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RESEARCH ARTICLE

COMPONENTS OF EMPOWERMENT INDEX IN MEASURING GENDER INEQUALITY TRENDS IN SOUTHERN NATIONS, NATIONALITIES AND PEOPLES' REGIONAL STATE (SNNPRS), SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

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ABSTRACT

Much of gender inequalities in society are related to empowerment issues. Measuring women empowerment has become relevant indicators to measure half of the dimension of gender inequalities. The primary aim of this study is to use quantitative data to measure women empowerment to understand trends of gender inequities in the SNNPRS. The study used data collected by governmental and international organizations. The findings indicate that women empowerment in field of politics, social and economy have been substantially rewarding. Nevertheless, the political, educational and labour participations gaps between women and men changed little. The findings also suggest that much remain to be done by development actors at regional, national and international levels to steer the direction of development policies in away to reduce gender inequalities. In this regard, establishing gender disaggregated data at national and sub-national levels have become crucial to design meaningful development policy and strategy to achieve gender equality as one of the integral parts of sustainable development goals.

INTRODUCTION

Gender as development cross cutting issue has long been taken in the international and national development plans. Development interventions meant to improve people life marginalized women out of the mainstream of society. Inequalities have become unintended outcomes of development endeavours. Efforts have been done to measure different forms of inequalities using indexes. According to Hausmann et al. (2007), "Index is designed to measure gender-based gaps in access to resources and opportunities in individual countries rather than the actual levels of the available resources and opportunities in those countries." Gender is a power relation between a man and a woman at different societal structures. Women empowerment efforts measure the position of women position from the hinge of power relations with respect to men. Power, in the social relations, commands access to political, educational, economic, and social/cultural resources and opportunities. Gender inequality index has been used to estimate how women and men benefits from resources and opportunities available at the region.

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According to Stachura and Śleszyński (2016), the Gender Inequality Index can be computed based on three components: HI (Health Index), EI (Empowerment Index), ESI (Economic Status Index). Each of which has its own sub-indexes. The health index has again two sub indexes such as maternal mortality ratio and adolescent birth rate. Similarly, Empowerment Index has three sub- indexes as sharing of parliamentary seats and population at least some secondary education and above. The Economic Status Index equals to Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR). In Ethiopia, where poor data handling and managements are very common, empowerment measurement indexes become difficult tasks at sub-national level. Incomplete health data sources on maternal mortality and adolescent birth at sub-national (regional) level restricted to calculate Gender Inequality Index. Instead, the research depends on components of empowerment index to look at gaps in the region.

Objectives of the Study: The overall objective of this study is to measure gender inequalities through women empowerment trend analysis in SNNPR

To achieve this goal, the study specifically attempts to:

- Compute women empowerment indicators at the region level
- draw the trends of women empowerment to show the status of gender inequalities in the region

- explain the social, economic and political implications of women empowerment as a mirror reflection of gender inequalities the region and the nation at large

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This data is part of the huge data collected between 30 May, 2016 and 4 July, 2018 at the SNNPRS. Quantitative data have been used to explain trend analysis to achieve the objectives of the study. So, 15years (1998-2014) gender disaggregated data were collected by the researchers and experts from government offices. The major sources of data are regional government sector offices reports. Moreover, published statistical reports and survey studies conducted by governmental and non-government organizations at national and regional levels were used to measure women empowerment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Women empowerment is the result of several composite indicators. As stated in the aforementioned paragraph, the national empowerment index has been computed as spectrum to look at the empowerment at the regional level. At the national level, women political participation was 21% in 2005 and in 2016 rose to 37.3 %. Similarly, men political participation was 79 % in 2005 and tended to declined into 62.7 % in 2015. The gap between men and women participation in political seats in the national parliament had been substantially decreased from 58 % in 2005 to 25 % in 2016. Men and women who attended at least secondary education increased since 2005 to 2016.

The difference between two sexes unchanged between 2011 and 2016. Similarly, men and women participation in economy remained the same for the last one decade. Nearly, 10% gap between men and women in attending at least secondary in education is big enough to make significant difference in their labour force participation in the economy. Women parliamentary seats at the regional level in 1994/95 national election were 4 % and significantly rose to 47.7 % in 2015. Conversely, men had 96 % of the seats in 1994/5 and declined to 52.2 % in 2015. The gap decreased from 92 % in 1995/4 into 4.6 % in 2015. When we compare the political empowerment gap in 2015, significant difference which accounted 25% and 4 % seats at national and regional councils respectively. Similarly, women who had political seat gaps in SNNPR Regional, and Zone and Special Woreda councils were 4% and 24.2% in 2015 respectively. This shows that more women had been more represented in the regional than in the national and local councils.

Women political representation at the regional council level has been progressively increasing from 1995 to 2015. The gender gap is very small. Women political participation in the local administration has been increasing from 1994 to 2011. However, it seems that the gap between sexes started to increase between 2011 and 2015. Hence, more women had political representation at the regional council than the lower hierarchies. Political decisions that determine women life at the national and lower levels are still remain major gaps in the political empowerment processes. The percentage of women participation in secondary education increased from 1.6 % in 1994 to 7.2% in 2016.

Table 1. Empowerment index and its component indicators computation for Ethiopia

Year	Share of parliamentary seats(PS) in Ethiopia)		Gap in parliamentary seats(PS) (Male- Female)%	Population with at least secondary education%		Gap in SE (Male – Female)%	Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR)%	
	Female	Male		Female	Male		Female	Male
2015	37.3	62.7	25	10.8	20.7	9.9	77	89.1
2011	25.5	74.5	49	7.8	18.2	10.4	77.3	89.8
2005	21.0	79.0	58	3.3	6.3	3	78.4	90.8

Source: HDI (2016)

Table 2. Empowerment Index and its component indicators computation for SNNPRS (1994-2016)

Year	Share of parliamentary seats(PS) in SNNP Council) %		Gap in PR (Male – Female)%	Share of parliamentary seats(PS) in SNNP Zones/Special Woreda Council) %		Gap in PR (Male – Female)%	Population with at least secondary education%		Gap in SE (Male – Female)%
	Female	Male		Female	Male		Female	Male	
2016	47.7	52.3	4.6				7.1	10.4	3.3
2015	47.7	52.3	4.6	37.9	62.1	24.2			
2011	31.9	68.1	36.2	40.6	59.4	18.8	4.2	8	3.8
2007	-	-	-				3	7	4
2005	27.9	72.1	44.2	24.5	75.5	51	-	-	-
2001	12.7	87.3	74.6	9.6	90.4	80.8			
1994/5	4	96	92	8.1	91.9	83.8	1.6	4.5	2.9

Source: SNNPR Regional Council,(2015); CSA,(1994); CSA, (2007); DHS,(2016)

Table 3. Economic Status Index and its component indicators for SNNPR (1994- 2013)

Year	Labour Force Participation Rate of population age 10 and above		Gap in LFPR (Male – Female)	Economic Status Index (ESI)	
	Female	Male		Female	Male
2013	74.4	83.1	8.7	.744	.831
2007	64.1	75.7	10.6	.641	.757
1994	50.3	76.7	26.4	.503	.767

Source: CSA (1996, 2007, 2014); CSA (2013); EHDS (2011)

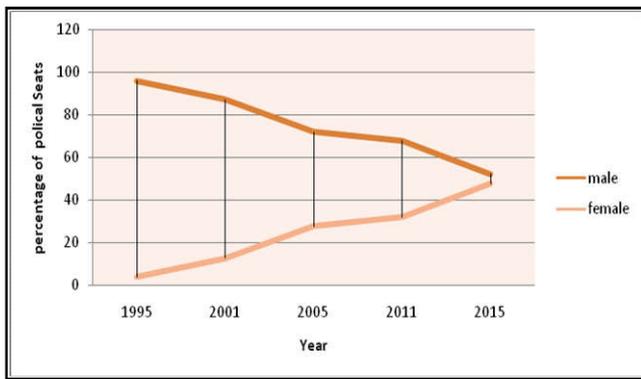


Figure 1. Trends of Component indicators of political empowerment index for SNNPR Council (1994-2015)

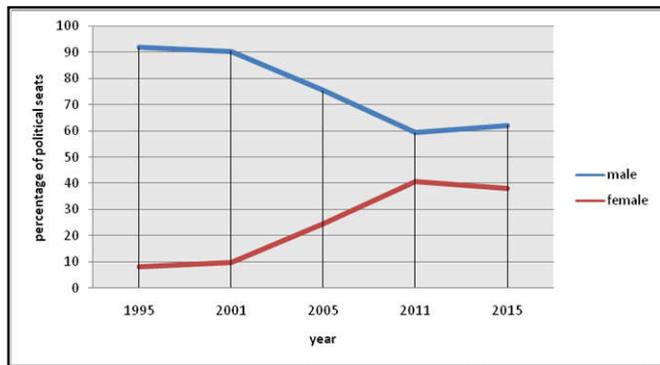
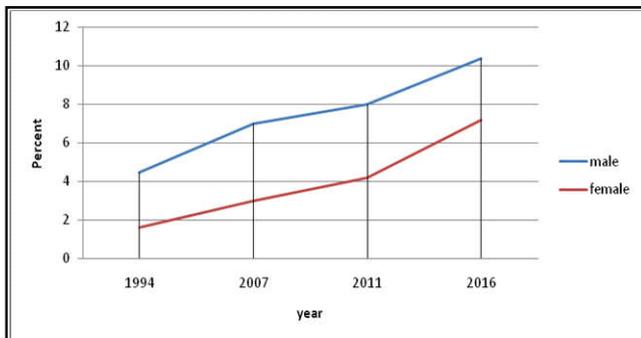
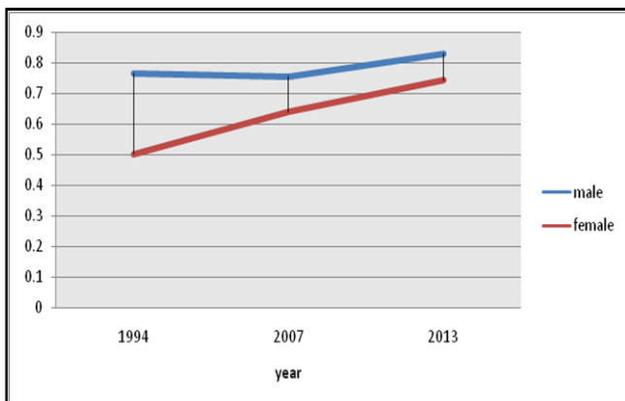


Figure 2. Trends of component indicators of political empowerment index for SNNPR Zonal/Special Woreda Councils (1994-2015)



Source: CSA (1996); CSA (2007); EHDS (2011); DHS (2016)

Figure 3. Trends of component indicators of education empowerment index for SNNPR (1994-2015)



Source: CSA (1996, 2007, 2014); CSA (2013); EHDS (2011)

Figure 4. Component indicators of Economic Status Index SNNPR (1994-2013)

The gap in secondary education and above between women and men in 1994 was 2.9 % and 3.2 % in 2016. Men and women educational attainment for the last two decade has shown little difference. Tesfaye and Solomon (2015) stated that female participation at secondary level (grades:9-112) is far below that of male counterparts and that would continue for the next five years. The major preseason for low education attainment is societal attitudes. Dagne and Alemante (2019) mentioned that early marriage and female genital mutilation, which had been prevalent in the SNNPRS, affected young girls' education.

Component 3: Economic Status Index: The Economic Status Index (ESI) is measured by female and male labour force participation rates of population age 10 and above. Relative labour force participation can reflect the degree of economic activity of women versus men. Women labour force participation increased from 50.3 percent in 1994 to 74.4 percent in 2013. Similarly, men in the labour force rose from 76.7 % in 1994 to 83.1% in 2013. The gender gap is declining across years. The following graph shows the trends of change in labour force participation. The graph shows the gender gap has been declining from 26.4 % in 1994 to 8.7 %.. However, the rate of change of gender gap in economic participation tends to be constant in between 2007 to 2013. The economic status index provides economically active population in the economy. Women labour force and political participations are the mirror reflection of women educational attainments. The higher girls secondary education attainment, the more empowerment in politics and economic spheres in the region. In this regard, the role of education sector development insignificantly changed women life chances in the region.

Conclusion

Gender inequality measurements are crucial to understand how national and international development policies have improved women living conditions. Women empowerment indicators tell half of gender inequalities narrative in the region. The findings point out those encouraging achievements in transforming women political power positions, secondary educational attainments and labour force participation have been scored at regional and national levels. The general trends of components of empowerment index clearly show that women participation in the political, social and economic spheres of the region goes upward direction. However, the gaps between women and men in politics, education and labour unchanged though irregularities observed across several decades. So, the direction of development policies should be to design as how participation reduces gender gaps.

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