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# Challenges of Womens' Participation in Education: the Case of Some Selected Primary Schools of Oromiya Region, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Education is a tool to enable citizens to make all rounded participation in development process. The participation of females in socio-economic programs depends on their educational background. Educating girls and women is critical to achieve the benefits as well as the improvement in the areas of health, fertility and nutrition. International treaties, conventions, laws & policies set a legal commitment on the right of education and gender equality. However, gross and net enrollment differences in schooling of females prevail. Females remain under represented at all levels of education. The females' participation gap in education is wide in developing countries, one of which is Ethiopia. Ethiopia is one of the developing countries with low females' participation in education. Statistics reveals that the number of female students in primary, primary and higher education is not equal to that of male students. This study is, therefore, initiated to assess the socio-economic challenges that hampered women participation in some selected primary schools of oromiya region. The necessary data for the study was collected from 23 students, 18 teachers, 18 parents and 11 vice-principals selected through stratified simple random sampling, purposive sampling, and availability sampling respectively. The instruments employed to collect data from respondents were questionnaire, interview and document analysis. The quantitative data gathered from respondents were analyzed using percentage, mean, and the qualitative data was analyzed through narration. The results of the study revealed that the wrong attitude of parents towards their female children's education and low level of support affected female students' academic performance. It was also showed that lack of aspiration, motivation and self-reliance contributed to the low participation of females. Sexual harassment is one of the causes for females' dropout. The extent underprivileged and underrepresented in primary schools is high due mainly to disparity, religious issues and cultural problems. This low female' participation in education has hampered the country from achieving ESDP V targets. Thus, females must be treated equally with males to attain educational access, which is necessary to increase their participation in different development programs.

**Keywords:** Challenges, Participation, Women, Oromiya

Introduction

To educate a girl is to educate a nation. Education is a tool to enable both women and men to make all rounded participation in development process by acquiring knowledge, skill and attitudinal change. According to Abera (2008), in all countries women are increasingly impatient to widen the options for realizing their potential and to participate on equal basis with men in productive and creative achievements, as well as in the rewards' systems of their societies". But they do not participate fully in what gets done in society due to lack of education. In order to play the critical role appropriately, women need education. The participation of females in socio-economic programs depends on their educational back ground. Educating girls and women is critical to achieve the aforementioned benefits as well as for the improvement in the areas of health, fertility and nutrition (Kane 2004; Conway and Bourque 1993). Similarly, studies on benefits associated with girls' education such as Kane (2004) argue that educating girls yields a higher rate of return than any other investment in the developing world. Thus females must be treated equally with men to attain educational qualification, which is necessary to increase their participation in different development programs.

In addition, education is a human right enshrined in international treaties and conventions that are legally binding on signatory states. The two most recent Conventions, the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, 1979) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); and UNESCO, (2003) contain the most comprehensive set of legally enforceable commitments on the rights of education and gender equality. Since then schools have been urged to take and educate all children in

the same way, regardless of sex differences. However gross differences in schooling prevail when data are disaggregated by gender. In many places around the world, girls receive much less schooling than boys (Schaffner, 2004). For example, studies on the enrollments of female students in developing countries and particularly in Africa (King, 1991; Hyde, 1993; Kane 2004) indicate that a small number of girls attend schools. The People's Movement for Human Right Education (PDHRE, 2004) "Despite widespread agreement that all people have the fundamental human right to education, 100 million children, at least 60% of them girls, do not have access to primary education. Nine hundred sixty million adults in the world are illiterate, and more than two-thirds of them are women.

Women and girls continue to face discrimination at all levels of education". Females generally recognize the right to education, but they are far from exercising their right in education. Kelly and Elliott (1992) pointed out that women remain under represented at all levels of educational programs, in formal or non-formal, few receive technical and vocational training and women account for a very small proportion of enrollment in education. It is clear from previous reviews that females have less opportunity than males to access school in all developing countries. Therefore the problem of female participation in education is a global issue that concerns both developed and developing countries.

Among the developing countries, there is a considerable variation in the rate of female participation in education. In African countries, especially in sub-Saharan Africa the gap is very wide. According to Kane (2004) current trends in sub-Saharan Africa reflect a predictable pattern previously emerging in other regions (under less difficult circumstances), a widening of gender gaps, as enrollments increase from a very low base could be a temporary phenomenon. Still the exigency of helping girls remains clear. Of the close to 50% of African children not enrolled in school, about two-thirds are girls. When every low enrollment of girls' exists in the primary levels, they are always prominent in the next education or higher level of education, as the female enrollment level is lower. From this point of view the problems of females' participation in education will continue to exist until the remedy for problems of the primary level is found.

Women constitute half of the country's population and are involved in 50-80% of the economic development and social welfare activities. However, they do not benefit from the nation's wealth (MEDaC/WAO, 2001). This could possibly be understood if one takes into account the economic and socio-cultural setting in the country vis-à-vis women. Given women's lack of access to economic resources and the various obstacles preventing them from benefiting from the fruits of their labor, it can be estimated that the majority of the people, 27 million living in chronic poverty in Ethiopia are women. In particular the situation of women living in rural area is humiliating (MEDaC/WAO, 2001). The fact is that females are underprivileged and underrepresented in development. This raises the issue that the role of education and female participation should be analyzed and studied.

Yeshimebrat *et al.* (2013) reported that traditional education was characterized by the monopoly of the clergy and the exclusion of women was part of ecclesiastical life of the society. Furthermore, although modern education was introduced in Ethiopia at the turn of the twentieth century, its development was cautious and gradual, particularly with regard to the education of women. Even though Empress Menen established a school for girls in 1931, the number of students was not more than a token (Seyoum, 1996:3). The country's education policy at no time has made a distinction based on gender; however evidences still confirm the superiority of males in an indirect way. Formal and non-formal curriculum and traditional teaching portray this image (Yeshimebrat *et al.*, 2013). In addition, the pattern of enrollment and participation of Ethiopian women in education is similar to that of many African countries. Statistics reveals that the number of female students enrolled in elementary, primary and higher education is not equal to that of male students. For example, female students' enrollment in primary (1-8) and primary (9-10) accounted for 59.1% and 15.9% in 2003/04 academic years, respectively (MOE, 2005). In other words Gender Parity Index (GPI), which is the ratio of female to male enrollment rates, at the same year, shows that GPI is 0.8 at the national level. This indicates that girls' participation is lower than that of boys. According to World Development Indicators (UNDP, 2001), adult illiteracy rate for males in Ethiopia for the years 1990 and 1999 are 64% and 57%, while that of female are 80% and 68%, respectively. This reveals that though more than half of both males and females are illiterate, the illiteracy rate for female is much higher than that for males for several years.

Moreover, female enrollment has been characterized by urban-rural and regional disparity. For example in 2003/04 academic year female students' enrollment ratio of Oromiya in primary (1-8), first cycle secondary (9-10) accounted for 59.3% and 10.9%, respectively (OEB, 2005). This shows that the higher the level of education, the lower the female enrollment. The gross enrollment ratio at all levels in Selected Woreda, the research area, was 54% for girls and 91% for boys for the same year (OEB, 2005).

Education contributes to socio – economic development of countries by endowing individuals with the means to improve their health, skills, knowledge and capability for productive work. Many countries have planned to increase enrollments by expanding schooling opportunities for all children with special efforts to encourage parents to enroll their daughters (PHRD, 1996). Similar researches have noted the crucial need of improving the educational enrollment of females for development. There is no doubt that female involvement in development will multiply social benefits. Educated mothers have fewer children, at later age and more widely spaced, greater

domestic bargaining power and knowledge and their opportunity costs are higher (Kane, 2004:2). Failure to raise female education to be at par with males entails a high development cost. They are the basis for the continuous existence of the human race and central to the development process. Thus the full and complete development of any country demands for the maximum participation of females who are about half of the countries' population (MOE, 2005; MEDaC/ WAO, 2001). Therefore their full participation in development cannot be imagined unless they have the knowledge or required level of education. It is believed that females are earlier educators of children. As a result, their education needs particular attention. Participation of females in education can result in increased total school enrollment. In this regard Kasaju and Mandhar (1985) stated that increment in girls' enrollment is a critical factor in attaining the high enrollment ratios described in development plans. In this context increasing female participation in education can be seen as a means of increasing school enrollment. Thus female participation in education should get considerable attention if a given target of enrollment is to be attained.

The constitution of the FDRE has guaranteed women equal rights with men. Several articles of the constitution relate to gender issues and show the emphasis placed on women. Article 35 of the Constitution defines the equality of women and men, recognizes the right of affirmative measures for women and provides special attention to women so as to enable them to compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social and economic life in public and private institutions (MEDaC/ WAO, 2001). But in practice, women are far away from exercising their rights, especially in education. The Education and Training Policy of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (MOE, 1994) has launched an educational program with major emphasis on enhancing the participation of females in education through different means. Despite the policy, however, the pattern of pupil enrollment and participation of females is still very low in the country, especially in the countryside or rural parts of Ethiopia. The main purpose of this study is to investigate socio-economic factors that affect females' participation in primary education in the study area. Attempts will be made to assess the causes for gender disparity in education.

### **Materials and methods**

The study used both qualitative and quantitative methodology. To ascertain the prevalence of different factors and views from various members of the education system have been assessed. The study area was purposefully selected by the researcher. The following criteria were taken into consideration while purposively selecting it. First, in the regional state the tenth grade national exam/academic achievement is relatively poor when compared to nationally and national policy direction. Academic achievement variations in each of the Zones/Special Woredas were also taken into account. In each Zone/Special Woreda the female students' academic achievements were underperformance. Second, lessening the negative impact on the collection of data as well as the analysis in light of the time limitation and financial shortage faced during the study was considered. Lastly, personal acquaintance with and work experience at the locality, which can help the researcher to get access to valuable data, were also a factor.

#### *Data Sources and sampling*

The research used both primary and secondary data sources. Three first cycle primary and four second cycle primary school were selected purposively. The target population of the study was female students at higher primary level. The necessary data for the study was collected from 23 students, 18 teachers, 18 parents and 11 education leaders selected through stratified simple random sampling, purposive sampling, and availability sampling respectively.

The key informants of the study were Woreda Education expert, Zonal Education programmer, and women affair experts. Other respondents include primary level school directors, deputy directors, counselors, teachers, and female students. In addition documents from primary survey have been reviewed. Data were collected and analyzed from the primary information. Primary data were collected through records from Regional Education Bureau and Annual Education Statistical Abstract and annual supervision report which were provided from the Regional State Education Bureau statistics and yearly recorded exams of 8th grade. Data from school attendance lists were assessed to see the correlation of girls in grade performance 8th for regular attendance over the last school year. To assess about womens' class room interaction, teachers' and female students' perceptions were interviewed with the help of semi-structured interviews.

#### *Procedures of Data Gathering*

For assessing the academic performance of female students in relation to male counterparts; first, the primary data from entire National and Regional Educational Annual Statistics Abstract and different documents from various sources were collected and analyzed by inspecting the aggregate statistics. Relevant related literature was reviewed in order to get necessary information of what has been done previously to make relation with the basic question of the research. Next to that the appropriate data gathering instrument was applied through semi structured interviews. Through the instrument the researcher attempted to understand the respondents' perceptions, opinions and views on the different social and cultural values, work experience of teachers and educational managers in policy implementation. The interview questions were simple, direct and relevant for providing response by the respondents. The questions give room to participants to comment on the issue that was raised during the interviews and discussions.

#### *Data Analysis*

The collected data was organized and tabulated according to their similarities under the theme issues raised in the interviews.

Moreover, the collected information through interview was presented to fit-together the data obtained by means of primary data. Deconstruction of the text was undertaken (analyzing texts based on the ideas) of school guidance documents to identify gender orientation and follow-up through interviews with school principals. The participants' views on mechanisms to enhance female students' academic performance in the level was also assessed through the interviews. Finally, conclusions were drawn from the major findings and possible recommendations from the identified problems were suggested.

## Results

In relation to financial capacity, willingness and level of families to provide academic, financial and other supports for their children, the following finding is presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** The Level of Support provided by Families for their Female Children (N=70)

Attributes	Category	Frequency	Percent
Family Support	High	36	51.43%
	Medium	21	30.00%
	Low	13	18.57%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>
Effect of income of Family on education	Yes	37	52.86%
	No	22	31.43%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>
Support when deficiency occurs	No support	37	52.86%
	I have enough	22	31.43%
	Other	11	15.71%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Own Survey Data, 2017

Out of the total respondents, 81.43 % were found to agree upon the high access to academic and financial support from their families and 52.86 % of the total believed that their families' income was affecting their education. Only 31.43 % of the respondents had a capacity of acquiring adequate inputs for their education, while the rest, 31.43 %, did not totally have a means to win the financial deficits they face in their daily life.

### Academic Participation and Performance of the Students

In order to assess the academic participation and the level of gender disparity, the number of enrolment and dropout of students for the last five consecutive academic years has been considered and compiled as follows.

### Psychological Factors

It is not only the extrinsic factors that contribute to girls' academic participation and performance, according to the hypothesis of this research, and also a number of intrinsic behaviors may take part in the issue and some of these are discussed as follows.

### Aspiration Level of Female Students towards Educational Performance

Aspirations, the enthusiasm of an individual towards a specific end goal, were one of the variables that were believed to influence girls' academic participation and performance. The data gathered from the respondents was then summarized and presented.

**Table 2.** Extent of Aspiration, achievements and Self-reliance of Female Students towards Educational Performance (N=70)

Attributes	Category	Frequency (%)
Aspiration level (respondents desire/ vision towards education)	High	26 (48.5%)
	Medium	24 (41.5%)
	Low	20 (10%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 (100%)</b>
Achievement motivation	High	35 (50.0%)
	Medium	25 (35.71%)
	Low	10 (14.29%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 (100%)</b>
Self-Reliance	High	25 (35.71%)
	Medium	30 (42.86%)
	Low	15 (21.43%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 (100%)</b>

Source: Own Survey Data, 2017,

\*\*\* significant at 1% level

It has been attempted to extract female students' level of aspiration and the respondents believed that education is the way out of problems, which enables them solve problems in life. The result for this variable computed with respect to the academic performance measured in their average score. Accordingly, only 10% of the respondents said that respondents' desire or vision towards females' education is low.

Achievement motivation, one of the intrinsic characteristic that was believed to motivate a person to achieve a pre-defined goal and hypothesized to affect female student's academic performance, was given a thorough attention and the data gathered on this particularly variable is analyzed and presented in Item 2 of Table 2 above. Consequently, only 14.29 % of the respondents said that respondents' achievement motivation towards education is low whereas the rest said achievement motivation had positive effect on female performance.

Self-reliance of the female students has been examined in relation to their readiness and efforts put in action to score better in a subject, the values a student has attached for herself and the way in which she reacted towards some accidental academic questions in the class room. As a matter of fact, all the respondents believed that by doubling the hours they spend on studying they can achieve the highest possible mark. Table 2 Item 3 shows the association of self reliance with the academic achievement of the respondents. Only 21.43 % of the respondents said that respondents' self-reliance towards education is low while 78.67% of them said that self-reliance had affirmative effect on female students' performance.

The motivation of the respondents towards scoring highest grades exceeding the scores of the rest of their classmates has been checked and found affirmative. The possible association of achievement motivation and self reliance of students towards scoring higher marks has also been checked using test and found statistically significant.

### **Socio-Cultural Factors**

#### *Religious Role and Decision Making Trend of the Society*

The religious role and decision making trend of the society, one of the socio-cultural factors and its effect on the female students' academic participation and performance has been considered, summarized and presented. The decision making trend in the study area has shown improvement. The majority (76.0%) of the respondents' households, decision making was made jointly by both men and women; while 21% of the respondents' families were dominated by male's decision making and the rest, 3.0% were those of whose families decision making was done by women.

**Table 3.** Socio-Cultural Factors Contributing to Girls' Education (N=70)

Attributes	Category	Responses
<b>Religious people affects education</b>	Yes	26 (37.14%)
	No	44 (62.86%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 (100%)</b>
<b>Doctrines of a Religion Affects Education</b>	Yes	45 (64.29%)
	No	25 (35.71%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 (100%)</b>
<b>Decision makers in the Society</b>	Men	24 (34.29%)
	Women	32 (45.71%)
	Both	14 (20.0%)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 (100%)</b>

Source: own survey data, 2017

According to the Interviews conducted among randomly selected female students, the following views were reflected that boys are obviously privileged at home as compared to girls and this is because the culture that thought it is girls' responsibility to bear house chores; but this fact had not been extended to keep girls confined at home and avoiding them from education. Some of the participants have criticized the religious facts observed towards girls saying that religious doctrines and leaders prioritize men for every possible opportunity by undermining women and telling them men are heads of the households, this fact holds true in both Christian and Muslim doctrines. Hence, need to have better opportunities to manage their households (female and children) in the future and therefore, this fact is observed at home. Even while both male and female are studying at home, a parent most likely calls girls for help in house hold chores rather than boys. Parents are not definitely happy with occasions that urge girls spend much times out of their home for having library access, practical sessions and the like and it is because parents are not confident with the societal conditions that do not guarantee the wellbeing of girls. This conviction has got a great impact on the girls' attitude towards using the resources equally with boys.

It is obvious that sexual harassment against female and the consequence of feeling less secured in their environment has been a widely spread problem contributing for both the participation and performance of female students. In Table 4, these factors have been presented from the observations collected at selected Schools.

**Table 4.** Social security of female students (N=70)

Attributes	Category	Responses
Comfort in public	Yes	20 (28.57 %)
	No	50 (71.43 %)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 (100 %)</b>
Access to guidance and counseling	Yes	50 (71.43 %)
	No	20 (28.57 %)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 (100 %)</b>
Disparity in school	High	35 (50.0 %)
	Medium	20 (28.57 %)
	Low	15 (21.43 %)
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70 (100 %)</b>

Source: Own Survey Data, 2017

Students academic performance and participation is most likely to be oppressed by the lack of security in their living and academic environments. Most of the students, who are not comfortable to participate in social affairs, like education, are certainly failed to achieve their academic performance. According to the data gathered from the sample respondents, 28.57 % of female students agreed upon the security they had in the society and the rest, 71.43 % were not comfortable with the situation in their environment. The feeling of insecurity arises from a number of reasons, like disparity in school and access to guidance and counseling. Some of the factors assumed to contribute for the level of social security were included; while gathering data from the samples and the following output has been achieved. Out of the total, 28.57 % of the respondents neither knew the existence of guidance and counseling service nor used the service provided by the School. The remaining, 71.43 % were using the service since they joined the school. Thus, according to the interviews made with the female class representatives, it was reflected that guidance and counseling was one of the techniques that builds the strength of female students, according to the groups, and the advantage of this service is more supportive for female students who join the school as a new comer; because most of the senior students both male and female will oppress them to show their seniority and this fact of oppression is extensive among of male students. Male students, especially senior ones, seduce female students and urge them to involve in love affairs, which most of the time destructs the female students' social security and the right to attend their lessons. Since most of the female students are in the age ranging 13- 16, they are not matured enough to determine how to deal with such issues. Hence, the availability and accessibility of guidance and counseling is the best alternative for girls to discuss and resolve the problems they are facing both in the school and the outside environment. On the other hand, half of the respondents claimed that there is high disparity while 21.43% of them said that there is a moderate level of disparity among male and female students. Fifteen percent of the respondents said that there is low disparity among male and female students in the school. Besides, sexual harassment is one of the major factors hypothesized to affect the academic participation and performance of female students. The data collected from the target population has been summarized and presented in the Table 5 below.

**Table 5.** Sexual abuses against female students (N=70)

Variable	Category	Frequency	%
Experience of sexual harassment	Yes	15	21.43 %
	No	55	78.57 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>
Common places of harassments occur	In or Around School Compounds	45	64.29 %
	Other places	25	35.71 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>
Actors in harassment	Men	35	50.00 %
	Women	20	28.57 %
	Both	15	21.43 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>
Kind of harassment	Verbal Harassments	25	35.71 %
	Physical contacts ( stopping, grab hand , etc)	30	42.86 %
	Others(winking, caressing, etc)	15	21.43 %
	<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100.00 %</b>

Source: Own survey data, 2017

As it can be seen from the Table 5 above, 21.43 % of students has experienced various kinds of sexual harassment in different places and the rest 71.5% have given their views on the issue from what they have observed both in the school and outside environments and agreed upon that the act of sexual harassment might occur in a variety of ways and locations with different actors. According to 64.29 % of the respondents, sexual harassments occurred more significantly in the in or near school compounds than other places and 35.71 % of them ranked environments out of the school are the probable locations for sexual harassments to occur. Among the sample students, 50.0% claimed that male students were the major actors of sexual harassments while 28.57 % believed that females participate in harassments. Again 21.43 % of the respondents said that elder people, whether females or males, are usually involved in the practice of sexual harassments against female students. When we consider the types of sexual harassment, female students mentioned that they were suffering from verbal and physical contacts like trying to kiss and grabbing hands and the rest students mentioned some other kinds of harassment (trying to rape, caressing in taxi and public places, winking, following without any reason, etc). The summary given has shown that out of the total respondents (57 students) who faced sexual harassment, 35.71 % revealed to encounter verbal harassments and 42.71 % of the total claimed to suffer from harassments related with physical contacts, like attempts to force a girl to stop while travelling, attempts to grab hand and the like. The rest of respondents, 21.43 % claimed the experience of harassments of the rest kind (winking, caressing, and the like).

### Conclusion

The result of this study showed that the majority of teachers who are teaching in selected woredas' second cycle primary and first cycle primary school are under qualified. This contradicts with new educational and training policy, which proposes for 2nd cycle primary school diploma holders and for 1st cycle primary schools degree holders. Most female students are over aged or in adolescence period in which they face a lot of emotional problems and most of them have uneducated parents. The regions, zones and woredas that have female participation rate higher than the average of national female participation rate have also the overall educational participation rate higher than the national ratio and they might not have a problem in achieving the ESDP V. On the other hand, the regions, zones and woredas, which have lower female participation rate than the national female participation average, have the overall educational participation rate lower than the national ratio. These are the regions, zones and woredas that would probably have a problem in achieving the ESDP V. The participation rate of female was higher at the primary 1st cycle than at primary 2nd cycle and primary levels of education. In other words, the participation of females in education decreases as the level of education advances from lower to higher levels. The variation in the participation of females between primary 1st cycle and 2nd cycle primary and primary level of education is due to the fact that there are more primary 1st cycle schools than primary 2nd cycle and primary schools. The enrollment ratio of female student is two times less than that of male students, and females are more susceptible to repetition. The direct schooling cost of parents to their daughters such as the living house rent and food supply cost are the major hindrances to female students' participation in 2nd cycle primary and primary schools of selected woreda. This is because there is only limited number of second cycle primary schools and secondary schools. Parents must pay living house rent and food supply cost. The causes of female child labor are multidimensional. Female child labor is the cumulative effect of economic, social, political factors as well as school related factors. Female child labor is also closely associated with low income and their parents' illiteracy. All of them have implications on female students' dropout, repetition and low performance and achievement in education. The problems female students encounter in school environment includes long distances from home to school and back home. The cost of food and living house rent, lack of role model female teachers, the closing down of 5th and 6th grades in some primary schools, and the unavailability of text books (contents and pictures) that demonstrate low status to females were reported to be factors affecting female students' participation in primary 2nd cycle and primary school of selected woredas. Abduction in early marriage and parents' type of religion, especially traditional belief were reported as contributors to the low female students' participation in primary 2nd cycle and primary schools of selected woredas. Parents' attitude has an impact on participation of females in education. A large number of parents believe that women's natural duty is getting married and give birth. Parents also worry that their daughters may get in to unwanted pregnancy before completing their schooling. On the other hand, poor knowledge of the benefits of educating their children and parents' illiteracy were reported to be the main reasons for the low female participation in education. Furthermore, a great majority of the respondents have supported the view that parents' literacy promotes their daughters' schooling. Finally, the home related factors that affect female students' education are domestic chores, lack of study time, and low living standards of their parents. It seems that all the factors indicated as socio-economic, socio-cultural and school environment problems were the critical factors that hindered female students' participation in first cycle of high school and second cycle primary schools of selected woredas.

### Recommendations

It is recommended from the finding that the woreda education office in collaboration with the Zonal Education Department and Oromiya Education Bureau should recruit more model female teachers, and education leader. In addition, it is essential to give more in service training opportunities for under qualified female teachers and give some incentives for qualified female teachers to be motivate and to work longer time in the woreda. Create awareness about women education to parents, religious leaders and policy makers through workshops, seminars, and media. Thirdly, administrators shall emphasize on female enrolment to ensure the educational opportunities but also to promote the achievement of the enrolment target described in ESDP V. In view of this, it is keen to set clearly the proportion of females that should be enrolled, while making general guidelines for enrollment. To reduce the long distance to schools and the problem of living house rent and food supply cost for female students building 2nd cycle primary and primary schools at reasonable distances or bringing girls to a place where the schools are available is crucial. In addition, attracting funding agencies to

build boarding houses near primary 2nd cycle and primary schools would be highly beneficial. Fifth, income generating activities are the best means of combating child labor in general and female child labor in particular. Schemes like revolving funds and credit facilities based on feasibility studies should be arranged for targeted groups. Diversification of the economy is also another way of increasing income at least for self-sustenance of the household. Sexual abuse was indicated to be the major problem to females' participation in education. So the woreda administration, women' affairs office and police office, in collaboration with kebele administration should take serious measures on abduction and early marriages. Finally, to increase the participation of females in education the following additional measures are important: Supporting positive policies and public expenditure programs, eliminating forms of discrimination that restricts girls' attendance, providing informal or alternative forms of education. On top of these, subsidizing uniforms, dropping uniform requirement, alleviating poverty, providing school feeding programs, subsidizing school materials, improving home technologies, ensuring equal division of labor for both sexes, providing family planning education services, reducing hidden cost and girls' dependence on males for money, and involving parents in school administration will help for the increment of females' participation in education.

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