



MEKELLE UNIVERSITY

College of Law and Governance

Department of Civic and Ethical Education

Post Graduate Study Program

Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision

Making in Bizet Woreda, Tigray, Ethiopia.

A Thesis Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Art (MA) In Civic and Ethical Education.

BY: Hadera Kahsay

Advisor: Yohannes Haile (PhD)

January, 2025

Mekelle, Ethiopia.

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**Declaration**

This is to certify that the thesis entitled “**Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Leadership and Decision Making in Bizet Woreda, Tigray, Ethiopia.**” which is being

submitted here with the award of the Degree of Master of Art (MA) In Civic and Ethical Education of Mekelle University, has been carried out by Mrs. Hadera Kahsay is an authentic work carried out by him under guidance. The matter embodied in this project work has not been submitted earlier for an award of any degree or diploma at the best of our knowledge and belief.

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## **Acronyms**

BDPA: Beijing Declaration and Platforms of Action

CEDAW: Convention Elimination Discrimination Against Women

ILO: International Labor Organization

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

S.D: Standard Deviation

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UN: United Nation

UNDP: United Nation Development Program

UNICEF: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

WB: World Bank

## **Abstract**

*Women have been faced different challenges to participate in leadership position, due to different factors. Practically as we know, there were less women leaders than men leaders both at country and organizational level. The purpose of this study is to assess the factors that hinder women's participation on leadership, in Bizet woreda, Tigray, Ethiopia. The data were collected by questionnaire, and interview via considering a purposive sampling for the qualitative interviews, while a stratified random sampling method was used for survey. The data was described through inferential statistics techniques. The find of the study reviled that women were found having interest to upgrade in the field of leadership profession. With few of them were interested to expert. The finding also identified major hindering for women participation on leadership such as personal, socio-cultural, and educational. Effectively applying quota system and gender sensitive planning were found to be the first and second effective mechanism that help decision-makers and raise women participation in leadership. Finally, the recommended mechanisms which for women leadership empowerment are, raising and bringing attitudinal change be undertaken by Woreda administrative offices through training, experience share and workshops, modifications in selection and placement criteria, giving quota to compete with men, family and home responsibility can be minimized by having family-friendly policies to improve the pressures of home responsibility.*

**Key words:** *Leadership, Decision making, Participation, Socio-cultural barriers, Bizet woreda*

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the Study

In the early stages of human existence, that it to say, in primitive society, the head of the family was a woman, who took every family responsibility and duty (Habib, 2020). However, this role of women in leadership did not last long. With the division of society into classes and the emergence of the state, women were degraded to lower societal position (Al-Nuwaysir., 2020). The emergence of state and the development of region can be cited as major causes of the inferior status of women (Whyte, 2015). Women have both a right and an obligation to active participation in political leadership. In addition to this human right and obligation political analysts and researches from different region of the world have observed that when women get into leadership and management, they bring a different perspective of political leadership (Kamau, 2010).

Globally, the underrepresentation of women in leadership roles is a persistent issue, influenced by various social, cultural, economic, and political factors. International human rights treaties and conventions such as the convention on the elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing plant form for action, 7 and the third Millennium Development Goal on gender equality, recognize that women have the right to participate equally with men at all levels and in all aspects of public life and decision-making. Weather it is deciding how the house hold income is spent or determining how the country is run, and such conventions commit signatories to realizing this goal (Okoh, 2023).

The possibility of all citizens to participate in the management of public affairs is at the very heart of democracy. Despite these facts in the majority of countries of the world, the political arena remains largely dominated by men, and is even an exclusively male bastion in some countries (Lean, 2021). In theories of democracy, the voice of all has to be heard equally. But, throughout history, women which constitute fifty percent of global populations are underrepresented in decision-making processes at all governance levels around the world and even they are dominated and marginalized politically, socially, economically, physically and

psychologically by their counter parts (Habib, 2020). The participation of women in the political discourse is a recent phenomenon.

While there have been positive strides in increasing women's participation in South Africa's foreign policy decision-making and execution from 2009 to 2019, challenges persist. Addressing systemic barriers and enhancing the influence of women in decision-making roles will be crucial for achieving gender equality in foreign affairs. Continued advocacy and policy commitment are necessary to ensure that women's voices are not only heard but also integrated into the fabric of South Africa's foreign policy (Nwafor, 2022).

According to Kassa, S. (2015), Ethiopia is part to all major human right treaties including the most important womens conventions, i.e., CEDAW which calls for equal participation of women in public decision making and the Beijing Declaration and Platforms of Action (BDPA) which requires governments to attain a 30% benchmark for womens representation in all public decision-making positions. As stated by Kassa, S. (2015), the main factors which have contributed for such disparities include: structural barriers, unequal socio-economic opportunities and inadequate access to mentors and support networks. Women are still largely underrepresented in decision are made and resource allocation are decided (Hora, 2014).

Women's participation in leadership and decision-making is a crucial aspect of achieving gender equality and sustainable development. In Ethiopia, particularly in the Bizet Woreda of Tigray, women's participation in leadership and decision-making remains limited, reflecting broader national trends. This research aims to explore the factors affecting women's participation in leadership roles within Bizet Woreda, considering the unique socio-cultural and political context of the region.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Women's various discriminations and less participation in any sector of development is an agenda of every country. The concern of women's participation in leadership has become key issue for the government of Ethiopia. Despite this, there is glorying inequality in all sectors particularly in developing nations like Ethiopia. According to UN (2015) equality between men

and women in the matter of human rights is a condition for social justice and a basic pre requisite for democracy, development, peace and good governance. This equality, however, has been compromised for various issues related to education, socio-economic, culture, political commitment, and behavioral constructs. It is with this ground that the researcher finds it appropriate to assess the factors that affect women's participation in leadership and decision making in Bezet Woreda of Tigray.

Previous studies have often focused on the existence of policies promoting women's leadership, but they cannot overlook the effectiveness and enforcement of these policies in local contexts. This creates a significant gap in the research. To address this gap, the researcher conducted a deeper investigation into how traditional gender roles are perceived and enacted within local governance structures. The persistence of traditional gender roles significantly influences the functioning of local governance structures. Despite global movements advocating for gender equality, local governance often reflects entrenched perceptions and practices that prioritize male authority and marginalize women's participation.

Therefore, the study addresses the public leadership and participation in socio-economic and political decision-making of women mainly in the office of Bizet woreda administrator, education, health, agricultural and revenue bureaus by taking issues of the educational status, commitment, sociocultural attitudes, self-assertiveness and interests into consideration.

### **1.3. Research Questions**

1. What factors hinder women's participation in leadership positions in Bizet Woreda?
2. How do community and political leaders perceive women's empowerment in leadership positions within the Bizet Woreda administration sector office?
3. How effective are the mechanisms used to empower women in leadership positions in Bizet Woreda?

### **1.4. Research Objectives**

#### **1.4.1. General Objective**

- To investigate the factors affecting women's participation in leadership and decision-

making in Bizet Woreda, Tigray, Ethiopia.

#### **1.4.2. Specific Objectives**

- To assess the factors that hinder women's participation in leadership position in Bizet Woreda.
- To assess the community and political leaders' perception on women's empowerment in leadership position in Bizet Woreda administration sector office.
- To explore the effective of mechanisms which were used to empower women in leadership position in Bizet Woreda.

#### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

This study has provided valuable insights into the challenges women face in attaining leadership positions in Bizet Woreda. The findings can inform policymakers, local government officials, and non-governmental organizations in designing interventions that promote gender equality in leadership and decision-making. Furthermore, the research has been contributing to the broader academic discourse on gender and leadership in Ethiopia.

#### **1.6. The Scop of the Study Area**

The study area focuses on investigating factors affecting women's participation in leadership and decision making in Bizet woreda, Tigray. The population under this study include the seven sector offices of the Woreda, namely the office of the woreda Administrator, Woreda Youth and Sport Bureau, Woreda Education Bureau, Woreda agriculture Bureau, Woreda health Bureau, Woreda Women and Children Affairs Office and Woreda Bureau of Revenue. Due to financial and time constrains, the researcher has preferred to delimit the scope of the study into selected seven sectors only.

In evaluating the participation of women versus men leaders, the study will not consider all factors that affect womens participation, but delimited only to personal, cultural, institutional, policy, educational factors.

#### **1.7. Limitation of the study**

Time restrictions may lead to incomplete data or insufficient depth in exploring complex issues.

Respondents' answers may be influenced by social desirability, leading to inaccurate reporting of their experiences and opinions. Even though the researcher had planned to use a tape recorder during the interview, respondents were not voluntary. Furthermore, there have been also time limitation of the researcher wait until the aforementioned leaded get free time to deal with the issue under consideration.

## **1.8. The Organization of the Study**

The study has organized in to five chapters: the first chapter contains an introduction for the study which contains background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, significance of the study, and scope of the study and operational definition of terms. The second chapter focuses on review of literatures related to the study, in these chapter general concepts and definitions, basic issues related to the leadership discussed in detail. Third chapter devoted to research design, samples selected, sources of data, data collection tools, procedures of data collection and the methods of data presentation. The fourth chapter concerned with discussing the findings, analysis and interpretation in which the collected primary and secondary data analyzed and organized in meaningful manner. The last chapter, chapter five, present the conclusion and recommendation part of the study.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. Meaning and Concept of Leadership and Decision-making**

Different scholars define leadership differently. There have been numerous writings and studies conducted on the topic. However, no universal definition of the word has yet been reached. The reason for the divergence of opinion on what leadership is or what is not due fundamentally to the fact that many people see leadership from different perspectives. It has also various connotations depending on the context in which it is used (Hallo, 2020) The nature of leadership values according to the demands of a particular situation as leaders themselves are diverse individuals (UN, 2015) also equated leadership with beauty; it is hard to define but you know it when you see it.

Moreover, it is the ability to direct people towards the achievement of goals and it is associated with the setting of goals and visions to the future and to go pass through the process to achieve the desired goals. As indicated by Ejimabo (2015), leadership is a process that takes place in the context of organizational or group behavior. Leadership, however, is a powerful word capable of conveying much more than can be contained within a concise definition and capable of meaning many different things to different audiences in different contexts.

Leadership is complex, multidimensional phenomena. It has been defined as: a behavior; a style; a skill; a process; a responsibility; an experience; a function of management; a position of authority; an influencing relationship; a characteristic; and an ability (Northouse, 2024). John Maxwell defined leadership by influence (Maxwell, 2013). Kotter (2014) stated that “Leadership is the capacity for collective action to vitalize”. Robert Greenleaf defined effective leadership as people who serve others, while they follow them (Cote, R., 2017). Moreover, Peter Drucker defined a leader is someone who has followers (Drucker, 2015). However, some theorists believe that leadership is a form of social influence process (House, 2013). Although there is a variety of

leadership definitions focused on two components which are: the process of influencing a group of individuals to obtain common goal, and to develop a vision

According to Yukel (2010) leadership is a word taken from a common vocabulary and incorporated into the technical vocabulary of a scientific discipline without being precisely redefined.

For Reed (2019) ‘there are almost as many different definitions of leadership on there are persons who have attempted to define the concept’. While some define a leader in political terms, others define the term in socio metric and psychometric terms. It has also been defined in terms of behaviors, influence over other people, interaction patterns, role relationships, individual traits, perception of others regarding legitimacy of influence, and occupation of an administration position (Yukl, 2010).

It is important to assess some of the definition of leadership given by different educators. Summerfield, M. R. (2014) explain leadership as the influencing of the actions, behaviors, beliefs and goals of one actor in a social system by another actor with the willing cooperation of the actor being influenced. This definition indicates that leadership is an attempt to influence people for what over reasons.

## **2.2. Womens Participation**

Gender role theory posits that boys and girls learn the appropriate behavior and attitudes from the family and overall culture they grow up with, and so non-physical gender differences are a product of socialization. Social role theory proposes that the social structure is the underlying force for the gender differences. Social role theory proposes that the sex-differentiated behavior is driven by the division of labor between two sexes within a society. Division of labor creates gender roles, which in turn, lead to gendered social behavior Eagly (2020)

The physical specialization of the sexes is considered to be the distal cause of the gender roles. Men’s unique physical advantages in term of body size and upper body strength provided them an edge over women in those social activities that demanded such physical attributes such as hunting, herding and warfare (Jin, X., 2020). On the other hand, women’s biological capacity for reproduction and child-bearing is proposed to explain their limited involvement in other social activities. Such divided activity arrangement for the purpose of achieving activity-efficiency led

to the division of labor between sexes. Social role theorists have explicitly stressed that the labor division is not narrowly defined as that between paid employment and domestic activities, rather, is conceptualized to include all activities performed within a society that are necessary for its existence and sustainability Fadia (2014).

The characteristics of the activities performed by men and women became people's perceptions and beliefs of the dispositional attributes of men or women themselves. Through the process of correspondent inference (Kassa, 2015), division of labor led to gender roles, or gender stereotype. Ultimately, people expect men and women who occupy certain position to behave according to these attributes. These socially constructed gender roles are considered to be hierarchical and characterized as a male-advantaged gender hierarchy (Eagly, 2020). The activities men involved in were often those that provided them with more access to or control of resources and decision-making power, rendering men not only superior dispositional attributes via correspondence bias (Kassa, 2015), but also higher status and authority as society progressed. The particular pattern of the labor division within a certain society is a dynamic process and determined by its specific economic and cultural characteristics.

### **2.2.1. Gender and development Theory**

Emphasizes the need to understand the roles of men and women in development and to address gender inequalities in all aspects of life, including leadership. This framework is advocated by Jaquette, J. S. (2017) and is influenced by development and planning thinking. The issue of womens equally in all spheres of life is presented as a moral and ethical one equal opportunity, equal pay for equal work and ensuring that women and disadvantage to men are regarded as womens right. The empowerment approach thus advocates social transformation. Empowerment is a process that enhances the ability of disadvantaged individuals or grouped to challenge existing power relations that place them in subordinate economic, social and political positions. Momsen, J. (2019) define womens empowerment as the capacity of women to be economically self-sufficient and self-reliant with control over decisions affecting their life.

### **2.2.2. Feminist Theory**

Focuses on the social constructs that perpetuate gender inequalities and how these can be challenged to promote women's empowerment and participation in leadership. The political economy framework originates from Marxist perspectives political economy focuses on the

patterns of uneven development with in a capitalist system and their differential economic and social effect of a global market economy that has been emerging since the 16<sup>th</sup> (Merchant, 2017). Some political economists are now beginning to pay attention to the interrelation between macro-economic policies and social frameworks (Eagly, 2020)

Recently feminist political economist has begun to specifically look at the gender implications of these processes. Sharma (2019) highlights that these studies show that women have been more devastated than men by these processes which have contributed to occupational sex segregation in the work force at all level. These aspects are highly gendered and reflect the social construction of gender and the assignment of specific roles responsibilities and expectations to women and to men (Smulders, 2008).

## **2.3. The Role of Womens in Leadership and Decision -Making**

### **2.3.1. The meaning of women Leadership**

Women leadership is just one branch of leadership concept and can also be defined in different ways. Some understand women leadership as the fact that women can be and are leaders, others may define it from a feminist point of view and as a matter of equality and the right to have the same opportunities. Some say, it refers to certain feminine characteristics which are valuable in today's organizations (Palm-Joronen, 2009). Others think that leadership should not be differentiated as women leadership at all. Specifically, emphasizing femininity in leadership means that it is recognized that there have been and still are less women than male leaders and that it is changing. In that sense, the word womens are seen to work as sort of a reminder of the fact that there have not always been women leaders.

According to Lahti (2013), some women want to use the words women leadership purposefully, to bring out the competitive advantage that different skills and capabilities can create, this way bringing up the advantage of femininity. Sometimes being a women leader and representing minority in some sense can be beneficial as some organizations may consider a woman as a more interesting choice or as a new asset. In general, the world needs leaders who will bring the agenda of peace, equality, and sustainable development.

#### **2.3.1.1. Characteristics of Leadership on Gender**

There are certain characteristics of leadership that are described as feminine characteristics and masculine characteristic. Some of the characteristics often found in male leaders are;

competitiveness, focusing, goal orientation, and inventiveness and performance orientation while Feminine characteristics include social skills and social interaction, conversational style of communication, acceptance of differences, being multi skilled and working well in groups Lahti (2013). These characteristics merely represent different kind of leadership behavior which can be applied by both women and men.

Ignoring all the details of stereotypical characteristics of women and men, it comes down to the differences between perceptions. According to Palmu-jorone (2009), due to biological differences women and men think about things in different ways, emphasize different aspects and approach problems in certain ways. Depending on the situations, women can think in masculine way men in feminine way. In the real world, the characteristics of a good manager are usually matched by masculine characteristics and many women in high positions use a masculine style of leading (Heiskanen, 2013). In that sense, certain aspects of femininity are still seen as weakness in the business world.

#### **2.3.1.2. Work Place Gender Equality**

Workplace gender equality is achieved when people are able to access and enjoy the same rewards, resources and opportunities regardless of gender. The aim of gender equality in the workplace is to achieve broadly equal outcomes for women and men, not necessarily outcomes that are exactly the same for all. To achieve this requires:

- Workplaces to provide equal pay for work of equal or comparable value
- Removal of barriers to the full and equal participation of women in the workforce
- Access to all occupations and industries, including leadership roles, regardless of gender;
- Elimination of discrimination on the basis of gender, particularly in relation to family and caring responsibilities.

Achieving gender equality is important for workplaces not only because it is ‘fair’ and ‘the right thing to do,’ but because it is also linked to a country’s overall economic performance.

Workplace gender equality is associated with:

- Improved national productivity and economic growth
- Increased organizational performance
- Enhanced ability of companies to attract talent and retain employees

- Enhanced organizational reputation. (Netsanet, 2013)

### **2.3.2. The Role of Womens in leadership and Decision-making**

The dynamics of today's business environment has changed particularly because of women business leaders playing an important role in making the transition away from business as usual. Not only are they leading in managerial roles but also assuming personal responsibility for tackling issues concerning gender equality, poverty eradication, children, education and climate change. For women to lead and take charge in taking such responsibility they have to be capable of holding positions of power and influence in the business world (Choge, 2015).

Women in positions and government have made breakthrough in influencing the course of public investments. In a world where women care about different things from men (and women do appear to care for children, rights, poverty eradication and environment more than men do), it may be that when women have more voice, but they drive institutional investments in a way that favors children, environment and sustainable development. So, when women have more rights in the political arena, the nature of public investments also changes. The world is a better place when women Women's leadership in political spheres is shown to be socially beneficial (World Economic Forum, 2017), and is a matter of women's right to equal opportunity and access. While in the Asia Pacific region women's political participation has increased since the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, the region lags behind global trends: women's parliamentary representation in Lower or Single House in the region is 20%, whereas the global average is 25% have the power to lead. (Ilona, 2014).

#### **2.3.2.1. Womens participation in Political leadership and Decision-Making**

Women's leadership in political spheres is shown to be socially beneficial (World Economic Forum, 2017), and is a matter of women's right to equal opportunity and access. While in the Asia Pacific region women's political participation has increased since the Beijing Platform for Action in 1995, the region lags behind global trends: women's parliamentary representation in Lower or Single House in the region is 20%, whereas the global average is 25%.

Women's participation in political leadership and decision-making is a critical aspect of achieving gender equality and ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented in governance.

Despite significant progress over the past few decades, women remain underrepresented in political leadership roles globally. Here's an importance of Women's Participation:

Women constitute half of the world's population and by implications potentially half of the world electorate. Furthermore, most countries claim that they use democratic methods including multiparty system, elections and parliamentarism to select political leaders and to make policy decisions. One internationally agreed indicator of women's political participation is national parliaments. The record world average of women's representation in national parliament was reached in 1988 when women's representative accounted for 14.8% of all parliamentarians.

In the Beijing Platform for Action, stemming from the Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing 1995, the prioritization of women's leadership was outlined in sections G.1 and G.2: "take measures to ensure women's equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making" and "increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership", respectively. Two decades later, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development underscored the need and urgency to achieve gender parity in leadership through SDG Target 5.5, necessitating "women's full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life."

Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women explicitly mentions women's political equality (Articles 7- 9) and discusses women's equal participation at all levels (Article 7b): "States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women on equal terms with men, the right to participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government" (Part II, Article 7b). These commitments collectively express that women's right to equality cannot be reached without equality in political decision-making positions.

Globally, the number of women in national parliaments has been steadily increasing, though it still falls short of parity. As of 2023, women hold approximately 26% of parliamentary seats worldwide. The number of women serving as heads of state or government has also increased, though they remain a small minority. Countries like New Zealand, Finland, and Iceland have been notable for their female leaders. There are significant regional differences in women's

political participation. Nordic countries, for example, have some of the highest levels of female representation in politics, while women are often severely underrepresented

Women's participation in political leadership and decision-making is crucial for achieving gender equality and ensuring that diverse perspectives are represented in governance. However, women remain underrepresented at all levels of political decision-making worldwide.

### **2.3.2.2. Womens participation in Socio-economic leadership and Decision-Making**

Around the world, women perform two-thirds of the work for 10 per cent of the income and only 1 percent of the assets. Women also constitute 70 percent of the world's poor. Women's earning still lags that of men's; they earn on average 30 percent of men's wages in the Middle East-North Africa (MENA) region and between 60 and 70 percent in East Asia. A priority among women's rights organizations is creating environments where women can interact with one another, share concerns, and address public resistance. There are hopeful signs, as the World Economic Forum revealed that two-thirds of 115 countries posted gains in overall gender gap scores.

According to Embassy of Israel Georgia, Global statistics clearly show that women are underrepresented as leaders, elected officials, and voters due to cultural and social norms, which limit their participation in the political process power in the government and different institutions.

As UNICEF (United Nations Children Fund) describes, gender equality "means that women and men, and girls and boys, enjoy the same rights, resources, opportunities and protections. It does not require that girls and boys, or women and men, be the same, or that they are treated exactly alike. It is increasingly recognized that gender equality can benefit the whole society.

For a long time in history, politics was only for men, women did not have rights to get access to politics. After fighting for a long time, nowadays, women's political position has been improved. In the 2000 UN Millennium Development Report, gender equality is listed as one of its eight goals and the achievement of this goal requires women's empowerment. Moreover, the United Nation underlines that women and men should have equal opportunity to make decisions in parliament. In reality, more women are appearing in the national and local parliaments and female leadership is not that rare, there are even female presidents and premiers. Despite an overall decrease in gender inequality in virtually every modern nation, gender discrimination and unbalance still exist in many fields, especially in politics. Women are still not involved in

politics as deeply as men. In many countries especially Asian countries, the ratio of female parliamentarians is low and most people tend to believe the statement that “men make better political leaders”. Under these circumstances mentioned above, it can be illustrating to figure out whether female political participation has an impact on economic growth.

### **2.3.3. Factors that hinder women participation in leadership position**

#### **2.3.3.1. Socio-Cultural Factors**

Different researchers (Shakeshaft et.al, 2014), indicate that socio-cultural factors are one of the factors for womens under representation in participation leadership. These factors include: lack of self-confidence, working condition, lack of support, societal attitudes and perception, lack of role models, mentors and home responsibilities. In many societies, traditional gender roles and stereotypes discourage women from pursuing leadership positions. These norms often prioritize male leadership and limit opportunities for women.

The socialization of males and females starts from the early developmental stage of children and in most cases, pre-school girls are expected to become passive, dependent, polite, and powerless. On the other hand, boys are expected to become independent, active, dominant, and confident and this gender stereotyping and cultural attitudes towards males and females has an impact on their future Career. Women who accept this stereotyping /cultural influences/ show motherhood behavior and do not involve in intellectual tasks and other professions, instead they simply accept the cultural influences and they are swallowed up in their cultural traditions.

On the other side, women that do not accept these influences become psychologically strong and participate actively in intellectual tasks but these women enter in state of conflict and anxiety that resulted from fear of societal rejection or loss of ‘femininity’.

Specially women in managerial position, as indicated in Barkhuizen (2022). develop a feeling of isolation from their group /absence of female support/, develop negative attitudes towards the society that resulted from stereotyping, and moreover, these women, because of the absence of less amount of women leaders /lack of role model/, develop sense of loneliness. The suffer of these women continue in connection with home and children care; if they are more committed to the home and children care, there is a possibility to be considered they are not committed to their job and if they fully committed to their job, there is a probability to be considered as ‘male’ or

‘unfeminine’. However, men are expected to be aggressive, independent, job oriented, dominant, more active, and sociable than women (Hale et al, 2018). Therefore, this stereotyping gives male advantage over female in managerial positions. (Netsanet W., 2013)

Womens who aspire to become leader are more likely to have low aspiration than men (Birhanu, 2011). In studies of female, aspiring to become administrators, Alameeri (2023) found a marked lack of self confidence in their finding related to aspiring leader indicates that women lack of sense of themselves as leaders and perceive that they have further to go in developing leadership identity then to men.

The component of administration work as well as the perceived and real male defined environment in which many women administrators must work, shape womens perception of the desirability of administration. Bullough (2008) contends that womens failure to aspire to the leadership might be a result of their experiences working with male leaders, role models whose leadership behavior may not be compatible with womens preferred ways of leading. According to Haile (2016) from the late 1970’s that pointed out that women traditionally had little support, encouragement or counseling from family, peers, super ordinates or educational institutions to pursue careers in leadership position.

The attitude of individuals and society towards womens ability in holding the responsibility of leadership position could influence the participation of women significantly. With regard to this, Hoare and Gell (2009) argued that mistrust of womens ability to lead and the stereotype and prejudices about their role in society and their lack of suitability for leadership roles and decision making are also challenges for women. These challenges are usually aggravated by cultural factors. Leadership is gendered concept. In wide variety of cultural contexts, leadership continues to be identified with the male. Even though women occupy positions of leadership responsibility, there is tendency to assume that the ‘rightful’ leader is male.

Home responsibilities as well as place bound circumstance more with spouses were early contributors to womens lack of administrative success, either because the demands of family on women aspirants restricted them or because those who hired believed that women would be hindered by family commitments. Native American women in Montana are for example reported

to be identifying family responsibilities as barriers to entering administration (Brown, 2004). In relation to these Shakeshaft et al., (2014) also argued that “family and home responsibilities are more likely to affect the career patterns of women than men.” Other researcher Wynn (2003) also noted that family responsibilities were considered by women in their decision to apply for and maintain administrative position.

### **2.3.3.2. Organizational Barriers**

The effects of gender labeling in the society creates discriminatory actions when women involve in professional activities especially in managerial positions. The abilities and skills of women are judged as lesser quality than men are. In relation to this, as cited in Rincón Diez (2017) confirms that the negative attitude of organization who hire women take the main share of becoming barrier to women participation in organizational leadership.

Some organizations, when they select employees for managerial positions, because of negative stereotyping, use selection criteria that completely exclude women from the competition and favor the participation of men. For example, as cited in Ouston (1993:49), Timpano and Knight (1976), describe particular discriminatory practices that some organizations use during selection of employees. These discriminatory activities are:

- Offering high payment for men than women.
- Promoting only men for interview.
- Asking questions that are not related with performance that is designed purposely to screen out female candidates etc.

These discriminatory actions are seen during the application process, when selection criteria are designed, during the interview process, and at the decision-making process. For instance, Shakeshaft (2014) stated that, there are organizational discriminatory actions while selecting women candidates for managerial position during the application process. These include:

- Asking questions concerning lowest acceptable salary that leads to unequal payment for salary for men and women.
- Separation of applications received by sex.
- Asking questions concerning the marital status „number of children and ages of children“ etc.

Moreover, this discrimination of women is also observed during the selection criteria of candidates for managerial position. These include:

- Allowing men to skip some selection stages but expecting women to fulfill all steps to compete. “Using criteria with unproven validity as predictors of success such as requiring a specific length of experience in a specific position.” Furthermore, during the interview process some organizations select only male interviewees by excluding women.

In addition, Shakeshaft (2014) indicated, discriminatory actions of women are also observed in decision making process by assigning job titles at lower salary than those of men candidates. Generally, these institutional barriers and discriminatory actions contribute to the low participation of women in leadership position (Weldeeyesus, 2013).

### **A. The Glass Ceiling**

The glass ceiling refers to the series of obstacles or events that hamper women’s advancement or promotion beyond a specific point or level. It is a concept used to describe the barriers blocking women from rising to positions of leadership regardless of their education and professional credentials in organizations.

The glass-ceiling is the invisible, impassable, artificial barriers, created by attitudinal and organizational prejudices, which block women from senior organizational positions. Many women at this level face a major concern with the glass ceiling as a result women marginalized to attain positions of power in organizational management (ILO Report, 2019.). Most women in Ethiopia have been unable to shatter the glass ceiling in organizational management, regardless of their talent, efficiency and experience.

With women’s gradual achievement of educational qualifications and changes in social attitudes, it had been tacit that women would swiftly move up the career ladder and make an impact in the men’s domain, but this has been difficult for them due to the invisible barriers across the ladder. But education is the key that would guarantee equality of women as well as to climb the leadership ladder.

### **B. Mentoring**

A mentor is a trusted experienced professional who is willing to assist a less experienced person by listening, sharing experience, advising, and guiding (Davies et al, 2005:104). Mentors share experience and skill to the inexperienced person (Hale et al, 2018) and mentoring enables women leaders to have the necessary skills on how to handle managerial positions. It involves sponsoring, giving training, giving advice, building confidence, and nurturing managerial skills (Hale et al, 2018). Furthermore, the presence of mentors makes women to be active in

professional and management work and it increases the mobility of women in managerial position but if there are no mentors, it will indicate “no entrance” signal to most qualified and motivated women who aspire leadership. So that, having mentors is crucial to support women to achieve in educational leadership

### **C. Women’s status in the Workplace and prevalent Negative Stereotypes**

Women are underrepresented in management positions in comparison to men in almost all organizations. In Ethiopia, even though it is not supported by formal research, most people talk about gender roles in their day-to-day activities and consider gender role stereotyping as the main reason why the number of women is few in the managerial position. Compared to men, women in Ethiopia are clearly in a disadvantageous position in all aspects; they hold inferior position in all economic, political, social and cultural affairs.

Women managers are faced with strongly negative stereotypes, distinguishing them from their male counterparts in the workplace. Past research results done by Lavaysse (2019) indicated women managers as less self-confident less emotionally stable, less analytical, less consistent and having poorer relationship abilities than male managers. Some assumptions, typical of negative stereotypes attributed to female administrators are that: women tend to place family demands above work considerations. They have children to care for; thus, they lose time for an interest in their jobs; women work for supplemental income and that they lack the necessary drive to succeed in business. Mounting evidence suggested that there are negative gender stereotypes about women which make them encounter more barriers than men in the workplace. The negative stereotypes or beliefs are more apparent when women seek or hold managerial positions.

#### **2.3.3.3. Individual Barriers**

Individual barriers are barriers that can be created within the individual himself or herself. There are different individual barriers that are responsible for the low participation of women in organizational leadership. The next part of the study deals with how the three individual barriers; aspiration level, self-confidence, and fear of balancing work and family life reduce the participation of women as leader in organization.

##### **I. Aspiration Level**

Having more female role model leaders will increase the aspiration level of other women to

become leaders and the reverse is also true (Mate, 2019). Furthermore, as cited in Shakeshaft (2014), argue that, “low self-confidence can affect aspiration level.” A person with high self-confidence has a chance to attempt any action than a person with low self-confidence. Therefore, because of cultural barriers like stereotyping or unfamiliarity of the public sphere, those women who developed low self-esteem can develop low aspiration level to participate in any public services and as a result, these women lack the chance to move upward position to hold managerial positions than those who have high aspiration level.

## **II. Self - esteem (Self - Confidence)**

Lack of self-confidence is resulted from a sex-structured community that believes women inability to participate in different positions including managerial positions. Therefore, this makes women to develop lack of self-confidence in public areas that resulted from absence of support and negative discriminatory actions that excludes women from the sphere. As a result, women develop low self-esteem and give chance to the establishment of male dominated society (Shakeshaft, 2014). Moreover, lack of self-confidence leads to unfamiliarity of conditions that discriminates women from the society.

For instance, as indicated by Chun (2024), if women and men apply for any kind of job whether they are qualified or not, and if they are not successful, men blame for the external factors for their failure. However, the story in females is quite different; if they are not successful, they code the failure as personal failure and decide not to compete or apply any managerial position. Those people who have high self-confidence tend to develop skills, attitudes, values, familiarity with conditions, and high aspirations and they can apply and compete for any job opportunity including school administration (Shakeshaft, 2014).

## **III. Fear of Balancing Work and Family Life**

In addition to lack of self-confidence and low aspiration level to managerial position, fear of balancing work and family life is one of the great challenges that women face to become leader. As compared to women, men have fewer domestic responsibilities than women of the same position do. For instance, women are responsible to care for children, cooking of food etc. (Hale et al, 2018). Furthermore, Chun (2024), in addition to domestic activities, absence of support from husband /spouse/ by sharing of domestic work, number of siblings, and perception of the importance of one’s work are the major challenges that women face to become leader in the organization. If there is no support from the family for division of labor, if there are large

number of children, and if the family or husband perceive that woman managerial position as less important, usually the woman will less aspire to become manager fearing of balancing those domestic burden with that of professional work.

#### **2.3.3.4. Educational Attainment**

The correlation between women's educational levels and their participation in decision-making. Education is a critical element to increase the upward socio-economic mobility of women and creates an opportunity to increase womens participation in leadership. The activities they perform tend to be less valued, and their low status is also perpetuated through the low value placed on their activity (Marshal, 1981). The fact that illiteracy rates are nearly always higher among women than men and it is a major limiting factor in womens contribution of development.

#### **2.3.3.5. Economic Barriers**

The impact of financial independence and economic status on women's leadership roles. Women face several economic barriers that hinder their participation in decision-making processes. Here are some key factors:

##### **I. Limited Access to Financial Resources**

Women frequently face challenges in accessing financial resources, such as loans and credit. This limitation can hinder their ability to start businesses or invest in opportunities that could elevate them into decision-making roles. Financial exclusion remains a critical barrier, as many women are underserved by the formal financial sector, which restricts their economic independence and potential for leadership (Women's World Banking's, 2023).

##### **II. Employment Disparities**

Women are often underrepresented in higher-paying jobs and leadership positions. This economic disparity not only affects their income but also diminishes their influence in decision-making processes within organizations and broader economic policies. The gender wage gap and the underrepresentation of women in senior management roles contribute to this issue, limiting their ability to impact decisions at higher levels (UN Women, 2024).

### **III. Legal and Institutional Barriers**

In many regions, legal and institutional frameworks impose restrictions on women's economic participation. For instance, laws that limit women's rights to property ownership or their ability to enter contracts can severely restrict their economic independence and decision-making power. Such legal barriers perpetuate gender inequality in economic contexts (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2024).

### **IV. Cultural and Societal Norms**

Cultural expectations and societal norms often dictate that women prioritize family and household responsibilities over their professional careers. These norms can limit women's opportunities to engage in decision-making roles, as they may feel pressured to conform to traditional gender roles that undervalue their professional aspirations (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2024).

## **2.4. The Role of Women in leadership and decision making in Ethiopia and Tigray**

### **2.4.1. Ethiopian Context**

Similar with that of other developing countries, the problem of gender inequality is a common phenomenon in Ethiopia. In our society, women involve mainly in domestic activities where as men involve in outdoor activities

like education and community services. In relation to this, the FDRE gender perspective guide line (2001:1) shows that, women in the rural part of Ethiopia spend more than 15 hours per day for activities like fire wood collection, water fetching, childcare, petty trade, spinning vegetable, and gardening. Similar with the rural women, urban women of Ethiopia also involve in selling of foods and drinks, petty trades, and spinning and in both cases, the majority of women participate in informal economic activities. As a result, they have little or no time for education. On the other hand, males, unlike females, have sufficient time for schooling and therefore, this creates discrimination of women from men and this attitude, as indicated in World Bank report (2011:21), can become a trend from generation to generation. So that, this gender stereotyping of

males and females in the society creates differences in employment rate and the number of women especially in professional areas becomes low.

### **I. During Haile Selassie Regime**

Before the 1974 revolution, Ethiopian society has a strong religious base and the political culture has derived its strength from those religious beliefs. Orthodox Christianity was the dominant religion at the time forming the ideological base of the ruling monarchs. Within the stratification system, women were not only placed at the lowest hierarchical level, but were also expected to show utmost respect and submission to men and never question the motives of their husbands, fathers or male relatives. This hierarchy was also explicitly stated in the Fetha-Negest (Melaku, 2020).

The requirement of being a male is based on the consideration that man is the master of a woman, as said by the Apostle [Ephesians 5:23]. The office of a judge belongs to the superior rather than the subordinate; because a man is more intelligent, he must judge”.

Over centuries, such indoctrination became further integrated as part of culture. In this manner, women's inferior status became established unchallenged as universal within the traditional Patriarchal ideology.

So according to Fetha-Negest, women at that time were subjected to powerful autocratic ideological control that none of them could challenge the emperor. Due to that, the emperor had no agenda and did not consider women's advancement as an issue. There were women's organized activities run mainly by non-governmental (NGOs) bodies such as the Ethiopian Women's Welfare Association, the Ethiopian Officer's Wives Association, and the Ethiopian Female Students' Association. These Associations were, however, limited in scope, and only existed in the cities. Besides as it was the order that time, the monarchy did not design special measures for women's liberation and also did nothing to alter traditional gender perceptions in the society. Therefore, they had little or no impact on government policies, laws, regulations or development programs. Most of the educated women (at the time there were very few) were also not sensitive to their own problems and could not walk further than functioning as part of the society, abiding by their feminine roles (Ibid).

Even though the first parliament was established in Ethiopia during Haile Selassie's regime, no woman had been given a chance of nomination. Later, only 2 women in 1965 and 5 women in 1969 have occupied the imperial's parliament and the senate which had 250 and 125 seats respectively. (Yalem, 2011).

## **II. During the Dergue Regime**

When the Dergue (The Military Government) took political power in the country in 1974, it dramatically changed the political course from monarchy to a communist orientation. The Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association (REWA) was established by proclamation, but this organization was too monolithic and too close to the Dergue to be of any real use to women.

The purpose of its establishment was, in fact, the consolidation of the Dergue's power. Promoting the interests of women was not high on its agenda nor was it designed to influence government policies or help women benefit from development programs. As a result, there was little improvement in the lives of Ethiopian women, whether in the social, economic or political sphere, especially of those who lived in the rural areas (Yalem, 2011).

Even though a few development agencies, particularly NGOs engaged in relief and rehabilitation work, had attempted to incorporate women's issues into their work programs, they did not show the expected results. This was because the previous government had not given women's development the priority it deserved and therefore had not created conducive atmosphere for development initiatives for women.

The Dergue made it clear that it would not tolerate any resistance from anyone to achieving its own goals. In the first year of its power, women activists engaged on state structures (peasant associations and women's commission) to advance their agenda in mobilizing rural women in some regions. They exploited the available opportunities at the time. But that did not last long.

The Dergue assumed complete monopoly on the emancipation of women, dictating its course and actions from a distorted woman question paradigm. Within this woman question, there was no indication of altering the traditional female and male domains. In fact, these were found to be enforced and exploited to the maximum by the institutional arm of the Dergue representing all

women in the country, namely the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association.

### **III. During the EFDRE Regime**

Things looked more promising when the EPRDF took political power in the country in 1991. Many new laws replaced the abundance of state proclamations of the Dergue, creating opportunities for society. Initially, these laws promised much freedom and space to the people (Biseswar, 2011).

The ruling party set up its own national women's machinery in the form of Women's Affairs Offices (WAO) and bureaus to enhance women's actions. Beside the women's machinery, the EPRDF government also initiated numerous other well-intended efforts to enhance the rights of women within. These include the promulgation of a very liberal constitution containing women's explicit rights, the signing of international treaties regarding women's rights and the introduction of affirmative measures to promote women's advancement (Yalem, 2011).

The Federal Constitution of Ethiopia was promulgated in 1995 which has renewed the commitment to the gender policy and clearly expressed legislative support for women through its various articles. For example, Article 25 prohibits discrimination on grounds of gender. Article 35 is the most comprehensive law regarding women's rights and consists of nine sub-provisions.

These are stipulations on the equal enjoyment of rights; equality of rights in marriage; entitlement to affirmative measures; freedom from harmful traditional practices; maternity leave; equal participation in program planning and implementation; equal rights on property ownership; equality in employment; and full access to reproductive health care.

A number of other constitutional provisions, namely those embodied in Articles 7, 33, 38, 42, and 89, also have a direct bearing on the protection of the rights of Ethiopian women. Beside local efforts, the government in Ethiopia has always been among the first to become a signatory to the many international conventions.

It did not stop there. It was quite promising to see that the ruling party included an article in the Constitution meant to domesticate these international treaties. Article 9 (4) in the 1995

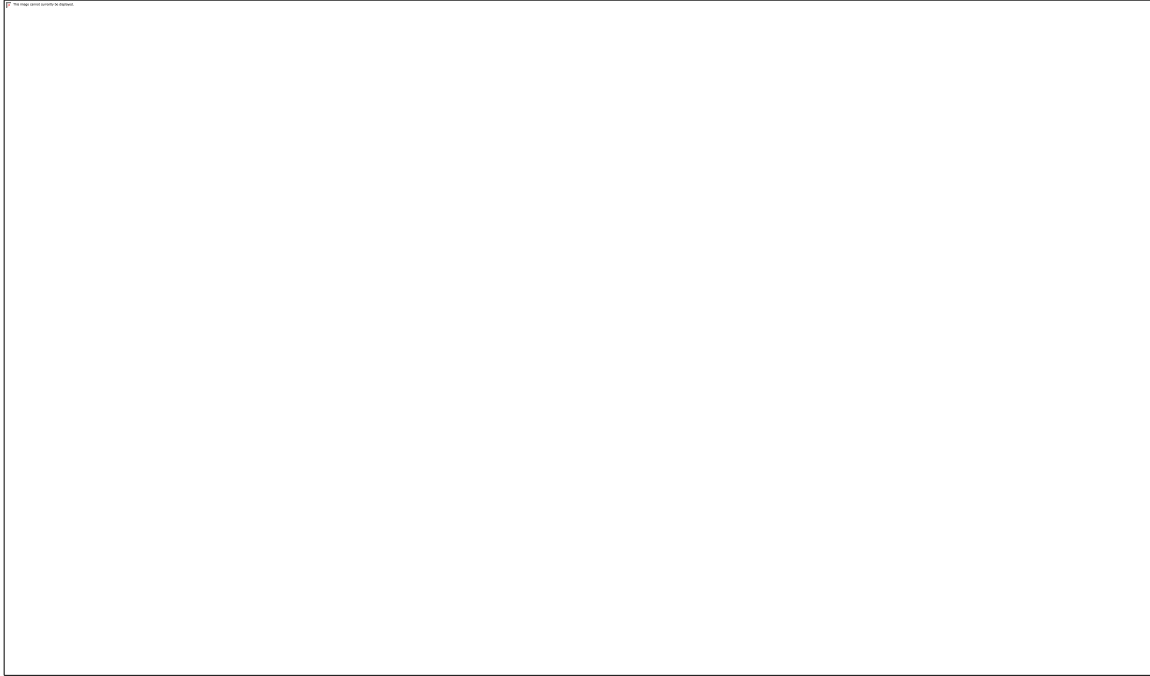
constitution stipulates that “all international agreements ratified by Ethiopia are an integral part of the law of the land”. Many other steps undertaken by the EFDRE government on women’s rights include revision of the family law in 2000; revision of the penal code in 2004; revision of the labor law; launching of a social welfare policy in 1997; an educational policy; the formulation of a national health policy in 1993; the promulgation of a national population policy, an HIV/AIDS policy, and many more.

Besides these, Article 3 of the constitution provides equal opportunity for women to participate in the decision-making process by giving them the right to vote and be elected. In this regard, a number of measures have been taken in terms of advocacy, lobbying and awareness creation in order to increase the participation of women in the decision-making structures of the country. Though much still remains to be done, there are noticeable achievements in the participation of women particularly in the parliament as well as in regional councils. The Civil Service Reform Programs also contributed a lot to women's participation in decision making. Article 13 (1) of the Civil Service Proclamation No.262/2002 prohibits discrimination job seeker on the basis of sex. The proclamation also incorporates an affirmative action by stating that preference shall be given to female candidates who have equal or close scores to that of male candidates. As a result, the number of women indifferent decision-making position has increased significantly.

#### **2.4.2. Tigray Context**

Women in Tigray have played significant roles in leadership and decision-making, especially in the context of conflict and peace-building. Organizations like the Women’s Association of Tigray (WAT) have been instrumental in promoting women’s leadership and supporting survivors of gender-based violence. Women in Tigray have been actively involved in advocating for gender equality and ensuring that women’s voices are heard in political and social spheres.

However, the participation of women in indigenous conflict management mechanisms in Tigray has been relatively low and indirect compared to other regions in Ethiopia. Despite these challenges, women have continued to contribute to peace-building efforts and community organization.



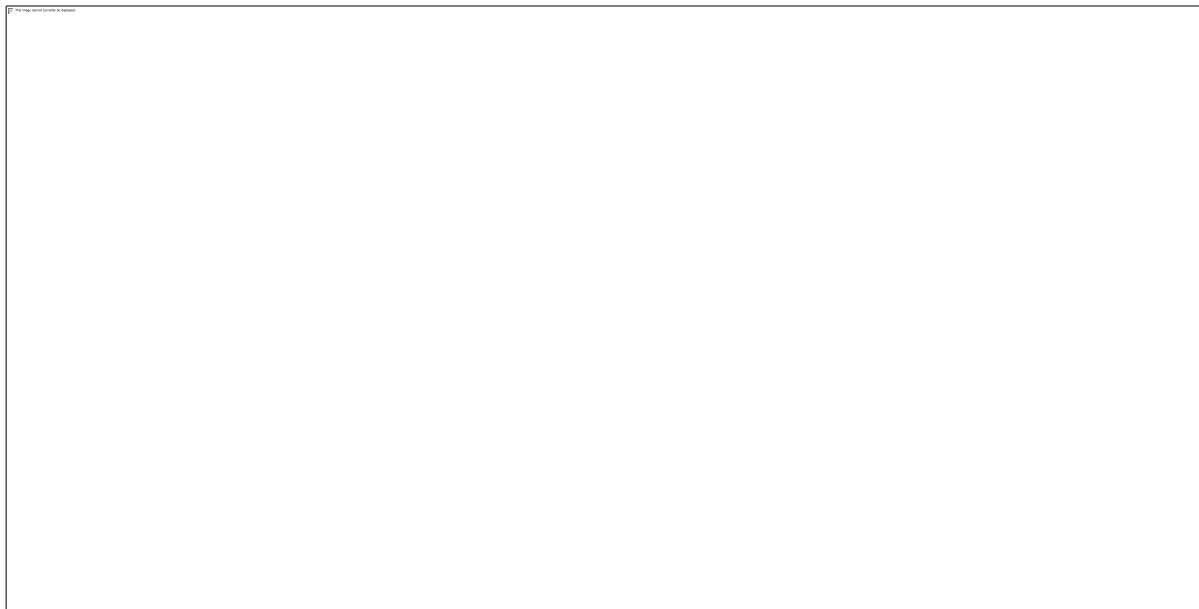
**Figure 1: Conceptual framework of factors affecting womens participation in leadership and decision making:**

## CHAPTER THREE

### 3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Description of the Study Area

The research was conducted in Bizet Woreda, Tigray, Ethiopia. Bizet Woreda is found approximately 585 km north of Addis Ababa as the crow flies. Geographically, the woreda lies within the coordinates of 14<sup>0</sup>13'30''N to 14<sup>0</sup>19'N latitude and 39<sup>0</sup>10'30''E to 39<sup>0</sup>21'30''E longitude. The target population have included women in various leadership roles, women aspiring to leadership positions, community leaders, local government officials, and representatives of non-governmental organizations. Bizet towns and other compacted villages are settled along the main asphalt road which is from Addis Ababa to Adwa in the center of the study area.



*Figure 2 Map of Bizet Woreda*

#### 3.2. Research Design and methods

To achieve the objectives of this study and to address the key research questions regarding factors affecting women's participation in leadership and decision-making, a mixed-methods approach was employed, incorporating both descriptive survey design, qualitative methods, and quantitative methods.

A descriptive survey design is deemed appropriate for this study as it facilitates an in-depth exploration of the factors influencing women's participation in leadership roles. This design is particularly useful for collecting a wide range of data that captures the current conditions and practices related to women in leadership, providing detailed descriptions of existing leadership phenomena, enabling the researcher to draw valid conclusions based on the information gathered from a broader geographical area.

The qualitative research method was employed in the study, utilizing information gained from open-ended questionnaires, interviews, and documents. Additionally, closed-ended questionnaires were used within the quantitative research method. This approach allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the factors affecting women's participation in leadership in Bizet Woreda.

### **3.3. Source of Data**

In order to secure sufficient and relevant information, the researcher have used two sources of data: primary and secondary source.

#### **3.3.1. Primary Sources of Data**

The primary sources of data were gathered from selected government sectors, including the Office of the Woreda Administrator, Education Bureau, Health Bureau, Agricultural Bureau, and Revenue Bureau. This selection was made based on observed indicators and reports indicating that women's participation in leadership and decision-making within these sectors is low.

#### **3.3.2. Secondary Sources of Data**

The secondary source of data has used to strengthen the primary sources. The main sources used for secondary data are annual women affair office report, different books in the area of sociology, management and leadership, and other documented sources from woreda Administration Communication Affairs Office and used as references.

### **3.4. Population and Sampling Method**

A purposive sampling technique have been used to select participants for the qualitative interviews, while a stratified random sampling method will be used for the quantitative survey.

Bizet woreda is one of eastern zone of Tigray National Regional State. Seven sectors taken as the population of the study there are 132 employees in the sector have selected, out of these population 99 of them are taken as a sample for purpose of this study.

The sample size is determined by using the formula developed by Wolfer, (2007) formula is used:

$$n = \frac{n_0}{1 + \frac{n_0 - 1}{N}}$$

Where: n = Sample Size

$n_0$  = is the initial sample size (384.5)

N = Total population (132)

$$n = \frac{384.5}{1 + \frac{384.5 - 1}{132}} \quad n = \frac{384.5}{1 + 2.9} = \frac{384.5}{3.9} \sim 99$$

### 3.4.1. Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

To select sample respondents from the total study population of 132, both probability and non-probability sampling methods were employed. The probability sampling method was chosen to avoid bias and to help generalize the data obtained from the sample respondents, thereby minimizing errors that could arise from sampling. Specifically, a simple random sampling method (using a lottery to identify the first respondent from the fourth stratum) was utilized, followed by stratified random sampling. This approach involved dividing the total population into distinct strata based on relevant characteristics, ensuring that each subgroup was adequately represented in the sample.

Table 1 Respondents selected through simple random sampling method

S/N	Respondents Participation	Total Population	Sample size
1	Woreda Head Office	14	10
2	Woreda Education Bureau	22	15
3	Woreda youth and sport office	8	5
4	Woreda Health Bureau	22	17
5	Woreda Agriculture Bureau	28	22
6	Female Affairs Committee Members	10	10
7	Woreda Revenue Bureau	28	20

	Total	132	99
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Source; Data obtained from respondent's 2024

### **3.5. Method of Data Collection**

In this process of data collection, questionnaire, interview and document analysis were used. Questionnaire is an instrument by which information is obtained from respondents in written form. The questionnaire was prepared for 99 respondents and interviews for 6 respondents. It is convenient to secure reliable and adequate factual information opinions and attitudes in structural framework from a large number of respondents at a low unit cost (Seyoum and Ayalew, 1989). It consists of both close ended and open -ended questions with the intensions to disclose free opinions of respondents. Data from Woreda Head Office, Woreda Education Bureau, Woreda Health Bureau, Woreda Agriculture Bureau, Woreda Female Affair committee Bureau, Woreda Youth and Sport Bureau and Woreda Revenue Bureau was gathered using questionnaire since it is appropriate to obtain information from a large number of respondents with in short period of time.

#### ***3.5.1.1. Questionnaire***

The questionnaires were prepared in English. The questionnaire prepared for all selected respondents was similar in most parts of it and had five parts. The first part was prepared to collect information about respondents back-ground. The second part of the questionnaire was designed to collect information on barriers which hindered women's participation from leadership positions which helps to understand the root challenges of the problems of under-representation of women. The questionnaire was prepared in form of Likert type attitude scale, and level of agreement was indicated in five parts ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree.

The item in the third was designed to obtain information about selection and placement criteria used to promote womens participation in leadership position. In this part, questions were prepared in items of their level of importance (very important, moderately important, and, less important). Some of the questions focused on policy matters, educational qualification, political background and related issues. This enables to understand how many the criterions were contributory for women's visibility in decision-making structure.

The fourth parts of this questionnaire focused on mechanism put in place/planned to enhance

women's participation in leadership positions. In this part, relevant information was collected based on respondents' level of agreement from the suggested question using Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. This was to collect relevant and useful data about the factor that hinder women's participation in leadership and decision making of the sample sectors. Appropriate close-ended and open-ended questionnaires were prepared and given to selected sample leaders and experts.

The fifth part of the questionnaire was related to perception of the respondents about women leadership behaviors. In this part, relevant information was collected based on respondent level of view from the listed questions using Likert scale ranging from highly favored (positive agreement) to highly unfavored (negative agreement).

### ***3.5.1.2. Interview***

In this study, the researcher prepared interview guide questions for two woreda leaders, one woreda human resource coordinator, and three female gender experts at each level. The interview guide contained semi-structured questions focusing on barriers to women's participation, contributory factors for the few women who have the opportunity to hold leadership positions, measures taken to overcome these barriers, and strategies to enhance women's participation in leadership in relation to affirmative action as outlined in the constitutional and gender policy statement.

## **3.6. Data Analysis**

In this research, descriptive statistics have been used as a method of analysis. The main descriptive statistical method has employed by SPSS, percentage, frequency count, mean score value and standard deviation.

### ***3.6.1.1. Qualitative Data***

Data drawn from the open-ended questionnaire, interview and document analyses have translated into separate topics. Then, each expression and view obtained were categorized and combined to describe the items both as expressed by the respondents and understood by the researcher. The data was analyzed in the form of narration. Based on qualitative and quantitative data analysis, interpretations were made to reach on central findings. Finally, a conclusion was made and possible solutions were recommended.

### **3.6.1.2. Quantitative Data**

After collecting questions, the raw data have tallied and tabulated under their respective male and female categories and classified into groups according to their similarities and issue raised so as to make it manageable, reliable and understandable.

Quantitative data a structured questionnaire have administered to a larger sample to quantify the factors affecting women's leadership participation. Statistical analysis, including descriptive statistics and regression analysis, will be used to analyze the quantitative data

### **3.7. Validity of the Instruments**

A common definition of validity is “the extent to which a test, questionnaire or other operation is really measuring what the researcher intends to measure” (David, 1998). According to Hagan (1997), validity asks the question: “Does my measuring instrument in fact measure what it claims to measure? Is it an accurate or true measure of the phenomenon under study?”

To ensure that the research is valid, the researcher made use of a qualitative and quantitative approach in the form of percentage, frequency, words, and phrase and with a focus on descriptive ways. Validity in research design is highly dependent on four factors: the usefulness of the information, contextual completeness, the researcher’s awareness of his or her own influence on the research setting and, lastly, the researcher’s reporting style (Leedy, 1990).

Validity is further ensured by collecting data from the same sample and by asking the same questions of all members of the sample. Some of the items were modified and others discarded to improve the quality of the instruments thus increasing the validity collected was relevant to the study. To ensure that the questionnaire and interview schedule was valid, it was sent to the advisor for comments. The comments received were acknowledged and the questionnaire and interview schedule were rectified before the researcher started.

The underlying assumption of content validity is that every variable has a content population of an infinite number of items and that highly valid instruments constitute to a representative sample of these items. The researcher discussed the instruments with advisor and other experts to test validity and ensure the data collected was relevant to the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with results and discussions of the data that are categorized into two parts. The first part treats the characteristics of the respondents which describe the study population by sex, age, education, experience and marital status, while the second deals with the analysis of findings of the study that were gathered through questionnaire and interview.

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative method of analysis were employed and the report was organized in a way to answer research questions raised in this research sequentially. Quantitative data which were collected through questionnaires and analyzed were supported and additionally evidenced by qualitative data which was collected from interviews.

#### 4.1. Background of Respondents

The collected data shows the following characteristics of the respondents by sex, age, experience, qualification and marital status.

Table 2 Distribution of respondents by sex and age

Respondents background characteristics	Frequency in count and percentage					
	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Sex	45	45.45	54	54.5	99	100
Age category						
18-25 years	5	11.1	11	22	16	16.16
26-35 years	14	31.1	18	36	32	32.3
36-45 years	16	35.5	12	24	28	28.28
46-55 years	8	17.7	10	20	18	18.18
>55 years	2	4.4	3	5.5	5	5.05

Source; Data obtained from respondent's 2024

Based on the table 2 above, women are represented in a greater proportion than men; from the total participants of 99 on the study area, 54.5% of the total are women and 45.45% of the total are men, this shows that the majority of the employees are women. This implies that women are

high employment rate as compared to male.

As the minimum age allowed employing in Tigray National Regional State Civil Service Proclamation governmental offices in above 18 years, its category is started from 18. The age distribution reveals that most of the age category was found concentrated in the ranges between 26 to 35 years age. On the other hand, when the respondents' age categories were analyzed by sex, both men and women respondents' age respectively hand shown peak frequently count value in the range between 26-35 years. In the age category less than 25 years, the proportion of women respondents which 22% was found greater than men which was 11.1%. This may be rationalized for that women are getting chances to join higher education only in recent years.

Table 3 Distribution of respondents by experience category

Experience Category	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1-5 years	4	8.8	8	14.8	12	12.12
6-10 years	13	28.8	18	32.7	31	31.3
11-15 years	10	22.2	16	29.6	25	25.25
16-25 years	14	31.1	10	18.5	24	24.24
≥26 years	4	8.8	2	1.8	6	6.06

Source; Data obtained from respondent's 2024

In relation to work experience, men respondents were found showing relatively greater in-service year categories 16 to 25 and >26 years they share about 31.1% and 8.8% respectively. On the other hand, the relatively greater frequency counts of women respondents were found having its highest value in lower service categories, such as 1 to 10 and 11 to 15 years of service, because frequency counts were found to 62.67% for both service year categories. The most probable reason that women are highly concentrated at lower service years might be explained by that women are being late comers to the academic world. Once again, their number was found greater in lower service year categories, while their men counterparts' frequency count magnitude was at relatively highest service year categories.

Table 4 Distribution of respondents by qualification category

Qualification Category	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Diploma	10	22.2	31	56.36	41	41.4
First Degree	30	66.6	20	36.36	49	49.49
Second degree	5	11.1	3	5.5	8	8.08

Source; Data obtained from respondent's 2024

As can be seen in the Table above item 4, the qualification of respondents was found to be 41.4% diploma, 49.49% first degree and 8.08% second degree holders. When the distribution of qualification of respondents was analyzed by sex, women respondents were found having the highest frequency count 56.36% under the qualification category of diploma, were as their counterpart men were found having the highest frequency count under the qualification category of first degree 66.6% where women are 36.36%. With regard to second degree, through its frequency count was found the least as it was compared with diploma and first degree for both sexes.

Similarly, as one looks the trend growth of women from first degree to second degree, it shows track trend while the proportion of their counterpart men is showing an increasing trend. This might also be rationalized that in remote past year's equity and access of education to girls were very low and they were not able to enter to higher education qualification categories.

Table 5 Distribution of respondents by marital status

Marital Status of respondents	Male		Female		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Single	14	31.1	16	29.6	30	30.3
Married	25	55.5	27	50	52	52.5
Divorced	5	11.1	11	20.3	16	16.16
Death spouse	1	2.2	0	0	1	1.01

Source; Data obtained from respondent's 2024

With reference to the marital status as can be seen at table 5 item 5, 52.5% i.e. 55.5% of male and 50% of female were married, where as 30.3% of both respondents i.e. 31.1% of males and 29.6% females were single. The other 16.16% that is with 11.1% males and 20.3% females were divorce, and 2.2% of men respondents was death of spouse.

In general, the characteristics of respondents showed that majority of them were matured enough in age, education, marital status and work experience to know the gender related problems and policies or facts about women.

Table 6 Distribution of respondents by sex

No	Sample Sectors of Bizet Woreda	Frequency in count and percentage					
		Male		Female		Total	
		Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
1	Woreda administrative office	6	13.3	4	7.4	10	10.1
2	Health Office	9	20	8	14.8	17	17.17
3	Agriculture Office	10	22.2	5	9.2	15	15.15
4	Woreda female affair	0	0	10	18.5	10	10.1
5	Education Office	15	33.3	15	27.7	30	30.3
6	Woreda Revenue Bureau	2	4.4	5	9.2	7	7.07
7	Woreda youth and sport office	3	6.6	7	12.9	10	10.1
	Total	45	100	54	100	99	100

Source; Data obtained from respondent's 2024

As it is evident Table 6 respondents background analysis, women were found having lower representation than men in leadership position. However, in total sample, women were found having greater 54.5 proportion while the counterpart men were having 45.45%. But as current leadership position of respondents revealed generally women were found having lower participation in key leadership positions.

Among the total number of leaders taken of this research, 66.1% were men and 33.9% were women. Here, from total number of participations having the highest leadership position 66.1% were men but 33.9% were women.

#### 4.2. Professional Upgrading Choice of Respondents

Table 7 Distribution of women respondents professional upgrading choice

No	Given alternative or option of upgrading	Respondents by Their Position Type					
		Women in Leadership Position		Expert Women		Total	
		Frequency Count	%	Frequency Count	%	Frequency Count	%
1	Women who have shown interest to upgrade in leadership profession	8	44.4	10	55.6	18	30.5
2	Women who have shown interest to upgrade in expert subject	12	29.3	29	70.4	41	69.5
	Total	20	33.9	39	66.1	59	100

Source; Data obtained from respondent's women expert and positioned through questionnaires, 2024.

Thus, as it can be seen in Table 7 above, from total women respondents, 69.5% were not show interest to upgrade in leadership position. On the other hand, from total women respondents showing willingness to upgrade in expert profession, 29.35 of them were women found in leadership position and 70.4% were experts. However, from total women respondents only 30.5% of them were found having interest to upgrade in the leadership profession. Of these women respondents, 44.4% were women found in leadership position respondents and 10.6% were from women experts.

As can be inferred from the analysis of upgrading choice of women respondents, expert's women were found showing greater interest or choice to upgrade in leadership profession. But contrary to this, women found in leadership position have shown relatively little interest in both expert and professions.

#### 4.3. What are the reason for Women Unwilling to Participate in Leadership Positions?

As it is in Table 8 below, respondents have rated family related factors to be the primarily reason

of women not to apply for leadership positions.

Table 8 Perceived reason of women respondents not to apply for leadership position

No	Item	Frequency Count	Percentage	Rank
1	Family Related Reasons	42	42.4	1 <sup>st</sup>
2	Personal Related Reasons	32	32.3	2 <sup>nd</sup>
3	Educational Barriers	25	25.3	3 <sup>rd</sup>

Source: data obtained from respondents through questionnaire, 2024

Similarly interview with Woreda women Children Affaires Office, November/2024 also confirmed same fact as follows:

“We know that there is a policy, strategy, and guideline regarding gender issues. We also know that the government at all levels is committed to increasing women's participation in leadership. However, the participation of women in vacant and nominated leadership positions is limited due to family and home-related responsibilities. Although equal opportunities for participation are provided to empower women, high workloads at home and family-related factors have resulted in little willingness among women to engage in available vacancies and nominations for leadership positions.”

Thus, both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis have verified that family and home related factors (socio-cultural) are the most dominant why women experts refrain from applying for leadership positions with 42.4%. According to the respondents rating, the next factors are personal related factors. Because among respondents of this study 32.5% have related personal factors to be the reason of women not to apply for leadership position. Similarly, 25.3% rated educational barriers to be the reason of low participation. Therefore, from the above analysis, the reason why women become unwilling to participate was found to be due to home and family related factors, personal and educational reason.

#### **4.4. Mechanisms for Womens Empowerment in Leadership Position**

As indicated in the introductory chapter of this research, one of the objectives of this study was

exploring the effective mechanism that empower women to participate in leadership position. Having recognized that women's low participation in the leadership position in Bizet Woreda. The researcher tried to investigate whether there are mechanisms established to women empower in these selected sectors. For this purpose, Woreda Head Office, HRM coordinate and gender expert, were asked to explain whether there is mechanism for women participation in leadership position.

According to the interviewee's opinion November/2024, women have been given special attentions as per the government policies and programs in order to participate equally in all hierarchies' positions and levels.

To mention some of the mechanisms: gender-sensitive departments have been established at the federal, regional, and woreda levels; recruitment and selection criteria are gender-sensitive; and management is aware of and responsible for the implementation of gender policy. Despite these strategies being in place, there is a belief that not all vacancy notices are gender-sensitive and that the quota system is not applied correctly. In general, it can be said that constitutional gender-related written policies are well-conceived and can play a significant role in efforts made for women's empowerment.

Besides, interviewees were asked that in spite of the enactment of different policies and strategies, why women are still not equally present in leadership position as of men. Some respondents have the idea that since senior management positions are occupied by men, they tend to propose men depending on the informal network of men. Of course, written policies are smart, gender departments are established, constitutional gender related policies are clearly stated; however, they couldn't have translated into practice. Most of the management bodies at all levels are monopolized by men; hence decisions are made without women's participation. From this, it is possible to conclude that women's participation in leadership positions was influenced by managers who are usually males and trend to maintain male dominance in the management.

Table 9 shows mechanisms in place or planned for women empowerment in leadership position. For the purpose of the analysis, the obtained mean values were interpreted as  $\leq 2.50$  highly disagree, 2.51-3.50 moderately agree, and  $\geq 3.51- 5$  highly agrees

Table 9 Mechanisms for women empowerment in leadership position

No.	Mechanisms of Empowerment	High				Moderately High		Low				Descriptive Statistics	
		5	4	Total	%	3	%	2	1	Total	%	Mean	S. D
1	Effective gender sensitive planning	40	31	71	71.7	14	14.1	11	3	14	14.1	4.0	1.77
2	Top management commitment to gender equity and issues	18	27	45	45.7	19	19.1	24	11	35	35.4	3.2	1.41
3	Proactive strategies to empower women through training	15	24	39	39.3	25	25.2	26	9	35	35.4	3.1	1.38
4	Enhancing women networking and experience sharing	20	23	43	43.4	25	25.2	20	11	31	31.3	3.2	0.08
5	Applying quota system during selection	45	30	75	75.7	10	10.1	8	6	14	14.1	4.0	1.69
6	Applying regular monitoring and evaluation to implementation of policy	32	27	59	60	18	18	15	7	22	22.0	3.6	1.63

Source: Data obtained from respondents through questionnaire, 2024

As can be seen from table 9 in the case of item 1, effective gender sensitive planning as a mechanism for women empowerment in leadership position, respondents rated as strong agree

with accumulative mean score of 4.0. Besides, in relation to item 2 the same table, respondents were asked to rate their views to top management commitment in gender issues and equity and their response in moderately agree with score mean 3.2 and S.D 1.41.

Regarding item 3 of the same table, respondents about the mechanism of proactive strategies to empower women through training were related as moderately agree with score mean of 3.1. In relation to item 4 on table 9, respondents' response about enhancing women networking and experience in their respective offices, were revealed as moderately agreed with score mean of 3.2.

Item 5 of table 6 about applying quota system during selection and recruitment of women for leadership positions, it was rated as strong agree with frequency count 75.7%. From these we can understand that applying quota system can be important to the participation of women in leadership positions.

Regarding the last item of the same table in relation to importance of applying regular monitoring and evaluation by officials to implementation of the gender policy, most of the respondents revealed strong agreement with the rate of women score 3.6 and 60% of the respondents. This shows that one of the reasons of under-representation of leaders is that the weak performance of monitoring and evaluation of policies on the ground, and this is relevant with the information obtained from interviews which state the plan promote female was not implemented correctly.

Thus, according to their rating; providing and effectively applying quota system and effective gender sensitive planning were found to be the first and second effective mechanism that help decision-makers to raise women participation in leadership.

#### **4.5. Factors that Affect Women's Participation in Leadership Position**

In this regard the respondents to be rated by five Likert scale, very high (5) high (4), undecided (3), low (2) and very low (1). For the purpose of the analysis, the obtained mean values were interpreted as  $\leq 2.50$  strongly disagree; 2.51-3.50 moderately agree; and  $\geq 3.51$ -5.00 strongly agree.

#### 4.5.1. Socio-Cultural Factors Affecting Women Participation in Leadership Position

Ethiopia, as one of the developing countries where gender-disparities exist in family, society and in the workplace. In line with this, socio-cultural factors were mentioned as one of the hinderance for women for holding leadership position. Thus, the main sociocultural barriers mentioned were family influence and work load at home, lack appreciation of society to women leadership and acceptance of male dominancy in the society.

Table 10 Socio cultural factors hindering participation of women in leadership position

No.	Socio cultural hindering factor	High				Moderately High		Low				Descriptive Statistics	
		5	4	T	%	3	%	2	1	T	%	Mean	S. D
1	Family influence & work load at home	32	27	59	59.6	18	18.2	13	9	22	22.2	3.6	1.63
2	Women Leadership is not appreciated by the society	17	29	46	46.4	20	20.2	15	18	33	33.3	3.2	1.4
3	Acceptance of male dominancy in the society	33	19	51	51.5	24	24.2	19	5	24	24.2	3.5	0.1

Source: data obtained from respondents through questionnaire, 2024

Regarding item 1, family influence and work load at home, majority of interviews opinion forwarded that women are responsible for societal relationship which needs time to be invested. They are expected to give time for their family and of course for their professional roles, which have direct and indirect connections with the under-representation of women in leadership positions.

Similar to interviews (informant) results, the figure in table 11 item 1 show that most response of the respondents are above average which have very high and high contribution to bring about low participation of women in leadership positions, with its mean score value of 3.6 and is interpreted as strongly agree.

Regarding item 2 in the same table, the mean value of responses of all respondents was 3.2 and is interpreted as moderately agree. The information obtained from woreda agricultural office heads and world agricultural office experts and Human Resource Management (HRM) through interview November/2024 pointed out in a male dominated society there is still a notion that leadership is associated with masculine which male belong in the public sphere, while women should stay in the private sphere. In reality, even though women’s participation in the expert staff has steadily increased, still leadership positions are remained as the domain of male work categories.

In relation to item 3 of the table, regarding acceptance of male dominance in the society, respondents have also rated it moderately agree with mean value of 3.5 and its standard deviation was 0.1. Thus, it shows that the case is considered as a cause in affecting women’s participation in leadership positions.

#### 4.5.2. Personal Factor

Personal factors such as, informal network of men which favors them to be leaders, lack of interest by women, due to self-image they give themselves. They perceived themselves as do not key skill, lack of experience, lack of competency and fear hardship. Based on this, respondents of this study have been asked through questionnaire to put their level of agreement for the items provided in the following table.

Table 11 Personal factors affecting participation of women in leadership position

No.	Hindering factor item	Frequency count for Very high				Frequency count for moderately high		Frequency count for low and very low				Descriptive Statistics	
		5	4	T	%	3	%	2	1	T	%	Mean	S. D
1	Lack of interest	31	14	45	45.5	31	31.3	10	13	23	23.2	3.4	5.2
2	Lack of experience	21	17	38	38.4	28	28.3	18	15	33	33.3	3.0	4.8
3	Informal network of men	23	11	34	34.3	28	28.3	17	20	37	37.4	2.9	4.6

Source: data obtained from respondents through questionnaire, 2024

Regarding item 1 on the above table 12 concerning women's lack of interest due to self-image as barriers for their advancement in leadership, respondents were found to be rating with a frequency count 45.5 very high and high hindering factor with a cumulative mean score of 3.4 and standard deviation of 5.2. According to participants degree of rating, the level of agreement is modern but it is the third influential hindering factor that lowers the participants of women in leadership positions. In addition to the respondent's questionnaire, interview (Informant four) revealed that women restrain themselves from leadership position with related to their personal interest by underestimating their own values.

According to interviews (informant) the only problem to empower our capacity through training and the opportunities for holding leadership positions are narrow.

In relation to item 3 on the same table, regarding lack of experience as barriers for women's empowerment, interviewees were asked to give their opinion on the stated issue. They explained that women as they are late comers to the highest educational levels (Diploma and Degree) and even to the expert staff compared to their countermen, they could not able to compute to hold the leadership position as it requires experience. Other interviewees (informant one and two) added that as they did not have practiced it before, they believe it that as it needs masculine behavior. In addition to this, respondents were asked about the same item; lack of experience; on the same table to put their level of agreement that how much women are affected by lack of experience. Based on this, respondents explained their view as moderately high with a cumulative mean score 3 and S.D 4.8. it is the fourth hindering factor with a frequency count and percentage of 38.4%.

In relation to item 3 table 12, interviewees (informant three and four) were asked to explain their opinion on how informal network of men can affect women's representation in leadership. Their response are stated as follows: "despite competence, performance, qualification and experience of individuals, relationship positions." Furthermore, even though women are well qualified and experienced, they might not be nominated because of the established network of men and this is a usual practice in the studied woreda.

Contrary to the interview results, the above Table item 3 presents the agreement level of

respondents in relation to the impact of informal network of men. They were rating as low and very low because in limiting women’s participation in leadership compared to other points in personal factors. Because respondents have rated it to be low and very low hindering factor with cumulative mean score of 2.9 and standard deviation of 4.6.

### 4.5.3. Educational Barriers

Table 12 Educational Barriers

No.	Hindering factor item	Frequency count for Very high				Frequency count for moderately high		Frequency count for low and very low				Descriptive Statistics	
		5	4	T	%	3	%	2	1	T	%	Mean	S. D
1	Low level of educational background	28	31	59	59.6	23	23.2	6	11	17	17.2	3.6	5.5
2	Absence of role Models and mentors	37	18	55	55.5	24	24.2	13	7	20	20.2	3.5	4.0

Source: data obtained from respondents through questionnaire, 2024

In relation to item 4 of the table 13, respondents agreed that the low level of educational qualification were considered as major cause. Because respondent have rated it to higher Hindering factor with cumulative mean frequency of 3.6 and standard deviation of 5.5, and this is related with the finding of Negash, G. (2014) that indicates qualification is an important factor for women’s participation in educational leadership. In other words, among respondents this research, 59.6% have rated it to have high hindrance and the 23.2% and 17.2% rated it moderately high and low hindrance respectively.

Similar to the respondent’s agreement through questionnaires, interviews (informant) mentioned that despite the recent improvement of females’ education, their low educational access and success starting from the lower level is the fundamental problem for women’s employment and then holding positions at different level of position.

In addition to the above barriers, the absence of role models and mentoring were mentioning as

influential barrier for women’s participation by some interviewees (informant three and four), especially for those who do not hold leadership positions.

Similar to the results of interview, majority of the respondents agreed that absence of role models and mentoring were responded as the moderately influential barriers with the cumulative mean score of 3.5 and S.D of 4.0. thus, the absence of role model and mentors of women is important barrier for the under-representation of women leaders.

#### 4.6. Some Participants’ Perception about Sex & Leadership Beliefs

An indicated in the introductory chapter of this study, one of the basic questions of the study is related with examining participants’ perception on issues related with sex & leadership roles both in the society and institutions. Then, according to their responses, frequency counts were categorized in to three categories. These were favored or positively agreed, undecided and unfavored or negatively agreed categories.

The data analysis was interpreted as:  $\geq 3.5$  = favorable or positive agreement 2.5-3.4 = undecided and  $\leq$  = unfavorable or negative agreement

Table 13 Perception of respondents about sex and leadership

No	Sex related Perception items or views	Favored				Undecided		Unfavored				Descriptive Statistics	
		5	4	T	%	3	%	2	1	T	%	Mea n	S.D
1	Women naturally lack self-confidence to practice leadership positions	43	42	85	85.8	4	4	7	3	10	10.1	4	1.79
2	Home & family related factors hinder highly women to participate in leadership	39	29	68	68.7	9	9	13	9	22	22.2	3.8	1.7

	position												
3	Husbands should encourage their wife to participate in leadership	31	55	86	87	6	6	5	2	7	7	4.4	1.9
4	Women leaders always seek support as compared with men leaders.	27	14	41	41.5	14	14.2	23	21	44	44.5	2.9	3.0
5	Women leaders are less influential & acceptable by their followers than men leader	35	27	62	62.6	19	19.2	12	6	18	18.1	3.7	1.65
6	Women leaders are more wise, emotional, stable, responsible & entail leaders than men counter parts	32	35	67	67.6	19	19.2	9	4	13	13.1	3.87	1.72
7	Men having leadership position by merit should willingly give up in order giving greater room for women	33	41	74	74.7	15	15.2	9	1	10	10.1	4	1.8

Sources: Data obtained from respondents through questionnaire, 2024

As can be seen from Table 14 in the case item 1 with regard to women naturally lack of confidence in order to participate in leadership, majority 85.8% of the respondents rated as favored or positively agreed.

Besides, in relation to item 2 the same table, respondents were asked whether home and family related factors hinders highly women to participate in leadership position, respondents' response was rated as positively agreed with the mean value of 3.8 and S.D 1.70. This finding provides evidence for the low participants of women in leadership position.

Regarding item 3 on the table, respondents about husbands should encourage their wife to participate in leadership position were revealed as positively agreed with the mean score of 4.4 and it is the highest rated item from all items to be rated in this perception analysis. This finding is supported by the interviewees that (most of them women) assured support and encouragement from husband is very determinants. Except few, most of husbands do not want coming late at night due to elongated meeting. They accused their wives as if not paying enough attention to their family responsibilities. Even others do not allow coming after they enter home at night.

Item 4 of the same table about the perception women leaders always seek support as compared with men leaders; it was rated as moderately agreed with mean score of 2.9.

Item 5 on table 14, the mean value i.e. 3.7 of the respondents indicated that women leaders are less influential and acceptable by their followers than male leaders by rating as positively agree.

In relation to item 6 of the same table, respondents' response about perception women leaders are more wise, emotional, stable, responsible and entail leaders than men counter parts were revealed as favored with accumulative score mean 3.9.

The last item of the same table regarding of men having leadership position by merit should willingly give up in order to give greater room for women, respondents explained their level of agreement as favored or they accept it positively with mean value of 4.0

As we can see from the above discussion of the findings, perception of respondents about sex and leadership are negatively coined. These are observed by some of their agreements such as: women naturally lack self-confidence to practice leadership positions and women leaders are less influential and less acceptable than men leaders by their follower. That is their awareness and perception about sex and leadership role was not fully positive. Especially due to socio-cultural influences still their views or perceptions were not free of sex bias. Even though they have shown to women in most of the items, showing some negative views about them makes their

concern and awareness incomplete.

The main purpose of the study was to assess the factor affects women's participation in leadership position and decision making. In relation to this, assessing the effectiveness of mechanisms which were used to empower women in leadership and the decision making were an important area of the study.

#### **4.7. Response of Interview**

Interviews conducted with women cited several factors categorized as societal, cultural, organizational, and personal that contribute to the underrepresentation of women in leadership positions. Some participants argued that female employees prioritize family responsibilities and shy away from career obligations until their children are grown.

The interviewed women leaders were asked about their career paths, and most disclosed that their hard work, persistence, dedication, and commitment have helped them reach their current positions. When asked about the types of barriers that could prevent them from attaining leadership roles, the majority of women leaders reported facing some obstacles, while others stated they did not encounter any social barriers. Commonly mentioned barriers included perceptions and lack of support from employees under their supervision, male bosses, and family responsibilities.

Additionally, the interview participants indicated that women in leadership positions may struggle to balance family (especially childcare) and work responsibilities. Women leaders with children particularly noted that handling household and work obligations is challenging. Among the participants, 4 are married with children, while 2 are single. However, most confirmed that it is possible to achieve a balance between both responsibilities. One female leader, who has three children, explained, "It just requires being organized and establishing a well-built support system." Another female leader with children stated that the support she received from family members helped her effectively balance her work and childcare duties.

Most of the women leaders interviewed spoke about the support and encouragement they received from their families, particularly from their husbands and mothers. They emphasized the

role of family in women's professional success. The factors that helped these women acquire leadership positions, as illustrated by the respondents, included hard work, dedication, maintaining a broader perspective, focusing on end results, and family support.

Regarding their future plans, two of the interviewed women leaders expressed aspirations to continue their education for a second degree. Furthermore, most of them expect family responsibilities to continue being a challenge.

#### **4.8. Discussion of the findings**

The results of this study relate to the literature on factors contributing to the low participation of women in leadership positions and decision making within organizations. Several factors at the personal, organizational, and societal levels prevent women from ascending to leadership roles. This aligns with the findings of Tundi (2014), E. Lahti (2013), and Habib (2023), where the researchers categorized the barriers to women's participation in higher positions under societal, organizational, and individual levels. E. Lahti's research further revealed that organizational factors were considered the most influential on women's career development. However, the findings of this study indicate that the combination of societal, individual, and organizational factors contributes most significantly to the low participation of women in leadership positions in the Bizet woreda, depending on the type and nature of the elements included under each factor.

The findings of Martinez-Cordoba et al. (2020) align closely with the themes highlighted in the literature review, which underscores the complex factors that impede women's participation in leadership roles and their representation in various sectors. This consistency suggests a pervasive issue that merits further exploration and action.

Moreover, incorporating insights from Araujo et al. (2016) reinforces the notion that women remain significantly underrepresented in appointed and elected positions within local government. This underrepresentation not only limits women's voices in decision-making processes but also perpetuates existing inequalities.

Despite the complexities and challenges that women encounter in participating in local government politics worldwide, there have been noteworthy positive developments aimed at

enhancing women's representation in this arena. For example, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has initiated capacity-building programs specifically designed for women in underdeveloped countries, including Yemen, Iraq, and Afghanistan (UN Women, 2022).

These initiatives highlight a proactive approach to addressing the barriers that have historically limited women's involvement in governance. By focusing on skills development and empowerment, such programs not only aim to increase the number of women in local government but also seek to create an environment where their contributions are valued and recognized.

The researcher confirms the study hypothesis that there is a significant relationship between the level of education and women's participation in leadership in community projects. This agrees with a study by Arvey, Rotundo, Johnson, Zhang, and McGue (2006), which showed that 30% of the variance in leadership role occupancy was accounted for by genetic factors, while non-shared environmental factors accounted for the remaining variance. The concept of “non-shared environmental factors” includes all possible exogenous and personal events during one’s lifetime that could influence leadership emergence, aside from genetic effects and the influences shared by twins in a common family environment. Examples of non-shared environmental factors include past educational experiences, religious experiences, parental and sibling experiences of loss, experiences of unexpected opportunities, peer groups, mentors, role models who were not direct acquaintances, training and developmental experiences, and prior work-related challenges and successes in leadership roles (Arvey et al., 2006).

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **V. SUMMERY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This chapter is concerned with the summery of the major findings and recommendations that the student researcher proposes and assumed to increase women's participation in leadership and decision making in Bizet woreda.

#### **5.1. Summary**

The study was aimed to assess factors affecting women's participation in leadership and decision making in Bizet woreda. Effort to meet the above stated purpose of the research, basic questions were stated and answered. The researcher therefore, identified the following major summary:

A description survey study with quantitative and qualitative research approach (mixed method) was employed, and the related literature was reviewed. The target population in this study was seven (7) sectors of Bizet woreda.

Different data collection tools were employed questionnaires, and interview. The data gained and all the required data obtained through these tools were discussed, quantified, narrated and described using logical arguments, and finally, a conclusion was drawn and possible solutions were recommended.

Regardless of its extent, the level of women's participation in leadership in the studied woreda is generally low compared to that of men.

With related to professional up grading choice of respondents, only 30.5% women were found having interest to upgrade in the field of leadership profession. Of those women respondents, 55.6% where expert respondents were expert respondents. 44.4% respondents' women in leadership position.

Various barriers for women's participation in leadership position identified as major hindering factors such as personal, socio-cultural, and educational. Among socio-cultural barriers social misconception about women's role i.e., family and home responsibility such

as birth children and home management. In relation to personal barriers lack of confidence and interest, to hold leadership positions.

Most of the respondents agreed that performance appraisal, work experience, qualification were the major selection criteria's and using these measures of selection and placement to leadership position of government offices largely affect women negatively.

With related to mechanism that women's participation in leadership position effective gender sensitive planning, applying quota system during selection and placement, and implement gender related policies were found to be major effective mechanisms to raise the women's involvement in leadership positions.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

Based on the summary of major findings, the following conclusions have been drawn: -

The study shows that were no adequate measure taken for women's participation in leadership positions due to lack of strong commitment and attentions by political and governors officials.

Women participation in leadership is hindered by their less aspiration to apply for leadership position. So, one may conclude from the finding's women have low intrinsic motivation to leadership position due to different factors such as lack of self-confidence and fear of competition were preventing women to aspire to leadership position.

Factors that hinder women's participation in leadership position were sociocultural, educational, institutional and personal and family responsibility as well as other related issues were found to be the key

The main criteria used for woman's selection and placement into decision-making structure and leadership position: performance appraisal, work experience, professional qualification and leadership position: performance appraisal, work experience, professional qualification with high consideration of candidates whereas gender preference and quota system were regarded as minor considerations. This situation contradicts with the implementation of

affirmative action and as one way of hindering factor of female holding leadership positions.

It was also indicated that women have been given priority when they had the same qualification and work experiences as their male counterparts.

Based on the finding results, respondents' belief the agreement of women is lack self-confidence to practice leadership positions and acceptable than men leaders by their followers. Therefore, there are negative perceptions which yet need to be changed to make the perception of respondents completely gender friendly.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

To tackle the problems that affect women's participation and improve their involvement in leadership and decision making, the following recommendations are proposed in view of the above findings.

- To tackle these problems and improve their aspiration to become a leader awareness creation, raising and bringing attitudinal change be undertaken by Woreda administrative offices through training, experience share and workshops.
- The study revealed that women were found to be competent in most of the skills. However, in order to participate effectively in leading and develop their abilities, skills and competence; women should have the required knowledge, experience and skills of leadership and WAO should provide short term and long-term training for women leaders to enhance or develop their experience in leading government offices.
- To develop self-confidence, self-awareness and to develop positive perception about oneself, continuous training of women should be designed and establish women networking in order to share their experiences.
- With regard to leadership position, there should be some modifications in selection and placement criteria, giving quota to compete with men should be done to overcome the problem of low women participation in leadership positions.
- One of the factors that limit women's participation is socio-cultural factor. One can clearly understand that these factors can affect social and psychological development of women that in turn affect their participation in leadership. Therefore, Men should develop

positive attitudes and think that women have equal ability with them and the society also should trust women to lead through awareness rising and the other thing to be done is to change the way children are raised and socialized. Parents should provide their daughters equal opportunity to develop their decision making and leadership capabilities and must train sons to respect their sisters as equals.

- The family and home responsibility can be minimized by having family-friendly policies to improve the pressures of home responsibility and create a culture of mutual commitment that make it to competent female leaders.
- WAO should encourage women leaders by providing technical support like mentoring, networking, and develop follow up mechanisms in which women's will practice their leadership roles. This can be done by empowering and allowing them to take part in leadership and decision making.
- WAO should be created and encouraged by awarding role model females in different sector offices.
- The capacity building scheme of female workers were not adequately done by the woreda women, youth and children office and other stakeholders in collaboration so the concerning body should exert efforts towards improving women's participation in leadership.
- Finally, as far as the researcher's knowledge goes, it was hardly got researches regarding leadership in Bizet woreda government offices. Therefore, there is a need to undertake further studies on the issue by taking enough time and information as well as finance.

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# Appendix A

**Mekelle University**

**Department of Civic and Ethical Studies**

**A questionnaire to be filled by leaders or administrators and experts.**

This study is aimed to assess the factor affect women’s participation in leadership and decision making in Bizet woreda. The information collected through this instrument will be used for the accomplishment of master’s thesis entitled ‘factors affecting womens participation in leadership and decision making’ the case of selected sectors office of woreda. Thus, your devotion and cooperation to carefully fill these questionnaires will have so much contribution to know the factor and solve the problem. You are therefore, kindly requested to honestly complete the question. I assumed that your response will be kept confidential and fully instrumental only to academic purpose.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

**Hadera Kahsay**

Tell: 0914099221      Email: [haderakahsay778@gmail.com](mailto:haderakahsay778@gmail.com)

General instructions and Directions

No need of writing name in any part of the questionnaire

Make your response in the space provided by putting ‘X’ mark

For your additional opinion or explanation, you are kindly requested to write briefly as much as possible in the space provided.

Part I: Background information

General information

A- Name of your woreda\_\_\_\_\_

B- Name of your sector\_\_\_\_\_

Personal Information

1. Sex A. male

B. Female

2. Age in year A. <25  B. 26-35  C. 36-45  D. 46-55   
E. >55
3. Educational Qualification A. Diploma  B. BA  C. MA
4. Work experience in year A. 1-5  B. 6-10  C. 11-15  D. 16-20
5. What is your current position at the sector you are working? A. leader  B. Expert
6. Marital status A. Unmarried  B. Married

Part II: Here is some Questions that assess your view on leadership. Circle the letter of your choice from the given alternatives.

1. If you are given a choice to peruse further education, which field of study are you highly interested?  
A. Leadership and Management B. field of study in subject matter expert
2. Have you ever applied for promotion to vacant and nomination leadership position?  
A. Yes B. No
3. At present, if you are given a chance to participate in leadership position and role in your sector, will you accept it (only for expert)?  
A. Yes, I accept it willingly B. I can accept but it is not first choice C. I will never accept
4. In No 3 if you reject the promotion you have given, please reason out why are you dislike it.

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Part III: based on your own observation and evaluation, rate the degree of hinderance the following factors to low participation of women in leadership. After you carefully read each factor, please put your rating using a  $\surd$  symbol under the number your degree to be the degree of hinderance. To rank the degree of hinderance of each factor please use the following scale.

5= strongly high, 4= Agree, 3= moderately agree, 2= low, 1= very low

No	Factors	Rating Scale				
		5	4	3	2	1
5	Women themselves lack interest to participate in leadership position					
6	In order to participate in school leadership position women expert, lack experience					
7	In order to participate in school leadership position women expert, lack qualification					
8	Women fear becoming leader assuming that leadership needs masculine courage					
9	Lack of self-confidence of women hinders them to participate in leadership and decision-making positions.					
10	Women refrain from participation in leadership position assuming that male expert resist their leadership.					
11	Women refrain from participation in leadership position because the working condition is not suitable to them					
12	Participation of women in leadership is low because lack of motivation to women leadership by community.					
13	Participation of women in leadership is low because they fail to meet the selection criteria.					
14	Participation of women in leadership is low because the placement criteria is not gender sensitive.					
15	Participation of women in leadership is low because of lack of women role model					
16	Women refrain from participation in leadership position because in most the teaching staff is male dominant.					
17	Lack of incentive to women hinders their participation in leadership position					
18	Burden of family responsibility at home prevents women expert to participate in leadership position.					
19	High work load at home prevents women experts to participate in leadership positions.					
20	Husband influence prevents women experts to participate in leadership positions.					
21	Participation of women in leadership is low because culturally women leadership is unacceptable by society.					
22	Participation of women in leadership is low because they understand that leadership doesn't belong to them.					
23	Women refrain from participation in leadership positions because they lack necessary					

	skill for leadership.					
24	Women refrain from participation in leadership positions because men, undermine women leadership.					
25	Participation of women in leadership is low because the community believes that women personality and behaviors are inappropriate for leadership.					

26. In your sector how many female experts, who fulfill the selection criteria, apply for vacant and nomination leadership position when equally invited with males?

- A. All most all of them
- B. About half of them
- C. Some of them
- D. None of them

27. If your answer to the above question is ‘b, c and d’ what do you expect the dominant reason for low women participation?

- A. Because of their personal (self-related) factors
- B. Because of institutional related factors
- C. Because of culturally related factors

28.If you are a woman and currently working in leadership position, what do you feel about the quality of your leadership?

- A. I feel that I am successful leader
- B. I feel I am partly successful leader
- C. I feel that I am not successful at all

29. Please justify some of the reasons for your feeling

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30. If you are experienced working with or under women leadership what do feel about the quality of her leadership?

- A. I feel that she is/was a successful leader
- B. I feel that she is/was partly successful leader
- C. I fell that she is/was not successful at all

31. please justify the some of the reasons for your feeling

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32. Suppose if you are given the chance of choosing the sex of your principal ship which one do you willingly prefer?

A. a male leader    B. a female leader

33. please justify the logic of your choice.

A. a male leader \_\_\_\_\_

B. a female leader \_\_\_\_\_

Part IV: Below are several statements about which you may have different opinions(perception). After carefully reading each statement, please indicate the degree of your agreement by putting a  $\surd$  mark on the corresponding to these statements.

SF= strongly favored, F= Favored, UD= Undecided, UF=Unfavored, SUF= Strongly Unfavored

No	Item	Degree of Agreement				
		5	4	3	2	1
34	I think men are naturally born leaders					
35	I feel that men's belief to stop marital life with a woman who is in leadership position is right					
36	I feel that women are naturally best leaders					
37	I believe that leadership position demand masculine physical strength					
38	I think women naturally lack confidence to practice leadership position					
39	I think women who fit to leadership position must be exceptionally talented with a masculine kind of personality in nature.					
40	I feel that many subordinate workers fail to obey orders of women leaders than men leaders.					
41	I believe that in our context single women have equal access to leadership position as the married ones.					
42	I think in our family and home related factors highly influence womens participation in leadership position.					

43	I believe that husbands should encourage their wives to possess leadership position and roles.					
44	I feel that men leaders are more problem solvers and conflict managers than women leaders.					
45	I think women leaders always seek support as compared with men leaders					
46	I believe that women leaders are less influential and acceptable by their followers the men leaders					
47	I feel that women leaders are more wise, emotionally stable, responsible and critical leaders than men counterparts.					
48	I think women leadership is more democratic and genuine than men because they exercise it at home.					
49	I believe that men who have leadership positions by merit should willingly avoid having that leadership positions in order to give greater room for participation of women.					
50	I feel that affirmative action should be stopped because it is a source of inefficient leaders and workers.					

Part V: This part deals about the factors that contribute for promotion of women’s participation in educational leadership. Based on your own observation and evaluation, rate the degree of contribution of the following factors to high participation of women in leadership. After you carefully read each factor, please put your rating using a √ symbol under the number you agree to be degree of contribution. To rank the degree of contribution of each factor please use the following scale.

5= Very high, 4=High, 3= Moderately high, 2= Low, 1= Very low

No	Expected Contribution Factor	Rating Scale				
		5	4	3	2	1
51	Developing and implementing gender sensitive plans at regional, woreda and levels is currently participation of women in leadership.					
52	Officials are strongly committed to implement gender equity in leadership					
53	Proactive strategies shifting to empower leaders through training.					
54	Gender department of the office effective of gender policy implementation.					

55	Women's networking is established in order to share their experience and to empower women leaders through experience sharing.					
56	Gender preference and quota system are currently given special attention during selection so as increase women leaders.					
57	Management bodies of your office are highly aware of gender issues and takes high responsibility to increase participation of women leadership.					
58	Gender related issues are monitoring and evaluating regularly regularly by top officials so as increase women leaders.					

Part VI: The condition of recruitment and selection criteria for women's participation in leadership positions. The following criteria are currently in use for selection and placement of school leaders. Please rank which of currently working is decreasing women's participation in leadership. After carefully read each of the criteria you are kindly requested to rate your judgment on the criteria in relation to women's progress in your respective woreda/sector.

5=Very high, 4=High, 3= Moderately high, 2=Low, 1= Very low

No	Expected Barriers	Rating Scale				
		5	4	3	2	1
59	Professional qualification					
60	Work experience					
61	Performance appraisal					
62	Relevant professional training					
63	Oral or/and written test					
64	Gender performance					
65	Quota system					
66	Political background					

## Appendix B

### Interview Guide for Key Informants

1. To what extent is women's leadership participation applicable in your respective sector?

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2. Does government policy in general and in your regulation in particular encourage women to key strategic positions?

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3. What special considerations /criteria have been made by your office to bring women to leadership position?

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4. What recruitment and selection criteria are in in place to encourage women participation at leadership position?

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5. In your opinion what factors do you suggest for women's under- representative to leadership position?

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6. What is your opinion about

- a. Women's participation in decision making structure
- b. Affirmative action and gender quota to increase women's participation in decision making

7. What do you suggest/recommend as remedial action to improve women's participation in leadership positions?

8. What conditions do you think would help women to retain at their position?