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A CRITICAL EVALUATION OF WOMEN LEADERS OF CIVIL SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS IN AMHARA REGION, ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

Currently, although females constitute half of the total population in our country, only few women take up leadership in middle level and top level positions in public organizations. Ethiopia is a country with large population that have diversified culture and sub-cultures which can influence the women in coming to leadership. The study has been conducted in Amhara Region (one of the regions in Ethiopia) particularly in government organizations explanatory survey method. Mixed data was collected from female managers and their subordinates in different five zones of Amhara Region using questionnaire and interview. Statistical method especially frequency distribution, mean and charts were used to analyse the data collected. The result shows that women are more transformational leaders showing a certain degree of effectiveness. Besides the main causes of underrepresentation of women in leadership positions are found to be gender stereotyping, top management influence, lack of support and mentoring, lack of confidence, cultural influence and incongruent family roles. The result demands that government and other responsible bodies should take measures to minimize cultural and top management influence, overcome lack of competence and skills through short-term and long-term training, develop women confidence through experience sharing and recognition of good performance, and more should be done in creating awareness that women are equally able to assume higher level responsibilities.

KEYWORDS

Gender stereotyping, glass ceiling, leadership styles, Women underrepresentation.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Currently, females constitute nearly half of the total population in our country. According to CSA projection on its web site, the total Ethiopian population in July 2011 was estimated at 82,102,000 of which 41,431,989 are males and 40,670,009 are females. Because of the affirmative actions taken, universities and schools try to serve equal proportion of female and male students. But the proportion of women in middle and top level leadership positions is very low showing that women in Ethiopia are not well represented in leadership positions. Particularly, only few women take up middle and top level leadership positions in public organizations. The 2008 Catalyst study reports that women continue to be *significantly* underrepresented in the top leadership positions.

Comparative research using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) has been conducted to evaluate the leadership styles of women and men (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). The results of the research showed that women scored higher as transformational leaders than men and transformational styles are particularly effective in most organizational settings.

It is paradoxical that females showing higher effectiveness in their duties as leaders are underrepresented. According to 2011 statistical reports of Amhara Civil Service Bureau, those who have leadership roles in various zones and districts of the region were 3018 males and 285 females totaling 3303. At the level of regional bureaus, there were 136 male and 10 female process owners or leaders totaling 146. From this data, it is possible to calculate the ratio of female to male leaders 295 to 3154 showing that female leaders constitute only 8.55% of the total leadership positions while about 91.45% were occupied by males. Therefore, this study is intended to identify the major obstacles for females to come to leadership positions and the link between their leadership style and effectiveness which were not addressed by other researchers under different settings and cultures of our country.

In this study, the researcher will try to address the issue of under representation of women in managerial positions, the leadership styles used by female leaders as opposed to male counterparts, and the qualities of women that make them effective as compared to their male counterparts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Women live in a world in which the standards for what is "normal" have been set by men, so that women's priorities, perspectives and practices are marginalized as "different" and inferior, something to be overcome if women are to be equal as citizens, workers or thinkers. This therefore highlights the need to challenge the underlying "rules of the game" if there is to be meaningful equality between the sexes

The UN Charter recognized the equality of both sexes for the first time and emphasized on the need to ensure gender equality during the inauguration of the new international world order in 1945. At the international level, the United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) stands out. It was developed and adopted on December 18, 1979. Essentially a bill of rights for women, CEDAW is seen as a milestone in advancing the rights of women globally. In addition, the African Women's Protocol has been formed to ensure African women equality (UN 2006 as Cited in Rita F.N. Chiejina, 2008).

Ethiopia like many other African countries has adopted and ratified different laws and international conventions. In other words, Ethiopia is signatory to many international conventions that promote and protect women's rights including the CEDAW. The conventions are integral parts of the law of the land by virtue of article 9 (4) of the FDRE Constitution. In 1991 the then Transitional Government of Ethiopia has shown concern for the improvement of the rights of Ethiopian women with the promulgation of the Women's National Policy with national, regional and local institutional and implementation machineries. In September 1993, the National Women's Policy was drafted by the Transitional Government and approved by the Council of Ministers. (The Women's Affairs Office: *Implementing the Ethiopian Policy for Women*, 1998)

LEADERSHIP STYLES

Leadership has been defined as successful influence by the leader that results in the attainment of goals by the influenced followers (Bass, 1990). Drouillard and Kleiner (1996) listed the following descriptors of good leaders: Communicative, integrity, Genuine interest in others, Rewards and recognizes achievement, team orientation, Visionary and idea-oriented, Decisiveness and responsibility and competence. Comparative research using the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ) has been conducted to evaluate the leadership styles of women and men (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2003). The results of research conducted appear to favor the position that women tend to be transformational leaders. In this study, women scored higher as transformational leaders than men. Since transformational styles are particularly effective in most organizational settings, various writers assured that women tended to show a more transformational style than men which could reflect the selection of women who have fulfilled the higher standards that are imposed on women leaders. Researchers started to link female characteristics with effective leadership. Researchers discovered a strong correlation between leadership effectiveness and transformational leadership (Lowe, Kroeck, & Sivasubramaniam, 1996; Seltzer & Bass, 1990, Bass 1997, Eagly & Karau, 1991; Eagly & Johnson, 1990, Omar & Davidson, 2001). Despite these views, women continue to be sorely underrepresented in senior leadership positions worldwide (Catalyst, 2008).

BARRIERS FOR UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP

Women are significantly underrepresented in corporations. Women continue to be *significantly* underrepresented in the top leadership positions (Jackson, 2001; Segal, 2005; Kottis, 1993). According to Ozlem, Ozakanli and Kate White (2008), women are underrepresented in senior management positions for the following reasons: Lack of support and mentoring, recruitment and selection, role conflict, gender stereotyping and influence of top management. According to Ryan & Haslam (2007), women continue to be noticeably underrepresented in leadership positions in organizations. The reasons for this fact include (1) the invisible barrier of the "glass ceiling" that protects them from getting access to such positions (e.g., Arfken, Bellar, & Helms, 2004; Catalyst, 2000; Maume, 2004; Ridgeway, 2001; Singh & Vinnicombe, 2004; and (2) the corresponding phenomenon of the "glass escalator," by which means men are accelerated through the organizational ranks (especially in female-dominated professions; Maume, 1999; Williams, 1992).

EFFECTIVENESS OF WOMEN LEADERS

The criterion of leadership effectiveness or successfulness is an ongoing debate and a question that must get answers. Many definitions of leadership have included the idea of effectiveness, such as Yukl's (2002) definition: 'Leadership is the process of influencing others to understand and agree about what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively, and the process of facilitating individual and collective efforts to accomplish the shared objectives' (p. 7). The discussion concerning the selection of valid criteria has a long history (Lent, Aurbach and Levin, 1971). Yukl (2002) proposed three types of leadership effectiveness indicators: (a) 'the extent to which a leader's organizational unit performs its task successfully and attains its goals' (p. 8), (b) the attitude of followers towards the leader, and (c) the contribution of the leader to the quality of group processes. These types of indicators imply different sources of assessment (e.g. groups, followers, leaders).

IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

In this regard, this study will help devise framework for development of female executives in the Region and formulate policies that encourage females to go up in the managerial hierarchies. It also adds to knowledge or literature regarding the link between effectiveness of women leaders and their leadership styles. More over it will help to avoid or reduce barriers that prevent women from climbing the ladder of higher leadership positions so that organizations will benefit the maximum from women leaders who are considered to be highly humanistic. Federal and regional, as well as different nongovernmental organizations will intervene in the empowerment of women in managerial involvement.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Women access to leadership positions are significantly affected by a number of factors such as gender stereotyping, discrimination, social and structural factors. In this study, questionnaire will be distributed to women leaders and their subordinates to collect data that will be used to measure the relationship between success factors (factors of effectiveness), leadership styles and level of representation of women in leadership positions. . At the same time, the barriers that prevent women from coming to leadership positions and the constraints after climbing to the ladder of leadership will be explored using interview with female leaders in Amhara Region.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study is intended:

- To distinguish the leadership style used by female leaders from male leaders
- To identify the barriers preventing women from entering leadership positions and the subsequent barriers faced by women while working in leadership positions
- To describe the relationship between effectiveness and level of representation of female leaders

BASIC RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study is intended to answer the following basic research questions:

- ❖ What kind of leadership style is mostly used by women leaders?
- ❖ What are the problems/constraints facing women when coming to leadership positions and subsequent barriers affecting women leaders?
- ❖ How successful are female executives in Amhara region?

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed the concurrent mixed approach in order to combine both qualitative and quantitative data. The researcher used explanatory survey research method to get answers why women are underrepresented in senior leadership positions and it tries to investigate the qualities possessed by females that make them different from male counterparts. It also explores the leadership style that is used by female leaders whether it is different from the style used by male.

VARIABLES OF THE STUDY

The dependent variables include the leadership style and effectiveness of female leaders. The independent variables/factors affecting women leaders are composed of challenges, incompetence, biasness, discrimination, social issues, disrespect, low self-esteem, domination, uncertainty, stereotypes, prejudices insecurity, role conflict and unacceptance (Rene P. Mceldowney, Paula Bobrowski, And Anna Gramberg, 2009). The subjects of analysis are individuals (women leaders and their subordinates).

SAMPLE OR PARTICIPANTS OF THE STUDY

The population of the study includes senior female leaders and their subordinates from civil service organizations in Amhara Region, Ethiopia. The researcher employed snowballing to select 15 female managers and stratified random sampling was used to select 30 sample respondents from subordinates. The researcher believes that 45 respondents would be representative of the study conducted in this region as they are more or less in the same context.

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS AND PROCEDURES

Primary data was collected using interview and questionnaire. Semi structured Interview was held with women leaders to raise different issues regarding the problems of women when climbing to the leadership positions. Moreover, Multifactor Leadership Questionnaires (MLQ) were prepared for the women leaders and their subordinates to gather relevant information after it was pilot tested. Secondary data had been gathered from review of documents, different articles, and books regarding women leaders.

DATA ANALYSIS

In order to analyze the qualitative data collected from women leaders using interview, the researcher used narration of the key text after coding the data by categorizing them into themes. Quantitative or statistical analysis/descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution including percentage, charts and mean were used for analyzing data collected from women leaders and their subordinates. The researchers made the analysis by coding and entering the data into computers utilizing the Excel program

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

TABLE 1: BIO DATA/ INFORMATION

Items	Women Leaders themselves		Subordinates of Women leaders	
	Number	Frequency (%)	Number	Frequency (%)
a. Sex				
Female	15	100%	8	26.67%
Male			22	73.33%
b. Age				
<20				
20-30	9	60%	9	30%
30-40	6	40%	18	60%
>40			3	10%
c. Educational level				
Able to write and read				
Grade 1-6				
Grade 7-12				
Diploma	3	20%	5	16.67%
First Degree and above	12	80%	25	83.33%
d. Marital status				
Married	13	86.67%	21	70%
Single	2	13.3%	9	30%
Divorced				
Widow				

Source: Author's Survey Results, 2012

Out of the total subordinates of women leaders, only 30 samples were selected for the study based on stratified random sampling and 15 women leaders were found for questionnaire and interview. As can be seen in the above table, regarding the age of the subordinate respondents, 8(26.67%) are females and 22 (73.33%) of them are male. This shows that most of the experts under the supervision of women leaders are male. The majority of the subordinates (60%) of women leaders are between 30 and 40 years where as the majority of women leaders (40%) are between 20 and 30 years of age. On the other hand, 10 % of the subordinates are greater than 40 years of age. It is possible to say that the respondents are matured enough to make decisions on their own. As shown from the table, most of the women leaders (80%) and their subordinates (83.33%) have first degree and the rest are diploma holders. This indicates that leaders and their subordinates have the required educational qualification. Finally, concerning their marital status, most of the women leaders (86.7%) and 70% of their subordinates are married indicating that they can shoulder responsibilities. The rest of the respondents (13.3 of women leaders and 30% of their subordinates) are single

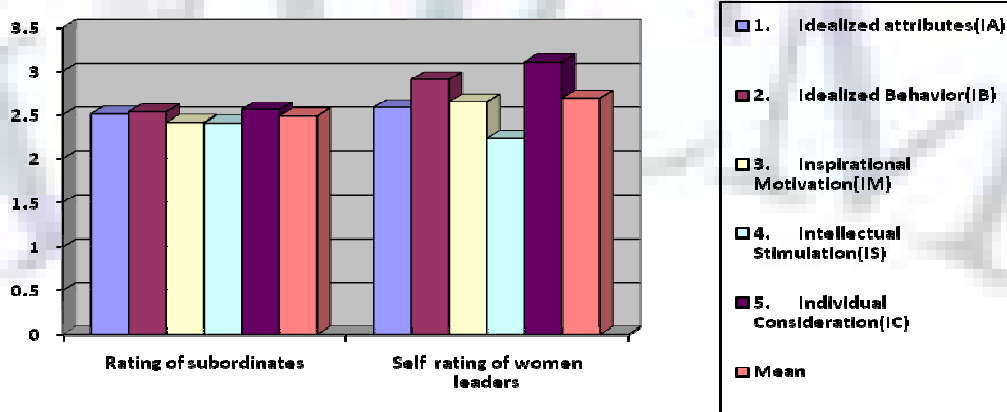
LEADERSHIP STYLES OF WOMEN LEADERS

TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP STYLE

Transformational leadership is a process of influencing in which leaders change their associates' awareness of what is important, and move them to see themselves and the opportunities and challenges of their environment in a new way. The transformational leaders are composed of Idealized influence (attributes and behaviors), Inspirational Motivation (IM), Intellectual Stimulation (IS) and Individual Consideration(IC). The values from the subordinates of women leaders regarding ratings are presented below in the table. The average validated range for transformational leadership style which is between 3.0 and 3.75.

TABLE 2: TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transformational Leadership (Four Is)	Rating of subordinates	Self rating of women leaders
1. Idealized Influences	2.52	2.75
2. Inspirational Motivation(IM)	2.416667	2.65
3. Intellectual Stimulation(IS)	2.408333	2.23
4. Individual Consideration(IC)	2.558333	3.1
Mean	2.484867	2.692667



(Source: Computed based on Survey, 2012s)

IDEALIZED INFLUENCE (ATTRIBUTES AND BEHAVIORS)

Idealized influence indicates whether you hold subordinates' trust, maintain their faith and respect, show dedication to them, appeal to their hopes and dreams, and act as their role model. In this regard, the average idealized influence as rated by subordinates is 2.52(2.51+2.53)/2 and it is 2.75 as rated by women leaders.

This averages show that the women leaders gain trust, respect and confidence in carrying out their activities. They provide a sense of both mission and vision that others want to follow. Women leaders consider themselves as those who build trust and act with integrity as shown in table 2 as well as the chart.

INSPIRATIONAL MOTIVATION

Inspirational motivation measures the degree to which leaders provide a vision, use appropriate symbols and images to help others focus on their work, and try to make others feel their work is significant. As indicated in the table 2 above, the mean values of the subordinates and women leaders themselves concerning this variable are 2.42 and 2.65 respectively showing that women leaders inspire and motivate followers. The average universal norm is about 2.5 which is not much different from the mean value of the respondents. The leaders communicate high expectation for performance through image and emotional appeals; the leader inspires the followers to pursue a shared vision over individual self-interests. Women leaders rated themselves better than their subordinates perceived them as shown in the table.

INTELLECTUAL STIMULATION

Intellectual stimulation shows the degree to which one encourages others to be creative in looking at old problems in new ways, create an environment that is tolerant of seemingly extreme positions, and nurture people to question their own values and beliefs and those of the organization. The subordinates' rating of women leaders in terms of creativity and innovative thinking is 2.41 where as their own rating is 2.23 which is lower than subordinates' rating on average. This indicates that women leaders encourage subordinates in creativity and innovative thinking. Even though it is below the validated benchmark which is 2.5, it is paramount in terms of frequency of exercising intellectual stimulation. It is possible to say that the women leaders provide environment fostering experimentation, empowerment and new approaches to problem solving.

INDIVIDUALIZED CONSIDERATION

Individualized consideration indicates the degree to which one shows interest in others' well being, assign projects individually, and pay attention to those who seem less involved in the group. These leaders pay attention to each individual's need for achievement and growth by acting as a coach or mentor. The subordinate respondents said that women leaders give attention to individuals shown by the average value of 2.56 while women leaders rate themselves high on their concern about individual workers which is observed from their own rating of 3.1 on average as indicated in the above table. Both average values are above the average universal norm portraying that women leaders recognize individual differences and coach their followers accordingly to make them effective in undertaking their activities.

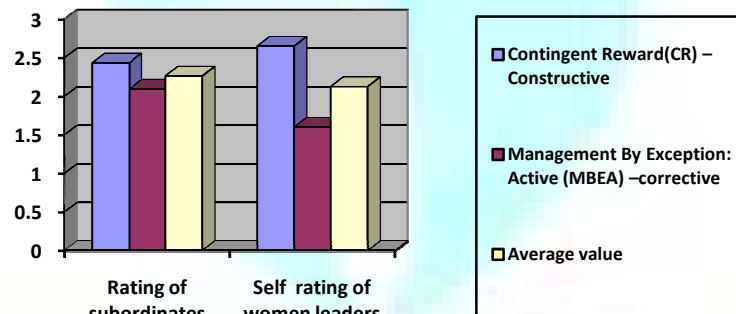
In general, the judgment of women leaders by their subordinates shows that they are more transformational which is near to the validated benchmark. The average value of transformational leadership components is 2.48. Women leaders own rating as transformational leaders is higher than the ratings of their subordinates. As shown in table 2, it is about 2.69 which is nearer to the validated benchmark that is 3.0-3.75. The average of the two ratings is 2.59 which in good record in terms of transformational leadership which is considered to be more effective. This clearly shows that women if they get the opportunity for leadership, they can do it with required performance.

TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transactional leaders display behaviors associated with constructive and corrective transactions. The constructive style is labeled Contingent Reward and the corrective style is labeled Management-by-Exception. Transactional leadership defines expectations and promotes performance to achieve these levels. Contingent Reward and Management-by-Exception are two core behaviors associated with 'management' functions in organizations. The women leaders and their subordinates rated women in terms of transactional leadership behavior as follows:

TABLE 3: TRANSACTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Transactional Leadership	Rating of subordinates	Self rating of women leaders
1. Contingent Reward(CR) – Constructive	2.433333	2.65
2. Management By Exception: Active (MBEA) –corrective	2.091667	1.6
3. Average value	2.2625	2.125



(Source: Computed based on Survey, 2012)

CONTINGENT REWARD

Contingent reward shows the degree to which one tells others what to do in order to be rewarded, emphasize what one expects from them, and recognize their accomplishments. Transactional contingent reward leadership clarifies expectations and offers recognition when goals are achieved. As shown in the above table and chart, women leaders rated themselves more on contingent reward than their subordinates. Women leaders' average rating is 2.65 while subordinates' rating is 2.43. Both groups' ratings are within the research validated benchmark which is between 2.0 and 3.25. Thus, it is possible to say that women leaders are willing to reward workers for better performance and recognize their accomplishments. They use positive reinforcement to encourage followers to achieve outcomes.

MANAGEMENT-BY-EXCEPTION: ACTIVE

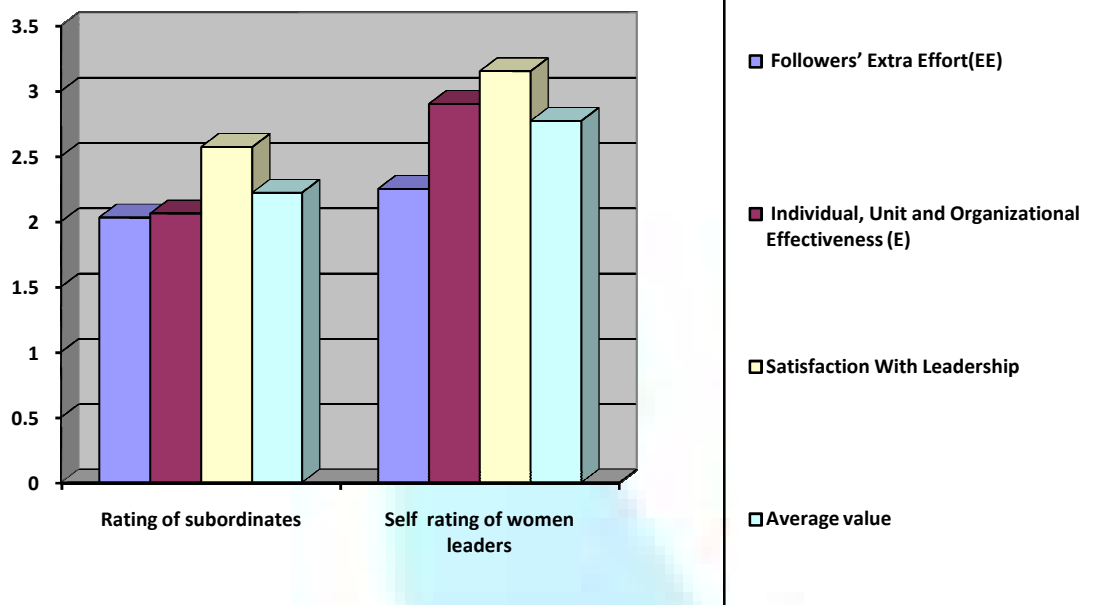
The leader specifies the standards for compliance, as well as what constitutes ineffective performance, and may punish followers for being out of compliance with those standards. This style of leadership implies closely monitoring for deviances, mistakes, and errors and then taking corrective action as quickly as possible when they occur. As shown above, women leaders are not much concerned with punishment. Instead, they focus on correcting mistakes as self rating and subordinates' rating are 1.6 and 2.09 respectively. The research validated benchmark is between 2.0 and 3.25. Subordinates witnessed that female leaders are quick enough to take corrective actions when things go wrong ways requiring expected compliance. They use corrective criticism, negative feedback and negative reinforcement to encourage followers to achieve outcomes.

OUTCOMES OF LEADERSHIP

Transformational and Transactional leadership are both related to the success of the group. Success is measured with the MLQ by how often the raters perceive their leader to be motivating, how effective raters perceive their leader to be as interacting at different levels of the organization, and how satisfied raters are with their leader's methods of working with others.

TABLE 4 OUTCOMES OF LEADERSHIP

Outcomes of Leadership	Rating of subordinates	Self rating of women leaders
Followers' Extra Effort(EE)	2.03	2.25
Individual, Unit and Organizational Effectiveness (E)	2.06	2.9
Satisfaction With Leadership	2.57	3.15
Average value	2.22	2.77



(Source: Computed based on Survey, 2012s)

The average ratings of subordinates and women leaders themselves about the outcome of women leaders are 2.22 and 2.77. Most of the subordinates are not satisfied with the women leaders' output. The women leaders may not win extra efforts of followers and sometimes achieve organizational effectiveness. In this regard, women leaders consider themselves as productive leaders because they rated themselves higher than the rating of their subordinates

CAUSES OF UNDERREPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

According to the structured interview, most of the female leaders said that discrimination or inequality still persists. They reported that women do not get equal chance for leadership positions. Some of the positions are given based on political affiliation without considering work performance of workers. Women leaders indicated that influence of top level management, lack of interest on the side of women to take higher leadership positions, incongruity between the family roles and work role of women, lack of confidence in becoming leader, lack of acceptance by their male counterparts and husbands because of gender stereotyping, unequal access to education, skills and mentoring are the major obstacles to come to higher level leadership positions.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

When women are rated on the style of leadership, they scored more on transformational leadership than transactional leadership style. It is possible to say that women are more transformational leaders because they score 2.59 on average on transformational leadership scale where as their score on transactional leadership is only 2.2 on average. Even though their score on transformational leadership is below the research validated benchmark, it is higher than transactional leadership style. In connection with this, the score on outcomes of leadership as perceived by their followers is lower than the perception of women leaders themselves.

Concerning the barriers of women in coming to leadership positions, women and men equally mention many factors such as top management influence (men network), gender stereotyping, cultural influence, family role incongruence, lack of mentoring and support, lack of confidence on the side of women and undermining of women leaders as perceived by men. Most of these factors enable us to make conclusion that there is still discrimination against women in empowering them in higher level leadership positions.

Based on the findings of the study and the suggestions of different respondents, the following recommendations are forwarded.

- ❖ The regional government and other responsible bodies such as bureau of education should provide more opportunities to female education, competence and skills through formal education, short term and long-term training relevant to leadership. Mentoring and support program should also be arranged to develop their experience.
- ❖ Different civic and public organizations particularly Children, Youth and Women affairs Bureau should arrange a variety of awareness creation activities to reduce or avoid cultural influences by brainstorming using panel discussion.

Husbands should share the family responsibilities of women leaders because one of the major obstacles of women in coming to leadership is incongruent family and work place roles.

- ❖ Those persons in higher positions need to give encouragement to best workers and identify women who have best performance and skills, committed for success, and then provide them position according to their abilities instead of other criteria such as political affiliation. This will build their confidence because they climb to that position based on their competence so that no one will undermine them. Women should also get chance to participate in organization planning to develop their confidence in communication.
- ❖ Women should be able to resist top management influence by dealing with women related organizations and bring illegal and unfair practices to law court.

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