

# Challenges and Prospects of Women's Participation in Leadership Positions; a Case in, Ethiopia

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## Abstract

This study aimed to investigate the prospects and challenges of women's participation in various leadership positions in south Wollo zone of Ethiopia. To achieve this objective a descriptive and explanatory design type research was employed. Both simple random and purposive sampling was taken to select the respondents from 26 public offices of the administration where employees and office leaders were included in the study with which data were collected through a survey questionnaire and interview. For this study, 225 valid observations were employed and data were analyzed using SPSS version 26 and analyzed data were presented in the form of tables using frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, T-Test and exploratory factor analysis. The finding revealed that women's participation in leadership was found to be low which might be attributed to challenges of socio-cultural settings and community attitude, lack of skill and capability as well as access to education and space for undertaking leadership roles. Apart from the challenges, opportunities were also identified supported by no significant differences among the respondent's gender and the existence of a positive attitude toward women's involvement in leadership and participation to assume positions in the study area. To this end, the study recommended that capacity building through training and development, encouraging and involving women in various leadership forums and improvement and widening of the existing opportunities should have to be put into practice to strengthen their participation in various leadership positions.

**Keywords:** Prospects • Challenges • Women • Leadership • South wollo zone

## Introduction

Women are playing a significant role behind people's participation in society today, as they play a captious role in posterity [1]. Enormous evidence has proven that leadership remains primarily a male dominated affair. For example Ontieno states that closer look at political womb of many countries will show that political participation is dominated by men. This evidence is not geographically or culturally differentiated but extends all over the world [2].

Women are exposed to several obstacles to participating in leading and performing leadership roles. Structural barriers through discriminatory laws and institutions generally women experience unequal treatment in political social and economic problems globally limits women's participation to run for leadership position. Capacity building gaps mean women are less likely than men to have the education, accesses and resources needed to become effective leaders. Political or other leadership is almost everywhere focuses on men, male oriented, male dominated organization and females/women's participation is not as expected ideal [3].

Recent changes in the political landscape of Ethiopia provide an opportunity to improve gender equality in the country and eliminate

long-standing social iniquities. After coming to power in 2018, Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed approved a cabinet reshuffle to ensure that 50% of senior government positions were reserved for women. Sahle-Work Zewde became the country's first female president, while Aisha Mohammed became the country's first defense minister. Never before in Ethiopia have so many high-ranking government leadership positions been held by women. In 1991, the share of seats held by women in the Ethiopian parliament as leader was under 3%. Today it stands at 38%, almost twice the ratio of women in the United States Congress. But, at the same time, stark gender disparities persist all around the country. The hope is that improved representation in the federal government will tangibly affect and improve the status of Ethiopia's more than 50 million women and girls [4].

Women's full and effective participation in leadership is a matter of human rights, inclusive growth and sustainable development. The active participation of women on equal terms with men at all levels of political involvement is essential to the achievement of equality, sustainable development, peace and democracy and the inclusion of their perspectives and experiences into the decision making processes [5].

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As a result of cultural stereotypes, as a male employee, women face many challenges in holding and growing in leadership aspects. The exclusion of women is not limited to societal culture either but extends to corporate culture, which strongly favours men over women and impedes women's career advancement. Lack of a female role model is a concern for an organization that limits women's senior leadership positions [6].

Isolations of women from leadership structures and processes as a result of a variety of structural, practical and personal factors that vary in different social contexts in different countries. However, beyond these specificities of national and local contexts there is a generic issue in women's political participation that relates to the wider context of the national and international politics, liberal democracy and development [7].

The idea that women in the kitchen and men should be in the board room is widespread around the world. Although we have seen changes and progress towards women participating in public sphere including in participating in various aspects of leadership, we are seeing less progress of men entering the kitchen and taking leadership in care work. Globally, women still do most of the unpaid work and household chores [8].

Surprisingly the views of women towards themselves to assume leadership position were not good. Worse than this, the social and cultural attitudes towards women leadership, the prevailing muscularity culture in favour of male, informal relationship, lack of confidence, low skills and capacity, fear of criticism, absence of sufficient support, absence of role models, high burden of home responsibilities, sexual harassment, religious influences, cultural believes, economic challenges (dependency) the interest of their partner (husband) and the negative feelings/male dominated gender politics were found a hindrances to participate in leadership position and decision making process [9].

Women in Ethiopia face many obstacles to participate in politics. Despite actions taken to improve women's political participation at the national and regional levels, there is a need to strengthen women's capacity to effectively compete with men in this male-dominated political landscape [10].

Women politicians face unique forms of online and offline attacks and deliberate actions to discourage their participation in politics," Daniel Bekele, commissioner of the Ethiopia Human Rights Commission, said during the keynote speech at the "Women's Political Participation and Election in Ethiopia, Envisioning 2020 and Beyond for Generation Equality" national conference at the end of 2019 [11].

The 1995 FDRE constitution clearly state the equality of women and men. For instance, Article 35 of the constitution stated that women have equal rights to those of men, recognize the right of affirmative measures for women 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. Women's have the right to participate in management, leadership and decision-making position at all levels of public organization equally with their male counterpart. This is well stipulated in different sources such as documents in human rights Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

Today, a number of women in the world including our country Ethiopia are sent to school to attend their education starting from lower grade level to higher level. However, their leadership participation was very low; men are still taking part in actively. As of the researchers' knowledge and understanding, men were observed repeatedly in various leadership positions of social, political and economic leadership. Even Ethiopian government has admitted that women's leadership participation was very low. In supporting this, Mohammed, ensured in his findings as women political participation is low in Amhara Regional State. This political limitation of women was very common in south wollo zone of Amhara region administration. The number of women representatives at the zone cabinet is still low; more and more women are employed as a civil servant employment unlike the low level consideration of women in lower, middle and upper leadership positions and decision-making positions. The number of women leaders and decision makers at the various level of the zonal administration structure is still inadequate which is aggravated by the level of empowerment for the women who are on the various leadership positions. This inadequate level of problem might be associated with which women are facing many problems with their families, communities and also work place and there is no research has been done to address these issues. It is with this in mind that the study will be designed to fill the gap. The studies focus was on the women's leadership status in south wollo zone, Administration, amhara region Ethiopia. In the region, a woman consists of nearly half of the total population. Even though Woman's play less role in the zones governance and leadership, the extent of their participation in social, economic and political leadership position is an issue which should be investigated. They have no active role in the key positions within the region administration system. They have little room in both leadership and decision-making positions in the administration and in the region councils. Though many efforts were made by certain women pressures groups and the region administrator the project entitled 'Enhancing Women's Leadership and Empowerment in Amhara Regional State' government's spoken political will of increasing the participation of women in leadership positions to 30 percent they ended up ineffective when it causes political sense.

Therefore, the main aim of this study is to investigate major challenges that affect women's participation in various leadership aspects and positions and decision making roles so as to describe women's participation in south wollo zone of Amhara region administration and to contribute more their part in the administration system in public or private institutions. So the researcher was inspired to conduct this study in this specific zone. Therefore, the researcher has decided to explore the challenges and prospects of women's participation in leadership positions in south wollo zone administration.

## Literature Review

### Concept of women's participation

The full and equitable participation of women in public life is essential to building and sustaining strong, vibrant democracies. Accordingly, the meaningful participation of women in national, local and community leadership roles has become an important focus on global development policy [12].

Women's leadership in political spheres is shown to be socially beneficial and is a matter of women's right to equal opportunity and access. The extent of women's participation in politics and women's access to decision making can be seen as the key indicators of gender equality in a society. Gender equality in decision making is to be in the context of whether women are in the position to make or influence public decisions on the same footing as men.

### Meaning and concept of leadership

Different scholars define leadership differently. As stated by Dimmock, it is an inspiring performances and achievements among staff that extend beyond what might have been reasonably expected. 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.

Leadership is a process by which one person influences the thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors of others. Leaders set a direction for the rest of us; they help us see what lies ahead; they help us visualize what we might achieve; they encourage us and inspire us. Leadership is the ability to get other people to do something significant that they might not otherwise do. It's energizing people toward a goal [13].

### Concept of women's political leadership

Politics is almost everywhere a male-oriented, male-dominated enterprise and female political participation is not as such good as expected. According to Feminist theory states that women owing to their specific life experiences in society makes women politicians highly rank and express different values and policies more so pertaining to childcare, education, healthcare, women politicians pursue less confrontational and cooperative political style. Women's political participation has been exceedingly low compared to men; this is the case both in developed and developing world. This is taking into account women's holding of elected offices and their role as voters. In modern democracies political participation takes many forms, people elect representatives whose responsibility it is to put electorate's welfare in generation of policies.

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 researchers from different regions of the world have observed that when women get into leadership and management, they bring a different perspective of political leadership. These analysts and researchers have argued that having more women in politics would help solve problems associated with perpetual poverty, especially as it affects women.

### Factors that affect participation of women

There are many typologies of factors behind the underrepresentation of women in political leadership position. Some of them are described as follows:

Maguire, comprising the types of challenges of women's participation in political leadership in to three overall themes:

**Social and cultural factors:** Financial considerations; time pressures and locality; caring and household responsibilities,

motivational factors, fear of online abuse towards themselves and their families.

**Structural and institutional factors:** Recruitment and selection procedures; working practices, the image of parliament.

**Knowledge and information factors:** Open and equal access to information; decision-making strategies and promotion and development routes.

### Socio-cultural factors influencing women participation in leadership

The "culture" of politics refers to the attributes of the political arena that are deemed either attractive or, as is more often the case, hostile to women. In many countries, traditions continue to emphasize women's primary roles as mothers and housewives and to restrict them to those roles. A traditional strong, patriarchal value system favours sexually segregated roles, and 'traditional cultural values' militate against the advancement progress and participation of women in any political process. Societies all over the world are dominated by an ideology of 'a woman's place' [14].

### Educational factors influencing women participation in leadership

Education is the backbone of thriving nations across the globe and in nowhere in the world is the leaders of a nation with no single form of education. To succeed as political candidates, women must be able to demonstrate that they are qualified to serve in elected office. Social conditions and factors relating to education, skills and competence are important factors that could help aspirants seeking to be elected or appointed into local assemblies [15].

### Political factors influencing women participation in political leadership

Another barrier to women's political participation is the political challenge politics is always dominated and controlled by men; men create the laws of the political game, and men set the criteria for assessment. The continuation of this male-dominated model results in lower interest and involvement of women in politics. The traditional concept of politics confines political activity merely in the public arena while the private sphere of family life is considered apolitical and safe. This public-private division in the traditional explanation of politics is used to eliminate women from politics. The masculine nature of politics, lack of party support, limited access to political networks, and lack of quota are identified as major political hindrances to women [16].

### Methodology

This study was mainly focused on assessing the challenges and prospects of women's participation in leadership positions in south wollo zone administration of Amhara region Ethiopia. In this regard the study focused on the regions public institutions permanent employees, public officials who are in leadership and decision making positions and the cabinet member of different cities of the zonal administration.

The study employed descriptive and explanatory study designs. The researcher used both primary and secondary sources of data to

gather pertinent information on the issue under study. There are 26 public departments in the study area and primary data was gathered through fieldwork from respondents of those public departments. In order to determine the appropriate sample and to assess challenges and prospects of women's leadership, the researcher used Simple random sampling techniques (specifically the lottery method) and purposive sampling was also used to select the target participants of the study. Hence, samples were taken from 26 public offices of the zone. Across all the public offices, there were 335 males and 248 female permanent employees that summing up 583 employees. Then, the sample size was determined based on the formula for a finite population where the sample population is known thus, formula for sample size determination is acceptable at a 95% confidence level and  $P=5$ . The sample size was determined based on sampling design technique *i.e.*

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2) \quad (1)$$

Where,  $n$  is the sample size;  $N$  is the study population and  $e=0.05$  is the level of precision.

Therefore, the sample size was;

$$583 / (1 + 583(.05)^2) = 583 / 2.458 = 237.18.$$

Thus, 237 sample respondents were taken as samples of the present study.

## Results and Discussion

### Descriptive statistics

**Percentage of administrative questionnaire:** As per the sample of the study, a total of 237 questionnaires were distributed randomly to the 26 public offices of South wollo zone administration. From the total distributed survey questionnaires 231 (97.5%) were returned of which a total of 225 (94.9%) observations were found valid and used for analysis. This makes the overall valid response rate 51.6% from the sample areas. This is indicated below in the following Table 1.

	No. of the distributed questionnaire	Return questionnaire	Valid and used for Analysis
Frequency	237	231	225
Percentage		97.50%	94.90%

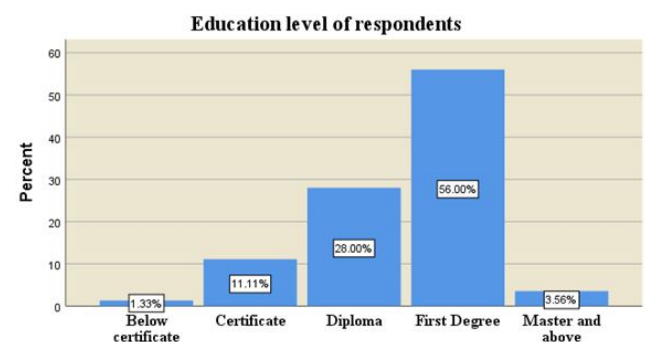
Source: Survey, 2022.

**Table 1.** Percentage of administered and valid questionnaire.

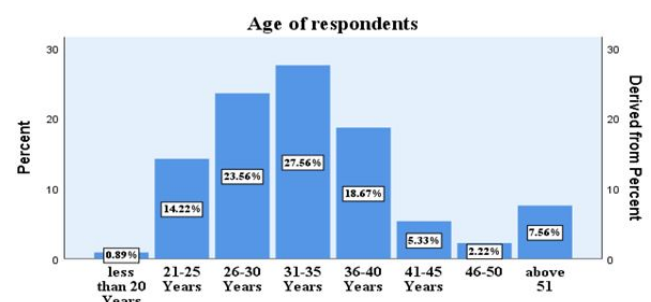
### Demographic characteristics of respondents

Based on the findings, out of the respondents, the majority of them were males that accounting for 123 (54.7%) whereas 102 (45.3%) were female respondents showing the majority of civil servants in public offices of South wollo zone are males. Besides the gender category of the respondents of the present study, the age group and education level of respondents were assessed. Thus, of the respondents, the majority were adults under the 31-35 years of age that accounting for 62 (27.6%) followed by the age group of 26-30 which accounted for 53 (23.6%) and 36-40 which was about 42 (18.7%) respectively.

Besides, the respondents between 21-25, above 51 and between 41-45 years of age accounted for 32(14.2%), 17 (7.6) and 12 (5.3%) respectively. Whereas the respondents below 20 years and 46-50 years' account for 2 (.9%) and 5 (2.2%) were found the least. Regarding education qualifications, the majority of the respondents found that have first (bachelor) degree that accounts for 126 (56%) followed by a college diploma (63; 28%), a certificate (25; 11.1%), and a master's and above (8; 3.6%) below certificate which accounts for 3 (1.3%) respectively (Figures 1 and 2).



**Figure 1.** Educational level of respondents.



**Figure 2.** Age of respondents.

Moreover, based on the survey, the majority of employees have a work experience that ranges from 11 to 15 years that accounting for 43 (34.7%) followed by 16-20 years (26; 21%) and 6-10 years (23; 18.5%) respectively. On the other hand, respondents having work experience above 26 years were found low that accounting for 5 (4%) that was followed by 21-25 years (10; 8.1%) and 1-5 years (17; 13.7%) of work experience respectively (Figure 3).



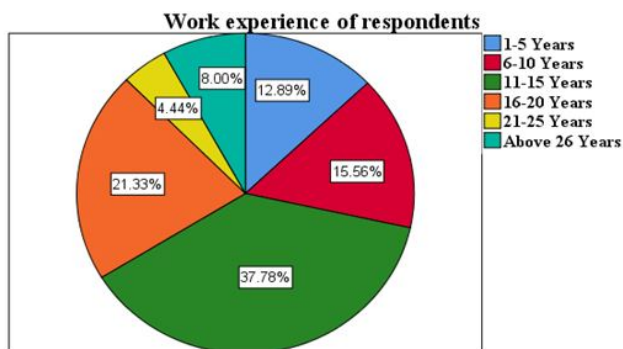


Figure 3. Work experience of respondents.

positions in South wollo zone is low that is exhibited none of the item variables was found above the mean cut-off point. Which is found women are encouraged to participate in a leadership position by the women's league and affair ( $M=2.43$ ,  $SD=1.335$ ); political parties work hard to bring women into political leadership ( $M=2.43$ ,  $SD=1.136$ ), and women's affair works effectively to enhance women political participation ( $M=2.24$ ,  $SD=1.019$ ). The aforementioned possible participation areas could be identified as a minimum for women in the study area. This was determined based on a mean of 3.2 as a cut-off point recommended by Castro and Martine, it can be concluded that women's participation is very low in South wollo zone administration as shown by the mean and standard deviation is below the acceptable mean cut-off point.

### Current status of women's participation in various leadership positions

As shown in Table 2 below, the results of the study revealed that the status of women's participation in assuming leadership

		Respondents' level of agreement										Mean; Std. Dev.
		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree		
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
Women are encouraged to participate in leadership position by women's league and affair	58	25.8	99	44	10	4.4	30	13.3	28	12.4	2.43; 1.335	
Political parties works hard to bring women in political leadership	44	19.6	108	8	12	5.3	55	24.4	6	2.7	2.43; 1.136	
Women's affair works effectively to enhance women participation	42	18.7	131	58.2	20	8.9	21	9.3	11	4.9	2.24; 1.019	
Hint: N=198; Freq.=Frequency; %=Percent												

Table 2. Status of women's participation in various leadership positions.

### The attitude of women's participation in holding leadership positions

As shown in Table 3 below, the results of the study revealed that the attitude of respondents toward women's participation and enrolment in various leadership positions in South wollo zone was found positive that are shown by the two items that were found above the mean cut-off point. Thus, women do feel confident in their

experience in leadership ( $M=3.37$ ,  $SD=1.041$ ), and women can make sound decisions and can be effective in leadership ( $M=2.43$ ,  $SD=1.136$ ). On the other hand, women have a positive attitude toward leadership ( $M=2.18$ ,  $SD=1.093$ ) was found below the mean as determined by a mean of 3.2 as a cut-off point recommended by Castro and Martine, it can be concluded that the attitude of respondents towards women participation is positive.

Respondents' Level of agreement											Mean; Std. Dev.
Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree			
Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Women do feel confident in their	5	2.2	62	27.6	20	8.9	120	53.3	18	8	3.37; 1.041

**Table 3.** The attitude of women's participation in holding leadership positions.

participation in leadership. This is shown by a non-significant test value of -.247 (sig.=.805) for the item Women do feel confident in their experience of leadership, 0.929 (.354) for the item women have positive attitude in leadership and -1.327 (.186) for the item women can make sound decision and can be effective in leadership which were found above the 0.05 level of significance (Table 4).

**Table 4.** Independent sample t-test: Attitude towards women participation in leadership.

The results of the present study exhibited that the prospects of women participation in leadership to assume leadership positions in the study area were the space is open to women's participation ( $M=4.23$ ,  $SD=.939$ ), and women's participation in leading is increasing from time to time ( $M=4.04$ ,  $SD=.554$ ), women have an awareness about leadership ( $M=3.87$ ,  $SD=.556$ ) and women are nominated to leadership position in different institutions ( $M=3.78$ ,  $SD=.714$ ). Contrary to these, people think that women are successful if they are provided a leadership

position ( $M=2.52$ ,  $SD=1.336$ ) and communities' attitude toward women's leadership is positive to see them in leadership position ( $M=2.36$ ,  $SD=1.336$ ) were not identified as the prospects of women participation in leadership with which their mean were found below the mean of 3.2 as a cut-off point recommended by Castro and Martine, it can be concluded that the attitude of respondents towards women participation is positive. Hence, people have no any negative view or problem towards women if they assume leadership positions (Table 5).

Prospects of women leadership participation	Respondents' level of agreement										Mean; Dev.	Std.
	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Undecided		Agree		Strongly agree			
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
People think that women are successful if they are provided a leadership position.	66	29.3	65	28.9	20	8.9	58	25.8	16	7.1	2.52; 1.336	
The space for leadership is open to women's participation	7	3.1	12	5.3	1	0.4	108	48	97	43.1	4.23; 939	
Women's participation in leading is increasing from time to time	1	0.4	7	3.1	3	1.3	185	82.2	29	12.9	4.04; 0.554	
Women have an awareness about leadership	1	0.4	10	4.4	15	6.7	190	84.4	9	4	3.87; 0.556	
Women are nominated to leadership position in different institutions	2	0.9	22	9.8	9	4	182	80.9	10	4.4	3.78; 0.714	
A Community attitude toward women's leadership is positive to see them in certain position	82	36.4	59	26.2	16	7.1	56	24.9	12	5.3	2.36; 1.336	
Hint: N=198; Freq.=Frequency; %=Percent												
Source: Survey, 2022												

**Table 5.** Prospects of women leadership.

## Inferential statistics

**Challenges of women's participation in leadership:** This study was also concerned about the challenge that faces women in participating in leadership that could restrain them. Thus, to identify these factors, exploratory factor analysis was employed to extract the list of factors and to group each of the linear components onto each factor if found significant.

A total of 7 items or linear components factors (variables) were employed after checking the reliability of items in the pilot survey.

Those variables were coded as: 01: Women are represented equally with men with regard to assuming leadership position; 02: Socio-cultural influence on women's participation in leadership; 03: Effect of community's attitude towards women's motivation to assume leadership position; 04: Women are vulnerable to intimidations by men at work place; 05: Most people think that women do not have the skill and capacity to be leaders; 06: Accesses of education limits women's participation in leadership; and 07: Participation space is narrow for women's. The assumptions of relationship, randomness and sampling adequacy were checked in the analysis of Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) (Table 6).

		Correlation matrix <sup>a</sup>						
		01	02	03	04	05	06	07
Correlation	01	1.000						
	02	.018	1.000					
	03	-.207	.783	1.000				
	04	-.35	.348	.360	1.000			
	05	-.409	.072	.154	.274	1.000		
	06	.158	-.106	-.019	.002	.008	1.000	

	07	.355	-0.108	-0.208	.111	-0.222	0.306	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	01							
	02	.394						
	03	.001	.000					
	04	.001	.000	.000				
	05	.000	.001	.010	.000			
	06	.009	.036	.020	.007	0.042		
	07	.000	.043	.001	.048	.000	.000	
a. Determinant = .150								

**Table 6.** Correlations.

The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy and Bartlett's test of sphericity also indicated that the sample size employed in this study was adequate and the assumption is met with KMO and Bartlett's test of sphericity value of 0.517 and sig.=0.000. A value varies between 0 and 1 where the value close to 1 indicates

that patterns of correlations are relatively compact and so factor analysis should yield distinct and reliable factors. Kaiser recommends accepting values greater than 0.5 as acceptable. Hence, the current value of KMO Bartlett's Test of Sphericity meets the assumption (Table 7).

KMO and Bartlett's test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy.		0.517
Bartlett's test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	418.824
	Df	21
	Sig.	0

**Table 7.** KMO and Bartlett's test.

Besides, the communalities table also presented the relationship of one of the variables with the other variables before rotation with which a value greater or equal to 0.30 indicates the employed sample is acceptable and results will not be distorted. The current finding has confirmed this assumption of factor analysis with the value ranging from 0.568 to 0.874 which is significantly above 0.30.

### Factor extraction and variance explained

The present finding has showed in the total variance explained table as the total variance explained was 71.117% which is

attributed to the 3 factors extracted out of 7 linear components variables included in the model with eigenvalues greater than 1. Hence, from the table the rotation sums of squared loadings indicated that the first factor contributed for about 28.981% and the 2<sup>nd</sup> contributes 21.951% whereas the 3<sup>rd</sup> factor accounted for 20.185% of variance explained for the women's' participation in holding leadership positions. The cumulative percentage variance explained from the 3 factors was found to be 71.117% after an orthogonal/vari-max rotation (Table 8).

Component	Total variance explained								
	Initial eigenvalues			Extraction sums of squared loadings			Rotation sums of squared loadings		
	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of variance	Cumulative %
1	2.248	32.121	32.121	2.248	32.121	32.121	2.029	28.981	28.981
2	1.571	22.438	54.558	1.571	22.438	54.558	1.537	21.951	50.932
3	1.159	16.559	71.117	1.159	16.559	71.117	1.413	20.185	71.117
4	0.824	11.77	82.887						
5	0.567	8.094	90.982						
6	0.461	6.584	97.566						
7	0.17	2.434	100						
Extraction method: Principal component analysis.									
Source: Survey, 2022									

**Table 8.** Total variance explained.



## Factor rotation

The rotated factor matrix indicates the rotated component matrix (also called the rotated factor matrix in factor analysis) which is a matrix of the factor loadings for each variable on to each factor. The values below 0.40 were suppressed while extracting the factors and are not displayed in the rotated component matrix and the factor loadings were sorted by size. The orthogonal rotation was used with the assumption that the variables are independent of each other

Before rotation, most variables loaded highly onto the first factor (32.121% variance explained) and the remaining factors didn't get a look. However, the rotation of the factor structure has clarified things considerably with the equivalence of variance explained. The suppression of loadings less than 0.4 and ordering variables by loading size was also made to make interpretation considerably easier (Table 9).

Rotated Component Matrix <sup>a</sup>			
	Component		
	1	2	3
Socio-cultural influence on women's participation in leadership.	0.919		
The effect of community's attitude towards women's motivation to assume a leadership position.	0.891		
Women are vulnerable to intimidation by men in the workplace.	0.606		
Most people think that women do not have the skill and capacity to be a leader.		0.862	
Women are represented equally with men concerning leadership position.		-0.753	
Access to education limits women's political participation.			0.75
Participation space is narrow to women.			0.744
Extraction method: Principal component analysis.			
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.			
a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.			

**Table 9.** Rotated component matrix.

As it can be depicted in the rotated matrix table, there are three components or factors that have been extracted as factors that are hindering women's leadership participation in South wollo zone administration. Hence, principal component factor analysis with varimax rotation was conducted to assess the underlying structure for the 7 items of the challenges of women's political leadership practices. The assumption of independent sampling was met. The assumptions of normality, linear relationships between pairs of variables, and the variables being correlated at a moderate level were checked.

Three factors were extracted after rotation, the first factor contributed about 28.981% and the 2<sup>nd</sup> contributes 21.951% whereas

the 3<sup>rd</sup> factor accounted for 20.185% of the variance explained for the women's participation in leadership positions. The following table displays the items and factor loadings for the rotated factors, with loadings less than 0.40 omitted to improve clarity.

As it is indicated in the Table 10 below, the first factor consisted of 3 items which are related to community attitude and socio-cultural influence whereas the second factor which is a cluster of 2 variables was related to lack of skill and capability to assume political positions to be an effective political leader. Besides, the third factor encompasses 2 items which are related to lack of access to education for women and space for women in political positions (Table 10).

Items	Component			Communalities
	1	2	3	
Socio-cultural influence on women's participation in leadership.	0.919			0.681

The effect of community's attitude towards women's motivation to assume leadership position.	0.891		0.874
Women are vulnerable to intimidations by men at work place.	0.606		0.831
Most people think that women do not have the skill and capacity to be a leader.		0.862	0.58
Women are represented equally with men with regard to holding leadership position.		-0.753	0.766
Accesses of education limit women's leadership participation.		0.75	0.568
Leadership participation space is narrow to women		0.744	0.677
Eigenvalues	2.248	1.571	1.159
% of Variance	28.981	21.951	20.185
Extraction method: Principal component analysis.			
Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization.			
Rotation converged in 5 iterations.			
<b>Source:</b> Survey, 2022			

**Table 10.** Component loadings for rotated loadings of factors (N=225).

## Conclusion

The results of the study revealed the status of women's participation in holding various leadership positions in South wollo zone. The existence of low status of women's participation in leadership positions might be subject to the hindering factors viz., community attitude and socio-cultural influence, lack of skill and capability to assume leadership positions to be an effective leader, and lack of access to education and leadership space for women to assuming the positions.

Another major finding of this study was about the attitude toward women's participation in assuming the leadership positions which portrayed the existence of a positive ground for the women to assume leadership positions. In this regard, women do feel confident in their experience in leadership and women can make sound decisions and can be effective in social, economic and political leadership were seen positively by the respondents. Moreover, the T-Test analysis assured that there was no significant mean difference observed between differences in the respondent's gender which shows positivity towards assuming holding leadership positions by women would be also effective equivalently for positions assumed by men.

Furthermore, the present study has shown that the space to participate in leadership is open to women, and their participation is increasing from time to time, women have awareness about leadership, and women are nominated to a leadership positions in different institutions were found to be the opportunities for women to participate and assume positions in the study area through the present status of women in assuming leadership positions was found to be low as far as this study is concerned.

Given the fact that the level of participation of women in assuming leadership positions is low, the government and concerned bodies can empower them to take a lead and take positions that is supported by the positive attitude of people towards assuming position in various levels of leadership positions. Moreover, strategies should be crafted to enhance women motivation to pull into positions and the gaps between the participation of men and women should be narrowed so that women could take meaningful quota that can escalate their participation in leadership which in turn empowers them in stepping up the decision making. Generally, the low level of participation of women in leadership positions in Ethiopia and especially in Amhara region in particular and various positions at zonal, regional and national levels should be enhanced to contribute for the enhancement of women's role in playing for the social, political and economic change, development which in turn upscale their role in the country's development. The current prospects could create fertile grounds for women to participate in various leadership affairs, other researchers, the local, regional and national government bodies, as well as various parties operating in the area and nation at large, should work on enhancing the existing opportunities and encouraging women to be part of national, regional and local political affairs.

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