European Journal of Business & Social Sciences
Available at https://ejbss.org/
ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

Attitude of Students towards Affirmative Action Program for Female Students: The case of Gambella Senior Secondary and Preparatory School

KahsayMeharyGebrekidan,
Gambella University,
Faculty of Social Science & Humanities,
Department of Psychology
Red Kun Nen, Department of Psychology

ABSTRACT

This paper is dedicated to the issue of the attitude of students towards affirmative action program for female students: the case of Gambella Senior Secondary and Preparatory School. In relation to the objectives, it was attempted to examine students' attitude to affirmative action program for female students, investigate the effectiveness of affirmative action program for female students and identify the challenges in providing affirmative action program for female student's specific objectives. A descriptive survey study with mixed research approach i, e quantitative and qualitative was employed for this study. Data gathering instruments such as questionnaires and interview were employed. The questionnaire was distributed to 163female students. The interview was conducted with ten female students. The data obtained through questionnaires was analyzed using SPSS 20 software program and statistical tools such as percentages and frequency. Narrations were made to analyze the data obtained through interview. The study revealed that their attitude towards affirmative action program was positive and negative; concerning implementation of female affirmative action program in the school for female students was weak; the number of female teachers and principals were few in numbers and the numbers of female students enrolled to secondary school was lower than the male, and lower achiever to compared with the male counterparts. The overall recommendation of the study was in order to change the negative attitude of female students towards affirmative action program with the issues above, female students, their school communities, government, and others non-governmental organizations should closely work together.

Key words: *affirmative action program, student.*

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

Introduction

The affirmative action in use for female students in Ethiopia is more likely a brilliant policy measure executed to reverse the longstanding absence of females from the world of education in Ethiopia. Numerous studies on gender equity (e.g. Johns, 1993; World Bank, 1986; King, 1982 and King and Bellow, 1993), have revealed that women have been victims of inequity for long. The major causes are reported to be gender bias, social, economic, cultural, historical, and religiousness factors. Another study by Lindsay (1991) indicated that educational inequality has endangered the education and training of girls and women in all the three dimensions of educational processes: access, success, and out comes at all level of schooling. Moreover, according to a study by Bowman and Anderson (1982) the degree of severity of inequality even increases along levels from primary to tertiary, across the dimension of educational process from access to success to outcome, and cross-sectional among countries from the highly developed ones to the least others. More specifically, equal access to educational opportunity is highly limited for girls and women in the initial phase of schooling (primary school, education).

As stated by Njuma (1993), high attrition rate and low preservation rate characterize women education at large particularly in developing countries. Citing the research findings of Seyoum (1991), and other related works, Abebayehu (1998) revealed that the situation of girls' participation in schools of Ethiopia is in agreement with this trend. A closer look at the trend of enrollment process in school learning of Ethiopia thus reveals that women are not represented well in crucial fields of study, especially, in Mathematics and the Science area (Tsige, 1991).These areas are, however, very crucial for women not only to assume full participation in development process but also to enjoy banditries of the educational outcomes equally with their male counterpart (Jacqueline, 1973). Various programs and projects (MOE, 1997) comprising different strategies have been subsequently designed. To address the issue of educational inequity for females at all school level of learning, MOE has launched affirmative action program since 1989 academic year. Female students have been given access to educational opportunity in the sense that they can be enrolled to schools. Primarily the affirmative action programs seek to provide equal educational chance to enroll significant number of female

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

students through increasing access strategies. Secondly, the affirmative action programs hope to maintain the academic diligence and performances of those female students admitted to secondary schools. Thirdly, the affirmative action programs intend to guarantee equal opportunity of educational outcomes at all levels of secondary schools especially where the numbers of female students are reported to be low and the dropout rate is high due to monetary problems. Keeping in mind the ambitious plan of supporting female students (i.e. the affirmative action programs) in particular, this research sought to assess the attitude of student's on the programs. In connection with the affirmative action programs, this study sought to examine the major problems hindering the execution of affirmative action program that are aimed at promoting girls education.

Statement of the Problem

Though the attempt to increase female students access to education observed in the town is Encouraging, there is a need to further examine the effectiveness of the program in light of what Lindsay has pointed out: ''While initial access to education is the foundation on which virtually all other opportunity structure rest, equity only begins with access'' (Lindsay,1991, p.651). Sustained educational equity for the target group is thus said to be promoted, if strategies and activities guaranteeing equal quality of learning environment and further equal equality of educational outcomes are deliberately designed in advance and then imported adequately, appropriately and timely for the needy. Unless the access opportunity provided is geared towards good performance and success, and further towards satisfying outcome to the individual women as well as to the society, any form of affirmative action is worthless to promote educational equity. This and other aspects of affirmative action program call for an investigation of various instructional and individual factors and roles to confidently witness the attainment of its objectives and leading also to undertaken deliberate and serious intervention by the concerned bodies at large. Regarding this issue, however, to the knowledge of the researcher, no enough study has been conducted so far in the school. The main purpose of this study was thus to investigate the attitude of students towards affirmative action program for women being implemented in Gambella Senior Secondary and Preparatory School.

Objectives of the Study

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

General Objective

The general objective of the study was to assess the attitude of students towards affirmative action program for female students.

Specific Objectives

- To examine students' attitude to affirmative action program for female students
- To investigate the effectiveness of affirmative action program for female students.
- To identify the challenges in providing affirmative action program for female students in Gambella senior secondary & preparatory schools of Gambella town.

Significances of the Study

With regards to affirmative action programs the focus of this study was absence of timely, monitor and evaluation traditions. They are the major reasons the Ethiopian educational system is being entertained in every schools' level to promote educational equity for females (Seyoum, 1986). One possible importance of the present study is, to give a timely analysis on the attitude of the affirmative action programs in school. The study is also hoped to inform the status and programs of the affirmative action in attaining its objective by the researcher to the towns educational office; to reveal the effect and impact of affirmative action by establishing a link with the objective; and to indicate some possible problems faced in affecting the programs by giving the research material to the educational office.

Delimitation of the Study

Since it is difficult to involve all of them governmental schools found in the town and to make the study manageable and to gather reliable information, the study was delimited to the Gambella senior secondary and preparatory schools chosen purposively. In terms of content, the study was limited to examining the attitude of female student's affirmative action program, effects of giving affirmative action program and challenges of affirmative action program for female students in senior secondary and preparatory schools Gambella town.

European Journal of Business & Social Sciences
Available at https://ejbss.org/
ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

3. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description of the Study Area

The study area is Gambella town located in south west Ethiopia of Gambella People National Regional State. It is the capital city of the Gambella People National Regional State, located about 776 kilometers from Addis Ababa. Gambella is situated at 8.25° North latitude, 34.58° East longitude and 512 meters elevation above the sea level. It is also founded on the banks of the Baro River-Ethiopia's widest and only navigable river. The town is subdivided into five kebeles. The area in which the research conduct was at Gambella Senior Secondary and Preparatory School.

3.2. Research Design

In this research, descriptive survey design has been used. Questionnaire and interview has been used as method of data collection.

3.4. Population, Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

The respondents of the study were female students of Gambella Senior Secondary School. The sample size is determined by using the Slovin's formula (1967): Sample size (n): $n_i = \frac{N_i}{1+\mathrm{Ni}(e)^2}$Ni = totalpopulation, e=sampling error (0.05), n_i=total sample size. By using Solvins formula, the researcher draws 163 students from 275 students to participate in this study. For the current study, the researcher employed simple random and purposive sampling techniques. For the current study, the researcher purposively selects the key informants who could give better information about the topic from the school.

3.6. Data Analysis Techniques

For the data gathered through questionnaires, SPSS 20 software program was used for analysis. Frequencies and percentages have been used to indicate the profile of the participants and the tendency of their attitudes towards affirmative action for female students. For the qualitative

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

data, thematic analysis was employed. These themes produce and interpreted to indicate the practice of affirmative action in Gambella Senior Secondary and Preparatory School**.**

Demographic Characteristics		Frequency	Percent
Age of respondent	15-17	44	27.0
	18-20	72	44.2
	21-23	19	11.7
	24 and above	28	17.2
	Total	163	100.0
Respondent of class grade	Grade 9	36	22.1
	Grade 10	127	77.9
	Total	163	100.0
sex of respondents	Female	163	100.0
	Total	163	100.0

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Demographics Characteristics of Respondent

As indicated in the above table 1, the data show that all participants were female whose age range 15-17(44, 27%) 18-20 age range is 44.2%(72) which is the largest participants of the study age range lies in this category. 19(11.7%) of female students participated from the age ranges of 21-23. The rest 17.2 %(28) participants of the study are 24 and above years. Concerning the class grade of participants77.9 %(127) of from the total population were grade ten female students whereas the rest 22.1 %(36) were grade nine female students. Regarding the sex of respondents, the respondents which were participated in the study was only female students. This was done purposively for the fact that female students can be the real source of information and the study was deals with the attitude of students towards affirmative action program for female students.

4. 2. Attitude of Students towards Affirmative Action Program

The majority 116(71.2%) of the respondents have agreed medium toward items which say affirmative action program strengthens is too much in the school where as 11.7%(19) of respondents replied that affirmative action program strengthens is high in school. Regarding to

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

the issues of item affirmative action means of re-examining current institutional policy and practice on gender inequality answered that 113(69.3%), 29(17.8%), 9(5.5%),7(4.3%)and5(3.1) of respondents respectively. As pointed out by Schuck (2015), affirmative action is justified to counter past discrimination against minorities and women in society.

> *One of the respondents strongly opposed the idea of female affirmative action by saying: "I completely support female student's affirmative action because as to me female is culturally was undermined in the society. Giving affirmative action only for female students is fair and upgrading of female students". Other respondent said that: "As to me, I believe that female can compete equal to their male counter parts without any support".*

But affirmative action designed only for female students is totally discrimination of disadvantaged weak male students." 55.2% of respondents answered affirmative action is compensation for backwardness of women because of culture that hider their effort. In response to affirmative action encourages female students to take leadership position most of respondents answered 66.9% said very high if implemented into practices. Respondent reveals that affirmative action create discrimination between male and female students 54 %) of the responded said low. Similarly majority of students responded that 55.8%, implementing affirmati ve action in education sector minimize the learning efforts is low in general. Critics suggested that affirmative action undermines the self-confidence of beneficiaries of the policy (Nacoste 1990, Boxil 1992).

Similarly majority of students responded that affirmative action enables women to use country resource equally with male. Similarly regarding item of affirmative action beneficiary could not be successful responded that majority very low with 69.9%. Notshulwana (2000) suggests that there is need on the part of beneficiaries of affirmative action not to view themselves as lacking in merit but to accept affirmative action as a vehicle for achieving equal access to opportunities, which were previously denied to disadvantaged groups. 58.5% of the respondent answered that affirmative action program is selecting unqualified female over qualified men. Some of the respondent 49.1% responded that affirmative action is appropriate means to discharge its obligation to those previously disadvantaged group. India's affirmative action as cited in Combs

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

and Nadkarni (2005) is referred to as compensatory discrimination in that its primary goal, as a minimum at beginning, was to compensate affected castes for subjection to past discrimination and oppression (Prior, 1996). Similarly the majority76.1% of respondents said affirmative action affected student performance. One of the respondents reported as follows:

> *"I feel good because I do support affirmative action program provided only for female students. This may make female students to perform themselves by developing the skills."*

Flores & Rodriguez (2006) strengthened the above idea by describing that faculty members make daily decisions concerning students' achievement in the school and judgments regarding their competence.

4.3. Effectiveness of Affirmative Action Program for Female Students

Female students from the schools chosen for the study were first asked whether there was special supporting class for female students respondent said yes but its implementation is very low 14.7%. From this, we can understand that female affirmative action program was low given in schools targeted for the study. The current results of the qualitative data shows that the subjects have favorable attitude toward affirmative action and the practice of the program found discouraging.

> *One of participant said that "there is no affirmative action program in the school."*

Students were also asked to what extent the special supporting program was effective for their academic program. The response of the student were low (46.6%) and (44, 27%) very low. Another respondent also added that:

> *"According to me, it has been not implemented well there is some plan among academic staff participation but it is not put into practice. I think, this is completely wrong because it must be given for female students according to the plan."*

Respondents who said the impact of special support program for female students' academic achievements was low (63.2%). The result portrays that concerning any help for poor female students to prevent dropout from school was very low (58.3%). The majority of students who answered 'low' put the blame on the schools, teachers, principals, students and parents.As a

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

result female students' academic achievement was bad. In item on issues concerning the extent this motivation affect academic achievement in female students responded moderately affect students (56.4). This indicates, female students get medium rewards from their schools and the rewards does not motivated to the female students to achieve high results.

An interview with one participant said that "to me, affirmative action is a chance for the future, the chance to develop career, the opportunity to proving to myself and others that women can be somebody and we are not inferior to men."

Majority of respondent respond that no discussion regarding program gender issue and equity (65.6%). From these data one can understand that female students have not such kind of opportunity in their school.

4. 4. Challenges' Encountered In the Overall Endeavor to Promote Female Affirmative Action Program

The current study is trying to identify the challenge of affirmative action practitioner face during implement at Gambella Senior Secondary and Preparatory School. 46% of the subjects show that provision of affirmative action program for female students are low. Regarding the issues affirmative action program give guarantee in your school that insures the protection of female students from sexual and other harassments show that 50.9%. This implies that half of the respondents were not agree on the issues. Respondent responded that there is no effort to give attention to non-academic problems of female students in the school. Concerning encouraging and giving chances to female students to participate equally with their male respondents answered as encouraging if it is improved. In the item that shows examining the results of female students after the tutorials were low which is 42.9% and 30.7% said very low on the issues.

> *"Female students were interviewed on the opinion that affirmative action program has more effective results if carried out as designed. But they said that initial commitments observed at the beginning of the academic year were not sustainable and that resulted in poor results."*

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

Provision of guidance and counseling service for female students in the school is low (50.9%). From the total participant of the study lies on 67.5% as low in creating and raising awareness of affirmative action program in the school.

> *One participant said that "female students themselves showed against to the program due to different reasons such as feeling waste of their time."*

Given the general lack of knowledge about what affirmative action is and how it operates, it is expected to find variations in attitudes (Crosby, Golden, & Hinkle: 2001).Participant responded that lack of follow up of the program was indicated in 45.4% said low and 42.2% said very low. This implies that lack of follow up created a challenge in implementation of the program.

> *One participant responded that: "follow up was good at the beginning of the year; it decreases as the academic year unfolded. In fact, concerned bodies stop taking measures against female student's affirmative action program implementation who failed to fully attend in the support programs."*
>
> *"Another participant revealed that: Because of lack of efficient monitoring and evaluating system, in most cases affirmative action programs remain only on paper. As far as I have experienced affirmative action is little more than a lip service."*

As the majority of respondent reveal that lack of awareness of society and female themselves, lack of recourse i.e. financial, time and manpower to implement fully, cultural and backwardness problem that hinder female participation, lack of commitment and so on.

Conclusions

As it has discussed widely under the previous chapter, female educational participations are entangled with several problems. Solving those problems and acquiring the benefits from the female education seriously calls for interventions. It is clear that supportive educational polices are preconditions for female 'educational participation as it establishes a climate for reform. However, the policy declaration alone does not close the gender gap in education. Since factors that hinder female' educational participations are many and complex, applying one intervention strategy cannot result in the desired objectives. Unless the intents to promote gender equity in education became rhetoric, all efforts would remain to be result less. Affirmative action program

ISSN: 2235-767X
Volume 07 Issue 06
June 2019

implementation is not well functioning in the school. In general, no clear mechanism was available to follow up problems faced to female students outside or/and inside the schools. Efforts to change and implement the program should be coordinated by principal of the school.

References

Abebayehu Aemero (1998).Problems of Gender Equity in Institution of Higher Education in Ethiopia.

Combs, G. M., &Nadkarni, S. (2005). The tale of two cultures: Attitudes towards affirmative action in the United States and India.

Flores, A., & Rodriguez, C. M. (2006). University faculty attitudes on affirmative action principles toward faculty and students.

Ministry of education. (1997). Education Sector Development Program I (ESDP I) 1997/98-2000/01, Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa.

Notshulwana, M, "Confronting diversity and difference in Institutional reform". Paper presented at the University of Zimbabwe AAP/GSA Conference, Harare, August, 2000.