

THE IMPACT OF CONFLICT AND COVID-19 ON WOMEN'S POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN ETHIOPIA

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ASSOCIATION (EWLA)

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Disclaimer

The study was conducted by the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA). The findings, interpretations, and conclusions expressed herein are the responsibility of the assessing (survey) team, and they do not necessarily represent the official position of the management of the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association and its Board of Directors, PO, or any of the stakeholders of the EWLA.


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Executive Summary

Conflict and COVID-19 are examples of shocks that are gendered. Although neither men nor women cannot avoid the effects, the severity of the impacts differs based on gender. Emerging patterns around the world demonstrate that conflict and COVID-19 affected women differently, not only in terms of increased gender-based violence and humanitarian crises but also in terms of their political participation, with women's political participation being found to be more severely impacted by these shocks than men. Therefore, using three conflict-affected regional states, i.e., Amhara, Afar, and Oromia, as case studies, the study's primary objective was to assess the impacts of conflict and COVID-19 on women's political participation in Ethiopia. Both primary and secondary sources have been employed for the study, which is grounded in a qualitative approach. Key informant interviews and focus group discussions have been used to gather primary data from the National Election Board of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Affairs, women politicians from different political parties, as well as the Zonal and Woreda-level women leaders in the three regional states. Accordingly, it has been found through the study that continuously occurring conflicts and lockdowns brought on by COVID-19 have had an impact on women's political participation through rising securitization dynamics, the

resurgence of traditional roles, men's dominance of decision-making, rising insecurities and restricted movements, the partiality of security protections, rising patterns of men's informal networks, underestimating the role of women, and rising dynamics of urgency. Finally, it has been suggested that interventions like strengthening shock-based women's capacity, developing initiatives, developing shock- or crisis-oriented women's political participation strategies, and finally, strengthening women-based networks and organizations to work towards minimizing the impacts of shocks on women's political participation.

ACRONYMS

EWLA - Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association

FGDs- Focus Group Discussions

GoE- Government of Ethiopia

KIIs- Key Informant Interviews

NDI - National Democratic Institute

TPLF - Tigray People's Liberation Front

OLF- Oromo Liberation Front,

VAW - Violence Against Women

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1. Background of the Study

Women's political participation is a prerequisite for any global objective of achieving democracy and sustainable development. It may take various forms, like constituency members, contestants, designated officials, or electoral administrators, but democracy cannot be accomplished in the absence of women's full and effective political engagement. In the same way, if political organizations fail to sufficiently encourage the engagement of the societies they aim to represent, mainly women, they undeniably put their existence in a predicament (Ashild, 2010; Tajali, 2013; and Wubante, 2021). Progress in terms of realizing inclusive and long-term development as well as protecting human rights could be successful through materializing gender equality in political engagement (Courage and Forget, 2019). As a result of this fact, the need for a paradigm shift in maintaining gender equality in politics has been dominating the agendas of various actors, and stakeholders have been generously presenting the necessity of women's political participation both at the local and international levels (Sindhuja and Murugan, 2017).

For instance, the Fourth World Conference on Women, which was held in Beijing in 1995, was marked as a foundation for the quest for a paradigm shift in terms of women's political engagement.

The conference brought attention to the continuous gender disparities in decision-making and underlined the impact of women's continued absence from formal politics on democracy and gender equality (UNDAW, 2005). As part of its continued progress, the United Nations Security Council also adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security, demonstrating a rising worldwide acknowledgment of women's involvement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Nevertheless, due to factors like political culture (male dominance), financial incapability, socio-cultural factors, violence, insincerity, and marginalization or oppression of women's political interests, the implementation of protocols on women's participation in peace talks is still limited, and women are underrepresented at all levels of decision-making (DiLanzo, 2019; Falch, 2010; Oguadimma et al., 2021).

At the continental level, Agenda 2063 of Africa endorsed its commitment to improving women's political participation through building cultures of gender equality and good governance and finally acknowledged the importance of on-the-ground evidence in drawing attention to gender gaps as well as making visible progress towards improving women's political participation. Additionally, the Maputo Protocol, which included particular measures on women's political participation, demonstrated the continent's long commitment to advancing gender equality in political decision-making (IDEA, 2021).

Despite all the efforts, women have been forced to play outside the political arena in Africa. As the political environment and conditions are frequently antagonistic to their engagement in politics, women in Africa attempt to express their voice in shaping the direction of their country but are mostly unsuccessful as they experience numerous obstacles (Courage and Forget 2019).

Particularly during both natural and artificial disasters, women are more vulnerable to negative impacts than men. For instance, SIDA (2015) and George (2021) have confirmed that conflict and post-conflict scenarios, as well as global pandemics, expose women to gender-based violence, loss of livelihoods, and women's marginalization from decision-making. Moreover, apart from the traditional impact of both conflict and global pandemic on the social, economic, and psychosocial aspects of women, there are emerging trends in these disasters' impact on women's political participation. According to the National Democratic Institute (2020), when shocks such as pandemics, conflicts, and natural and man-made disasters occur, the political space for all actors shrinks and the whole political system moves from a more consultative mode of operation to 'command and control.' For women, this shrinking is particularly problematic not only in terms of the loss of their voice and agency in political and decision-making processes but also in terms of physical restrictions and information gaps (NDI, 2020).

Therefore, apart from the traditional view of measuring the impact of pandemics, conflicts, and natural and man-made disasters on the socio-cultural and economic aspects of women, there is an alarming need to investigate how conflict and pandemics obstruct women's equal and meaningful political participation. Thus, the study is meant to assess the impacts of COVID-19 and conflict on women's political participation in Ethiopia, taking Amhara, Oromia, and Afar regional states as case studies.

2. Context of the Problem

Women are disproportionately affected by disasters in both developing and industrialized countries. They are particularly susceptible and powerless to defend themselves during disasters as well as to lessen their risk of future catastrophes due to social injustice and gender inequality (SIDA, 2009). For instance, armed conflict is not gender-neutral; in fact, it is extremely prejudiced. In their study that assessed 14 ethnic-based conflicts and four non-ethnic-based conflicts, Plumber and Eric (2006) discovered that any ethnic conflicts and conflicts in the failed states affect women more severely than men (Plumber and Eric, 2020; George, 2021).

Ethiopia is not an exception. Since the confirmation of the first case in March 2020, Ethiopia has suffered from the multidimensional impacts of COVID-19.

The pandemic-led state emergency has resulted in the restriction of movement and prohibition of interregional public transport and public gatherings, which, on the other hand, have affected the livelihoods of the people. Moreover, it has been confirmed by many studies that the pandemic is not gender-neutral. It exposed the women to further challenges like gender-based violence, exploitation, and abuse; reduced health care like pregnancy checkups; reduced access to sexual and reproductive health services; minimal political participation; and other psychosocial problems. (UN Women, 2020; Gebrewahd et al., 2020; Ajayi et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2021; Christian et al., 2020; Alessandra, 2020).

Similarly, since November 20, 2020, Ethiopia has been suffering from the deadly conflict between the Federal Government of Ethiopia (GoE) and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF). The conflict has resulted in various humanitarian crises, including high levels of death tolls and displacements across conflict-prone areas like Afar, Amhara, and Tigray regional states (Lauren, 2021). As well, the frequent clashes between the government forces and the armed groups, mainly the Oromo Liberation Front, further exacerbated the crisis of death and displacements across Oromia regional state. The conflict affected all sections of the community, but women were highly vulnerable to gender-based violence during the conflict. The conflict has had a disproportionate impact on women in the form of the prevalence of physical, sexual, psychological, or economic

violence against women (VAW) in the areas (SRSRG, 2021; RHINGO, 2020).

Despite the presence of many studies that have been conducted on the impact of both COVID-19 and conflict on the socio-economic and psychosocial aspects of women in conflict-prone areas (UN Women, 2020; Gebrewahd et al., 2020; Ajayi et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2021; Christian et al., 2020; Alessandra, 2020), there is a dearth of findings on the impact of COVID-19 and conflict on women's political participation in general and in Ethiopia in particular. Therefore, the purpose of the study is to assess the impact of COVID-19 and conflict on women's political participation in Ethiopia, taking three conflict-prone areas as case studies: Amhara, Afar, and Oromia regional states.

3. Objectives of the study

The general objective of the study is to analyze the impacts of COVID-19 and conflict on women's political participation in Ethiopia, with an emphasis on conflict-affected areas in Amhara, Afar, and Oromia regional states.

- To critically examine the nature of women's political participation in Ethiopia, focusing on the Amhara, Afar, and Oromia regional states in both pre- and post-conflict circumstances.
- To analyze the impact of conflict on women's political participation (ability, safety, and mobility), with a focus on conflict-affected areas in Amhara, Afar, and Oromia regional states.

- To analyze the role and challenges of women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities in Ethiopia, with an emphasis on conflict-affected areas in the Amhara, Afar, and Oromia regional states.

4. Methodology of the Assessment

4.1. Assessment Approach

The assessment employed a qualitative approach to collect, transcribe, and analyze data and was finally framed by NDI's shocks, gender, and democracy framework.

4.2. Sources of Data:

Primary and secondary data sources were used to collect the data for the assessment. Primary data was collected through focus group discussions and key informant interviews, while secondary data was collected through desk reviews of various published and unpublished sources.

4.3. Methods of data collection

The study employed a variety of participatory qualitative data-gathering approaches as well as tools that are specifically adapted to the assessment's objectives. Semi-structured checklists have been prepared for KIIs and FGDs to lead discussions with diverse organizations. The following participatory approaches were developed and used:

- **Desk Review:** To corroborate primary data and gather data that could not be gathered using primary data collection instruments, the assessing team used desk reviews, where secondary sources like article journals, institutional briefs, books, and magazines were consulted.

- **Focus Group Discussion:** Focus Group Discussions were held to shed light on more complicated subjects requiring evolving views and/or attitudes, as well as to comprehend different viewpoints on gender, conflict, and political engagement dynamics. Women politicians from various government sectors and political parties were targeted at the regional, zonal, and Woreda levels. As a result, three focus group discussions were held in each region with women politicians from various groups, mainly government structures at the regional, zonal, and woreda levels.
- **In-depth interviews:** Key informants interviews were conducted at the federal, regional, zonal, and Woreda levels. Women, children, and social affairs experts, members of the ruling party's central committee, members and officials from political parties, and regional, zonal, and Woreda-level leaders were among the participants in the study.

4.4. Method of Data Analysis:

All KIIs and FGDs have been recorded and kept on a password-protected USB stick to ensure that the information is transferred correctly later. Following that, transcription, which was a lengthy process due to the large number of interviews and focus group discussions, was undertaken. Finally, the data that was thematically coded after transcription has been analyzed using theme analysis.

5. Significance of the study

The research has five key implications. To begin, the Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association (EWLA) sought to use the study's findings to guide its action in conducting a project that was financed by NDI. Second, the study will provide different stakeholders with evidence-based information and lay the groundwork for policy advocacy. Third, the findings of this study will be important and will ideally help policymakers and implementers recognize the gaps and take corrective actions. Finally, it will serve as a seedling for people who wish to pursue additional research and investigation in the field.

6. Scope of the study

The study's objective is to assess the impact of COVID-19 and conflict on women's political participation at the national, regional, zonal, and Woreda levels. It is geographically and thematically framed. Geographically, the study is limited to three regional states: Amhara, Afar, and Oromia. It has covered women's political participation in national as well as regional state structures (regional, zonal, and woreda) and their engagement in national and regional state political processes, including political parties.

CHAPTER TWO

Conflict, Covid-19 and Women's Political Participation in Ethiopia

2.1. Shock, Gender and Democracy

One of the pillars of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in 1979 and went into effect in 1981, was the equal participation of men and women in public and political life. The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, a non-binding declaration produced by the UN's Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, asked all countries to ensure that women made up at least 30% of all legislators in national parliaments. Africa's Agenda 2063 also endorsed the continent's commitment to increasing women's political participation and, for the first time, acknowledged the importance of empirical data in highlighting gender gaps and demonstrating concrete progress in doing so. The Maputo Protocol also included specific clauses on women's political participation, demonstrating the continent's long-standing commitment to attaining gender equality in political decision-making (IDEA, 2021). Contrarily, although African women try to participate in politics to change the course of their nation, they often fail because they face a number of obstacles and the political environment is frequently unfriendly to their involvement. (Courage and Forget, 2019).

For instance, women are disproportionately impacted by the short- and long-term repercussions of crises and shocks and are

vulnerable to sexual assault and exploitation; victimization that results in isolation, alienation, protracted emotional trauma, unplanned pregnancies, reduced and unequal access to resources, limited livelihood inputs, prohibition of basic services, increased family and social responsibilities; mobility restrictions; and insufficient political power mainly during times of crisis like conflict (USAID, 2009; Audrey, 2014; Cohn, 2012). Political turmoil, protracted civil wars, and international conflicts have had a particularly severe impact on women and their families and have deepened the gender gaps already existent in patriarchal society (Fikadu, 2020; Campbell and Patricia, 2005; Large, 1997).

2.2. Shocks and Women's Shrinking Political Participation

Plumber and Eric (2006) have demonstrated that ethnic wars and conflicts in failed states harm women more severely than men in their analyses of 14 ethnically-based conflicts and four non-ethnically-based conflicts. Beyond just the humanitarian situation, it also has an impact on women's political participation and reduces their influence on decision-making (Sonya, 2019; Cohn, 2012). The National Democratic Institute (2020) has additionally provided evidence that whenever shocks like pandemics, conflicts, and natural and man-made disasters strike, the political space for all actors starts to get smaller, and the political system shifts from a more consultative mode of operation to command and control. The institute also made it abundantly evident that shocks, like conflicts, affect women not just in terms of the weight of physical limits and knowledge gaps

but also in terms of the loss of their agency and voice in political and decision-making processes (NDI, 2020).

Insecure environments and restrictions on movement, a lack of access to information, resources, and services, and the dominance of informal institutions like patronage networks in unstable and conflict-affected areas/situations make women and girls vulnerable (Castillejo, 2011; Cordaid, 2012; OECD, 2013; UN Women, 2012, 2015).

2.3. COVID -19, Conflict and Women's Political Participation in Ethiopia

Like many other nations around the globe, Ethiopia's majority of women have long been marginalized in society and have been denied basic social, economic, and political rights. In Ethiopia, the federal structure of the nation was established by the formal promulgation of the 1995 constitution. In addition, Article 35 of the FDRE constitution gives women an equal opportunity to participate in the decision-making process by granting them the right to vote and hold elective office. Article 25 of the FDRE Constitution guarantees all people equality before the law and forbids any discrimination based on gender (FDRE Constitution, 1995). In more detail, the FDRE constitution provides that women shall have equal rights with men in the exercise of the rights and safeguards granted by this Constitution. Women have the right to complete consultation when developing national development policies, creating projects, and carrying them out, especially when those initiatives are harming the interests of women (FDRE Constitution 1995, Art. 35).

Even though Ethiopia's Constitution explicitly guarantees that men and women have equal rights, significant obstacles still prevent women from having a meaningful voice in and influence over decision-making processes. These obstacles include widespread sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), negative social norms and gender roles, widespread conflict, and general insecurity (IRI and NDI, 2021). With the opening up of civil society and the political sphere, Ethiopian women's standing and the options available to them have experienced changes in recent years.

However, ongoing ethnic and political conflict, detrimental traditional practices, and patriarchal cultural norms continue to obstruct women's equal and active involvement in society and public life (CEPPS, 2020; EWLA, 2021).

Women's participation in elections in Ethiopia, both as candidates and voters, has frequently been highlighted as being severely hampered by violence and instability. Violence against women can take the form of ongoing sexual assault, physical assault, psychological abuse, or harassment of women in politics at any level. These behaviors have a chilling impact on the potential of women as a whole and pose a threat to democracy. Recent legal and institutional changes designed to encourage women's political participation, such as an additional subsidy for political parties that nominate a minimum number of women as candidates or as party leaders, as well as the distribution of free airtime for political parties, have incentivized women's political participation, albeit to a limited extent (IRI and NDI, 2021; EWLA, 2021).

Additionally, the election and appointment of women to high-level positions, including the president of Ethiopia, president of the Supreme Court, and chairperson of the NEBE, are viewed as encouraging indications of the critical role that women should play in public life and of more gender-inclusive politics. Only one of the 53 officially recognized political parties is led by a woman, and only 58 women hold positions of leadership within these organizations. Although women's representation in the last HoPR was higher than the regional norm (39 percent compared to 24 percent), this was probably because the EPRDF used an unofficial quota system. The percentage of female candidates dropped from 29% in 2015 to 21% in the 2021 elections as compared to that year. The main causes are the extremely unstable security situation as well as security worries, including increasing threats and intimidation, to which female candidates are especially susceptible. Their participation is further hampered by a lack of financial resources and historic gender bias against women participating in public and political life (EWLA, 2021; IRI and NDI, 2021).

2.4. Conflict and Women's Political Participation

Conflict has historically been characterized by the oppression of women. Women are more susceptible to the negative effects than men, especially during both natural and man-made disasters. For instance, SIDA (2015) and George (2021) have proven that gender-based violence, loss of livelihoods, and women's marginalization from decision-making are all possible outcomes of conflict and post-conflict situations, as well as global pandemics.

In addition, new patterns are showing how conflict and pandemic affect women's political engagement in addition to the conventional effects on women's social, economic, and emotional elements (Falch, 2010). According to the National Democratic Institute, as shocks like pandemics, conflicts, and natural and man-made disasters occur, the political space for all actors shrinks and the entire political system switches from a more consultative form of operation to "command and control" (2020). Due to physical constraints, knowledge gaps, and the loss of agency and voice in political and decision-making processes, women are particularly affected by this downsizing (NDI, 2020).

Women and girls are significantly burdened by conflict in various ways compared to men. The effects of conflict on women and girls can be exacerbated by pre-existing gender inequality and discrimination, and the feminization of poverty frequently limits women's ability to lessen these effects. Women and children, for instance, make up a sizable share of the refugees and internally displaced people caused by armed conflict. Conflict heightens women's vulnerability to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), widens the gender gap in enrolment and retention in schools, worsens reproductive health issues, and puts stress on reproductive and caregiving roles (Domingo and Holmes, 2013; Myrtilinen et al., 2014; UN Women, 2015).

On the other hand, the participation and empowerment of women can support long-term peace. Women's meaningful participation in constitutional change and peace discussions enhances the likelihood that a deal will be struck and carried through (OECD, 2013; Paffenholz et al., 2016; UN Women, 2015).

There is a 35% greater chance that a peace agreement will continue for at least 15 years when women are involved in peace negotiations. Therefore, women contribute significantly to fostering peace, healing, and resilience at the household, community, and sub-national levels (Cardona et al., 2012; Georgetown Institute, 2015; UNSG, 2010; UN Women, 2015). In general, and especially in Ethiopia, peacebuilding and conflict-resolution initiatives have marginalized women, who make up a major portion of the population. Historically, values, policies, institutions, and practices related to conflict resolution and peacebuilding have marginalized a sizable portion of the population, especially women (Agbajobi, 2010).

2.5. Global Pandemic and Women's Political Participation

The novel coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19), which was first discovered in China's Hubei Province in late December 2019, has since spread to all nations or regions, and as of September 14, 2022, health actors had confirmed that there had been 607,083,820 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 6,496,721 deaths, reported to the WHO. 12,613,484,608 vaccine doses have been delivered as of September 12, 2022 (Begley, 2020; CIM, 2020; CARE, 2020). The virus has put several obstacles in the political environment, mainly for women. Due to the COVID-19 epidemic, women and men may not be able to successfully engage in political processes such as voter registration, candidate nomination, voter education, electoral campaigning, and voting, especially if they are already infected or under quarantine.

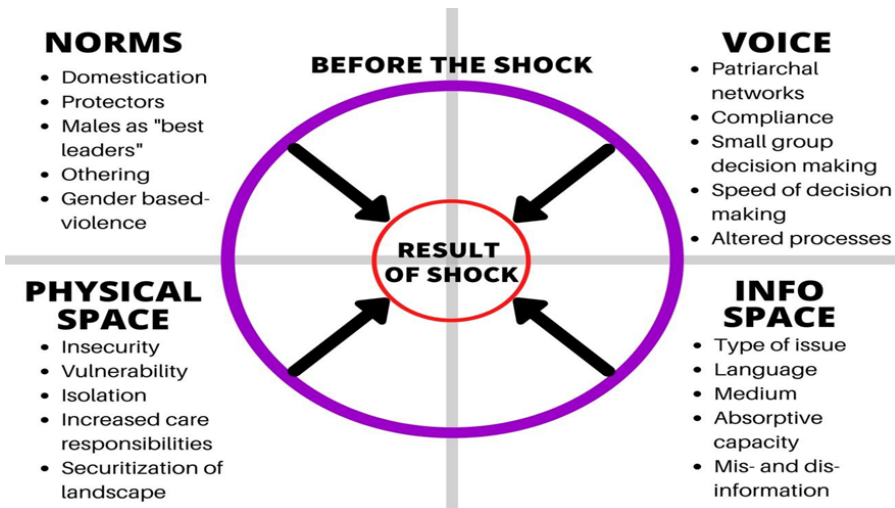
Despite the pandemic, 18 African nations had elections in 2020, and four others, including Ethiopia, postponed their polls. Amid a second wave of the epidemic that is devastating the continent far more severely than the first, around 26 elections have been set to take place in 2021 (Punam, 2021; IDEA, 2021).

Shocks, such as COVID-19 and its immediate state of emergency, were not gender-neutral. It exposed the women to additional difficulties like gender-based violence, exploitation and abuse, decreased access to services for sexual and reproductive health, reduced access to health care like prenatal exams, and other psychosocial issues. Additionally, it has limited women's access to political power and freedom of movement (UNWomen, 2020; Gebrewahd et al., 2020; Ajayi et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2021; Christian et al., 2020; Alessandra, 2020).

Securing the participation of women at all levels and their leadership in the decision-making and oversight committees/task forces established in parliament to address the crisis is crucial (Begley, 2020; CIM, 2020; CARE, 2020; Punam, 2021; IDEA, 2021). For instance, with COVID-19, new working and operating procedures are required to make sure that parliaments fulfill their crucial function in achieving gender equality. Parliaments must make choices and take measures that are gender-responsive and that reflect the new reality imposed by COVID-19. The crisis is an opportunity for parliaments to continue being or becoming gender-sensitive institutions (IDEA, 2021; IPU and UN Women, 2021). Women must be at the centre of COVID-19 recovery efforts, and this process begins with ensuring that they are equally represented and

included in decision-making. Even if it takes special measures, like quotas, to ensure their participation, women must be included in COVID-19 specialized groups or task forces, as well as legislative, policy, and budgetary decision-making processes (UN Women, 2020; OCHA, 2020; Julia, 2020).

In addition to the conventional approach of measuring the effects of pandemics, conflicts, and natural and man-made disasters on women's socio-cultural and economic aspects, there is an urgent need to investigate how conflict and pandemics prevent women from engaging in meaningful political participation (Rachard, 2021). The following diagram shows the National Democratic Institute's (2020) framework for the interplay between shock, democracy, and gender and how shocks like conflict and COVID-19 drive and affect women's political participation.



Source; National Democratic Institute, 2020

2.6. The Impact of Conflict and COVID-19 on Women's Political Participation in Ethiopia- Taking Afar, Oromia and Amhara Case Studies

Shocks like pandemics, conflicts, and natural and man-made disasters shrink the entire political space for all actors and switch from a more consultative style of operation to command and control. This shrinking is primarily troublesome for women because of physical limitations and knowledge gaps, as well as the loss of their voice and agency in political and decision-making processes (NDI, 2020). As a result, disasters strike women disproportionately in both developing and developed countries. Due to social injustice and gender inequality, they are especially vulnerable and helpless to defend themselves during disasters (SIDA, 2009). These shocks often exacerbate the existing inequalities. Although there are many female leaders receiving praise for their crisis management performance in the past two years, women in most contexts continue to be ignored. Women elected officials, candidates, and voters are disproportionately affected by the COVID-19 epidemic and its repercussions, which intensify inequality and reinforce obstacles (IDEA, 2022).

In Ethiopia, even though the constitution clearly states that men and women are entitled to equal rights, significant obstacles still stand in the way of women's equal and active participation in society and public life, including meaningful political participation. These obstacles include persistent patriarchal cultural norms, ethnic and political conflicts, harmful social norms and gender roles, traditional practices, and sexual and

gender-based violence (CEPPS, 2020; EWLA, 2021; IRI and NDI, 2021). It has been universally acknowledged that violence and insecurity pose a significant obstacle to women's political engagements like voting and running for office (IRI and NDI, 2021; EWLA, 2021). Cohn, 2012).

Even though many studies have been done on the socio-economic and psychosocial impacts of shocks like conflict and COVID-19 on women, only a few studies have been done on the impact of COVID-19 and conflict on women's political participation in general and in Ethiopia in particular (UNWomen, 2020; Gebrewahd et al., 2020; Ajayi et al., 2020; Wood et al., 2021; Christian et al., 2020; Alessandra, 2020). Therefore, the main purpose of the study is to assess the impact of COVID-19 and conflict on women's political participation in Ethiopia by using the conflict-affected areas, Amhara, Afar, and Oromia regional states, as case studies.

There are various ways of measuring the impact of shocks like conflict and COVID-19. For instance, the National Democratic Institute (2020) has outlined four dimensions for measuring the impact of shock on women's political participation. These dimensions are norms, information space, voice, and physical threats. Specifically, in Ethiopia, based on both primary and secondary sources, the following are the major impacts of conflict and COVID-19 on women's political participation in Ethiopia: The following diagram shows a summary of the impacts found by the study.



Adopted by: Research Team, 2022

The impacts are detailed below.

1. “Securitization” as a barrier to Women’s Political Participation: According to the international relations school of thought, national security is carefully chosen by politicians and other decision-makers rather than being given on a global scale. A "securitizing actor" who has the social and institutional ability to elevate the issue "beyond politics" deems issues mostly political as "dangerous," "menacing," "threatening," "alarming," and so on (Stephen, 2017). The securitizing actors have the choice of taking the matter seriously and giving it "urgency" or underestimating and ignoring it. Similarly, when a crisis occurs at the national and local levels, whether it be a conflict or COVID-19, it is the "securitizing actors," mostly social and political leaders, who determine whether the situations are severe and urgent and whether to pay attention to them or disregard them. This has been described as the securitization of the landscape or the democratization of the use of weapons where insecurity is exacerbated for

women and other marginalized groups (World Bank, 2018). In the study areas, the securitization of the landscape took three forms, namely institutional, domestic, and personal securitization, to alter women's political engagement.

- **Institutional securitization as a barrier to women's political participation** Political parties, government agencies, and social organizations are some of the social and institutional power holders who can frame and identify a problem as "dangerous," "menacing," "threatening," or "alarming." Participants in the study have asserted that male leaders dominate these organizations. As a result, what men judge to be "dangerous," "menacing," "threatening," and "alarming" binds all actors, and these power brokers also provide the solution to the problem.

In light of this, KIIs and FGDs held at regional levels in Oromia, Afar, and Amhara have shown that institutional and social power holders structured at regional, zonal, and Woreda levels are principally responsible for defining the "sensitivity of conflict-based crises." Because men predominate in these organizations, they define security in terms of their worldviews. Men secure the situation during times of conflict and determine the type and extent of women's participation in decision-making. As a result, these leaders, who are mostly men, decide to take charge of the situation and persuade the women to look after their families or to fill complementary roles in the logistical and humanitarian realms. One of the KII informants from the Western Wollo Zone of Amhara Regional State said:

"Our authorities always advise us to either return to our homes during times of crisis or to take on facilitation roles and logistical-oriented

duties. Even though we are cabinet members, they never ask us for advice on what to do or how to accomplish it. We are unsure of the motivations behind it, which might be safety or superiority, and they don't want us to participate in the management of crises that mostly include conflict situations. Therefore, our roles are to either provide supportive services or return home for protection.”

It suggests that the male leaders took advantage of the chance to secure crises like COVID-19 and conflict to control all decision-making areas. On the other hand, this mostly had an impact on women's political participation in pre-, during-, and post-conflict situations. During the COVID-19 lockdowns, institutional and social power brokers employed the same technique to protect and restrict women's movements and political activity in Ethiopia. The securitization took the form of considerable media coverage for COVID-19, male-dominated media briefings, and the postponement of several political events, including elections, which influenced women's psychological preparation for political engagement. One of the informants from Oromia has said:

“All of our leaders were enthusiastic to send us home as soon as the pandemic reached Ethiopia. They further disturbed us by saying that COVID-19 has a higher influence on women than men. They showed sympathy for us, which made us happy, and we went back home. We saw it as a chance and chose to stay. However, the male counterpart took advantage of the situation to dominate/abuse situations related to finance, knowledge, and other institutional affairs.”

As a result, it has been found that the person who frames a crisis using words like conflict and COVID-19 controls the choices made and the outcomes that are produced, whereas the prescription of those who frame limits others', like women.

This had an effect on the low level of women's political participation, particularly during shocks like conflict and COVID-19.

● **Domestic securitization as a barrier to women's political participation:** In this situation, the same approach was taken to the above scenario, where males, particularly husbands, did not want their respective spouses to lead a public life such as political activity, especially during mid-shocks like COVID-19 and local conflicts. The informants stated that two statements are used to support this argument. First, the husbands think that women are more vulnerable to disasters than men are, including war and COVID-19. Second, in mid-shocks like conflict and COVID-19, women bear a heavier burden than anyone else in terms of caring for the family. Because of this, whenever a conflict or health emergency like COVID-19 occurs, the husbands securitize the situation and persuade their wives to stay at home, directly impacting women's engagement in public life, particularly politics. One of the FGDs from West Wollega said;

“Being a member of the cabinet or holding any other position of leadership in this area will require you to travel to dangerous rural areas where armed organizations are active. It could be for a work-related job or to organize the neighborhood against armed organizations. The husbands in this situation are uneasy because they worry that the armed groups may attack their spouses. As a result, there are rising trends of people quitting their jobs since working from home is getting harder.”

The interviewees assert that their husbands also employed the same strategy during COVID-19.

The spouses persuade their wives to avoid attending any political events. One of the informants in Afar stated, "*Our husbands started to limit our engagements in public life, including taking part in meetings, gatherings, and any political engagements, since the breakout of COVID-19.*" They think that wives would be more likely to contract the epidemic than men and would also spread it to husbands and kids. They contend that they would take over all aspects of public life and compel women to stay at home, which would hurt women's participation, especially during elections." One of the participants from afar said,

"Since COVID-19 broke out, our husbands have begun to restrict our participation in public life, including attending meetings, events, and political involvement. They think that wives would be more likely to contract the epidemic than men and would also spread it to husbands and kids. They contend they would take over all aspects of public life and compel us to stay home, hurting our participation, especially during elections."

● **Personal securitization as a barrier to women's political participation** Women tend to stay out of politics because they want to feel protected and secure, especially during shocks like conflict and COVID-19. The informants made the case that women seek to face both healthy challenges and conflict safely. Women prioritize personal safety over participating in politics and other public spheres, which contrasts with men's tendency to defend and protect their families. The women prioritize their safety and avoid their uncertainty by staying at home even in the absence of the male challenge at home or the workplace. One of the informants from the Western Guji Zone of Oromia Regional State said:

"Your level of engagement with and confrontation with the armed

groups heavily influence your appointment and career progression. You must travel to the far-flung regions where the armed organizations are active. We fear traveling to the area as we avoid engaging in conflict. The men take advantage of the situation and control every position as a result."

In addition to the securitization threats from the government sectors, women from political parties confirmed that the country's general insecurity and the conflict-prone areas in particular had an impact on women's engagement in politics.

2. Intimidation as a Barrier to Women's Political Participation: It has been discovered through the study that it is tough for women politicians (both political party candidates and government cabinets) to actively participate in the political spheres in the areas where armed groups are active, particularly in Oromia Regional State, Amhara, and Afar. This is because the armed groups primarily use psychological and physical intimidation to prevent politicians, mainly women, from serving in higher roles at the zonal and Woreda levels. They use various methods to warn women and foster an atmosphere of unease. These threats cause people to shift their residences and resign from their positions. One of the informants from the Western Guji Zone of Oromia Regional State has said:

"In most cases, an armed group will send a message to warn the leaders, usually women. Many of the female employees quit their jobs right away. Some individuals even relocate to a different location. For instance, I am the fifth woman appointed to my post; I don't think I'll stay in the position if the intimidation continues."

3. The re-emergence of traditional roles as a barrier to women's political participation: According to NDI (2020), shocks and crises exacerbate domestication, which, on the other hand, drives stereotyping about women's role into norms like the burden of caregiving and submissiveness to men. It further classifies males as “best leaders,” or the “strong man” as synonymous with political leadership, and ignores women's roles mainly during shocks. Accordingly, through the investigation, it was discovered that shocks like conflict and COVID-19 sustain the resurgence of conventional roles. In times of crisis, the men take on the duty of safeguarding the family and adopt a strong, manly attitude. They believe that women are particularly susceptible to certain physical dangers, such as gender-based violence. Second, they consider themselves to be accountable and to be the guardians of both their family and their country. As a result, whenever there is conflict, the men assume responsibility for protecting their family, country, and borders.

Likewise, the KIIs and FGD participants attested to the revival of conventional roles for women during the COVID-19 lockdowns. During COVID-19, men assumed the responsibility for socio-economic and political tasks, while women fully resumed their historic roles as family carers and homemakers in need of safety and security. As a result, women are becoming less involved in politics, and the old roles of men and women are resurfacing. On the other side, this has led to a decline in women's political participation and dominance in politics.

According to the study, men who are leaders tend to control the decision-making process during times of conflict and pandemics like COVID-19. Two reasons support the hegemony. Most male leaders in times of crisis fail to recognize the strength of women, particularly in crisis management. Women are not permitted to participate in discussions about how to manage the conflict or advance the cause of peace. These are urgency, informal networks, and ignorance.

4. Urgency as a Pretext: A Barrier to Women's Political Participation: Shocks like conflict and COVID-19 almost always present an emergency requiring quick action. Due to the urgency, leaders, who are primarily men, are more likely to make decisions without full input from their colleagues, who are primarily women in cabinets.

According to NDI (2020), authoritarian opportunism leads to the exclusion of women from decision-making, where the tyranny of urgency minimizes gender considerations and women's voices during response. All decisions made during the crisis are not democratic, which limits the participation of women in public life, including politics. One of the informants from the Western Wollo Zone of Amhara Regional stated,

"In normal situations, decisions are seen from different angles, including gender. Be it resource allocation or any other strategic decision, they require inculcating the concern of all. But conflicts and COVID-19 have brought a new scenario where things are decided without consulting women, and our concerns during these situations are left behind. "

5. Informal Networks as Barriers to Women's Political Participation: According to NDI (2020), shocks promote the isolation of women from public life. As stated in the section above, shocks like conflict and COVID-19 endanger the security and safety of women. On the other hand, this limits women's participation in politics and other aspects of public life. Male leaders are more likely to make informal networks and decisions when shocks are present. This includes making decisions regarding resources and holding positions, both of which significantly diminish the voice of women in decision-making and the equality of representation in politics and decision-making. Because of the pandemic's urgency and emergency status, the dominant group is preferred to make all decisions in response to COVID-19. Furthermore, it has been found from FGDs and KIIs that conflict and COVID-19 have created informal networks that exclude women who didn't take part in crisis management. This affected women's political participation mainly in the post-crisis period.

6. Overlooking the role of women as a barrier to women's political participation: According to the data gathered from FGDs and KIIs, there have been persistent trends of ignoring the contribution of women to pre-, during-, and post-shocks such as conflict and COVID-19. Discussion participants have asserted that leaders, primarily men, either fail to recognize the importance of women in decision-making or do so out of a lack of understanding of their place in society. One of the informants from the opposing political party leader, EZEMA, stated:

“When there is conflict, the men make all the decisions. For instance, I participated in the Gashena Front with other colleagues.

If you're a woman, no one will care about you. Even though conflict primarily affects women, men dominate discussions and choices. Even women in higher-ranking positions have had little impact on conflict-related decisions; they are merely used as symbols. Beyond this, women-based civil society organizations in Ethiopia have very little influence over how conflicts are resolved. Women were psychologically threatened during the pre-war period, while they were physically threatened during the conflict, and there has been no improvement in the post-conflict situation because they continue to face both psychological and physical threats.”

Women's participation in political decision-making is reduced, particularly during times of conflict, according to Moyale Woreda informants in Borena Zone. This is because men have ingrained informal networks, especially during times of crisis. One of the informants, Borena, said:

“The communication channel is private and one-sided. For security reasons, only men actively discuss information with one another; this is handled at the top management level. Due to the nature of the tasks and obligations, women cannot possibly participate in these activities. Most of the time, meetings and other activities—which sometimes happen at all hours—have no set schedule. As a result, both the system and women themselves exclude women from such types of participation.”

Additionally, during pandemics like COVID-19, there has been domination followed by a disregard for the position of women. The men took advantage of the COVID-19 situation; when the women went back to their homes, the men took over all the decision-making, ignoring the influence of the women.

7. Partiality of Security Protection as a Barrier to Women's Political Participation: Conflict impacts both men and women, even though women are more susceptible to crises brought on by conflict and need specialized safety and protection. Even if women need more security, both female and male leaders must have access to the same level of security protection. In contrast, security protections are exclusively provided for men in the study zones. In addition, handguns are now allowed for all cabinet members, but only men are allowed to carry them. One of the informants from Afar said:

“The men in the cabinets travel with their security guards during times of crisis, particularly when there is a conflict between armed groups and the government forces, or they at least have their small arms like Shigute. However, female cabinets do not have their own small guns or security personnel. Therefore, this limits our freedom of movement and political engagement, particularly during times of crisis.”

8. Economic Insecurity as a Barrier to Women's Political Participation: Conflict and COVID-19 are two common shocks that destabilize and have an impact on economic activity. The informants, who are primarily from political parties, have stated that COVID-19 and conflict have impacted their members' economic capacity. Political party leaders and members, who are primarily women and rely on their sources of income, have been severely affected by the shocks impacting the economy. One of the informants from the opposing political party, EZEMA, said:

“Our members, particularly those who have been contributing financially and volunteering for our party, have vanished after COVID-19.”

The majority of our visitors over the previous two years have already left. Their motivation, involvement, and contribution have all been impacted. Although COVID-19 has had an impact on our entire organization, the women's aspect was obvious."

9. Decreasing Political Interests: A Barrier to Women's Political Participation: The more unstable the world becomes owing to psychological threats, the more women think about survival rather than taking part in politics. Informants have therefore confirmed that shocks like COVID-19 and conflict significantly reduce women's interest in political participation.

2.7. Women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities in Ethiopia

Founded in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, there have been various efforts towards engaging women in the conflict resolution process. Yet they encounter various barriers, including shock and the dominance of patriarchal views, and women are still excluded from peacebuilding in many instances (Bosha, 2018). COVID-19 and conflict have severely affected women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes (Sarah, 2020).

In the case study areas, it has been found that women have a role to play in the peacebuilding process. The FGDs and KIIs held with various stakeholders stated that the off-putting attitudes and perspectives of society in general and political leaders, in particular, contribute to the diminishing role of women in the peacebuilding sphere. Political leaders may not view women's participation in the political leadership of a

specific nation differently than other members of society. The impression of women as non-partisan and public leaders has a considerable impact on their involvement and efficiency in activities aimed at resolving conflicts and fostering peace.

Thus, despite the presence of a few metaphorical women who made a beneficial contribution to Ethiopian politics, the political elite and the general public have an inauspicious perception of women's ability to take on political responsibilities, including conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities. Women have been excluded and left out of peacebuilding and conflict-resolution efforts. Similarly, the FDGs and KIIs held in the case studies have revealed that women have been excluded not only from pre- and post-conflict scenarios but also from post-conflict peacebuilding and reconstruction activities. They further added that women take supportive roles in dealing with peacebuilding, where their sole responsibility is to prepare meals for the elders and disputing parties. Men, and even some women, assume that women have no chance to communicate or negotiate while seated next to respected elders or peacemakers. Women often employ special tactics and act as sources of information in conflict-prone locations.

One of the KIIs said, "We believe that women's engagement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding is vital. Women, however, do not have such opportunities in our area." This claim was supported by one of the FGD participants at Afar, who said:

"The participation of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding is quite low. The men never encourage women to take part in politics or activities involving conflict resolution."

There are false impressions about women's acceptance as leaders, peacemakers, and role models at home and at work. Even when women resolve disputes in their own best interests, men will never agree with their choices. The society views actively participating in politics and promoting world peace as being the exclusive domain of men."

2.8. Comparative Assessment across the Regional States

As stated in the above section, the study was limited to three regional states, i.e., Afar, Amhara, and Oromia Regional States. The results of KIIs and FGDs have shown that the impact of COVID-19 on women's political participation is almost similar, where women were excluded from political rooms as well as from the decision-making process for the same reasons as institutional, domestic, and personal securitization. On the other hand, it has been found that the impact of conflict on women's political participation varies from region to region, according to the context. For instance, in Amhara and Afar regional states, the nature of the conflict was conventional, where the conflict was more in-between the armed bodies and women's political participation was affected by the intensity of conventional conflict in the area. Whereas, in Oromia, it is occasional rebel-based attacks, where the conflicts and confrontations were mainly between local governors and the rebel groups.

CHAPTER THREE

Conclusions and Recommendations

3.1. Conclusions

Shocks, such as COVID-19 and conflict and its immediate state of emergency, were not gender-neutral. It exposed the women to additional difficulties like gender-based violence, exploitation, and abuse; decreased access to services for sexual and reproductive health; reduced access to health care like prenatal exams; and other psychosocial issues. Securing the participation of women at all levels and their leadership in the decision-making and oversight committees and task forces established in parliament to address the crisis is crucial.

In addition to the conventional approach of measuring the effects of pandemics, conflicts, and natural and man-made disasters on women's socio-cultural and economic aspects, there is an urgent need to investigate how conflict and pandemics prevent women from engaging in meaningful political participation. The main objective of the study was to assess the impact of shocks on women's political participation using a qualitative approach and the National Democratic Institute's (2020) framework of the interplay between shock, democracy, and gender and how shocks like conflict and COVID-19 drive and affect women's political participation. Accordingly, it has been found that shock, conflict, and COVID-19 affect women's political participation.

In the first case, it has been found that in times of shock, women's political participation is affected by securitization,

which includes institutional, domestic, and personal securitization. In times of crisis, the institution they work in, their husband, or themselves limit their engagement in politics. In light of this, the KIIs and FGDs held at the regional levels of Oromia, Afar, and Amhara have revealed that the institutional and social power holders structured at the regional, zonal, and Woreda levels are primarily responsible for determining the "sensitivity of conflict-based crises." Because men predominate in these organizations, they define security in terms of their worldviews. As a result, these leaders, who are mostly men, decide to take charge of the situation and persuade the women to look after their families or to fill complementary roles in the logistical and humanitarian realms rather than decision-makers.

Secondly, during shocks, mainly conflict, intimidation by different actors has been one of the major factors affecting women's political participation. It has been discovered through the study that it is very difficult for women politicians (both political party candidates and government cabinets) to actively participate in the political spheres in the areas where armed groups are active, particularly in Oromia Regional State, Amhara, and Afar. This is because the armed groups primarily use psychological and physical intimidation to prevent politicians, mainly women, from serving in higher roles at the zonal and Woreda levels. They use a variety of methods to warn women and foster an atmosphere of unease. These threats cause people to shift their residences and resign from their positions.

Thirdly, the re-emergence of traditional roles has also been found to be another factor affecting women's political participation.

This assumption classifies males as “best leaders,” or the “strong man” as synonymous with political leadership, and ignores women’s roles mainly during shocks. Accordingly, through the investigation, it was discovered that shocks like conflict and COVID-19 sustain the resurgence of conventional roles. In times of crisis, the men take on the duty of safeguarding the family and adopt a strong, manly attitude. They believe that women are particularly susceptible to certain physical dangers, such as gender-based violence. Second, they consider themselves to be accountable and to be the guardians of both their family and their country. As a result, whenever there is conflict, the men assume responsibility for protecting their family, country, and borders.

Fourthly, the pretext of urgency also contributes to lower women’s political participation. Shocks like conflict and COVID-19 almost always present an emergency requiring quick action. Due to the urgency, leaders who are primarily men are more likely to make decisions without full input from their colleagues, who are primarily women in cabinets. All decisions made during the crisis are not democratic, which limits the participation of women in public life, including politics. The informal network that happens during crises also affects women’s political participation. Shocks like conflict and COVID-19 endanger the security and safety of women. On the other hand, this limits women's participation in politics and other aspects of public life. Male leaders are more likely to make informal networks and decisions when shocks are present. This includes making decisions regarding resources and holding positions, both of which significantly diminish the voice of

women in decision-making and the equality of representation in politics. Because of the pandemic's urgency and emergency status, the dominant group is preferred to make all decisions in response to COVID-19.

Fifthly, an assumption that overlooks the role of women in political situations affects women's political participation. According to the data gathered from FGDs and KIIs, there have been persistent trends of ignoring the contribution of women to pre-, during-, and post-shocks such as conflict and COVID-19. Discussion participants have asserted that leaders, primarily men, either fail to recognize the importance of women in decision-making or do so out of a lack of understanding of their place in society. On the other hand, the partiality of security protection is also another factor affecting women's political participation. Even if women need more security, both female and male leaders must have access to the same level of security protection. In contrast, security protections are exclusively provided for men in the study areas. In addition, handguns are now allowed for all cabinet members, but only males carry them.

Sixth, economic insecurity as well as decreasing political interests from women's side affect women's political participation. On the one hand, conflict and COVID-19 are two common shocks that destabilize and have an impact on economic activity. The informants, who are primarily from political parties, have stated that COVID-19 and conflict have impacted their members' economic capacity. On the other hand, it has been found that women have a role to play in the peacebuilding process.

The FGDs and KIIs held with various stakeholders stated that the off-putting attitudes and perspectives of society in general and political leaders, in particular, contribute to the diminishing role of women in the peacebuilding sphere. Political leaders may not view women's participation in the political leadership of a specific nation differently than other members of society. The impression of women as non-partisan and public leaders has a considerable impact on their involvement and efficacy in activities aimed at settling conflicts and fostering peace.

3.2. Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made to the stakeholders operating in the area:

- **Capacity Development:** To change the future, building the capacity of female legislators and experts in various fields has paramount significance. Thus, funding capacity-building initiatives improves women's empowerment, particularly in politics, on both a descriptive and substantive level. The success of gender-related issues, such as women's participation in politics, depends on the availability of committed gender-based engagements like capacity-building initiatives. It helps both for preparedness as well as for resilience creation.
- **Research and Development:** Facts and data are needed to advocate for and influence policy to increase women's political participation, particularly in mid-shocks like conflict and COVID-19. Therefore, expanding research in the field encourages both peacemaking and broad political engagement.
- **Emphasis on Women's Safety and Security:** Women are less likely to participate in politics when there is a lack of adequate security protection, especially during times of unrest and instability. Installing a robust security protection system is a must for promoting women's political participation, as women value their safety and security.

- **Crisis-based Gender Mainstreaming Programme:** A special gender mainstreaming program is required in response to shocks like conflict and COVID-19, in addition to the programs already in place for the regular course of events. The extent of crisis-driven gender inequities in public life, such as politics, is thereby decreased by implementing gender mainstreaming programs.
- **Strengthening women's networks and women-based organizations** Close ties between women's groups not only promote women's political engagement but also deepen and provide more contextually relevant mitigation mechanisms, enhancing women's agency and their ability to influence conflict resolution and peacebuilding. It is crucial to encourage the development of networks, forums, and summits that assist women in setting a common agenda and finding solutions to their problems. Expanding networks of women and women-based groups at the local, national, and international levels will therefore strengthen the significance of women in settling conflicts, promoting peace, and engaging in politics.
- **Inclusive Crisis Management:** A few examples of how to do this include mandating more women in leadership and decision-making positions, stating unequivocally that consultations with women's rights organizations and leaders must take place during peace negotiations, encouraging women to participate in peace processes at senior levels, improving men's technical knowledge of including women, and incorporating a gender lens into all stages of the peace-making process.

- **Community Awareness:** Investment in raising community knowledge both mitigates the problem's future occurrences and bends the current one. So, energizing the neighborhood makes the bigger goal of increasing women's political participation simpler. Questions for testimony and hearings, government actors' technical assistance, and the development of a feedback loop at the local, regional, and national levels.
- **Developing the Quota System** The lack of definite policy, legislation, and rules on the ratio of males to women hinders women's political participation in both regular and emergencies. Conflicts in several Ethiopian regions and health crises like COVID-19 serve as examples of how the absence of sex and gender-disaggregated data hinders harm reduction, logical decision-making, and effective solutions. Consistently supporting quotas and reservation policies is essential for women's involvement to increase women's access to leadership roles and decision-making responsibilities. Implementing practical rules on gender quotas at work and in society is essential to boosting women's political participation.
- **Localization of Women's Political Engagement:** The study finds that although there are initiatives to reduce gender inequality at the federal level, women's political participation has not yet been localized. Both formal and informal institutions displayed this. It is necessary to install localizations that minimize gender disparity in political arenas, particularly amid shocks like COVID-19 and conflict.

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Appendix

East African Consulting

FGD guideline for Women - from Different Sectors

East African Consulting is a national consultant for Ethiopian women's Lawyer's Association (EWLA), for the specific assignment of Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 and Conflict on Women's Political Participation. Thus, your cooperation in providing genuine answers to the following questions is highly important for the successful accomplishment of this assessment. Your responses will be kept confidential. It is only for EWLA's engagement. Thank you for your cooperation!

1. How do you see Ethiopia's political atmosphere from women's perspective? How does it encourages /discourages women from engaging into political arena?
 2. How do you see Women's political participation compared with counter men?
 3. Do you think Ethiopian political environment provides enough opportunity for women compared with men? Why, why not?
 4. What are the factors impeding your/women's political participation in Ethiopia? Mainly during crisis?
 5. What do you think about the perception of the society in terms of women political and conflict resolution participation?
 6. How do you describe the impacts of conflict on Women's political participation in your area? How do you describe the impact of conflict on women's political participation in your area in terms of ;
- Gender-based violence like physical violence, intimidation, sexual harassment, and other sexual based attacks increased since COVID-19?
 - Security/insecurity, mainly for women, pre, during and post conflict in your area? Security of mobility? Security of public mobilization?

- The level of consultation during conflict? How was your and your fellows' participation in decision making process during conflict? Was the decision making system during conflict participatory? Do you think that there was any exclusion of women in decision making during conflict, mainly due to urgency?
- Have you been burdened to family responsibility due to conflict? Have you been participated in crisis management? What were your roles at family and at your office during conflict?
- How was the channel of communication at your leadership sphere during conflict? Was the communication clear in terms of language? Was the media of communication favorable to women? Was information accessible, timely, accurate?

7. How do you see the impact of conflict on women's participation in leadership positions like the share of cabinets, share of regional council, the share of management council, or the share of sectoral representations? How do you compare the share of women in leadership positions with the the pre-conflict context?

Participation?

8. How do you see the impact of the covid-19 on women political participation? (taking the 6th national election)? How did the Covid-19 reduce your ability to participate in politics? (Particularly the 6th national election) ? Did it restrict your safety, mobility and security for participating in political activities?

9. How do you see Women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building activities? How do women take part in conflict resolution process in your arwea? How do they take part in peace building activities?

10. What factors do you consider as loopholes for women participation in conflict resolution and peace building activities, policy, cultural?

11. What measures do you think should be taken to overcome the impact of conflict and COVID-19/shocks?

East African Consulting

Interview guideline for Women, Children, and Youth Office Leaders

East African Consulting is a national consultant for Ethiopian women's lawyer's Association (EWLA), for specific assignment of Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 and Conflict on Women's Political Participation. Thus, your cooperation in providing genuine answers to the following questions is highly important for the successful accomplishment of this assessment. Your responses will be kept confidential. It is only for EWLA's engagement. Thank you for your cooperation!

1. How do you see Ethiopia's political atmosphere from women's perspective? How does it encourages /discourages women to engage into political arena?
2. How do you see Women's political participation compared with counter men?
3. Do you think Ethiopian political environment provides enough opportunity for women compared with men? Why, why not?
4. What are the factors impeding women's political participation in Ethiopia? Mainly during crisis?
5. What do you think about the perception of the society in terms of women political and conflict resolution participation?
6. How do you describe the impacts of conflict on Women's political participation in your area? How do you describe the impact of conflict on women's political participation in your area in-terms of ;

- Gender based violence like physical violence, intimidation, sexual harassment, and other sexual based attacks increased since COVID-19?
 - Security/insecurity, mainly for women, pre, during and post conflict in your area? Security of mobility? Security of public mobilization? Have the women been vulnerable to risk during conflict? How and to what kind of risk the women were vulnerable? Vulnerability to attack? Have the women been secured to freely move, and undertake their responsibility?
 - Women's participation, mainly in decision making process during conflict? Have the women been taking part in conflict? How did they take part?
 - The level of consultation during conflict? How was women's participation in decision making process during conflict? Was the decision making system during conflict participatory? Do you think that there was any exclusion of women in decision making during conflict, mainly due to urgency?
 - Do you think that the women were burdened to family responsibility due to conflict? How women participated in crisis management? What were their roles at family and at office during conflict?
 - How was the channel of communication at your leadership during conflict? Was the communication clear in terms of language? Was the media of communication favorable to women? Was information accessible, timely, accurate?
7. How do you see the impact of conflict on women's participation in leadership positions like the share of cabinets, share of regional council, the share of management council, or the share of sectoral representations? How do you compare the share of women in leadership positions with the pre-conflict context?

8. How do you see the impact of the covid-19 on women political participation? (taking the 6th national election)? How did the Covid-19 reduce women's ability to participate in politics? (Particularly the 6th national election)? Did it restrict the women's safety, mobility and security for participating in political activities?

9. How was the composition of COVID-19 response committee? Was it gender inclusive?

10. How do you see Women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building activities? How do women take part in conflict resolution process in your area? How do they take part in peace building activities?

11. What factors do you consider as loopholes for women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building activities, policy, cultural?

12. What measures do you think should be taken to overcome the impact of conflict and COVID-19/shocks?

13. What are your office's roles in solving the problem?

East African Consulting

Interview guideline for – Leaders- Regional, Zonal and Woreda

East African Consulting is a national consultant for Ethiopian women's lawyer's Association (EWLA), for specific assignment of Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 and Conflict on Women's Political Participation. Thus, your cooperation in providing genuine answers to the following questions is highly important for the successful accomplishment of this assessment. Your responses will be kept confidential. It is only for EWLA's engagement. Thank you for your cooperation!

1. How do you see Ethiopia's political atmosphere from women's perspective? How does it encourages /discourages women to engage into political arena?
2. How do you see Women's political participation compared with counter men?
3. Do you think Ethiopian political environment provides enough opportunity for women compared with men? Why, why not?
4. What are the factors impeding women's political participation in your area? Mainly during crisis?
5. How do you describe the impact of conflict on women's political participation in your area in-terms of ;
 - How gender was based violence like physical violence, intimidation, sexual harassment, and other sexual based attacks increased since /conflict outbreak/ COVID-19?
 - How was the security/insecurity, mainly for women, pre, during and post conflict in your area? Mainly, for women's mobility, public mobilization? How was women'e vulnerability to risk during conflict? How and to what kind of risk the women were vulnerable? Vulnerability to be attacked? Have the women been secured to freely move, and undertake their responsibility?

- The level of consultation during conflict? How was women's participation in decision making process during conflict? Was the decision making system during conflict participatory? Do you think that there was any exclusion of women in decision making during conflict, mainly due to urgency?
- Do you think that the women were burdened to family responsibility due to conflict? How women participated in crisis management? What were their roles at family and at office during conflict?
- How was the channel of communication at your leadership during conflict? Was the communication clear in terms of language? Was the media of communication favorable to women? Was information accessible, timely, accurate?

6. How do you see the impact of conflict on women's participation in leadership positions like the share of cabinets, share of regional council, the share of management council, or the share of sectoral representations? How do you compare the share of women in leadership positions with the pre-conflict context?

7. How do you see the impact of the conflict/ covid-19 on women political participation? (taking the 6th national election)? How did the Covid-19 reduce women's ability to participate in politics? (Particularly the 6th national election)? Did it restrict the women's safety, mobility and security for participating in political activities?

8. How was the composition of COVID-19 response committee? Was it gender inclusive?

9. How do you see Women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building activities? How do women take part in conflict resolution process in your area? How do they take part in peace building activities?

10. What factors do you consider as loopholes for women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building activities, policy, cultural?

11. What measures do you think should be taken to overcome the impact of conflict and COVID-19/shocks?

12. What are your office's roles in solving the problems?

East African Consulting Interview Guideline – Political Parties and the Council

East African Consulting is a national consultant for Ethiopian women's lawyer's ASSOCIATION (EWLA), for specific assignment of, Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 and Conflict on Women's Political Participation. Thus, your cooperation in providing genuine answers to the following questions is highly important for the successful accomplishment of this assessment. Your responses will be kept confidential. It is only for EWLA's engagement. Thank you for your cooperation!

1. How do you see the participation of women in Ethiopian politics?
2. How do you see the gender composition of your party?
3. Do you think they are actively participating in political activities and campaigns?
4. Was any withdrawal of women politicians due to COVID-19 and Conflict/insecurity in the area?
5. How do you see the impact of conflict on women's political participation in-terms ;

- Gender based violence like physical violence, intimidation, sexual harassment, and other sexual based attacks increased since COVID-19?
- Security/insecurity, mainly for women, pre, during and post conflict in your area? Security of mobility for women? Security of public mobilization for women? Have the women been vulnerable to risk during conflict? How and to what kind of risk were they been vulnerable? Vulnerability to attack? Have they been secured to freely move, and undertake their responsibility?
- Women's participation, mainly in decision making process during conflict? Have the women been taking part in conflict? How did they take part?
- The level of consultation during conflict? What was the mechanism used by your party to enable women to take part in decision making process during conflict? Was the decision making system during conflict participatory? Do you think that there was any exclusion of women in decision making during conflict, mainly due to urgency?
- Have women been burdened to family responsibility due to conflict? Have they been participating in crisis management?
- How was the channel of communication at your leadership during conflict? Was the communication clear in terms of language? Was the media of communication favorable to women?
- Is there any difference? In terms of number and participation? Pre, during and post conflict?

6. What problems do you think would impede women's political participation in your area?

7. How do you see the perception of the society on women's political participation, mainly during and after crisis?

8. What do you recommend to handle these problems?

East African Consulting

Interview Guideline – NEBE

East African Consulting is a national consultant for Ethiopian women's lawyer's Association (EWLA), for specific **assignment of, Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 and Conflict on Women's Political Participation**. Thus, your cooperation in providing genuine answers to the following questions is highly important for the successful accomplishment of this assessment. Your responses will be kept confidential. It is only for EWLA's engagement. Thank you for your cooperation!

1. Do you have any special procedure to handle issues in relation to women?
2. How do you see women's participation in politics in Ethiopia?
3. What do you think about the gender composition of political parties?
4. What factors do you think impede women political participation?
5. How do you see Women's political participation pre, during and post conflicts? Is there any difference? In terms of number and participation?
6. How do you see the impact of conflict on women's political participation in-terms of gender based violence, vulnerability, security, consultation in decision making, channel of communication, family burden?
7. How do you see women's participation in conflict resolution? Does the situation allow them to come forward?
8. Do you think the northern conflict is affecting women involvement in politics and conflict resolution? How?
9. What do you think about this conflict and the 6th national election?
10. What has NEBE done to handle the challenges?
11. What do you suggest to resolve problems associated with women participation in politics and conflict resolution?

East African Consulting **Interview Guideline – NGOs**

East African Consulting is a national consultant for Ethiopian Women's Lawyer's Association (EWLA), for specific **assignment of, Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 and Conflict on Women's Political Participation**. Thus, your cooperation in providing genuine answers to the following questions is highly important for the successful accomplishment of this assessment. Your responses will be kept confidential. It is only for EWLA's engagement. Thank you for your cooperation!

1. How do you see the relationship between conflict and women's political participation?
2. How do you see women's political participation? How do you compare women's political participation with counter men, mainly during conflict/covid-19?
3. How do you see the impact of conflict on women's political participation in terms of gender based violence, vulnerability, security, consultation in decision making, channel of communication, family burden?
4. Do you have projects that are designed to empower women's participation in politics mainly during conflict, covid-19, peace building, and conflict resolution? What achievements did you secure?
5. Do you notice any significant difference between men and women in political and conflict resolution activities?
6. How do you see women's role in peace building and conflict resolution?
7. What factors do you think would hamper women's participation in peace building and conflict resolution?
8. How do you think covid-19 impacted women's political participation?
9. What should be done to mitigate the problems?

East African Consulting

KII guideline for– Academicians and Researchers

East African Consulting is a national consultant for Ethiopian women's lawyer's Association (EWLA), for specific assignment of Assessing the Impact of COVID-19 and Conflict on Women's Political Participation. Thus, your cooperation in providing genuine answers to the following questions is highly important for the successful accomplishment of this assessment. Your responses will be kept confidential. It is only for EWLA's engagement. Thank you for your cooperation!

1. How do you see Ethiopia's political atmosphere from women's perspective? How does it encourages /discourages women to engage into political arena?
2. How do you see Women's political participation compared with counter men?
3. Do you think Ethiopian political environment provides enough opportunity for women compared with men? Why, why not?
4. What are the factors impeding your/women's political participation in Ethiopia? Mainly during crisis?
5. What do you think about the perception of the society in terms of women's political and conflict resolution participation?
6. How do you describe the impacts of conflict on Women's political participation in your area? How do you describe the impact of conflict on women's political participation in your area in-terms of ;
 - Gender based violence like physical violence, intimidation, sexual harassment, and other sexual based attacks increased since COVID-19?
 - Security/insecurity, mainly for women, pre, during and post conflict in your area? Security of mobility? Security of public mobilization? Vulnerability to attack?

- Women's participation, mainly in decision making process during conflict?
- The level of consultation during conflict?
- family responsibility due to conflict?

7. How do you see the impact of conflict on women's participation in leadership positions like the share of cabinets, share of regional council, the share of management council, or the share of sectoral representations? How do you compare the share of women in leadership positions with the pre-conflict context?

8. How do you see the impact of the covid-19 on women political participation? Did it restrict women's safety, mobility and security for participating in political activities?

9. How do you see Women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building activities? How do women take part in conflict resolution process in your arwea? How do they take part in peace building activities?

10. What factors do you consider as loopholes for women participation in conflict resolution and peace building activities, policy, cultural?

11. What measures do you think should be taken to overcome the impact of conflict and COVID-19/shocks on Women's political participation?



Photos¹
Focus at Borena, Oromia Regional state

¹Afar, Women informants were Muslim and not volunteer to take photo.



Photos²
FGDs at Gimbi , Oromia Regional state

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