

Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Social, Political and Economic Decision-Making Positions at Kelemwollega Zone, Western Ethiopia

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Abstract : In spite of social, political, and economic marginalization, women are still considered as the backbone of Ethiopia, one of the least developed countries in the world. The general purpose of this study was to assess factors that affect participation of women in politics, social and economic decisions at Kelem-Wollega Administrative Zone of Oromia Regional State, Ethiopia. Data used in this paper is mainly primary, and a few secondary data were incorporated. Respondents were selected using a systematic random sampling method and were placed questionnaires containing open-ended and closed-ended. Focus group discussion was also used for the study subjects in two offices. According to the information collected from the KWAZ Development and Social Service Office, a total of 18,473 tax-paying employees are present in the Zone, which is 14% of the total population of the Zone. Among the total number of employees in the Zone, 2,617 have been recruited for this study based on the criteria stated. This showed 1.8% of them were comprised of several churches and religious owned integrated development projects in the KWAZ. The 2,103 (80.34%) study participants responded personally, and they completed and returned the questionnaire to the researchers. The study revealed that in public institutions existed in KWAZ, the majority of women were having an educational status of diploma and lower, practicing lower non-decision making and leadership positions. Conclusion: Major barriers hindering women include: Socio-cultural attitudes, lack of necessary experience, education, the burden of domestic responsibilities, and lack of role models of women leaders in the Zone. Empowerment of women via social organizations, critical involvement of the government, and Affirmative action for women is critical. Further research is needed on the scope and challenges in implementing the strategies.

Keywords : women, affirmative action, leadership, empowerment, Ethiopia

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