

Obstacles of Women Academicians: The Case of Ethiopian Higher Education Institutes

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Abstract: Education is the basis of a country to promote economical, political and social conditions. And higher institutions have been a great role to produce human resources who enhances the national development. Women education is considered as educating the whole society and women academicians in the higher institutions have huge contribution for the enhancement of girl education because of these the current Ethiopian government appreciated the engagement of women academicians in the higher institutions but they hinder many obstacles which sourced from different sides like, from organizations (bureaucratic system, low services, problem of induction and mentoring). The second obstacles is educational obstacles such as, lack of training, on teaching pedagogy, low skill of using technology, low financial payment and the third one is social obstacles like negative attitudes and expected failer, low social relationship, harassment and gender role conflict. Generally women academicians in the Ethiopian higher institution had many obstacles.

Keywords: obstacles, higher institutions, women accademicians.

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher Education:

According to Kumar and Ahmad (2007), defined that the word Education has been derived from two Latin words Educare and Educatum. Educare means to train. The term Educatum means the action of teaching. It throws light on the principles and practice of teaching. The term Educare or Educere mainly indicates the development of the latent capacities of the child through teaching. University Education is the backbone of any country through providing skill human power.

Other studies, Lumumba (2006) reported that the effectiveness and efficiency of quality education in a university is directly dependent on employees, especially for instructors and its relationship between employees and the total working environment. So, the relationships between employees and working environment is a way through which an institution gets aware of its responsibility to develop jobs and working environments which are good for employees to be benefited for the economical, political and social aspects of the educational institution.

Furthermore, Tasnim (2006) also remarked that universities have been considered to have a unique capacity to provide the necessary human resources and relevant knowledge to promote national development. The educational institution is an organization which success depends on the involvement, effort and contributions of the academic staff and its professional expertise.

Women Education:

According to Bhat (2015), explained that educated women not only tend to promote the education of their girl children, but also can provide better guidance to all their children. Moreover, educated women can also help in the reduction of infant mortality rate and growth of the population. Syomwene and Kindiki (2015) also stated that, Female education is important for poverty reduction. Whether self-employed or earning wages, working women help their households to escape

poverty. Their returns flow not only to themselves but to other generations as well. In addition, educated women are more likely to send their children to school. The benefits of expanding female education were greater than the benefits from other public interventions like improving family planning services or increasing the number of physicians. It is evident that in comparison with various investments, educating girls produces the highest possible return. Besides, the benefits of improving female education go beyond increasing individual productivity and income indicated by (Akhter, 2012).

EFA (2005), reported that female education is indispensable because they are citizens of the country and God has also endowed them with brains just like boys and they are at the heart of most societies. So, female education is one of the most important investments.

Similarly, Agataet *al.*, (2015) explained that female education is very important to protect their rights by giving attention for the respectation. Education needs to enhance the active participation of females in the community equally with men. When females are educated, they will have high self-esteem, confidence and eliminate discriminations. However, Yeshimebrat, Alemayehu and Firew (2013), stated that education is one of the social issues that gender gap is occurring in universities and females. Instructors are less signified.

The Concepts of women academician's:

Academicians are an engineers of every profession because they have an ultimate role in the actualization of school goals and overall development in this world (Hagos, 2015). Furthermore, Almze (2003) claimed that women Academician's are effective in social support for female students against the prevailing societal norms that become faces in their education. Furthermore, to deliver quality education in universities, better working conditions of instructors have a determinant role in a university's ability to do and for both students and instructors to have positive relationships reported by (U.S department of education, 1996).

2. OBSTACLES OF WOMEN ACADEMICIAN'S IN ETHIOPIA HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTES

2.1 Organizational obstacles:

Bureaucratic System:

One of the major challenge to manage Academicians are concerned about the top-down bureaucratic system or leadership model that dominates in many higher educations. Management practices focus on enabling staff to actually enjoy their work rather than feel oppressed by it, ones that encourage questioning, thinking, develop cooperation in social capital and mutual trust within the organization. Low-trust relation in higher education have a negative effect on the instructor's physical and emotional wellbeing and their collegial professional relations. In order to enhance effective relationship with the university employees must be able to engage with others in a positive way stated by (Mulford, 2003).

Creating good working relationships offer individuals a rich variety of tools and processes to prevent, manage, resolve work conflict, to build harmonious working environment indicated by (Desta, 2014). In addition, Bennell (2004) reported that in most university administration regarding instructors' management, there is a lack of clear rules which tend to generate conflict and department heads lack formal administrative control over instructors in their university and also there are always no effective performance evaluation and inspections.

The other administrative challenge is low implementation and practice on affirmative action. According to Eerdewijket *al.*, (2015), stated that low implementation and practice on affirmative action in the universities was another challenge. However, government policies and proclamations are referred to as a basis for affirmative action measures, but it is not always clear how these are translated to and put in practice. There are also indications that affirmative action measures are not implemented consistently like recruitment, promotion, scholarships, housing, etc. And there is a lack of transparency on how and when it is being implemented.

Low Services:

Eerdewijket *al.*, (2015), suggested that low or lack of service has negative impact to create good working condition for Academicians to achieve goals of higher education. In most universities the availability of toilet facilities is problematic, might either be absent or badly maintained. In other instances, the toilets which are available are locked and access is

restricted to a selected few, lack of toilet facilities hinders women's ability to work on campus, especially when they are pregnant or during their monthly periods when they need toilets on a more regular basis.

Not only that rather Voluntary Service Overseas (2008), explained key facilities that positively affect women's performance in the universities are accessing to housing and transport services. In the context of harassment, unsupportive attitudes of the community like house owners, women's mobility is constrained when they have to rely on their home rather than the campus. When female instructors do not live on campus, they rely on the surrounding community for housing facilities; they often have difficulties finding a safe place to live, and are confronted with negative attitudes from the community and house owners. So, the delivery of housing for instructors is still a problem in our country and was commented on by a significant number of instructors and directors as being a major issue. Placing an instructor's home near the university is especially important for female instructors and can have strong motivating effects for instructors and ultimately on the quality of education.

Moreover, Eerdewijket *et al.*, (2015) argues that when Academician's does not live in the campus or near the campus, the availability of transport services becomes a critical concern. Most female instructors avoid travelling to home during evening hours, because there is either a lack of transport, or because available transportation does not reach their homes completely. So that, they have to walk a short distance. These affect women's opportunities to engage in different activities like leadership, doing and participating in research and other activities.

Problem of Induction and Mentoring:

According to Kessels (2010), induction programs play a key role for women Academician's while they join in the teaching profession. It contributes to beginning instructor's well-being and their professional development. In addition, American Association of State Colleges and Universities (2006) stated that mentoring and induction can be a bridge between pre-service education and the classroom, and higher education institutions must be an important part of this picture. Mentoring involves a more experienced staff member who provides assistance and guidance to another person to grow professionally.

Furthermore, TEQIP (2009) explained that in higher education, induction contribute to the overall effectiveness of the Academician's. When universities are involved in beginner women academician's, induction programs, faculty representatives contributed to the development and implementation, and provided a resource not found in the local school system to enhance the well function of induction program that used to promote instructors capacity in different aspects.

Moreover, Craig *et al.*, (1998) also remarked that regular monitoring of student improvement, combining with constructive and use full comments as well as feedback are factors that promote student motivation, effectiveness and achievement. Schools support instructors with an induction program a more or less formalized program that is aimed to support new instructors in their first years of teaching after their pre-service education with induction programs, schools aim to contribute to new instructors' sense of well-being and skill improvement stated by (Kessels, 2010).

On the contrary, Craig *et al.*, (1998) reported that experienced academicians have full confidence in the teaching and learning process, but the beginner should not be expected to have the same degree of confidence and proficiency as academician's who have been teaching for several years. Beginner women academician's bring new knowledge into their institution and can actively contribute to the development of the school indicated by (Tickle, 2000).

In addition, Papanoum (2002) described that induction programs helps for beginner women academician's to promote socialization of the instructors in the school culture, development of knowledge and skills which are necessary for good teaching, the development pedagogical teaching that used to enhance self-confidence and also increases knowledge how to deal with stress.

Likewise, Nemser (2003) reported that assigning a beginner women academician's to a mentor have their own benefits to promote effective teaching in the early years because he or she learns from guided practice. Mentoring have significant value for new instructors to enhance educative practice. They may be good classroom teachers, but might find it difficult to visualize what they think, explain principles underlying their work in practice.

Other studies, Tickle (2000) noted that observation of peers and other colleagues is important for women academician's to have the possibility of observing good teaching practices presented by more experienced colleagues. On the other hand, the formative feedback after being observed, usually by the mentor, addresses the new instructors' strengths and areas to develop. Adequate feedback may have a positive effect on professional development.

2.2 Educational Obstacles:

Lack of Training on Teaching Pedagogy:

Lack of training in teaching pedagogy considered as a challenge. Beginner women academicians are lacking a skill to relate theory with practice in the situations. Teaching comprises identifying methods in which a learner is thinking about the subject to structure the next steps to assess the learner's progress (Gaby *et al.*, 2007). The aim of professional education is improving significantly on what can be learned through experience alone, teaching in university, this work is further complicated by the reality that instructors are responsible for many individual learners' growth while working concurrently with many students indicated by (Ball and Forzani, 2009).

Likewise, Fisher and Swindells (1998) asserted that most of the beginner women academicians who joined in universities are non-trained in teaching methodologies, even high priorities towards pedagogical training is given. Training which brings a change in consciousness. Instructors of higher education should get further training in teaching methodology that used to promote the teaching and learning processes. Since most of the Instructors in our educational system are subject matter experts, priority must be given to develop their ability in methods of teaching by getting teaching pedagogy.

Hight (1996), also noted that teaching needs to typical orientation toward others situation and Instructors are skilled with ideas, words and learning, their duty is to see the content from others point of view. Additionally, teaching requires appropriately using and integrating specific activities in particular cases and contexts, based on knowledge and understanding of one's learners and on the application of qualified judgment. Professional training designed to help instructors learn to ratify the chores skillfully. Training involves through looking examples of each task, learning to separate and analyze the work, practicing under the real world, and specifying practice in detail and designing professional education that will offer beginners multiple opportunities to practice the work with skills stated by (Ball and Forzani, 2009).

Also, Isbn (2009) reported that in modern sense teaching includes professional activities on all school level, including higher education institution, such as co-operating in teams, building professional learning communities, participating in school development, evaluating and changing working environments in each aspects. However, Instructors come into the profession of teaching, they face low quality training that fails to give instruments to overcome their classroom challenges indicated by (Guajardo, 2011).

Moreover, Desta (2014) explained that for quality of teaching and learning processes instructors must have pedagogical knowledge. In addition, Save the children (2009) argues that in order to achieve quality education instructors' motivation are very important. Fraser (2005), stated that teaching is a dynamic profession and also new knowledge about teaching and learning emerges, new types of expertise are required by educators. Instructors must be well informed of this knowledge base and use it to continually refine their conceptual and pedagogical skills. The field of inquiry that has most significance for instructors and teaching is that of how students learn.

Similarly, Wilson and Ball (1996) described that beginner women academicians have problems of the inability to enhance creatively with knowledge. Because, they do not have the ability to teach and apply what they know nor do they have the experience needed to know the difference between teaching and studying. Moreover, they faced difficulties in areas such as controlling the group and maintaining discipline, lack adequate teaching strategies, lack the ability to create opportunities for all students to learn, not knowing how to deal with students who have learning disabilities, lack sufficient knowledge about how to plan the academic program and even about the content of the subjects they teach explained by (Cantu and Martinez, 2006).

Low Skill of Using Formative Assessment:

UNICEF (2000), reported that Instructors must be skilled in evaluation and assessment practices that allow them to measure individual student learning and teaching activities that include knowledge and performance assessment. Assessment of academic achievement outcomes has most often been used in a collective way. Testing and assessment used to decide who can continue to the next grade level rather than as a tool to improve educational quality. However, beginner women academicians have low skill of using formative assessment. Likewise, Fraser (2005) remarked that effective instructors used formative assessment to make students' thinking visible to themselves, their peers, and to monitor student learning progress.

Low Skill of Using Technology:

Technologies are the indicators of how school organizations can become more diversified to meet the needs, interests, experiences, realities of individuals and groups, i.e., How schools can become more student centered. As schools respond to the needs of diverse groups, facilities and practices will need to be diversified to respond to the specific needs of different areas (UNICEF, 2000). However, women academicians in the universities are relatively isolated, due to weak connections with male informal networks as well as low level of networking among female staff across different departments and colleges. This affects their access to information on a range of issues, including scholarships stated by (UNSECO, 2006).

In addition, the Committee for Economic Development (2000) reported that many beginner women academicians lack skill of using technology. This faces the instructor's role in digital learning. Technology offers the instructor's ability to collect and interpret student assessment data and will need to be trained in how to use these data effectively to inform instruction and increase student learning.

Other studies, Salehiet *al.*, (2012) claimed that the use of new technologies in education is essential in the information age. However, some barriers discourage instructors to integrate information and communication technology in the classroom and prevent them to introduce supporting materials through ICT usage. Using ICT in teaching and learning is a medium in which a variety of methods and approaches could be implemented. New graduate instructors may lack the skills to access, process and use information.

In addition, stress is a problem of instructors they are faced. According to Grace (2014), Stress can be destructive if not well managed. Hence, women instructors are subject to greater work-related pressures than their male counterparts. Challenges of women in academics work stress does have a homework interface connection. Women academicians faced in sex- role stereotype in which power and independence are not traditionally assigned to women. Furthermore, the women academic face role conflict between the workplace and the home indicated by (Williams, 1992). And beginner academicians throughout in the university not give special attention to student interests, problems and activities are not caring for their students, they frustrate large classes, not give special care and attention to students (Craig *et al.*, 1998).

Lack of Self Confidence:

In Ethiopia beginner women academicians also lack self-confidence. They felt that they could not be good instructors until they completed their own master program, in particular beginner women academicians, who have BA degree holders are very aware of their limitations and lacked confidence in their abilities. Instructors' self-image plays an important role in delivering quality education and must be taken into account in formulating instructors' development programming because instructors are conscious of being a role model for their students and create a trusting environment in class (Winthrop and Kirk, 2004).

Similarly, Voluntary Service Overseas (2008) noted that women are joining in teaching with lower qualification levels than men, their performance tends to lag behind, which may badly affect their self-esteem. Therefore, giving additional support to Female instructors and provides training is very important.

Classroom management is an important concern of instructors, experienced or beginner for both sexes. Controlling classroom environments for new instructor is very challenging. Even instructors with long years of experience can still face classroom management problems (Merc and Subas, 2015).

Low Financial Payment:

The professional status of instructors in Ethiopia is relatively low compared with other western countries and this, even though recent salary increases. Many university instructors are teaching until they can find better paying higher status, employment directly within their specialist field. When salaries are too low, instructors need to take on additional work, including private tutoring parallel to their regular's work which can reduce their commitment to their regular teaching jobs and this leads to instructors to be absent from their regular work indicated by (Education for all, 2015).

Moreover, Voluntary Service Overseas (2008) also remarked that Salaries were affecting instructors' motivation and morale. It is an area that must be addressed under the current strategy by the Ethiopian government to improve the quality of education. In Ethiopia' instructors now placed under ever increasing pressure to deliver on the government's ambitious

educational goals. In the situation of increasing inflation in the economy and increasing enrollment in education, instructors requires to see that their work is valued.

2.3 Social Obstacles:

Low Status and Value:

Bennell (2004), reported that teaching has become employment of the last resort among university graduates of many countries. Because of this, teachers often lack a strong, long-term commitment to teaching. Poor societal view, lack of respect from students; negative view of teaching from family, friends, community. A teacher receives salary today, but borrows money tomorrow. This is said to reflect the economic problems of teachers and their low social status. A relative is to his/her relative, as a teacher is to his/her ash or chalk.' This shows the negative social attitude for teaching because it is a tiresome and unattractive job in terms of its physical working conditions. Teachers teach, almost all the time, with chalk in their hands and writing on chalkboards. So, there is no wonder that they get tired and dirty at the end. Unfortunately, this situation is sometimes used to portray teachers negatively stated by (Jeylan, 2013). According to Craig *et al.*, (1998), status depends on how society and prospective instructors perceive the extrinsic compensation and conditions of the workplace, and the intrinsic rewards of professional accomplishments.

Negative Attitudes and Expected Failure:

Women academicians face negative attitudes and norms towards their public roles and their capacities to perform are strong and pervasive. It is generally expected that women are not capable to perform and they will not succeed. This attitude of expected failure implies that there is low trust in women's capacity to achieve. The misconceptions on female's capacities affect the opportunities given to them. Women are generally seen as unable to achieve anything indicated by (Eerdewijket *al.*, 2015).

Furthermore, selamawit and Nega (2014) reported that women academicians lack access to house because of community's negative perception towards them and owners prefer males instead. Lack of stability and security are other pressing problems related to get a house. Increasing cost of housing rent to live in a more secured compound is another limiting factor. Absence of house service in the university is as the root cause for the problem mainly for their exposure to sexual harassment, including rape, theft and robbery of their property.

Low Social Relationship:

According to Dubovicki and Banjari (2014), higher education institutions are characterized by a high value of autonomy and privacy. The beginner academicians quickly become conscious of this feature and are uncertain to get help for fear that they can be classified negatively. They feel unsupported by colleagues and administrators. This implies a problem of relationship between colleagues and leads them to experience a sense of isolation and others to feel demoralized. They also experience problems in relating to their managers like department heads, college deans and presidents. They feel that they are hardly heard of these and lack their support reported by (Cantu and Martinez, 2006).

In addition, to this other studies Selammawit and Nega (2014) asserted that beginner women academicians lack quick adaptation to the new social environment, both in institutions and outside the institutions in the neighborhood is also another problem that negatively affected their interpersonal relationships with the new communities. This left them alone because there is no effective orientation program that could facilitate their interaction with people.

Sexual, physical and psychological Harassment:

Women's are prone to sexual harassment irrespective of their status, personal characteristics and the types of their employment. They face sexual harassment at working places, educational institutions, on the way on transports and at home. Most of them are tend to be concentrated in the poorer service jobs, whereas men are in an immediate supervisory position, which gives them a chance to exploit them subordinate Female (Baratiet *al.*, 2013).

Likewise, Almaz (2003) explained that women academicians harassed by male superiors or male academicians. It is not easy to work with males if one is unmarried and had experienced sexual harassment. Sexual harassment is unwanted and unwelcome sexual behavior which interferes with your life. It can be serious which contribute to a hostile teaching - learning environment. Unwanted comments, jokes, gestures, and looks are the most common type of sexual harassment indicated by (Hill and Silva, 2005).

Sexual Harassment takes place when there is power or authority difference among persons involved, such as Student /Teacher, Junior Teacher/Senior Teacher, female teacher / men's department heads. This also involves treating others unequally on the basis of gender in work-related or academic duties or programs and not providing female students with the same academic opportunities as male students or vice versa. Male head of the department forced the female instructors to spend their time with him after office hours. Male instructors spending long hours locked away in an office with a young female colleague (Reena and Saheab, 2012).

Gender role conflicts:

Olatunji and Akinlabi (2012), described that gender role forced on women academicians which add to them extra roles that seems to worsen the situation. Ahmad and Masood (2011), also remarked that work-family balance is a major problem for the females' instructor. Related to contributory factors include attending meetings at departmental and faculty levels as well as membership of various administrative committees. By all these assignments, a female academic may become a nagging mother indicated by (Williams, 1992).

Other studies, Hightower (2011) reported that women carry a dual burden from both their academic interest and household chores for which they get little or no help from their spouses. A woman academic is concerned with childbearing and rearing, cooking and domestic household chores and their management. While married female instructors are at greater risk of high work to family interference than those who are single noted by (Acheampong, 2013).

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