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Assessment of Factors Affecting Women Participation in Managerial Positions in Selected Public Organizations in Jimma Zone, Oromia, Ethiopia

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Abstract- Women constitute about half of the population and had contributions for the development of the country in all fields in Ethiopia. In spite of their number and contribution, their participation in managerial positions has consistently lower than men in public organizations in Jimma Zone. It is a universally accepted truth that women are the base and fuel for the overall development of a country. However, their participation in all spheres of life is mainly at a subordinate level and in managerial positions in public organizations is insignificant.

Therefore, this study is aimed to assess the factors affecting women participation in managerial positions in public organizations in Jimma Zone.

The study had employed both quantitative and qualitative research approaches. The data of this study were both primary and secondary data collected from three public organizations found in Jimma Zone. The sample was selected by using stratified random sampling method. Data was collected through personal interview and questionnaires.

As the finding of the study shows, even though the number of women increases in public organizations, their participation in managerial positions is still affected by several factors. Low participation of women in managerial positions results in serious consequences like job dissatisfaction, employee turnover, low productivity and absenteeism and minimizes various benefits that the organizations enjoy from their participations.

Hence, in order to reduce these factors and enhance the participation of women in managerial positions, organizations should develop different mechanisms and strategies.

Keywords: women participation, managerial position, mechanism to enhance women participation.

I. INTRODUCTION

In societies, where traditional or patriarchal values remain strong, many women find politics as unwelcoming and even hostile to participate in it and hold managerial positions. There are practical factors

affecting the participation of women in managerial positions. These factors include lower level of education, financial problems, lack of necessary networks, greater family responsibilities and deprivation of their rights (IGAD, 2010).

Women are less participated and low represented in decision making positions in developing countries. Women's low access to information and media, less employment opportunity, organizational barriers coupled by cultural factors reduce their decision making power in the society in general and in organizations in particular (UNFPA, 2005).

Ethiopia is a patriarchal society that keeps women in a subordinate positions (Haregawoyin and Emebet, 2003). The socialization process, which determines gender role is partly responsible for the subjugation of women in the country. The differences in the ways in which individuals are treated through the socialization process due mainly to their sex status leads to the development of real psychological and personality difference between males and females (Almaz, 1991).

Women constitute 71.3% in the clerical and fiscal type of jobs in federal government employment list. Women representations in administrative and professional jobs category is only 25% and 18% respectively, which clearly indicates middle and upper management positions overwhelmingly dominated by men (Federal Civil Service Commission, 2005).

In the case of Jimma zone, women's participation in political activities and decision making role is still very low. As the data obtained from Jimma zone administration office, human resource department, many public organizations in the zone are dominated by male managers (Jimma Zone Administration Office, 2012).

Women are underrepresented in politics and civil service, especially at the managerial positions. There are several laws and policies which guarantee equal pay and employment right, in practice; however, women do not stand an equal chance of promotion (Walters and Gwen Mason, 1994).

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In the case of Jimma zone, while women have captured an ever increasing share of the labour market, improvement in the quality of women's jobs have not kept pace. The other reflection of this situation is their absence from senior management jobs. As per preliminary investigation made by the student researcher, there was a position difference in male and female managerial jobs stem from the reality that even when women hold management positions, they are often in less strategic and lower paying areas of an organization. Thus, this research tries to identify the factors hindering women from holding managerial positions in Ethiopia, particularly in Jimma zone's public organizations.

The main objective of this study is to assess the factors that obstruct women from participating in managerial positions in selected public organizations in Jimma Zone.

Specifically:

- To identify factors that affects the participation of women in managerial positions in public organizations in Jimma Zone.
- To identify institutional procedures and structures concerning women's career development and promotion to managerial positions.
- To examine organizational mechanisms and strategies in enhancing women's to managerial positions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

a) *An overview of gender inequality*

Gender inequality can be considered as universal problem in developing countries. Women in developed countries are relatively empowered economically and have power to struggle for their equality with men. On the other hand women in developing countries are voiceless because of economic and cultural factors. These economic and cultural factors dictate the gender based division of labour, rights, responsibilities, opportunities and access and control over resources. Education opportunity, access to media, employment status, participation in decision making positions, involvement in political activities among other things, are some areas of gender inequality.

Gender disparity in education makes women to be underrepresented in the formal sector of employment. According to the survey conducted by the Central Statistical Authority (CSA, 2004) showed that women account for less than half (43%) of the total employee of the country.

b) *Women's participation in managerial positions*

The principle of equality of women and men was enshrined in the United Nations charter and was later inaugurated in many international instruments and

national constitutions play a great role in minimizing the discrimination of women worldwide. The United Nations Commissions on the Status of Women legitimize and promote international norms and standards to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women in all fields (Walter and Mason, 1994).

In many organizations, the inequality between men and women in managerial positions are often revealed by numerical discrepancies. The research of (Collinson, 1996) has shown the role of gender in organizational functioning and has highlighted the importance of considering whether managers are men or women when understanding organizational behavior. As most managers of organizations are men, it is important to consider the role of women managers and investigates the constructions of women identities in male dominated working environment.

Despite some measures taken by the state governments, there is still small percentage of women participating in public decision making roles, especially in top managerial positions. Even in the traditionally women dominated professions; women are in the secondary position compared to men (Davidson, 1983).

Many scholars cited the role of women in economic, political and social process of their country. The contributions of women in the development of the country are immeasurable. Even though, their contribution in all sphere of life is increasing from time to time, their participation and representation in managerial position and decision making role is insignificant.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

a) *Study Area and Design*

This study was conducted in selected public organizations in Jimma Zone, Oromia region, south west Ethiopia. Jimma zone is located to south west Ethiopia at 346km away from Addis Ababa. The three public organizations included in the study are South West Region Ethio Telecom, Jimma Zone Administration Office and Jimma City Administration.

This study were used descriptive research design by combining both quantitative and qualitative research approaches to analyze data and acquire adequate data about realities of the women.

b) *Data sources and Sample Size*

Both primary and secondary data were used to collect data on the factors affecting the participation of women in managerial positions. Before the collection of data by using data collection tools, the researcher has undertaken an observation in the selected three public organizations.

The sample size is 201 which is determined using single propotion formula and the sample respondents were selected from the selected three public organizations. Stratified sampling technique was

employed and the determined sample was distributed to each stratum using proportional allocation method. So, from Ethio-Telecom South West Region, Jimma Zone Administration and Jimma City Administration 94, 52 and 55 sample sizes was determined respectively.

Data were collected using structured questionnaire and individual interview were used as tools of data collections.

c) *Data analysis procedure*

The collected data checked for its completeness and coded on SPSS Version 16. Descriptive and inferential was used to analysis the data. Frequency table, mean standard deviation was used to describe the data and chi-square test of association were conducted to investigate statistically significant difference between men and women's responses. In the analysis of qualitative data, the researcher begins with the description of informant's responses and analyzing of open ended questionnaires.

IV. REUSLT AND DISCUSSION

All distributed questionnaires were selected from the respondents. A total of 201 questionnaires were analyzed for discussing and presenting the findings of the study. Finally, based on the findings of the study, conclusions were drowned and recommendations were forwarded.

a) *Socio Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents*

As the below Table 1 shows, 59.7% were female and 40.3% of them were male. The majority 42.8% of the respondent's were between 20-25 years age group. One hundred five of the respondents were married. Among religion 53.2% of the respondents are Muslim, while the education level 46.3% of them were first degree and above. The work experience of the respondents 74.6% of them had an experience of less than five years.

Table 1 : Socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents

| Socio demographic characteristics | | Frequency | Percent |
|---|------------------------|-----------|---------|
| Sex of respondent | Male | 81 | 40.3 |
| | Female | 120 | 59.7 |
| Age of respondent | 20-25year | 86 | 42.8 |
| | 26-35 year | 74 | 36.8 |
| | 36-45 year | 41 | 20.4 |
| | | | |
| Marital status of respondent | Married | 105 | 52.2 |
| | Single | 62 | 30.8 |
| | Separated | 8 | 4 |
| | Divorced | 13 | 6.5 |
| | Widowed | 13 | 6.5 |
| Religion of respondent | Muslim | 107 | 53.2 |
| | Christian | 64 | 31.8 |
| | Wakeffata | 30 | 14.9 |
| Education status of respondent | High school complete | 31 | 15.4 |
| | Diploma (10+3) | 77 | 38.3 |
| | First degree and above | 93 | 46.3 |
| Years of experiance (In this organization only) | < 5 years | 150 | 74.6 |
| | 5-10 years | 35 | 17.4 |
| | >10 years | 16 | 8.0 |
| | Total | 201 | 100 |

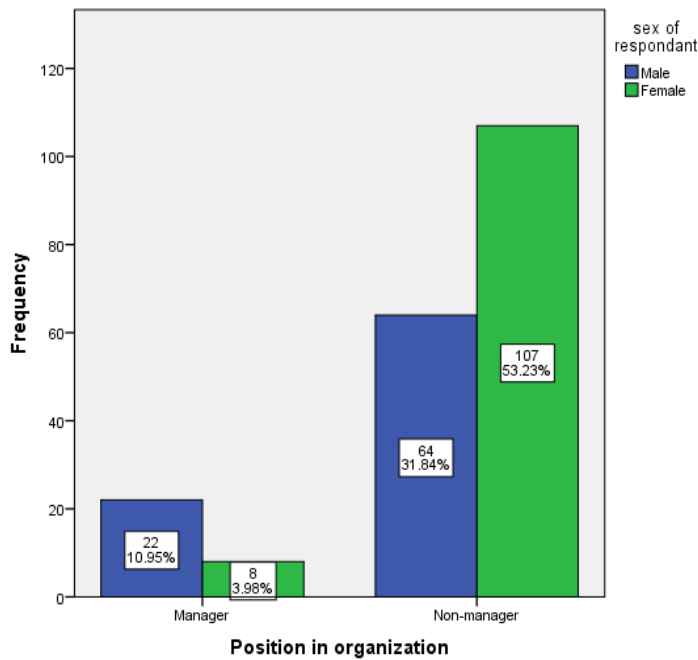


Figure 1 : Positions of respondents in organizations

As indicated in Figure 1 above, from total 30(14.9%) are managers of an organizations from that 22(73.4%) were male managers, while 8(26.6%) were female managers. This implies low participation of women in managerial positions in selected public organizations.

b) *Factors Affecting the Participation of Women in the Managerial Positions*

As per study conducted by IGAD, 2010, there were several causes for underrepresentation and low participation of women in managerial positions.

As indicated in Table 2, 78.1% of the respondents found lack of motivation from the family, society, organization and government as the hindering factor for women’s participation in managerial positions.

Lack of motivation is the main factor for women’s lower participation in managerial positions.

Low academic qualification of women is another factor for low participation of women in management positions. Many management positions require educational qualification as criteria to hold the positions. Especially after the introduction of BPR (Business Reengineering Process), many positions begin to consider high education qualification as the main criteria to hold the position. From the total respondents, 65.67%, 48.8%, 47.8% and 34.9% of them put family commitment of women, lack of experience, lack of role model and lack of confidence of women respectively are an obstacle for women’s participation in managerial positions.

Table 2 : Women’s personal factors affecting their participation in managerial positions

| Personal factors affect Women participation in managerial positions | Frequency | | Percent | |
|---|-----------|-----|---------|-------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Family commitment | 132 | 69 | 65.67 | 33.34 |
| Lack of confidence among women | 70 | 131 | 34.9 | 65.1 |
| Low academic qualification | 136 | 65 | 67.7 | 32.3 |
| Lack of motivation | 157 | 44 | 78.1 | 29.9 |
| Lack of role model | 96 | 105 | 47.8 | 52.2 |
| Lack of experience | 98 | 103 | 48.8 | 51.2 |

From Societal factors affecting women’s participation in managerial positions 176(87.07%) of respondents responds Men are seen as decision makers and 81.60% of the respondent replied women’s lack of social network as the obstacle for women’s participation in managerial positions. This means they

are not actively participating in extra activities in and out of their organization. As indicated in the responses of interviewed informants, women are exposed to double responsibilities one in office and the other at home. Because of this they have no extra time to socialize with many people. Hence they lack information concerning

new jobs and vacant positions in and out of their organizations. Since they lack social network or have few friends they are not informed about the flow of latest information in the organization (Table 3).

One hundred fifty three 76.11% of the respondents have indicated culture as the obstacle for women's participation in managerial positions. As indicated in the study of Almaz, (1991), the socialization process and cultural activities of the society is another factor that hinders women from participating in managerial positions. Culture includes the societal norms, beliefs and values. In Ethiopian, especially in Jimma culture, women are not encouraged to participate in managerial positions. The culture of society identifies the gender role of women. According to this, women are expected to perform domestic work and refrain from managerial activities. They are obliged to accept the decision of their husband in the family even on matters concerning their life.

From the total respondents, 62.69%, 58.70%, 57.21% and 46.27% of the respondents have replied

lack of support from husband or family, lesser opportunity for women in education, inequalities in higher management positions and religious practice of the society respectively as factors affecting the participation of women in managerial positions. From the total 201 respondents, only 34.32% have replied fear of isolation as one of the obstacle for women's participation in managerial positions.

As information from available literatures, there are several institutional factors, which affect the participation of women in managerial positions. As indicated in Livinstone, 2004, study, there are several barriers for women participation in managerial positions. These include: entrenched cultures and norms, the way power is defined and exercised, selection procedures, exclusion of women from informal networks, organizational climates and placement. As indicated in Constance B. 2007, study, women in general suffer discriminatory practices in their organizations when promotions to senior positions are considered.

Table 3 : Societal factors affecting women's participation in managerial positions

| Which of the following Societal Factors Affect Women Participation in Managerial Positions? | Frequencies | | Percent | |
|---|-------------|-----|---------|-------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Fewer opportunity for women in education | 118 | 83 | 58.70 | 41.30 |
| Men are seen as decision makers | 176 | 25 | 87.07 | 12.93 |
| Inequality in higher management position | 115 | 86 | 57.21 | 42.79 |
| Fear of isolation | 69 | 132 | 34.32 | 65.68 |
| Women lacks social network | 164 | 37 | 81.60 | 18.40 |
| Religious practice | 93 | 108 | 46.27 | 53.73 |
| Culture | 153 | 48 | 76.11 | 23.89 |
| Lack of support from husband/family | 126 | 75 | 62.69 | 37.31 |

As indicated in Table 4, most 93.03% of the respondents have replied as the management positions dominated by male managers. This indicates how male managers are influential in the organization and low participation of women in managerial positions. This is mainly because of the notion that women are not good manager as replied by 55.22% of the respondents. Marshal (1984) supports this view, that other peoples negative reactions to women in authority are particularly expected to undermine the ability of women. The notions of people towards women managers as indicated in Mason et al (1992), indicated two-thirds of men and one-fifth of women would feel uncomfortable to work for female managers. This study has also reveals that there is a negative attitude and beliefs on the performance of women managers in selected public organizations.

While 54.72%, 52.73% and 16.91% of the respondents have indicated the absence of affirmative actions, Appointment requirement and irrelevant questions asked during interview respectively as factor affecting women's participation in managerial positions at institutional level. The constitution of the Federal

Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE, 1995), incorporates the article which states the affirmative action's entitled for women. Article 35 of the FDRE constitution states the rights guaranteed for women. There are also policies and procedures developed at national level which are focusing on women. But as it can be evident from the collected data, these policies and instruments are not fully implemented in selected public organizations found in Jimma zone. The interviewed informants were also affirmed the absence of affirmative action's for women in their organizations.

Table 4 : Institutional factors affecting women's participation in managerial positions

| Institutional Factors Affect Women Participation in Managerial Positions | Frequencies | | Percent | |
|--|-------------|-----|---------|-------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| Few number of women | 83 | 118 | 41.30 | 58.70 |
| Management position dominated by men | 187 | 14 | 93.03 | 6.97 |
| Notion that women are not good manager | 111 | 90 | 55.22 | 44.78 |
| Unclear promotion procedures | 102 | 99 | 50.74 | 49.26 |
| Irrelevant questions asked at interview | 34 | 167 | 16.91 | 83.09 |
| Appointment requirement (long experience) | 106 | 95 | 52.73 | 47.27 |
| Absence of affirmative action | 110 | 91 | 54.72 | 45.28 |

In regard to equal information sharing for women and men, 53.73% of the respondents replied the status of their organization as medium. This implies that, if the organizations did not share information equally for women, their participation in managerial positions would be affected.

In the case of feedback on actions taken, women had medium feedback since equal information sharing is not practiced in the organizations. As indicated in the same Table 5 below, even though women have not participated in managerial positions and decision making role, they had feedback on decisions taken. From the total respondents, 51.74% replied strong. This implies that, the participation of women in having feedback on decision taken is comparatively found at strong level, when compared with other mechanisms. The interviewed informants were also responded to feedback on decision taken as strong mechanism in enhancing women participation in managerial positions.

Knowledge development and training for women is the essential mechanism in enhancing the participation of women in managerial positions. The status of the selected organizations in this regard also found at medium level. More than half 55.22% of the respondents viewed knowledge development and training to women at medium.

According to the responses of interviewed informants, these organizations did not arrange knowledge development and training program exclusively for women. As per the responses of the interviewed informants, most of the time, these organizations sent male workers for training.

In regard to reward and recognition, 64.18% of respondents indicated it at medium. Rewards and recognitions can motivate and initiate women for further achievements.

In addition, key informants affirmed that, there is no special reward arranged for women. The organizations and their workers are not giving recognition for the performance of women. But few informants replied in contrast to this idea. According to these informants, there is a reward and recognition for women's achievements, which has started in recent time. Especially after the introduction of scaling up the

good experiences by the government, these organizations begin to recognize the potential of women and reward their achievements.

Team working in these organizations is another area where poor implementation of mechanisms to enhance women participation in managerial positions was prevailing 51.74% of respondents replied it as medium.

In the implementation of power sharing to women 60.20% of the respondents replied it as medium. From this it is possible to imply that organizations are found at medium level in implementing power sharing mechanism to enhance the participation of women in managerial positions.

Table 5 : Organizational mechanisms to enhance women participation in management

| Mechanisms to enhance women participation in management | Presence of mechanisms in the organization | | | | |
|---|--|------------|------------|--------------|-------------------|
| | Never (%) | Rarely (%) | Medium (%) | Strongly (%) | Very strongly (%) |
| Equal information sharing | | 5(2.5) | 108(53.7) | 67(33.3) | 21(10.4) |
| Having feedback on actions taken | | 20(10.0) | 69(34.3) | 104(51.7) | 8(4.0) |
| Knowledge development and training to women | | 33(16.4) | 111(55.2) | 41(20.4) | 16(8.0) |
| Reward and recognition | 5(2.5) | 51(25.4) | 129(64.2) | 8(4.0) | 8(4.0) |
| Team working | | 8(4.0) | 104(51.7) | 73(36.3) | 16(8.0) |
| Power sharing to women | | 43(21.4) | 121(60.2) | 22(10.9) | 15(7.5) |

From Table 6, 66.67% of the respondents agreed on the recruitment strategy to ensure women participation in management positions. 17.91% and 15.42% of the respondents were respectively replied neutral and strongly agreed regarding recruitment as the strategy to ensure women participation in managerial positions. This implies that, if all processes of recruitment such as selection, examination, interview and employment are in favour of women, their participation in managerial positions would increase.

Labour division for the workers of an organization can be another strategy to ensure women participation in managerial positions. Out of the total respondents, 56.72% agreed. Key interviewed informants and the participants of focus group discussion were agreed with the presence of labour division as strategy to ensure women participation in managerial positions in their organizations.

In regard to the strategy of representing women in committee activities 50.25% of the respondents

agreed. This implies that women representation in committee can ensure their participation in managerial positions through experience sharing with other committee members.

Considering Facilities & initiatives 57.71% of the respondents say agree. This shows that, if organizations are fulfilling the necessary facilities and providing initiatives for women, they can ensure their active participation in managerial positions.

The other strategy, which can ensure the participation of women in managerial positions, is training and capacity building. The majority of respondents 70.65% strongly agreed on this strategy. The other strategy indicated to ensure women participation in managerial positions is group work. If women are participating in group work with men, they would be increasing their participation in managerial positions through experience sharing 45.77% respondents responds agree.

Table 6 : Strategies to ensure women participation in management

| Strategies to ensure women participation in management | Level of agreement | | | | | mean | S.D |
|--|--------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------------|--|------|------|
| | Disagree (%) | Neutral (%) | Agree (%) | Strongly agree (%) | | | |
| Recruitment | | 36(17.9) | 134(66.7) | 31(15.4) | | 3.97 | 0.58 |
| Division of labor | | 41(20.4) | 114(56.7) | 46(22.9) | | 4.02 | 0.66 |
| Representation in committee | 13(6.5) | 34(16.9) | 101(50.2) | 53(26.4) | | 3.96 | 0.83 |
| Facilities & initiatives | | 6(3.0) | 116(57.7) | 79(39.3) | | 4.36 | 0.54 |
| Training & capacity building | | | 59(29.4) | 142(70.6) | | 4.71 | 0.46 |
| Group Work | | 53(26.4) | 92(45.8) | 56(27.9) | | 4.01 | 0.74 |

V. CONCLUSION

This study has noted and emphasized that, women participation in managerial position is critical for organizations in order to achieve their goals. Low participation of women in managerial position is attributed to different personal, societal and institutional factors.

The societal factors are the main hindering factors for women's participation in managerial positions. The culture of society, which design and assign gender role, put women at subordinate level in comparison with their male counterpart. Women are mainly assigned in domestic role and reproductive role, while men are expected and assigned to managerial positions in the society. Lack of education opportunity is

another obstacle for women participation in managerial position. Lack of social network, lack of motivation and support are also other societal factors, which affect women participation in managerial positions.

Low academic qualification and lack of experience are also the personal factor of women, which hinder them from participating in managerial positions. Other personal factors, which affect women participation in managerial positions, are lack of role model and poor confidence of women on their performance.

Managerial positions in public organizations are mainly dominated by male managers and it is not attractive for women. The notion that women are not good manager is the predominated factor in the institutions and it is an obstacle for women's participation in managerial positions. Ambiguous organizational structure and promotional procedures are also other factors that affect the participation of women in managerial positions. Moreover the absence or improper implementation of affirmative action is another hindering factor for women's participation in managerial positions.

Organizations can ensure and enhance the participation of women in managerial positions through different strategies and mechanisms. Training and continuous capacity building for women can ensure their participation in managerial position. Providing facilities and initiatives is also another mechanism to ensure the participation of women in managerial positions. Information of communication about the organization is the other critical strategy to enhance women's participation in managerial position.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The government should realize the participation of women in managerial positions through its laws, policies and regulations.

Public organizations should review their organizational structure and promotional procedures and adjust them as suitable for women.

Family is the base for the society and the government; hence they have to give equal chances in every matter for their children without considering their sex. And also, women have to fill confident by their potential performance and compete equally with men in managerial positions. They have to use their own effort and upgrade themselves by knowledge and skills in order to fit to the managerial positions. They should increase social networks through social medias and by creating inter personal relationship with both men and women in and out of their organization and expose themselves to organizational and other current information.

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