

Role of Feminizing Men for Women empowerment, the case of Ethiopia

Alemtsehay Alemayehu Derbe

(Alemtsehay.Alemayehu@yahoo.com)

ABSTRACT

Globally many policies are designed for women empowerment realizing its utmost significance to development. Though these governmental efforts are bringing change, still women are not up to the level that they deserve to be empowered from different dimensions. Men's are powerful drivers of the globe. Due to this there has been an increasing emphasis internationally, in policy and in practice, on engaging men to promote and achieve gender equality. It is evidenced that without the empowerment on the part of boys and men to realize women's importance and their contribution in various spheres of life, true empowerment for women is not possible in our society. Therefore the role of men's attitudes and behaviors should not be ignored in the debate and the design of gender related policies. This study aims at assessing the rational for involvement of men in women empowerment the case of Ethiopia. From the review it is evidenced that, men play significant role for women empowerment and any policy that fails to include men in gender related policies is failed to achieve women empowerment. Policies designed to make women economically independent is going to be a cause for gender based violence since men fear women independence. women who contested elections on their own initiatives faced more problems within and outside the family in comparison to

women who contested elections on the initiative of their husbands or family members.

Key words: women, men, empowerment, feminizing

INTRODUCTION

Women constitute slightly more than half of the world population. Their contribution to the social and economic development of societies is also more than half as compared to that of men by virtue of their dual roles in the productive and reproductive spheres. Yet their participation in formal political structures and processes, where decisions regarding the use of societal resources generated by both men and women are made, remains insignificant. This insignificant participation of women is attributed to their low representation in political and economic sphere. Presently, women's representation in legislatures and entrepreneurs around the world is less than 15 percent. (Franza Barie, 2005)

According to Eshetu (2011), empowerment as a strategic development approach for women involves two levels: extrinsic and



intrinsic. The extrinsic level refers to gaining greater access to and control over financial and physical resources and the intrinsic level refers to changes within, such as the rise in self-reliance, confidence, motivation and positive hope for the future.

There is a growing consensus that development cannot be realized without women participation and women's were perceived as part of the development process and attentions have been devoted to include women's need, preference and aspiration in the centre of policy making rampantly. Hence, empowerment of women and marginalized groups becomes a prominent development agenda of the century.

To that end governments across the globe have been designed and implement various programs and strategies in order for empower women economically, politically and socially. The past three decades have witnessed a steadily increasing awareness of the need to empower women through measures to increase social, economic and political equity, and broader access to fundamental human rights. (WEF, 2005)

Despite the work of Governments, the United Nations and other international

and regional organizations, as well as the many years of struggle by women's movements for equal rights, inequalities between women and men persist around the world. Gender-based violence remains prevalent in all societies, and is exacerbated in conflict and post-conflict situations. For millions of women and girls, education and employment opportunities are restricted, leading to inequalities in income and access to decision making.

Due to this there has been an increasing emphasis internationally, in policy and in practice, on engaging men to promote and achieve gender equality. Beginning with the Beijing Declaration¹, adopted by the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, a number of intergovernmental platforms, such as the World Summit on Social Development (1995), its review session (2000), and the special session of the General Assembly on HIV/AIDS (2001), have focused on this issue. The importance of education systems in shaping the gender perspective of boys was underscored in the landmark Dakar Framework for Education for All (UNESCO, 2000).

An explicit goal (goal 5) of the Dakar Framework is to ensure that education systems contribute to and promote gender equality, instead of reinforcing gender stereotypes. Most recently, in its 48th session in March 2004, the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women specifically focused on the theme: The role of men and boys in achieving gender equality.

Despite these facts, the Ethiopian government is signatory to most of the international instruments, including: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Platform for Action, the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, the International Conference on Population and Development

Statement of the problem

In spite of the fact that women plays significant role for development, globally many countries design many strategies for women empowerment. Bearing this fact in mind, though there are significant changes due to strategies, many are not achieving as expected.

Chowdhury and Patnaik (2010) provide a critical revision of several gender equality

policies in India. There are various welfare programs for maintaining gender equality and reduce disparities between male and female from the very beginning of individual's life. However, these are not able to be successful due to a variety of reasons. One of the fundamental causes for their unsuccessful implementation is the lack of direct involvement and positive mindset of males in these programs and too much emphasis and focus on the females.

According to Farre Lidia (2011), without the empowerment on the part of boys and men to realize women's importance and their contribution in various spheres of life, true empowerment for women is not possible in our society.

In the last decade, the Ethiopian government has recognized the critical role women's empowerment plays in achieving its development goals and consequently instituted various legal and policy reforms. Major instruments for gender equality include constitutional prohibition of gender discrimination and the guarantee of equal rights to women, reforms to the penal code, affirmative action policies for women, the ratification of international women's, children's and human rights

treaties, and various civil sector reforms to create a favorable environment for women workers.

Achieving gender equality requires systemic changes in policy and modes of social interactions at all levels of the society: home, work place, school, public services, media, and so on. Men continue to occupy positions of power and privilege in patriarchal social systems, and without their active involvement, a gender equitable society will neither be achievable, nor be sustainable. Yet, when men take an active role in promoting gender equality, the entire society benefits. (UNESCO)

This is supported by;

“We can all think of a million examples where if we provide men with a little more information, a few more skills, and a bit of encouragement, they themselves can be far more supportive, communicative and caring for their sexual partners and family members. It’s not rocket science, and yet it isn’t happening on a significant scale ...”.—
Margaret Greene International Center for Research on Women (ICRW)

As specified in **Growth and transformation plan 1**, though many

many achievement are achieved in different dimensions, Limited supply of farming and agricultural processing technologies that minimize women’s work load, infringement of land use right of some female headed households in some areas, and inadequate supply of credit service especially for poor women are also challenges observed and hence require due attention going forward. In addition, school drop out of female students, unsatisfactory academic performances of some female students at higher educational institutions, unconducive environment of learning institutions to female students, and prevalence of harmful traditional practices such as early marriage, circumcision, violence against women, etc. are issues that are listed as they deserve attention during the next plan period.

Women’s participation in leadership was also promoted during GTP I. The proportion of women with parliament seat, in judiciary and political leadership and executive body at federal level reached 27.8 percent, 20.6 percent, 9.2 percent, respectively. Although, this shows a progress from previous periods, women’s participation in leadership is still considered to be

low. More over in spite of this, it is specified that Leadership commitment at all levels to empower women to higher leadership positions is still a major challenge.

In addition to this, Government reports and various studies conducted on women empowerment practices in Ethiopian confirm that women participation in political, economic and social endeavors in general and in the civil service structure in particular holds low profile (ESPS, 2008; APRM Report, 2011; Tarik, 2012; MoFED, 2012).

Economically, Ethiopian women have one of the highest rates of economic participation in the world, but this rate is lower than that of men in the country. They tend to be employed more in the informal sector, and they are afflicted by unemployment more frequently than men.

In relation to access to resource, Ethiopian women own property and assets at a lower rate than men. While formal data is scarce, there is some evidence that Ethiopian women's access to credit and their savings are low.

Socially, though, Promising new laws and policies prohibiting various types

of gender-based violence (GBV), including the revised family code, the outlawing of HTPs, the introduction of women's rights are there, the social empowerment is not well achieved.

Bearing this facts in mind Ethiopian government design additional plan for women empowerment in **Growth and transformation plan 2** and it have objective of Ensuring gender equality at all educational levels, creating conducive environment for female students, increasing number of female teachers, increasing gender equality in employment, ownership of land and other fixed resources, eradicating harmful traditional practices, and increasing women's equal participation in political and decision making processes will be given due attention.

To improve economic benefits of women and ensure gender equality, it is planned that the post 2015 sustainable development goals and regional (continental) goals will be aligned with the country's context and strategic areas and implemented accordingly.

Though the plan have many significant strategies, still the engagement of men as a strategy for women empowerment does



not get enough attention in spite of its utmost contribution.

There are adequate policies in place to protect women's rights, however, their implementation remains a challenge.

The knowledge gap augurs on the fact that in Ethiopia there are different strategies designed to empower women from different dimensions, but still it is not satisfactory. One of the rational for this is inability to include men at policy, community and household level. Bearing this in mind, though there are different research's done basing secondary data in different countries of the world, In Ethiopia, there is no research done on the issue. Therefore investigating the rational why men are engaged for women empowerment will be momentous to change the existing programs.

The general objective of this review is to investigate the rational for engaging men in women empowerment; the case of Ethiopia

METHODOLOGY

This research is explanatory by nature; since it explains why men should be engaged in women empowerment. Qualitative approach was employed for this research. The author used only

secondary materials; like researchs, journals, reports and qualitative analysis is done to answer the research questions.

DISCUSSION

RATIONALE FOR ENGAGING MEN

Men - as community, political or religious leaders - often control access to a large variety of resources such as health and educational services, but also transportation and finances. As heads of states and government ministers, as leaders of religious and faith-based institutions, as judges, as heads of armies and other agencies of force, as village heads, or indeed as husbands and fathers, men often wield enormous power over many aspects of women's lives. Therefore, the role of men's attitudes and behaviors should not be ignored in the debate and the design of gender related policies due to the following reasons.

TO LIFT WOMEN OUT OF POVERTY

In order to promote greater gender equality, economic empowerment and entrepreneurship development interventions have thus focused on women, hoping to challenge the gender norms that put them at an economic disadvantage in comparison with men.

Entrepreneurship development programs that target women are sometimes failing to promote sustainable gender equality (Keonig et al., 2003).

Because of the complexity of gender identities and relationships, they may sometimes even lead to negative impacts on their beneficiaries. For example, Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) and Entrepreneurship Development (WED) interventions may sometimes lead to an increase in gender-based violence from husbands and male household members (Ahmed, 2005). This type of response from men can stem from a feeling that women's economic empowerment and greater financial independence are a threat to their masculinity and/or the status quo that favours them. This will lead to negative effect of empowerment of policies that is increase gender based violence due to lack of acceptance of their independence by their men counterparts. Therefore women empowerment policies might create empowered women but this in return will increase violence.

Research done on the idea of role of men in women empowerment in Brazil by clearly imply the following.

A minority of male respondents expressed that it is good that women become more educated and independent. Only one of the men acknowledged the positive influence that his wife's increased independence and knowledge had on their household. Regarding the female respondents, all of them indicated to highly value the changing social position of women, that gave them the chance to work, to contribute to the family income and through that becoming more equal and less dependent on their husbands. However, in contrast to their support of working women in general, half of the men preferred their own wife to stay at home.

In addition to this he concluded that, although power distributions among households vary, in general men possess the greater share of power in households, which is both based on a greater access to resources, such as cultural structures, as on agency. This power is not only derived from, but also justified by the traditional cultural norms that place men in the more powerful position.

The same is true in Ethiopia and it is evidenced as follows.

The Beijing platform report of Ethiopia shows that, the major hurdles in lifting

women out of poverty are women's burden in the productive and reproductive spheres as well as their limited access to productive assets and resources.

In Ethiopia it is estimated that the average Ethiopian woman has a long working day, much of it spent in hard farm work and physical labor. Coupled with the reproductive burden of looking after the household, women are affected by time poverty. Even where women engage in productive activities, limited access to resources and assets like credit, financial literacy and modern technology imply limited returns. Social expectations and stereotypes that confine women to certain types of roles in private and public life mean that women have limited opportunities.

If men start to share reproductive burden of looking after their household and become willing to empower their wives, women will easily go out, work, change their circumstance.

In addition to this, Vyas and Watts (2008) find that women's involvement in income generation activities is generally associated with a higher lifetime history of physical violence. For India the National Family Health Survey 1989-99

reveals that women face greater domestic violence and the ones who face even more are those working away from home (Eswaran and Malhotra, 2009). In a multi-country study including data for Cambodia (2000), Colombia (2000), the Dominican Republic (2000), Egypt (1995), Haiti (2000), India (1998-1999), Nicaragua (1998), Peru (2000) and Zambia (2001-2002), the authors report that, compared to nonworking women, women being paid in cash were more likely to have **experienced lifetime physical violence**.

In contrast, Aizer (2010), using evidence for the US for the period 1990-2003, finds that decreases in the male-female wage gap reduce violence against women. This evidence suggests that improving the employment and earning opportunities of women relative to men reduces violence and the costs associated with it.

Evidences indicates that empowering women is not always a solution to eradicate gender violence rather it will be the cause for gender based violence unless men's attitude is not changed. There is a growing awareness that men can play a significant role in ending violence and thus violence prevention



programs should be addressed towards them.

FOR WOMEN HEALTH RELATED ISSUES-chil,wife

In countries such as Nigeria, Tunisia, Korea, Ethiopia; Studies show that in seeking health care, women do not decide by themselves and depend on decisions made by a spouse or to senior members of the family (Thaddeus and Maine, 1994). In Nigeria, for instance, the only one who can give permission to a woman who develops obstructed labor to leave the home for hospital is her husband. Moreover in his absence, those present are reluctant to accept such responsibility. This evidence highlights the importance of men for women's health. As a result, fertility and family planning programs that continue to focus solely on women will continue to achieve only limited successes, especially in many of the patrilineal societies that characterize several developing countries.

Since men are breadwinners, it is them who have much to say on family decisions. Therefore women and childrens health will be affected by the decision of their counterparts. Including men on women health will help to achive family planning and

other health related policies for the country.

EDUCATION

2003 report of The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Ministry of Education GENDER DIRECTORATE Major Challenges to Gender Equality in Education, Community attitudes prevent girls from attending school and are linked to traditional division of labor in homes, lack of finances, safe access to nearby schools.

Study conducted in 2009 on the theme entitled "Status and Attrition Rate of Female Students in Higher Education Institutions" and the field reports of expertise from the Ministry of Education, depicts that one of the problems to female students in education In-campus sexual harassment(by some teachers, students members of other university, and other bodies out of campus, inadequate Counseling service, exposure to addiction in their residential areas)

To Increase Women Political Participation

Political participation in fact matters the life of every individual human being both men and women. Recognizing the essence of the political participation for every individual human being the United Nation (UN) exerted its human rights

core instruments and recognized it as a fundamental political right. Though there is progress in women political participation, still it is not at desired level. The current women's political status is improvable. The solutions depend on perceptions and the ways one understand the current political problem.

Dominance of men from household to country level bring attitude of bearing confidence on capacity of men to have political power and low trust on women role on women political participation.

For women to participate freely, they should get support from their husband, father and men leaders who dominate at all layers of government. Not only the government bodies, the community should avoid the attitude of "set wedemajet, wend wede chilot" thinking.

It is evidenced that research done by Pragya Rai shows that, It is very interesting to discover that the women who contested elections on their own initiatives faced more problems within and outside the family in comparison to women who contested elections on the initiative of their husbands or family members.

Other research by Kadar Mohammed(2013) on women political

participation shows, the lack of acceptance by men for women to be involved in politics of the country and belief that women do not deserve political positions and the irony that the women do not themselves have the political will much as they are not supported by fellow women and their counter party males.

For Ethiopian women political participation,

As stated by Shimels Kassa (2015) titled on challenges and prospects of women participation in Ethiopia, women's participation in political life depends largely on their access to employment which gives them not only material independence, but also certain professional skills and grater self confidence. So that access to means of production and finances has a direct relationship and influence on the participation of women in political institutions. Having aware about the impacts of economy on women the Ethiopia government formulated Economic Reform policy in 1992 with the aims to promote economic development and improve the living standard of the most vulnerable sections of the society, particularly women [5], but still in most Ethiopian society women have no right to decide on one's own

property in the house hold because the household head is always the father which can control every asset and property of the family. Due to this facts women always needs to get permission of the father to buy some consumption materials and other resources of the household. Even if women are salaried, most of the time their income is controlled by men and sometimes if father and mother have their own income independently, women cover household expenses while men enjoy outside home like hotels and bars. So women are always dependent on men economically which is the main cause for their low participation to politics of the country.

This shows as, among others, men can be one cause for women to be empowered or not. Their knowledge, support and involvement in women issues is very crucial.

TO COMBAT VIOLENCE

The government of Ethiopia has adopted, ratified and further revised various legislation and policy documents specifically addressing violence against women. Notable among these are: the revised criminal law (2005), the revised family law (2000), Strategic Plan for an Integrated and Multi-Sectoral Response to VAWC and Child Justice

in Ethiopia (2009) focusing on prevention, protection and response mechanisms and the recently adopted National Strategy on Harmful Traditional Practices (2013). The legal and policy frameworks criminalize all acts of violence against women including all forms of harmful traditional practices and provide sanctions for their practice.

Recent studies indicate high prevalence of different types of violence. For instance the recent EDHS reported that over 10 % of women had experienced physical violence from their husbands, While 25% of sexually experienced women experienced sexual initiation under coercive conditions (19 % of urban respondents, 29 % of rural respondents). Seventeen per cent of women reported their first sex was rape/forced (12 % of urban women, 19 % rural women), while 17 % reported insistence, 11 % report partner threats, and 6 % said they were beaten. The most common perpetrators of coercion or force were intimate partners.

Among those reportedly using force, 92 % were husbands, 6 % were boyfriends or fiancés, and 2 % were acquaintances or classmates.

A 2011 survey by the Ministry of Women, Children, and Youth Affairs (MoWCYA) found that in 4,617 reported cases of economic violence at the local level, women going through divorce were denied their share of property and their custody of children. 98 The study also found 8,655 reported cases of wife beating, physical violence against women and girls, and abduction of girls. 99 Another 404 reported cases involved rape and attempted rape. 100 Similarly, a 2009 USAID study found that an estimated 50–60% of Ethiopian women experienced domestic violence in their lifetime.

MoWYCA cites a number of reasons for the gap between policy and implementation. One crucial reason is the prevailing attitude of men's superiority. Therefore changing the attitude of men has substantial impact in avoiding gender based violence. This fact is supported by different experiences from different countries.

✚ As cited on Women for women international, WfWI developed effective programs and has trained more than 15,000 men in the most rural and isolated communities of

Afghanistan, Iraq, the DRC, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan and Kosovo. in the DRC, it is found that 92 percent of men surveyed report they have talked with another man about women's rights and the need to prevent sexual and gender-based violence, compared to 56 percent before the program. In Afghanistan, 51 percent of male graduates surveyed report they took action to reduce gender-based violence, compared to 13 percent before the program.

✚ In Egypt, the Centre for Development and Population Activities (CEDPA) runs the New Visions Programme, which involves boys aged 12 to 20. The programme teaches life skills and seeks to increase the gender sensitivity of the participants. Over 15,000 boys have completed the course. A 2004 evaluation found that participants had adopted more gender-equitable attitudes, including less tolerance for female genital mutilation and gender-based violence.

Source: Centre for Development and Population Activities (2005), "New visions: life skills education for boys"

(Washington, D.C.: CEDPA), information sheet.

It is sexual harassment, and other forms of violence that is affecting women empowerment from different perspective. Such as there is school and university dropouts in Ethiopia happened due to sexual harassment

Therefore though different laws are designed to reduce gender based violence in Ethiopia, different researches and reports show as there is still challenge in achieving the plan. Therefore the crucial point in relation to gender based violence is working on and changing the attitude of the actors who cause violence on women.

Laws that penalize men who made violence against women are there in our country, but there is still gap on working on those men who will make violence in advance.

Preventing a problem of gender based violence by changing men attitude is better and long run solution for Ethiopia to create gender sensitive men and avoid the problem. Therefore if there is strategy and clear intervention that can change the attitude of men, the country's policy can easily be achieved better than the current situation.

Next we review some of the successful stories of involving men in women's

EMPERICAL EVIDENCES FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

There is evidence showing the benefits of educating men about contraception in Bangladesh (Becker, 1996; Green et al., 1972) and Ethiopia (Terefe and Larson, 1993). These studies find that the inclusion of the husband in family planning programs resulted in a relevant increase in the use of modern contraception methods. Similarly, Wang et al. (1996) found lower discontinuation rates in their randomized study in China: when both parents were educated about family planning, IUD users had significantly lower pregnancy and abortion rates than users whose husbands were not educated with their wives on the matter. The evidence in those studies suggests that educating men about contraception makes a difference in overall contraceptive use, but that it is important to simultaneously educate both partners. Ultimately, there is a strong effect on the outcome when both partners (individually or separately) receive family planning education.

A further very practical reason for engaging men in work on gender

equality is that men often control the resources needed for this work, in particular because of the underrepresentation of women in all areas of decision making. The existing pattern of gender inequality—men's predominant control of economic assets, political power, cultural authority and armed forces—means that men (often specific groups of men) control most of the resources required to implement women's claims for justice.

The evidence so far suggests that gender policies that exclusively target women can easily fail to achieve their intended goals. Indeed, some of those policies designed to only promoting women's empowerment have been shown to have adverse effects on their well-being. In contrast, programs that take into account the role of men and inform them about the benefits of improving women's socioeconomic status are more likely to be successful. Particularly popular are those focused on women's reproductive health that educate men on contraception, STD and HIV prevention methods.

Conclusion and recommendation

From the reviews the chronic cause for Gender In-equality is lack of working environment for men in different

dimension. In health dimension, it is evidenced that women especially the rural women, expect their husbands say to go to hospital, to use contraceptive and other health related issues because they are culturally, economically, socially dominated by men. In economic dimension, it is founded that men fears women economic independence. It is going to be a cause for violence against women due to the fact that men do not accept women's independence.

Men attitude is one of the major challenge in women multi-dimensional empowerment. In order to change these men should be included in women health, education, social, economic issues in different ways. If men have knowledge and positive attitude towards women education, educating women will come from husbands, brothers and fathers and it will motivate women to be educated. Benefit of Women economic independence should be accepted by their counterparts to support them financially, morally and in other forms. If not, economic independence became cause for violence from their men counterparts. To summarize men should be part of strategies designed to empower women.

In workplace, most of the managerial positions are held by men, to bring more women in leadership positions, gender sensitive men leaders should be there to train and bring them to positions. Therefore first, men should be educated, aware and change their attitude towards women capacity and benefit of coming in leadership positions. Because it is them who are in most of the countries decision making areas. Even in countywide policies, gender sensitive men If they are not well empowered in gender related issues, they may not bring gender equality.

Men Leaders in different layers of the country should be well trained regarding their role for women empowerment and should be aware and be sensitive of gender related decisions. Because it is an empowered men on gender issues who can empower its relative women.

FINAL POLICY IMPLICATION

Empowering men to empower women is crucial strategy for the country to adopt, implement and bring more gender equitable society in Ethiopia.

Therefore, to achieve women empowerment, the concerning bodies should inculcate men in different

strategies, (microfinance and other ways of women economic empowerment. Therefore among others, the main cause for not achieving women empowerment as expected is lack of attention by policy makers, experts, researchers to engage men in women empowerment. Therefore it is ultimately recommended that to make all women related policies, strategies (women policy, CEDAW, Beijing platform and others) be effective, men's role should get attention and strategies should be designed.

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