THE STUDY OF POLICY INTERVENTION ON FACTORS AFFECTING FEMALE STUDENTS' ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND CAUSES OF ATTRITION IN HIGHER LEARNING INSTITUTIONS OF ETHIOPIA

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CHAPTER I

1.1 Introduction

At the beginning of human history, the environment favored and promoted equality of males and females. However, as the exposure of males to the natural environment differed, various activities and dangers increased, both sexes started to differ in the nature and depth of experience (Power, 1975). Since then, the gender disparity that began in this way was widened by religious, political, economic, cultural and other factors. Currently, gender differentiations are reflected in the accesses to the three precious things of the world, political power, economic privileges and social or cultural prestige.

Consequently, females' exposures to these things, their contributions to the world and their benefits from the accommodated wealth of the world are affected by these factors. As a result, the problems of gender disparity have now become both vicious and spiral to approach. To alleviate this problem aggressive measures and integrated efforts are required from all the concerned politicians and academicians.

Education is one of the social factors where by gender disparity is reflected. In the field of education, the number of educated females is very low. As the grade level in school increases the number of female students starts to decline because of lots of factors. Consequently, higher education remains an area of learning from which women are less represented both as a student and staff. The very few women that are fortunate enough to join higher institutions are characterized by lower academic performance and higher forced withdrawal. Consequently, such inequity in higher education representation has a serious life long impact on their opportunities to participate in the country's political power sharing, economic privileges as well as social representations. This is because, currently, joining higher education has become an avenue to upward social mobility status, political power, economic privilege and social prestige.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

The Ethiopian government has given due consideration to realize equity and equality of both sexes in all spheres of life. One of the social sectors in which the government works

hard to ensure gender equality is the education sector. Since the implementation of the New Education and Training Policy (1994) various strategies are employed to increase females' enrollment in all levels of education. Besides, the affirmative action is duly being implemented to increase females' academic performance and to minimize females' attrition rates. Despite the increments of the number of female students in all levels of education, their academic performance is observed to be less than their male counters and their attrition is higher.

This suggests that the question of equality should not be measured only by the rate of enrollment and by the school inputs because some inputs may be of greater importance to certain groups of students. The new definition of equality is stipulated in such a way that the students are equal when the educational outcomes of these students are essentially the same for both males and females. Therefore, it is unwise to think gender equality in education by simply counting the number of female students enrolled in higher education institutions. This implies that equality of sexes can be ensured if the schools identify and solve the factors that affect females' academic performance and there by minimize female attritions in higher education institutions. However, schools and universities because of their biased treatments and some other external factors become centers of gender disparity.

For instance, some studies made in USA revealed that children of both sexes start school with roughly similar potential to learn. Their scores on IQ tests were approximately equivalent when gender difference was controlled. Yet, test scores of female students decrease over time until when children move up the ladder in the education arena. This implies that there are on campus and off campus factors those differential treat students across gender (Feldman, 1990).

In different times various factors have been stated to be the causes for lower academic performance and higher attrition rates of female students. For instance, the general institutional climate, the overall interaction and practice the students make with school personnel, institutional rules and regulations, sanctions, and the organizational structure,

is one salient non academic factor that influences female students' social and academic experience. It is long noted that the relationship between students and their universities is one significant predictor of social and academic development. To put it in yet another way, the managerial and organizational structure of the university unfairly treats students based on their background (Apple, 1980).

Another debilitating factor in the education of girls is stereotype. These stereotypes in higher institutions, based on students' characteristics serve as an important avenue in affecting females' academic performance. Eliminating stereotypical attitudes towards various groups that are represented in the classroom is a recognized avenue to increase females' academic performance and there by minimize their attrition rate in higher institutions (Rotherberg cited in Banks, 1997).

Further more, teacher student interactions, peer interaction, lack of adequate orientation, etc are presumed to be factors affecting females' education. Thus, this study plans to identify the major factors that influence females' academic performance in the Ethiopian higher learning institutions

Traced on the theoretical frame works and practical observations the following research questions were formulated.

1. What are on campus factors that affect the academic performance of female university students and cause higher attrition rate?

- What is the trend of attrition in higher learning institutions of Ethiopia across faculties and sexes
- Are there unfavorable school climates that affect females' education?
- Do female students receive adequate support from teachers and friends?
- Are there affirmative action programs in the universities?
- Is the affirmative action held in the universities effective?
- Are female students victims of sexual harassment and verbal abuse?

2. What are the off campuses factors that affect the academic performance of female university students?

- Does the socio-economic background of female students affect their academic performance?
- What are the surrounding environmental factors that affect females' academic performance?
- Does female students' residence affect their academic performance?

1.3 Objective of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to assess and identify the root internal and external causes of higher attrition rate and lower academic performance of female students compared to male students in the universities and to identify core problems for policy makers and educational planners.

More specifically, this study has the following set of objectives.

- To investigate the major on campus and off campus factors causing the attrition of female university students.
- To investigate the major on campus and off campus contributing factors for poor academic performance of female students as compared to males.
- To assess the pros cons of the affirmative action provided for female students
- To identify major off campus environmental influences for each university which may contribute to mislead students' behavior?
- To identify and document good practices which have been shown to contribute to a decrease female attrition rates and or increase academic performance.

1.4 Significance of the study

The higher education transformation is key means to implement the capacity building strategies in Ethiopia. Through its training, research and community based services, the higher education is planned to introduce innovative ideas pertinent to economic and social development and support a democratic system in the country. This is why the higher education transformation and its equitable distribution in the regions is one of the major issues of priority areas of the government efforts in higher education development.

Another concern in the area of higher education is gender equity/equality in admission, retention and graduation. The question of equity and equal opportunity of higher education for females and disadvantaged groups has now become the top agenda in educational debates held among the public, educators and politicians. Through the efforts of government to maintain equity through expansion of higher education, many of today's college and university campuses are not dominated by males and major ethnic groups like that were in the past three decades. This expansion of higher education has increased student population both in size and diversity. The question lies how many of female students graduate from higher institutions compared to their male counters?

Thus, the findings of this study help the government policy makers to identify the root causes of females' poor academic performance and their attrition rate and make informed decisions while setting policy frame work and interventions to be implanted in higher institutions. Higher learning institutions are also beneficiaries of the results of this study in that the findings help them to design strategies to increase female academic performance and alleviate female attrition rate.

Further more, Women's Ministry, Women organizations and other organizations who are working on women's affairs and NGOs will use the results to design better intervention strategies.

1.5 Scope of the Study

This study has focused on the major factors that affect female students' academic performance and causes of attrition in higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. Even though the female students' problems are multifaceted in this study attempts were made to examine on campus and off campus problems that cause low academic performance of female students. The issues of gender mainstreaming and the nature of curriculum have not been dealt in this study. The types of affirmative action, teachers' and students' attitudes towards affirmative action have also been considered in this study.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

The comprehensiveness of this study has been affected by many challenges. For instance, the attempts made to collect data from Addis Ababa University have faced resistance from the registrar office and the sample faculties. Besides, the data collection process from Gondor University was failed due to the reason that the University was engaged in organizing National Sport festival for higher learning institutions. Another challenge was lack of willingness of the higher learning institutions' teachers and students to give the necessary data. Besides, those who were volunteers to fill the data did not give full information as is required by the researchers. The attempts made to collect data from the community and other concerned individuals with regard to female education have also faced difficulties. Specially, the efforts made to assess the off campus factors have been affected by lack of the necessary data. Despite all these challenges, the researchers have tried to critically analyze the available data to answer the questions raised in the study.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1   School Factors Affecting Female Students' Academic Achievement

The general institutional climate is the overall interaction and practice the students make with school personnel, institutional rules and regulations, sanctions, and the organizational structure which in turn affect students practice in the school and their perception towards the school. It is one salient non academic factor that influences students' social and academic experience. It is long noted that the relationship between students and their universities is one significant predictor of social and academic development. To put it in yet another way, the managerial and organizational structure of the university unfairly treats students based on their background (Apple, 1980).

In explaining how the school structure affects minority students, Lawton, (1984) noted that the school is a subsystem of the larger social system and the larger social system is dependent on schools to pass along crucial beliefs and values through stereotypes and expectations and the structure that assigns   power, privileges and tasks by sex and ethnicity.

The way in which the teacher responds to student behavior, the often subtle distinctions made between sexes, the nature of classroom control mechanisms, the topics and issues chosen for classroom study and the rewards and punishment practiced are culturally loaded and transmit messages that reinforce certain student behavior and discourage others (Banks 1997).

A brief summary of student university interaction and its long lasting effect on students' sense of worth and identity has been given by Ballentine (1997.68) as follows.

> In colleges and universities students spend more in class and school related activities. Teachers and the university campus are the important source of their identity. Students in addition to a formal class, learn by observing their instructors, peers, and university administrators. They observe the ratio of males to females, rich and poor students from diverse culture, and the authority structure in the educational hierarchy.

Studies on student-university contact and college outcome suggest that the quality of the contact between them should be examined in greater detail in determining the academic out-comes of students (Banks, 1997).

Previous findings clearly suggest that minority students' perception of campus climates linked to students-university relationships and thus has an influence on self-concept. Most African American students reported that their relationships with faculty members and peers are negative and they avoid interacting inside or out side the class- room (Ibid).

Other findings suggest that students who do better academically reported that they are on better terms with faculty members, and find the institute to be generally supportive of their educational needs. Consequently, they appear to make a greater effort to interact with ethnic groups (Fuller, 1994).

If students feel that the school environment is alien and hostile toward them or does not affirm and value who they are (as many students ethnic minority believe), they will not be able to concentrate as thoroughly as they may be on academic tasks. The stress and the anxiety that accompany this lack of support and affirmation cause their mental attention, energy and efforts to be defused between protecting their psyches from attack and attending academic tasks (Astin, 1975).

This shows that unfavorable school climate adversely affects students' daily academic performance by reducing their willingness to persist at academic tasks and interfering with the cognitive process involved in learning (Craft, 1996). Furthermore, learning is a high risk taking enterprise that works better when students are made to feel secured and centered in who they are and what they are already capable of doing before they are asked to take on new ventures. Psychological security and a positive feeling of self-worth are pre-requisites for the more abstract need to know and learn. Unfavorable school climate may cause school failure more than intellectual ability for some culturally different students. Thus, maximizing school success requires creating conducive school climate (Ibid).

The kinds of social climates that exist in the classroom also affect students' performance on academic tasks. This influence is particularly true for ethnic groups that consider

social relations and informal settings imperative to the learning process. When teachers respond to these needs by including ethnic symbols, images and information in the classroom, curriculum content and interpersonal interactions, ethnic students feel validated, at ease, and have greater affiliation with the school.

These feelings of personal affirmation and comfort create the conditions of personal connectedness that is essential to students' taking ownership in learning, which, in turn, leads to more sustained attention, effort, time on task and improved task mastery and academic achievement. As a result, the other focus of this research is to examine the social climate of the higher learning institutions and whether or not they have differential treatments across students' backgrounds. More specifically, this study attempts to examine students' perception of the school climate and the nature of student power structure. Besides, this study addressed the presence of rules and regulations both at national and institutional levels that promote multicultural education.

Even when families encourage persistence, the poor performance of schools can pressure students into dropping out. One study revealed that female high school students are frequently enrolled in cosmetology classes or tracked into non college preparatory general education programs. Few vocational programs encourage females to enter nontraditional fields or offer them reasons to remain in school (Banks, 1997).

Female students may also leave school because of sexual harassment and the refusal of administrators to correct it. Sylvia Cedillo of the University of Texas Law School worked with the Stop Harassment in Public Schools Project (SHIPS) to eliminate sexual comments or jokes, sexist terms, sexual rumors, graffiti, leering, sexually graphic notes, and physical sexual harassment such as touching, grabbing, or pinching. Typically, sexual harassment begins in middle school, but many students report such behavior before the 7th grade. Competition and conflicts among "cliques" of girls can also result in harassment, affecting females' attitudes toward school and their ability to learn (Merten, 1997). As a result of sexual harassment, students often stay home, cut class, or do not contribute. They may experience difficulty concentrating on school work or suffer lowered self-esteem and self-confidence (Ballentine, 1997).

Peer attitudes also contribute to lower education aspirations among females. A major part of what students learn comes from friendships formed outside the classroom and the strategies of peers for coping with school (Kimura, 1999). Female students who are parts of peer groups that participate in and are accepted by the school do better in their classes and future jobs than students in peer groups that reject the school and feel rejected by it. According to Feldman (1993), students feel that social support from peers deteriorates significantly by the end of the first year in high school. Females with close friends who are school oriented are more likely to graduate and consider attending college.

The support of family, schools, and peers is very important to female students in completing higher education and taking nontraditional career paths (Grevatt, 1992). The current findings have also proved that the greater support female students receive from peers and teachers, the higher is their university GPA

School programs that promote self-efficacy, self-confidence, and high expectations are as important as programs that provide opportunities for higher academic achievement and career success.

Student support services designed to improve students' academic performances at early ages and help them set and work toward academic goals have been found to counter academic barriers such as teachers or counselors who discourage females from taking advanced classes. These programs also help them maintain their goals for academic success while retaining ties to friends who may not be school oriented.

There are numerous examples of gender bias in our classrooms from preschool through graduate education (Lewallen, 1992), and faculty need to counter these biases. Teachers can connect with female students by making physical or eye contact, allowing them ample time to answer questions, creating a sense of community and participation in the classroom, using examples in the classroom that are inclusive of female representatives, listening carefully and respectfully to students' questions and comments, and coaching students who seem reserved to speak.

Nelson (1993) identified a number of school factors that promote female students' success in higher education. The most critical is a university staff that believes all students can succeed. Other key factors include valuing students' languages and cultures, holding high expectations, making education a priority, offering a variety of courses, providing sound counseling, and providing staff training to help teachers serve female students more effectively.

As indicated above the problems of female students are multifaceted and are reflected at the time of admission, choice of stereotypically assigned fields and graduation from high schools and universities. With this situation it is unthinkable to realize gender equity and equality in education. Thus, the government both at national and regional levels should set workable policy that takes into account the prevailing social, cultural, economic and political context of the country and aggressively work towards its implementation.

2.2 Intervention Programs

The study conducted to examine effects of the intervention programs students' retention and college cumulative GPA show that the intervention programs had significant effects on retention and college cumulative GPA, and worked better for the first year. Retention is a complex issue involving many different factors. Whether a student departs from an institution is largely a result of the extent to which the student becomes academically and socially connected with the institution. As prince's (1993) model indicates, as students are integrated into and become more interdependent with both academic and social elements of a university, the probability that the student will leave the university declines. Astin (1975) also found that involvement was critical to a student's decision to persist or drop out school. In other words, involvement with faculty and student peer groups encourages participation in social and intellectual life of a college and, therefore, helps learning and persistence in college (Astin, 1975).

Other factors that may also affect retention and academic performance include institutional type, motivations for attending college, financial aid, fulfillment of expectations for college, sense of community in residence halls, self-efficacy, attitudes

and maladaptive coping strategies (Banks,1997). In addition, previous research results show that interactions of those factors with students' characteristics, e.g., demographics and college preparedness, play an important role on their success in college.

In the literature, most research on students' success in college has used student enrollment data to explore factors affecting students' success in college. Such research has provided much valuable information to college administrators, faculty and staff. As a result, many universities have setup programs based on the theories in the field and the results of research trying to improve students' academic achievement and prevent students from attrition. However, research on intervention program effects somewhat falls behind. Such research would make an important contribute to the literature.

In an effort to manage the attrition problem and improve students' academic performance, the one university has initiated nearly 100 intervention programs, from 2001 to 2003, with the Success Challenge grant funded by the state. The Success Challenge grant has two components: 1) challenging university campuses to enable at-risk students successfully to earn baccalaureate degrees; and 2) challenging university campuses to enable baccalaureate seeking students to complete their degrees in a timely fashion, typically four years. In theory, these programs were set up based on Prince's (1993) Student Integration Model and Astin's (1975) Theory of Involvement. Most of the interventions programs were designed to promote student-to- student interaction, faculty-to-student interaction, student involvement, academic engagement, and academic assistance. They can be roughly categorized into six different program types based on the types of services they provide. The categories consist of advising, academic help, first-year experience (FYE), social integration, general orientation, and financial aid.

Slaughter (2004) stated that freshman orientation may be effective to reduce the risk of dropping out. It is not clear whether the other types of intervention are effective or not, and how long the effect lasts. It is also a great concern to the stakeholders and the administrators about which programs work, how they work, and which one works better, and to whom. The purpose of this present study is to try to answer these questions by examining the effects of the intervention programs on retention and students ' academic

performance which is measured by college cumulative GPA across 3 years, interacting with students' characteristics, using multilevel longitudinal modeling. The research investigated reasons for leaving study amongst a sample of 118 mature age female students who had been enrolled at one of three eastern Australian universities. Analysis of questionnaire data revealed three major types of motive for attrition. Firstly, a strong socio-economic class influence was found. Women whose own   social class indicators were low tended to leave study because of a combination of lack of support from family for the mother's study, lack of money, weight of domestic responsibility and lack of knowledge or skills expected at university. Secondly, women who had been enrolled in non-traditional subjects (economics/business/law) were relatively over-represented amongst the discontinuing students and were particularly likely to cite lack of academic support or staff hostility as a reason for leaving. Thirdly, reasons for leaving study were found to be connected to student's age, suggesting a life style interpretation. Younger women   were likely to leave because of family and financial   related reasons. Older women were more likely to leave because of practical difficulties or course dissatisfaction.

2. 3 Affirmative Action

Affirmative action is a very controversial issue that always causes great sensation and discussions among educators and politicians. It is a term describing a series of orders, rules and procedures designed to protect minorities from discrimination in employment, education and other services. It was started to combat the effects of historical discrimination that denied minorities equal educational opportunities. This definition gives the impression of what affirmative action consist of and shows the reason for it was created for. It has not been created to repay past discrimination, but also to balance the modern one that is even today still present in a huge dimension.

The practice of affirmative action is an attempt to resolve the issue of discrimination. Affirmative action is the proactive or the preferential treatment of persons in employment, the admission of to selective schools and universities and the granting of

other social goods and resources by giving positive consideration to specified races and ethnicities and to one gender (Crosby, 123). Despite the practice of affirmative action, the complexities of the issue of discrimination have prevented a resolution, and now more than ever, the confusion about the issue of gender and ethnicity continue to grow.

The roots of affirmative action reach widely back to the past. To understand its origins and development one has to know something about how minorities were treated. For instance in America, the civil rights movement that began in 1861 (the struggle to liberate slaves) was considered as the first antecedent to the affirmative action. It was strengthened by the 1941 all Black March on Washington (4). The Civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King is another land mark in the development of affirmative action in America.

However, affirmative action has officially been introduced in America when President Kennedy issued special orders that demanded from companies to employ a certain number of women and minorities. Since then, affirmative action has been widely introduced both as a political and educational agenda in different parts of the world. The affirmative action which began to resolve the discrimination of Blacks has now been stretched to encompass all forms of minorities, gender, disabilities, ethnicity, religion, etc.

Affirmative action in the area of education has been questioned and debated since 1978, immediately it was put into practice and the first court issue was heard on its implementation.

In Ethiopia, affirmative action has been introduced during the Derge regime when students of the military class, women and rural areas were given quotas for higher education admission. However, well articulated and constitutionally backed affirmative action has began in 1991 after EPRDF overthrow the Derge regime and took power.

Despite its wide application in education sector, affirmative action is not without criticisms. Opponents of affirmative action oppose the supporters that it cannot be fair to let majorities who have not done anything, pay for the crimes their ancestors have committed. Others say, affirmative action programs are little more than a cover for putting unqualified and incompetent minorities into plumy positions they couldn't otherwise achieve and at the expense of people who, by rights, should have the job or place in school (13). Others still say that affirmative action never went beyond the question of race and because of that it only aggravates the race differences instead of reducing it and compensating it.

Affirmative action is dangerous because it bypasses our nations merit based ethic and instead focuses on racial and ethnic categories. The merit-based ethic, one of the most basic and fundamental parts of our democratic society, is being replaced by equality of group representation.

The lack of the merit-based ethic under affirmative action can cause the unintended result of feeling of inferiority by minorities. As to Steel (Black professor) affirmative action leads to self-doubt and the questioning of self-worth among minorities. The effect of preferential treatment-the lowering of normal standards to increase minority representation-puts them at war with an expanded realm of debilitating doubt so that the doubt it self becomes an unrecognized preoccupation that undermine their ability to perform especially in integrated situation Crosby, 20). Without affirmative action, minorities are considered as individuals and not statistics. Diversity, the major goal of affirmative action, is greatly misconstrued. The concept of diversity was first derived by Powell in 1978 to explain that race could be a plus factor in college admission. But currently, it was taken as a final factor to determine for admission in higher education beyond the implied limits.

Research results are not lacking to portray the existence of negative perception towards affirmative action. For instance, the study conducted in 1991 in USA indicated that to the question "Do you believe that because of past discrimination of Black people; qualified

blacks should receive preference over equally qualified white in such matters as getting into colleges and jobs?" Seventy two per cent whites and 42 % of blacks responded that blacks should not receive preference (Crosby, 236). However, there was no gender difference in the belief regarding affirmative action.

To defend and advance the goals of affirmative action, proponents have had to provide evidence that racial diversity in higher education benefits all students. Proponents of affirmative action argue that faulty conception of educators towards affirmative action might be attributed to several factors. The first of all might be lack of multicultural awareness among the faculty. For instance, in my experience as planning officer of Bahir Dar University (one of the sample universities), I was the head of the affirmative action planned to recruit female instructors with lesser academic achievement. In this post, I observed that the majority of instructors were observed opposing the affirmative action. They were also observed while criticizing the program in many staff meetings.

One female instructor who was recruited on the basis of normal competition came to my office and told me that the affirmative action makes the university students and the community to perceive females as inferior and factors for the failure of the quality of education. This experience attests the view that the use of affirmative action in academia to represent women and minority faculty has often resulted in worker's perception that they are tokens or outcomes of reverse discrimination (Neimann, 1999; Delgado, 1991).

This single experience attests the conception that the dominant groups maintain their dominance not only by force but also by getting consensus from the minority themselves. Thus, to eliminate this misconception from the university community, the provision of multicultural education is of paramount importance.

The implementation of affirmative action in higher education encompasses both the diversity of student population and faculty representation from minorities and women. The assumption is that when minority students and women are admitted to higher education they bring new version of knowledge and experience to the university. Besides, the universities become the true reflections of the society they meant to serve.

Diversity should mean more than numbers and percentages, that it should not be limited to matters of race and ethnicity and that, importantly, the presence of diversity should not be interpreted to mean that there exists the presence of equity (Slaughter, 2004). Smith cited in Slaughter (2004; 8) argues that "The emphasis on a diversity is indeed critical but for more reasons than are often articulated." She describes five reasons. In order to provide support for the benefit of students from particular groups, to show institutions commitment to all students, creates a more comfortable environment for students as well as for faculty and reflects the institutional success for pluralistic society.

A diverse faculty will mean better educational outcomes for all students. To serve current and future student population, multiple and diverse perspectives are needed at every level of college teaching and governance (Ibid).

The more diverse college and university students and faculty are, the more likely all students are exposed to a wider range of scholarly perspectives and to ideas drawn from a variety of life experience. It is also important that colleges and universities transform what and how they teach to better serve new students and to prepare all students for an increasingly diverse world (Smith, 1990). Despite some progress, the minority and women are still grossly underrepresented among college students and faculty. Aggressive recruitment efforts are still needed to achieve equity.

If the higher learning institutions accept as their goal the creation and sustenance of culturally pluralistic and inclusive institutions that affirm the presence of difference throughout and that value excellence at all levels of the institutions-in its students, faculty, staff, administration, governing board, curriculum, student service, social organizations and missions- then, it should do more than achieve and celebrate diversity. In other words, the mere presence of diversity does not assure the presence of equality of opportunity. Something in the institution has to be in place (Slaughter, 2004). That something consists of two things. One, the institution must have the will and the capacity to change in order to address fully the educational and socialization needs of its increasingly more diverse population. Two, there must be an unwavering commitment to excellence (Craft, 1996).

When proponents of affirmative action explain its importance, they said that today, overt discrimination has all but disappeared but more subtle remnants of racial, gender, ethnic bias remain and continue to prevent the higher learning institution campuses from being the models of pluralism. One of the factors in the biased treatment of higher learning institution environment is lack of diversified student, academic and administrative staff. "Although teacher quality has been accepted and internalized as a tune for school reform, the imperative for diversity is often marginalized rather than accepted as central to the quality education to teaching (Niemann, 1999)

They further propounded that the challenge of ensuring teacher excellence and diversity are not new. However, only recently have these issues begin to garner the public attention needed to bring about actual change in the composition of the student and teaching force (Aquirre, 2000).

One of the principal impediments that educators must overcome is the mindset on most college and university campuses that diversity refers only to the composition and the characteristics of the student body.

Diversity among the student population, while necessary, is not sufficient to conclude that the institution is diverse and inclusive. True diversity requires going beyond the composition of the students enrolled. It requires diversity at all levels; students, faculty, administrators and governing board. Despite the existence of such progressive conceptions, little attention has been paid to the issue of cultural competence and diversity in the teacher workforce-critical factor in improving the performance of minority students through affirmative action.

"A true commitment to diversity requires more than concern for the diversity of the students, It requires a similar commitment to the diversity of those responsible for providing the education-faculty, administrators, staff, and to the diversity of academic and support services provided to those students. Only then, can a meaningful assessment of the institution's commitment to a pluralistic, inclusive and multicultural learning environment be made. Only, then, does a commitment to diversity make it self evident (Slaughter, 2004; 5)." Furthermore, diversity should not be seen as a goal, it should be seen as the means to achieving equity and pluralism.

National Collaboration on Diversity in the Teaching Force (Niemann, 1999) has conducted a survey study on the demographic data and the growing diversity of American higher learning institutions. The participants of the study voiced the widespread concern about the demographic disparities and their negative impacts on the quality of education for all children. The same study affirms that the percentage of teachers from women does not even approximate the percentage of students from minority groups.

Policy makers, teacher educators, members of ethnic communities and school teachers agree that the education profession needs more teachers from minority groups and females.

More diversified teaching force mean:

- Increase the role model for women and minority students.
- Provide opportunities for all students to learn about ethnic and cultural diversity.
- Be able to reach diverse students' learning because of shared gender, ethnic and cultural identities.

Although the contributions are sometimes identified as having more of an impact on the social and relational areas than on academic performance, increasing the percentage of students and teachers from diverse groups in the workforce is connected directly to closing the achievement gap of students (NCDTF, 2004: 6). In view of this, Aguirre (2000) noted that staff diversity helps in closing achievement gaps that persist between students of different gender, ethnic and economic groups.

The affirmative action to diversify the higher education institutions is not free from theoretical criticism and practical resistance (Humphreys, no date). Critics of affirmative action in higher education have suggested that proactive efforts to diversify the pool of minority and women faculty members are unnecessary and unfair.

The favorite argument of those who fear diversity is that it affects the emphasis on quality and the pursuit of excellence as a consequence of its focus on equality and the presence of equity (Slaughter, 2004).

Evidence suggests, however, that current efforts to diversify college faculty are, in fact, both fair and badly needed if higher education is to adequately serve to diverse student population (Humphreys, no date). As a result, the institutions of higher learning continue to use affirmative action to diversify their faculty by recruiting women and minorities which in turn results an increase in number of women and minority faculty in higher education (Aguirre, 2000).

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

This research sought to investigate factors for the low achievement and higher attrition of female students in the higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. The study involves both qualitative and quantitative research methods. More specifically, the study focused on assessing the impacts of various background characteristics on females' academic performance and attrition, the major problems that challenge female students in higher learning institutions, students and teachers' attitudes towards affirmative action, and the major factors that affect females' academic performance.

The quantitative instrument was a questionnaire. This instrument was used to collect data about the various background characteristics on females' academic performance and attrition, the major problems that challenge female students in higher learning institutions, students and teachers' attitudes towards affirmative action, and the major factors that affect females' academic performance. The qualitative part constitutes the document analysis and interview.

Generally, this part of the study addresses populations and samples of the study, methods of data collection, data gathering tools, sampling procedures, variables to be dealt with the study, and the data analysis techniques.

3.2. Populations, Samples and Sampling Techniques of the Study

Students of higher learning institutions of Ethiopia were the focus of this study. 2nd year and above undergraduate students were selected for the reason that their long stay in the universities might have made them clearly understand the factors that affect female students' academic performance and causes of attrition.

Currently there are 21 universities. However, data was collected from eight universities. These universities include, Mekele, Bahir Dar, Gondor, Addis Ababa, Adama, Haramaya, Hawassa, and Jimma. They are purposefully selected with the assumption that these universities have long years of experience and the factors that affect females' academic performance might give a true picture of the higher learning institutions in Ethiopia. Besides, the availability of diversity of programs in these universities was one factor for selecting these universities for the study.

Five faculties, Education, Engineering, Law, Business and Economics and Agriculture, are selected from each university. Thes universities are selected with the assumption that they are available in most of the target universities. In those universities which do not have education or Agriculture, Natural Science Faculties were taken as sources of data. Four departments from each of the four faculties were purposefully selected.

Finally, the questionnaire was distributed to 20 students in the classroom randomly. In the sections where there are adequate numbers of females, 15 females and 5 males were selected arbitrarily in the classroom. However, when the number of female students in the sections was found below 15, the number of male students was increased. More specifically, 600 students from each University and a total of 3600 students from six universities were made to fill the questionnaire. Of these 2345 were females and the remaining 1265 were males. However, 2873 questionnaires were returned and of these only 1496 questionnaires were found properly filled.

Similar questionnaire with some modifications was dispatched to instructors in the departments where students are selected. 506 (58 females and 448 males) questionnaires were dispatched to the instructors of higher learning institutions. Of these, only 345 were returned. And, only 123 of them were found legible for analysis.

3.3. Data Gathering Instruments

In this study, four data gathering instruments were used. They were questionnaire, document analysis, observation and interview. The way such instruments were developed and scored is explained hereunder.

3.3.1. Quantitative Instrument

1. **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed to assess the factors affecting female students' academic performance and causes of attrition in higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. A total of 179 items were developed It included background information (10), measure of parents education level (10), recreation centers (12), Money spending (7), prevalent problems (18), university environment (11), nature of affirmative action (8), attitude towards affirmative action (16), factors for low performance and attrition (17), support from friends (15), support from teachers (11), locus of control (20).

Except the items used to measure students' locus of control, the rest were constructed by the researchers on the basis of theoretical and empirical grounds about factors affecting females academic performance and causes of attrition.

To measure its face validity and to avoid ambiguity in language construction different procedures were employed. First, 200 (150 female and 50 male) readmitted students (who were academically dismissed in the year 1999) in the year 2000 were given an open ended question about factors that affect female students' academic performance and causes of attrition in higher learning institutions. After analyzing and categorizing the responses 179 items were developed. Next, Ten 2nd year students were made to fill the questionnaire and to tick the items that were difficult and ambiguous. Next, the researcher sat together with the students and made amendments about the items they found are unclear.

After doing this, the questionnaire was given to one Associate Professor in English language teaching and one Assistant Professor in Measurement and Evaluation. Finally, a Pilot study was conducted to determine the reliability of each scale and to discard items that did not correlate with the total scores. The reliability test revealed that the questionnaire has a .73 reliability which is acceptable.

3.3.2 Qualitative Data Gathering Instruments

1. Document Analysis

The document analysis was carried out to examine the rate of female students' attrition from higher learning institutions. To see the trends of female students' attrition in higher learning institutions the documents from the Registrar were consulted. For this purpose documents from 1998-2000 E.C were analyzed.

2. Interview. Interview was conducted with University Officials, Gender offices, Deans' of Stuents, and female students. The results of interview are employed to substantiate the results gathered through questionnaire and document analysis.

3. Focus group discussion. Focus group discussions were held with gender office heads, gender club members, female students and studets' council memebrs. The issue of discussion was about the problems of female students, the nature and effectiveness of affirmative action, the problems of gender offices, etc.

4. Observation: Observation was conducted to assess the off campus factors that detach students from thier focus on the academic matters.

3.4. Data Analysis Techniques

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were employed. The data gathered through the questionnaire from students was analyzed using mean, standard deviation, t-test, and Linear Regression analysis. The Software called SPSS 13.00 was employed to analyze the quantitative data.

The data collected through documment analysis was analysed qualitatively through narration and using percentage. The interview and the focus group discussions were also analysed qualitatively and used to support the findings obtained through questionnaire and document analysis.

CHAPTER IV

4.1 Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

This part deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of the data gathered through various instruments. The analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. The quantitative data analysis was carried out on the results obtained through the questionnaire. The qualitative one is held on the data obtained through the document analysis, focus group discussion and interview. The pilot study was conducted to validate the questionnaire. The reliability of the questionnaire was found to be .73, which is acceptable. After validating the questionnaire, the data was collected from eight sample universities. A total of 3600 students were randomly selected from 2nd, 3rd and 4th students. First year students were not included in the study and the results of the analysis made are presented hereunder.

Table1.

The Enrolment and Attrition of Students in Five Universities for Three Consecutive Years across Gender

Bahir Dar University Enrollment and Attrition

Fac	Sex	1998			1999			2000			
		Enro	Attr		Enro	Attr		Enro	Attr		Total
Educ	Male	3260	278	8%	3214	345	11%	3580	257	7%	10054
	Fema	857	242	28%	1218	339	28%	910	264	29%	2985
FBE	Male	1224	149	12%	2068	166	8%	2059	216	10%	5351
	Fema	400	122	30%	716	140	20%	662	178	27%	1778
Law	Male	482	16	3%	553	18	3%	700	7	1%	1735
	Fema	164	37	23%	182	20	11%	179	4	2%	525
Eng	Male	2623	51	2%	2670	112	4%	2164	50	2%	7457
	Fema	643	14	2%	595	110	18%	452	30	18%	1690
Agri	Male	192	39	20%	525	55	10%	812	47	6%	1529
	Fema	47	34	72%	110	23	21%	166	25	16%	323
		9892	982	10%	11851	1328	11%	11684	1078	9%	

Table1 shows that in the year 1998, high attrition rate (72%) of female students is observed in Agriculture faculty, Bahir Dar University. FBE and Education faculties constitute the second (30%) and the third (28%) positions with regard to female students' attrition in Bahir dar University. In 1999, high attrition of female students is observed in Education faculty (28%). In the same year, 21 % of female students were dropped out in Agriculture faculty and 20% in FBE. In 2000, the attrition for the same group was Education (29%), FBE (27%) and Engineering (18%).

Table 2

Haramaya University Enrollment and Attrition

Fac	Sex	1999			2000			
		Enro	Attr		Enro	Attr		
Educ	Male	2380	238	10%	2381	259	11%	4761
	Fema	583	231	40%	620	224	36%	1203
FBE	Male	1598	51	3%	1751	61	3%	3349
	Fema	412	91	22%	404	54	13%	816
Law	Male	672	0	0%	568	12	2%	1240
	Fema	242	7	3%	203	9	4%	445
Eng	Male	412	10	2%	643	28	4%	1055
	Fema	89	15	17%	147	22	15%	236
Agri	Male	1983	77	3%	1876	166	9%	3859
	Fema	475	59	12%	455	80	18%	930
		8846	779	9%	9048	915	10%	17894

Table 2 portrays the enrollment and attrition rate of students in Haramaya University for the years 1999 and 2000 E.C. Female students' attrition ranges from 40% in Education faculty followed by 22% in FBE and 12% in Agriculture faculty in 1999. In 2000, 36% of female students in Education faculty are academically dismissed. Besides, 18% from Agriculture and 15% from engineering faculties leave the universities in the same year

Table 3

Adama University Enrollment and Attrition

Fac	Sex	1998			1999			2000			
		Enro	Attr		Enro	Attr		Enro	Attr		Total
Educ	Male				81	5	6%	331	70	21%	412
	Fema				120	53	44%	472	49	10%	592
FBE	Male	383	279	73%	690	233	34%	488	155	32%	1561
	Fema	302	176	59%	297	197	66%	291	152	52%	890
Nat. Sc	Male				183	10	5%	475	95	20%	658
	Fema				131	14	11%	164	65	40%	295
Eng	Male	348	111	32%	575	175	30%	616	71	12%	1539
	Fema	168	96	57%	118	52	44%	117	69	59%	403
Agri	Male										
	Fema										

Table 3 above indicates that high attrition of students in general and female students in particular was observed in Adama University in the year 1998 E.C. 73% of male and 59% of female students were academically dismissed from FBE and 57% of female students were forced to dropout academically in engineering faculty. In 1999, 66% in FBE, 44% each in education and engineering faculties were academically dismissed. 59% of female students in engineering faculty and 52% of female students from FBE were forced to leave the university in the year 2000 E.C.

Table 4

Mekele University Enrollment and Attrition

NO.	Faculty	Sex	1998 Enro	Attr		1999 Enro	Atri		2000 Enro	Attr		Total		
1	Education	Male	207	26	13%	153	66	43%	193	46	24%	553		
		Female	88	35	40%	136	81	60%	189	81	43%	413		
2	FBE	Male	1638	138	8%	1894	176	9%	2906	189	7%	6438		
		Female	596	167	28%	698	234	34%	691	202	29%	1985		
3	Law	Male	625	16	2%	731	11	2%	665	3	.4%	2021		
		Female	182	19	23%	224	22	10%	247	5	2%	653		
4	Engineering	Male	420			275	19	7%	277	60	22%	972		
		Female	104			87	25	29%	65	21	32%	256		
5	Agriculture	Male	428	59	14%	418	67	16%	455	43	9%	1301		
		Female	196	45	23%	182	49	27%	183	50	27%	561		
		Total	4484	505	11%	4798	750	16%	5871	700	12%	15153		

As it is indicated in Table 4, 40% of female students from Education, 28% from FBE and 23% each from both Law and agriculture faculties of Mekele University were academically dismissed in the year 1998 E.C. Similar patterns were observed in the years 1999 and 2000 E.C. That is, 60% of female students from Education faculty, 34% from FBE and 29% from Engineering were forced to leave the university through dismissal. 42% of females enrolled in the Education faculty of Mekele University in the year 2000 E.C were academically dismissed. In addition to this, 32% and 24% of female students were academically dismissed in the year 2000 E.C. from Engineering and FBE respectively.

Table 5

Jimma University Enrollment and Attrition

NO.	Faculty	Sex	1999 Enro	Atri		2000 Enro	Attr		Total M& F
1	Education	Male	885	115	13%	967	147	15%	966
		Female	325	174	54%	377	145	38%	
2	FBE	Male	162	33	20%	514	100	19%	8423
		Female	27	16	59%	268	110	41%	
3	Law	Male	169	6	4%	99	1	1%	2674
		Female	59	15	25%	52	3	6%	
4	Engineering	Male	216	19	9%	290	30	10%	1228
		Female	60	26	43%	83	24	29%	
5	Agri	Male	421	46	11%	401	18	4%	1862
		Female	151	60	38%	120	20	17%	
		Total							15153

The enrollment and attrition rate of students in Jimma University were presented in Table 5. A critical look at the data reveals that the attrition rate of female students ranges from 59% in FBE, 54% in Education faculty and 43% in faculty of Engineering from the first to the third in order.

Hawassa University Enrollment and Attrition

NO.	Faculty	Sex	1998 Enro	Attr		1999 Enro	Atri		2000 Enro	Attr		
1	Education	Male	422	8	2%	421	14	3%	701	56	8%	
		Female	69	2	3%	82	7	9%	263	91	35%	
2	FBE	Male	496	38	8%	327	19	6%	256	19	7%	
		Female	90	60	67%	137	12	9%	141	48	34%	
3	Law	Male	134	2	1.4%	87	0	0%	65	2	3%	
		Female	30	2	7%	42	0	0%	27	2	7%	
4	Engineering	Male	259	16	6%	244	11	5%	232	0	0%	
		Female	77	30	39%	48	3	6%	45	3	7%	
5	Agri	Male	374	15	4%	357	5	1%	358	17	5%	
		Female	169	45	27%	124	13	10%	112	20	18%	
		Total										

The results in Table 6 indicated that 3% of female students from Education, 67% from FBE, 7% from Law, 37% from Engineering and 27% from Agriculture Faculties of Hawassa University were academically dismissed in the year 1998 E.C. However drastic change was observed in female students' academic dismissal in the year 1999. That is, only 9% of female students from Education and FBE Faculties, 0% from Law, 6% from Engineering and 10% from Agriculture were academically dismissed. In the year 2000 E.C., 35% of female students from Education Faculty were forced to leave the university through academic dismissal. Similarly, 34% of female students from FBE, 7% each from both Law and Engineering faculties and 18% from Agriculture Faculty were academically dismissed.

Responses to Problems Female Students Encounter in Higher Learning Institutions.

Students were given the list of 19 possible problems that female students in higher learning institutions may face to rank in order. These items were first collected from 200 (150 females and 50 males readmitted students in BDU during Pilot study) through opened ended questions. The responses are summarized in the table below.

Table 6

Problems Female Students Encounter in Higher Learning Institutions

Rank	Problems in the University	Categories
1	fear of failure	Personal
2	economic problem	Economic
3	Being placed in the department they were not interested	University envir
4	Influence from bad senior friends	University enviv
5	lack of special support services	University env.
6	adjustment problem	University envi
7	presence of unfavorable attitude towards females	University envi
8	verbal and physical harassment by male students	University envi
9	lack of concerned body to consult females	University envi
10	Shyness	Personal
11	lack of assertiveness	Personal
12	Homesickness	Personal
13	becoming easily desperate	Personal
14	lack of facilities (separate reading places, medical, recreation, etc)	University envi
15	family imposition and control	Family
16	verbal and physical harassment by male teachers	University envi
17	lack of security in dormitories	University envi
18	verbal and physical harassment by other staff members in the university and	University envi
19	Rape	University envi

As indicated in Table 6 the problems can be categorized by family related problems, economic problems, personality problems, and problems related to the university environment. Out of 19 problems listed to be ranked in order, 1 problem is related to family, 5 problems are related to personality and 1 problem is related to economic problem. The remaining 13 problems are related to the university environment. University related problems are caused by male students, teachers and lack of support services.

The results in Table 6 further revealed that <u>fear of failure</u> are found to be the first problem that challenges female students in higher learning institutions. The second problem was found to be <u>economic problem</u>. <u>Being placed in the department they are not interested</u> is the third problem females' face in higher learning institutions. The above mentioned problems are the problems female students encounter in higher learning institutions from 1st to 19th in order.

Responses to Factors for Low Achievement and Causes of Attrition

In the pilot study 200 (150 female and 50 male) students were given open ended questions to list the possible factors that contribute for female students' low academic performance and higher attrition. The responses were analyzed and the most frequently mentioned items were included in the final questionnaire for students to rank in order from the most significant factor to the less significant one. The responses obtained from students of higher learning institutions are presented in the Table below.

Table 7

Rank	Factors affecting academic performance	Categories
1	lack of self confidence	Personal
2	Lack of adequate effort	Personal
3	Carelessness	Personal
4	lack of ability to be competent	Personal
5	Lack of proper reading place where they can use freely	University environment
6	Homesickness	Personal
7	difficulty of education	Academic
8	the influence of male students	University environment
9	the influence from male teachers and other staff members	University environment
10	lack of proper guidance	University environment
11	Tension	Personal
12	poor high school performance	Academic
13	falling in love easily	Personal
14	inability to become well planned and organized	Personal
15	academic advising problem	University environment
16	shortage of money to support one self and	Economic
17	being addicted to drinking, smoking, disco houses, etc,	Personal

The results in Table 7 show that out of the 17 factors that presumed to be factors affecting female students' academic performance, the first 4 are personal related factors. They include <u>lack of self confidence,</u> lack of effort, carelessness and inability to be competent. The remaining factors include university environment, academic, economic and personal.

The above mentioned factors constitute the rank from the 1st to 17th from the most significant factor that contributes for female students' low academic performance and higher attrition to the less significant factors.

The interview with the university clinics has proved that pregnancy is one of the serious problems that female students encounter in higher learning institutions. As to the responses obtained from Nurses working in three universities, at an average of 3-4 female students per week come to the clinic seeking help for pregnancy cases.

Table 8

Correlation among Support Friends and Teachers, Problems Females Encounter in HEI, Their Perception of University Environment, Entrance Exam and their GPA.

GPA	1.000						
riendsup	**.091**	1.000					
Unienv	**.071**	**,132**	1.000				
roblems	**-.118**	**.304**	**,223**	1.000			
Teacsup	**.081**	**.365**	.344	**.171**	1.000		
Entexam	**.209**	**.076**	**.075**	**.103**	**.122**	1.000	
	GPA	**riensup**	**nienv**	**roblems**	**eacsup**	**ntexam**	1.000

The correlation analysis is carried out among students' University GPA, support from friends, perception of university environment, problems students encounter in the university, support from teachers and students' entrance exam results. The results demonstrate surprising relationships. University GPA is correlated highly and significantly with support from friends, support from teachers, favorable perception of university environment and entrance exam results. However, students' GPA negatively but significantly correlated with the problems students encounter in the universities. That is, the more students believe that they have problems in the university; the lower is their university GPA.

The correlation ranges from (r=0.209) with entrance exam to (r=-o.118) with problems students encounter in the university, (.091) with support from friends, (r=.081) with support from teachers and followed by (r=.o71) with students perception of university environment.

Table 9

Predictors of Students' Academic Performance in Higher Learning Institutions.

Mode; variables	B	t	Sig,
University Environment	-.092	-2.447	.015
Problems in the university	-.098	-2.633	.009
Support from friends	-.113	-2.923	.004
Support from teachers	.097	2.462	.014
Entrance score	.226	6.462	.000
Age	.036	1.035	.301

After having ascertained the relationship analysis among different variables university environment, College GPA, support from friends, support from teachers, entrance exam, and age by means of Product moment Correlation Coefficient, the researchers have further analyzed the data by means of regression analysis technique. The main purpose of this higher order analysis is to pinpoint the most important predictors of female students' achievement in higher learning institutions. The results in Table 9 portray that except students' age the rest of factors, such as entrance exam, conduciveness of university environment, support from friends, support from teachers, and problems students encounter in their university life significantly predict students' academic performance in higher learning institutions of Ethiopia.

Table 10

t-test On Friends and Teachers Support Between Sexes

Sources		Male		Female		df
F	Sig.	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Support from friends 2.853	.019	33.96	27.68	30.70	29.22	1
Support from teachers 1.308	.000	78.54	9.1	73.59	9.66	1

Two t-tests are run to determine if there are statistically significant differences between the means of male and female students support services given by their friends and teachers   The results depict that the mean differences between male and female students are statistically significant at $p< 0.05$ for friends support and $p<.01$ for support from teachers in favor of males. This implies that male students received more support from friends and teachers than their female counters. In other words, female students receive less information, share less experience about the academic and social life in higher education and less guidance from their friends and teachers.

Table 11

Cross Tabulation between Female Students' Aptitude Score and Year of Dismissal in Higher Institutions

		Aptitude score				Total
		1.00	2.00	3.00	4.00	
Yeardis	1.00	13(1%)	321(25.6%	457(36.3)	20(1.5%)	811(64.6%)
	2.00	12(1%)	211(16.8%)	112(8.9%)	6(.47%)	341(27.14%)
	3.00	4(.3%)	51(4%)	40(3.2%)	1	96(7.6%)
	4.00	0	2(.1%)	5(4%)	0	7(.^%)
	Total	29(2.3)	585(46.6%)	615(48.9%)	27(2.1%)	1255

The Table above indicates that out of 1255 female students dismissed academically from various universities, 811 (64.6 %) were first year students. 341 are 2nd year, 96 are 3rd and the remaining 7 were from 4th year students. The data shows that the majority of

students who were academically dismissed were at the freshman level. The results from Table 11 further revealed that 456 students whose aptitude test scores range from 41-60 were academically dismissed at 1st year, 112 at 2nd year, 40 at 3rd year and 5 at 4th year level. However, 321 students whose aptitude score range from 21-40 at dismissed at 1st year level, 211 students at 2nd year, 51 at 3rd year and 2 at 4th year. The trend shows that as year of study increases the number of academic dismissal decreases. When the data is critically seen, the numbers of students whose aptitude scores were higher had been dismissed at first year level compared to those students whose aptitude scores were between 20-40.

More over, the longer these students stay in the universities, the number of dismissal decreases compared to female students with lower aptitude scores. This might be attributed to the problem of adjustment at first year level and lack of orientation and proper guidance and counseling. That is, when students whose aptitude scores are higher get time to adjust in the social and academic life in the universities, the possibility to use their potential increases.

Table 12

Cross Tabulation on Female Students' Mothers' Occupation and their Entrance Exam Score

		Entrance Exam			Total
		101-200	201-300	301-4.00	
Motheroc	1.00	50	183	13	246
	2.00	8	16	0	24
	3.00	5	21	6	32
	4.00	5	6	6	17
	5.00	9	15	3	27
Total		77	241	28	346

The Table 12 revealed that from female students who are academically dismissed from various universities only 346 filled the data concerning their mothers' occupations. Of these, 246 of them have mothers who are house hold wives, 24 farmers, 32 merchants, 17

teachers and 27 office workers. This implies that the majority of female students who were academically dismissed have mothers with low paying jobs.

Table 13

Correlations on Mothers Occupation and First Year GPA

Mothers' Occupation	**1.000**	
First Year GPA	**.116**	**1.000**
	Mothers' Occupation	First Year GPA

Pearson Product Moment correlation was carried out to see the relationship between mothers' occupation type and female students' academic achievement. The results in Table 13 above show that there exists positive relationship between the two variables. That is, as female students' mothers' occupation status is higher, female students' academic achievement increases.

Table 14

Teachers and Students Attitudes Towards Affirmative Action

Correlation among University GPA, Entrance Exam and Attitude Towards Affirmative Action

Entrance exam	**1.000**		
GPA	**.209**	**1.000**	
Affirmative action	.067	-.003	**1.000**
	Entrance exam	**GPA**	**Affirmative action**

The results in Table 14 revealed that there is no relationship between students' attitude towards affirmative action and their entrance exam results and with that of their university Grade Point Average.

Table 15 One Sample t-test for students' attitude towards affirmative action

No	Mean	Std	Df	Sig.
623	34.75	13.75	622	.000

Table 15 shows the results of One sample t-test on students' attitude towards affirmative action. The result portrays that students have favorable attitude towards affirmative action in higher education at significant level.

The results in Table 15 imply that students regardless of their entrance exam results and their university Grade Point Average have favorable attitude towards affirmative action in higher learning institutions to increase female students' academic performance and minimize their attrition rate.

Students were also asked to answer about the types of affirmative action given in universities. Their responses revealed the following responses in order from more frequently employed affirmative action strategies to less frequently implemented ones. They are:

- Giving additional tutorial sessions for female students
- Giving awareness training
- Giving assertive training
- Giving priority for females to select the field of study they need
- Educating females about their rights. However, the interview made with one of the Dean's of Students indicated that when there is announcement about Female's right seminar or conference, the majority of attendance is covered by male students.
- Hiring female instructors with minimally required GPA and
- Establishing laws and regulations that will prevent female students from different forms of attacks.

These results are also confirmed by the interview made with Female Education Offices and Gender Clubs.

Table 16 One Sample t-test on Teachers' Attitudes towards Affirmative Action

No	Mean	Std	Df	Sig.
123	60.65	35.03	122	.000

The result in the above Table shows that higher education instructors believe that affirmative action is crucial to enhance female students' academic performance and deter the rate of attrition. This implies that both higher learning institutions' instructors and students have cognized the importance of affirmative action as a strategy to realize equity and equal opportunity of education for females. Unreported t-test has also proved that there is no significant mean difference between female and male instructors' and students' beliefs towards affirmative action.

4.2. Discussion of the Findings

The data gathered from different sources has been subjected to both qualitative and quantitative data analysis. This has been carried out to identify the factors that affect female students' academic performance and causes of attrition in the higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. The discussion is made on the results obtained through quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques. The quantitative data analysis was made on the data obtained through the questionnaire. The qualitative data analysis mostly relied on the results of the document analysis and interview.

4.2.1 What is the Trend of Attrition in Higher Learning Institutions of Ethiopia?

In this study attempts were made to see the trends of attrition of female students across faculties in five Universities, Bahir dar, Mekele, Jimma, Adama, and Haramay. In doing so, the document analysis was carried out on the data gathered from the registrar office of these universities. The results from Tables 1-5 revealed that female students' attrition is very high in the two faculties, education and FBE. For instance, in BDU, Haramaya and Mekele Universities, education faculty was the first top most faculty where female students' attrition was found to be very high. In Jimma and Adama Universities, Faculty of Business and Economics was one of the faculties where by female students' attrition was found to be very high. The question comes why high attrition rate is consistently observed in these two faculties? What is peculiar to them?

This can be attributed to the fact that education and business and economics faculties are the areas that are less selected by higher achievers. In other words, students who join these faculties might be low achievers. After securing this result the researchers have tried to ascertain data about the students' choice of faculties in Bahir Dar University by interviewing the university registrar. Education faculty is the least chosen faculty by most of the students. The second from the last is faculty of Business and economics. Thus, the reason for high attrition in these faculties might be students' academic background. Besides, these two faculties are those which female students are traditionally and

stereotypically assigned. Based on the two assumptions it is possible to infer that the majority of female students who join the universities on the basis of affirmative action may be assigned in these faculties. Thus, it is not surprising to see high attrition of female students in these faculties unless these faculties do something to minimize such high attrition of female students.

4.2.2 Does the University Environment Affect Students' Academic Performance?

The university environment has been explained as one major factor that affects female students' academic performance both through the qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Most of the problems that students have reported emanate from the higher learning institutions' environment. Out of 19 problems listed to be ranked in order, 13 were related with conduciveness of the university environment. Similarly, among the 17 factors that affect female students' academic achievements, five of them are directly related with the university environment.

These feelings of personal affirmation and comfort create the conditions of personal connectedness that is essential to students' taking ownership in learning, which, in turn, leads to more sustained attention, effort, time on task and improved task mastery and academic achievement. As a result, the other focus of this research was to examine the social climate of the higher learning institutions and whether or not they have differential treatments across sexes.

The quantitative data analysis has also proved this fact to be true. The correlation analysis has shown that students' believes about the conduciveness of the university environment is highly correlated with their university GPA. That is, those female students who believe that the university environment is conducive achieve higher in their university GPA. The Linear regression analysis has pulled out conduciveness of university environment as one significant variable that predicts female students' university GPA. Besides, peer support and support from teachers, which are practically part and parcels of the university

environment, are significant predictors of female students' academic achievement in the universities.

The mean difference between male and female students on their perception of the school climate is statistically significant in favor of males. That is, male students perceived that the school climate is more conducive than their female counters. Further more, the comparison of the means of female and male students in the support they receive from peers and teachers has revealed that females are in the disadvantageous position.

The results of the current study are not different from the already established theoretical frameworks and research findings. There is growing evidence that the school climate may act as a threat to some group of students. For instance, Brookover cited in Feldman (1990) has consistently proved that unfavorable social climate is likely to distract the female students from the task at hand, to detriment of performance and to influence their self-concept. Put in a different way, the context of higher education institutions serves as a tracking system to perpetuate the existing patterns of social stratification, benefiting males (Ibid). The school environment in the higher education institutions is a system of stratification that embodies differences of prestige and status among sexes.

The current findings have also proved that the greater support female students receive from peers and teachers, the higher is their university GPA

While the available literature ascertains that school programs that promote self-efficacy, self-confidence, and high expectations are as important as programs that provide opportunities for higher academic achievement and career success, the current findings have indicated that personal problems such as fear of failure and lack of self-confidence are the first top most factors that impede female students' academic achievement in higher learning institutions of Ethiopia.

Nelson (1993) identified a number of school factors that promote female students' success in higher education. The most critical is sound counseling, and providing staff training to help teachers serve female students more effectively. However, in this study, it

was reported that lack of support from teachers, absence of concerned people in the university about female students' problems and absence of adequate counseling services are problems mentioned by students.

4.2.3 Teacher and Student support

As Prince (1993) indicates, as students are integrated into and become more interdependent with both academic and social elements of a university, the probability that the student will leave the university declines. Astin (1975) also found that involvement was critical to a student's decision to persist or drop out school. In other words, involvement with faculty and student peer groups encourages participation in social and intellectual life of a college and, therefore, helps learning and persistence in college (Astin, 1993).

Younger women   were likely to leave because of family and financial   related reasons. Older women were more likely to leave because of practical difficulties or course dissatisfaction. The findings of this study have also portrayed that economic problems and difficulties of education (courses) are some of the factors that affect female students' academic achievement.

Peer attitudes and support also contribute to lower education aspirations among females. A major part of what students learn comes from friendships formed outside the classroom and the strategies of peers for coping with school (Willingham & Cole, 1997). Female students who are parts of peer groups that participate in and are accepted by the school do better in their classes and future jobs than students in peer groups that reject the school and feel rejected by it.

Females with close friends who are school oriented are more likely to graduate and consider attending college. This implies that the support of schools and peers is very important to female students in completing higher education and taking nontraditional career paths (Merten, 1997). The current finding has also proved that peer support and support from teachers have significant effects on female students' academic performance in higher learning institutions. Other findings have indicated that lack of academic

support or staff hostility as a reason for female students' leaving the higher learning institutions. This statement was strengthened by the findings of the current study. That is, the support given by teachers to female students was found less than that of their male counters. Further more, the regression analysis has portrayed that the support from teachers affects female students' academic achievement as it is explained by their university GPA.

4.2.4 Causes of attrition

The document analysis was carried out to examine cause of attrition in the higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. From three universities around 376 documents of female students who left the universities were analyzed. The results indicated that poor academic performance takes the lion share for attrition. That is 283 (75%) female students left the higher learning institutions due to lower academic performance. The second reason was found to be health problem.

Female students may also leave school because of sexual harassment and the refusal of administrators to correct it. Feldman (1990) explained that sexual comments or jokes, sexist terms, sexual rumors, graffiti, leering, sexually graphic notes, and physical sexual harassment such as touching, grabbing, or pinching are precipitating factors for female students attrition. The findings of the current study have also outlined that such problems do persist in the higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. For instance, as it is indicated in Table 6, verbal and physical harassment by male students, teachers and other university staffs and rape are mentioned as major problems female students encounter in the Ethiopian higher learning institutions.

This result was substantiated by the focus group discussion with female students, gender clubs and students councils. Some girls said that girls are mostly victims of sexual harassments by senior male students and some instructors who mostly target to use their grades as a means. Of course, we know that some instructors were accused of their crimes. The problem related with teachers become serious when we apply for university administration, they request us to give our witness. However, most of the female students

did not take courage to expose themselves in front of some people and as a result refuse to give their witnesses about what the instructors had committed on them.

As a result of these harassments, female students have indicated that they have stopped to go to libraries, laboratories, study spaces and students lounges for recreation

The discussion has also portrayed that the management is not working well to help female students in real sense. Their support is verbal and for the sake of reporting believing that it is a policy issue. Practically, the university administration is observed marginalizing female education centers.

Most of the Female Education center coordinators indicated that the office is poorly organized and not well equipped with both human and material resources. Sometimes some workers who were found inefficient in other offices or have disciplinary cases will be transferred to Gender office. This clearly shows the university administrations' less concern towards female education. Absence of concerned university officials ready to help female students was mentioned as one of the problems in the higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. Besides, these offices are running shortage of budget and this holds true to all higher learning institutions.

As a result of sexual harassment, students often stay home, cut class, or do not contribute. They may experience difficulty concentrating on school work or suffer lowered self-esteem and self-confidence (Banks, 1997). Though the current study has not assessed the direct relationship between female students' level of harassment and their self esteem, the findings of the current study revealed that lack of self-confidence is the first major factor that affects their academic performance. Lack of confidence might develop on females' dependency on male students which possibly may expose them to deal with males for sexual matters. Other factors that may also affect retention and academic performance include institutional type, financial aid, sense of community in residence halls and self-efficacy.

The results obtained in the current study have also affirmed the above findings. Students have explained that economic problems, university environment, lack of self confidence

and problems of adjustment are the problems that female students have faced in the higher learning institutions of Ethiopia.

Gender role attitudes of families contribute to girls' education performance. Female students are encouraged to be submissive and underachievers by family, school, and media (Astin, 1993). In this study, it was reported about the presence of unfavorable attitude towards females. According to Nelson (1993), mothers exert powerful influences over their daughters' education and career choices. Even though they value education, mothers from low socioeconomic backgrounds, who are uncertain about the future and depressed about their own livelihood, may not talk to their daughters about pursuing postsecondary education or professional careers. As a result, even female students who are above-average achievers may think about leaving school.

When female students do not see possibilities for doing well in school or pursuing postsecondary education or a career, they often leave school and start a family. Feldman (1990) suggest teen mothers do not have to leave school if their families are supportive and programs allow them to continue taking courses toward graduation. The current study also ascertains the above statements. That is, out of 346 female students who were academically dismissed from higher learning institutions of Ethiopia, the majority 270 have mothers who are household wives and farmers. This implies that one of the factors for female students' low academic performance and high attrition might be their family background.

4.2.5 Off campus Factors affecting female students' persistence in higher learning institutions

The researchers have tried examining whether the outside environment has some factors that detract female students from their focus on their academic work and study. In doing so, attempts were made to visit some Disco houses and Traditional Music Houses (Azmari bet) in three towns, Bahir Dar, Awassa and Mekele. The majority of participants in these recreation places were university students. One observation has indicated that 9 female students have rented their own house outside of the university so as to pass the

nights after enjoying in Disco houses. This problem has also been indicated by students in Table 6 as one of the major problems female students. The interview made with some people (whose identity should not be expressed) revealed that some female students work as sex workers to get money.

Another interview has reported surprising results. Some female students have contacts in the towns with brokers to work as sex workers for money. That is, the brokers call them in the night when ever they are wanted. Two reasons were obtained why female students participate in this type of activity. One group of females reported that they do it to satisfy their financial requirements and to cope up with the competition with other female students in the university. The second group of female students does it for leisure. That is, they need extra money to enjoy in various recreation places. The result in Table 6 has indicated that economic problem is one of the challenges for female students in higher learning institutions.

The interview made with Nurses working in the universities' clinics has reported that pregnancy is the major problem in the universities. At an average, 4-5 female students come to the clinics seeking help and advice due to pregnancy cases. Specially, it is sever during immediately after freshman students are admitted to the university. This might be attributed to the fact that this is the time that the majority of female students become free of parental control with out having adequate awareness about how to deal with opposite sex mates. This issue has been raised by female students as a major problem. The other possible reason may be that female students immediately after admission might not get adequate social and academic orientation that helps them to adjust to the requirements of life in the universities which intern may expose them for bad senior students. This finding is consistent with what female students mentioned in Table 6 (influence from bad senior students).

Female students have reported that they have real problems with some teachers that they are requested to sexual practice by teachers. However, if they refuse to respond positively teachers hurt them during grading. The problem becomes sever when no concerned officials in the universities accept our appeal. One of the researchers is currently serving

as Dean of students. Many female students come to appeal and when the attempt was made to discuss the issue with departments it is usually observed that the whole effort is to protect the teacher than to help female students solve their problems.

4.2.6 What is Teachers' and Students' Attitude towards Affirmative Action?

It is indicated elsewhere in the literature part that affirmative action is a very controversial issue that always causes great sensation and discussions among educators and politicians.

Opponents of affirmative action oppose the implementation of affirmative action with the belief that it affects the quality of education by recruiting unqualified people. Others question the effectiveness of affirmative action. Still others believe that it will aggravate racism and ethnicism. Some others criticize it for it undermines the merit based system of promotion.

The study conducted in 1991 in USA indicated that Seventy two per cent whites and 42 % of blacks responded that blacks should not receive preference (Crosby, 236). However, there was no gender difference in the belief regarding affirmative action.

The proponents of affirmative action, however, believe that the quality of education cannot be ascertained without giving specialized support for those who are disadvantageous.

If the higher learning institutions accept as their goal the creation and sustenance of culturally pluralistic and inclusive institutions that affirm the presence of difference throughout and that value excellence at all levels of the institutions-in its students, faculty, staff, administration, governing board, curriculum, student service, social organizations and missions- then, it should do more than achieve and celebrate diversity through affirmative action. Further more, they propounded that affirmative action is a means to realize equity and equality of education.

With this in mind the researchers have assessed the attitude of instructors and students of higher learning institutions' attitude towards affirmative action. The results of this study

indicated that both higher institution instructors and students have favorable attitude towards affirmative action. The current finding has also ascertained that there is no significant difference on students' attitude towards affirmative action as a function of entrance exam and sex.

Similarly, there is no mean difference between instructors attitude towards affirmative action across sex. That is, both male and female instructors have similar attitude towards affirmative action.

However, the interview made with some students indicated that some female students believe that affirmative action has a negative consequence on the perception of the society on females. One female student said "it is good to apply affirmative action before female students come to higher education. Once they come to higher learning institutions, they should be treated equally."

Another female student said "Affirmative action puts down female students self-concept." The contradiction between the results of the questionnaire and the interview made with female students might have emanated from the sampling procedure.

Generally seen, there seems some change of conception of instructors and students towards affirmative action. In 2006, one of the researchers was assigned to recruit female instructors with lesser GPA compared to their male counters. As to the practical observation of the researcher, there was strong resistance and criticism from instructors about affirmative action. This change might be attributed to the impact of various workshops and seminars organized on gender issues and multiculturalism through various media. Both students and instructors might have also learned from their practical observation about its relevance in enhancing equity and equality of opportunities for females in higher learning institutions.

5.1. Summary

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the on campus and off campus factors for female students' low academic performance and high attrition. More specifically, the study sought to achieve the following set of objectives.

- To investigate the major on campus and off campus factors causing the attrition of female university students.
- To investigate the major on campus and off campus contributing factors for poor academic performance of female students as compared to males.
- To assess the pros cons of the affirmative action provided for female students
- To identify major off campus environmental influences for each university which may contribute to mislead students' behavior?
- To identify and document good practices which have been shown to contribute to a decrease female attrition rates and or increase academic performance.

Taking these objectives into account, an extensive review of the available literature was made. Based on the review of the related literature, basic questions were formulated (see 1.3) to indicate the nature of assumed relationships among various variables considered in this study. To verify the stated assumptions, the study had employed different procedures and techniques. In particular, the study was conducted taking samples from eight higher learning institutions of Ethiopia, Bahir Dar University, Mekele University and Jimma University, Harramay University, Addis Ababa University, Hawassa University, Arbaminch University, Adama University, and Gondor University. They were selected purposefully

Apart from its significance in providing information about the factors for female students' low academic performance and high attrition in the higher learning institutions so that measure could be taken to tackle it, this study provided a valuable addition to the current literature on off campus and on campus factors that impede female student' academic performance and the efforts made to realize equity and equality of female students   in   education..

In order to examine the on campus and the off campus factors that affect female students' academic achievements and caused their high attrition rates both quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed. The quantitative method included the students' questionnaire concerning problems that female students face in higher learning institutions, factors that affect female students academic performance and causes of attrition, teachers' and students' attitude towards affirmative action, the nature and effectiveness of affirmative action given in higher learning institutions of Ethiopia, etc.

The qualitative instruments constituted of document analysis. The document analysis was carried out on students' files in the registrar to assess the back ground characteristics of female students who were dropped out and reason fro dropping out. The results of interview were used to substantiate the results obtained through the questionnaire and document analysis.

A Pilot study was conducted to validate the instrument on 200 2nd year university students and was followed by the main study. The final version of the questionnaire was administered for   3600 undergraduate students.

The findings of student questionnaire were analyzed and interpreted. The computer software called SPSS 13.0 was used for the treatment of the collected data. Statistical techniques such as Percentage, Cross Tabulation, Pearson product Moment Correlation, t-test and Regression Analysis have been used for data analysis. The major findings of such analysis have been briefly summarized below.

- Education and Business and Economics faculties were found the areas where high attrition of female students was observed.
- Table 1 indicates that as the rate of enrollment for students in general and female students in particular increases in higher learning institutions, the rate of attrition has decreases. However, female students' attrition has increased from time to time. This clearly shows that there are problems that female students face in their academic life.

- The findings of the study indicated that the problems female students encounter in higher learning institutions constitute personal, university environment economic and family related problems. Each of these categories contains one or more specific problems (see Table 6). The first problem is found to be fear of failure. The second and the third problem constitute economic and being placed in the departments they are placed.

- The factors that affect female students' academic performance and cause high attrition are categorized in the same way as problems of female students encounter. They include personal, university environment, academic, and economic. The first four factors are related with personal matters, lack of self confidence, Lack of adequate effort Carelessness lack of ability to be competent. The interview made with female students has revealed that previous academic background (high school) is the major factor for their low academic performance and their by their dropping out in higher learning institutions.

- There exists a significant correlation among the support from teachers, support from friends, problems female students encounter in higher learning institutions, and their entrance exam results with their University GPA.

- The regression analysis has pulled out all the above variables as important predictors of female students' academic performance (University GPA).

- Academic dismissal is higher at first year level. Even the majority of female students with higher aptitude results were dismissed at freshman level. However, the rate of attrition for these groups decreases as the year of the study increases..

- Female students who come from mothers' with low status occupation were dismissed at first year level. Further more, high correlation was obtained between mothers' occupation and female students' academic performance.

- External factors such Disco houses and traditional Music Houses have detracted females from their persistence on academic work.

- Teachers and students in higher education institutions have favorable attitude towards affirmative action.

- The types of affirmative action practiced in the Ethiopian higher learning institutions include:

Giving additional tutorial sessions for female students

- Giving awareness training
- Giving assertive training
- Giving priority for females to select the field of study they need
- Educating females about their rights.

- Hiring female instructors with minimally required GPA and
- Establishing laws and regulations that will prevent female students from different forms of attacks.

However, the interview made with one of the Dean's of Students indicated that when there are seminar, workshops or conference regarding females' rights, assertive training and women's education, the majority of attendance is covered by male students. Besides, many female students have explained that the support service and affirmative action given in higher learning institutions are not sufficient. One female student continued to say that it is only for report consumption that universities announce affirmative action programs.

In conclusion, the majority of problems female students encounter and those factors that affect female students' academic performance are personal and the other problems are caused by the university environment. Further more, the off campus factors that affect female students' academic performance include family background, Disco houses and traditional Music Houses, economic problems and the role of brokers to initiate female students to work as sex workers are some of the factors that affect female students academic performance and their by causing attrition.

Recommendations

- Education and Business and Economics faculties are the two faculties where higher attrition is identified. Thus, universities should give due emphasis on how the problems can be alleviated (See recommendations 1 & 2).

- **The** major academic (high attrition) and social problems (such as pregnancy) are observed at the first year of academic life. Besides, the majority of problems and factors are related with personal matters. Thus, well planned and need based counseling and orientation about how to cope up with university academic life, basic life skills and possible problems that may challenge female students, should be given to female students immediately after admission.

- The orientation and counseling should be given by course instructors at the beginning of the course. Thus, the first chapter of every course should be orientation than introduction. To implement this strategy, the university officials should consider the integration of orientation as a fundamental task of teachers in the legislation or any other legal document.

- The Ethiopian higher learning institutions should consider the problems stated in the study and take corrective measures to improve the university environment so that it becomes conducive for female students academic life.

- The attitudes of teachers and students have been found positive to the programs implemented to enhance female student' academic performance. Thus, the higher learning officials have to organize workshops, seminars and conferences about the issues equity, affirmative action and multiculturalism to strengthen the already available positive beliefs towards affirmative action.

- Concerned government and non government organizations should organize a scheme to help those female students who face economic problems in higher learning institutions.

- Universities either have to implement rules and regulations to protect females from rape and harassment, or if they do not have should develop rules and regulations concerning the issue.

- The higher learning officials should develop a system where by female students can get support from friends and teachers. The universities should promote cooperative learning where by female students can get support from friends.

- Ministry of Education should set workable policy guideline that will be implemented by all higher learning institutions to protect female students from being harassed by students, teachers and other members of the institutions.

- The regional government and the local governments should strictly implement rules on female students' rights. Or if they do not have should design and implement strategies to protect female students from being abused.

- The interview made with Gender offices and female associations has revealed that they are not well organized to give the necessary support to female students in higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. This was supported by female students' responses too. Thus, these offices and associations should be strengthening with human and material resources.

- Retention and university success are affected by many factors in which the institutional climate takes the lions share. Institutional factors include interaction with academic and administrative staff, gender biased institutional roles, traditional academic expectations to girls, etc. Generally, these have to be addressed by interventions like designing a gender policy at federal level that basis international and   federal laws that favor women rights.

- Revise the gender biased roles in the HLIs and change them to the standard gender neutral ones that support the marginalized part of the society.

- Neutralize the university climate by raising the awareness of students, teachers and administrative staff about women rights, gender equality, etc. This could be done by giving academic base in the universities by including it in the higher education research, training and community engagement.

- A coordinating body should be established centrally that can guide the implementation of the interventions in the Ethiopian higher learning institutions consider the problems stated in the study and take corrective measures to improve the university environment so that it becomes conducive for female students academic life.

- Ministry of Education should set workable policy guideline that will be implemented by all higher learning institutions to protect female students from being harassed by students, teachers and other members of the institutions.

- The interventions should start at the lower levels of schooling also by developing HE linkage empowering programs by arranging the necessary budget. That means before female students come to higher learning institutions, the local government (Education Bureau) in cooperation with the surrounding preparatory schools, colleges or universities should arrange tutorials, orientation programs, and assertive training during summer to fill the academic gap before girls join higher education Institutions.

- The interview and focus group discussions made with Gender offices and female associations has revealed that they are not well organized to give the necessary support to female students in higher learning institutions of Ethiopia. This was supported by female students' responses too. Thus, these offices and associations should be given special attention in the higher education policy and proclamation they are marginalized in the higher education institutions and are not given attention like the other departments. This clearly shows that empowering these offices should be the very first measure to be taken. That is strengthening these offices with the necessary human, budgetary and material resources are mandatory. This may not be practical in the existing attitude of higher management and university community at large as the study revealed. To make the intervention shortly practical the Ethiopian government should put enforcing laws in this regard.

- Currently, all government organizations including higher learning institutions are engaged in over whole change process through BPR. Thus, the issue of female students' education has to be given due attention in BPR.

- Last but not least, all higher learning institutions should develop a data base about their students, teachers and administrative staff based on their background characteristics.

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by

Besufikad Dessie

Number -5

Grade 9th B

Submitted to Mr. Seifu

Oct 3-2010