

# The Prospectus, Challenges and Causes of Gender Disparity and its Implication for Ethiopia's Development: Qualitative Inquiry

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## Abstract

The study conducted with proposition that development needs to be participatory including both men and women. Different scholars came up with different explanations by raising the question why gender gap in different sectors. The objectives of this paper are to: Analyze some relevant theories of development related to the causes of gender equality considering from different point of view; scrutinize using empirical data on gender participation by education, employment, health and political representation in Ethiopia corresponding to theories development; pinpoint the challenges and obstacles of gender equality in different sector in Ethiopia, assess the legal and policy frameworks of the Ethiopian government on gender. Methodologically, this paper a brief review is made on theories of development that provide justification mainly on the significance of gender equality for development and clarify the determinants of gender equality in different sectors. This study is written by considering these theories of development as a basis of analysis corresponding to the empirical data on the situation of gender and development; on the challenges in realizing gender equality in Ethiopia. Finally, conclusion and recommendation is made by considering how theories of development with respect to gender and development in Ethiopia underpin with empirical evidences in the country. To supplement the literature interview is conducted and the result of relevant interviewee is narrated as case study in some sections.

**Keywords:** Gender, Disparity, Empowerment, Employment, Leadership, Decision Making, Legislative and Judiciary Body

## Introduction

It has been widely understood that realizing the goal of development cannot be attained without the very significant component of gender. Globally, it is proved that exclusion of women in development has rendered their development efforts futile (Doepke and Tertilt 2010). If a country is successful in minimizing or closing the gender gap, it will have a better chance to develop through alleviating poverty.

World Bank (2003a) reported that promoting gender equality is an essential component of an effective economic and human development strategy; *“there is now a shared understanding within the development community that development policies and actions that fail to take gender inequality into account and fail to address disparities between males and females will have limited effectiveness and serious cost implications.”* (World Bank 2003a)

Women are still subjected to repugnant conditions that lead to their early deaths during pregnancy, during conflicts and in other situations. This also implies that gender and development is important because it takes in to account the most fundamental aspects of development like the concern of health, education, decision making, leadership, peace building, violence against women and economic and political empowerment (Blumberg 2005).

There are four goals of MDGs that are directly related to gender: achieving universal primary education, promoting gender equality and the empowerment of women, reducing infant and child mortality, and improving maternal health. Gender plays an important role to attain goals related to reducing poverty and eradicating hunger, combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases; ensuring environmental sustainability. With such linkages it is difficult to see how it would be possible to meet the MDGs without addressing gender issues.

Some empirical evidences suggest that money in the hands of women benefits children (such as child nutrition, clothing, and schooling) go up disproportionately. By the same token, mothers' education has been shown to have a beneficial effect on child health and education. The argument is that if empowering women benefits children, it should ultimately lead to more human-capital accumulation and, therefore, growth and foster development. The large extent to which micro-credit programs are targeted exclusively to women is perhaps the most prominent example in this context (Doepke and Tertilt 2010).

Although gender equality forms the basis of development, all over the world women do not equally involved in development and are mostly lower in terms of status than men. In the third World, the position of women, relative to men, is lower on all of the main indicators such as level of literacy, years of schooling, nutritional status and level of income. In developing and underdeveloped nations, women have a triple burden of work in child rearing, in maintaining the home and in food production. Relative to men, women work much longer hours for a smaller income. Especially in predominantly agrarian societies (like in Ethiopia), envisaged

improvements in the livelihood of women are highly dependent on the efficiency of the economic performance of the country (Ahmed et al. 2001).

Women account for half of the Ethiopian population and are more vulnerable than men due to many economic and social factors that work against them. Development scholars came up with different theories to explain the causes of development including that of gender. Thus, the main purpose of this study is to examine how existing theories of development and the empirical data on gender, development and empowerment are substantiated in Ethiopia.

### **Objectives**

The objectives of this paper are to:

- a) Analyze some relevant theories of development related to the causes of gender equality considering from different point of view;
- b) Scrutinize using empirical data on gender participation by education, employment, health and political representation in Ethiopia corresponding to theories development;
- c) Pinpoint the challenges and obstacles of gender equality in different sector in Ethiopia.
- d) Assess the legal and policy frameworks of the Ethiopian government on gender.

### **1.1 Methodology**

Under this study, a brief review is made on theories of development that provide validation mainly on the significance of gender equality for development and clarify the causes of gender equality in different sectors. This study is written by considering these theories of development as a basis of analysis corresponding to the empirical data on the situation of gender and development; on the challenges in realizing gender equality in Ethiopia. Finally, conclusion and recommendation forwarded by considering how theories of development with respect to gender and development in Ethiopia underpin with empirical evidences in the country.

To supplement the literature interview is conducted on six women and 4 men and the result of relevant interviewee is narrated as case study.

#### **Gender: Concepts, Theories and Conceptual Framework**

Gender is a social construct. It defines and differentiates the roles, rights, responsibilities, and what is appropriate behavior and obligation for women and men. The innate biological differences between females and males are interpreted by society to create a set of social expectations that define the behaviors that are appropriate for women and men and that determine women's and men's differential access to rights, resources, and power in society. Although the specific nature and degree of these differences vary from one society to the next, they typically favor men, creating an imbalance in power and a gender inequality that exists in most societies worldwide (Reeves and Baden 2000).

These gender ideologies often reinforce male power and the idea of women's inferiority. Culture is sometimes interpreted narrowly as 'custom' or 'tradition', and assumed to be natural and unchangeable. Despite these assumptions, culture is fluid and enduring. The defense of 'culture' and 'tradition' is often used by men to justify practices that constrain women's life chances and outcomes. Gender discrimination is the systematic, unfavorable treatment of individuals on the basis of their gender, which denies their rights, opportunities or resources. Across the world, women are treated unequally and less value is placed on their lives because of their gender. Women's differential access to power and control of resources is central to this discrimination in all institutional spheres, i.e. the household, community, market, and state. Women's lack of representation and voice in decision making bodies in the community and the state perpetuates discrimination, in terms of access to public services, such as schooling and health care, or discriminatory laws (Reeves and Baden).

#### **Theories**

There are different explanations for the status of women in the society or for gender inequality, but in this study the analysis focuses on four dominant theories in literature.

**Economic Modernity:** The classical modernization perspective considers economic development as the direct factor to increase democracy and human choices (Rostow 1960; Deutsch 1964; Bell 1999). With respect to gender equality, economic development is considered as a central element to increase the pool of women eligible for positions of social power. In this perspective scholars establish that increased economic development associates with a more broad based distribution of educational and occupational resources. Greater access to educational and occupational resources increases women's chances of professional development, creating a larger pool of women eligible for power positions such as political office. Higher levels of economic development bring more social services to societies. Through their alleviation of the costs in labor and time of everyday responsibilities associated with child-rearing and domestic work, increases in these services free up time for social pursuits in women's lives (Kenworthy & Malami 1999).

Reynolds (1999) and Siaroff (2000) confirm using developmental measures such as countries' levels of non-agricultural development, per capita gross domestic product, women in the workforce and women college graduates positively influence the percentage of women in their parliaments.

**Cultural Modernity:** The human development perspective which is a more recent theory emphasize the conversion of economic development into a cultural process of human development. Cultural modernity is believed to bring an emancipative worldview, reflected in self-expression values that emphasize human choice and autonomy, including women (Inglehart & Welzel 2005). This rise in emancipative orientations develops mass expectations targeted at making elites responsive and inclusive. In this way, rising emancipative values lead to increases in women's empowerment throughout society and in parliament.

The human development perspective links social modernization to emancipative values through changes in existential constraints. The theory highlights alterations in modern societies particularly conducive to women's empowerment and therefore establishes a link between cultural modernity and publics that value greater equality between genders. Welzel (2003) ties the modern human resources crucial to the human development sequence to economic development. The most consistent findings show that gains in gender equality are most dramatic in countries with high levels of development and strong emancipative values. Economic modernity will more strongly explain the initial stage of women's empowerment while cultural modernity will become more central to explanations of the higher stages.

**Historical Legacies:** The developmental trends of social modernization may face legacies of path dependent cultural and institutional organization that affect societies' abilities to improve women's lives (Skocpol 1992). The emergence of institutions cultural or the result of policy sometimes consists of social organization that have a continuing and determinant influence on phenomena relevant to those institutions far into the future. There are four measures of path dependent processes highlighted in the literature.

Depending on the nature of their traditions, religions vary in opportunity for women's emancipation. For instance, relative to other religious heritages, scholars find that a Protestant religious heritage improves the status of women in a country (Inglehart & Welzel 2005; Reynolds 1999). With its tradition of sectarianism and volunteerism, Protestantism holds a tradition particularly hospitable to democratic values, such as respect for individualism, reciprocity and popular sovereignty.

Traditional units that are restrictive of women's development such as the family and the church lose their authority as individuals place greater emphasis on rationality and individualism. Studies find positive relationships between secular, rational values and measures of women's empowerment (Inglehart & Welzel 2005).

The path dependent processes with respect to women's suffrage policy may affect the potential to increase gender equality in particular societies. Suffragist policy represents instances when elites and dominant political groups open the system of political representation to former, politically constructed out-groups Moore & Shackman 1996).

Countries with earlier suffragist policies for reforming women's formal political exclusion are likely to have a stronger institutional legacy of women's formal political inclusion. Several studies hypothesize and establish a positive link between earlier suffragist policy and women's empowerment in parliament (Kenworthy & Malami 1999).

State-financed welfarism policy is another tradition that research on gender equality highlights as central to societies' progress in gender equality. Much research confirms that a key barrier to women's full social inclusion and autonomy has been and continues to be institutional arrangements that restrict the state's role in caretaking and domestic responsibilities (Hirschman 2001).

Welfare policy is capable of alleviating these barriers by expanding the scope of the state's involvement in these everyday household necessities through, for instance, state supported childcare. The traditional dominance of leftist parties through their role as gatekeepers, political parties act as mediators of women's potential to seek and win elective office (Kunovich & Paxton 2005).

Leftist parties are more likely to recruit women and to adopt strategies to ensure more women candidates, which increase women in party leadership positions. More women in party leadership positions associates with the adoption of more strategies to empower women within the party and the election process (Kunovich & Paxton 2005; Caul 1999).

**The Institutional Design Perspective:** The variation in institutional characteristics mediates mass support for women's empowerment and the pool of women eligible for political office in ways that either enable or constrain women's attainment of political leadership. The oppressive, unequal treatment of women clashes with the democratic idea of human equality (Welzel 2003). As societal foundations that preserve and socialize free and equal citizenship, democratic institutions supply women with more rights and more channels for making their voices heard. Research indeed shows that the strength of countries' democratic traditions empowers their women (Inglehart & Welzel 2005).

Electoral systems affect women's paths to parliament by structuring party elites' incentive or disincentive to run women candidates. In this line of research, the most persistent finding is the consistent, positive impact of proportional representation systems on the percentage of women in parliament (Darcy et al. 1994; Kenworthy & Malami 1999). Due to differences in socioeconomic status, occupational choice and family responsibilities, in comparison to men, women candidates are likely to have greater difficulties in becoming eligible and aspiring political candidates. Women are less likely to pursue political office and are likely to be lower on candidate lists if they choose to run. The proportional electoral systems increase women's chances of recruitment and electability despite lower placement on candidate lists, these electoral systems provide greater opportunity for the election of women.

The greater incentive to balance tickets gives parties greater opportunity to promote gender as an option for challenging other parties to equalize the playing field by avoiding the appearance of their party's marginalization of women voters (Matland & Studlar 1996). Gender electoral quota systems are institutional mechanisms that consistently, positively mediate the conditions and attitudes that structure women's leadership potential (Dahlerup & Freidenvall 2003; Caul 1999).

### **The Empowerment Approach**

The empowerment approach blames the existing structures of societies as sources of women's subordination, and puts a strong argument on the importance of challenging them in all aspects. Women's gender subordination emanated from the complex socio-political, economic, and cultural context. Women's gender subordination is deeply rooted not only in the existing structures, but also in the minds of both women and men. The lack of power is the main factor that results in dependency, marginalization and poverty.

Empowerment enables people to perceive themselves as able and entitled to make decisions; having the capacity and the right to act and have influence on different development matters. The 'powerless' need power to solve their own problems (Moser 1989). Personal Empowerment lies on developing a sense of self and individual confidence and capacity and challenging the effects of internalized oppression. Collective empowerment can be achieved as a result of the collective action of a group (Rowlands 1997; 1998). Empowerment in close relationship relates to women's experiences with their husbands, children, parents etc ability to negotiate and influence the nature of the relationship and decisions (Rowlands 1995).

*Empowerment as a Political Movement:* The empowerment approach strongly emphasizes the need for broad and deep changes in socio-economic, political, and cultural structures of the society at all levels from the household to the state. This is an ambitious goal which demands awareness and support of the masses and only be achieved collectively. The participation of women in formal politics can be increased using reform of political parties; quotas and other forms of affirmative action; training to develop women's political skills; working with women's sections of political parties; and development of women's political organizations (Oxaal and Baden 1997).

*Empowerment as a 'Bottom-Up' Approach:* an alternative development can start only from below. As a bottom-up approach, the empowerment attaches special attention to women's grass-roots organizations. These types of organizations are central to the bottom-up strategies of the empowerment approach. In the absence of women's grass-roots organizations women cannot organized and mobilized at local level, therefore the empowerment cannot claim to be a 'bottom-up' approach. Grassroots women organized around their immediate socio-economic, political, or cultural needs are the agents of a transformation that starts at local level (Rowlands 1998).

## **Discussion**

### **Gender Inequality in Ethiopia**

In this section detail discussion is made using empirical evidences from Ethiopia about the situation of gender disparity in Ethiopia, its determinants and implication for development.

#### **Employment, Income and poverty**

The type and nature of employment is an important factor that determine the amount of income of the family which in turn has the implication to influence education, health, technology adoption and shape the general livelihood of the household. Gender gaps in employment tend to result in lower average labor force productivity than in the absence of gender inequality in employment (Chen 2004). Although there is a progressive improvement in the labor force participation by gender in Ethiopia, females still account for the highest unemployment rate than their counter parts in the years 1994-2007 except in 2006 (FDREMLSA 2013). While women's participation in paid employment has increased worldwide, women are still segregated into certain types of employment (Floro and Meurs 2009).

**Table 1. Gender Gap Index for Employment in Ethiopia**

Gender Gap Index for Employment in Ethiopia						
Key Items	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female to Male ratio
Economic participation & opportunity	85	0.622	0.599	-	-	
Labor Force Participation	15	0.91	0.68	83	91	0.91
Wage equality for similar work	64	0.66	0.64	-	-	0.66
Estimated earned Income (PPP US\$)	41	0.67	0.53	894	1341	0.67
Legislators, Senior Officials & managers	92	0.19	0.25	16	84	0.19
Professional & technical workers	98	0.49	0.63	33	67	0.49

**0.00= INEQUALITY, 1.00=EQUALITY**

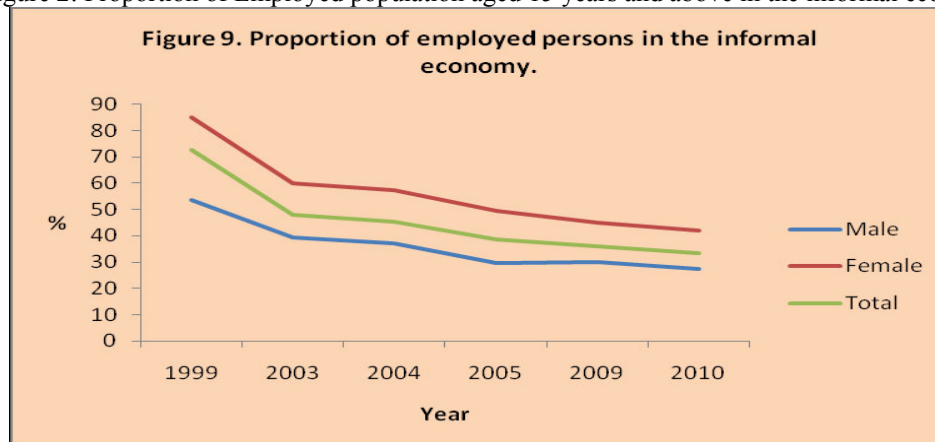
Source: Hausmann et al. 2012

The global gender gap report of the year 2012 as indicated in figure 2 revealed the existence of gender inequality in employment in Ethiopia for all figures female-to male ratio is less than 1 that implies women are not equally benefited in the labour market. Women in Ethiopia still remain at the lower end of a segregated labor market, concentrated in informal occupations, underrepresented in "technicians and associate professionals," "professionals" and "legislator senior officials and managers" hold positions of little and no authority and receive less payment than men (Floro and Meurs 2009; Hausmann et al. 2012).

The majority of women in Ethiopia engaged in the informal sector. According to (FDRE MLSA 2013), throughout the periods 1999-2010, the highest proportions of females engaged in the informal economy than their male counterparts as can be seen in figure 3. In the rural areas, agriculture creates employment opportunity for less educated and economically marginalized women. Gebrehiwot & Wolday (2005) reported that about 60% of the total populations engaged in the informal sector are female urban work force.

Floro and Meurs (2009) also came up with similar finding, in Sub-Saharan Africa, about half of women are estimated to work in the informal sector, where 75% of employment is found. In Asia and Latin America, the situation is similar. In most countries, the vast majority of home-based workers are women.

Figure 2: Proportion of Employed population aged 15 years and above in the informal economy



Source: CSA, Calculated based on Labour Force and Urban Employment Unemployment Surveys.

The prevailing condition of employment results for lower income and consequently leads to feminization of poverty (Kedir and McKay 2003). In Ethiopia there are more women in urban and rural areas than men (Morrison et al. 2007). The implication is so far reaching that the more women are well employed and paid the more they invest in the education and nutrition of their children which consequently lead to improved human capital in the future that can be potentially enhance economic development in the future.

### The Challenges of Gender Equality in Employment

There are complex mixes of obstacles and challenges that results gender disparity in employment and income in Ethiopia. Based on household duties, educational background, discrimination, social norms and personal choice, women are more likely than men to be in part-time or temporary work, to be in the informal sector or to be doing home work, or unpaid labour in family enterprises, and to be concentrated in certain types of jobs, usually those at the lower end of the pay and status scale (Floro and Meurs 2009).

In the urban areas, most women workers are concentrated in the informal economy and are not recognized, registered, regulated or protected under labor legislation and social protection and are therefore not able to enjoy, exercise or defend their fundamental rights (FDREMLSA 2013). Women are more likely than men to exit and re-enter the labour force for family-related reasons and other gender inequalities outside the labour



market, for example access to education and training, to give birth also negatively affect women's effort in searching job.

USAID (2001) explained gender disparity in the growth and success of micro and small enterprises that women operated micro and small enterprises grow less rapid than those headed by males and relatively high percentages of these were closed due to different reasons.

Rahel and Paul (2010) summarized lack of enough working space, high costs of raw materials, lack of working capital, limited loan access, limited innovative activities, lack of information and experience sharing as the major problems that hinder women's enterprise growth. Experience sharing, innovative activities, use of media, risk taking, management, partnership and joint problem solving must be encouraged and developed through trainings to increase the sustainability of women operated micro and small enterprises.

The ILO believes that it is not enough that women are provided with jobs, those jobs should be adequately remunerated with entitlement to full labor rights, therefore constituting a real opportunity for women to achieve economic empowerment and improve their livelihoods and status. In most cases the contribution of females is unpaid and they may have little or no experience of the handling of money which further reduces their status and power.

The prevailing labour force participation in employment confirm the existence of gender disparity in which the majority of female are found in informal sector with limited access to credit and access to market linkage and high rate of unemployment. This has an implication to make women the most vulnerable group of the community to poverty and constraints also the health, education and livelihood systems of the family and can be a potential challenge for the development of nation as a whole in different aspects. Hence, to accelerate economic development in Ethiopia efforts need to be taken to solve the existing gender disparity in employment sector and the other aspects of development obstacles can be addressed in such a manner.

#### **Interview One: Employment and Female headed household**

*She came to Hawass when she was 12 years old from South Omo area, Jinka. "I came to live with my sister and to start education because there is no nearby school in our Village" She joined primary school at Tabor and got educated up to grade 8. She was forced to give up her education from grade 8. "My sister was so poor and unable to help me to further continue education rather I was in forced to find job and to live my own independent life." Then, she began employment on temporary and informal bases. First, she began working as a daily laborer serving as an assistant with people working in different construction site. She later joined a textile factory in Hawassa; however, her salary is too small to cover all her expenditures. Finally, she began working on the informal trade activities selling different items like grains (Teff, Barely, Wheat, Maize); baked Injera; "grass" straw for cattle and now she opened a small shop in front of her house but the status of the shop is extremely bad. She got married and has two daughters with age of 10 and 6. She divorced from her husband after living for five years together and having 2 children. "I prefer to live with my daughter rather than with my husband. Because he was not responsible to share the household expenditure and he was expecting me to fulfill all the household expenditure by myself. Finally I divorced with him and start to live for my children. My life becomes highly complicated with one serious challenge that my elder daughter faced a problem of physical sexual harassment at her age of 4 at my compound while I was outside. My daughter encountered metal problem. I suffered a lot due this problem. This all are mainly happened*

#### **Education and Use of technology**

Education enables girls and boys, women and men to fully participate in social, economic and political life and is a base for development of a democratic society. It is vital for the ability to exercise rights and consequently for women's empowerment and to change the attitude of people into accepting gender equality as a fundamental social value ((Naila 2005). Women's political participation; sexual and reproductive health and women's rights and security, including gender-based violence and trafficking and women as economic actors are prioritized issues in the thematic area of gender equality and women's role in development. Without bringing advancement in girls' and women's education, progresses are less likely to be attained in any of these prioritized issues.

Despite some major achievements, in Ethiopia the gender gap in education prevails at all levels of the system. The gap becomes more visible as one goes higher up the educational ladder consequently hindering women participation in political leadership and decision making (MoE 2010). Girls' completion rate at grades 5 and 8 has increased from 49.5% in 2004/05 to 78.4% in 2008/09 for grade 5, and from 26.3% in 2004/05 to 40.5% for grade 8. The share of girls admitted to preparatory education is only about a third.

The number of female students in TVET is relatively close to male students, but female students are concentrated in areas that are considered female's. Among those enrolled in government institutions for a 2 or 3

year diploma program 16.2%, for the four-year degree program 22.5%, for the Masters Degree program 9.2%, and for Ph.D. programs 6.4% were women (MoE 2010; Hausmann et al. 2012). The global gender gap report of the year 2012 as shown in figure 3 revealed the status of gender inequality in Ethiopia in all grade levels and even generally in educational achievement.

**Table 2. Gender gap in education in Ethiopia**

Gender Gap Index for Education in Ethiopia						
Key Items	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female to Male ratio
<b>Educational Attainment</b>	130	0.739	0.932	-	-	
<b>Literacy rate</b>	129	0.59	0.87	83	91	0.91
<b>Enrolment in Primary Education</b>	120	0.94	0.97	-	-	0.66
<b>Enrolment in Secondary Education</b>	128	0.66	0.90	894	1341	0.67
<b>Enrolment in Tertiary Education</b>	133	0.36	0.88	16	84	0.19

**0.00= INEQUALITY, 1.00=EQUALITY**

Source: Hausmann et al. 2012

The share of women among primary school teachers increased slowly from 35.6% in 2004/05 to 37.2% in 2008/09 and from 8.5% to 11.7% over the same period in grades 9 to 12. As shown in appendix 2 the case AAU, there is a difference in the enrollment of boys and girls to the university both in terms of number and the type of field of specialization. There are fields which are assigned to female and male students which have its own implication for gender gap in technology use and to take position in leadership. The number of females in administrative and leadership positions remains extremely low. As shown in appendix 1 the case of AAU academic staff by educational rank and level of education, as the academic rank and level of education increases, the number of female decrease, throughout the year 2005/06-2009/10 only 1 professor was found (MoE 2010).

### The Challenges for Gender Equality in Education

The gender disparity in the education sector is one of the persistent problems that constrain the human and economic development strategies of Ethiopia. Poverty was one of the most frequently cited barriers for girl's access to education in Ethiopia (Blumberg 2005; Aikman and Unterhalter 2005). Education differentials by income exacerbate gender disparity in Ethiopia. When household resources are limited, parents are forced to make choices about which of their children attend school. The decision is usually taken on the basis of gender (Brock and Cammish 1997). Brock and Cammish (1997) revealed that in most part of rural Ethiopia families expect girls to get married at an early age and work in the household mainly associated with low perception of the community on the value of schooling to girls.

According to UNICEF, 49% the girls in Ethiopia get married before the age of 17 of these 55% in rural and 27% in urban areas. Traditional and cultural beliefs reinforce gender stereotypes that give preference to boys over girls in access to education. Girl's heavy work load at home, abduction, school distance and harassment, feelings of discomfort to participate equally with men are stumbling blocks for female students (Bogalech and Mengistu 2007). This prevents girls from attending, remaining and performing in school. Cultural practices leading to girls' low self-esteem have an impact on parents' perceptions of their daughters' abilities (SADEV 2010).

The other obstacle is related to teachers' skill, Berry (2008) both male and female teachers who didn't get gender training and/or training on inclusive education often considered girls to be less intelligent than boys. Community attitude towards girls' education is low and there is still gender based violence in and around schools and higher learning institutions and lack of separate toilet/latrines facilities for boys and girls (MoE 2010).

Poor community-school interaction also stated as big challenge (Lewis & Lockheed, 2006; Brock and Cammish 1997) that parents in rural areas failed to send their children to school particularly girls. The other challenge is the sexual advances made by teachers to their students are particularly shocking because of the abuse of trust, but the negative impact such incidents have on victims and the dangerous role model they present to male students are also important considerations. A single case in a community may discourage parents from sending their daughters to school (Leach 2008).

### **Interview Two: Kidnapping and Schooling**

*I am from Addis Ababa Yeka sub city area. I was born at rural village which is found in Legetafo Woreda. I attended school up to grade 6. One day when I am returning back to home from school four young men kidnapped me and took me by force to make wife for the man whom I don't know. The crisis of my life makes its root in that regrettable day in my early ages of 15 years old. The man forced me to make marriage without my consult and there was no one to help me to come out of that tyranny. After few days that I got married in such a manner, happiness and hope started to leave my life rather my life became full of sorrow and tension every day and night. My husband was too alcoholic, extravagant and adultery. I was physically abused, neglected, psychologically and spiritually disturbed. In my stay in marriage I have one baby. My husband failed even to cover our household expenditure; then I began some business activities at home in traditional poultry farming and selling of other commodities. Finally when things became worst I lost any hope in my marriage; then I took my baby without his consent and migrate to Yeka sub city. Then, I began to work as a daily laborer at around Yeka in construction area. However, the income that is paid for me is not enough to fulfill all our demands. Then, I went to Dubai with the intention to build my financial capital to start new business. Although I worked three consecutive years in Dubai, I returned back to my home land without sufficient money to pursue my business. I was repeatedly sending money to my poor parents living in the rural area and to help my child in all aspects. I cannot start new*

Gender bias in education may thus generate instrumental problems for development policy-makers as it compromises progress in other important development goals, for instance, gender inequalities reduce economic growth and consequently hamper the improvement in well being (Ahmed et al. 2001).

### **Interview 3. School Distance and Girls' Schooling**

*The lady is 20 year's old and came Adama/Naztereth Balle Goba with her uncle. She got educated up to grade 9 at one rural area of Goba. She explained that the school is very far from their home travelling 3 hours on foot to reach at school every day. She stated two main reasons for her migration. One is the far distance between school and home make her to be tired off travelling such long distance every day and the second is her expectation to get better life in Addis Ababa than in rural area. But she didn't find life in Naztereth similar to her expectation. She failed to continue her education; rather employed at a "Grocery" to sell "Habesha Buna" with a monthly Salary of 500 birr. She spend some of this money for herself and sometimes send to her families who are living in the rural area. "I don't have any interest to continue once I dropout schooling. I want to be employed and generate income whatever the type of job and the associated income I can obtain from the job. **Female C 20 Year's Old Female***

### **Women's Susceptibility to Health Risks**

The health status of a population is an important factor that determines the productivity of the population, educational attainment and to achieve other socioeconomic indicators of development. The low socioeconomic status of Ethiopian females is associated with high divorce rates, customary property inheritance favoring males, low access to health care and education, and heavy workload (Berhane et al. 2001). The MLSA recently reported a sharp increase in HIV risk factor associated with trafficking women due to poverty and unemployment. Such women are particularly vulnerable to various forms of exploitation, sexual abuse, and usually have little or no access to preventive information or health services. Harmful traditional practices, for instance, female circumcision, child marriage, rape, child sexual abuse, kidnapping and domestic violence are widespread in Ethiopia.

Strong resistance to change has been reported from some areas (Berhane et al. 2001; CSA and ORC



Macro 2001), there is evidence that this practice is declining as a result of national health campaigns (Spadacini and Nichols 1998). Abductions of young girls for marriage, which usually involves rape, are still common in rural Ethiopia, with more than half of all brides reportedly abducted in parts of the highlands (Getahun 2001). Kidnapping carries a stigma that may prevent the victims from returning to their families and communities, contributing to rural-urban migration and poverty of females. Sexual violence against females has also been reported among street children (Tadele 2005) and in domestic settings.

Most female commercial sex workers and servants in the towns came as divorcees from rural areas in search of work and a better life, causing lower male/female ratios in urban areas than in most other African countries (Pankhurst 1990). The trend among African commercial sex workers to enter into prostitution at an earlier age, also reported from Ethiopia, increases the risk of infection due to the biological and socioeconomic vulnerability of adolescents (Helmut et al. 2007).

The empirical data revealed that in Ethiopia health is one of the major areas that reflect gender disparity. Low economic empowerment due to unemployment and poverty together with culture, harmful traditional practices and other constraints make women highly vulnerable to health risks than men. Thus, poor health status of women hinders national development in affecting children's health and limiting the economic productivity of women in different ways

### Representation of Women in Political Leadership

The government of Ethiopia has good intension to increase the participation of women in leadership and decision making, but women's participation in the political and public sector is still low. In the 2007 elections, women held only 22% of the seats in National Parliament. Only 2 out of 28 Ministerial posts were held by women whereas there are 6 out of 30 state minister slots were held by women (Federal Civil Service Agency, 2006/7). In the 1995 election female representatives held 2.7% of members of parliament seats, in the 2000 election around 7.7% of the elected members of parliament were women (Country Gender Profile Ethiopia, 2006). The 2005 election resulted in an increase of female member of parliaments to 22%, the 2010 elections led to a female share of 27.6% female parliamentarians. These trends indicate that women's representation in political decision-making has increased over the past years; hence their voices gradually gain in strength. In contrast to their male counterparts and voters, however, female representation still remains somewhat weak and female leadership skills undeveloped restricting their ability to challenge and influence decisions that affect women's lives.

The global gender gap report of the year 2012 showed that in the last 50 years there was no female head of state in Ethiopia, women's representation in parliament and in the ministerial positions were also very low with extremely high gender disparity as shown in table 3.

At the household level women have low decision making powers even to access health services, to use family planning and make household purchases (ECA Report on the Implementation of Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action). According to DHS (2005) around 53% of currently married women reported that they made the final decisions about daily household purchase. It is only 13% of the married women make decisions alone regarding their own health care, whereas in 42% of cases, husbands decide in their stead; in 45% of cases they jointly decide.

**Table 3. Gender gap index in Political Representation in Ethiopia.**

Key Items	Gender Gap Index for Political Representation in Ethiopia					
	Rank	Score	Sample Average	Female	Male	Female to Male ratio
<b>Political Empowerment</b>	62	0.146	0.195	-	-	
<b>Women in Parliament</b>	32	0.39	0.23	28	72	0.39
<b>Women in Ministerial Positions</b>	101	0.11	0.19	10	90	0.11
<b>Years with female head of state (last 50)</b>	58	0.00	0.17	0	50	0.00

**0.00= INEQUALITY, 1.00=EQUALITY**

**Source: Hausmann et al. 2012**

The number of decisions in which a woman participates at different levels on different issues, is one of the measurements of empowerment (Naila 2005).

The main challenge for these differences in political participation lies in the traditional patriarchy of Ethiopia which remains buttressed by religion, culture, and until recently also the legal system. The changes in the Constitution and the legal code were designed to address these attitudes and practices but the changes are not yet complete nor are they properly reflected in prevailing workplace attitudes, nor in such settings as the market place, or, for that matter, in many if not most individual Ethiopian homes (Chant and McIlwaine 2009).

### Strategic Interventions to Narrow Gender Disparity

The government of Ethiopia designed different national policies and institutions and also signed international conventions that are intended to narrow the gender gap. The constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of

Ethiopia sanctions equality of men and women in all aspects of social, economical, legal and political activities. The constitution has a clear provision that guarantees gender equality in all aspects of the country's development endeavors including employment.

In accordance with the provision of Article 25 of the constitution all persons are equal before the law and discrimination on grounds of sex is prohibited. Similarly Article 35(8) stipulates men's and women's equality in employment, promotion, pay, transfer, and pension entitlement.

Furthermore, Article 35(3) of the constitution identified itself with women's historical legacy of the past and clearly states the retroactive positional truth by way of prescribing an affirmative action as a remedy to the women's discrimination. Article 42 (1) (d) of the constitution stipulates women workers right to equal pay for equal work.

The National Policy on women is explicit recognition to gender issues in Ethiopia can be fairly linked to the Ethiopian Women's Policy issued in September 1993. The objectives of the national policy on women have multi-sectoral development strategies, which aim to address the felt needs of women in a holistic approach. In addition the Labour law proclamation NO.377/2003 has clearly stipulated different provisions to safe guard women's right upon the formation of employment contract Ethiopian Women's Development and Change Package (2006), Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to Poverty (PASDEP).

PASDEP was one of the main implementation strategies designed to achieve gender equality in all development goals of the country. PASDEP has twin goals of reducing poverty and ensure gender equality (MoFED, 2006). One of the priority areas of the GTP is addressing the women and youth issues in order to accelerate the economic development. The Ethiopian government is also signatory to most of the international instruments. It has adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women /CEDAW (1979), Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women (DEVAW,1993), the International Conference on Population and Development / ICPD (1994), and the Beijing Platform for Action /BPA (1995).

Moreover, gender mainstreaming is also implemented in different sectors in Ethiopia. All these instruments are put into practice to close the gender gap in Ethiopia. But the problem of gender disparity is still a persistent problem in Ethiopia. As the global gender gap indexes revealed, Ethiopia is found on the lower rank among countries in terms of education, employment, political participation and health with few improvements from year to year. The problem of gender gap in Ethiopia might exist as a result of different interrelated problems especially hindering women to be active participant in education, employment, leadership and other sectors. Why the problem is still exists with the intervention of all this instruments needs further investigation in this field.

#### ***Interview 4: Child Care giving and Women's Empowerment***

*The lady married grade (10<sup>th</sup>) at her 17 years of age. She dropout school at grade 11 at the time of delivery for her first daughter. "The main reason for my dropout of schooling was to give care for my child as I thought no one can provide care and treatment for my child rather than me. I prearranged at that time first to have/born some children and then to continue my education. Regrettably, I couldn't continue my education I totally lose my interest in education; rather I opened a small shop to help my husband in household expenditure." She elucidated that she spend all what obtained working in the shop upon her children's' education, transportation, nutrition, clothing and other household expenditure. "I don't have any bank saving I am investing in my children and I consider that one as my saving. Even I don't know how much I collect income rather I immediately use all what I got working*

#### **Conclusion and Recommendation**

Not only increase of income and welfare, but the social setting is equally important to attain the desirable outcome of development in a given nation. The existence of gender equality has paramount importance in enhancing the process of development. Countries with high gender gap in different sectors could face a big challenge in realizing the goals of development. In Ethiopia unless collective efforts are made to narrow or if possible close the gender gap, the country could potentially face development challenges as a result of wide gender gap.

The gender gap is reflected that women are less educated, less paid, highly vulnerable to health risks, unequally represented in politics and highly exposed for violence. It could be a difficult task to identify the root causes of gender disparity in Ethiopia, but the likely causes could be related to culture, economy, historical legacies, institutional design, political system and other unknown factors may need further investigation.

The role of government intervention using policies that can equally benefit women and men could solve the problem to some extent, but without the participation of the mass including men and women the goal of narrowing the gender gap cannot be attained in the country. Thus, the problems of gender inequality are deep-rooted in the system and even in the minds of men and women it needs collective action to change the system

and to change the attitude of men and women to change the mind set up of people to the role of women in development.

Consequently, addressing the problem of poverty, political empowering, cultural modification, access to information, appropriate implementation of policies could among the potential suggested remarks to address the problem of gender equality in Ethiopia.

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Appendix 1. AAU Academic Staffs by educational level and academic rank  
 AAU Academic staff by educational level

Year	3rd Degree				2nd Degree				1st Degree				Total			
	F	M	FM	F%	F	M	FM	F%	F	M	FM	F%	F	M	FM	F%
2005/06	20	342	362	6	59	491	550	11	20	236	256	8	99	1069	1168	8
2006/07	16	319	335	5	53	428	481	11	22	191	213	10	91	938	1029	9
2007/08	19	326	345	6	56	478	534	10	27	218	245	11	102	1022	1124	9
2008/09	22	346	368	6	64	551	615	10	74	362	436	17	160	1259	1419	11
2009/10	32	390	422	8	67	634	701	10	124	422	546	23	223	1446	1669	13

AAU Academic staff by academic rank

Year	Professor				Associate Professor				Assistant Professor				Lecturer				Asst. Lecturer and below				Total			
	F	M	FM	F%	F	M	FM	F%	F	M	FM	F%	F	M	FM	F%	F	M	FM	F%	F	M	FM	F%
2005/06	0	24	24	-	8	131	139	6	18	261	279	6	56	467	523	11	48	311	359	13	130	1,194	1324	10
2006/07	0	28	28	-	3	120	123	2	15	248	263	6	55	358	413	13	54	279	333	16	127	1,033	1160	11
2007/08	0	27	27	-	6	129	135	4	16	265	281	6	51	405	456	11	58	279	337	17	131	1,105	1236	11
2008/09	0	21	21	-	6	119	125	5	24	311	335	7	55	508	563	10	339	444	783	43	424	1,403	1827	23
2009/10	1	22	23	4	7	124	131	5	30	366	396	8	70	593	663	11	76	333	409	19	184	1,438	1622	11

Source: AAU registrar

Appendix 2. AAU Student Enrollment 2005/06-2009/2010

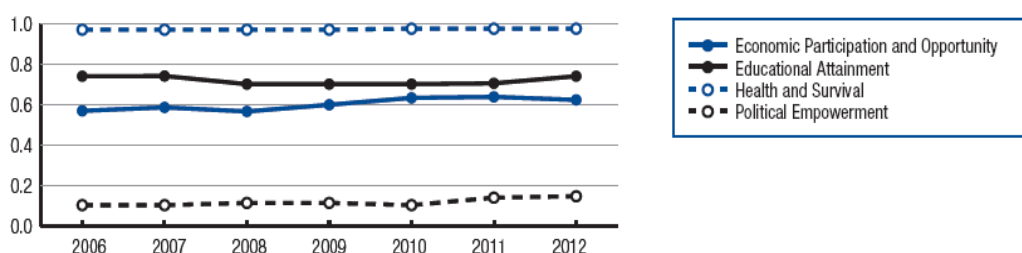
College/School/Faculty	2005/06					2006/07					2007/08					2008/09					2009/10				
	Female	Male	Total	F%	GPI	Female	Male	Total	F%	GPI	Female	Male	Total	F%	GPI	Female	Male	Total	F%	GPI	Female	Male	Total	F%	GPI
Social Science	407	898	1,305	31	0.45	447	680	1,127	40	0.66	394	637	1,031	38	0.62	298	753	1,051	28	0.40	382	975	1,357	28	0.39
Business and Economics	486	1,049	1,535	32	0.46	619	1,026	1,645	38	0.60	559	1,070	1,629	34	0.52	619	1,371	1,990	31	0.45	492	1,512	2,004	25	0.33
Natural Science	367	1,222	1,589	23	0.30	364	1,062	1,426	26	0.34	260	944	1,204	22	0.28	391	1,489	1,880	21	0.26	397	1,316	1,713	23	0.30
Technology	437	1,433	1,870	23	0.30	379	1,417	1,796	21	0.27	211	1,457	1,668	13	0.14	1,097	3,164	4,261	26	0.35	839	2,647	3,486	24	0.32
Education	942	3,664	4,606	20	0.26	1,325	3,791	5,116	26	0.35	1,277	3,133	4,410	29	0.41	918	2,422	3,340	27	0.38	735	1,603	2,338	31	0.46
Law	253	372	625	40	0.60	282	332	614	46	0.85	265	263	528	50	1.01	273	330	603	45	0.83	249	305	554	45	0.82
Medicine	451	879	1,330	34	0.51	554	1,071	1,625	34	0.52	-	1,504	1,504	-	-	617	1,027	1,644	38	0.60	762	1,160	1,922	40	0.66
Pharmacy	131	225	356	37	0.58	137	196	333	41	0.70	98	229	327	30	0.43	118	176	294	40	0.67	122	174	296	41	0.70
Language Studies	370	915	1,285	29	0.40	419	960	1,379	30	0.44	556	1,040	1,605	35	0.53	531	1,349	1,880	28	0.39	853	1,760	2,613	33	0.48
Informatics	172	242	414	42	0.71	147	217	364	40	0.68	-	381	381	-	-	350	533	883	40	0.66	175	612	787	22	0.29
Veterinary Medicine	50	353	403	12	0.14	72	347	419	17	0.21	81	302	383	21	0.27	59	340	399	15	0.17	73	357	430	17	0.20
Yared Music School	36	100	136	26	0.36	33	91	124	27	0.36	29	84	113	26	0.35	17	90	107	16	0.19	25	96	121	21	0.26
Fine Arts and Design	14	94	108	13	0.15	20	91	111	18	0.22	18	93	111	16	0.19	17	96	113	15	0.18	18	99	117	15	0.18
Commerce	1,428	3,332	4,760	30	0.43	1,399	3,056	4,455	31	0.46	-	3,905	3,905	-	-	1,268	2,324	3,592	35	0.55	1,443	1,979	3,422	42	0.73
Journalism and Communication	31	69	100	31	0.45	90	254	344	26	0.35	61	215	276	22	0.28	66	225	291	23	0.29	134	391	525	26	0.34
Social Work*																12	69	81	0.17	0.26	108	134			
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,676</b>	<b>14,847</b>	<b>20,422</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0.38</b>	<b>6,287</b>	<b>14,691</b>	<b>20,978</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0.43</b>	<b>3,809</b>	<b>16,266</b>	<b>19,075</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0.26</b>	<b>6,661</b>	<b>16,758</b>	<b>22,409</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0.42</b>	<b>6,726</b>	<b>16,094</b>	<b>21,819</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0.45</b>

Source AAU registrar

Appendix 3 Gender gap indexes of Ethiopia(2006-2012)

	OVERALL		ECONOMIC PARTICIPATION		EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT		HEALTH AND SURVIVAL		POLITICAL EMPOWERMENT	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
<b>Gender Gap Index 2012 (out of 135 countries)</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>0.620</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>0.622</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>0.739</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>0.974</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>0.146</b>
Gender Gap Index 2011 (out of 135 countries)	116	0.614	71	0.637	131	0.704	77	0.974	64	0.139
Gender Gap Index 2010 (out of 134 countries)	121	0.602	74	0.632	129	0.700	75	0.974	82	0.102
Gender Gap Index 2009 (out of 134 countries)	122	0.595	91	0.598	130	0.700	106	0.969	74	0.113
Gender Gap Index 2008 (out of 130 countries)	122	0.587	96	0.565	126	0.700	101	0.969	70	0.113
Gender Gap Index 2007 (out of 128 countries)	113	0.599	86	0.585	121	0.740	100	0.969	68	0.102
Gender Gap Index 2006 (out of 115 countries)	100	0.595	74	0.568	108	0.739	87	0.969	61	0.102

Evolution 2006–2012



Appendix 4. Interview guide

1. What is your highest level of education? Have you faced any challenge in education like early marriage, abduction and others?
2. What is the condition of your employment? Are you satisfied with your income?
3. Have you exposed for any type of sexual violence?
4. What is your view in electing women for higher political position in Ethiopia?
5. What are the challenges that make women to be in the lower status in terms of education, employment, health and political representation?
6. What could be the solution to empower women economically and politically in Ethiopia?
7. How do you see the relation between gender inequality and Ethiopia's development plan?
8. What is your view on government's intervention with policies in gender mainstreaming? Are they adequate to narrow the gender gap in Ethiopia?
9. What is expected from the society to create conducive situation to make women agent of development?