could compel those in power to engage in the rhetoric of public service and welfare. On the other hand, the more democratic governance is, the more likely developed are the mechanisms for public accountability and the more politically mature are the citizens, who are aware of their rights and demand accountability from public officials, and the greater the sense of accountability to the general public of those voted and appointed to public office.

The ability of women to make a difference may also be a function of what factors propelled them to public office. The circumstances of women's entry into positions of power will determine whether they will be politically marginalized or become key players in their political organization and the decision-making positions in public office that they assume. Were they thrust into politics by luck of a dynastic prerogative when one carries the name and by some osmosis the reputation of a recognized national leader or a renowned politician as a wife or a daughter? Are they tokens selected by political parties, or the product of a calculation by political parties of the value that women could bring to the party as a response to some advocacy or legislation for more equal political participation by women? Or did they cut their teeth in political work and rose through the ranks of political parties on merit to become effective recognized party leaders?

## 2.4. Status of Women's Participation in Decision-Making Bodies

### 2.4.1. Decision-Making

A decision is an act of selection or choice of one action from several alternatives.

Decision-making can be defined as the process of selecting a right and effective course of action from two or more alternatives for the purpose of achieving a desired result. Decision-making is the essence of management. According to P. F. Drucker – "What-ever a manager does he does through making decisions." All matters relating to planning, organizing, direction, co-ordination and control are settled by the managers through decisions which are executed into practice by the operators of the enterprise. Objectives, goals, strate-gies, policies and organizational designs are all to be decided upon in order to regulate the performance of the business. The entire managerial process is based on decisions. Decisions are needed both for tackling the problems as well as for taking maximum advantages of the opportunities available. Correct decisions reduce complexities, uncertainties and diversities of the organizational environments.

The decision-maker should not only be an observer while others will perform as per his decision. He should also participate in completing the work for which decision was taken by him. This experience will help him in decision-making in future. The principle of participation in work of the decision-maker will enable him to understand whether the decision taken is practical and also guide him in forthcoming decisional matters.

### 2.4.2. Status of Women's Participation in Decision-Making

According to Niraja, in the last ten years, there has been progress toward the equal representation of men and women in decision-making. As of September 2005, the global average for women in parliaments stands at 16.0 percent. Additionally, women have achieved 30 percent representation or more in national parliaments in 19 countries. However, progress has been uneven and slow and in some cases, there have been significant setbacks. Twenty-two countries out of 167 had reversals in women's representation in parliaments, while ten remained static (IPU, 2005). Progress in the political empowerment of women in Africa as well has been very slow although isolated cases of better progress can be identified at the country level. "Africa's regional average representation of women in national legislative assemblies stands at 11 percent reflecting little progress in achieving the 30% target of women in decision-making positions by 1995 set by the UN Economic and Social Council. Another report similarly showed that women parliamentarians constituted only 10.4% of total parliamentarians across Africa by January 1997.

## 2.5 Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Decision-Making Bodies

Impediments differ according to countries and regions, and even within one country, they are not always of the same features. For the sake of simplifying what could be a long and interminable list, therefore, the challenges are broken down into social/cultural, economic, and political spheres.

## 2.5.1 Social/Cultural Factors

The socio-economic position of women in societies negatively affects their participation. Typically, women earn less than men, and the sexual division of labor in society also imposes burdens on women that are not normally faced by men. Women often face a triple burden when participating in politics. They have a responsibility to their work or profession, to their family, and if they become involved in politics they are effectively taking on a third full-time job. Most societies fail to organize in a manner that enables both men and women with families to share these responsibilities, particularly considering that child-rearing responsibilities tend to fall disproportionately on women

Even though 'culture' and debates about it, have elicited an entire discipline within the social sciences, it remains an elusive concept to define. However, for practical purposes, it can be assumed that culture encompasses particular lifestyles derived from history, and perceived traditions, as well as both a product of and a motor for contemporary social and political dynamics. In short, therefore, culture is that which surrounds us and plays a certain role in determining the way we behave at any given moment in time. By no means a static concept, culture defines and is both defined by events that are taking place both locally as well as regionally, and internationally, it is shaped by individual events as well as collective ones, and it is a feature of the time or epoch we live in. Because it is so vast, culture is also often used as a tool to validate all manners of actions - not, all of which may be acceptable to all concerned - and are often intimately, connected to issues of identity. Cultural frameworks are not always imposed but are open to manipulation and interpretation from many angles and sources.

A significant social feature resides in the double if not triple - responsibilities of women: In most countries, women are perceived to have 'primary' responsibilities as wives and mothers. But in many cases, either as a result of a preference for personal development or out of sheer economic necessity, women also go out to work in the employment market. Hence, a political career may well come in these cases either as a second or third job. Juggling these different occupations and their consequent responsibilities is no easy task for anyone - man or woman.

Societal perceptions regarding the traditional division of labor, where women are seen as bound to certain functions only, are also an important barrier that many women the world over the face. This idea is closely connected with a definition and understanding of space as dichotomized between the public and the private spheres, where women are meant to belong to the latter. These notions are remarkably persistent and are at the basis of much of the difficulties women face not only entering into the political sphere but also gaining credibility and impacting from within it.

The stigma of politics as 'dirty' is somewhat connected to the previous notion but is also more specific to certain countries where political scandal and intrigue dominate the headlines. Russia, with the latest events related to the murder of the woman Member of Parliament, in addition to widespread rumors about Mafia involvement, is a good example, (Azza M Karam, 2008).

Provision of social services and a support network based on family-friendly considerations are still lacking in many countries. There are many success stories of how women's actual involvement in politics has impacted favorably on this area which will be elaborated on in the following sections. But it remains an important requirement if women are to be able to overcome the difficulties of the double/triple responsibilities and stereotyped roles (Lie, 2009).

Illiteracy is another problem. According to the UNDP 1995 Human Development Report, out of the developing world's 900 million illiterate people, women outnumber men two to one, and girls constitute the majority of the 130 million children without access to primary school. Further, because population growth has superseded the expansion of women's education in some developing regions, the number of illiterate women has increased.

Leijenaar (2009) makes a distinction between individual and institutional factors affecting the chances of women becoming involved in political decision-making. Below are explained the factors and mechanisms that give women a disadvantaged position.

## 2.5.2 Individual Factors

Address the extent to which individual characteristics favor political participation. In general, women are less interested in politics; both women and men often see politics as a men's affair. Women have not learned to develop political capacities, because public sector activities are usually seen as male. As a consequence women lack confidence in their political capabilities.

The experts agreed that electoral systems had a direct impact on women's participation in decision-making bodies. Research consistently shows that women's representation is highest in countries using

proportional representation (PR) systems. PR systems lead parties to balance their electoral tickets which often results in women's demands for greater equality in decision-making being heard. Most majoritarian systems allow for the nomination of only one candidate per district, and parties overwhelmingly in this situation choose a male candidate. There are many other aspects of electoral system design that can affect women's representation and should be carefully considered, such as electoral thresholds (the minimum percent of the vote required to obtain a seat in parliament), district magnitude (the number of seats divided by the number of districts), and open versus closed lists in PR systems (Brown, 2006),

## 2.5.3 Institutional Norms and Values

To become active as a politician women are hampered by their care-taking tasks and their responsibility for the household. They often lack support from their husband or family. Impediments in the structure of society for women are limited access to leadership, managerial skills and training, lack of female role models and mentors, disproportional expectations, and violence against women (Haregewoin C., 2003).

The political participation of women also depends on the social and cultural climate of a country: religious and patriarchal norms and values may exclude women from public life. Andersen's research in Tanzania (1992) showed that all women local leaders despite internal differences have had to fight hard to get an education and to conquer male resistance against their political activity. Many of them have experienced one or more divorces and today about half of the women live as single women. Accusations against female leaders of being prostitutes, witches, etc. are frequent and indicate that the women leaders challenge some very fundamental values concerning the proper distribution of tasks and responsibilities between men and women. They challenge prevailing gender ideologies and gender identities in the area.

## 2.5.4 Religious factors

Religion is another important source of cultural beliefs in most countries. Arguments about women"s inferiority to men are present across all dominant religions, and religion has long been used to exclude women from aspects of social, political, or religious life around the world. But the major religions of the world are differentially conservative or patriarchal in their views about the place of women, in the church and in society. For example, Protestantism promotes nonhierarchical religious practices and more readily accepts women as religious leaders compared with Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity. And Islamic law is typically interpreted in a manner that constrains the activities of

women. Hence, exclusion of women from religious institutions and religious leadership may have negative impact on women‟s status in society and limit their opportunities in politics and public life. Hence, religious is one of the anachronistic cultural beliefs in many communities in the country that excludes women from the mainstream of leadership. In most religions, power and authority is believed to divinely belong to men hence subjugating women. Thus women are encouraged to play subsidiary roles since their place is in the kitchen and men are the decision makers. Arguments about women‟s inferiority to men are present across all dominant religions, and traditionally religion has long been used to exclude women(schaefer, 2004)

## 2.5.5 Economic Factors

In many countries of the South, the greatest challenges for human development in general, and women's participation in public life in particular, are the changes in the global economic market, poverty, and illiteracy. Although it is a commonly held refrain that economic and political development goes hand in hand, the situation of women's empowerment in some countries with a high per capita income, such as some of the oil-producing states, disproves this commonly held belief (Lemlem Bekele, 2016).

Hence, there is no one country, which claims to be satisfied with the situation of women's political participation. Even in Sweden, with a high per capita income and standard of living, and hailed as a model for other nations of the world with its gender equality policies and its over 40% female parliamentary representation, there are still many complaints of certain entrenched (and often subtle) macho attitudes towards women gaining influence.

Poverty is seen as a major impediment largely because it means that women are, or become, more concerned with earning their daily living than following any specific political development. Moreover, the process referred to as the feminization of poverty means that most of those affected tend to be women, so how can they be expected to find the time to actively participate in a political process? Worse still, the question needs to be asked whether there is any direct advantage accruing to these women from having women politicians as yet (Blau, F. D., 2002).

Another factor is the lack of adequate financial resources that women tend to have access to. The impact of this can be felt primarily when financing electoral campaigns, as well as the ability of women politicians to undertake certain initiatives. Although a major recommendation of many international gatherings is that both political parties, as well as governments, attempt to provide and set up various

funds especially destined for women, women in many parts of the world still end up with less if any access to resources (Lemlem Bekele, 2016).

## 2.5.5 Political Factors

The electoral system plays an important role in determining whether or not women get properly involved on party lists or get elected. Several research results indicate that Proportional Representation systems are most conducive to women's legislative presence. As indicated earlier, however, most of the information available on this issue is specific to the Western world. Moreover, it is also a case that each electoral system does not operate in a void but is affected by other cultural and economic considerations (Arvey, R. D., 2006). Hence, no one particular system can be universally advocated.

The structures and agendas of political parties are other factors in consideration of women's political participation. Many political parties, reflecting the more general conditions in the rest of society, do not easily accept or promote many women into their echelons, let alone women's occupation of important positions within these parties. This issue is particularly important because of current discussions about the overall role and functioning of political parties, and the concerns being raised about the political viability and popularity of such vehicles in the face of emerging alternative political entities, such as NGOs (WHO, 2005).

The lack of sufficient training and communication skills, or media know-how, is also extremely problematic for women in developed and developing countries alike. In the age of the media, women politicians need to use the media and be constructively used by it for purposes of positive image building, constituency creation, and consolidation, as well as the dissemination of their agendas. This issue is compounded by a corresponding lack of interest on the part of the media in women politicians. "Just being a woman politician is not enough to raise interest we need a story that is interesting and would attract attention 8is not an uncommon view from media personnel (Rotundo, M., 2006).

One of the defining features of global culture today and in the 21stcentury is media and its sister development of information technology. The latter will emerge as perhaps the most determining variables in events in the years to come, and the capacity to own, influence and manipulate these structures will determine where and with whom power lies.

Access to technology remains an imperative that only the privileged enjoy. Previously, the statement that was almost a cliché was that knowledge is power. Today and in the coming century, access to technology is at the basis of global power relations, and hence also a determinant feature of gender

relations and women's empowerment. Today's technology determines a great deal of the availability of information, and hence, knowledge.

Women who have limited access to such things as office facilities, computers (i.e. the software and the hardware), and the Internet which have become almost basic features of any office and individual in the developed world are at a distinct disadvantage in terms of their capacity, efficiency and potential locally as well as internationally (Endale Alemu, 2014).

In general, not all of the challenges are new, but most fall into broader frameworks of culture, economics, and politics. These frameworks are not rigid, however, since many of the challenges overlap, e.g. culturally-determined gendered role allocations also play a role in media reluctance to take an interest, which in turn, reflects on how popular and/or understanding of women's political platforms and achievements can be, and how far their impact thus is. Also, questions around the choice of any particular electoral system are affected by the cultural and economic features of any country, as are aspects of access to technology, which are closely connected to the economic capabilities of countries. In fact, a great deal has already been achieved as earlier sections have also indicated. The provision of international norms and the strengthening of global networking provide important tools for moving in the direction of enhancing women's political participation (Blau, F. D. & Ferber, M. A., 2002).

## 2.6 Strategies to Increase Women's Participation

The most common mechanism for increasing women's participation in decision-making is an electoral quota and leadership position, which is defined as a mandatory percentage of women candidates for public elections. While in a few countries reserved seats for women existed as far back as the 1950s, the real push for quotas came in the 1990s with the introduction of quotas in Argentina in 1991 and the adoption of the Beijing Platform for Action at the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995. While quotas were met with great hope by women throughout the world, their history is decidedly mixed. In mapping the implementation of quotas, International IDEA found nearly 100 countries that had either implemented quotas, previously used quotas or were considering implementing quotas. Of these, 10 countries had adopted reserved seat guarantees and 30 countries had adopted legislation mandating quotas. In addition, 130 political parties in 61 countries had voluntarily adopted quotas (Staffan I and Lindberg, 2004).

## 2.6.1 Equal opportunities policies

Most of the equal opportunity policies stress three major areas for the advancement of gender equality for women and men: full achievement of human rights; equal access to resources and services; and equal participation in political and economic decision-making. According to the UN, (2007) equal opportunity policies should contain: Employment and economic activities, because most women work in the informal sectors, with low productivity and incomes, poor working conditions, and little or no social protection; Governance, as in many countries women are marginalized as decision-makers. To protect the fundamental human rights of women, legislation ensuring equal rights for men and women must also be accompanied by implementation; Access to education, where gender equality is related in particular to the responsibility of women for everyday tasks in the household; Health, as women have limited access to basic health services and especially in the sphere of sexual and reproductive health.

## 2.6.2 Positive Action Strategies

The successful implementation of positive action strategies in political decision-making had challenged the gender distribution of political power over policy institutions and technical, human, and financial resources (Maria Stratigaki, 2005). This is mainly due to the successful application of gender mainstreaming strategies, which is one of the appropriate tools to achieve gender equality, (Bruno et al., 2006).

Bruno further explained that the effectiveness of widespread and quick adoption of mainstreaming as a gender equality strategy by prestigious international organizations (International Labor Organization, United Nations, European Union, Council of Europe, Organization for Economic Development and Cooperation) was extremely important for the adoption of mainstreaming and provided a common referential frame. Gender mainstreaming has also achieved a measure of institutionalization as a result of the dual pressures of supranational requirements and domestic demands for compliance.

## 2.7 Women's Status, Policies, and Challenges in Ethiopia

Like many African countries, the majority of women in Ethiopia hold low status in society. They have been denied equal access to education, training and gainful employment opportunities and their involvement in policy formulation and decision-making processes has been minimal. Although women constitute 49.8% of the population and contribute their share in agricultural production and other household activities, they have not benefited from their labor equally with their male counterparts. The participation of women in qualified jobs and related fields is at its lowest level. For instance, the

National Labor Force Survey (CSA, 2009) indicates that women account for only 23.9% in technical and professional fields. The majority of women perform tiresome, low-paid, and even unpaid jobs. The 1994 census on employment also shows that women represent only 27.3% of the total government employees and 93.2% of them are engaged in low-grade jobs.

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) formulated several laws and policies to promote gender equality. Particularly Article 35 of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia stipulates the rights of women. The government has also been promoting the mainstreaming of gender in all its development policies and strategies to address gender inequality.

Women's National Policy was formulated and adopted in 1993 to address gender inequality. National institutional machinery was established at federal, regional, and district levels to implement the policy. The Women's Affairs Office has been re-established as a full-fledged Ministry in October 2005 with the duties and responsibilities of ensuring participation and empowerment of women in political, economic, social, and cultural matters.

The Labor proclamation No 42/93 as well as the newly amended labor law 377/2004 stipulates that women shall not be discriminated against in employment and equal payment based on their sex. It also prohibits the employment of women in a type of work that may be harmful to their health. The criminal code/penal code has been recently revised and amended to address discrimination against women and protect them from criminal acts such as rape, abduction, Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), sexual exploitation and harassment …etc. The Criminal procedural code has also been revised and the first draft has been submitted to the Council of Ministers. The document is forwarded to the parliament for further comment and approval.

Moreover, efforts have been made to address the problem of gender inequality and gender-based discrimination in the Education and training policy. The economic Reform policy that was formulated in 1992 also aims to promote economic development and improve the living standard of the most vulnerable sections of the society, particularly women.

The economic policy ensured equal rights of agricultural land use, control, and participation of women in extension services. The Health Policy, Developmental Social Welfare Policy, Cultural Policy, the Policy on Natural Resources and the Environment, the Civil Service Proclamation, Pension Law, Penal Code…etc. aim to improve the livelihood of women.

## 2.8 Opportunities and Challenges of Women's Participation in Decision Making

A profound change in political, economic social and cultural relationships has dominated in Ethiopia providing women, government as well as NGOs with challenges concerning women's status. This has called for concert efforts to put into action the goals and strategies laid down in the constitution, the National Women's Policy, and the overall Rural-Centered Development program. The National Gender Policy framework and the constitution are meant to provide a framework that all government structures and development partners can use to tackle women' in their general or specific activities. It is also an opportunity to have not only legislative support, and policy framework but also institutional arrangements that enable the mainstreaming of gender concerns in all programs and activities as was recommended by the Beijing platform for action for the advancement of women.

Despite all the positive and encouraging activities ahead is much more challenging when it comes to the implementation of the action plan. Despite the fact of the political commitment, legal support, and institutional arrangement the bureaucratic resistance to accepting the gender experts as equal partners and to the gender-equitable integration of women as the subject of public policy has made it more difficult to perform effectively because of the traditional set up of society and thinking.  The more serious shortcoming is the absence of organizations as constituencies to the national machinery in the civil society, because of experience and because of lack of resources combined with the reluctance of women themselves.

To accelerate the advancement of women in Ethiopia, it is believed that trespassing from the public to the private and from the private to the public is the mechanism that generates a form of genuine grassroots feminism where solidarity links and communication networks are set up around anew awareness of common interests.

Allocation of a special fund for women's organizations is, therefore, a goal to be achieved by mid-1999 because women's organizations are believed to serve as a special forum for women to get exposures to be informed on their rights and to make pressure on their constitutional rights so that their participation and being beneficiaries can be guaranteed in all walks of their lives.

## 2.9 Conditions that Enable Women to be Effective in Decision-Making

The experts identified three important conditions that contribute to the ability of women to effectively promote gender equality, including through gender mainstreaming efforts: the presence of individual women, and in some cases men, who as critical actors play key roles in the political process; how certain political processes and institutions enhance women's political influence - critical structures; he

unfolding of certain periods or moments when forces combine to provide unprecedented opportunities for women to influence the policy-making process -critical junctures.

## 2.9.1 Critical actors

Although many advocates of women's empowerment have identified a critical mass of women in elected office as being a crucial factor in their ability to influence policy processes and outcomes, the experts observed that this is not always the case. Recent research suggests that a simple rise in numbers does not necessarily add up to a more effective female presence in parliament. For example, the increase in the number of women in parliaments can lead to more bills on women's issues but does not necessarily strengthen the political alliances necessary to get the bills passed. Women elected due to the introduction of quotas will not automatically become strategic allies in promoting policies that favor gender equality and gender mainstreaming.

How women enter positions of power can determine whether they will be politically marginalized or become key players in their political organizations and in the decision-making positions in public office that they assume. Some women work their way up from the grassroots and through the party structures, which gives them both experience and legitimacy.

Others enter politics as proxies for male relatives who are unable to run for office due to prohibitions on re-election or ironically the presence of gender quotas. While many of these 'proxy women representatives' remain politically marginalized with little impact on gender equality issues, others become competent political agents in their own right through the process of political socialization that begins as soon as they enter the political arena, gain experience, and, in many cases, face gender discrimination.

The formulation of women's interests is highly context-specific. The ease with which women a legislator act individually and collectively on gender equality issues does not depend on their sex per se or their strength in terms of numbers. The different life experiences, multiple social identities, and adherence to various political or religious doctrines all shape how women as much as men come to define what they believe is in their best interest.

## 2.9.2 Critical Structures

The experts noted that structural elements of each country's political system and environment exert a strong influence on women's effective participation in policy-making. Some particularly important aspects of the political environment were identified as:- the intensity of ideological conflicts and their impact on society, for instance through profound violence and disruption; whether gender equality issues are regarded as politically salient; the degree to which parties are open to dialogue with social movement actors, particularly the women's movement; extreme poverty and human suffering and resulting economic and social dislocation.

The most critical determinant of women's ability to make a difference is the nature of governance and the political mainstream. The degree of accountability varies among countries. In patronage-oriented systems, accountability will tend to be defined by narrower personal, family, or clan interests as well as those of political groups and patrons. More democratic governance is accompanied by more developed mechanisms for public accountability. There is a notion of the public good; decision-making posts are viewed as positions of public trust; and citizens are more politically mature, aware of their rights, and likely to demand accountability from public officials. The experts identified three key areas where issues of accountability are important: political parties, parliaments, and the executive branch of government.

## 2.9.3 Critical Junctures

Experts noted that critical junctures such as peace processes, transitions to democracy, and the drafting of new constitutions, provide opportunities for women's participation. During such periods of change and transition, the monopoly of political parties over policy decisions and the policy formation process, in general, is relaxed and access expands to non-traditional political actors.

These are key moments for the representation of the interests of many different social groups. Such political opportunities are not gender-neutral and women's movements and agencies involved in such processes need to seize these opportunities to push for gender-sensitive reforms.

Such moments also allow temporary coalitions to form between women legislators around very specific issues on which there are no major divergences, for example on a package of reforms. In Central America, for example, women's cross-party coalitions managed to overcome the bitter ideological divisions of the civil wars. During the peace process in El Salvador, women came together to adopt reforms on several issues such as gender quotas, responsible paternity, and domestic violence. During the transition to democracy in Uruguay in the mid-1980s the all-party Working Group on Women's

Status, which had struggled to be included within the National Consensus-Building Forum, managed to draw up a set of recommendations on domestic violence, overcoming traditional rivalries between the two historically dominant parties. For example; by contrast, the post-Communist constitutions drafted in Eastern Europe were only marginally influenced by women legislators, whose numbers dropped dramatically, as a result of the transition from the one-party rule and the weakness of civil society.

## 2.10 The Impact of Women's Equal Participation in Decision-Making

The experts emphasized the importance of two normative premises for women to make a difference in all areas of policy: those women should be brought in on an equal footing with men in decision-making and that citizens need to be educated about good governance to make their governments accountable (Sosena, 2008).

With these premises in mind, the experts assessed the impact of women's participation in decision-making in gender equality policy, peace-building, and socio-economic development. Impact on Gender Equality Policy. Experts agreed that women's participation in decision-making has implications for promoting gender equality:

Women have played an important role in writing and amending constitutions that address the issues of gender equality. Two notable examples include the French parity constitutional amendment on equal representation of men and women, and the post-apartheid constitutional drafting process in South Africa;

Most countries have established national machinery for the advancement of women aimed, inter alia at promoting, supporting, and monitoring gender mainstreaming, that is, a cross-sectoral approach to integrating gender equality concerns into all areas of public policy. This national machinery, in alliance with women legislators and local and regional women's movements, has made important gains in terms of removing anachronistic and discriminatory provisions from legal codes and promoting women's rights. Thanks in part to some women leaders taking up this issue; the eradication of violence against women in both the domestic and the public sphere has gained momentum as a global movement.

Impact on peace-building: women and men experience conflict and its aftermath differently. The economic and physical vulnerability of women is compounded by sexual violence, terrorism, counter-terrorism, and insurgency. Women are expected to hold together their fractured families, rebuild shattered infrastructure, and divided communities. Unequal distribution of resources has been identified as one of the primary causes of conflicts; however, although women are on average more economically

disadvantaged than men, they have consistently been on the vanguard of the movement for a peaceful resolution.

## 2.11 General Situation of Women in Ethiopia

Women comprise about 49.9% of the estimated Ethiopian population of 77.1 million (CSA, 2007). Among the total heads of households, 25.5% are females with 23% of them in rural and 39% in urban areas. Like their counterparts in developing countries, women in Ethiopia face a set of multiple, cross-cutting, and interrelated problems. These problems limit Ethiopian women's access to productive resources, basic health services, and educational and employment opportunities. Hence most of them do not participate in decision-making processes (Tsehai, 2008).

In general, Women in Ethiopia occupy low status in society. Despite their contributions to the well-being of their family and community affairs in general, women experience lower socioeconomic status as a whole and hence are marginalized from making decisions at all levels. Women are facing multiple forms of deprivation. Gender-based discrimination, lack of protection of basic human rights, violence, lack of access to productive resources, education and training, basic health services, and employment are widespread (National Committee for Traditional Practices Eradication (NCTPE), 2003).

Ethiopian women suffer from work stereotypes and gender distribution of labor, more are occupied in economically invisible work. Women experience lower socioeconomic status in general and hence are marginalized from making decisions at all levels. Nonetheless, women are poor in terms of access to resources, services, and employment. Women are underrepresented in the formal sector of employment. The survey conducted by the Central Statistical Authority (CSA, 2004) showed that women account for less than half (43%) of the total employees in the country. Considering the percentage of female employees from the total number of employees by employment type, the highest was in domestic activities (78%) and followed by unpaid activities (59.3%).

In other types of formal employment (e.g. government, NGOs, and private organizations), the percentage of female workers is less than 35.

On the other hand, the survey showed an over-representation of female workers in the informal sector. About 58% of working women work in the informal sector whereas the percentage of working men in the informal sector was 37.7 % (ibid). The breakdown of the federal government employees by occupational groups also indicated gender disparity.

Of federal government employees found in the clerical and fiscal type of jobs 71.3 % were female, while the percentage of females was slightly more than half (51%) in the custodial and manual type of jobs. Women makeup 25% and 18% of the administrative and professional and scientific job categories, respectively, indicating that upper and middle-level positions are overwhelmingly dominated by men (Federal Civil Service Commission, 2005). This concentration of women in the informal sector and low-level positions implies their earnings. In this regard, the survey showed four out of ten women civil servants earn Birr 300 a month compared to two out of ten men (Federal Civil Service Commission, 2005).

## 2.12 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework refers to the cycle of women's participation in decision-making at local government bodies. Below follows the inter-related conceptual framework for women's participation equity in decision-making processes:

a) **Political Participation**: This involves the development of political agendas and operational planning, detailing activities such as discussion, debate, lobbying, and activism that will create women's equal participation in politics and decision-making (Stokes, 2005).

b) **Political Leadership:** This involves women's participation and representation in appointive and elective party leadership.

c) **Access to making decisions and Commitment**: This refers to the visible implementation of gender equity and women's empowerment issues clearly stated in decision-making at the local government body.

4) **Participation in Economic Decision-Making**: This refers to women's participation in domestic or institutional financial decision-making.

e) **Participation in organizational Decision-Making**: This refers to women's participation in formulating and executing decisions concerning organizations
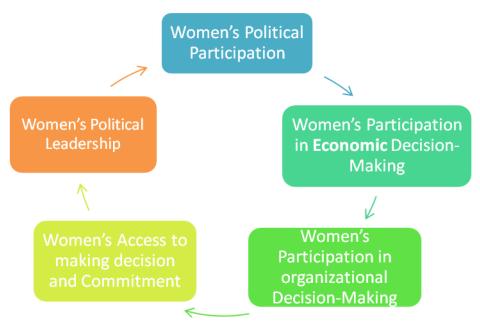
**Women's Political Participation**

**Women's Political Leadership**

**Women's Participation in Economic Decision-Making**

**Women's Access to making decision and Commitment**

**Women's Participation in organizational Decision-Making**

**Fig 1. Conceptual Framework (SOURCES, Thomas and B Woroniuk, 2006)**

## 2.13 Empirical Literature Review

Patrick Musyoki Wambua (2013) conducted on the factors influencing the participation of women in the decision-making process in community projects in Kitui Central District Kitui County. The study sought to establish the influence of levels of education, government legal structures, and cultural factors in influencing the participation of women in the decision-making process in community projects. The findings of the study were that educational level and academic qualifications have a significant influence on women's participation in the decision-making process as well as in community project leadership. This was supported by the majority of the respondents totaling 73.3%. It was established that the legal structures of the government have much significance in influencing the participation of women in the leadership of community projects. This view was supported by 75.3% of the respondents. The cultural factors were found to have a major influence on women's participation in community project leadership to a great extent which was supported by 53.3% of the respondents.

Anwar A. Ibrahim (2012) Promoting women's participation in decision-making at the local level a case study of Barzan Sub-district in Kurdistan Region of Iraq. It focused on women's participation in decision-making from the perspective of gender and development. Democratic governance and decentralization served as the main theoretical framework and precondition for analyzing participation. The involvement of women in the decision-making process at the local level in Kurdish society is limited. The study revealed that the triangle of traditional cultural structure namely tribalism, religious

and patriarchal issues integrated into a complex scheme and paralleled with a long centralized mindset, has weakened the process of women's participation in the decision-making process. Also, the limited capacity of civil society, lack of internal democracy of political parties, and decentralized power absorbed by the regional government have created power centers instead of power trickling down to the local level. It again came to light that decentralization as a strategy changes structures and power relations among levels of government and key stakeholders and those negative aspects of traditional culture and the tenets of democracy do not jointly work together. In reality, it is difficult to bring them together to ensure harmony.

Bogie Kene (2016) conducted on Political Participation of Woman at Local Level: The case of Sebeta Town Administration, Oromia National Regional State. The study revealed that the political participation of Women's problems in Sebeta town is mainly due to a lack of equal education opportunities, and the historically rooted gender-based division of labor. More importantly, the lack of economic power of women to cover their living expenses is also limiting their participation. As they lack their income, they consider attending the meeting, election campaigns, and others as time-wasting, because they have to take care of their domestic affairs like care given to children and cocking.

Endale Alemu Hora (2014) Factors that affect Women Participation in Leadership and Decision-Making Position. The study revealed that in public institutions existed in Bedele Town, the majority of women were having an educational status of diploma and lower, held lower non-decision making and leadership positions, and observed major barriers hindering women from public leadership and decision-making positions include: Socio-cultural attitudes and a lack of acquisition of the necessary experience for taking part in public decision-making, Over the burden of domestic responsibilities continuation of the negative attitudes regarding women's ability to lead and govern, Lack of role models of women leaders for young women and girls and the like can be stated.

Lemlem Bekele (2016) Assessment of Factors Affecting Women Participation in Managerial Positions: the case of Arba Minch University. The study revealed that the current position of women in managerial positions was minimal. Major factors for this were lack of delegation, recommendation, educational gap, socio-cultural factors, gender stereotype, male dominance and dual responsibility of women. Based on the findings, the study suggested that there should be affirmative action, equal opportunity policy, elimination of gender stereotypes, providing legislative and infrastructural support and special training program as a necessary action to bring a significant change in women's participation in managerial positions.

Adonay Habtu (2014) on Women's Participation in Public Administration in Tigray, Ethiopia: Institutional Policy Success with Cultural Challenge. As to the finding, there are two conflicting value systems regarding the participation of women in public administration. The state value system including the laws and policies promotes the empowerment of women at all levels.

On the other hand, the cultural value system restrains women from being processed. The participation of women in the public administration of woreda Tahtay Mathew is still at the infant level, but the rate has been increasing from time to time due to different governments.

Concerning the above-mentioned empirical studies, the current study is different from those mentioned studies and investigates women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in a Case Study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma City Ethiopia

# CHAPTER THREE

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design, data sources, population, sampling techniques, data collection tools, and methods of data analysis to be applied to achieve the objectives of the current study.

## 3.1 Description of the Study Area

Jimma city is one of the growing cities in Ethiopia located in the Southwestern part of the country. The city is located 353 km southwest of Addis Ababa and has a total population of 184, 925, of which 92,938 are men and 91,987 women. The three largest ethnic groups in Jimma town are Oromo (46.71%), Amhara (17.14%), and Dawuro (10.05%); other ethnic groups make up26.1% of the town's population. The town has 17kebele. Kebele is a residence place divided by the government for administrative purposes based on the number of households more than 25,000. Bocho Bore kebele is the largest and the broadest located in east Hora Gibe, in the west, Hermata kebele in south Bore, and the north Awetu Mendera kebele. The total population of the kebele is 29458, the male and female account for 15,326 and 14,132 respectively according to a population and house census conducted in 2007.
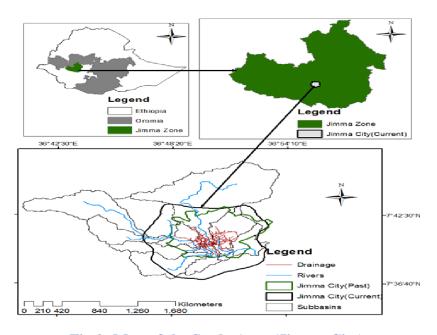


Fig 2: Map of the Study Area (Jimma City)

## 3.2 Research Design

A research design is the 'procedures for collecting, analyzing, interpreting, and reporting data in research studies' (Creswell & Plano Clark 2007). The purpose of the research design is to obtain evidence that addresses the research question and objectives. Therefore, the researcher will use a descriptive research design. Descriptive research design is a type of research design that aims to obtain information to systematically describe a phenomenon, situation, or population. More specifically, it helps to answer the research questions regarding the research problem (Creswell, 1994). The descriptive research design can involve the use of many different kinds of research methods to investigate the variables in question. It predominantly employs quantitative data, although qualitative data is also used sometimes for descriptive purposes. Especially when both quantitative and qualitative data, together, provide a better understanding of the research problem.

It is important to note that in the descriptive method of research, unlike in experimental research; the researcher does not control or manipulate any variables. Instead, the variables are only identified, observed, and measured. The descriptive research design involves using a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods to collect data that aids in accurately describing a research problem.

## 3.3 Research Approach

The researcher used a mixed research approach. The mixed research approach may include both qualitative and quantitative research methods. A mixed approach involves combining or integrating qualitative and quantitative research and data in a research study. Qualitative data tends to be open-ended without predetermined responses while quantitative data usually includes closed-ended responses such as those found on questionnaires.

## 3.4 Sample of the Study

The study area consists of **28** public institutions having **1625** government employees who have a diploma and above, **898** males and **727**are females. The researcher selected 4 public institutions from the town and executive bodies of the town administrator. The four institutions are Jimma city council, Education Bureau, Trade and Industry, and Executive. The bureau was selected through the clustering method of sampling.

cluster sampling is a sampling method in which the entire population of the study is divided into externally, homogeneous but internally, heterogeneous groups called clusters. Essentially, each cluster is a mini-representation of the entire population. Cluster Sampling).

Therefore the researcher cluster the overall sectors into Economic cluster sector, Social sector, Industerial sectors and judicial sectors. From the clusred sector, at list one Public institution was selected. In the selected sector there are 160; a total population of 59 women and 101 men government employees in the four selected Sectors of the town's Public sector.

## 3.5 Sample Size and  Sampling Techniques

Out of 28 public institutions, four (4) sectors were selected through the cluster sampling method. The sample size of this study was 160. From the total sample size of 160 (59 women and 101 men) in selected. 59 women were, selected purposively, to avoid biased in the final result.

The source lists of the total number of working women and men in the public sectors of Jimma City were obtained from the Human Resources Department. As a result, deliberate sampling was used to obtain the sample size. Deliberate sampling is also known as purposive sampling.

This sampling method was involved. According to Kothari 2004, the selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample that represents the universe which is from the target population to distribute the questionnaire. When population elements are selected for inclusion in the sample based on the ease of access, it can be called convenience sampling. From this point of view, the researcher uses a sample size that can help to gather sufficient information to effectively address the research questions and enhance the validity and reliability of the study. Having this truth, as a matter of time and cost limitation out of the 160 total population 74 respondents including 15 male (from different sectors by using purposive sampling) and 59 female (consensus) from 4 public sectors were chosen.

## 3.6 Types and Sources of Data

To accomplish this study, the researcher used both primary and secondary data. The primary data source was the target population. The secondary data sources were journals, books, reports, unpublished research documents in the library, and other articles that are related to the area concerned

## 3.7 Methods of Data Collection

The researcher may employ a variety of techniques or tools depending on the research topic and the type of data the researcher wants to collect. To collect data the researcher used a questionnaire, in-depth interview, Focus group discussion, and key informants.

### 3.7.1 Interviews

Interviews involve interviewing a select group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on a particular subject. Two characteristics of key informant interviews need special mention. First, only a small number of informants are interviewed. Such informants are selected because they possess information or ideas that can be solicited by the investigator. Depending on the nature and scope of an inquiry, the investigator identifies appropriate groups. Key informant interviews provide flexibility to explore new ideas and issues that had not been anticipated in planning the study but that are relevant to its purpose (Kumar, Krishna, 1987). The interview was conducted with 15 men.

The researcher used the in-depth interview. It is mostly face-to-face, interviews conducted to achieve desired goals. Interview also known as one-on-one is a method of extracting more detailed information or a deep understanding of a subject or concept (Kvale, 1996). Interviews are one of the most efficient methods of collecting primary data.

Interviews are used to explore concepts for further investigation and descriptive analysis. The interviewer needs to develop a relationship with the respondent to achieve a complete understanding of her perspective (Thompson, 2000).

### 3.7.2 Questionnaire

The researcher prepared both open and close-ended questionnaires to get reliable data to regard to women's Participation in Local government decision-making bodies in a case study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma Town in selected sectors. The researcher used questionnaires separately to collect information. This is because the questionnaire is amenable to statistical data analysis with minimal manipulation of raw data, helps to access a large sample, places minimal demands on personnel, can avoid biases of responses due to personal experiences unlike interview and observation, and can be anonymous (Alebachew, 2007).

The questionnaires were consisting of specific questions that refer to women's participation in decision-making at local government; the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making; the challenges that women face in participating in local government decision-making bodies. The questionnaires were developed in close and open-ended item forms. A five-point Likert scale where respondents indicated their degree of agreement against each item was prepared. Hence,

the questionnaire was conducted with 59 participants (women only). Because the researcher wants to study/Assess the participation womens in decision making at local government.

### 3.7.3 Focus Group Discussion

This is one of the data collection tools which help to get data from the informants through group discussion. To get data through this tool the researcher conducted focus group discussions with 15 men and grouped them into two groups. The first group consists of 7 informants and the second group consists of 8 men. The selected group is the excutive body from selected four institution.

## 3.8 Method of Data Analysis

Kreuger and Newman (2003) explained that concept formation is an integral part of data analysis and begins during data collection. Thus, conceptualization is one way that a qualitative researcher organizes and makes sense of data and analyzes the data by organizing it into categories based on themes, concepts, or similar features. In analyzing data, the researcher used three procedures that are organizing, summarizing, and interpreting the data. After collecting the data in the above different data collection instruments, they were categorized into major ideas for their specific cases to shape the basic research question.

As a result, this helped the researcher to summarize the data successfully to the case. Then, the details to be organized and summarized discussed, or interpreted carefully. Interpretations were concerned with reflecting the words and acts of the data source and the researcher's reflection was used to strengthen the reliable data to be gained from the respondents.

As it is stated under the subtopic of type of research, this research is of descriptive type. Accordingly, for the successful accomplishment of the study, data to be collected through different tools would be recorded, edited, organized, analyzed, interpreted, and presented with research questions. This was done both quantitatively and qualitatively by using descriptive statistical tools such as tables, percentages, and tables for data to be collected through questionnaires, whereas the description of findings will be used for data collected through open-ended questions and interviews. To do this SPSS Version 20.0 software is used.

### 3.9. Validity and Reliability

Conducting a pilot is mandatory to get the reliability and validity of data collection tools. The pilot test is done before launching into the actual investigation. The purpose of the pilot test is, to check whether

the responses fulfilled the objectives of the study or not. It helps to determine the extent to which the tool has an appropriate relationship with respondents or not (Yalew, 2004).

Therefore, the researcher sampled 20 men from Jimma town public organizations that can not be included in the targeted sector. because it is impossible to conduct a pilot test with the same respondents.   To assure the face validity of the instruments, the researcher secured feedback from regular or target respondents and checked the strength of the instruments.  Besides, the return rate of the questionnaire was checked. Hence, the instruments were modified based on the feedback of the pilot test. The reliability was ranged according to (Hinton, 2004). There are four cut-off points for reliability, which include excellent reliability (0.90 and above), high reliability (0.70-0.90), moderate reliability (0.50-0.70), and low reliability (0.50 and below) (Hinton, 2004).

## 3.10. Ethical Considerations

To undertake this study the researcher is based on the consent of participants and willingness of the respondents. The researcher should tell subjects the full detail of the purpose of the study based on women's Participation in Local government decision-making bodies in a case study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma City. As a result of the genuine information, they provide for the accomplishment of the study. In addition, informed the subjects that they have the right to remain anonymous in providing any information. The researcher also may get an official letter from the department head to formally approach the respective respondents to whom the researcher sought the right information. Then, the researcher also behaved ethically and morally in a way that the subjects trusted him as a result of which he expected to get genuine information. General the researcher should use and bounded to the ethical consideration and let them informed consent signed to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

# 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

## Introduction

This chapter covers data presentation, analysis, and interpretation. The research was conducted to investigate women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in a Case Study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma town Ethiopia.

The purpose of this study was to determine women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in a Case Study in Oromia National Regional State, Jimma town Ethiopia. The objectives of the study were; to examine the status of women in decision-making in local government, to assess the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies, and to identify the challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies.

As the researcher stated in chapter three, to measure the reliability and strength of the instruments, the researcher conducted a pilot study with 20 participants. The gained value of reliability in each variable indicated the "status of women participation in decision making in local government (0.810)", the contributions of local government to empower women's participation in decision-making bodies (0.79), and the challenges that women face to participate at local government decision making bodies (0.85). Hence, the result of reliability in each variable shows that the instrument has high reliability.

Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaire was conducted with 59 participants, the interview was held with 15 interviewees and a Focus group discussion was held with selected key informants from the total study population. The collected data was analyzed using descriptive statistical tools such as percentage and frequency. This was done by use of the Statistical Package for social sciences latest version 26(SPSS).

## 4.1 Demographic characteristics of the respondents

The respondents' demographic information is discussed by their gender, work experience, and educational background.

*Table 4.1. 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents*

| no | variables | | Frequency | percentage |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | gender | male | -- | -- |
| | | female | 59 | 100 |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| | work experience | 1-5 years | 13 | 22 |
| | | 11-15 years | 29 | 49.5 |
| | | above 15years | 17 | 28.5 |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| | educational background | Diploma | 9 | 15 |
| | | BA degree | 47 | 79.66 |
| | | MA and above | 3 | 5 |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |

***Source: - Own Survey, 2022***

As indicated in the above table 1, based on the gender variation, 100% of the respondents are women; concerning work experience, 13(22%) of the respondents have 1-5 years of work experience, 29(49.5%) have 11-15 years work experience and 17(28.5%) of the respondents have above 15 years work experience. Along with educational background, 9(1525%) are diploma holders, 47(79.66%) are BA degree holders and 3(5.08%) of the respondents have an MA degree in their educational background.

Based on the data analyzed on demographic information of the respondents, it is possible to conclude that all of the participants are women, the majority of them have 11-15 years 'work experience and more than 75% of the respondents have a BA degree in their educational background.

## 4.2 The Status of Women in Decision Making at Local Government

In this section, nine different items were developed to examine the status of women in decision-making in local government.

*Table 4.2. 1: The status of women in decision-making in local government*

| No | Items on the status of women in decision-making in local government | scale | frequency | Percentages |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | There is the full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security | SDA | 23 | 39 |
| | | DA | 30 | 51 |
| | | N | 6 | 10 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 2 | Women are directly involved in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peace building. | SDA | 35 | 59 |
| | | DA | 21 | 36 |
| | | N | 3 | 5 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 3 | Men and women are different and even conflicting but women are needed in institutions to articulate their interests in decision making | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | 4 | 7 |
| | | A | 25 | 42 |
| | | SA | 30 | 51 |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 4 | There is equal representation of women and men in decision-making in local government | SDA | 25 | 42 |
| | | DA | 32 | 55 |
| | | N | 2 | 3 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 5 | Most of the women take part in decision-making in local government | SDA | 34 | 58 |
| | | DA | 19 | 32 |
| | | N | 6 | 10 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 6 | Women actively participate in decision-making processes and achieve in part through their enhanced visibility. | SDA | 19 | 32 |
| | | DA | 26 | 44 |
| | | N | 14 | 24 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 7 | women are more broadly accepted without any gender stereotypes | SDA | 36 | 61 |
| | | DA | 13 | 22 |
| | | N | 10 | 17 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 8 | Women are highly participated in decision-making at local government bodies to achieve global gender equality and democratic governance | SDA | 29 | 48 |
| | | DA | 22 | 37 |
| | | N | 9 | 15 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 9 | The number of female candidates increased in decision-making at local government bodies | SDA | 41 | 69 |
| | | DA | 16 | 27 |
| | | N | 3 | 4 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |

*Source: - Own Survey, 2022*

Based on the data analyzed in table 2, item 1, 39% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 51% answered disagree and 10% of the respondents have no belief in the item. From this result, it is possible to say that there is no full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security in decision-making in local government under the study area study.

Item 2, 59% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 36% disagree and 5% of the respondents have no belief in the item. The result reveals that women aren't directly involved in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peace building through the decision-making at local government bodies under the study area.

Concerning Item 3, in this item, 42% of the respondents answered strongly agree, 51% answered agree and 7% have no belief in the item. The result reflects that men and women are different and even conflicting but women are needed in institutions to articulate the interests of decision-making. This indicates that women should be needed in local government bodies while the decision-making process.

Regarding item 4 of the same table, 42% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 55% answered disagree and the rest 3% of the respondents have no belief in the item. As seen from the result it is possible to conclude that there is no equal representation of women and men in decision-making in the local government of the study area.

Item 5, the majority of the respondents have negative responses on the item, 58% answered strongly disagree, 32% answered disagree and 10% of the respondents have no concepts about the item. This shows as most of the women can't take part in decision-making in local government under the study area. This reflects that still there is men domination in the area of decision-making in the local government.

Besides, item 6 in the same table, 32% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 44% answered disagree and the rest 24% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This implies that under the study area women can't actively participate in decision-making processes and achieve in part through their enhanced visibility.

Concerning item 7, the majority of the respondents have negative responses on the item, 61% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 22% answered disagree and 17% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This shows that still there is gender stereotype and women aren't more broadly accepted without any gender stereotypes.

They also state that to this day, gender discrimination in their institutions is not avoided due to the less effort of the existing local government. This study is similar to the finding of Gebremariam (2013) which states that in business organizations (private companies) more decision-making chances and opportunities are given to men rather than women.

Under item 8 in the same table, 48% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 37% answered disagree and 15% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This shows that women weren't highly participated in decision-making at local government bodies to achieve global gender equality and democratic governance in the study area.

Here, this study contradicts the finding of Mbugua (2007) who argues that organizational policies inhibit women's progression to the top decision-making body. Finally, this finding implies that the policies and practices of most institutions under the study area aren't practiced in the real world to encourage gender equality rather than discrimination.

More importantly, of those who think that there is unequal participation in decision making, more than 80% they stated that lack of sufficient education; lack of opportunity for women, women in the domestic affair and child-rearing; and socio-cultural attitude towards women as a major factor for the absence of equal political participation in the politics of their local government. The key informants interviewed also mentioned the same reason as the cause for the low level of women's participation in decision-making in local government.

In the final item, 69% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 27% of the respondents answered disagree and 4% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This implies that the number of female candidates isn't increased in decision-making at local government bodies and the result reveals that still there is men domination in local government in the area of the decision-making process.

Hence, the calculated grand mean value for items on the status of women in decision making at local government majority of the respondents replied disagree and this reveals that the status of women in

decision making at local government is low that women aren't taken as an active organ in decision making at local government.

The data obtained from the respondents of the interview indicates that equal opportunities are orally given to women and men to participate in decision-making but are less considered in practice among local government bodies. In addition to this, they also state that in most governmental sectors women are given partial opportunities, and also priorities, quotas, and practices of some gender-based discrimination. The participants also said that the government gives more attention to women during the meeting but on the ground is too poor, and adopts different policies, laws, and international instruments to ensure gender equality as well as to empower women.

This finding is one indication of the implementation of the constitution, laws, and policies which advocate that the Ethiopian legal and administrative environment be conducive to the promotion of gender equality, as we have noticed over the past two decades isn't well-practiced under the study area. The most important gender and development measures are taken by the Ethiopian government including the issuance of The National Policy on Women (1993), relevant passages in the most recent version of the Constitution of Ethiopia (1995), the Revised Family Law (2000) and the Revised Criminal Code (2005), Ethiopian.

However, interviewees mentioned that lack of enabling environment, low level of commitment from the town administration, and lack of determination from the women themselves major factors that hindered the participation of women in decision-making in local government.

Women's participation in decision-making is essential for women's interests to be incorporated into governance. It has been widely experienced that governance structures that do not provide for adequate participation of women, often suffer from state interventions that are neither inclusive nor democratic. Including women, especially in local governments, is an essential step toward creating equal opportunities and gender-sensitive policies. Since women should have an opportunity of expressing their needs and perspectives on social and political issues, it is important to involve women in governments to incorporate all of the societal viewpoints in decision-making processes.

In addition to the above-mentioned data, key informants in FGD added that:

> *When we see the participation of women in decision-making bodies in local government their participation is still below the expectation and does not fit with government proclamation. They replied that women are not regular participants in the decision-making process in all cases in local government. To be active participants in the decision-making process being the manager or top leader is a key point but in different local government organizations majority of men are representatives and leaders due to this reason women can't able to make daily and continuous participation in decision-making bodies at local government bodies. Hence, women's participation in decision-making bodies is limited and below the theory of government policy and plan.*

## 4.3 The condition of local government to empower women

Under this part, 17 different items were applied to assess the condition of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies.

*Table 4.3. 1: The contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies*

| No | Items on the conditions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies | Scale | Frequency | Percentage |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | Ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making; | SDA | 34 | 58 |
| | | DA | 12 | 20 |
| | | N | 13 | 22 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 2 | Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making | SDA | 12 | 20 |
| | | DA | 10 | 17 |
| | | N | 10 | 17 |
| | | A | 27 | 46 |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |
| 3 | Make a great effort on the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, | SDA | 10 | 17 |
| | | DA | 9 | 15 |
| | | N | - | - |
| | | A | 30 | 51 |
| | | SA | 10 | 17 |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 4 | Engage women in decision-making institutions such as in court by participating in bureaucracies, policy-making bodies, and representative organizations | SDA | 35 | 59 |
| | | DA | 11 | 19 |
| | | N | 13 | 22 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |

| 5 | Reflecting the emerging consensus in the gender and politics research community | SDA | 43 | 72 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | DA | 14 | 24 |
| | | N | 2 | 4 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |
| 6 | Give in-service training and increase the number of women in decision-making positions | SDA | 24 | 40 |
| | | DA | 21 | 36 |
| | | N | 14 | 24 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 7 | Assessing and grading the equal participation of women and men in decision-making in local government | SDA | 43 | 72 |
| | | DA | 6 | 11 |
| | | N | 10 | 17 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |
| 8 | Give training regard to skills development | SDA | 31 | 53 |
| | | DA | 15 | 25 |
| | | N | 13 | 22 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 9 | Mentoring to increase efficiency and ensure sustainability | SDA | 9 | 15 |
| | | DA | 31 | 53 |
| | | N | 19 | 32 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 10 | Develop and open dialogue with social movement actors, particularly the women's movement | SDA | 8 | 12 |
| | | DA | 40 | 68 |
| | | N | 12 | 20 |
| | | A | 9 | |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |
| 11 | Offering women in decision-making with the foundation they need to actively participate in decision-making at local government | SDA | 25 | 43 |
| | | DA | 19 | 32 |
| | | N | 15 | 25 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 12 | Practices a central gender mainstreaming unit with policy responsibility, and a mandate to guide the overall gender mainstreaming process. | SDA | 31 | 53 |
| | | DA | 4 | 7 |
| | | N | 24 | 40 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |

| 13 | Promoting women Networking to achieve decision-making positions | SDA | 23 | 39 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | DA | 29 | 49 |
| | | N | 7 | 12 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 14 | Implementing affirmative action to promote women to decision-making positions | SDA | 21 | 35 |
| | | DA | 19 | 32 |
| | | N | 19 | 32 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |
| 15 | Establishing gender-balanced governmental bodies, committees, and judiciary, through a positive action policy; | SDA | 45 | 76 |
| | | DA | 3 | 4 |
| | | N | 11 | 20 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 16 | Promoting and protecting women's rights and reconciling work and family responsibilities for both men and women | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | 17 | 29 |
| | | A | 34 | 57 |
| | | SA | 8 | 14 |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 17 | Conducting gender awareness training; developing transparent criteria for decision-making positions; and creating a mentoring system | SDA | 29 | 49.5 |
| | | DA | 21 | 35.5 |
| | | N | 9 | 15 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |

*Source: - Own Survey, 2022*

As can be indicated in the above table 3, item 1 majority of the respondents have negative responses to the item, 58% answered strongly disagree, 20% disagree and the rest 22% the respondents have no belief in the item. This implies that local government can't ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making. Hence, the contribution of local government to empower women in decision-making is less considered.

Regarding table 2, item 2, 20% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 17% disagreed, 17% of the respondents have no belief in the item and 46% of the respondents answered agree. This indicates that the local government is unable to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making.

Concerning item 3 of table 2, 17% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 15% disagree, 51% of the respondents answered agree and 17% of the respondents answered strongly agree.

This reveals that local government is unable to make a great effort on the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women and has poor performance in empowering women in decision making at local government bodies.

However, the researcher identified that majority of the cases by which the women reported to local government body is reporting to local police on security issues or conflict, reporting when there is a social service interruption, and similar cases. In the real decision-making participation sense, this does not constitute meaningful political participation like running for election, holding decision-making positions, and raising key political issues to be considered by the government.

Therefore, it is possible to say that, like other forms of political participation, the decision-making participation of women in Jimma town is weak in terms of attending local government meetings, and raising important political issues to get the government's attention. Hence, from the interview, the researcher understood that one of the causes of weak decision-making participation of women in Jimma town is the fear of the citizens that the ruling party cadres and police may take some action against them. However, interviewees stated that their fear is baseless as the local government does not have an intention to take any action against the citizen because of their expression of their opinion. However, as the researcher understood, the experiences of interviewees do not want to take a risk by expressing their views freely so far. Therefore, it is normal to expect women in this situation to only raise the issues that the local government of the area wants to be raised.

Along with item 4 of table 2, 59% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 19% answered disagree and 22% of the respondents have no belief. This indicates that local government is unable to engage women in decision-making institutions such as in court by participating in bureaucracies, policy-making bodies, and representative organizations and there is poor consideration of women in the area indicated.

Item 5, almost more than 80% of the respondents have negative responses to the item, 72% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 24% answered disagree and 4% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This implies that local government is not reflecting the emerging consensus in the gender and politics research community.

Regarding item 6(give in-service training and increasing the number of women in decision-making positions) of table 2, the majority of the respondents have negative responses to the item, 40% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 36% of the respondents answered disagree and 24% of the

respondents have no belief on the item.  This implies that there is a lack of in-service training and an increasing the number of women in decision-making positions.

Based on item 7 of table 2, 72% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 11% answered disagree and 17% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This shows that there is no assessment and grading of the equal participation of women and men in decision-making in local government.

Item 8, 53% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 25% answered disagree and 22% of the respondents have no belief. The result reveals that there is no training regard to skills development given to women by the local government.

Item 9 of table 2, 15% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 53% answered disagree and 32% answered they have no belief in the item.  This indicates that there is no mentoring to increase efficiency and ensure sustainability among women in decision-making in local government.

According to item 10 of table 2, 12% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 68% answered disagree and 20% of the respondents have not believed in the item.  The result reveals that local government doesn't develop and practice open dialogue with social movement actors, particularly the women's movement.

Hence, women's participation in decision-making is essential for women's interests to be incorporated into governance. It has been widely experienced that governance structures which do not provide for ad-equate participation of women, and often suffer from state interventions that are neither inclusive nor democratic. Including women, especially in local government is an essential step toward creating equal opportunities and gender sensitive policies. Since women should have an opportunity of expressing their needs and perspectives on social and political issues, it is important to involve women in governments to incorporate all of the societal viewpoints in policy and decision-making processes. Women are actively involved in household and community work and hence well aware of real issues faced by common people. This gives them insight and perspective which can be instrumental in sustainable overall development.

Besides item 11, 43% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 32% of the respondents answered disagree and 25% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This reflects that local government can't offer women in decision-making the foundation they need to actively participate in decision-

making at local government and there are fewer considerations for women in decision-making in local government bodies.

Item 12 of table 4, 53% of the respondents replied strongly disagree, 7% replied disagree and 40% of the respondents have no belief in the item indicated. This shows that government has fewer efforts on practices a central gender mainstreaming unit with policy responsibility, and a mandate to guide the overall gender mainstreaming process to empower women as more participants in decision-making at a local government body.

In the case of item 13 of table 3, 39% of the respondents replied strongly disagree, 49% replied disagree and 12% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This implies that there is a weakness of local government in promoting women networking to achieve decision-making positions to empower in decision-making at a local government body.

In the case of item 14, 35% of the respondents replied strongly disagree, 32% replied disagree and 12% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This implies that local government is not effectively implementing affirmative action in order to promote women to decision-making positions in the local government body.

Concerning item 15 of table 3, 76% of the respondents replied strongly disagree, 4% of the respondents replied disagree and 20% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This implies that local government is weak in establishing gender-balanced governmental bodies, committees, and judiciary, through a positive action policy to empower women's participation in decision-making in local government.

In the case of item 16 of table 3, 29% of the respondents replied neutral, 57% of the respondents replied agree and 14% of the respondents replied strongly agree. This finding reveals that local government is better at promoting and protecting women's rights and reconciling work and family responsibilities for both men and women.

In the last item (item 17), 49.5% of the respondents replied strongly disagree, 35.5% replied disagree and 15% of the respondents have no belief in the item. This indicates that local government is weak in conducting gender awareness training; developing transparent criteria for decision-making positions, and creating a mentoring system to empower women in decision-making in local government bodies.

The interviewee added that:

> *The local government is weak and not able to give training services to women in order to empower women in decision-making local government. The above finding is opposite to Aboagye also emphasized the role of stakeholder institutions such as training institutions and agencies providing services and implementing development initiatives to provide appropriate support to women's concerns by targeting, positive action, and creating an enabling environment for their participation.*

Again, As Aboagye, (2000) stated that to enhance women's participation in decision-making in local government it is important to focus on building the capacity of women to aspire to, attain and perform in a local government office; and in women's groups to engage local governments. But local government under the study area doesn't fit this in practice.

Again, the finding of this study is not similar to Barth's (2008). Regarding strategies for the promotion of gender equity in local government, Khosla and Barth (2008) mentioned the creation of new women's associations, partnerships, and networks along with civil society organizations, to emphasize political participation at the local level very critical. Explaining alternative strategies, the authors underlined the importance of strengthening the existing women's association and civil society groups that focus on local governance and citizen participation.

Godwin (2013) sought to study the need for the participation of women in local governance. The the author found the existence of more women participated in decision-making in local governance at the Federal and State governments than at the local level. Furthermore, the finding of the researcher indicated that male domination due to low political consciousness among women-that is associated with a cultural barrier, and lack of economic base for women is a basis for the poor attitudinal syndrome are some of the obstacles to achieving the 30 percent affirmative action declaration for women at Nigeria's grassroots.

The findings of this study are similar to Aboagye (2000). A study entitled promoting the participation of women in decision-making in local governance and development conducted was conducted by Aboagye (2000) in Ghana. The author explained that women's low level of local-level women participation in decision-making in Ghana is mainly due to a lack of finances for campaigning; time constraints for domestic responsibilities and low income. In addition, the author mentioned that the widely-held perception that political activity is not for decent women is also a barrier. Husbands and

families are reluctant to have their women in the public eye. Women lack public arena skills and some complaints of intimidation by male opponents.

Findings of the current fit with Ethiopia context. For example; in the context of Ethiopia, according to a study conducted by Shimelis (2015) there is a socially held traditional belief assume women are made to take care of children and do kitchen work than participate in the outside home activity.

Due to this unfair labor division, Women are overburdened with different household activities like; cooking, taking caring kids, washing, and so on. These all activities make women busy in the household and impede their involvement in decision-making in local government.

In addition to the above data, the interviewees added that:

*In analyzing women's participation in decision-making in local government, it is important to identify their representation in the local government decision-making body. There is one town council and more than 5 kebele councils in Jimma town administration. From the data collected through the interview, the researcher identified only one-fourth of respondents are a member of either town or kebele council. Moreover, the same proportion of interviewed are members of either kebele councils (that is either taking part in decision making or not)and/or women associations. From this, it is possible to understand that three fourth of the interviewees are a member of town or kebele councils.*

In addition to the above data, the key informants in FGD added that:

*In analyzing women's participation in decision-making in local government, it is important to identify their representation in the local government decision-making body. There is one town council and more than 5 kebele councils in Jimma town administration. From the data collected through the interview, the researcher identified only one-fourth of respondents are a member of either town or kebele council. Moreover, the same proportion of interviewed are members of either kebele councils (that is either taking part in decision making or not)and/or women associations. From this, it is possible to understand that three fourth of the interviewees are a member of town or kebele councils.*

That means both councils, where the decisions regarding the local issue are made, are dominated by men. It is in this scenario that the major decisions that affect the lives of both are made. One can understand that it is less likely to expect decisions made in favor of woman's representation in the decision-making bodies.

At the local government level, one of the mechanisms by which women are directly engaged in decision-making is by participating women in woreda/town and kebele meetings. Accordingly, women are expected to take part in a meeting held at the local government level to take part in decision-

making. Greater than half of the interviewed rarely take part in a local meeting held by the town or kebele administration body. In addition, all of the interviewees indicated that they rarely participate in a local government meeting concerning decision-making.

The data collected revealed that almost all of the interviewees agreed that:

> *Male and female dwellers should play an equal role in political participation. Though such belief in equal gender participation in decision-making in local government is very important in shaping people's behaviors, the reality shows that belief does not transform into practice yet. Regarding this issue, more than half of the interviewees felt that, practically, women's participation in decision-making in local government in Jimma town is not based on gender equality, and men and women are not equally taking part in decision-making in local government.*

The reasons they forwarded regarding the low level of women's participation in decision-making at local government in Jimma town generally revolves around socially constructed gender roles. The majority of them argued that previously existing beliefs of the community that limits the participation of women in domestic affairs are not eradicated. Others argued that there is still a limitation in bringing the woman to the decision-making positions and the town administration's commitment to increasing women's participation in decision-making in terms of appointing them to a cabinet and other decision-making positions are still not enough.

The calculated grand mean value for items on the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies. This implies that the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies are too less and the government bodies aren't making effective contributions to give priority to women in decision-making**.**

Concerning the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making, interviewees (5 &7) stated as follows:

> *They stated that the local government can call on women to make decision-making equal to men, promote clear policies and communication to women, give in-service training to women, and eliminate cultural violence.*

Supporting the above data or responses, Godwin (2013) argued as the local government is closest to citizens, local authorities can play a vital role in addressing gender inequality and in building the capacities of women by involving them in local decision-making, planning, and management; the

importance of that role was recognized by the international by different international conventions and agreements.

In addition, supporting and enhancing women's participation at the local level involves fostering a diversity of approaches and encouraging critical reflection and learning. Dom (2012) stated that the difference among local contexts, and the opportunities or constraints that may exist, mean that ongoing innovation is critical and there is no one best way to enhance women's participation in decision-making. Hence, the review revealed that the most successful participation interventions need to be gradual, long-term, and flexible in design.

The respondents listed on open-ended questions as follow: Government ensures executive bodies provide institutional support to the established or existing women's cross-party alliances and caucuses, including infrastructure, budget, and institutional recognition. The local government ensures efficient collaboration between parliamentary bodies on gender equality, including standing committees and women's caucuses, and national mechanisms on gender equality and the empowerment of women. Ensure that all standing and ad hoc committees in legislatures at all levels guarantee the adequate representation of women as members and leaders. Ensure that women are equally represented in all constitutional drafting or reform bodies, including those that are involved in revising legal codes, and that all those bodies maintain efficient and comprehensive consultations with civil society.

In line with the above data, key informants in FGD stated as below:

> *The conditions of local government to empower women's participation in decision-making bodies are not that much enough to encourage women. Some of the contributions promoted by the local government are creating awareness, providing special training to women, providing education opportunities, struggling to end gender-based discrimination in the public organizations, giving priority to women's participation, appointing women to be leadership, setting up gender equality committees, raise the awareness of the media on the issue of gender equality to prepare them for the role which they play in forming public opinion and encourage its political groups to take account of the gender equality principle in appointing the members of speakers taking the floor on their behalf during debates. Hence, local government can promote different contributions to the effective participation of women in decision-making bodies at local government.*

## 4.4 The Challenges Women face participating in local Government Decision Making Bodies

In this section, 17 different items were prepared to identify the challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies.

*Table 4.4. 1: The challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies*

| No | Items on the challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies | Scale | Frequency | Percentages |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lack of adequate academic qualifications | SDA | 36 | 61 |
| | | DA | 2 | 3 |
| | | N | 10 | 17 |
| | | A | 11 | 19 |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 2 | Poor public relations | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | 12 | 20.5 |
| | | A | 23 | 39.5 |
| | | SA | 24 | 40 |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |
| 3 | Lack of self-control (being emotional) | SDA | 24 | 40 |
| | | DA | 35 | 60 |
| | | N | - | - |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 4 | Poor in time management | SDA | 11 | 20 |
| | | DA | 9 | 15 |
| | | N | - | - |
| | | A | 31 | 51 |
| | | SA | 8 | 14 |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 5 | lack of problem solving approach | SDA | 36 | 61 |
| | | DA | 10 | 17 |
| | | N | 13 | 22 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |
| 6 | Poor decision making | SDA | 39 | 66 |
| | | DA | 11 | 18 |
| | | N | 9 | 16 |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |

| No | Items on the challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies | Scale | Frequency | Percentages |
|----|------|------|------|------|
| 7 | Too busy with domestic chores | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | - | - |
| | | A | 10 | 17 |
| | | SA | 49 | 83 |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |
| 8 | absence of enabling environment (commitment) by concerned bodies | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | 3 | 4 |
| | | A | 26 | 44 |
| | | SA | 30 | 51 |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 9 | lack of adequate service years required | SDA | 35 | 59 |
| | | DA | 9 | 15 |
| | | N | 5 | 9 |
| | | A | 10 | 17 |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 10 | Attitudes (negative) of society towards women | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | 2 | 3 |
| | | A | 34 | 58 |
| | | SA | 23 | 39 |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |
| 11 | Men domination | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | 3 | 4 |
| | | A | 46 | 79 |
| | | SA | 10 | 17 |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 12 | Over burden of domestic responsibility | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | 2 | 3 |
| | | A | 47 | 80 |
| | | SA | 10 | 17 |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |

| No | Items on the challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies | Scale | Frequency | Percentages |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 13 | Negative attitudes of the organization toward women's participation in decision-making positions | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | 3 | 4 |
| | | A | 38 | 65 |
| | | SA | 18 | 31 |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 14 | Attitudes (lack of confidence and willingness) of women by themselves | SDA | 49 | 83 |
| | | DA | 10 | 17 |
| | | N | - | - |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 15 | lack of encourage from government | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | 13 | 22 |
| | | A | 16 | 27 |
| | | SA | 30 | 51 |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |
| 16 | Low Social Status | SDA | 50 | 85 |
| | | DA | 9 | 15 |
| | | N | - | - |
| | | A | - | - |
| | | SA | - | - |
| | | total | 59 | 100 |
| 17 | Poor  Policies or Policy gap | SDA | - | - |
| | | DA | - | - |
| | | N | 9 | 15 |
| | | A | 13 | 22 |
| | | SA | 37 | 63 |
| | | Total | 59 | 100 |

*Source:- Own Survey, 2022*

As data analyzed in the table above, item 1, 61% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 3% of the respondents answered disagree, 17% neutral and 19% of the respondents answered agree. This implies that lack of adequate academic qualifications is not taken the challenge that women face to participate in decision-making in local government.

Item 2, 20.5% of the respondents have no belief in the item, 39.5% of the respondents answered agree and 40% of the respondents answered strongly agree. This indicates that poor public relations are one of the major challenges that women face to participate in decision-making in local government.

Item 3, 40% of the respondents answered strongly disagree and 60% of the respondents answered disagree.  This indicates that women have no problem with a lack of self-control (being emotional).

In item 4 of table 3, 20% and 15% of the respondents answered strongly disagree and disagree respectively, 51% answered agree and the rest 14% answered strongly agree. This reveals that women have problems with time management and poor time management can be taken as challenge women face.

In item 5, 61% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 17% answered disagree and 22% of the respondents have no belief. This implies that a lack of problem-solving approach is not considered a challenge that women face to participating in decision-making in local government.

Regarding item 6 of table 3, 66% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 18% disagree and 16% of the respondents answered that they have no belief in the item. This implies that women have no problem with poor decision making and they don't face such issues as challenges to participating in decision-making at local government.

Dealing with item 7, the majority of the respondents answered agree (17% agree and 83% strongly agree. This shows that the majority of the women are too busy with domestic chores which challenges them to participate in decision-making in local government.

The interviewee added that:

> *Culturally constructed divisions of labor that restrict women's role as domestic and men's role in the public sphere do not encourage women to run for decision-making roles. This socially held belief has its impact on undermining women's self-confidence to take part in decision-making in local government.*

Concerning item 8, 4% of the respondents have no belief in the item, 44% of the respondents answered agree and 51% of the respondents answered strongly agree. This reveals that the absence of enabling environment (commitment) by concerned bodies is one of the major challenges that women face to participate in decision-making in local government.

Along with item 9 of table 3, 59% of the respondents answered strongly disagree, 15% disagree, 9% of the respondents have no belief in the item and 17% of the respondents agreed on the item. This indicates that the lack of adequate service years required in their position is not considered a challenge that women face to participating in decision-making in local government.

Based on respondents' responses on item 10, 3% of the respondents have no belief in an item, 58% of the respondents answered agree and 39% of the respondents answered strongly agree. This shows that there is a negative attitude of society towards women that hinders/women face to participating in decision-making in local government. In the case of item 11 of table 3, 4% of the respondents have no belief in the item, 79% of the respondents answered agree and 17% of the respondents answered strongly agree. This indicates that still there is men domination in the government sectors that limit women's participation in decision-making in local government.

In addition to the above information, the interviewee stated that:

*There is male domination in all government sectors which limits women's strong participation in decision-making in local government. In line with this local government, bodies are not working strategically in improving their internal philosophy that would support more women to engage in decision-making.*

In the case of item 12 of table 3, 3% of the respondents have no belief in the item, 80% of the respondents answered agree and 17% of the respondents answered strongly agree. This indicates that women have an overburden of domestic responsibility that limits women's participation in decision-making in local government.

Supporting the above findings, the interviewee added that:

> *Women have numerous domestic responsibilities in the family which consume a lot of their time, energy, and resources passed in the home and limit their participation in decision-making in local government. Sector heads and other local government bodies do not take account of the reality of women's role in social reproduction when organizing meetings and developing women's participation in decision-making in local government.*

Item 13, 4% of the respondents have no belief in the item, 65% of the respondents answered agree and 31% of the respondents answered strongly agree.  This reflects that negative attitudes of the organization toward women's participation in a decision-making position are one of the challenges that women face to participate in decision-making in local government.

Regarding item 14, 83% of the respondents answered strongly disagree and 17% of the respondents answered disagree. The findings reveal women have no problem with attitudes (lack confidence and willingness) themselves to participate in decision-making in local government.

Item 15 of table 3, 22% of the respondents have no belief in the item, 27% of the respondents answered agree, and the rest 51% of the respondents answered strongly agree. This implies that lack of encouragement from the government is the challenge that women face to participate in decision-making in local government.

Concerning item 16 of table 3, 85% of the respondents answered strongly disagree and 15% of the respondents answered disagree. This indicates that low social status is not the challenge that women face to participate in decision-making in local government.

Along with item 17 of table 3, 15% of the respondents have no belief in an item, 22% of the respondents answered agree, and the rest 63% of the respondents answered strongly agree. This shows that poor policies or policy gaps are one of the challenges that women to participate in decision-making in local government. Hence, there are challenges that women face to participate in decision-making in local government such as shortage of time, poor time management, men domination, lack of in-service training, and house-related responsibilities.

Again, the key informants in FGD added some challenges that women face to participate in decision-making bodies in local government. They stated as below:

> *They replied that lack of information, lack of effective and clear government assistance, number of children, lack of employment equality, job segregation, lack of work experience, the field of study, religious doctrine, and political failure of local government in practice.*

# CHAPTER FIVE
## MAJOR FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

## 5.1 Major Findings

The researcher presented findings of the study on women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in a Case Study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma town Ethiopia.

Regarding with the status of women in decision making at local government, findings of the study reveal that there is no full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security in decision making at local government under the study area study; women's aren't directly involved in prevention and resolution of conflict and peace building through decision making at local government bodies of under the study area; there is no equal representation of women and men in decision making at local government of the study area; this reflects that still there is men domination in area of decision making at the local government; women can't actively participate in decision-making processes and achieve in part through their enhanced visibility; still there is gender stereotype and women aren't more broadly accepted without any gender stereotypes and the numbers of female candidates aren't increased in decision making at local government bodies and the result reveals that still there is men domination at local government in area of decision making process.

Based on the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies, findings of the study reveal that local government can't ensure women's equal access to and full participation in decision-making, the local government unable to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making, local government unable to engage women in decision making institutions such as in court by participating in bureaucracies, policy-making bodies and representative organizations and there is poor consideration women in area indicated, there is no assessing and grading the equal participation of women and men in decision making at local government, there is no training regard to skills development given to women from local government, there is no mentoring to increase efficiency and ensure sustainability among women in decision making at local government and local government can't offering women in decision making with the foundation they need to actively participate in decision making at local government and there is less consideration women in decision making at local government body.

Regarding the challenges women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies, the findings reveal that there are poor public relations, women have problems with time management,

negative attitude of society towards women, absence of enabling environment, and women are too busy with domestic chores that challenges them to participate in decision making at local government.

The interviewee added that culturally constructed division of labor that restricts women's role in the domestic and men's role in the public sphere do not encourage women to run for decision-making roles. This socially held belief has its impact on undermining women's self-confidence to take part in decision-making in local government.

The local government doesn't promote human resource practices that are sensitive to the gender needs, and failed to recognize women with the links between the personal and professional responsibilities of staff, unable to enable organizational commitment and competence to work for gender equality in job descriptions,  there is the weakness of local government in promoting women networking to achieve decision making positions and local government is not effectively implementing affirmative action to promote women to decision making positions at a local government body.

Even local government is weak in establishing gender-balanced governmental bodies, committees, and judiciary, through a positive action policy to empower women's participation in decision-making in local government.

## 5.2 Summary
The general objective of this study was to investigate women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in a Case Study in Oromia National Regional State, Jimma town Ethiopia. To address this data was collected through questionnaires and interviews. The main sections seen in this study are the status of women in decision-making in local government; the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies; the challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies and the Strategies that local government uses to limit challenges that women face.

The major findings indicate that the status of women in decision-making in local government I slow and below expected, and there is no full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security in decision-making in local government under the study area study; women's aren't directly involved in prevention and resolution of conflict and peace building through decision making at local government bodies of under the study area and there is no equal representation of women and men in decision making at the local government of the study area.

Based on the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies, findings of the study reveal that local government can't ensure women's equal access to and full participation in decision-making, and the local government is unable to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making, a local government unable to engage women in decision making institutions such as in court by participating in bureaucracies, there is no assessing and grading the equal participation of women and men in decision making at local government and there is no training regard to skills development given to women from local government.

The findings reveal that several challenges faced by women such as poor public relations, women have problem with time management, negative attitude of society toward women, absence of enabling environment, and women being too busy with domestic chores that challenges them to participate in decision making at local government.

## 5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the researcher forwarded the following recommendations: A large space exists for local government and advocacy non-governmental organizations to play a positive role to promote women's participation in decision-making at local government and increase their status.

Concerning with contributions of local government, the government should develop and implement training programs on gender mainstreaming in governmental bodies to undertake gender analysis in all legislative and policy areas. Jimma town administration must promote gender mainstreaming as the main strategy recommended by the national policy of Ethiopia, and develop accountability among staff to promote gender equality; it should be one of the core issues in performance appraisal. Jimma town administration women's affairs office in collaboration with the SARDP gender adviser should develop and implement training programs on gender mainstreaming to enable government staff, to identify the plan and implement gender-sensitive projects focused on issues impeding women's participation in decision-making bodies.

In addition, the government should promote decentralization that is conducive to women's equal participation in decision-making processes at the local level and empower local bodies to implement effective gender mainstreaming and gender-sensitive budgeting. Encourage men in decision-making positions to support women to enter arenas of power, and encourage and support alliances between women and men to pursue a gender equality agenda. Encourage women to seek greater involvement in the decision-making processes at all levels and to provide a systematic significant influence on decision-making processes and policy outcomes.

Hence, women should manage their time properly and should be motivated to participate in the decision-making bodies of local government.

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# Appendix A-Questionnaire

## **Jimma University**

College of Law and Governance
Department of Governance and Developmental Studies

**Dear Respondents,**

This questionnaire is prepared to collect data on women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in a Case Study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma City Ethiopia. It is one of the data collection tools that the researcher uses to collect the necessary data for her MA thesis in the Department of Governance and Development Studies. Therefore, your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is valuable for the study. Since the success of this study depends upon your genuine responses, kindly provide objective and honest responses for all items included in this questionnaire. Rest assured that all the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence. Thank you in advance for taking the time and effort to fill out this questionnaire!

**General Instruction**

- ✓ No need of writing your name and other personal information
- ✓ Read all the questions before attempting to answer the questions

## **Part One: Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents**

Indicate your response by using "√" in the box provided

1. Gender:  Male ☐  Female ☐

2. Work experience: 1-5 years☐ 6-10 years☐11-15 years☐ above years 15 years ☐

3. Educational background:  Diploma ☐  First degree☐ MA degree

**Part two:** **Status of women in decision-making in local government**

Indicate your responses for the following Likert scale items using the " √" or "X" mark to write in the box corresponding to an action. 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA)

| no | Status of women in decision-making in local government | SA | A | N | DA | SDA |
|----|--------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 1 | There is the full involvement of women in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security | | | | | |
| 2 | Women are directly involved in the prevention and resolution of conflict and peace building. | | | | | |
| 3 | Men and women are different and even conflicting but women are needed in institutions to articulate their interests in decision making | | | | | |
| 4 | There is equal representation of women and men in decision-making in local government | | | | | |
| 5 | Most the women take part in decision-making in local government | | | | | |
| 6 | Women actively participate in decision-making processes and achieve in part through their enhanced visibility. | | | | | |
| 7 | women are more broadly accepted without any gender stereotypes | | | | | |
| 8 | Women are highly participated in decision-making at local government bodies to achieve global gender equality and democratic governance | | | | | |
| 9 | The number of female candidates increased in decision-making at local government bodies | | | | | |

**Part Three:** **Contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies**

Indicate your responses for the following Likert scale items using the" √" or "X" mark to write in the box corresponding to an action. 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA)

| no | Contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making bodies | SA | A | N | DA | SDA |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|---|---|----|-----|
| 1 | Ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making; | | | | | |
| 2 | Increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making | | | | | |
| 3 | Make great effort on convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women, | | | | | |
| 4 | Engage women in decision-making institutions such as in court by participating in bureaucracies, policy-making bodies, and representative organizations | | | | | |
| 5 | Reflecting the emerging consensus in the gender and politics research community | | | | | |
| 6 | Give in-service training and increase the number of women in decision-making positions | | | | | |
| 7 | Assessing and grading the equal participation of women and men in decision-making in local government | | | | | |
| 8 | Give training regard to skills development. | | | | | |
| 9 | Mentoring to increase efficiency and ensure sustainability | | | | | |
| 10 | Develop and open dialogue with social movement actors, particularly the women's movement | | | | | |
| 11 | Offering women in decision-making with the foundation they need to actively participate in decision-making at local government | | | | | |
| 12 | Practices a central gender mainstreaming unit with policy responsibility, and a mandate to guide the overall gender mainstreaming process. | | | | | |
| 13 | Promoting women Networking to achieve decision-making | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | positions | | | | | |
| 14 | Implementing affirmative action to promote women to decision-making positions | | | | | |
| 15 | Establishing gender-balanced governmental bodies, committees, and judiciary, through a positive action policy; | | | | | |
| 16 | Promoting and protecting women's rights and reconciling work and family responsibilities for both men and women | | | | | |
| 17 | Conducting gender awareness training; developing transparent criteria for decision-making positions; and creating a mentoring system | | | | | |

**Part Four: Challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies**

Indicate your responses for the following Likert scale items using the" √" or "X" mark to write in the box corresponding to an action. 1=Strongly Disagree (SD), 2=Disagree (D), 3=Neutral (N), 4=Agree (A), 5=Strongly Agree (SA)

| no | Challenges that women face to participate in local government decision-making bodies | SA | A | N | DA | SDA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Lack of adequate academic qualifications | | | | | |
| 2 | Poor public relations | | | | | |
| 3 | Lack of self-control (being emotional) | | | | | |
| 4 | Poor time management | | | | | |
| 5 | lack of problem-solving approach | | | | | |
| 6 | Poor decision making | | | | | |
| 7 | Too busy with domestic chores | | | | | |
| 8 | absence of enabling environment (commitment) by concerned bodies | | | | | |
| 9 | lack of adequate service years required | | | | | |
| 10 | Attitudes (negative) of society toward women | | | | | |
| 11 | Men domination | | | | | |
| 12 | Overburden of domestic responsibility | | | | | |
| 13 | Negative attitudes of the organization toward women's participation in decision-making positions | | | | | |
| 14 | Attitudes (lack of confidence and willingness) of women by themselves | | | | | |
| 15 | lack of encouragement from the government | | | | | |
| 16 | Low Social Status | | | | | |
| 17 | Poor  Policies or Policy gap | | | | | |

**Open-ended questions**

1. What are the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making?

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2. What are the organizational related factors that hamper women's participation in local government decision-making bodies?

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3. What are the cultural related factors that affect women's participation in local government decision-making bodies?

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4. What are the community-related factors that affect women's participation in local government decision-making bodies?

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5. What are the perceptions of the community towards women's participation in local government decision-making bodies?

**Jimma University**

College of Law and Governance
Department of Governance and Developmental Studies

**Dear Interviewer,**

This interview question is designed to gather data on women's participation in local government decision-making bodies in a Case Study in Oromia Regional State, Jimma City Ethiopia. Your cooperation in answering these interview questions is valuable for the study. Since the success of this study depends upon your genuine responses, kindly provide objective and honest responses. Rest assured that all the information you provide will be treated in the strictest confidence.


## Thank you for your cooperation!

1. How do see the status of women's participation in decision-making in local government?

2. What are the contributions of local government to empower women in decision-making?

3. What are the organizational related factors that hamper women's participation in local government decision-making bodies?

4. What are the cultural related factors that affect women's participation in local government decision-making bodies?

5. What are the community-related factors that affect women's participation in local government decision-making bodies?

6. What are the perceptions of the community towards women's participation in local government decision-making bodies?

7. What are the local government-related challenges that women face in participating in local government decision-making bodies?

8. What are the strategies that local government uses to limit the challenges that women face?

# Appendix C- FGD

## Jimma University

College of Law and Governance
Department of Governance and Development Studies

1. How do you see the status of women's participation in decision-making bodies in local government?

2. What are the contributions of local government to empower women's participation in decision-making bodies' local government?

3. What are the organizational related factors that hamper women's participation in local government decision-making bodies?

4. What are the cultural related factors that affect women's participation in decision-making bodies in local government?

5. What are the community-related factors that affect women's participation in decision-making bodies' local government?