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**An Assessment of Women Empowerment in Public Institutions: The Case of Benishangul Gumuz Regional Bureaus****Gudata Abara****Assosa University  
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*The study deals with the assessment of women empowerment. It was designed to analyze the women participation in making decision, the role of government in empowering women, the influence of socio-cultural factors and the challenges affecting the women in leadership positions. The research design was mixed approach. Descriptive survey including both quantitative and qualitative method was employed. The sampling technique was both non-probability and probability incorporating random sampling technique. The study used primary data sources collected through questionnaires from the sample of 145 respondents. Hence, the finding shows that there is less emphasis for women empowerment in the organizations. In addition, the cultural and organizational factors affect women in leadership position. It is also further analyzed that even though women had confident for becoming leaders, there is no concern for mentoring, coaching, and training made by the organizations. It is recommended that all the concerned bodies need to give due attention for empowering women.*

*Key words: Employees, Public Institutions, Women Empowerment, Leadership, Women Participation*

**1. Introduction**

In most patriarchic societies, females are regarded as the inferior of the species. Because of this, women are denied access to both honored and utilitarian role open only to males. Such roles as administration and disposal of property, leadership roles in societal affairs including religion and governance are 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 round developments of a society cannot be brought about without the full and unreserved participation of both woman and man 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 World Bank (WB, 1998), although women constitutes working hours, two to produce half of the world's food and above all, suffer from all forms of discrimination and from the absence of adequate protection against violence.

According to Meaza (2009), Ethiopia is party to all major human right treaties including the most important women's conventions, i.e. Beijing Declaration and Platform of Action (BDPA), which requires governments to attain a 30% benchmark for women public decision making positions. Moreover, various literatures argue that as compared to prior decades, the participations women in decision making throughout the world are somehow increasing. But, in spite of the incremental progress towards women's participation in public spheres, it is largely remained outside of formal leadership roles due to various factors.

Accordingly, as it was stated by (Meaza, 2009), the main factors which have contributed for such disparities include: structural barriers, unequal socio-economical opportunities, and inadequate access to mentors and support networks. Furthermore, the same source have depicted out that rigid work place structure and gender stereotypes that relate socially defined characteristics with certain groups in most cases also dissociate women from leadership roles.

The importance of this research bases on the bases the idea that attitudes toward women in leadership affect women's participation in leadership, and in turn, women in positions of leadership engage in policies that positively affects women (Caiazza, 2004). This reciprocal effect farther the process of gender equality in the work force, and promotes an environment where women are supported to move into autonomous and independent activities. This process gradually leads to further acceptance of women in business or political leadership.

## **2. Statement of the problem**

Women's leadership and effective participation is increasingly on the development agenda of governments, bilateral and multilateral agencies, and non-governmental organizations, including women's rights groups. Evidence from programs and research demonstrates the important role women play as key actors and decision-makers in the development process across a wide range of sectors (Gill, 2009).

In the political arena in particular, there is growing momentum among governments to foster and ensure women's participation and leadership in governance structures. Establishing quotas for women's representation at different levels of governance has been a strategic tactic in achieving this goal in many countries. Affirmative action to ensure women's political representation is an important step in democratizing and engendering local governance. However, it has not been adequate to ensure women's leadership and their effective participation in local governance as elected women representatives (Sarpanches & Jayal, 2006). Thus, women empowerment continued to face several institutional and social barriers. At the institutional level, the capacity of local governance structures to implement reforms, institutionalize accountability systems, decentralize functions and facilitate women's active engagement plays a role in determining whether women are able to emerge as political agents and actors (Mukhopadhyay, 2005).

## **3. Literature Review**

This chapter explains the systematic review of relevant literatures and empirical studies. It deals with the general situations of the women in Ethiopia, leadership and power, etc.

According to Carey (2007), women leaders are more assertive and persuasive, have a stronger need to get things done and are more willing to take risks than male leaders. Women leaders were also found to be more empathetic and flexible, as well as stronger in interpersonal skills than their male counterparts.

It is unusual in rural villages in Africa to find the man literally walking ahead of women. Different motives may be postulated for this, but eventually it demonstrates the intensely held conception of leadership as masculine. De La Rey (2005) lists the qualities commonly linked with leadership as effective communication skills, task completion, responsibility, problem solving, originality, decision making, vision, self awareness, confidence, experience and power. Although it is likely to build up these qualities in any human being in spite of gender, in male dominated societies, as is often the case in African societies, male leadership and styles prevail, and are regarded as the more acceptable forms of leadership.

### **Transformational leadership**

Transformational leadership is defined as a leadership approach that causes change in individuals and social systems. In its ideal form, it creates valuable and positive change in the followers with the end goal of developing followers into leaders. Enacted in its authentic form, transformational leadership enhances the motivation, morale and performance of followers through a variety of mechanisms. These include connecting the follower's sense of identity and self to the mission and the collective identity of the organization; being a role model for followers that inspires them; challenging followers to take greater ownership for their work, and understanding the strengths and weaknesses of followers, so the leader can align followers with tasks that optimize their performance (Antonakis, *et al.*, 2003).

### **Women's Participation in Public Administration at Global Level**

Some developing countries have made great strides in women's participation in decision-making positions in public administration. For instance, Costa Rica has reached 46 percent women in decision-making positions, Botswana 45 percent and Colombia 40 percent. Progress can and is thus being made in many countries; hence gender equality and gender parity can be a realistic goal for countries currently lagging behind (Arab, 2011).

According to the Worldwide Index of Women as Public Sector Leaders recently developed by Ernst & Young (Arab, 2011) across the G20 major economies, women account now for around 48 percent of the overall public sector workforce, but they still represent less than 20 percent of public sector leadership. Conversely, across the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries, women hold 65 percent of all administrative and secretariat positions in central public administrations.

### **The status of women's participation in Africa**

Participation of women in public decision-making is one of the areas in which progress has been made in Africa. Rwanda became a shining example by achieving gender parity, interpreted as the 50% goal set by the AU Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality. At 56% women representation in parliament, Rwanda is also the global leader. For this achievement, the President of Rwanda has received several awards, most recently at the International Colloquium on Women's Empowerment, Leadership, Development, International Peace and security in Monrovia, Liberia from 7-8 March, 2009.

Six other African countries have achieved 30% representation, usually interpreted as fulfilling the "critical mass" threshold set by the BDPA. These countries include South Africa, (45) Angola (37.3%) Mozambique (34.8%), Uganda (30.7%) Burundi (30.5%) and the United Republic of Tanzania (30.4%). South Africa witnessed a 12% increase in women's representation in parliament, from 33% to 45%, during the April 2009 elections. South Africa is on track to achieve the 50% target set for 2015 according to the 2008 SADAC Declaration.

Countries with over 20% representation rate include Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mauritania, Namibia, Seychelles, Senegal and Tunisia.

Countries that have made progress have either instituted affirmative action/quotas in their constitutions or adopted rules to enforce gender quotas in their dominant parties. For instance, in Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, constitutional provisions established quotas to ensure women's representation mostly within the range of 30%. In South Africa, the Municipal Structure Act established a 50% quota for local government while the African National Congress (ANC) established a 30% quota at the level of parliament. Similarly, in Mozambique, the Front for the Liberation of Mozambique adopted a 30% quota for women.

In Africa, there is modest progress in women's representation in the executive branch. Liberian President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf became the first woman Head of State in modern Africa when she assumed power in 2003. Further, the number of women Ministers has increased in countries such as South Africa (44.8%), Cape Verde (35.7%) and Lesotho (31.6%).

### **Women's Participation and Decision-Making in Local Governments**

Although this report pays particular attention to gender in decision-making positions at the national level, recent data and analysis that reflect variations in patterns of women's participation in local public administration is worth highlighting. A recent UNDP Asia-Pacific Regional Centre publication shows that "for most people (...) local governments are far more important arenas for matters having a direct impact on their livelihoods than national parliaments, especially when local governments are responsible for the delivery of key services." (Boman, A., 2013). In some countries the rate of women's participation is higher at the sub national level than in the central public administration.

Another UNDP publication on the presence of women in decision-making at the local level in Latin America and the Caribbean (Bosnia and Herzegovina, 2009) shows that while there have been important gains in legislative sub national bodies (councils), progress has been mixed in the executive sub national branch (mayors and governors). In 1998, five percent of executive leaders at sub national levels in the region were women; by 2012, the proportion increased to 11 percent. If the same rate of increase is maintained, it would take approximately three decades to achieve a critical mass (30 percent) of women in these posts. Likewise, the report found that the 30 percent minimum threshold has not been achieved in decision-making positions in legislative branches of sub national governments.

### **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 (ibid.). 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 services, productive and educational and employment opportunities. Hence most of them do not participate in decision making.

In general, Women in Ethiopia occupy low status in the society. In spite of their contributions to the well being of their family and community affairs in general, women experience lower socio-economic status as a whole and hence is 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 stereotype and gender distribution of labor, more are occupy in economically invisible work. Women experience lower socioeconomic status in general and hence is 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, private organizations), the percentage of female workers is less than 35.

On the other hand, the survey showed overrepresentation 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. From 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 custodial and manual type of jobs. Women make up 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 has implication on

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 for men (Federal Civil Service Commission, 2005).

Generally, regardless of women's immense contribution particularly land, and are underserved with agricultural extension, credit, labor, oxen and farm implements. Women's representation in the and federal civil services is also lower than men; in comparison to the large number of unemployed women. The increase in the number of women employees over the years is insignificant. Women's employment in the form Service is lower than men (NCTPE, 2003).

### **Challenges to Women in Leadership**

A range of issues arise in restraining women's potential to aspire to positions of leadership. Sadie (2005) maintained that at the bottom of the restrictions that women face is the patriarchal system where decision-making powers are in the hands of males. In this context, traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes concerning the role and status of women in society are still common and many women who are part of this system are finding it difficult to diverge from this culture and tradition they be ostracized. Regardless of women's education and access to the job market the woman's role is considered to be the typical one of homemaker. The man on the other hand is the bread-winner, head of household, and has the right to public life.

Confining women's identity to the domestic sphere is one of the barriers to women's entry into politics, and politics by its nature catapults one into public life. Commonly cultural attitudes are antagonistic to women's involvement in politics. Some women were capable of transcending cultural barriers and climbing to positions of leadership whether in politics or other spheres of public life, but more often than not it meant having to cope with cultural expectations with their leadership roles.

According to Emmett (2001) the majority religions have stereotypical functions for men and women where women are professed as less equal than men, often being kept apart in the way functions are assigned. In her account of women's experience of religion, Emmett examined the ceremonies executed for and by men in diverse religions such as Hinduism, Islam and Christianity. Her judgment was that men are usually empowered by religion in various ways. Women do not benefit from such dispensation, being disempowered by religious structures and practices.

## **4. Research Design and Methodology**

### **Research Design**

In this study, a mixed design involving both quantitative and qualitative approach was employed so as to collect broad data and uses to confirm findings from different data sources. **Research Method**

The descriptive survey method was selected with the assumption that it is helpful to acquire sufficient information from large number of respondents and to describe the existing status of women empowerment and opinions related to the ongoing practices of women in decision making.

### **Sources of Data**

Data for this research was collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary source was collected from the women employees and political leaders of bureaus under study. The secondary sources were reports, annual magazines, and human resource managerial department records.

### **Study Population**

Study population is an aggregation of elements from which the sample was actually selected. Accordingly, the study population of this research paper was all permanent female employees which currently exist in a total of 20 public institutions of Benishangul Gumuz Regional State with the total

number of 604. In addition, the sample was selected from the leaders of the organizations.

### **Sample size**

To carry out this study 604 female employees which are currently working in public institution of the Regional Bureaus, about 25% (151) from all public institutions was selected as a sample respondent. This is decided for the reason that the researcher believes 25% is enough for the reliability of the study and can show the real situation of factors that hold back women from leadership and public decision making positions and actual status of women in the town. The managers of each organization were also selected as respondents which was 20. Hence, the total sample size for the study was 165.

### **Sampling Techniques**

To select sample respondents from total study population, both probability and non-probability sampling methods was employed. Under the probability sampling method simple random sampling particularly lottery method was employed to select sample women from female employees. Simple random sampling avoids biasity and helps to generalize data gained from sample respondents avoiding an error which could arise from sampling. In addition purposive sampling was used to select the managers of the organizations under study.

### **Data Collection Techniqes**

The data gathering tool for this study was questionnaire and related document analysis. The questionnaire was hold both closed and open ended design. The questionnaires was selected for that it helps to gather data with minimum cost faster than any other tool. Moreover, all the respondents were literate. So, they can read and answer the questionnaire more freely to express their idea on the issue. Besides, the interview was employed to collect the data from the managers of the organization to realize the female employees' responses.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

The research conducted was of descriptive type. Accordingly, for realization and successful accomplishment of the study, data collected from different primary sources were recorded, edited, organized, analyzed, interpreted and presented in relation to research questions. This is done both quantitatively and qualitatively by using descriptive statistical tools such as tables, frequencies, charts and percentages for data collected through questionnaires. The qualitative data collected from the unstructured interview, document analysis and open ended question items was analyzed and interpreted qualitatively.



## 5. Results

### Items related to the extent of women participation in decision making

**Table 1: The extent of women participation in decision making**

No	Questions	Scales									
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage	Frequency	percentage
1	Women are sufficiently represented in leadership position.	57	39.04	52	35.85	3	1.9	14	9.96	19	13.14
2	Women are posted/represented uniformly across all public sectors at regional level.	58	40.23	64	43.82	5	3.1	8	5.97	10	6.8
3	Women are fairly represented in positions of greatest influence /legislative, executive, and judiciary organs/.	51	35.45	55	37.45	5	3.1	26	17.93	8	5.87
4	Women leaders are active and exemplary model in making public decisions.	44	30.27	38	25.89	7	4.7	23	15.93	33	22.75
5	Women leaders have potential to guide, set the vision and to aspire other women to the position of leadership.	40	27.49	46	31.87	8	5.8	32	22.31	19	12.35
6	Women at different leadership positions are confident full in decision	33	23.1	51	35.45	12	8.3	19	13.14	30	20.69
7	Women at senior level positions are doing to empower other women.	40	27.49	40	27.49	4	2.3	29	19.9	32	22.31

Source: Field Survey (June, 2015).

As it has been indicated in table 4.1, almost all respondents 74.89% of the women are sufficiently represented in leadership position rate either disagree/strongly disagree. Only 1.99% of the respondents have no opinion, 9.96% rated that women are sufficiently represented in leadership position and the remaining 23.1% agree/strongly agree with the question.

Similarly, the majority of the respondents (84.05%) disagree or strongly disagree with the statement that 'Women are posted/represented uniformly across all public sectors at regional level' while about 3.18% of them have no opinion and 12.77% of the respondents agree or strongly disagree with the statement.

Moreover, 23.5% of the respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement that 'the Women are fairly represented in positions of greatest influence /legislative, executive, and judiciary organs'. However, the majority of respondents 72.9% of the respondent disagrees or strongly disagrees with the statement whereas about 3.58% of them have no opinion.

Regarding the statement 'women leaders are active and exemplary model in making public decisions about (56.16%) disagree/strongly disagree, 4.78% have no opinion, and the remaining 39.03% agree/strongly agree with the statement.

Similarly, the respondents rate the statement 'Women leaders have potential to guide, set the vision and to aspire other women to the position of leadership. 34.66% of them agree/strongly agree with statement, 5.97% have no opinion, and 59.36% disagree/strongly disagree.

Table 4.1 also indicates that 58.55% of respondents either disagree or strongly disagree with the statement 'women at different leadership positions are confident full in decision'. 8.36% of respondents decline from expressing their level of agreement, and 33.04% of them agree/strongly agree with the statement. In response to the statement 'women at senior level positions are doing to empower other women' 42.21% agrees/strongly agree, where as 55.37% disagree/strongly disagrees, and the remaining 2.39% have no opinion.

## 2. Items related to the role of government in empowering women

**Table 2: Emphasis given for women by the Government**

No	Questions	Scales									
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Women are accessible to relevant training and development towards leadership.	24	15.87	71	49.2	9	6.3	14	9.52	27	19.05
2	Women are provided clear awareness of the vision and mission of their organization.	18	12.70	28	19.1	7	4.7	60	41.27	32	22.22
3	Our Bureau has consistent plan to empower women as leaders.	23	15.87	71	49.2	5	3.1	30	20.67	16	11.11
4	Our organization set sustainable motivation	39	26.98	69	47.5	5	3.1	21	14.29	11	7.14



	system for women empowerment.				6		7				
5	Our organization attend and tries to fulfill the need, and concern of women in leadership.	23	15.87	69	47. 6	9	6.3 5	28	19.05	16	11.11
6	Our organization encourages and values the women employees for their creativity and contributions in leadership position.	28	19.05	74	50. 8	12	7.9 4	18	12.7	13	9.52
7	Our leaders invest their time and energy in helping women to overcome weakness and improve their potential.	32	22.22	86	60. 3	9	6.3 5	7	4.76	9	6.35
8	Our organization openly supports successful mentoring relationships for leadership position.	44	30.16	75	50. 8	6	4.7 6	14	9.53	6	4.76
9	Our leaders are committed to encourage women's overall development.	30	20.64	81	55. 5	9	6.3 5	16	11.11	9	6.35

Source: Field Survey (June, 2015).

As it is can be seen from table 4.2 above, the majority of respondents 65.07% disagrees/strongly disagrees with the statement 'women in their organization are not accessible to relevant training and development towards leadership'. Whereas 28.57% replied that the women are accessible to training and development to become leaders and the remaining 6.35% has no opinion.

Similarly, the majority of the respondents (63.49%) explained that women in their organization have clear and understandable awareness about the mission and vision of their organization. In contrast, 31.8% argued that the women employees have no clear understanding of their organizational mission and vision and the remaining 4.76% have no opinion about the statement.

Moreover, the respondents (65.07%) in major hand responded that their organization has no consistent and successful women empowerment plan for becoming leaders. 31.78% agree/strongly agrees on the statement that their bureau has a consistent plan to empower women as leaders and the remaining 3.17% has no opinion.

With regard to the statement 'our organization set sustainable motivation system for women empowerment' 74.58% of the employees disagree/strongly disagree whereas 3.17% have no opinion on the statement, and 21.43 % agree or strongly agree.

Table 4.2 also indicates that the majority of employees disagrees/strongly disagrees rating 63.47%, the organization attend and tries to fulfill the need, and concern of women in leadership. Whereas the 30.16% agrees/strongly agrees about the statement and the remaining 6.35% of the respondents have no opinion.

Similarly, the respondents 69.85% hardly believed that the organization is encourage and values the women employees for their creativity and contributions in leadership position. 7.94% of the respondents have no opinion and the remaining 22.22% respondents relied that their organization is encouraging and giving values for women's' creativity and contributions.

Table 4.2 also shows that the majority of the women respondents (82.52%) replied that their leaders do not invest their time and energy in helping women to overcome weakness and improve their

potential. Whereas 6.35% of the respondents have no opinion on the statement and the remaining 11.11% agree/strongly agree with the statement.

Moreover, the respondents rated 80.96% disagrees/strongly disagrees with the organization openly supports successful mentoring relationships for leadership position, 4.76% have no opinion and the others 14.29% agree/strongly agree that their organization is supporting them for becoming in leadership position.

Lastly, the majority of women employees 76.14% disagree/strongly disagree about their leaders are committed to encourage women's overall development. 6.35% have no opinion on the statement and the remaining 17.46% agrees/strongly agrees that their leaders are committed to support women for development.

### 3. The influence of Socio-cultural Status on women empowerment

**Table 3: The influence of Socio-cultural Status**

ID	Questions	Scales									
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Women are expected for leadership role position in the society.	21	14.29	85	58.73	7	4.76	23	15.87	9	6.35
2	Women are socially and culturally suffering from work stereotype and discrimination of labor.	16	11.11	19	12.70	9	6.35	80	55.55	21	14.29
3	Work is performed better if women lead.	14	9.52	30	20.63	5	3.17	60	41.27	36	25.40
4	Women are culturally allowed to communicate freely in daily activity of their position.	30	20.63	69	47.62	7	4.76	21	14.29	18	12.40
5	Our religions support to empower women to leadership position	25	17.46	59	41.27	14	9.52	38	25.40	9	6.35
6	Women can lead challenging working environment.	21	14.29	14	9.52	9	6.35	65	44.44	36	25.40
7	Women are competent enough to acquire the necessary leadership skills	11	7.94	5	3.17	9	6.35	80	55.55	40	26.98

Source: Field Survey (June, 2015).

From the table 4.3 above, the majority of the respondents disagrees/strongly disagrees with that women are expected for leadership role position in the society which is indicated by 73.02%. 4.76% of the respondents have no opinion and the remaining 22.22% agrees/strongly agrees with the statement. Women are involved in community managing role based on care and maintenance of human beings and provision of items of collective consumption, men on the other hand play a community leadership role in which they organize at the formal political level within the framework of structural system. This implies that women are involved in voluntary community activities in which they are not paid, while men are involved in a position of community leadership with paid capacity.

Moreover, 69.84% of the respondents agree/strongly agree with the statement 'women are socially and culturally suffering from work stereotype and discrimination of labor', 23.81% either disagree or strongly disagree where as 6.35% show no opinion.

Similarly, 66.67% replied by saying agrees/strongly agree with that statement about the work is performed better if women lead. The remaining 3.17% have no opinion and 30.15% disagrees/strongly disagrees on the statement. Hence, because the majority of women respondents are not at head level they think that the work is better to be performed by men than women.

The table 4.3 above also shows that 68.25% of the respondents disagrees/strongly disagree on the statement about 'women are culturally allowed to communicate freely in daily activity of their position'. 4.76% of the respondents have no opinion and the remaining 26.69% agree/strongly agree on the statement. This shows that there is cultural impact about the future discrimination on women to freely communicate with the others.

Moreover, it is also indicated that the majority of the respondents 58.73% disagree/strongly disagree on the saying that their religious does support the empowerment of women for leadership position. Whereas 9.52% of the respondents have no opinion and the remaining 31.75% agree/strongly agree. So, there is the religious impact preventing women to become leaders in the concerned organizations.

From the table 4.8 above, the majority of the respondents 69.84% believed that they can lead the challenging working environment whereas 6.35% have no opinion and the remaining 23.81% disagree/strongly disagree on the statement.

Furthermore, the majority of the respondents 82.53% agree/strongly agree with the statement 'women are competent enough to acquire the necessary leadership skills'. 6.35% of the respondents have no opinion and the remaining 11.11% disagree/strongly disagree. This means that women to their knowledge are enough to acquire the necessary leadership skills.

#### 4. Challenges of women in leadership

**Table 4: Challenges of women in leadership**

No	Questions	Scales									
		Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly Agree	
		Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1	Women are marginalized from decision making at all levels of public administration.	16	11.11	21	14.49	7	4.76	78	53.97	23	15.87
2	Women are more responsible to take risk of carrying burdens of their families.	11	7.94	7	4.76	5	3.17	46	31.75	76	52.38
3	Women are more accessible to their resource ownership and development.	21	14.29	53	36.51	14	9.52	39	26.98	18	12.70
4	The hard work and long hours duty of leadership inhibit women's progression to top leadership.	46	31.75	63	42.85	9	6.35	18	12.70	9	6.35
5	Family responsibilities are barrier to women empowerment.	30	20.64	48	33.33	5	3.17	41	28.57	21	14.29
6	Traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes in society influence women's in decision making.	25	17.46	18	12.70	7	4.76	72	49.21	23	15.87

Source: Field Survey (June, 2015).

From the table 4.4 above, the majority of the respondents 69.84% agree/strongly agree with the statement 'women are marginalized from decision making at all levels of public administration. 4.76% of the respondents have no opinion and the remaining 25.6% disagree/strongly disagree with the statement. Form this it can be deduced that the female in the selected organizations are less appointed in leadership position which influences them from decision making.

Similarly, 84.13% of the respondents agree/strongly agree with the statement 'women are more responsible to take risk of carrying burdens of their families. 3.17% of the female respondents have no opinion and the remaining 12.7% disagree/strongly disagree. Hence, from this is concluding that if the women get the leadership position in the community they can have the ability to bear the risk.

Moreover, the almost half (50.8%) of the respondents disagree/strongly disagree that women are more accessible to their resource ownership and development. Whereas 9.52% of the respondents have no opinion and the remaining 39.68% of the them agree/ strongly agree on the statement. Hence, it can be said that there are limitations on the women in using their resource freely and developing their skills and knowledge at the expected level and to be competent with men employees.

Table 4.4 also shows that 74.6% of the sample respondents disagree/strongly disagree with the statement 'the hard work and long hour's duty of leadership inhibit women's progression to top leadership'. Only 19.05% of the respondents agree/strongly agree and the remaining 6.35% have no opinion. Thus, it can be seen that the women are not as such influenced by the lack of skills and knowledge but because they are not entitled in leadership positions.

Furthermore, the majority of women employees disagree/strongly disagree with the statement that family responsibilities are barrier to women empowerment. Whereas only 3.17% of the respondents have no opinion and the remaining 42.86% of the respondents agree/strongly agree with the statement.

Moreover, the majority of the respondents (65.08%) agree/strongly agree with the statement 'traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes in society influence women's in decision making'. Only 4.76% of the respondents have no opinion and the remaining 30.16% disagree/strongly disagree on the statement.

From the table 4.4 above result it can be inferred that women are influenced by factors as culture, lack of experience, education, training so that they are not in a position of making decisions. The analysis also shows that women believed that they have the ability to take risk of carrying burdens of their families even though there are cultural systems hindering their empowerment. It is also seen that because the women empowerment is less in the selected organizations they are less accessible to their resource ownership and development at the societal level. Moreover, it is also found that even though the job of leaders is hard and takes huge amount of time, the women believed that this is not the matter for them to inhibit women's progression to top leadership but other factors influence their empowerment.

The finding furthermore indicates that family responsibilities are not barrier to women empowerment but there is the lack of concern for women empowerment form organizational side i.e. there is no mentoring, training, experience sharing, coaching, and development, of women employees in the selected organizations. Lastly, women believed that there are traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes in the society affecting the women's in decision making.

In the same way, the data obtained through the interviews made with the bureau heads pointed out that women at top leadership positions are few in number. Which agree with the evidence from document analysis (14.59%) of women are participate in leadership position in bureaus under study.

### **Discussion and Interpretations**

From this it is possible to infer that women employees working in the selected institutions are not sufficiently represented in leadership position. It is further implied that, the majority of the employees hardly believed that the women are posted/ represented uniformly across all public sectors at regional level. The analysis shows that women are not fairly represented in positions of greatest influence /legislative, executive, and judiciary organs. They argued that the women leaders are not as such active and exemplary model in making public decisions.

Moreover, the employees believed that the women leaders have no enough potential to guide, set the vision and to aspire other women to the position of leadership. They also argued that women at different leadership positions are not confident full in decision making process. Lastly, employees argued that women at senior level positions are not doing to empower other women i.e. coaching and, mentoring the future women leaders is less by the present women leaders.

As interview conducted with vice Bureau head of women, youth and children Affairs on (June 2, 2007) government at all levels are exerting much effort for the empowerment of women and encouraging progress has been registered as compared to the near futures. But in empowering women at leadership position still it need integrated effort of all stakeholders. The responses obtained from open ended question and document analysis also shows that, for the empowerment of women at leadership position, it needs the commitment of all concerned bodies, especially leaders at key leadership positions.

From the findings, thus, one recognize that due attention should be given by all stakeholders to empower women at all levels of leadership positions.

From the above table 4.7 it is found that women in their organization are not accessible to relevant training and development towards leadership. Although women have the clear understanding of the organizational mission and vision, the organization has no consistent plan to empower women as leaders. The analysis also implied that organization has not set any sustainable motivation system for women empowerment, attend and tries to fulfill the need, and concern of women in leadership. Even tough, there are rules and regulations that indicates the women empowerment in the organizations, they are not encouraging and valuing the women employees for their creativity and contributions in leadership position.

Furthermore, the leaders are not investing their time and energy in helping women to overcome weakness and improve their potential. In addition, there is less emphasis for openly supporting successful mentoring relationships for leadership position of women; leaders are not committed to encourage women's overall development to become more good leaders.

The data collected from the open-ended questions reveled that, the government has devoted to realize the equal participation and getting benefit from their involvement at all level, by designing polices and strategies that realize the benefit of women. But in reality women are not empowered to leadership positions.

So, based on the above analysis, it can be said that leaders at top level and all the concerned bodies have to devote their time and energy to work cooperatively to empower women.

From this it can be inferred that women are not expected to be leaders in the community due the cultural impact. Data analysis also tells that women are socially and culturally suffering from work stereotype and discrimination of labor because of the socio-cultural systems in the society.

Women employees also argued that the job will be better done if the women lead the organization. It is also found that women are believed to be culturally not allowed to communicate freely in daily activity of their position. In addition, the religious institutions are not making awareness for the women to hold the leadership position. Irrespective of the cultural factors women can challenge the working environment if they get chance of leadership position. Moreover, women are expected to be competent in acquiring the necessary leadership position. Therefore, there are cultural facts that influence the women involvement in empowerment.

As the responses obtained from open-ended questions and interview of bureau heads women are competent enough and devoted for their goals if they are not socially and culturally deprived from the chance of empowerment.

From the findings, thus, one recognize that cooperative effort has to be taken by medias and all concerned bodies to raise the awareness in the community on the importance of empowering women.

Furthermore, this is supported by the report "...HTPs are deep-rooted in cultures and traditions passing through generations. They have implications for the inequalities suffered by women in education and employment as well...." (MLWDO, 2006).

From the table 4.9 above result it can be inferred that women are influenced by factors as culture, lack of experience, education, training so that they are not in a position of making decisions. The analysis also shows that women believed that they have the ability to take risk of carrying burdens of their families even though there are cultural systems hindering their empowerment. It is also seen that because the women empowerment is less in the selected organizations they are less accessible to their resource ownership and development at the societal level. Moreover, it is also found that



even though the job of leaders is hard and takes huge amount of time, the women believed that this is not the matter for them to inhibit women's progression to top leadership but other factors influence their empowerment.

The finding furthermore indicates that family responsibilities are not barrier to women empowerment but there is the lack of concern for women empowerment form organizational side i.e. there is no mentoring, training, experience sharing, coaching, and development, of women employees in the selected organizations. Lastly, women believed that there are traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes in the society affecting the women's in decision making.

In the same way, the data obtained through the interviews made with the bureau heads pointed out that women at top leadership positions are few in number. Which agree with the evidence from document analysis (14.59%) of women are participate in leadership position in bureaus under study.

From the findings, thus, it is possible to conclude that women are marginalized from decision making at all levels of public administration due to the lack of access to empowerment, the influence of traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes in society. So, based on the above analysis, it can be said that all the concerned bodies have to work by integration to tackle the challenges of women empowerment, such as lack of access to participate in decision making position, getting relief from more responsibility to take risk of carrying burdens of their families, traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes in society influence women's in decision making.

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