

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Rationale

Progress towards universal education is on the march around the world, although on the current trends, the goal will not be reached by the 2015 target date set by over 160 countries as one of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) at the Millennium Summit in September, 2000. Already, the pledge to eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 was missed in about 70 countries. The goal to improve adult literacy rates remains illusive: although literacy is central to achieving all the 'Education For All' (EFA) goals, over 800 million adults, of which almost two-third are women, who are illiterates (Cynthia, 2005).

Education has been used as a vehicle for national economic development as well as for individual advancement. The evidence from third world countries shows a close link between women's education and social and economic development, and between the sizes of the gender gap in education and national development (King and Hill, 1993).

Education can affect people's lives through several channels. It affects access to knowledge, information, and new ideas. It enhances overall efficiency, market opportunities, and social status. It also changes attitudes and behaviors, among other things, bringing about openness to new ideas and experiences, an increasing independence from traditional authority, and a questioning of passivity and fatalism. These effects apply to both sexes. However, men are exposed to new ideas through their wide contacts with the world outside home and local community, as well as through formal schooling. In contrast, many women in developing world have few contacts with the outside world; and for them, formal schooling remains perhaps the primary channel for the transmission of new ideas (Shireen, 1995).

However, as Mak (1996) noted, even if women constitute proportionally a large group of the labor force in various economic sectors and economic development is unthinkable

without the participation of women, the experience of several decades, has shown that education systems continue to admit and treat males and females differently.

Over the past few years, recognition of women's education has grown both in various international fora and in national agenda, with increasing commitments to investment in women's education. The Program of Action adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, Egypt, in September 1994, reaffirms everyone's right to education and gives special attention to women and the girl child. Terming the education of illiterate as 'one of the prerequisites for human development', the Program of Action recognizes education as a factor in sustainable development in the empowerment of women and gives paramount importance to the elimination of illiteracy among women. The Program of Action also urges countries to take steps to keep girls and adolescents in school, in order to close the gender gap in primary and secondary school education by the year 2005. (Shireen, 1995).

Formal "western style" education was introduced to Ethiopia almost a century ago. At that time only a few local students predominantly boys received formal schooling (Teshome, 2003).

It is clear that experiences by females in most developing countries of the world reflect on the females of Ethiopia as well. The latest Education Statistics of the Ethiopian Ministry of Education shows that in the 2007-08 academic year, the enrolment share of female students in high school was 39.35%, and it was only 32.52% in Preparatory level. (MoE, 2009). In the same document, the annual growth rate of female students' enrolment compared to the previous year shows an appreciable trend; and the figures are 20.7 for girls compared to 15.6 for boys in high school level and 25.4 and 17.2 for girls and boys respectively in Preparatory level. Historically, girls have been denied of opportunities for schooling in most of the regions and societies in the country. Their denial for education goes back into the old traditional schooling systems. In traditional Ethiopia, the Orthodox Church and Mosques were major institutions responsible for the discrimination of female education (Seyoum, 1988).

The factors that affect the academic performance and achievements of female students can be classified in numerous ways. Some of these factors are related to economic, socio-cultural, political and institutional, psychological, and school factors influencing females' education.

As Barbour (1997) stated, females learning is greatly affected by the attitudes, values, and actions emanating from home, schools, and communities, but of course the impact varies according to females' stages of development and their amount of contact with those social settings. Sanabory (1993) also says that a family's socio-economic status influences the daughter's education directly through financial and moral support for schooling and indirectly through a set of variables that include the daughter's physical, cognitive and psychological development as well as her own motivation, aspiration, and expectations. In addition to this, he underscores that girls and women from middle income and upper income families are more likely than those from low-income families to enter school and progress all the ways to the university level.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The relationship between gender and education is complex and dynamic. Therefore, issues of gender inequality in Schools within developing countries have been gaining increased attention globally over the last three decades, especially since the 1990 World Conference on 'Education for All' in Jomtien, Thailand (Janigan, 2008).

Achieving gender parity in education implies that boys and girls will have equal opportunities to realize their full human rights and to contribute to and benefit from economic, social, cultural, and political development (USAID, 2005; Glick, 2008; Wudu and Yonas, 2009). These benefits, according to Agarwal (2004), might include increased economic productivity, high family incomes, delayed marriages, reduced fertility rates, and improved health and survival rates for infants and children.

The study by Nigatu (2008) indicated that considerable attention should be paid to improve access and quality at Secondary level education because there is some indication that

Secondary level education may provide higher returns, especially for girls. Besides, female schooling at Secondary level is more consistently and strongly associated with increased decision making and mobility for women. According to Glick (2008), it is also frequently found that the demand for girl's schooling is more responsive than boys' to gender neutral changes in school cost or distance as well as quality. That is why educating women plays an important role in the socioeconomic development of a country, because it has an important effect on the family in particular and the society in general than men's education. It has been aptly remarked, "If you educate a boy, you educate an individual; if you educate a girl, you educate the whole family".

Econometric studies estimate an increase in income of as much as 10 to 20 percent with each additional year of schooling (World Bank, 1988). In addition, Hans (2003) has pointed out that while the impact of additional schooling on earnings is similar for males and females, educated females generate more substantial social benefits. As schooling tends to improve a mother's knowledge and use of health practices, each additional year of schooling is estimated to decrease the mortality rate of children under the age of 5 by up to 10 percent. Moreover, it is estimated that one extra year of schooling reduces fertility by approximately 10 percent. Besides it has been believed that women with schooling are more likely to send their own children, females in particular, to schools (Wudu and Yonas, 2009).

However, many children, especially girls, significantly those from poor families and those living in rural or remote areas lack access to safe, nearby school or other quality learning opportunities.

The Government of Ethiopia has been taking several measures to reduce the gender gap in education and admirable trends are being observed in the recent years. The Government has also incorporated gender issue as one of the priority agenda in its policies and programs. The Education Sector Development Program III (ESDP III), which is a continuation of ESDP I and II, set out special steps and measures to reduce gender gaps in enrolment, academic performance and successful graduation and it suggests several

specific activities at regional, woreda levels and for schools (MoE, 2005). These are the strategies and actions undertaken during the ESDP III period of 2005/06 up to 2010/11. Similarly, measures have been included in the draft ESDP IV, which is planned to be implemented over the 2010/11 – 2014/15 period.

However, it is necessary to closely monitor and assess the progressive measures taken by the Government and to realistically analyze the causal constraining factors for the prevailing gender gaps in enrolment, academic performance, and graduation at different levels of education. This context also demands an exploration into the possible options to reduce the current gender disparity. The study was designed in this background and rationality.

1.3 Objectives of the study

The overall objective of the study was to analyze the factors affecting the policies and programs on girls' education and to develop a concise policy brief on girls' education in Ethiopia that will enable the Federal and Regional governments as well as other stakeholders supporting the education system in the country to operate more effectively.

The specific objectives of the project were:

- to review current literature on girls' education in Ethiopia, particularly the policy and strategic documents, as well as other related gender materials, within the government and other partners in education;
- to conduct a rapid appraisal on the status of enrolment and graduation rates of girls in primary and secondary levels of education in the country, and the factors influencing their academic performance;
- to consult the educational authorities at different levels, and institution level actors to identify feasible measures for improvement; and
- to hold a dissemination and validation workshop on the draft policy brief.

1.4 Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study has covered all the nine regional states as well as Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa Administrations of the country. However, sampling was done to represent the population, which comprises of all schools under the framework of this investigation. Since the gender disparity is not seriously seen in Primary First Cycle as indicated in many previous surveys in the country, the study was confined to the other three levels such as Primary Second Cycle, Secondary First Cycle and Secondary Second Cycle levels for detailed analysis. However, the findings of the study are expected to have applicability for the whole country, as representative samples were drawn from all the regions for data collection.

The study was planned to cover proportional representative sample of each level of schools from urban and rural areas as well as public and private schools consisting of 219 schools, but due to logistic issues on the ground, slight modifications were made ensuring that no error happens in the sampling design.

1.5 Significance of the Study

As indicated earlier, the study assumes much importance in terms of the quantitative and qualitative data it generated, and the observations and recommendations made. This has great relevance for the strategic planning on school level education of the country, and also provides valuable information in reducing the gender gaps in enrolment, and in increasing academic performance and success rates. The methodology and findings would also give directions for future investigations on the topic of concern for all relevant stakeholders.

1.6 Outline of the Report

This is the preliminary report based on the nation wide research. It is mainly focused on secondary data obtained from all available reports, documents and some of the past research studies as well as the qualitative data collected from all sampled schools from all the regional states. The huge quantitative data gathered through survey from thousands of

students from all sampled schools are under processing, and will be included in the final report after rigorous statistical analyses.

This report has five chapters. The first chapter deals with introduction, covering background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, scope and limitations and significance of the study. The second chapter reviews all available and relevant literature to formulate the conceptual framework of this study, while the third chapter explains the research methodology followed to generate necessary data. The fourth chapter explains and discusses the results of analysis of the secondary data obtained from various documents, and the interpretations and inferences on qualitative data obtained through focused group discussions with groups of female students and teaching staff from sample schools. The fifth chapter contains summary and conclusions based on the analyses, along with policy recommendations.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

“In all societies, to a greater or lesser degree, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse that cuts across lines of income, class and culture. The low social and economic status of women can be both a cause and a consequence of violence against women.”

-Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 15 September 1995.

In this chapter, important documents and studies relevant to this project are reviewed in order to assess what has been done so far in line with the objectives of the study and to identify the research gaps. Besides, this section also serves to formulate a theoretical framework for the investigation and interpretation.

2.1 Concepts and Definition of Key Terms

This section deals with the definition of some important terms in order to lay proper perspective for subsequent discussions.

Academic performance: is the level at which a student performs in education to achieve or score the entry point or pass mark of each grade according to the standard set by Ministry of Education or the Regional Bureaus of Education. It is measured in average pass marks awarded by the school.

Average pass marks: refers to average marks that a student has obtained to get promoted from grade to grade at the end of the academic year. It is calculated by summing up all the marks a student scored from all the subjects and dividing the total by the number of the subjects.

Dropout: a student who leaves the school before completing the academic year in a cycle in which she/he is enrolled.

Gender: is a socially constructed power restriction / relation that exists between males and females, as perceived by the society, and it results particular types of expected behavior and status among them. In less advanced societies, they are distinctly different and vary from culture to culture.

Gender Disparity: as used in this study refers to the difference between girls and boys in enrolments and academic performances in a given year.

Gender Parity Index (GPI): is the ratio of female to male enrolment rates. When the gender parity index (GPI) for enrolment shows a value equal to 1, female enrolment and male enrolment rates are equal. A value less than 1 indicates that proportionately less females than males have enrolled.

Primary First Cycle: is the lowest level of formal schooling, from Grade 1 up to Grade 4, may or may not be after Pre Primary (KG) learning.

Primary Second Cycle: is the next level after Primary First Cycle, which is from Grade 5 up to Grade 8.

Secondary First Cycle: is the next level after Primary Second Cycle, and this includes Grade 9 and Grade 10. The entry to this level is based on the national examination at the end of Grade 8

Secondary Second Cycle: is also known as **Preparatory** level, which consists of Grades 11 and 12. This is the level preparing the students for tertiary level education in universities or colleges.

2.2 Historical Background of Female Education

Many studies have shown that the foundation for the development of education was religious-worship (Pankhurst, 1968). The church organizations provided basic education for their male and female followers, particularly how to read and write the Bible. Reading a Bible, therefore, was one of the first schools for girls' education. The other themes of their education were much related to their domestic role with an emphasis on housewife roles and other domestic subjects so that they would become good maids and mothers (UNICEF,

1982). This implied that women were not involved in all types of educational programs and course of study in the earliest period of times. The educational opportunities for girls remain distinctly below than those open to boys. The report of UNESCO (1970) indicated that this is true not only in qualitative terms, but also in quantitative terms of education. Nearly everywhere in the world, school age-girls are given less educational opportunities than that of boys. Without exception, the majority of illiterates are females.

In developing nations, it is believed that education of females contributes towards population control; family health and nutrition; receptivity to innovations and educational motivation of school-age girls (Coombs, 1985). According to him, in many developing countries, a remarkable expansion took place in girls' educational access in recent years. However, inequalities still persisted in educational access as well as in educational experiences mainly as it goes the upper levels.

After Primary level, disparities between boys' and girls' education increase radically. Moreover, in Sub-Saharan African countries, only 55 percent of girls complete primary school, compared to the average of 60 percent of the total children. (Diaw, 2010).

However, in recent years, relatively greater and sudden attention has been given to gender inequalities in many aspects of life including education. For instance, in developing countries, it is today widely believed that the education of females is a basis to all other elements on which transformation of societies depends.

2.3 Girls' Education in Developing Countries

It was noted that increased participation of girls, particularly at secondary education level, does not only improve their families own quality of life, but that of their communities and nations (Alemayehu, 2003). Wudu and Yonas (2008) further explained that educated mothers have better families and standard of living. Their children's school enrolments are also well ensured. Their communities benefit from the intellectual, political and economic participation of all members, while their nation prospers with the added contribution from

the females. But society for centuries is not aware about it and thus girls face various difficulties throughout the different levels of education system.

2.4 History of Female Education in Ethiopia

History of education in Ethiopia dates back to the time of introduction of Christianity in 330 AD, but towards the end of 19th century, the need for modern education emerged and it was initiated in 1908 with the opening of Menelik II School in Addis Ababa (Asmaru, 2010). In 1906, the first education proclamation was issued, which stated, among others, that “As of today, all six year old boys and girls should attend school. As for parents who could send their children to school, when the former die, their wealth will be transferred to the government, instead of passing to their children. The government will provide the schools and teachers.”

The inclusion of “girls” in the proclamation itself was a breakthrough for traditional education, which was considered as an exclusive domain of men till then. Even though education was free, it did not attract the attention of the people, mainly due to the influence of the clergy, because parents suspected and believed that sending daughters to school would spoil them and the girls would not behave in a manner that was expected of them by their parents.

Asmaru (2010) further explains that the next proclamation by Empress Zewditu was another landmark in the history of female’s education in Ethiopia, which forced parents to send their children to school, and failure to do so was to result in penalizing parents for violation of the law. Later, in 1944, a Memorandum of Education was adopted to create access to mass education, address gender equity, and promote literacy. Further, Public Announcements of 1956 and 1964 were introduced to promote basic education for all and to create access by children of 7 – 16 years of age.

Later, the country witnessed the Education Sector Review (1972), which was to create access to basic education, keep up quality and relevance of education, but the focus was

non-formal education. Moreover, gender was not a point of attention in education during that time.

It was the Education and Training Policy of 1994, which adequately started addressing some of the core issues in education in the country, such as access, relevance, quality and equity. This policy document clearly addresses the participation of women in education at all levels.

2.5 Gender Disparity in Education in Ethiopia

The Government of Ethiopia launched in 1997-98 the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP). The Program is now in its third phase, covering the years from 2005/06 to 2010/11. The policy pursued under this Program focuses on improving the quality of education, increasing access to educational opportunities with enhanced equity, equality and relevance. (MoE, 2005)

The Government has placed a strong emphasis on the participation of women in the development process. Accordingly, policies and strategies have been formulated to integrate and mainstream the gender dimensions in economic, social, and political decisions.

The elimination of gender gaps in all levels of education is an internationally agreed development goal not least since the Dakar Declaration on 'Education for All' in 2005. Educating girls is a powerful lever for their empowerment, as well as for reducing poverty. Girls who are educated are likely to marry later and to have smaller, healthier families. Education helps girls to know their rights and claim them, for themselves and their families. Education can translate into economic opportunities for women and their families.

In recent years, as a result of the efforts done throughout the country, the flow of female students to school has been increasing at a faster rate than ever before. However, the proportion and the participation rate of girls at secondary level is still less and successful completion rates are not encouraging (Alemayehu, 2003). The attributing factors for girls' low participation and performance are centered on what might be perceived as demand of

labor, early marriage, non awareness of value of education on the part of parents, low economic standards of family and some other school designated factors.

2.6 Policies on Mainstreaming Gender in Education in Ethiopia

After the fall of the military regime in Ethiopia, government policies began to consider the need to address gender inequality in socio-economic and political arena. Thus, addressing gender issues has received considerable attention by understanding its crucial role in poverty reduction, ensuring good governance and democracy. As a result, all major policy documents clearly articulate the gender question. For instance, the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia (FDRE, 1995), Article 35. Sub Article 3. states that:

The historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia taken into account women, in order to remedy this legacy, are entitled to affirmative measures. The purpose of such measures shall be to provide special attention to women so as to enable them compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social, and economic life as well as in public and private institutions

Within the constitutional framework, the New Education and Training Policy further articulated the need to address the longstanding inequity and discrimination suffered by Ethiopian women, as follows.

Special attention will be given to women and to those students who did not get educational opportunities in the preparation, distribution, and use of educational support input (TGE, 1994; Article 3.7.7.)

Similarly, the Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamation (FDRE, 2003) also further articulated the need to implement affirmative action for women, students with disabilities and native students of disadvantaged regions:

Entry assessment or admission procedures designed for any female, disabled student, a student who completed high school education in a developing region and who is native of the nationality of such region or student from nationality whose participation in higher education is low shall be different from others. They shall, during their stay in the institution, get special support; particulars of such support shall be determined by the “Ministry” (Article 6: 3).

The Government of Ethiopia has prepared and issued the gender mainstreaming guidelines and checklists for education sector, intended to education offices at various levels, Teacher Training Institutes and schools (MoE, 2004b) This document gives clear directions to the concerned on how to ensure access and equity, quality and relevance with efficiency. Thus, it is now apparent that the policy frameworks addressing the issue of gender equity as well as fostering female retention and success in education seem to be in place. Asmaru (2010) also explained that the Government is keen in enforcing the gender sensitive policies and programs to achieve equity in educational sector

2.7 Factors Affecting the Academic Performance of Females in Education

Conditions that influence the improvement of girls’ education have been discussed in a number of ways. With particular reference to Sub-Saharan Africa, Odaga and Heneveld (1995) discussed factors affecting female education under three categories: socio-economic and socio-cultural, factors related to the school environment, and political and institutional factors. Nicola *et al.*, (2008) indicated that some of the critical factors affecting female education include early pregnancy, psychological cost of pregnancy, direct cost of schooling, societal perceptions, the labor market, opportunity costs, family poverty, irrelevant curriculum, insecurity, structural attributes and classroom culture.

The report by MoE (2004a), after studying the issues related to gender gaps in enrolment, retention and performance in primary schools in five regions of Ethiopia, indicated that girls in primary classes are generally low in performance, more in dropouts, more in

absenteeism, and less in doing home works assigned from the schools. The report further elaborates the possible reasons for these issues, and indicates that the above mentioned factors are relevant for the country as a whole. Asmaru (2010) indicated that the continuing gender gap in participation in education, as well as high attrition rate and low performance of females are challenges in the sector to be addressed with priority.

For the sake of convenience, this review will summarize the literature under the following categories: economic, cultural, school and societal factors.

Economic factors

The academic performance of girls in schooling has been found to have links with socio-economic factors. According to Teshome (2002), the most important of these factors include direct and opportunity costs of schooling, limited employment opportunities, socio-economic status, and the economic value of girls, rural / urban residence, and the level of parental education and their attitudes.

Many studies in developing countries using household survey data found that girls' schooling is more sensitive to cost, however defined, than that of boys'. Distance to school or the absence of a nearby school has stronger negative impact on female than male enrolments (Glick, 2008). In East African countries, for example, higher school fees increase the dropout probabilities for girls, but have no effect on boys (Lloyd, 2005).

Direct schooling costs have been found to be the major reason parents offer for not educating girls or for removing them from the school. Apart from tuition, such costs include house rent, fees for registration and admission, examinations, school building fund, and the cost of uniforms, provision of furniture, extra tutorials and transportation. World Bank (2006) explained economic wellbeing appears to be a stronger correlate of school completion and school enrolment in Ethiopia.

Browne (1991) and Endeshaw (2007) pointed out that poverty and the fiscal crises, which force families to cover shortfalls, have a devastating impact on households and

participation in education, particularly for girls. In general, several studies suggest that the direct costs or financial constraints hold back more girls than boys from schooling.

The opportunity costs of girls' schooling are associated with resources/services lost due to sending the child to school. Child labor is indispensable to the survival of many rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa and agricultural work, household chores (cooking, collecting fuel, fetching water), marketing as well as child care services are required from children, with more from girls (World Bank, 1988; Odaga and Haneveld, 1995). As noted by Teshome (2002), in many Sub Saharan African societies the continuing importance of bride price, polygamy, adultery lines, and value accorded to marriage and motherhood depress the relevance and demand for female education.

Research findings also indicated that although parents realize that education can produce economic benefits, they may think about it in terms of getting formal jobs. In other words, parents send their children to school with the hope that they will be employed and become someone to support them later, particularly in the civil service sector.

Legal or regulatory barriers to women's participation in the labor force or policies that restrict women's access to information and resources help to perpetuate the tradition that girls stay at home to do more of domestic chores (Herz., 1991). Many girls perceive marriage as an escape from family poverty, and mistakenly believe that pregnancy will help them to "hook" husbands.

Girls from better-off homes, mainly those who live in urban areas, and whose parents are better educated are more likely to enroll and remain in school longer than those from poorer homes and rural areas. In areas where overall enrolments are low, the gender gaps in participation are wider. (Teshome, 2002).

Parental perceptions concerning the relevance of girls' education influence both the persistence of female pupils in schools. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) indicated that the educational investment behavior or decisions of most African families is based on gender

differentiations, birth-order and number of siblings. According to the same authors, parents often consider that boys are a better investment than girls and that they are also better at school.

Cultural / attitudinal factors

The socialization process in the society is one of the major constraints impacting on the girls' participation in education. This process starts in the family and continues in the school and in the society at large

Socio-cultural beliefs, customs, practices, early pregnancy, insecurity, girls' expectations and other traditions play a significant role in decisions to enroll and or withdraw girls from school. Generally, there may be a deep-rooted cultural bias as suggested by the disempowered position of women in Ethiopian society (World Bank, 2006).

Religion is frequently associated with low female participation in Schools (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995). The reasons have to do with the fear of parents based on the assumption that education promotes values and behavior for girls that are contrary to cultural norms.

Girls' expectations of their school performance and career prospects play significant roles in their persistence at school. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) showed that both girls and boys have low expectations of female achievements in school and of career prospects. Diaw (2010) also opined that cultural barriers exert strong and adverse influence on girls' education by early marriage, teenage pregnancies, traditional values of patriarchal society, and gender based violence.

School related factors

When one thinks of the constraints, limits and obstacles to girls' education in developing countries like Ethiopia; it is natural tendency to think in terms of ideas and concepts, for instance cultural traditions and discrimination against girls. However, sometimes, the small

but concrete things make a difference. One of these is the place where a school is located (UNESCO, 2004).

As different researchers have pointed out, school environment is one of the major factors that affect participation of female students (World Bank, 1988). More precisely, factors like the absence or shortage of instructional materials, the attitude of teachers towards female education, inappropriate content of curricula, distance from home to school, poor administration of the school, absence of guidance and counseling service, facilities for personal welfare, drop out and the like are the most common factors affecting girls' participation in education.

As Secondary schools in Ethiopia are scattered over great distance, and are mostly located in urban centers, parents do not dare to send their daughters to such a far distance. The journey may be unsafe, since many girls at this school age experience harassment and physical attack on the way.

Schools, like any other social context, are the sites of power relationships among teachers, staff and students, and among students themselves. The UN Study on Violence Against Children notes that violence at schools has both physical and psychological forms, and can be expressed as punishment; discrimination; sexual or gender-based violence; bullying; fighting; gang violence; and violence via new technologies (Nicola *et al.*, 2008). The same authors further explained that violence is generally carried out by offenders known to the child (such as relatives and authority figures, including teachers and school authorities), and it provides a hint of the magnitude of the problem of school-based sexual violence. Indeed, in this UN Study for five sub-Saharan African countries also pointed out that between 10% and 30% of students had been physically forced to have sex. It was reported that attitude of teachers towards female students also affects their survival and academic performance (Tella, 2007).

The curriculum and materials carry both implicit and explicit message that characterizes women as inferior, helpless and dependent being. Alemayehu (2003) indicated that women

and girls remain invisible in most text books. Because the numbers of females who reach higher education are small, girls who suffer from excessive teaching of male teachers; and males' attitudes, behavior and learning styles might differ from those of females. Besides, the presence of gender bias in textbooks and teaching materials can affect females' participation in education. Many text books and teaching materials have pronouns of sex bias, which can discourage girls from thinking of themselves as good students or as suited to any job. Often books portray men as intelligent and adventurous, seeking employment in new, exciting, and profitable fields. Women are depicted as passive admiring, and suited only for traditional roles (World Bank, 1991).

While proposing the strategic framework to enhance women's participation in tertiary level education in Ethiopia, it was observed that the low academic performance of girls in school classes was one important factor contributing to low enrolment and participation of females in universities and other higher learning institutions (MoE, 2004c). The document further explains that the share of girls who passed the Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) and became eligible for higher studies, when compared to the percentage of total number of girls who actually took the examination in a given year should be considered as a critical factor. It is shown that the survival of female students in universities also depends on the academic performance trends in secondary schools.

Lack of role models is another deficiency in the schools of the country in motivating girls to learn further. Number of female teachers are very less in Secondary levels, and this situation makes the directions for the girls missed. Landel and Gergel (2009) strongly argued that increasing the number of role models will enhance the urge and motivation to learn with good performance for the girls in schools. .

Parental factors

A lot of studies have shown that the educational background of parents, number of children in the household, occupation and age of the household head, attitude towards female education, birth order of the child with in the household, social participation of parents are among the parental factors that play decisive roles for the daughters' successful

participation in education (King and Hills, 1993; Panos Ethiopia, 2006). Panos Ethiopia (2006) further explained that fathers and mothers educational background affect females' education differently and mothers' literacy does not affect as much as fathers' literacy for daughters to attend schooling in a patriarchal society like Ethiopia.

Ager(2002) suggested that females' education is strongly and adversely affected by parents who are illiterates than literates. As many educators have found that if the educational background of the parents is very well, their job position may also be well. Then, the good position of the parents indicates that they may have good economical background. So, such parents, who have good economical background, may help their daughters to continue their education. Otherwise, parents who are illiterates and have poor economic background might affect their daughters' educational participation and might not be voluntary to help them.

2.8 Empirical Studies Related to Females' Education

A study carried out by UNICEF (2005) in developing countries of the world pointed out that Millennium Development Goal 3 (MDG 3) targets the elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education by 2005 and aims for parity at all levels of education by 2015. The

2005 target has not been reached; in almost all developing countries and, boys participate significantly more than girls in education, particularly at secondary levels.

A study conducted by Rena (2004) in Eritrea investigated many factors that contributed to the gender gap in education. The study identified various factors: girls are put to work, helping their mothers fetch water and firewood mainly in the rural areas; work load at home (domestic chores) such as caring for younger children, sweeping and cooking. Another constraint is school distance. Lack of transportation facilities for students is also a problem. Children in the rural areas face difficulties to travel long distances to schools, which cause tiredness and absenteeism. It is to be noted that in some of the areas, the students walk (one-way) 10-18 Km to reach their schools. This is worse when students are

needed at home for work. And, no doubt, girls are prone to such burdens. A related issue is a matter of safety for girls on their way to school or home. Moreover, a mix of traditional mores (i.e. norms and beliefs), crippling poverty, and lack of parental interest, support and encouragement are among the main factors inhibiting greater female participation in the school system. Most notably, the practice of early marriage also conspires against girls' education (Rena, 2004).

Several studies were carried out in Ethiopia, which also reported similar findings. A research on secondary female education of Dire Dawa showed that females at the Secondary education leave the school either because of failure, dropout or to join the labor force. These are the possible reasons why at the higher primary and secondary education level the number of females decreased significantly (Girma, 2007).

The general findings of almost all empirical studies or surveys in Ethiopia were:

- less number of girls than boys was enrolled in all levels of education;
- as grades increase, the number of girls decreases in comparison with that of boys;
- more girls' dropout was registered than that of boys; and
- the percentage of girl repeaters was slightly higher than that of boys.

After launching ESDP I in 1997, a study was conducted by the Women's Affairs Department of the Ministry of Education on ways and means to improve the retention of girls in education in Ethiopia (MoE, 1999). That study indicated different reasons for relatively high dropout rates among the female students, and suggested measures to reduce them. In that report also, many of the above indicated factors were found to have significant influence on girls in the schools.

The reasons given for girls' low participation are centered on demand of labor, early marriage, no awareness of value of education on the part of parents, low economic standards of family and some other school designated factors. A detailed study was conducted in the country as a prelude to ESDP III examining all constraints in girls' education in Ethiopia and suggesting priority agenda for change and useful strategies

(Hyde *et al*, 2005). The report also elaborates similar issues to be addressed if the situation has to improve.

Three recent research studies conducted in Haramaya University (Endeshaw, 2007; Yenenesh, 2007 and Nigatu, 2008) also endorsed these observations with their findings from different locations of the country.

2.9 Conceptual Framework

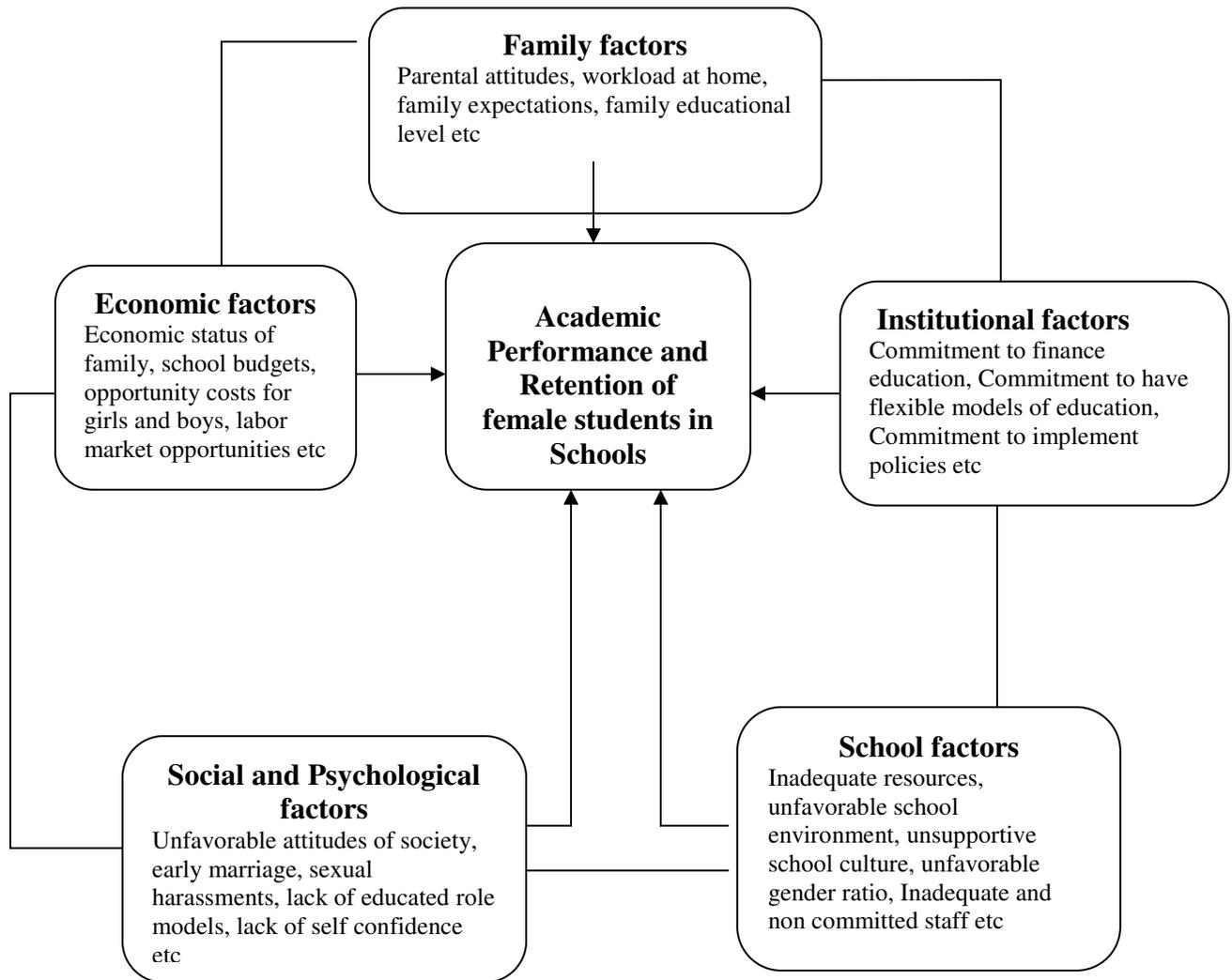
According to Kavuma (2003), the education of children in general and female students in particular is affected by different factors such as economic, social, cultural, political and school factors that influence the educational outcomes in terms of gender disparity between boys and girls. Similarly, Emebet (2003), on the basis of the findings of different studies, pointed out that the major factors responsible for the low participation and high dropout rate of children in Ethiopia could be categorized as family related, cultural and school related factors. Such factors include economic constraint, marriage by abduction, load of household chores, school distance, sexual harassment and early marriage.

As reported by Yenenesh (2007), the value of boys' education is perceived as higher than that of girls'. Parents may also fear for sending their daughters to schools that are far from home for security reasons. Additionally, family's demand on girls to help in household work can place further obstacles in the way of gender equality in education. Furthermore, parents with low income have to make priorities whether it is profitable enough to send girls to school. Decisions about sending children to school are made by parents often based on their perceptions of the likely return on their investment. Parents sometimes perceive that the economic return for educating daughters is lower than that of educating sons.

On the basis of the review of literature that deals with education and gender disparity in academic performance, family related factors, economic, institutional, psychological and school related factors were considered as explanatory variables that might influence the

dependent variable, academic performance of female students, in this study for further analysis.

Thus, in the study, the relationships and influences of explanatory variables on the dependent variable were analyzed using statistical tools. Hence, the conceptual framework diagram of this study is indicated as follows



Conceptual Framework of the Study (Adapted from Hyde *et al*, 2005 with modifications)

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This Chapter deals with the methodology followed in carrying out the study. It includes the sampling design, types and sources of data, data collection procedures, and methods of data analyses.

3.1 Sampling Design

The nation wide research conducted for the preparation of this report involved a descriptive research design. To achieve the objectives of the study, sufficient sample respondents were required to ensure accuracy and objectivity, to draw realistic inferences. Hence, a multi stage sampling procedure was followed to select the respondents for data collection. Since there might be variations in the issue being addressed among regional states, and within the same region among zones, among schools in urban and rural areas, among public and private schools, and among schools of different levels and cycles, the sampling procedure was designed with a decision to cover all the nine regional states of the country, as well as Addis Ababa and as Dire Dawa administrations.

The next step was to select zones to represent each region in a proportional manner. Accordingly, the number of zones was decided and they were selected purposively to cover different locations within each region. The main criteria for this selection were scattered nature within the region and proportional number to the geographical area and number of schools in each region. Accordingly, two zones from Tigray, three from Amhara, four from Oromiya, three from SNNP, one each from Gambella, Benishangul Gumuz, Somali, and Afar, and the locations of Harari, Addis Ababa, and Dire Dawa were identified.

The detailed sampling format is provided in Table 1 as follows. After selecting the zones, decision was made on the type and number of schools to be included in the study sample from each selected zone. The three major criteria were that the number of schools should represent the population within the zone in terms of rural – urban background, levels and cycles, and public and private management.

Table 1 Sample distribution for data collection

No	Region	Zone	Primary 2 nd cycle	Secondary 1 st cycle	Secondary 2 nd cycle	Total
1	Tigray	Central Tigray	6 (3 rural, 3 urban and at least 1 private among these)	1 (Govt)	1(Govt)	8
2		Southern Tigray	6 (3 rural, 3 urban and at least 1 private among these)	2 (1 rural, 1 urban)- Govt	1 (Govt)	9
3	Amhara	North Gondar	11 (6 rural, 5 urban and 2 private among these)	3 (2 rural and 1 urban and 1 private among these)	1 (Govt)	15
4		South Wollo	13 (7 rural, 6 urban and 3 private among these)	3 (2 rural and 1 urban and 1 private among these)	1 (Govt)	17
5		North Shewa	13 (7 rural, 6 urban and 3 private among these)	2 (1 rural and 1 urban, no private)	1 (Govt)	16
6	Afar		1	1		2
7	Oromia	West Wollega	16 (8 rural, 8 urban and 3 private among these)	4 (2 rural, 2 urban and 1 private among these)	1 (Govt)	21
8		Arsi	15 (8 rural, 7 urban and 3 private among these)	3 (2 rural and 1 urban, no private among these)	1 (Govt)	20
9		Bale	15 (8 rural, 7 urban and 3 private among these)	4 (2 rural, 2 urban and 1 private among these)	1 (Govt)	20
10		East Hararghe	16 (8 rural, 8 urban and 3 private among these)	4 (2 rural, 2 urban and 1 private among these)	1 (Govt)	21
11	Somali		4 (2 rural, 2 urban, no private)	1 (govt)		5

12	Benishangul Gumuz		2 (1 rural, 1 urban, no private)	2 (1 rural, 1 urban, no private)	1 (Govt)	5
13	SNNP	Sidama	10 (5 rural, 5 urban, 1 private among these)	2 (1 rural, 1 urban, no private)	1 (Govt)	13
14		Gurage	9 (5 rural, 4 urban, 1 private among these)	2 (1 rural, 1 urban, no private)	1 (Govt)	12
15		Gamo Gofa	9 (5 rural, 4 urban, 1 private among these)	2 (1 rural, 1 urban, no private)	1 (Govt)	12
16	Gambella		1 (rural)	1 (rural)		2
17	Addis Ababa		4 (2 rural, 2 urban, no private)	6 (3 rural, 3 urban, 1 private among these)	2 (1 rural, 1 urban, no private)	12
18	Harari		3 (2 rural, 1 urban, no private)	1 (rural)	1 (Govt)	5
19	Dire Dawa		2 (1 rural, 1 urban, no private)	1 (rural)	1 (Govt)	4

Overall criteria to decide the number of schools were to have about 3% of the population (Total number of schools) for primary schools and about 5% for secondary schools. After deciding the number and types of schools in each zone, the actual schools to be included in the sample were identified using the lists of schools in the zone, and with the help of Zonal Offices of Education. Sample respondents included female students and selected teachers and Directors from each school. The number of students for survey design was arbitrarily fixed to be 70-80, since the data collection had to be done by assembling them in one class room and explaining the contents of the questionnaire, and helping them to fill up the questionnaire with clarity, completeness and accuracy. However, care was taken to include girl students representing all grade levels of that school in a proportional manner in the sample.

The final sample contained 209 selected schools and 11198 selected student respondents and about 950 teachers, including school directors. Data entry was done in Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 17, rejecting questionnaires with incomplete

responses. Although the originally planned number of schools was 219, due to the constraints in logistics, lack of convenience for school staff (due to salary day) and accessibility in school working hours, ten schools were dropped from the sampling design.

Table 2. Distribution of Sample Respondents (Grade level)

Sl. No	Grade level	Frequency	Percent
1	5	1266	11.3
2	6	1579	14.1
3	7	2288	20.4
4	8	2504	22.4
5	9	1297	11.6
6	10	1139	10.2
7	11	549	4.9
8	12	576	5.1
-	Total	11198	100.0

The sample consists of 7637 female student respondents from primary second cycle, 2436 from secondary first cycle, and 1125 from secondary second cycle school grades. This distribution was seen due to the allocation of student respondents using probability proportional to size random sampling.

3.2 Types and Sources of Data

The data types included primary and secondary data, both quantitative and qualitative in nature. Primary data were collected from sample respondents, functionaries of Federal, Regional, Zonal and Woreda level offices of education. Quantitative data collection was primarily from student respondents. Qualitative data were collected from teachers, school directors, selected female students, and functionaries of different offices. The purpose of gathering qualitative data was for triangulation of the quantitative data and to capture detailed information, which might not be obtained through quantitative data.

Secondary data were gathered from all available published and unpublished documents, records and research reports of offices and other relevant stakeholders in relation to the

objectives of the study. The available documents of the Ministry of Education, including Education Statistics and strategic plan documents were also used for analysis.

3.3 Methods of Data Collection

To collect primary quantitative data, a semi structured questionnaire was prepared and pretested among non sample respondents in Haramaya woreda schools. The purpose of pre testing was to ensure relevance and clarity of the questions and items included in the instrument. Based on the responses in pre testing, some of the questions and items were modified, some were added and then the questionnaire was translated to three national languages, namely, Amharic, Afan Ormo and Tigrigna. Hence, there were four versions of the questionnaire, including that in English. (Appendix I)

For the purpose of data collection from all selected schools in all the regions, 21 academic staff members of Haramaya University were selected based on their interest and willingness to involve in the research project. Out of them, 16 were female staff and the remaining five were male staff members. These enumerators were given orientation training on the purpose and objectives of the study, data collection methods, content of the questionnaire and check lists, micro level sampling design, and precautions to be taken to ensure completeness, accuracy and reliability of the data. Sufficient copies of data collection instruments were duplicated based on the language needs of the selected zones.

Qualitative data were generated through Focused Group Discussions (FGD) conducted separately with selected female students, and school teachers and directors. Check lists containing necessary open questions relevant to the study objectives (prepared separately for students and teachers) were used for FGDs (Appendix II and III). In addition, informal interviews were also conducted with educational administrators and other relevant actors. Each focused group included five to six participants, who were purposively selected based on their awareness on the topic of concern, expressive skills and dynamism. In these group discussions and informal interviews, tape recorders were used to document the information to avoid missing of any valid data.

Secondary data were collected by reviewing all available records and documents collected from relevant actors and offices.

3.4 Methods of Data Analyses

The data collected from student respondents were analyzed mainly using descriptive statistics such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, percentages. To identify the factors affecting academic performance of female students, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. Qualitative data were also analyzed, interpreted and the inferences are included in this report. Secondary data were also analyzed and interpreted.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this part of the report, the inferences obtained from analyses of secondary data and primary qualitative data are provided. These show the current status and trends in gender disparity in school education, and the different factors influencing the enrolment, academic performance and retention of female students in different levels of schooling.

4.1 Participation of Female Students in School Education

The secondary data obtained from recent documents of Ministry of Education were used to analyze on different dimensions of female students' participation in school education.

4.1.1 Current status of school enrolments

The data related to gender disparity in enrolment at primary and secondary levels of school education in Ethiopia, obtained from the latest published Education Statistics Annual Abstracts (2007-08) are provided in Table 3 as follows.

Table 3. School enrolment status based on gender in 2007-08 (2000 EC)

No	Grade level	Male		Female		Total
		Number	%	Number	%	
1	Primary first cycle (1-4)	5,682,444	52.95	5,048,924	47.05	10,731,368
2	Primary second cycle (5-8)	2,523,001	54.76	2,086,417	45.26	4,609,418
3	Secondary 1 st cycle (9-10)	793,228	60.65	514,691	39.35	1,307,919
4	Secondary 2 nd cycle (11-12)	130,533	67.48	62,911	32.52	193,444

Data source: MoE (2009)

A close perusal of the Table 3 indicates that gender disparity in enrolment exists in all levels of schooling. However, this gap is narrow in primary first cycle, and gets widened as the school grade levels go up.

In primary first cycle level, the share of boys in total enrolment was 52.95% and that of girls was 47.05%. But, the enrolment status of boys and girls in upper levels are gradually widened and becoming serious as can be seen in Table 2. The enrolment share of boys and girls in primary second cycle was 54.74% and 45.26%, respectively, and the gap is wider than that of the first cycle. In the case of secondary first cycle, these figures were 60.65% and 39.35% for boys and girls respectively. While in secondary second cycle level, which prepares them for higher education in universities and colleges, the status showed 67.48% for boys and 32.52% for girls.

Here comes one important factor into consideration. The enrolment status of males is more than that of females in the preparatory level education, and one cannot expect the successful graduation level would be different in a desirable trend for females, but trend might be In the other way, as previous records reveal Even though the Government makes serious efforts to ensure at least 30% enrolment of female students in tertiary level education by means of Affirmative Action Policy, the reduced female participation in secondary second cycle level becomes a serious hurdle to fulfill that objective meaningfully. The data from the same Table also imply that if the target of improving female participation in tertiary level has to be achieved, serious efforts are needed to enhance participation, performance and retention of females in secondary first and second cycle levels.

It may also be noted that the Educational Statistics document for 2007-08 (MoE, 2009) indicates that the targeted Gender Parity Index (GPI) for the year was 0.71 for secondary school levels. However, the achievement was 0.67 in secondary first cycle, which implies that for every three students enrolled, one was a girl. In the case of secondary second cycle, the GPI again went down and was 0.49.

Table 4. Gender wise average annual growth rates (AAGR) (%) in enrolment in schools between 2006/07 and 2007/08 academic years

No	Grade level	Male	Female	AAGR
1	Primary first cycle (1-4)	12.1	15.0	13.4
2	Primary second cycle (5-8)	7.7	15.4	10.9
3	Secondary first cycle (9-10)	15.6	20.7	17.5
4	Secondary second cycle (11-12)	17.2	25.4	19.6

Data source: MoE (2009)

The above Table illustrates the appreciable increasing trends in average annual growth rate when the grade level increases, particularly for female students. Though it may appear to be contrasting to the previous Table results, it is clear that the growth rate of female enrolments is increasing gradually, when compared to males, probably due to the progressive policy measures adopted in the recent past. This is in the context of increasing overall enrolments at different levels.

4.1.2 Overall enrolment trends in the country

It will be useful to see the overall picture of students' enrolments in different regions in the country to make a comparison among regions. The data in this regard are presented in Table 5 as follows.

Table 5. Region- wise enrolment data in schools of the country

No	Region	Primary (1-8)			Secondary (9-12)		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1	Tigray	503,042	489,875	992,917	62,284	53,423	115,707
2	Afar	52,879	30,139	83,018	4,543	2,655	7,198
3	Amhara	2,099,585	1,975,130	4,074,715	225,054	170,175	395,229
4	Oromiya	3,036,311	2,505,608	5,541,919	348,293	181,074	529,367
5	Somali	201,704	126,516	328,220	11,036	3,556	14,592
6	Benishagul Gumuz	94,891	70,951	165,842	10,200	5,715	15,915
7	SNNP	1,886,188	1,570,577	3,456,765	174,790	82,960	257,750
8	Gambella	45,550	33,878	79,428	5,399	1,682	7,091
9	Harari	21,530	17,418	38,948	4,215	2,636	6,851
10	Addis Ababa	232,654	288,852	521,506	70,380	68,696	139,076
11	Dire Dawa	31,111	26,397	57,508	7,567	5,020	12,587
	TOTAL	8,205,445	7,135,341	15,340,786	923,761	577,602	1,501,363

Data source: MoE (2009)

The gender disparities in enrolment are more evident in Afar, Somali, and Gambella regions at primary levels, while it is obviously wide in Oromiya, Benishagul Gumuz and SNNP as well at secondary level in addition to the other four. One probable reason for this status in Oromiya and SNNP might be the scattered nature of human settlement pattern in SNNP resulting in less access to secondary schools in nearby areas, which might affect female students' enrolments more than for boys. In Oromiya also, the location of majority of secondary schools in urban centers or small towns might have made access difficult for female students, since the rural parents would not be willing to send their teenage daughters to leave the family and go to far away places in towns for the sake of school education

4.1.3 Trends of change in enrolment in Primary level education

Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) in Primary schools indicates the percentage of total enrolment irrespective of age out of corresponding population in the age group of 7 – 14 in the country. The following Table shows how enrolment improved in the Primary schools over the past five years.

Table 6. Trends in enrolment at Primary level education (GER) for five years

Year	Primary 1st Cycle (1-4) %			Primary 2nd Cycle (5-8) %		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2003/04	95.2	78.3	86.9	57.0	36.9	47.1
2004/05	109.8	95.5	102.7	62.0	42.6	52.5
2005/06	123.9	111.2	117.6	67.4	49.8	58.8
2006/07	122.9	111.2	117.1	68.3	53.7	61.1
2007/08	133.0	122.5	127.8	64.8	55.5	60.2

Data source: MoE (2009)

It is encouraging to see from the above Table that the enrolment rate of both boys and girls increased consistently in the past five years. However, there is a wide gap between the GER of Primary first and second cycles, which implies a huge number of discontinuance after the first cycle. Moreover, the documents shows that girls' share is more in dropouts, and 48.72% of GER of boys from first cycle continued in the second cycle, while only 45.31% of GER of girls went to the second cycle in 2007-08, when we further analyze the data in the document

A perusal of the next Table will show this trend more obviously. It deals with the trend of change in GER in Secondary levels of schooling.

Table 7. Trends in enrolment at Secondary level education (GER) for five years

Year	Secondary 1 st Cycle (9-10) %			Secondary 2 nd Cycle (11-12) %		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
2003/04	28.2	15.9	22.1	4.5	1.7	3.2
2004/05	34.6	19.8	27.3	4.3	1.7	3.0
2005/06	41.6	24.5	33.2	5.7	2.0	3.9
2006/07	45.7	28.6	37.3	7.3	3.7	5.5
2007/08	44.4	29.6	37.1	7.8	3.8	5.8

Data source: MoE (2009)

Data in this Table bring three factors into limelight. The gender disparity becomes wider when the students move to second cycle from first cycle of Secondary education, implying that more number of girls drop out after the first cycle when compared to boys. Moreover, the total enrolment also substantially lowers in second cycle, indicating that only a small share of the participants in Grade 10 moves to preparatory education, probably by failure in the national examination or by moving to other technical or vocational diploma courses. It also shows that in 2007-08 academic year, 29.6% of the girls in eligible age group (15 – 16) in the country attended first cycle of the secondary education, while only 3.8% of the eligible age group (17 – 18) of girls joined second cycle of the secondary schools. The gap between boys and girls in terms of GER again widened, probably due to social reasons of early marriage, discontinuance, or moving to short term diploma courses.

In addition to these facts, the recent Education Statistics (MoE, 2009) also illustrates the dropout rates, particularly in primary levels. It shows that the dropout rate in Grade 5 in 2007-08 was 15.2% for boys and 13.0% for girls, while in Grade 8, it was 13.7% for boys and 16.1% for girls. These figures can be interpreted in two ways. Firstly, the gender gap in Primary first cycle being very narrow with a Gender Parity Index of 0.90, girls were more in continuing trend compared to boys. But, the dropout rate of girls substantially increased,

compared to that of boys by Grade 8, indicating that factors other than academic performance or abilities might have contributed to the trend. However, the following discussion on the findings from Focused Group Discussions and Key Informant Interviews brings out some of those reasons.

4.1.4 Rural – urban contrasts in school enrolments

In addition to gender gaps, there is a serious gap exists in enrolments between rural and urban areas, as is evident from the following Table.

Table 8. Student enrolment status in rural – urban schools (including regular, evening and Alternative Basic Education) in 2007-08

No	Level	Urban enrolment			Rural enrolment		
		Male %	Female %	Urban% Total	Male %	Female %	Rural% Total
1	Primary (1-8)	50.4	49.6	20.6	54.3	45.7	79.4
2	Secondary 1st	60.2	39.8	90.0	64.4	35.6	10.0
3	Secondary 2 nd	67.3	32.7	94.6	70.9	29.1	5.4

Data source: MoE (2009)

The data in Table 8 indicate that 79.4% of the total enrolment in the Primary level in the country was from rural areas, leaving the remaining 20.6% in urban areas. Superficially, it may seem to be a glossy picture for rural areas, but in reality it does not represent completely appreciable state of affairs, when we consider that more than 85% of the population lives in rural areas. However, it shows a narrow gender gap in urban as well as in rural areas at Primary level, though the gender gap in rural schools is wider than urban schools.

When it comes to Secondary levels, things get worse in terms of general participation in education by both girls and boys in rural areas, and only 10% of the total enrolments in Secondary first cycle education belong to rural schools, while the remaining 90% were in

urban schools in 2007-08. Moreover, out of that 10% enrolment in rural High Schools, the share of girls is only 35.6%, indicating a wide gender gap. Probable reason might be the high dropout rate of girls after Grade 8, as indicated in most of the previous studies as a general trend in the country.

The situation in Preparatory level is much worse than that of Secondary first cycle, and rural areas account for only 5.4% and remaining 94.6% enrolments are in urban areas. These figures show us two facts. Firstly, the participation in Preparatory level education substantially lowers in rural areas, compared to that in urban areas. Secondly, the number of Preparatory schools in rural areas is very few, and if students from rural areas want to pursue their education at Preparatory level, they have to move to urban areas. This calls for serious attention when one looks at the figures through a gender lens, since it is unlikely for the rural girls to get permission from the parents to move to urban areas to continue their school education, considering the societal attitudes, costs of living and educational costs. Hence, one can assume that many deserving girls might stop their education at Grade 10, even though they are eligible to enroll in Preparatory education.

Along with substantial reduction in enrolments in rural areas, one can observe the widening gender gap as well in the data presented in Table 7. When total enrolment share in rural areas was 10%, the girls constituted 35.6% of that in first cycle of Secondary level, but when we look at the figures at second cycle of Secondary education, girls' contribution in enrolment reduces to 29.1% out of the rural enrolment share of 5.4%.

4.2 Trends in National Examination Performance at Grade 10

A glance at Table 9 below, which presents Grade 10 national examination results for five consecutive years, clearly illustrates that the number of students attaining a passing grade (typically 2.00 or above) has increased slightly every year for the last four years with some decline in 2000 E.C. (2007/2008). More importantly, the number of students receiving scores above 3.00 has also increased each year with the exception of 2007/08. This suggests that both the number of students and the quality of students may be increasing in

Secondary first cycle. However, one important fact that is contained in the Table is the gender gap prevailing in achieving high grades. It is obvious that the number of girls achieving average grades above 2.5 is increasing year by year.

A critical further analysis of Education Statistics (2007-08) data shows that the proportional share of female students in this national examination consistently showed an increasing trend, even in 2007-08, when the general number of achievers became lower than the previous year. The share of female students who achieved more than 3.00 was 18.86% (2003-04), 17.62% (2004-05), 19.56% (2005-06), 20.56% (2006-07), and 21.69% (2007-08) in that consistently increasing order. Probably these achievements are due to the gender sensitive educational policies and strategies of the Government of Ethiopia, particularly during the last five years.

Table 9. Achievement trends in Grade 10 national examinations in five years

Data source: MoE (2009)

Year	Sex	<=1.00	1.00	1.29	1.43	1.57	1.71	2.00	2.29	2.43	2.57	2.71	3.00	3.29	3.43	3.57	3.71	4.00	Total
1996 E.C. /2003-04/	Male	1,423	6,758	5,955	8,322	10,773	31,704	37,062	8,089	5,775	4,269	5,919	4,228	1,246	950	830	1,433	390	135,136
	Female	1,500	7,094	5,686	7,415	8,104	18,420	15,434	2,958	1,967	1,292	1,647	1,013	308	242	182	284	69	73,675
	Total	2,923	13,852	11,651	15,737	18,877	50,124	52,496	11,047	7,742	5,561	7,566	5,241	1,554	1,192	1,012	1,717	459	208,811
1997 E.C. /2004-05/	Male	3,423	12,263	9,181	11,847	14,920	41,275	50,548	10,317	6,989	5,201	7,089	5,626	1,884	1,584	1,252	2,018	1,430	186,857
	Female	4,469	14,500	9,290	10,354	11,186	22,576	18,156	3,407	2,109	1,357	1,711	1,204	426	345	275	432	267	102,174
	Total	7,922	26,843	18,471	22,201	26,106	63,851	68,704	13,724	9,098	6,558	8,810	6,830	2,310	1,929	1,527	2,450	1,697	289,031
1998 E.C. /2005-06/	Male	6,124	12,894	10,609	14,078	17,696	49,781	54,231	18,164	13,583	10,264	14,578	9,564	3,222	2,610	2,064	3,373	2,516	245,353
	Female	7,724	14,160	10,781	12,404	13,962	30,967	26,011	7,741	5,232	3,649	4,276	2,425	774	657	521	801	499	142,633
	Total	13,848	27,063	21,390	26,482	31,678	80,748	80,242	25,905	18,815	13,913	18,854	11,989	3,996	3,267	2,585	4,174	3,017	387,986
1999 E.C. /2006-07/	Male	6,695	10,510	10,123	14,392	18,910	58,598	35,281	27,459	19,740	14,607	27,729	10,912	3,946	3,090	2,471	4,132	2,747	271,342
	Female	5,726	12,628	11,116	14,068	16,265	39,108	19,060	13,711	9,031	6,128	9,717	2,963	1,017	759	652	986	684	163,619
	Total	12,421	23,138	21,239	28,460	35,175	97,706	54,341	41,170	28,771	20,735	37,446	13,875	4,963	3,849	3,123	5,118	3,431	434,961
2000 E.C. /2007-08/	Male	68,814	3,198	5,540	10,631	16,829	65,329	39,451	26,349	17,988	12,216	20,993	7,655	2,900	2,423	1,975	3,253	2,059	307,613
	Female	57,975	3,802	6,332	11,273	15,927	45,300	20,515	12,605	7,081	4,216	6,239	2,109	770	686	529	899	623	196,983
	Total	126,790	7,000	11,872	21,904	32,756	110,629	60,066	38,955	25,069	16,432	27,232	9,764	3,670	3,109	2,504	4,152	2,692	504,596

Note: With any two subjects (other than Maths, and English) the lowest grades are dropped

4.3 Availability of Female Teachers in Schools

When the number of female students increases, availability of more female teachers is important to handle several issues of female students, in addition to teaching learning process. This is more important at second cycle of primary and both cycles of secondary levels. Female students need accessible and friendly female teachers to be role models, to discuss personal issues including about reproductive health matters, in their transitional teenage, to get counseling and guidance, and to seek help on the occasions of facing gender based violence. The data extracted from Education Statistics (MoE, 2009) are interpreted hereunder.

Table 10. Number of teachers and average annual growth rate as of 2007-08 (2000 EC)

No	Grade level	Male	Female	Total	AAGR Male (%)	AAGR Female (%)	AAGR Total (%)
1	Primary	159,625	94,004	253,629	13.6	18.6	15.3
2	Secondary	29,883	3,853	33,736	21.2	33.1	22.3

Data source: MoE, (2009)

The above Table shows the gender wise status of teachers' availability in the schools in the country. This is particularly important in the context of availability of role models for female students, and to openly discuss issues which they hesitate to discuss with male teachers. It is interesting to note that the rate of increase of female teachers is appreciable, particularly in secondary schools, where issues become more sensitive. It might also imply another positive trend of producing more successful Bachelor degree females from different universities to join teaching profession in high schools, probably as a result of new education policy of expansion of education in the country.

4.4 Female Students' Academic Performance in Schools

The analysis of the primary data collected from 11198 female student respondents revealed the general trends of examination scores were good, and the findings are presented in Table 11 below.

Table 11. Mean academic performance scores of sample respondents (Grade wise)

Grade level	Mean score	N	Std. Deviation	% of Total N
5	74.55	1266	14.33946	11.3
6	73.73	1579	13.44473	14.1
7	73.93	2288	12.66746	20.4
8	73.10	2504	13.25045	22.4
9	68.41	1297	11.92837	11.6
10	67.72	1139	9.40435	10.2
11	69.59	549	13.87346	4.9
12	72.39	576	13.30520	5.1
Total	72.23	11198	13.05527	100.0

The results of analysis in Table 11 show that the female students performed well in lower grades scoring more than 70%, while the performance levels lowered when they moved to secondary levels. The general performance levels was good, and the probable reason might be that the data were collected based on classroom examinations conducted in the schools by their own teachers, and not the national examinations. The teachers' evaluations are mainly on comparative basis, and involving marks for school assignments, continuous assessments, and students' participations, in addition to examinations. The better trend in Grade 12 can also be attributed to the above mentioned reasons. Moreover, the improvement in education sector with good policies has also contributed to these better performance levels.

When the academic performance levels were analyzed as region wise, variations were observed, and the findings are furnished in Table 12 as follows.

Table 12. Region wise academic performance of sample respondents (Pooled data)

Region	Mean score	N	Std. Deviation	% of Total N
Tigray	69.90	1391	11.15190	12.4
Afar	69.81	237	11.12941	2.1
Amhara	71.40	2364	13.00393	21.1
Oromia	74.51	2666	13.01921	23.8
Somali	69.03	246	15.25675	2.2
Benshangul Gumuz	63.95	325	11.68852	2.9
SNNP	71.91	1896	13.21982	16.9
Gambella	72.11	471	12.32490	4.2
Harari	72.82	451	11.92598	4.0
Dire Dawa	76.77	501	16.94001	4.5
Addis Ababa	74.23	650	11.18068	5.8
Total	72.23	11198	13.05527	100.0

The above Table indicates that the maximum mean scores were for the respondents from Dire Dawa (76.77) and the minimum mean scores were obtained by the female student respondents of Benishangul Gumuz region (63.95). There were variations in mean scores for other regions as well. In addition to Benishangul Gumuz region, Somali, Afar and Tigray regions also showed lower trends in mean academic scores of female students (less than 70.00).

An attempt was made in this research to compare the mean academic scores of female students in different selected zones within each region. According to the sampling procedure followed, zones were selected proportionally from the regions, and the results of the analysis are presented in Table 13 as follows.

Table 13. Zone wise academic performance scores of the respondents (Pooled data)

Zone	Mean score	N	Std. Deviation
Central Tigray	68.65	620	11.26998
Southern Tigray	70.90	771	10.96056
Afar	69.81	237	11.12941
South Wollo	67.77	800	11.36356
North Gondar	73.42	748	13.30503
North Shewa	73.10	816	13.48439
West Wollega	74.80	685	13.23204
Arsi	74.64	612	14.83132
Bale	74.14	630	12.60195
East Hararghe	74.45	739	11.49441
Somali (Jijiga)	69.03	246	15.25675
Benshangul Gumuz (Assosa)	63.95	325	11.68852
Gamo Gofa	71.65	554	11.81068
Sidama	73.59	595	16.04377
Gurage	71.47	747	12.64446
Gambella	72.11	471	12.32490
Harari	72.82	451	11.92598
Dire Dawa	76.77	501	16.94001
Addis Ababa	74.23	650	11.18068
Total	72.23	11198	13.05527

A perusal on Table 13 discloses the variations in mean academic performance scores of the respondent female students among different zones selected for this study. Tigray had two zones, Amhara had three zones, Oromia had four zones and SNNP had three zones for this survey. According to the findings in the Table, in Tigray region, the mean score was better in Southern Tigray zone (70.90) compared to Central Tigray zone (68.65). In Amhara region, North Gondar (73.42), followed by North Shewa (73.10) indicated better mean scores. The qualitative data also disclosed the lower academic aptitude among female

students in South Wollo zone schools, due to increased trends of migration to cities and Middle East countries.

4.5 Disparities in Academic Performance between Boys and Girls in Schools

The sample respondents reacted to the checklist questions openly and freely in focused groups. These groups were formed separately for teachers and female students to avoid hesitation for open remarks and possible bias due to the presence of the other category. The qualitative data generated through these methods were analyzed and presented as follows;

Academic performance and successful completion among girls and boys

Generally, all girl students and teachers in almost all schools sampled opined that the boys perform better than girls. However, there are some outstanding female students, who score better than top scoring males, and occupy places in the list of top three or five. For instance, in one Primary full Cycle school in Debre Birhan, the teachers reported that girls were as good as boys in their performance in their school. The enrolment rate has substantially gone up during the last five years, probably due to the progressive measures like affirmative action and strategic action guidelines given by the Ministry of Education. There are some schools, mostly at primary levels, where girls outnumber boys. However, the general opinion is that the academic performance of boys is better than that of girls, with some obvious reasons. The participants of FGDs in almost all sampled zones agreed that there is a visible trend of change in the positive direction in the academic performance of girls in schools.

Another observation in one Primary full Cycle school in North Shewa was that the girls perform better than boys in the Primary first Cycle; while boys do better than girls while in Primary second Cycle. One of the probable reasons might be that girls are more mentally disturbed when they reach puberty, and teenage stress makes them unable to focus in studies as before.

In most of the schools surveyed in all the regions, there are very good performing girls, but their percentage is low when compared to boys. In Wollega and many other places, enrolment is similar to boys in both cycles of primary classes, but performance of girls is lower. In Addis Ababa also teachers' focused group discussions revealed the same findings.

In private schools, (most of them are at Primary cycles), girls' performance was good or satisfactory. These schools have adequate facilities, good teaching, and good support to girls, but most of the students belong to economically better off families with educated parents. However, there are internal and external factors affecting their performance levels also.

4.6 General Factors Adversely Affecting Girls' Performance

The survey data obtained from 11198 sample female student respondents indicated several factors adversely affecting their academic performance. All the explanatory variables included in the questionnaire were tested for their degree of association with the dependent variable ie; the academic performance, and ten variables were found to be statistically significant. The findings of Analysis of Variance are presented in Table 14, indicating only the significant variables.

As the results show, except female students' own perception about the importance of education and performing well in it, all the nine variables showed high significance at less than 1% level. Female students' own perception was also found to be an influencing factor on their academic performance as statistically significant at 5% level. These significant factors were status of being married while they are learning in school, having children, educational status of the parent (household head), type of household (female headed or male headed), rural-urban background, working outside home for income generation, parents' attitude towards girls' education, girls' own perception about their education and need for good performance, sexual harassments, and use of intoxicating substances.

Table 14. Association of selected factors with girls' academic performance

No	Variable	df	Pooled Mean	SD	F value	Sig
1	Marital status	7	72.37	12.98835	5.593***	.000
2	Having children	4	72.23	13.36264	5.072***	.000
3	Parental education	12	72.34	13.06241	28.575***	.000
4	Type of Household (FHH / MHH)	4	72.28	12.81875	14.276***	.000
5	Rural/urban background	10	72.36	13.06116	11.990***	.000
6	Work for income after school hours	5	72.36	13.06116	19.526***	.000
7	Parents' attitude towards girls' education	20	72.36	13.06116	3.531***	.000
8	Girls' perception on their education	6	71.29	12.8471	1.906**	.018
9	Sexual harassment	7	72.06	12.6893	5.201***	.000
10	Use of intoxication	6	72.26	13.07898	5.795***	.000

+++ Significant at less than 1%, and ** Significant at 5% levels

Early marriage

The survey results showed that being married in early age and attending schools adversely affect the academic performance of female students. As obviously known, being a wife, the girl has to undertake many household chores, in addition to pleasing her husband for all his needs. This might lead to dropouts within a couple of years, either due to pregnancy or other reasons. Naturally, the girl will not aspire for good academic performance, higher learning or career prospects. The analysis of survey data revealed that 3.3% (369) of the

respondent female students were already married, 8.5% (952) of them were engaged for marriage, 0.4% (45) of them were divorced, and 0.2% (22) were widowed. Early marriage is proved to be a factor that adversely affecting the female students' academic performance, as perceived by large majority of the respondents, and proved by the highly significant findings of the statistical analysis.

Having children

Another significant factor adversely affecting female students' academic performance was having children. The female student respondents, who had children, had a mean academic score of 67.06, while those who did not have children had mean score of 72.68, making this factor statistically significant. Being mothers, the female students have to attend higher workload at home for child care, occasional sickness of children, and other maternal activities. This makes them unable to study at home and doing school homework, and even attending schools regularly.

Parental education

Educated parents would perceive the need of females' education in a better way than those who are not educated. They would no the importance of education in daily life and to lead a better life. The statistical test also proved that there is an association between the parental education and female students' academic performance. Educated parents might also facilitate the girls' learning at home and encourage in doing school homework. The analysis of data further showed that the respondents of illiterate parents had a mean academic score of 68.9, while those with parents having primary school level education had 71.8, with high school level had 73.11, with secondary (11-12) had 73.84, with 12+diploma had 75.01 and with degree level had 77.03. This increasing trends in academic performance scores of female students along with increasing levels of parents' education establishes the strong relationship between these two factors.

Type of household

Type of household was found to be another significant factor. Female headed households' girl students had a mean performance score of 73.36, while male headed households' respondents had a mean score of 71.27, and those who replied as 'living by herself' scored 69.12. This shows that when the household head is female, the mother might give more attention for the girl child, and due the less number of family members, household chores would be less reducing the burden on the girl. Those who live alone scored the least, probably due to other works to make income for living and learning, in addition to the workload at home.

Rural – urban background

There was statistically significant difference between female students' from rural and urban backgrounds. Rural student respondents' mean academic score was 70.02, while that of urban students was 74.51, which indicates that urban students' performance is better. The probable reasons might be more exposure to career opportunities and many employed female role models available for urban female students. Moreover, there is more difficulty in use of English language for students from rural background, due to nature and frequency of using that language in teaching-learning process in the schools and low exposure to reading materials and media in English language. Rural households will have more household chores such as taking care of small animals and poultry, and helping in agricultural activities like weeding and post harvest handling, which are mainly attended by girls and women. Moreover, after return from school, the female students are expected to help their mothers or undertake activities like fetching water and firewood, cooking, taking care of younger children, washing clothes, cleaning the house etc. This workload makes them tired, and unable to study or do school assignments. Moreover, they don't get time for it even if they wish to do so. Going to school without doing assignments makes them inferior in the eyes of teachers, demoralized, and ultimately become poor in performance. The general belief in the country, that a girl is supposed to do all household activities when she gets married and thus the training for that in childhood is more important than school

learning, might be the reason for this compulsion, even if her labor is not essential in some houses.

Working for income generation

Working for income generation while learning in schools obviously limits study time and doing school homework among girls. In addition they may have to attend household chores to help the mothers. Analysis showed that those who had to work for income generation had a mean score of 68.27, while those who did not work for income scored 73.04. Focused Grup Discussions conducted in sampled schools with female students and teachers also revealed that many girls are working after school hours in cafeterias, as house maids, or even in bar and restaurants to earn some money to meet living expenses and school costs. This reduces their time for learning at home and focusing attention to learning related activities.

Unfavorable attitude towards girls' education

This is another serious problem observed, emanating from patriarchal system of society. Parents do not attach value to the education of daughters, and often think that a girl child is going to be a member of another family, and not going to contribute to them in future, and hence hence consider that investments in girl's education as a wastage of resources. Moreover, the opportunity costs of sparing them from household tasks, which might also make them unable to learn essential family management skills, is considered to be high in traditional societies. In a poor household, the costs of education compel the parents to give priority to boys to study in schools.

Moreover, the society at large also thinks against girls' education, since the general notion is that an educated girl might violate social norms and deviate from accepted traditional styles of life. In addition, girls do not possess a desire to get educated, particularly in rural areas, may be due to lack of role models, and smaller horizons of aspirations created by

patriarchy, which, in turn, affects their achievement motivation to perform well in academics. This was proved to be significant in statistical analysis as well.

As seen in the Table, parental attitude towards girls' education is a significantly influencing factor for academic performance of female students. If parents do not recognize the need for education of their daughters, they would not encourage the girls to attend schools and learn well.

Own perception about education

Girls' own perception about their education and need for good academic performance was another influencing factor. If they do not realize the importance of education and career prospects or better life chances, and limit the aspiration to be wives and mothers, naturally it will adversely affect the desire to perform well in schools. The level of statistical was 5%, unlike other significant variables, which were at less than 1% with higher level of significance. This type of lower perception about importance of education is more observed in female students from rural areas, since they have less opportunities to realize career prospects and do not have female role models for motivation to learn and perform well.

Sexual harassment

Another important factor adversely affecting girls in schools was sexual harassment. It might happen inside or outside the schools. Focused group discussions also endorsed the importance of sexual harassment affecting the psychology of girls and their education. It might happen from male students or male teachers or security guards inside the school, and from any man on the street or inside the home if the girl stays in another home away from family. Further analysis of data revealed that sexual harassment in verbal or physical forms were the highest in Somali region (mean of 0.61) followed by SSNP (mean of 0.59), while it was the least in Oromia (mean of 0.20) and in Amhara region (mean of 0.28), as reported by the survey respondents. The request from male teachers in the schools for love affairs or

sexual contacts were reported to be the highest in Somali region (mean of 0.47) and lowest in Harari region (mean of 0.11)

All focused group discussions emphasized this factor and it was proved in statistical test also. Sexual harassment takes place in most of the schools and premises, and on the way to schools whether they are in urban or rural areas. This might be from male students, neighbors, relatives, employers or strangers, as revealed by almost all the focused group discussions with girls.

Even some of the security guards consider that they can do anything with these small girls, who might be younger than their own children, and may sometimes act as 'go-between' to make them arranged for someone and make some small benefits out of that. (Case Study I). There are several cases of rape on the way and back to schools, particularly when they travel alone.

Another form of sexual exploitation of the girls in schools is the emergence of a new style of 'Abduction'. It is through trapping the girls who desire to have fashionable dress and to appear to be attractive, though they don't have resources from their family, but have influences from the surroundings. There are many instances, as revealed by focused group discussions with girls in schools in most of the sampled schools, in the 'fire age', girls will be attracted to chances of being attractive, especially when they live away from the family for the sake of education at Secondary levels. It is clear from the FGDs with girls' of Secondary schools that "there are girl students who connect their friends to men outside for fringe benefits" (Case study II). These "go-between" trends are increasing in many towns, and pose problems to the enactment of prevailing criminal acts, if needed. Probably, the attractions of western styles and media influences are tempting the victims and arrangers. In some towns, where the survey was conducted for this study, taxi drivers and three wheeler 'Bajaj' drivers also act as promoters for the trend. It is better not to be blind to these emerging trends, when the country struggles hard for progress.

Case study I

Tigist (not real name) lives in Dire Dawa with her mother and two younger sisters. Two years back, when she was in Grade 5 in one of the Primary schools in the city, the security guard of the school who is about 55 years, invited her for a coffee ceremony in his house, which is near to the school. Since she had good regards to that elderly man, she agreed, and went to his house on the next Saturday afternoon. There was another guest also for him, who was about 45 years, and was introduced as working in a factory in the city, but originally from Addis Ababa. He started talking to her impressively, and appreciating her beauty. At the end, he offered her some nail polish as a gift.

After 2-3 occasions of coffee ceremonies in the guard's house, Tigist became close to the guest, who use to offer perfumes and other gifts occasionally. This led to her visits to his house, where he was living alone. Gradually, it went up to sexual relationships.

After six months, she came to know from others that he was HIV positive, and she felt that her life has been transformed by her conviction that she would die at any time. She neither went to school afterwards, nor went for a VCT for fear of shocking news in the test results.

Case study II

Meron (not real name) was not good in her studies till Grade 5, and her parents shifted her to a town in West Hararghe to continue learning living with her mother's family. In the new school, Martha was her best friend and classmate. Martha had a boy friend outside the school and she used to join him for 'Bercha' (chewing chat) on Saturdays. One day, Martha invited Meron to join her to go to the boy friend's place for Bercha.

While chewing was in progress, Martha informed thm that she had to go out for a while, and would come back soon. Meron continued to be there with the boy. After chewing chat, he offered her a couple of beers, and finally it ended up with a forced sexual intercourse. When all that happened, Martha did n't turn up

When Martha asked her with a smile the next day "how was yesterday?" she realized that it was a pre planned attempt, as desired by the boy. However, she remembers with a sigh that she did not become pregnant due to that shocking incident.

Use of intoxicants

Use of intoxicating substances was proved to be another significant variable in the statistical analysis. Chewing chat, smoking Shisha, using alcoholic drinks or smoking cigarettes were reported as some of the emerging trends of intoxications even among school students, as revealed in focused group discussions. Key informants revealed that

intoxicant use facilities like beer pubs, chat and shisha houses, *Tejj* and *Tella* (local mild alcohols) sale houses are functioning in the close proximity of many schools, particularly secondary level schools, which cannot be prevented by school managements. Among the sample respondent girls, 1276 responded that they are using some of the intoxicants either in group or alone. The mean academic scores of users of intoxicants was 68.89, while those who never used had a mean score of 73.42. The data analysis further revealed that Somali region was top in use of intoxicants (mean of 0.37), while respondents from Tigray and Amhara responded lower levels of use (means of 0.07 and 0.09 respectively)

In addition to these factors which were statistically proven to be influencing the academic performance of female students in schools, many more factors were also identified. Focused group discussions with girls and teachers, and key informant interviews with school directors explained those factors affecting the female students. They are also interpreted and discussed here.

Workload at home

The burden of household chores was one important factor that affects the girls in most of the houses in all the regions and surveyed locations. After return from school, they are expected to help their mothers or undertake activities like fetching water and firewood, cooking, taking care of younger children, washing clothes, cleaning the house etc. This workload makes them tired, and unable to study or do school assignments. Moreover, they don't get time for it even if they wish to do so. Going to school without doing assignments makes them inferior in the eyes of teachers, demoralized, and ultimately become poor in performance. The general belief in the country, that a girl is supposed to do all household activities when she gets married and thus the training for that in childhood is more important than school learning, might be the reason for this compulsion, even if her labor is not essential in some houses. However, this factor was not found to be statistically significant in quantitative analysis, even though it was tested as an explanatory variable.

Low self esteem of girls

This is a result of patriarchal culture, where submissiveness is expected from females in household and community levels. From early childhood, girls are taught not to be assertive and to be obedient, to be submissive and believe to be lower than boys or men. It results in low self esteem, and lack of self confidence, which are reflected in education as well. Most of the FGDs with girls and female teachers expressed this view. Any intervention without realizing the cultural factors and psychological statuses would not be efficient, as opined by FGD with female teachers in most of the sampled schools.

Absence in tutorials

Most of the sampled schools try to arrange tutorial classes for girls, particularly for those who are weak in performance, in the weekends, as envisaged in ESDP III. But the major problem is the parents' attitude towards this arrangement. If their daughters are absent from home in the guise of having tutorials on Saturday and Sunday, they suspect that the daughters are in dangerous situation in their teenage, as the parents see their classmate boys are around the home premises and no class for them. Hence, parents don't permit their daughters to go for these extra ordinary sessions out of home, and retain them with household chores. This leads to absence of girls in tutorials and make the tutorials as futile exercises, though the intention is really good.

Economic problems

Economic problem in the family leads to interruption of the education of female children, since many of the parents believe that investments for the education of a girl is a waste of financial resources, since she is going to be a member of another family later. Hence, the trend is to send boys to schools if resources are limited, since they can help the parents in future life. Moreover, the feeling is that the girls are to be trained to lead the family life by being good wives and mothers and to avoid conflicts in the future, and hence to be confined to home to learn household activities better. There are many income generating options, where the female children can help the family, by involving in petty trading, working as

housemaids, or other options depending on the locality. It is observed that girls are taking care of petty trading, chat selling, and contraband business in many places in Hararghe, Somali, and even in Addis Ababa. It is noteworthy that once the female children realize that these options may help to make income to survive; they lose interest in school learning, and try to see options for making the present work successful.

Love affairs with boys and male teachers

In many of the sampled schools, it was reported that boys and male teachers request the girls to have friendships, and it affects the girls' peace of mind to concentrate in studies. One probable reason is that they might be worried about the consequences if they refuse, such as possible attacks from boys and revenge from male teachers. However, this is also a common factor in all the regions of the country, as told by FGDF discussants, and the basic cause is of lack of assertiveness for girls, as groomed by the culture.

Long distance to school

This is another serious constraint for girls, and even reported by almost all past studies in the country. Most of the secondary level schools are located in towns, or generally far away from rural households, and this seriously affects the girls, who have a lot of household chores before going to schools. It is found from FGDs in sampled schools that the average walking distance to Secondary schools is about 5-10 kms, and girls often reach schools late. Moreover, this situation affects the safety on the way, when they try to walk alone. Many times, teachers, mostly males, punish the girls for late coming by not letting them in to the class, and in some schools the security guards take advantage by keeping them outside by closing the gate. This practice leads them to risks in physical safety, as the girls don't wish to return home alone immediately, and try to spend time outside to wait for their friends.. The delayed back travel leads to concerns to parents, and delay in attending household work. Ultimately, the possibility of dropping out becomes high. Another impact of the long distance is that the girls have no chance to attend the tutorials mostly arranged in the weekends, since the parents might doubt about attending the weekend classes, and usually disallow them to go. Not only for the distant households, but also for most of the

parents, attending weekend tutorial classes are not fully understood or appreciated, as disclosed by girls' FGDs.

Upcoming trends to migrate for Middle East jobs

This is a new observation found in this study in almost all parts of the country, particularly among girls. This trend is very high in Wollo, southern Tigray, western Amhara, central Oromiya and Addis Ababa. Several illegal agents are working to promote this trend, and make profits out of it. The FGDs in South Wollo indicated that Middle East jobs have become a dream for many teenage girls from the locality, and they prepare to go out as they reach the age of 18 and secure a passport. Agents disseminate the information that the girls with 8th grade education from Wollo have good chances of securing jobs with a salary of at least about 3000 Birr equivalent per month. The poor families also hope that it is a good option for having remittance income, than educating girls here for no hopes. Many other studies and reports indicate that this trend in one way leads to girls' trafficking and miserable stories of sexual exploitations, since most of the jobs given are that of housemaids.

In Wollo and other parts of Amhara region, another trend is illegal migration to Sudan, aspiring for good jobs and salaries. FGDs with girls in Wollo and Gondar made it clear that many school going girls from Wollo and other parts of Amhara move towards Metema to go to Sudan illegally, with the help of illegal agents. On the way, they have to wait one or two months or more in Gondar or Bahir Dar cities, work in hotels or bars to meet daily living costs, and get trapped into sexual exploitations.

The dreams about Middle East jobs are very high in the Somali region as well, while the migratory tendency in Afar is more towards Djibouti. All these new trends, promoted by illegal business agents are seriously and adversely affecting girls' education in the country. Surprisingly, this tendency is less among boys, which indicates the promotion of this exploitation is targeted to teenage girls of the country.

Trafficking of girls to cities in Ethiopia

In the name of better educational opportunities for the girl children, particularly from rural poor families, relatives or acquaintances encourage them to move to towns or major cities like Addis Ababa and live with them. In most cases, as was revealed in FGDs, the labor of these girls is being exploited in return, for their accommodation and living costs, and the girls hardly get time to learn after the household chores. In many cases, sexual exploitation also becomes a part of the story. In case, the girl tries to live by herself having a small rented house, the risky life situation follows since she has to make efforts to earn some income for living expenses. This case is reported in this study from Addis Ababa, Gondar, and Hawassa.

In Benishangul Gumuz, the case is situation made. Girls, who are desirous to learn further after primary levels from rural areas, move to Assosa town, where there is the only preparatory school in the whole woreda, and live in rented houses and do part-time jobs for living and to meet learning costs. Sometimes, they work as housemaids, or make *injera* and sell on roadsides, or even work in bars and hotels, and end up with risky life. Some cases have been reported with pregnancy and dropping out from the school in Assosa.

This type of unwanted pregnancy due to situational pressure and submissiveness and consequent dropout cases has been reported from Addis Ababa and Debre Birhan too.

Unfavorable attitude towards girls' education

This is another serious problem observed, emanating from patriarchal system of society. Parents do not attach value to the education of daughters, and often think that a girl child is going to be a member of another family, and not going to contribute to them in future, and hence hence consider that investments in girl's education as a wastage of resources. Moreover, the opportunity costs of sparing them from household tasks, which might also make them unable to learn essential family management skills, is considered to be high in traditional societies. In a poor household, the costs of education compel the parents to give priority to boys to study in schools.

Moreover, the society at large also thinks against girls' education, since the general notion is that an educated girl might violate social norms and deviate from accepted traditional styles of life. In addition, girls do not possess a desire to get educated, particularly in rural areas, may be due to lack of role models, and smaller horizons of aspirations created by patriarchy, which, in turn, affects their achievement motivation to perform well in academics. This was proved to be significant in statistical analysis as well.

Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs)

Harmful traditional practices like early marriage, abduction and FGM have significant influences on girls' education in Ethiopia, as revealed by FGDs. Early marriage results in early pregnancies, leading to household confinements and psychological stress, which in turn, result in dropouts. Early marriage is common in most places in Ethiopia, prompted by the dowry paid to girls' family by the bridegroom, in cash or other assets. In the Somali region, it might be a flock of cattle or camels, which is an important asset for them. Resource poor parents prefer their daughter to get married as a help for the family. In the Somali region, there is a practice 'Absuma', which is a customary cross-cousin marriage system, in which the girl has to marry her uncle's son, irrespective of his age (may be 40-50). The bridegroom might wait for her to reach puberty, and then she has to interrupt her education to marry him. It was also reported in this study that in Assela and most parts of Itaya woreda that a girl has to marry her brother-in-law on demise of her elder sister, no matter how old he might be.

FGM also contributes to psychological trauma, physiological problems and stress, and makes the girl unable to focus on her studies. Many other studies have also pointed out this fact (MoE, 2008) FGM practice and consequent weak academic performance or dropout was reported in this study from Bale, East Hararghe, Somali and other parts of the country.

Frequent absence from school

Girls become frequent absentees in class for various reasons. Work load at home makes them absent or delayed to reach school, and many teachers do not allow them to enter the class when they come late. There are schools with security guards close the gates for late comers, and mostly they are girls for obvious reasons.

In Southern Tigray, parts of Amhara and Oromiya, it was found that girls become absent on weekly market days since they have to engage themselves in trading or buying, or to help family members, who involve in market. If it is not complied with, the parents might opt for their discontinuance of the education.

In addition, it was commonly found in all regions that girls, particularly in second cycle of Primary schools, tend to be absent in their monthly menstruation days. The major reason for this is that, as explained by girls' FGDs, the girls in transition stage are not fully clear about their reproductive health and physiological phenomenon, and feel shy and over concerned about those stressful days. Adding oil to fire, the majority of the schools surveyed have no separate toilets for boys and girls, which creates much difficulty for girls on those days. In no school, the study found a room for changing sanitary napkins in privacy, or napkins available for supply to girls. This holds true even for secondary schools. Boys and male teachers have a tendency to insult or harass girls, when they realize that girls are in stress due to this biological phenomenon. Naturally, to avoid embarrassment, the girls try to avoid going to schools for a couple of days, which seriously affects their regular attendance and in turn their academic performance.

Personal deviances

It was observed through FGDs that in some cases, girls get attracted to fashions, cosmetics etc, even though they do not have economic capacity to afford them. This might lead to deviant styles, to please some men outside schools for small amount of money or some gifts, and get into dangers. It was reported from some schools in Addis Ababa, Wollo, and North Shewa that abortion cases and dropouts due to pregnancy happened in this context, as reported during FGDs with girl students. There are instances of sexually transmitted

diseases and medication as well in such instances in some places, which obviously affect the academic performance of those girls.

Other general issues

There is a common assumption in the Somali and the Afar Regions, and in some other places in SNNP that a girl has to go to school only up to Grade 4, and at the most up to Grade 8 to be literate. In the Afar Region girls are sent to religious studies first and later to school, and by that time girls will be of higher age and feel ashamed to be in Grade 1. Added to this, the possibility of sexual harassment exacerbates the problems that girls have to live with at schools.

4.7 Specific Factors Affecting Girls Inside Schools

In addition to the issues mentioned above, there are a number of factors that specifically affect girls adversely in their academic performance and continuance in the schools.

Sexual harassment inside the schools

Obviously, harassment from male students takes place in most of the schools, but male teachers' indulgence to sexual harassment and exploitation of female children, starting from Primary second cycle up to higher levels is a terribly common feature in Ethiopian public schools. The male teachers might consider this as a 'privilege' to use the opportunity and it results in serious consequences in the whole scenario of females' education in Ethiopia (MoE, 2008). Moreover, they try to punish the girls, who refuse to satisfy the male teachers' sexual needs when they express the demand for it (Case study III).

Most of the girls' FGDs reported that if the girl denies invitations from boys or male teachers for sexual relations, she might be punished by being beaten or insult by boys, reducing marks or failing in examinations by teachers. For fear of these, many girls become subjected to exploitations. It was reported that most of the school administrations are

insensitive to such issues or complaints, and hence the victims do not dare to complain for fear of later consequences. There are instances where male teachers seek love affairs with their female students and tempt them with unholy offers of higher marks in examinations.

Case study III

Five years back, Meskarem (not real name) was a student of Grade 9 in one of the High schools in East Hararghe. She lost her father, when she was in Grade 7, but she continued to learn further with an ambition to fulfill her father's dreams to go up to university education. She was trying to attend all classes regularly, and her mother was also supporting her desire to perform well in the school.

A young male teacher, who was teaching her 'History', invited her twice to visit his house after school hours. Being suspicious at the unnatural invitations, Meskarem declined in both occasions, telling him one or another excuse. After a couple of weeks, the teacher openly told her about his desire to make her his girl friend; at least till she completes her studies in that school. Then, she had nothing to think further, and told him that she was not interested in that types of time pass relationships.

The next month was the time of final examinations. Meskarem was trying to study well and prepare for the examinations. When the examinations started, she was happy that she could perform satisfactorily in most of the examinations.

When the results came out, she had failed in History and it was shocking to her. She remembers that the exam was not very difficult, and even lower performers than her had passed. When she enquired, she found that it was recorded as 'absent in examination', and her answer book was not seen in the corrected bundle.

She immediately informed her mother, and both of them visited the School Director and complained about the issue. He called the teacher and enquired about it. The teacher reconfirmed that Meskarem was absent in the examination, and as a proof he produced the attendance sheet, in which other students had signed, except Meskarem. He also told her mother that Meskarem was occasional absentee in his classes also.

She immediately wrote a complaint letter, with some of her classmates' signature as witnesses for her presence in the examination. But, the School Director just ignored it with sarcastic comments, and advised her to try next time.

Then, she realized and remembered that during the examination time, the attendance sheet was not circulated to her, and she was also busy in writing the answers without other worries.

But, after returning to home, her mother shouted at her and scolded her, and when she was trying to explain, her mother had even beaten her.

On the same day, Meskarem left home and went to a relative's house in another region, and that was the end of her schooling.. Though she came back to her family after one year, she could not

study further and now she lives by earning small income from some casual jobs in some shops in Dire Dawa.

Sexual harassments include verbal or physical harassments. There are many instances, where girls are forced to discontinue their studies due to harassments. In one of the schools in the sample, a boy, whose request for sexual relationship was rejected by a girl, took her picture with her male classmates using mobile phone camera and printed enlarged copies and displayed them in different public places including her home premises. This led her to discontinue her studies because of her parents' decision. Lack of separate toilets also substantially contributes to sexual harassments. Many such examples were narrated in FGDs with girls. For instance, in some schools, girls indicated that some boys try to enter into the toilet along with the girl when she tries to go inside. Some girls prefer never to visit the school toilets, even if they need to, for fear of sexual attacks.

Technology abuse

This is another revelation of this study, which probably was not reported in many past studies. With the popular use of mobile phones in school campuses, particularly in urban areas, many students tend to abuse its use. Getting the phone numbers of girls and frequently calling them at night was reported to be a common phenomenon, which disturbs girls and negatively affecting their academic performance. Moreover, these untimely calls prompt the parents to doubt the daughter and think of discontinuance of her education. More importantly, exchanging pornographic pictures and video clips is an emerging trend in many urban schools. Some girls' FGDs pointed out that there is also a tendency to watch these clips or photos using mobile phones (boys and girls together) in rest times and even during boring classes sitting in back seats. Naturally, these might adversely affect their aptitude in academics.

There is a serious incident reported from one of the schools in Addis Ababa. One boy took a photo of a girl's face, and then through morphing, he made it as a nude picture and

circulated among other students. Naturally, this has led to her demoralization and dropping out from the school.

Computer room in secondary schools is another technology abuse place. Some girls in FGDs indicated that some boys bring pornographic movies and play them in the absence of teachers. In the tempting teenage, it also affects studies, particularly of girls.

Lack of essential facilities

Many of the surveyed schools lack enough text books, chairs, laboratory facilities, clean water supply, and study rooms that adversely affect girls more than boys. In the Somali region, there are schools where only one text book is available to ten students, and naturally girls are being marginalized in using them. In some schools of other Regions, like the Amhara, the Tigray, the Oromiya and the SNNP, not all students get text books for individual use, and hence they cannot study at home. In one school in Somali region, girls, who are normally late comers, sit on the floor due to shortage of chairs.

Girls complained that shortage / lack of supply of clean water and rest rooms make them absent during menstrual periods. Most of the male teachers do not realize the stress and they try to punish the girls for their fatigue or absence.

Outsiders' entry to school compounds

This was also reported from many schools, particularly where there is no proper fencing or compound wall with security. The targets of the miscreants are often girls in the schools. In some schools in Afar, sometimes outsiders come with rifles, and harass female students.

Negative attitude of male teachers and boys

In addition to the general negative attitude of the society, teachers and boys in schools also have negative attitudes towards girls' performance and achievements. Using verbal abuse,

insults etc are common in most of the public schools starting from primary second cycle. If a girl asks questions or try to clarify doubts, the teacher might harass her instead of helping her. It was reported in FGDs that there are cases where boys openly harassing girls if they perform well in examinations, alleging sexual relations with teachers. For these reasons, girls do not aspire to perform better than boys or ask for clarifications from teachers. In addition to that, the submissive nature of girls, resulting from patriarchal norms of society, makes them to be silent and docile in schools.

Counseling and guidance services and school clubs

This was another issue discussed in FGDs during the survey. Though it is part of ESDP III strategies, in many schools counseling and guidance services are not effective. In many cases, a female teacher, who took a course in psychology during her training to be a teacher is assigned with the task of handling it. In one school in Addis Ababa, teachers' FGD revealed the existence of good C&G services in that school; while girls' FGD indicated that they have no idea about C&G service there. This indicates that the genuine implementation of ESDP III directives is missing in some of the schools.

School girls' clubs are important for a to bring them together, make them active and handle some of the problems they face. In most of the schools, girls' clubs are functioning, particularly at secondary level. There was an incident of abduction in a rural school in Sidama zone, and the girls' club could intervene timely and rescue the victim with the help of authorities. The success of girls' clubs, however, depends on gender sensitive management of the school. In the Somali and the Afar Regions, girls' clubs are not functional in most of the schools.

Language problems

English language is a hurdle for most of the students, particularly for girls from rural areas. This is more serious when the teachers themselves have language deficiency. Language deficiency affects understanding of lessons in the class, writing examinations and in self

studies. In some of the schools, for example in North Shewa, FGDs revealed that teachers try to explain lessons in local language mainly due to their language deficiency; and though it helps for easy understanding by students, students cannot get chance to improve their language skills. In survey among female students also, language difficulty was reported to be a serious and adversely affecting factor for girls' education and academic performance, even though it was not statistically significant in the analysis, probably it is more of common in nature for all.

Non responsive management

It is reported that many school managements are non responsive to girls' issues in schools. They do not respond to complaints on sexual harassments, lack of special facilities for girls like toilets, and bad treatments by male teachers. This makes girls more vulnerable to harassments, and deprives them of their basic rights, and forces them to be confined to their submissiveness.

Gender insensitive curricula

This is also one among the school related factors affecting girls. Teachers and students generally opined that many text books contain gender insensitive usages and examples, which reaffirm gender bias and some lessons portray male as a symbol of courage, decisiveness and mental strengths while females are depicted as symbols of submissiveness and obedience. Such illustrations of 'ideal' characters tend to reinforce patriarchal norms in the minds of young learners, adversely affecting gradual change of social attitudes through education. However, they indicated that this is not an issue to be handled at school level only, but more importantly to be taken care of by text book preparation and publishing authorities

Lack of role models

Many of the girls, particularly those coming from rural areas, do not realize the purpose of their learning in schools, due to lack of conviction of the benefits. The lack of role models

fails to convince them the awaiting status and opportunities. Shortage of female teachers or successful cases around adds to this deficiency. FGDs with girls suggested that if interaction sessions are arranged with nearby university girls' clubs, it would be a remedy for the issue. This is more relevant in the context of having university campuses in almost all parts of the country.

Some other specific factors

There is a growing tendency among teenage girls to move to urban centers, especially to Addis Ababa, if not to abroad. This is to have better learning facilities, if there are some relatives in the capital city, and the rural environment with all restrictions may not curtail their ambitions to learn. But unfortunately, as mentioned earlier, many of the relatives or acquaintances make them to work at homes where they are sheltered, and they do not get time to learn or accomplish the purpose for which they came.

4.8 Some of the Good Practices Observed During the Study

- In one school in Debre Birhan, Girls' Education Advisory Committee was formed to take care of the issues of concern about female students
- There are well functioning parent–teacher associations in some of the schools, particularly in some private schools in the Amhara region. They monitor the children's performance and suggest remedial measures, if needed. Monthly meetings are being held with parents in those schools.
- Community fund raising initiatives were observed in Debre Birhan and in Gondar to construct separate toilets for girls.
- In some schools in the Sidama zone, two class leaders are selected for every class, and one is a girl.
- In one school in Axum, some female teachers arrange special classes on reproductive health for female students. This is a voluntary service by these teachers.

- In one of the Gondar town schools, they have made to avoid any hiding place in the school compound, to avoid possibility of sexual harassments.
- Special tutorials are given for girls who score less than 50%, in one Primary second cycle school in Gondar town.
- Selected girls were given ToT on girls' issues and they serve as peer group counselors among girls in a government Primary second cycle school in Debre Birhan

V. CONCLUSIONS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the preliminary findings of this investigation, the conclusions are made and the following recommendations are forwarded.

The study found that girls' education in Ethiopia faces a lot of challenges. The challenges are extrinsic as well as intrinsic in nature. The extrinsic challenges are contributed by society's traditions, beliefs and value systems, and more significantly by the people living around with patriarchal dominance. Intrinsic factors are shaped by the society, which nurtures the girl children and brings them up. They are molded in the personality of female children, to be submissive, obedient, and consequently to be exploited by the male dominance. This study has identified different causes for poor participation and academic performance of girls in school education, and many of them can be mitigated, while some others will take time to modify.

The specific policy recommendations based on the inferences of the study are provided below.

1. There is a need and possibility for many schools in the country to collaborate and have close linkages with nearby universities to work for the welfare of female students, to have experience sharing sessions with university female students, and to have role models, since the country now has universities in almost all the locations. This opportunity should be capitalized. For this purpose, it should be made mandatory for each university to establish functional linkages with Secondary level schools in their mandate area, and to have functional linkages among Girls' Clubs of the university and schools.
2. It will be good to think to arrange residential facilities, at least in Secondary second cycle levels, for the girls coming from rural areas, since that is the most vulnerable group for exploitations due to the urge to learn and the situational pressure to stay outside; and to find means of survival. This may be considered till sufficient

- Secondary second cycle schools are established as accessible to rural population. This is particularly important in the context of less number Secondary second cycle schools in rural areas, and it may be possible to increase their number in rural areas only gradually.
3. Having parent-teacher associations in all schools should be mandatory, since without convincing parents about the purpose of tutorial classes and about the need for girls' education, no plan to help them will work. Convening occasional meetings of such associations will make to make a difference.
 4. Frequent use of mass media for creation of public awareness for the cause may gradually help to improve the situation, since society's attitude change takes time, and frequent convincing persuasion is needed for that.
 5. Drawing the experience from Debre Birhan, it is recommended to have two class monitors / class leaders in every section, and one should be a girl elected by girls themselves. This might improve the self esteem and self confidence of girls in general, and provide opportunities to raise their voice and grievances in needy occasions.
 6. It is desirable to restrict by rules the use of mobile phones inside the school compound. There are many advancing countries that have already realized this issue and acted upon.
 7. It is desirable to have a gender focal person in every schools of Primary second cycle level onwards, who should be a female teacher who can genuinely handle the issues of girls, like sexual harassments, insult by boys and male teachers and such other complaints.
 8. It should be mandatory to have separate toilets for girls and boys in every school, since it is an essential facility, particularly for girls.

9. It is good to form Girls' Education Advisory Committees in every school, and at woreda, zonal, and regional levels. Selected female teachers, female students' representatives, and school directors have to be in such committees. These committees can monitor and handle issues pertaining to girls.
10. There should be provisions for Training of Trainers on topics like Assertiveness, Stress management, Reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS at zonal and regional levels. Selected female teachers and selected female students can be the participants, who can, in turn, help others at school level. Necessary budget provisions may be made available for this purpose.
11. It should be mandatory to allow girls to enter the class even if they come late, except for frequent late comers. No school should be allowed to close gates for late coming girls and leaving them to the street, and they should have the right to be within the compound, if not in the class.
12. More rural Primary second cycle schools should be upgraded to Secondary first cycle schools, so that girls' dropout rate after Grade 8 can be reduced, allowing them to learn further in their locality itself.
13. Prohibit chat houses, beer pubs or intoxicating provisions like Shisha smoking houses around 100 meters radius of school premises. This recommendation is based on the observations of upcoming trends of behavior among adolescents in the schools.
14. There should be a provision for remunerating female teachers, who offer additional tutorial classes sacrificing their personal time, and this will help to meaningfully implement the proposal to have special tutorials in all schools, as suggested in ESDP III.

15. It will be good to introduce school feeding program to enhance retention of girls in schools, particularly at Primary levels. Poverty and starvation are found to tempt children to dropout and involve themselves in small income generating activities, particularly in food insecure areas. Girls are first affected by this type of decision of the households
16. It is worth considering arranging orientation classes for girls who are appearing for national entrance examinations of Preparatory schools for tertiary level admissions. It should orient them about campus life, means of survival and performance; and how to prepare for the examinations. It might help them to adapt to the transplanting shocks, survive better in tertiary level and enhance successful performance.
17. It should be mandatory for every school, starting from Primary second cycle, to have rest rooms for girls with doors. This recommendation is in the context of wide spread absenteeism of girls during the menstruation period due to lack of private facilities in schools, consequently affecting their academic performance.
18. Recognizing and rewarding good performing girls in Grades 8 and 10 might motivate other female students to perform better. However, it should be the responsibility of the schools.
19. It is desirable to strengthen Counseling and Guidance services in every school, with a focus on girls. The C&G services are to focus on emotional support and guidance to girls, when they are in need of it. Every girl in the school should have access to such service daily, if needed, and it should be made known to all students.
20. It is suggested to include 'gender' and 'reproductive health' as compulsory subjects in every teacher training curriculum, since those graduates are expected to work with teenagers in schools later.

21. Text book scrutinizing mechanism at national and regional levels may be established to thoroughly check the contents of text books and properly edit them in a gender sensitive manner.
22. Necessary measures are to be taken to make available the text books to all students on time and in required quantity. This has been reported as one of the causal factors for poor performance of girls in some of the schools surveyed.
23. Finally, it is suggested to observe one day in every academic year as “Gender Equity Day” in educational sector throughout the country, to ensure intensive awareness creation programs, implementations of gender policies, and make school managements alert, with having specific monitoring mechanisms at national, regional, zonal and woreda levels. The day can be meaningfully observed at school level by conducting meetings of parents, and programs and competitions for female students to show their talents. There should be activities at woreda, zonal, regional and federal levels as well.

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APPENDIX I

Questionnaire for female students

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is intended to assess the gender disparity in academic performance among school students, and to determine factors affecting female students' academic performance at school level.

You are one among those who are chosen to participate in the study. Therefore, the researcher requests you for valuable response and thanks for your willingness to support the research effort.

You need not write your name or any other identification. The information given by you will be kept as confidential, and will be used only for this research. Please give very honest and sincere response!

Thank you!

Fill in the spaces provided or encircle one of the given alternatives

1. Age_____
2. Sex_____
3. Which grade are you studying now? -----
4. Marital Status:
 1. Married
 2. Engaged
 3. Single
 4. Divorced
 5. Widowed
5. you are / were married,
 1. How long you are / were married? ----- years
 2. At what age you got married? ----- years

3. Do you have children? (1) Yes ---- (2) No -----
4. If yes, how many children? -----
6. Family size (Total number of members in your family):-----
7. Educational level of family members

Family	Educational Level							
	Illiterate	Able to read, & write only	Primary 1 st (1to 4)	Primary 2 nd (5 to 8)	High School (9 – 10)	Secondary (11– 12)	12+ Diploma	12+ Degree
Father								
Mother								
Sisters								
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								
brothers								
1								
2								
3								
4								
5								
6								

8. Religion:

- | | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| 1. Orthodox | 3. Muslim |
| 2. Protestant | 4. Others ----- |

9. Ethnic group: -----

10. How do you characterize your family?

1. Male headed
2. Female headed
3. I am living by my self (economically independent)

11. Were you raised by your parents?

1. Yes
2. No

12. If the answer is no, who raised you? _____

13. Parents' economic status:

1. Poor
2. Moderate
3. Rich

14. Parents' Occupation:

A. Father's occupation

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1. Laborer | 5. Employee |
| 2. Farmer | 6. Others |
| 3. Merchant | (Specify)..... |
| 4. Other trader | |

B. Mother's occupation

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. Petty trading | 4. Employee |
| 2. House Wife | 5. Others |
| 3. Merchant | (Specify)..... |

15. What is your family's estimated annual income? ----- Birr

16. Where do you belong to?

1. Rural area
2. Urban area

17. Number of children in the family, other than you:

Males-----
Females-----

18. Number of children in the household now attending their education:

Males -----
Females -----

19. Do you have household work responsibility in your family other than studying?

Yes
No

20. If your answer is “yes”, rate the amount of time spent in the week on the following types of work. (Put this mark ‘√’ in the most appropriate column against each item)

	Daily	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Domestic work	-----	-----	-----	-----
Petty trading	-----	-----	-----	-----
Fetching water and Collecting fire wood	-----	-----	-----	-----
Agriculture (Crop or livestock)	-----	-----	-----	-----
Daily laborer	-----	-----	-----	-----
Employment for others’ (domestic work)	-----	-----	-----	-----
Selling in the shop	-----	-----	-----	-----
other (specify)	-----	-----	-----	-----

21. Does the household work responsibility in your family other than studying have impact on your academic performance?

1. Yes
2. No

22. In how many schools, have you been studying till you now? _____

23. Why did you have to change school? _____

24. Your perception about parental attitude towards girls' education (tick only one of the given alternatives for each item)

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Your parents have the same positive attitude towards girls' and boys' education					
2	Your parents have a thinking that educating girl child is a waste , since she has to get married and join another family					
3	Your parents have an attitude that girls have the intellectual capability to effectively use their education in life.					
4	Your parents have an attitude that boys and girls have equal intelligence and can perform equally in their education.					
5	Your parents have a positive attitude that girls need education even if they are married or get pregnant before they complete schooling					
6	Your parents have a feeling that education makes girls more understanding and self-confident.					
7	Your parents have a feeling that education changes the cultural beliefs of daughters and they may become undisciplined					
8	Your parents have an attitude that sending females to school will lead them to be harassed by boys, teachers and others outside.					
9	Your parents have an attitude that education enables daughters to get married late and only to have fewer, healthy, educated children in their future life.					

10	Your parents have a thinking that the daughters have to become mothers in future and work in kitchen and house, for which formal education is not needed					
----	--	--	--	--	--	--

25. What was your average grade during:

The First Semester of the 2001 E.C. _____

The Second Semester of the 2000 E.C. _____

The First Semester of the 2000 E.C. _____

26. Which educational stream are you following?

Natural Science

Social Science

Technical

Others (specify) -----

27. What do you think about the existing costs of schooling?

1. Low

2. Average

3. High

28. From your own experience on yourself and others, to what extent the academic performance is affected by direct costs of schooling?

1. Only slightly

2. Somewhat

3. Very much

29. Who is providing you with financial support now?

1. Parents

2. Relatives

3. My own work

4. Others (Specify) -----

30. How do you perceive about getting education? (Choose only one of the options for each statement)

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Education is the only means to have better life in the modern world.					
2	Education will help to get good jobs and income.					
3	Education is necessary to have a happy family life in future.					
4	Without education, the individual will become backward in the society.					
5	Education is an opportunity to become knowledgeable to lead a good life.					

31. Do you understand well the language through which you learn?

1. Yes
2. No

32. How do you rate your understandability of the language through which you learn?

1. Very well
2. Somewhat
3. Very less
4. Nothing

33. Do you try to clarify your doubts with teachers, when you do not understand the concepts and lessons in the class?

1. Yes, always
2. Sometimes
3. Rarely
4. Never -----

34. Do you try to clarify your doubts with other students, when you do not understand the concepts and lessons in the class?

1. Yes, always
2. Sometimes

- 3. Rarely
- 4. Never -----
- 35. Are you living with your family (with parents).
 - 1. Yes
 - 2. No
- 36. If not, are you living away from family for the purpose of attending school?
 - 1. Yes
 - 2. No
- 37. Do you have any work to make some income, after school hours?
 - 1. Yes
 - 2. No
- 38. If yes, what type of work you have?
 - 1. Laborer
 - 2. House maid / house servant
 - 3. Serving in cafeteria / restaurant
 - 4. Evening work in bar / hotel
 - 5. Any other (Specify) -----

39. Aspiration level of students:

To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (Select only one option for each statement)

No	Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Students who have higher expectation to get good job after completion of their education perform well.					
2	If I can study double time, I can score high mark.					
3	I want to score in an exam more than other students.					
4	I can make more effort in my study and get rid off the present difficulty.					
5	I want to have high status and position trough good performance in my education.					

40. How is your interaction with other female students?
1. Always I have interaction with other female students
 2. I interact with other female students sometimes
 3. I interact with other female students rarely
 4. I don't interact with other female students
41. How is your interaction with male students?
1. Always I have interaction with male students
 2. I interact with male students sometimes
 3. I interact with male students rarely
 4. I don't interact with male students
42. What is the estimated distance of the school in terms of time required to reach the school? ----- Kms ----- Hours of walk in normal speed
43. How do you cover the journey between home and school?
1. On foot
 2. On animals' back
 3. By animal cart
 4. By bicycle
 5. By bus and other motor vehicles
44. How do you see the impact of distance on school performance?
1. Has no impact
 2. Little impact
 3. Very high impact
45. How do you see the possible negative impact of distance on girls' academic performance?

	High	Average	Low
1. Fear of abduction	-----	-----	-----
2. Fail in exams	-----	-----	-----
3. Sexual harassment	-----	-----	-----
4. Get tired and cannot learn and after reaching home	-----	-----	-----
5. Transportation cost	-----	-----	-----
6. Extra cost for accommodation	-----	-----	-----
7. Risk of rapes	-----	-----	-----

46. Do you study in school by discussion with your friends?
 1. Yes
 2. No
47. If yes, who are those friends?
 1. Other girls
 2. Boys
 3. Boys and girls
48. Have you faced occasions of sexual harassments, including verbal abuse?
 1. Yes
 2. No
49. If yes, what type of sexual harassment?
 1. Verbal abuse and dirty comments
 2. Forcing to kiss
 3. Touching sensual body parts
 4. Attempting rape
 5. Forced sexual intercourse
 6. All or some of the above
50. Where did you face sexual harassment?
 1. Inside the school
 2. Outside the school
 3. Both places
51. If inside the school, from whom?
 1. Male students
 2. Teachers
 3. Other workers
52. If outside school, from whom?
 1. Male students
 2. Teachers
 3. Youth on the street
 4. Elderly males
 5. Neighbors
 6. Relatives
 7. My employers

53. How much those incidences affected your peace of mind to learn?
1. Very seriously
 2. To some extent
 3. Slightly
54. Have you ever been requested by your teachers for unhealthy relationship?
1. Yes
 2. No
55. If the answer is yes,
1. How many times? _____
 2. By how many of your teachers? _____
56. Have you reported that to the school management?
1. Yes
 2. No
57. If the answer is 'no', why?
1. Afraid of their revenge
 2. Do not want anybody to know about it
 3. My friends discouraged me
 4. Others (specify) _____
58. Do you know someone, among your fellow female students, who has an affair with the school instructors?
1. Yes
 2. No
59. If the answer is yes, how many of your fellow female students have such a relationship? _____
60. In your opinion, what is (are) the major reason (s) for the female students to enter into such type of relationship?
1. Desire to score better grades
 2. Blackmailing (harassment) from the instructors
 3. Fear that their grades could be affected, if declined
 4. Love
 5. Others (list them down) _____
-

61. Do you think that there are differential treatments of male and female students in the school?

1. Yes

2. No

62. If the answer is yes, what form do these preferential treatments take?

63. Do you take part in extra curricular activities?

1. Yes

2. No

64. If the answer is yes, list down the activities

65. If the answer is no, why not?

66. How do you describe the majority of your fellow male students? (Please tick one item only).

- 1. Sociable and understanding
- 2. Sociable but vicious
- 3. Reserved, but sympathetic
- 4. Reserved and introvert
- 5. I don't know

68. Who are the main enemies of female students in the school?

- 1. Bad teachers
- 2. Bad male students
- 3. Guards
- 4. School management
- 5. Poverty
- 6. Others (Specify) _____

69. Is co-education the right choice for Ethiopian female students?

1. Yes

2. No

70. How do you evaluate your own parents?
1. Treat both sexes equally
 2. Prefer males
 3. Prefer females
 4. Do not know
71. How do you think the school management should treat its female students?
1. Equal with male students
 2. Give more attention to female students
 3. Give special attention to disadvantaged students
 4. Others (specify) _____
72. Are you able to say “No”, when others ask you to do something which you don’t like to do?
1. Yes, always
 2. Yes, sometimes
 3. No -----
73. Are you able to ask for help from others, when you are in need of help?
1. Yes, always
 2. Yes, sometimes
 3. No -----
74. Have you ever used intoxicating substances, either in group or alone?
1. Yes
 2. No
75. If yes, what are those intoxicating substances? (Multiple answers are possible)

1. Cigarettes
 2. Shisha smoking
 3. Chewing Chat
 4. Beer / wine
 5. Strong alcohols
 6. Others, please specify.....
76. How frequently you use them?
1. Always, when I get time and money
 2. Sometimes, when I am with friends
 3. Very rarely, when friends invite me
77. Who are your friends when you use such substances?
1. Girls
 2. Boys
 3. Both girls and boys
78. How do you rate about yourself, now and in future? (Self esteem)
1. I am capable of making good academic performance
 2. I am weak in studies, and unable to make good performance
 3. I am weak and helpless, and cannot perform like others
79. How do you rate your desire for recreations and enjoyment styles?
1. I like to enjoy whenever possible
 2. I like to have recreations and enjoyment occasionally
 3. I like to enjoy during holidays
 4. I don't want to enjoy by recreations in any occasion
80. How do you perceive about your physical health status?
1. I am perfectly healthy
 2. I have physical problems, but not much
 3. I have physical problems that always disturb my mind
81. Have you had any experience of problems related to reproductive/ sexual health?
1. Yes
 2. No
82. If yes, identify the problems you faced:.....
.....
.....

83. How did the problems (related to reproductive health) affect your school performance / what has happened because of the problem you faced?
1. Dropped from school
 2. Low school performance
 3. Unable to pass to the next grade
 4. Chased away from home
 5. Others, please specify.....
84. Do you think that problems of reproductive/ sexual health have influence on girls school participation and performance?
1. Yes
 2. No
85. Which of the following reproductive health related services are available in your school?
1. Education through teachers
 2. Information through clubs and mini-media
 3. Reproductive health clinics
 4. Reproductive health guidance and counseling
 5. Others, please specify
86. How do you generally rate your teachers in school?
1. I like them because they are kind and helpful to female students
 2. Some of them are good and helpful
 3. I don't like them because they are not helpful to female students
 4. I am afraid of them, since they may disturb female students
87. Which of the following factors are the major constraints for female students to pursue their studies at School? (Please tick wherever appropriate. (Multiple responses are possible).
1. Financial problems to cover personal expenses.
 2. Security on campus (permanent feeling of insecurity).
 3. Harassment from teachers.
 4. Insufficiency or lack of recreational facilities (music, arts, sports, etc.)
 5. Little or no supportive services (such as special tutorial classes, student-teacher relationship, etc.)

6. Lack of competent and experienced female counselors.
7. Limited contacts with the school management (lack of appropriate forum where gender-specific problems could be discussed).
8. Harassment from fellow male students.
9. Inadequacy of disciplinary measures taken on those who commit offenses against female students.
10. Limited teaching materials like textbooks and reference materials (female students are forced to share teaching materials with other students)
11. No separate latrine for girls
12. Class and sitting arrangement are not comfortable for girls
13. Unavailability of school health
14. Others (list them down) _____

88. Do you think educational materials in school (Books, examples in learning materials, pictures posted around school, teaching materials and methods) portray girl's traditional roles as housekeepers, cooks, care giver...?

1. Yes
2. No

89. Do you think that female students face gender-specific problems in the School?

1. Yes
2. No

90. If the answer is yes, list down these problems (On priority basis)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

91. What do you think are the root causes for the existence of these problems?

(On priority basis)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

92. Do you think that these problems could be overcome?

1. Yes 2. No

93. If the answer is yes, how? _____

94. If the answer is no, why not? _____

APPENDIX II

Check list for conducting Focused Group Discussions with female students

1. How do you rate the academic performance and successful completion of the studies between girls and boys?
2. What are the causes that adversely affect girls to perform as good as boys?
3. What are the specific factors that adversely affect girls inside the school?
4. What are the specific factors that adversely affect girls outside the school (at home or in other places)?
5. What are your comments on the bad experiences that girl students face in the school?
6. What are your suggestions to improve girls' participation in school education?
7. What are your suggestions to improve girls' academic performance in school?

APPENDIX III

Check list for conducting Focus Group Discussions with teachers in the school

1. How do you see the academic performance of boys and girls in the school?
2. What are the factors contributing to poor performance of girls?
3. How is the enrolment status of male and female students in this school? Are they satisfactory?
4. How is the attrition rate of female students here? What can be the major reasons?
5. What do you think about the role of teachers to improve girls' academic performance?
6. How the school atmosphere can help the girls to perform better?
7. What is your opinion about giving special attention to girl students, who are weak in academic performance?
8. Is there any counseling or guidance service in the school for girl students? How they work?
9. What are your practical suggestions to improve girls' performance to be adopted by schools, regional bureaus, and the government?