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Decentralization and Service Delivery in the Afar National Regional State: Governance in the Water Supply Sector

Management

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ABSTRACT

The major objective of the study is to assess the decentralized governance of water supply. It was conducted in the Afar National Regional State in Zone two specifically Aba'ala and Koneba Districts. Household heads were the targets of the study and the service they are getting from the public service of water supply were the main issue of study. This paper assesses the public service of water supply governance at the grass root levels collecting primary source from household residents of the selected district kebelle. The data is collected from 372 households by distributing questionnaire and supplemented by semi-structured interviews held with the concerned bodies of water resource office. The paper identified that, in the Ethiopian federal system that includes decentralization of significant responsibilities to local levels which has the potential to better serve the interests of ordinary citizens, in the Afar National Regional State decentralization is not well practiced or implemented up to the District level. It also identified that much emphasize is not given to the water supply sector that is why there are many kebelle which don't have any source of water within their kebelle. The people nowadays, living in the districts that investigated are facing severe challenges of getting pure water supply and at the same time the concerned bodies at the district levels don't have the required level of knowledge with regard to decentralization specifically fiscal decentralization. Therefore, water supply provision should be the area of priority in the regional state. Because achieving pure water supply provision effectively means avoiding several problems of the society, like water contaminated diseases and others, so that achieving MDGs would be easy and simple. Eventually, since decentralization is a policy for better public service at the local level it should be practiced in the real ground.

KEYWORDS:

decentralization, water governance, fiscal decentralization, Afar National Regional State, water supply

Acronyms and Abbreviations

ANRS Afar National Regional State
DFID Department for International Development
GWA Gender and Water Alliance
IWRM Integrated Water Resource Management
MDG Millennium Development Goals
ODI Overseas Development Institute
OSSREA Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa
UN United Nations
UNDP United Nations Development Program
UNICEF United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WB World Bank
WHO World Health Organization

1. Background and Justification of the Study

Access to water supply and sanitation is a fundamental need and a human right. Those without access are the poorest and least powerful. Access to water for the poor is a key factor in improving health and economic productivity and is therefore an essential component of any effort to alleviate poverty. The benefits of improved access to water and sanitation are clear. However, a topic for discussion is why problems with water arise in the first place. Is it because there is not enough water, or is there another reason? The UN World Water Development Report (2006) suggests that there is enough water for everyone. The problem we face today is largely one of governance: sharing the water we have fairly whilst ensuring the sustainability of natural ecosystems. It is a question of managing and distributing the available resources for the maximum and equitable benefit of everyone.

According to the UN World Water Development Report (2006) the water crises of the 21st century is in many ways a crisis of governance; a crisis of the failure of the institutions to manage the resources for the well-being of humans and ecosystems. Institutions refer to the informal and formal norms, principles, rules and structures that society shapes in order to address the problems that affect society.

Globally, almost one billion people lack clean drinking water. 2.4 billion People have no access to hygienic sanitation facilities; 1.2 billion lack any sanitation facilities at all. Each day, an average of 5,000 children die due to preventable water and sanitation related diseases (UNDP, 2009). In 2000, through the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the international community committed to halving the proportion of people without access to clean water and basic sanitation by 2015 (DFID, 2004). Overall, the world is on track to meet the water supply MDG, but there are major gaps in many regions and countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa. On current trends, the world will miss the sanitation target by a staggering 700 million people.

Meeting the MDG water and sanitation targets is more than a health and dignity issue. The evidence is compelling that achieving the water and sanitation goals would trigger a major leap forward in human development: Water and sanitation are essential to achieving all of the MDGs.

The crisis in water and sanitation overwhelmingly affects the poor. Availability of water is certainly a concern for some countries. But the global water and sanitation crisis is mainly rooted in poverty, power and inequality, not in physical availability. It is, first and foremost, a crisis of governance and thus governance reform must be a key pillar of any strategic approach to addressing the crisis.

Water governance has more to do with people than with water. Water governance mainly focuses on the processes. Governance

arrangements can only work if the processes associated with the underlying systems are understood.

While water issues may be extremely important to many segments of the Ethiopian population, e.g. small-scale farmers or pastoralists, such issues have limited visibility in Ethiopian political discourse and priorities. As such, efforts could be made to define and strengthen the 'political contract' around water, and to make water a more prominent political priority. This is a complex process to promote (OSSREA and ODI, 2010). This research will assess the decentralized governance of water supply in the case of Afar National Regional State. Regional differences in politico-institutional development and agro-ecological characteristics suggest that one-size-fits-all blueprints for water sector capacity-building are inappropriate (OSSREA and ODI, 2010).

Afar is an emerging region meaning that its political and institutional capacity is weaker relative to other regions, hindering its ability to deliver services and to effectively demand support from central government. Therefore, this research highlights the need for checks and balances at local level, and thorough preparation and capacity-building of local administration and elected officials while delegating more power to the local levels in the Afar Regional National State. Moreover, it helped us to understand how much the planned decentralization is in place up to the grass root level of administration.

2. Objectives of the Study

2.1. General Objective

- The study aims to understand the degree of decentralized governance of the water supply sector in the Afar National Regional State and to identify some key challenges and opportunities for the progress of the sector

2.2. Specific Objectives

- To identify to what extent the water supply sector is decentralized up to district level and the challenges of the decentralization
- To explore the water supply sector governance reform in the regional state
- To investigate the capability of the administration to internalize and to implement any desirable reforms
- To examine the regulatory frameworks of good water governance in the regional state
- To discover the policy opportunities of the Afar National Regional State with regard to water supply Governance

3. Review of Literatures

3.1. Decentralization and Related Concepts

In a general way decentralization refers to the transfer of power, responsibility, resource, functions and services from center to other units of government. In the same manner, according to Barnett, Minis and Vansant (1997), decentralization is "the transfer of authority, planning, responsibility, and decision making from the central government to its field organizations, local administrative units, and semi-autonomous local governmental or non-governmental organizations." it can be described as the redefinition of structures, procedures and practices of governance to be closer to the citizenry.

In a nutshell, decentralization can be viewed as an ideological principle associated with objectives of self-reliance, democratic decision making, and popular participation in government affairs, and accountability of public officials to citizens.

Decentralization in the political administration context is "...the devolution of resources, tasks and decision making power to democratically elected lower level authorities that are largely independent of the central government" (Frizen, 2006). As Frizen and Lim, (2006) noted that decentralization has been a prerequisite for good governance in such a way that to improve levels of popular participation, accountability, efficiency, and responsiveness to local needs and concerns, among other goals.

The various definitions of decentralization provided by different authors could be recapitulated as:

Decentralization ... (is)...the transfer of responsibility for planning, management, and resource raising and allocation from the central government and its agencies to (a) field units of the central government ministries or agencies, (b) subordinate units or levels of government, (c) semi-autonomous public authorities, or corporations, (d) area wide regional or functional authorities, or (e) nongovernmental private or voluntary organizations.

While the transfer of responsibility is critical in the above definitions, the agencies or authorities to whom the power is transferred are several, which can be within the same structure or outside the structure. In addition, decentralization has different dimensions such as the type of activities over which power or authorities is transferred; the level to which they are transferred; the individual or institution to which they are transferred; and the type of political, administrative and legal machinery used to make the transfer.

Decentralization is a complex and multifaceted concept. However, it is operationally defined as follows*: It refers to the empowerment of people through the empowerment of their local governments. It is the process of dispersing decision-making governance closer to the people or citizen.*

3.1.1. DIFFERENT TYPES/FORMS OF DECENTRALIZATION

There are three important types of decentralization (Rondinelli, 1981, and Boro, 2002). These are administrative decentralization, political decentralization and fiscal decentralization. It is necessary to clarify our concepts in order to gain a proper grasp of the relationship between the official decentralization policy and its role in enhancing popular participation. At best, it will help in assessing the effective transfer of decision-making authority and responsibility from higher level government to the local level government and thereby to the people or citizens at large.

Fiscal Decentralization

This is characterized by the re-assignment of spending, taxing and borrowing authority from central to local level governments. It refers to the transfer of power and resources between the center (higher) government and sub national (lower) government (Lidija R. Basta 2002). In particular, this type of decentralization deals with the introduction of tax-sharing and grant system between the higher and local governments.

Theory tells us that an appropriately structured fiscal decentralization can lead to a higher quality of infrastructure services than will a fully centralized system. The efficiency of decentralized expenditure assignment for infrastructure is enhanced by local financing of these capital projects. If full financing is by transfers from higher-level governments and loans from state banks, then local officials are not fully accountable to the voters for the quality of services delivered.

Sub national governments in developing countries have access to three sources for financing capital expenditures:

a) Own source taxes, charges, and other non-tax revenues;
b) Intergovernmental transfers; and
c) Various types of privatization schemes (Bahle and Bird, 2013)

Administrative Decentralization

The essence of administrative (bureaucratic) decentralization is intra-government transfer of authority and responsibility among units of administration within the same organizational hierarchy. It is a de-concentrated form of administrative organization that involves delegation of responsibility and functions by central headquarters to field offices.

Political Decentralization

Political decentralization, on the other hand, refers to the complete devolution of decision making power and responsibility from central governments to local governments. It allows wider latitude for popular participation in governance. This type of decentralization is widely applicable in highly decentralized political system. Often, there are legal provisions to protect any intervention by higher governments in matters exclusively determined to be of local jurisdiction (Meheret, 2002).

The various dimensions of decentralization are also expressed in terms of different modes of decentralization; i.e., de-concentration, delegation and devolution. Each of these forms decentralization has its own characteristics explained shortly as follows;

De-concentration

De-concentration is the weakest form of decentralization and used most frequently in unitary states-redistributes decision making authority and financial and management responsibility among different levels of the national government (GetachewAdem, 2001:05).

Delegation

Delegation is a more extensive form of decentralization. Through delegation, central governments transfer responsibility for decision-making and administration of public functions to semi-autonomous organizations not wholly controlled by the central government, but ultimately accountable to it.

Devolution

In devolution, which is the highest form of decentralization, governments devolve to/substantially share powers and functions vertically, and hence they transfer authority for decision making, finance, political matters like election and management to semi-autonomous units of local government with legally acknowledge status. In devolution, local governments are given legally recognized boundaries in which they enforce an independent authority to plan and implement programs (Lidija R. Basta, 2002).

3.2. Governance and Related Concepts

What exactly is water governance? It usually refers to "the range of political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources, and the delivery of water services, at different levels of society" (Global Water Partnership, 2003). The literature states that governance rests on two core values: **inclusiveness** (ensuring that all members of the group receive equal treatment) and **accountability** (ensuring that those in authority answer to the group they serve if things go wrong, and are credited when things go well).

All around the world in matters of governance, decentralization is the rage. Decentralization has been regarded as the major institutional framework for the phenomenal industrial growth in the last two decades in China, taking place largely in the non-state non-private sector.

On account of its many failures, the centralized state everywhere has lost a great deal of legitimacy, and decentralization is widely believed to promise a range of benefits. It is often suggested as a way of reducing the role of the state in general, by fragmenting central authority and introducing more intergovernmental competition and checks and balances.

The term governance is now used widely by aid agencies but it has been defined in a variety of different ways. It originally served to connect debates on politics and administration which equated governance with government, but the focus has subsequently been broadened beyond government to encompass relationships between a range of state and non-state institutions. As such the term now refers broadly to 'power and authority and how a country manages its affairs' and 'encompasses all the mechanisms, processes, relationships and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests and exercise their rights and obligations' (DFID, 2007a). The emerging governance agenda is thus a broad one which reflects its multi-dimensional nature and diverse theoretical origins in different disciplines. Key themes which are directly relevant to the governance in water services agenda include:

Changing role of government: - The role of the state is increasingly challenged at local, national and international levels with increased involvement of non-state actors in activities which have hitherto been considered the exclusive preserve of government. It is important to note therefore that the appropriate role of government in relation to different spheres of governance – including water – remains subject to ongoing debate and discussion.

Institutional complexity: - Governance concerns the function and interplay of institutions in the broadest sense including social networks and markets as well as state institutions. It is important to recognize that while institutions of governance may operate according to formal rules and procedures, outcomes are also shaped by informal norms, rules and expectations. There is a general consensus that governance is about establishing effective relationships, networks and partnerships to coordinate the activities of state, communities, private sector and civil society bodies towards collective societal goals.

Centrality of politics: - The particular value of the term governance is that it focuses attention on the formal and informal 'rules under which power is exercised in society' and highlights the conflicts inherent in decision-making processes. Current thinking suggests that governance needs to be understood as a product of social and political contestation and bargaining between multiple different actors. This has been accompanied by a growing focus on participation and empowerment of marginalized groups or individuals.

In its popular usage the term governance is associated with 'doing things right' and in recent years efforts have been made to define general principles of 'good' governance. These have been variously combined in different governance frameworks used by bilateral and multi-lateral donors. While these frameworks, which emphasize certain universal aspects of governance, provide a useful diagnostic tool, they have been criticized for masking the fundamentally contested nature of governance processes and the complex and dynamic forms it takes in particular contexts. The key challenge which this paper seeks to address is to understand how general governance processes interact with sectoral governance processes at district levels, specifically water supply sector.

3.2.1. Water Supply Governance

The term "water governance" needs to be carefully defined, as it may not be readily understood. It is also important to identify the attributes that make water governance effective. The Global Water Partnership (2006) defines water governance as follows: Water governance refers to the range of political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources, and the delivery of water services, at different levels of society. The notion of governance for water includes the ability to design public policies and institutional frameworks that are socially accepted and mobilize social resources in support of them.

Water policy and the process for its formulation must have as its goal the sustainable development of water resources, and to make its implementation effective, the key actors/stakeholders must be involved in the process. Governance aspects overlap with technical and economic aspects of water, but governance points us to the political and administrative elements of solving a problem or exploiting an opportunity. Governance of water is a subset of the more general issue of the creation of a nation's physical and institutional infrastructure and of the still more general issue of social cooperation.

Water governance is concerned with those political, social and economic organizations and institutions (and their relationships), which are important for water development and management. Given the complexities of water use within society, developing, allocating and managing it equitably and efficiently and ensuring environmental sustainability requires that the disparate voices are heard and respected in decisions over common waters and use of scarce financial and human resources. Water governance is concerned with the functions, balances and structures internal to the water sector (internal governance). It includes the framing of social agreements on property rights and the structure to administer and enforce them known as the law. Although issues can arise for water governance from the economic and technical spheres, in most countries the driving force is politics. Effective governance of water resources and water service delivery requires the combined commitment of government and various groups in civil society, particularly at local/community levels, as well as the private sector (Global Water partnership, 2013).

One of the goals of the international community stated in the United Nations Millennium Declaration is to reduce by half the population with no access to safe water by 2015. According to WHO/UNICEF (2000) 1.1 billion people lack access to improved water supply. Many of the water projects implemented over the last three decades in developing countries are considered failures (World Bank 1992). Experts from a variety of disciplines have examined factors determining success. They identified knowledge of the health benefits of improved water supplies, affordability of tariffs, sensitivity by donors and the central government to local customs and beliefs, the ability to operate and maintain water systems by the local population, as well as community participation and local involvement in design and management as important factors for rural people to use improved water sources (Brookshire et al. 1993).

Water is crucial for sustainable development. However, limited access to clean and safe water associated with poor water supply, hygiene and sanitation at household level is widening the poverty gap, gender inequalities and the prevalence of water borne diseases (Gender and Water Alliance (GWA), 2006). The degree of governance within a society in relation to water management is determined, among other factors, by the following:

- The degree of implicit or explicit consensus regarding the nature of the linkages between society and water.
- The existence of consensus regarding the bases for public policies that express these linkages.
- The availability of management system that enable effective policy implementation and monitoring within a framework of sustainable development (Pena and Solanes, 2003).

Thus, governance implies the capacity to generate and implement appropriate policies.

3.2.2. Principles for effective water governance

According to IWRM (2012) there are several principles for effective water governance. These are:

Open and transparent: Institutions should work in an open manner. They should use language that is accessible and understandable for the general public to increase confidence in complex institutions. In addition to being open, good governance requires that all policy decisions are transparent so that both insiders and outsiders can easily follow the steps taken in the policy formulation. This is particularly important with regard to financial transactions.

Inclusive and communicative: The quality, relevance and effectiveness of government policies depend on ensuring wide participation throughout the policy chain – from conception to implementation. Improved participation is likely to create more confidence in the end result and in the institutions that deliver policies. Participation crucially depends on all levels of government following an inclusive approach when developing and implementing policies.

Broad participation is built on social mobilization and freedom of association and speech, as well as capacities to participate constructively. Transparency and accountability are built on the free flow of information. Governance institutions and systems need to communicate among the actors and stakeholders in very direct ways. Correctly done, this will lead civil society to be socialized into governance over a wide range of issues.

Coherent and integrative: Policies and action must be coherent. The need for harmony and coherence in governance is increasing as the range of tasks has grown and become more diverse. Coherence requires political leadership and a strong responsibility on the part of the institutions at different levels to ensure a consistent approach within a complex system. Water governance should enhance the effectiveness of Integrated Water Resources Management (IWRM). The institutions will have to consider all uses and users within the traditional water sector and also their interconnections with and impacts upon all other potential users and sectors.

Equitable and ethical: All men and women should have opportunities to improve or maintain their well-being. It is essential that the penalties for malfeasance are, and are seen to be, equitably applied. Above all, water governance has to be strongly based upon the ethical principles of the society in which it functions and based on the rule of law. This manifests itself most strongly in the issue of justice, property rights for use, access, and ownership of water. Legal and regulatory frameworks should be fair and enforced impartially.

Performance and operation

- **Accountable**: Roles in the legislative and executive processes need to be clear. Each institution must explain and take responsibility for what it does. But there is also a need for greater clarity and responsibility from all those involved in developing and implementing policy at any level. The "rules of the game" need to be clearly spelled out, as should the consequences for violation of the rules, and have built-in arbitration enforcing mechanisms to ensure that satisfactory solutions can still be reached when seemingly irreconcilable conflicts arise among the stakeholders. Decision-makers in government, the private sector and civil society organizations are accountable to the public, as well as to institutional stakeholders. This accountability differs depending on the organization and whether the decision is internal or external to an organization.

- **Efficient**: Classical economic theory demands efficiency in terms of economic efficiency, but there are also concepts of political, social, and environmental efficiency which need to be balanced against simple economic efficiency. It is also essential that governance systems do not impede action, for example, minimizing transaction costs will go a long way toward political and economic efficiency. Responsive and sustainable: Policies must deliver what is needed on the basis of demand, clear objectives, an evaluation of future impact and, where available, of past experience. Responsiveness also requires policies to be implemented in a proportionate manner and decisions to be taken at the most appropriate level. Most importantly, the policies should be incentive-based. This will ensure that there is a clear social or economic gain to be achieved by following the policy. The institutions should also be built with an eye toward long-term sustainability. Water governance must serve future as well as present users of water services.

3.2.3. Regulatory Framework of the Water Supply Sector

UNDP (2013) identified the most common definition of water governance as the "range of political, social, economic and administrative systems that are in place to develop and manage water resources and the delivery of water services, at different levels of society." Essentially, governance systems determine who gets what water, when and how, and who has the right to water and related

services and their benefits. The representation of various interests in water-related decision-making and the role of power and politics are important components to consider when analyzing governance dynamics.

UNDP (2013) further illustrates the four dimension of water governance.

1. **Social dimension**, which focuses on equity of access to and use of water resources. This includes issues such as the equitable distribution of water resources and services among various social and economic groups and its effects on society.
2. **Economic dimension**, which highlights efficiency in water allocation and use.
3. **Political dimension**, which focuses on providing stakeholders with equal rights and opportunities to take part in various decision-making processes.
4. **Environmental dimension**, which emphasizes sustainable use of water and related ecosystem services.

Water governance is sometimes confused with water management. However, "water governance and water management are interdependent issues in the sense that effective governance systems are meant to enable practical management tools." The term 'water governance' is sometimes also used interchangeably with integrated water resources management(IWRM), a process that promotes the coordinated development and management of water, land and related resources to maximize economic and social welfare in an equitable manner without compromising the sustainability of vital ecosystems and the environment. Although important links can be found between them, they are not synonymous. According to the Global Water Partnership, governance should be seen as providing the context within which IWRM can be implemented.

Water governance reforms often contain similar elements, such as: decentralization, integrated and coordinated decision-making, stakeholder participation, river basin management and increased roles for the private sector through public-private partnerships.

In 2002, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights adopted General Comment No. 15 on the right to water. The Committee emphasized the government's legal responsibility to fulfill that right and defined water as a social, cultural and economic good. It identified a number of normative and cross-cutting criteria that are identified as key principles that need to be met to realize the right to water, such as availability, quality/safety and accessibility (more specifically, physical and economic accessibility, non-discrimination in accessing water and the right to obtain relevant information. It also set out obligations of the state to respect, protect and fulfill water as a human right.

According to United Nations Development Program, Oslo Governance Centre (2006) there is three key components that make up a water governance assessment framework workable. These components offer a simple but applicable analytical framework that can be used to design and contextualize assessments in the water sector. They include:

- ***Institutions and stakeholders***. This component provides a framework with which to assess and analyze particular water institutions and stakeholders, including their specific interests, capacities and the power dynamics between them. Such an analysis helps build an understanding of how water governance fits within the wider context of governance and the political economy.
- ***Governance principles***. This component focuses on transparency, accountability and participation (TAP) and can be used to analyze institutional performance as well as how stakeholders behave and relate to each other.
- ***Performance*** **assessment**. Institutions, stakeholders and TAP analyses provide input into the assessment of the performance and impact of particular water-related functions, such as allocation, service delivery, planning and capacity development. This provides the basis for developing assessment indicators on water sector performance and impacts.

Stakeholders

If institutions constitute the 'rules of the game', stakeholders are the actors. They respond to institutions but can also change the rules. The water sector is made up of a myriad of stakeholders. Determining which stakeholders should be included in the assessment will depend on the focus and level of the assessment. Thus, the focus of this paper was household heads of local level governance entities.

Pressing issues in the water sector are the challenges of collective action that individuals with interests in the water sector face in organizing themselves as an interest group. An important task in looking at stakeholder engagement is to understand how existing interest groups are able to organize themselves and exert influence as a group. It is also important to understand why some interest groups, such as users who are poor, fail to organize effectively.

Governance principles: Transparency, accountability and participation

This guide has identified the above principles, known as TAP, as useful entry points from which to analyze institutions and stakeholder relations within a water governance assessment. The way in which TAP mechanisms are structured within a governance system creates incentives that influence how stakeholders behave and work together.

- ***Transparency*** can be understood as the level of openness of governance processes and access to information. It also refers to the extent that public decision-making processes and outcomes are open to scrutiny by citizens, the media, and others.
- ***Accountability*** refers to sets of controls, counterweights and modes of supervision that make officials and institutions in the public and private sector answerable for their actions and ensures that sanctions are applied against poor performance, illegal acts and abuses of power. In the water sector, well-functioning accountability mechanisms can help clarify the commitments of actors involved in water governance, lead to efficient management of fiscal resources, protect water resources and increase control over the actions of public and private stakeholders, and ensure minimum quality standards.
- **Participation** refers to the possibility for citizens to provide informed, timely and meaningful input and to influence decisions at various levels. Participation in decision-making processes in the water sector is a precondition for social accountability. Different mechanisms exist for public participation—that is, different means can be found through which citizens can be encouraged to express themselves and influence decisions and processes in the political, economic and social spheres. Attending town hall meetings and being heard, actively contributing to and shaping advisory committees, voting, protesting or carrying out a referendum are examples of participation mechanisms in political processes, decision-making and planning.

These three governance principles are closely interrelated. Transparency is a precondition for participation and accountability. If people lack access to information regarding the activities of government agencies, they will not be able to raise their voices to demand accountability or participate in decision-making or monitoring processes. Similarly, transparency without accountability can lead to disillusionment and distrust of institutions, since citizens have information about services they are entitled to but do not have any mechanisms to hold those in power to account if they do not receive such services.

Assessing water governance performance

Institutions, stakeholders and governance principles are important components in the water governance assessment framework. To be

meaningful, however, their assessment needs to be applied to particular water-related issues and problems.

4. Methodology

4.1. Description of the study area

The Afar National Regional State (ANRS) is located in the Great East African Rift Valley in the north-eastern part of the country. Afar is one of the nine regional states of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. . It shares international borders with Eritrea (to the north) and Djibouti (to the northeast). Domestically, Afar borders on the Somali region (to the east), the Oromia region (to the south), the Amhara region (to the west and southwest), and the Tigray region (to the northwest). The region is arid and hot, with annual rainfall usually between 225 mm and 560mm and the daily maximum temperature between 18 and 45 degree Celsius. Transhumant pastoralism is the main economic activity of Afar region. Afar pastoralists keep various types of livestock including camels, cattle, sheep, and goats.

In terms of area coverage the Afar region is the fourth largest with a total area of 100,860 square km and is structured into 5 zones and 29 districts. The study covered only one zone and two districts from the selected zone, Aba'ala and kuneba.

Aba'ala is one of the districts in the Afar Region of Ethiopia. Part of the Administrative Zone two, Aba'ala is located at the base of the eastern escarpment of the Ethiopian highlands, and bordered on the south by Megale, on the west by the Tigray Region, on the north by Berhale, on the northeast by Afdera, and on the east by Erebti. The major town in Aba'ala is Aba'ala.

Kuneba is one of the districts in the Afar Region of Ethiopia. A triangle-shaped district in the Administrative Zone two, Kuneba is located near the base of the eastern escarpment of the Ethiopian highlands, and bordered on the west by the Tigray Region, on the north by Dallol, and on the east by Berhale. The major town in Kuneba is Kuneba.

4.2. Research Design

The research was relied on both qualitative and quantitative types of research. That is, triangulation, which is combining both quantitative and qualitative types of research. The researchers believe this is a good way of approaching the research as it enables them to counteract the weaknesses in both quantitative and qualitative types of research.

The quantitative type was applied more to analyze the level of residents perception in decentralized governance of water supply collected through questionnaires. Whereas the qualitative type was applied more to analyze the mechanisms, and barrier of decentralized water governance collected from the rest sampling groups/units by way of semi-structured interview.

4.3. Sampling Methods

Both probability and non-probability sampling techniques was employed to collect all the necessary data at different stages. First, random sampling technique was employed in the study area. The target or study population was the residents of the study area. The study area has a population of 63294 (CS, 2007). And out of that 10549 are households. With regard to the sample size, although the researchers believe that more sample size could have better represented the whole population, to make the research more manageable, a total of 385 sample respondents then have been selected from the residents of the local administration proportionate to its population size.

Data was collected from respondents of residents of the local administration (households or family head) (through probability sampling); officials and administrators in the local administrations (through purposive sampling) as well as councilors in the local administration (through purposive sampling) who have direct relationship with popular participation in decentralized governance in the study areas by way of interviews was also be included.

Table 1 Estimate of population size Based on the 2007 Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA)

S.N	District	Population	Household size	Sample size
1.	Aba'ala	26991	4498	164
2.	Kuneba	36303	6051	221
	Total	63294	10549	385

To determine sample size Yamane (1967) simple statistical formula is employed.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)2}$$

N=Total population
n=sample size
e= precision level

$$n = \frac{10549}{1 + 10549(.05)2}$$

n=385

Totally, there were 385 respondents. These respondents were further break down to each district proportionate to their population number. Eventually, five kebelles were selected using lottery method from both districts i.e. three kebelles from Aba'ala out of eleven and two kebelles from kuneba out of seven.

Table 2: selected kebelles and Estimated sample size of Aba'ala and Kuneba Districts

SN	Woreda	Kebelle	Total population	Household size	Sample size
1.	Aba'ala	Harridan	5189	864	54
		Adi-Haremeni	5213	882	57
		Hdmo	4992	846	53
2.	Kuneba	Feres Dege (koneba)	5412	902	108
		Efiso	5568	928	113
3	Total		63294	10549	385

4.4. Data Collection

In this research both primary and secondary data type was used as source of information. In line with, the primary data source was collected from sampling groups /units such as residents of the local administration; from officials and administrators in the local administrations as well as local organizations and councilors in the local administration through questionnaires and interviews.

While the secondary sources were include different books, published and unpublished journal articles, office documents, government reports, websites or internet, working papers, previous studies . . .etc. through such a mixed of data generation, the limitation of one will be settled. The data type is confined to literatures and empirical data and information in the areas of decentralized water supply governance in two districts (woreda) of zone two local administrations as local government in Afar National Regional State.

4.5. Analysis of Data

All the data was cleaned and checked for consistency. Then the questionnaire was analyzed using the Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. Then, having analyzed the data, the significant part of the result, based on descriptive methods such as frequency, averages, percentages and other measures of central tendency are used to summarize and present the data. Qualitative information that was collected through interview is incorporated into the quantitative results.

The conclusion and generalizations in this research have been arrived at carefully and cautiously on the basis of the processed data gathered through the valid data gathering devices. The conclusions

and formulations of the research process was involve inductive-deductive mode of thinking. Likewise, a generalization of the research findings, of course, dependent upon the method, instruments, and sampling procedures followed.

5. Results and Discussions

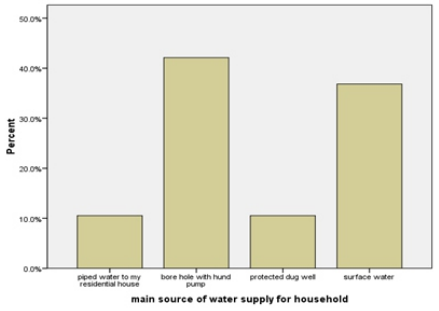
5.1. Introduction

This research was conducted in the Afar National Regional State, in Zone two, Aba'ala and Koneba districts, on the issue of decentralized governance of water supply sector, taking information from households and other concerned local governance institutions. It is focused on the issue of understanding the degree of decentralization in water sector since one of the concepts of decentralization is improvement of delivery of public services at the local by becoming responsive to local needs.

In the previous parts the, theoretical and historical evidences of the issues related to the study were presented. While in this part the practical assessments are presented. Data gathered through questionnaire, interview, and observation are presented, analyzed and interpreted using percentages, graphs and frequencies.

As it was stated in the methodology part, the sample size of this study was 385 but only 372 respondents returned the questionnaires. Respondents were households of Aba'ala and Koneba districts. These households are the direct beneficiaries of the service provided by the public institutions of the local administrations. Since the data collected from the local residents reflect perceptions and feelings, it must be triangulated by the data collected through interview. In-depth interview was also made with the leaders of the districts of the two districts especially with the head office of water resources. Exclusive interview was held with the leader of each districts on the issues of decentralization and stakeholders investment in the water sector in general and water supply in particular, the role of public service delivering institutions to improve the livelihood of the district residents, the current challenges of the decentralization program.

5.2. Source of water supply in the study area



Source: survey 2014

Figure 1: The main source of water supply for local residents

As it can be seen from the above graph, the main source of water for majority households in the study area is bore hole with hand pump and surface water like rivers and streams in both districts of the study area.

In koneba majority pastoralists get water from stream which is found to the north of koneba town both for drinking and their livestock. The water from the stream is not treated. But there are borehole hand pump water source in and around the town of koneba both for drinking, washing and livestock. These water sources are chlorinated sometimes. There are also very few residents of koneba town who are getting piped water to their residential house. As per the information derived from the Head of water resource office of koneba district, there are several kebelle in the district which don't have any source of water within their kebelle. These people travelled for over 5-8 kms to fetch water for drinking, washing and livestock.

In Aba'ala town the source of water for drinking is dung water and connected to the residents through pipe line. However, for other kebelle of Aba'ala district the water sources are far away from their home. There are also water source for irrigation in both districts (Koneba and Aba'ala).

Table 3: Constancy of water service and alternative sources of water

Does the water service remain constant throughout the year?	Percent (%)
Yes	21.9
No	78.1
Is there an alternate source of water if there is no available water from the main source?	
Yes	95.8
No	4.2

Source: survey data 2012

As it is clearly depicted in the above table the water service from the main tanker does not remain constant throughout the year. The data collected via interview also confirms that the water service from the main source does not remain constant throughout the year. Shortage of water supply occurs in the dry seasons. In the months of May and June small water is collected to the main tanker and the dung well also lost their water as a result of the ground water table go deep down. Majority respondents replied that there is alternative source of water in the absence or shortage of water from the main source. Water supply to the town is throughout the year but there is critical shortage of water around May and June. At the time of shortage of water the town dwellers of Aba'ala and koneba dwellers travelled more than 5kms to fetch water for drinking and washing from the near surrounding surface water.

The main source of water supply for both districts households' are Bore hole and Hand pump. Besides, there are also unprotected dug well or spring. There are kebelle which have not any access to water in their surrounding and even in the kebelle that have already access to pure water it does not remain constant throughout the year especially in the driest months like May and June.

In the absence of water from the main source, there is water from the spring even if it is far away for most of the districts' residents. The water from the spring serves both for washing and drinking although it is untreated.

In the absence of water from the main source residents of the study area use water from the surface which is far away from their home. The water they fetch from the surface water is intended both for drinking and washing. With regard to the quality of water majority of the respondents are not considering as element of water supply. They believe that since the government is providing it, it is up to the government whether providing quality of water or not. However, according to the information obtained from the office of the district water resource it is clear that the water which they have fetched from the surface is untreated.

1.1. Decentralization of water governance

Asked about their participation in the decision-making process respondents replied that there are no opportunities for public participation. Both interviewees and questionnaire respondents assured that no public input in water supply decisions at district level. The water resource office of the district prepares their own annual plan which they consider pertinent and send it to the regional water resource bureau. Accordingly some of their plans might be accepted and budget is provided.

Participation is seen as a key to the process of decentralization. Most of the literature has been dichotomized into "means" and "ends" (Oakley et al 1991) with the former seeing participation as an efficient tool or means for achieving better project outcomes and the latter

arguing that the process of participation is in itself an empowering one (Cleaver 1999). However, in the study areas the respondents replied that they have never participated in water issue decision-making process. The respondents, household heads, could not evaluate the transparency level of decision-making process with regard to water supply since they have not participated in the decision-making process. Usually girls and wives (mothers) are responsible to fetch water in the culture of the Afar people. Fetching water is the responsibility of females. Like in any other cultural society, the Afar clearly demarcates the different societal roles in line with gender basis. So anything pertaining to water is the duty of female (wives and girls).

According to the key informants Fiscal, administrative and political decentralization processes in the water supply sector have taken place to differing degrees. The licensing of some major water works contracts of 'Grade Six' and above still remains in the hands of federal level authorities despite demands from local authorities to exercise greater control. The local head further explains that political constraints have limited this process and there is partial decentralization in cases. In some cases even the Town Water Boards have not been given the authority to decide on the tariff of water supply as necessary to deliver to the respective towns.

Some findings also suggest that the degree of decentralization in the Ethiopian water sector is not sufficient to enable the lower tier of government to accomplish its functions. On the other hand studies noted that some of the risks associated with decentralization processes in water service delivery. For instance, further decentralization of water services to woreda level – if capacity for implementation is limited – risks worsening the implementation of water plans and undermining the political legitimacy of local governance. Also, decentralization can present the risk of increasing the power of local elites in controlling the poor's access to water services, such as the case of kebele officials' control over access to tap water.

Some of the challenges for water supply decentralization are commitment problem of district level administration, accountability as a result of the residents less information, less capacity to implement their own plan etc. There are some cases of political patronage in the system, in that sector heads are political appointees and incentives exist to promote staff loyalty to the ruling party. A few interviewees raised concerns that some sector appointments were not made on the basis of merit alone and that political loyalties played a role in the selection of staff. This leads to pressures for 'upward accountability' to the party as opposed to responsiveness to citizens and service users.

The other possible challenge also the institutional capacity of the regional government itself. Afar is an emerging region meaning that its political and institutional capacity in the sector is weaker relative to other regions, hindering its ability to deliver services and to effectively demand support from central government.

While sound policies have been created on paper, many encounter problems that prevent the formation and proper functioning of governance structures. Water governance adheres to principles of good governance. Transparency, Accountability and Participation are most important elements of principles of good governance.

The overall objective of water supply and sanitation policy of Ethiopia is to enhance the well-being and productivity of the Ethiopian people through provision of adequate, reliable and clean water supply and sanitation services and to foster its tangible contribution to the economy by providing water supply services that meet the livestock, industry and other water users' demands. Promote the availability of water nearer to pastoralists as much as possible by providing livestock water supply to all the regions, particularly to the lowland areas. The overall policy of water supply and sanitation in Ethiopia is to ensure that rural drinking water and livestock water supply undertakings shall be integral part of the overall socio-economic development, centered on self-reliance, community participation and management.

The success of decentralized water governance is constrained by the conceptualization of the larger reform in water at one level and the notions of the normative woman, community, public and the private domains, and institutions at another. Water is a public good and as such should be available, accessible and affordable to all the people in society. To enable this outcome the nature of governance is important. Appropriate decentralization, giving powers to local communities to manage their resources is an important avenue for both equity and equality.

The basic decentralization premise suggests that local governments, endowed with adequate resources, can provide the level of public services such as education, health and water that most closely reflects local demands. Decentralizing service delivery, which involves tasks such as the shifting of decision making, re-allocation of financial resources, undertaking local budgeting, improving sectoral capacity and greater community involvement, is a complex process and works differently in each sector. If done well, decentralization can possibly improve equity, efficiency, accessibility, and accountability in public service provision. Done poorly, it can result in chaos, inefficiencies, service delivery failures and accentuated inequity.

According to Ethiopia's water supply strategy concerning water supply and sanitation, the strategy aims at: more decentralized decision-making, promoting the involvement of all stakeholders, including the private sector, increasing levels of cost recovery and integrating water supply, sanitation and hygiene promotion activities (MoWE, 2011).

Research conducted by OSSREA and ODI (2010) states that the process of standard setting for the whole activities of water projects is unclear and that decision-making is non-transparent; and there have been excessive delays in implementing contract decisions. Further, there is a lack of mandate for regional water bureaus to maintain oversight over external contractors with operational licenses of Grade Six and above. This continued central control over such contracts and the lack of regional participation in – and non-transparency of – decision-making processes presents a serious risk of corruption and may lead to the assignment of contracts to politically favored regions or groups.

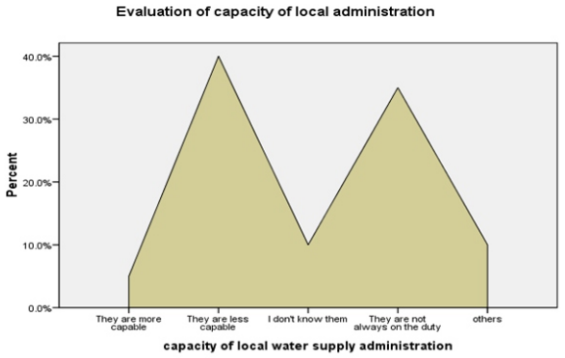
The research further explain that at *woreda* level, in spite of positive views on decentralization and improved water service delivery, some informants pointed out that only labor-intensive works have been decentralized to *woreda* level. Capital-intensive works in the sector have not yet been decentralized from regional level to *woreda* level. Because of this, there is potential for contestation and competition between *woreda* and regions for such works. For instance, some officers at *woreda* level complained that they have developed sufficient capacity to undertake capital intensive works, and hence they demand further decentralization of those activities. On the other hand, some informants contend that there are limitations in capacity at *woreda* levels, meaning that further decentralization to *woreda* level risks worsening the implementation of water plans and the legitimacy of local governance.

In practice, however, central government powers are not devolved, leaving local government units without real authority to exercise their functions or fiscal authority to generate local revenues. This system did not create incentives for local government units to act on behalf of their citizens, and local government units often acted simply as an extension of central government agencies.

In terms of the wider Political Economy context, historically, the ruling philosophy in Ethiopia has been autocratic, centralized and hierarchical. From 1991, the ruling party, the Ethiopian People's

Democratic Revolutionary Front (EPDRF), have started major processes of governance reform, including devolution into an ethnic group-based federation, a reform of the civil service, a gradual liberalization of the economy and a policy to devolve fiscal, political and administrative power to regional governments. Before 1999 E.C. there was no attempt of provision of water supply to the pastoralist society. Earlier than the period mentioned above people used to travel more than 25 kilometers sometimes to fetch water. After the attempt was started till now even though the woreda is less capable to expand pure water supply among its residents but there are good beginnings. Majority of the households don't have the understanding to ask the concerned bodies to provide them water for themselves and their livestock. In the study area when water is damaged from the main source the local residents used to contact their kebelle leaders usually to ask about the problem but it is not developed as political culture. They used to find water from different sources by themselves. Sometimes they regarded water searching, in the absence of water in their surrounding from the main source, is their duty.

1.2. Capacity of Local Water Governance



Source: survey 2014

Figure 2: capacity of local water supply administration

In study area, the beneficiaries of water supply perceive as if the expertise in the water supply sector are as individuals with less capacity. The above figure 2 indicates that the capacity of local water supply administration is less. The key informants further strengthen the idea that they don't have employees with the required skills. Not only with less required skill but also there is also high staff turnover in the sector. Asked about why turnover the existing employees explain that unfavorable working environments and low emulsion are the main causes.

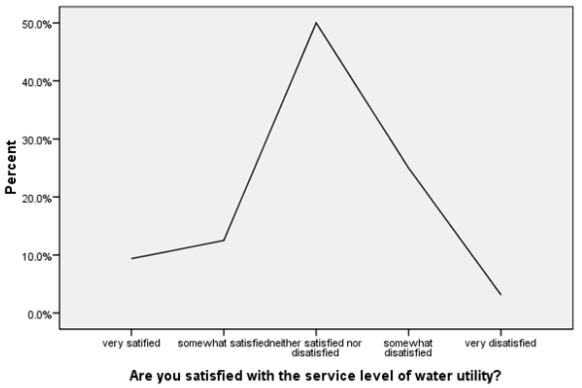
Table 4: technical expertise in the water supply

Do you think that your nearby water resource office has adequate technical expertise?	Percent (%)
Yes	2.1
No	84.7
I don't know	13.2

Whenever problem is occur in the water supply its maintenance takes long time due to both the absence of capable technical expertise and not having enough staffs. In case water supply service giving machineries are damaged, there are individuals employed for maintenance even though they are less capable.

In this research capacity refers to the district level capacity to implement its programs having the required skilled man powers. According to the information derived from the respondents the water resource office at both districts do not effectively maintain public water infrastructure. This is due to the fact that they don't get qualified skilled man power and as a result of high turnover of qualified expertise.

Figure 3: Satisfaction level of respondents to the service they are getting from water supply office



Source: survey 2014

Figure 3: satisfaction level of respondents to the services they are getting from water supply

Majority respondents are, as it can be seen from the graph, in between satisfaction and dissatisfaction. The perception of the respondents reveal that there are very few percent of (around 10%) residents replied very satisfaction with the service level of water utility.

5.5. Regulatory Frameworks in the Water Supply Sector

Except in the regional water resource office there are no established plans and strategic priorities in the district levels of water supply and sanitation administration. There are no generally established rules and regulations on water supply governance. However, there is ground rule for water fees from the household users and it covers the salary of the untrained technicians. Even the ground rules are established by the regional government and handed them down to the district's water resource offices.

Sometimes there are conflicts among water users around the surface water but usually resolved efficiently using traditional means.

According to the water resource head of the districts there is no well-established quality water supply standard. Unanimously the respondents assured that the water resource office has not adequate technical expert. As the researchers verified that the concerned bodies in the water resources offices have less understanding on the issue of decentralization especially fiscal decentralization. Usually, the woreda water resource office attempts to have annual plan which would be sent to Regional government for the purpose of getting budget but it rarely implemented.

Here it is possible to conclude that the district level government is not powerful which does not have its own regional planning taking the demands and initiatives of its locality and having its own budget for implementation in the water supply sector. Therefore, it is possible to say that the decentralization policy of the Ethiopian federal Democratic Republic is not well implemented in the water sector. The personalities in the districts of water resource office don't have an understanding of what exactly is decentralization specifically about fiscal decentralization. They attempt to define fiscal decentralization as budget allocation to their respective office by the regional government only. According to the key informants the individuals in the water supply sector of each district are not elected one. They are nominated and appointed by the zonal administration. The ground water table is not adequately studied. There is no public and political awareness of water sector in the districts investigated. There are not group of individuals who are authorized to formulate program for the water sector in both districts. As a result the wider publics are not aware of the main water problems and of the different possible measures to face them.

The local administration is not in a strong position to take important decision due to shortage of budget allocation by the Regional government. There is one NGO in Aba'ala woreda which is engaged in irrigation scheme partially. According to some key informants and head of water resource office of koneba district, lack of proper road that connects koneba with other districts of Afar and the surrounding Tigray regional state's districts is the major obstacle for all development of infrastructure including the water supply sector. By comparing the two districts, it is possible to conclude that koneba water resource office is found in its infancy stage of development. At the koneba town there are water institutions which are not well organized. At the town water charge is collected for the salary of unskilled workers of local water institutions.

The key informants and questionnaire respondents stressed that the district level administration often lack the required resources to make informed choices around planning of its own resources. For example, the water resource office in the district is quite keen to ensure quality of material purchased for setting up water infrastructure. But they were never got the required capital from the regional government. This indicated us that the district level governance is not in a position to own its resources via fiscal decentralization. This can be taken as 'token decentralization' which can be defined as formal delegation of operational duties and responsibilities without actual power or authority to carry out such responsibilities. So, while decentralized service delivery might provide citizens with a greater political space for expressing their views and for accessing government at local levels, the limited mandate, power and financial capacity at district and kebele level have limited citizens' capacity to influence government decision-making and delivery.

However, some research findings suggest that decentralization is frequently advocated as a means of improving public services delivery based on the assumption that in a decentralized system services are more responsive to local needs and demands of service users because citizens can directly or indirectly influence decisions about resource allocation and service delivery (Rakodi, 2002; Conyers, 2007). Decentralized institutions are viewed to improve matching of public services to local needs and preferences and increase accountability of local governments to their constituencies (World Bank, 2001), resulting in better targeted policies and lower transaction costs (Ribot et al., 2006). The World Bank (2004) stresses that decentralization is an institutional mechanism that has the potential of enhancing the service users' voice in a way that leads to improved services.

Therefore, the findings of this paper and other researches on decentralization in Ethiopia contravenes with the assumption of decentralization as a policy and its significances to the local communities. The basic assumption of decentralization is simply improving the public service delivery to the local people by transferring powers and duties to the lower level of administration. Underlying these arguments is the assumption that decentralization of service delivery occurs within an institutional environment that provides the political, administrative and financial authority to local institutions, along with effective channels for local accountability and central oversight.

In decentralization there are also many things that should be considered. Because the outcomes of decentralization depend on the type of public services involved, the institutional design, the way it is implemented, the capacity of institutions involved, and the wider economic, social and political environment. Therefore, hopefully other researches will fill this gap.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. Conclusions

Since the early 1990s an overwhelming number of countries have been engaged in decentralization of policy formulation and implementation especially in many developing countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America (WB, 2000). The World Bank has marked this as an important agenda for the 21st century as is evident from its several reports in the last decade. It is believed that well decentralized governance brings efficient and fast economic development. This research is not aimed at investigating the relationship between economic development and decentralization. But as it is well known provision of adequate water supply has its own contribution for economic development. This paper assessed the extent of decentralized governance of water supply sector at grass root level for the purpose of understanding the policy practices in the pastoralist society.

Many research findings revealed that the Afar National Regional State is among different regions in Ethiopia that might be characterized by little development of sectoral intervention in the Provision of clean water supply.

In the study area the existing water supply service is not enough for such enormous and large number of human and livestock populations. Even the existing very limited water sources are either being dry out during hot seasons or repeatedly get out of service due to breakdown of equipment & infrastructure. These problems forced the local communities to use unsafe water. This may expose the community to different water born diseases. Children and women are also obliged to waste their valuable time in traveling long distances to fetch drinking water together with their livestock.

These are attributed as a result of shortages of capital budget for the expansion of water supply service at district level, lack of financial and human capacity in the district's Water resource offices, shortages in human resource capacity and expertise, with a high turnover of personnel, human resource shortages are more acute in Koneba district compared to Aba'ala and there is limited transportation service to Koneba district. The absence of the transfer of increased governmental responsibilities to lower entities may also have its own contribution for the problem. There are clear fiscal benefits. If fiscal and administrative responsibilities for social service delivery are transferred to local government, then central government administrative and fiscal capacities are freed to be reassigned to the increasingly complex high level national level tasks that must be undertaken.

Decentralization is not an end in itself, but rather a means to ensure the delivery of effective, efficient, and quality services that are well adapted to the demands of the immediate operating environment and the specific needs of the people served. During recent years, the international water community has focused on governance as the most important challenge to improve water management and service provision. Because most developing countries have developed new water laws and policies, but many face significant challenges in implementing them. Many of the water policies adopted contain similar features and goals, such as decentralization, an increased role for the private sector, basin-wide management planning, better coordination of decision-making (both horizontal and vertical) and multi-stakeholder participation. But while sound policies have been created on paper, many encounter problems that prevent the formation and proper functioning of governance structures. Ethiopia as a developing state is also not free from this problem.

6.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study and conclusions made, the following recommendations and policy implications are forwarded to different level of decision makers.

As it is stated in the findings of this paper insufficient capacity (both human and financial) and a shortage of new investments undermine the effective governance of water in the study area. The study also identified that there is no more effective administrative and fiscal decentralization and downward responsiveness. Fiscal decentralization redistributes funds and financial responsibilities.

While declared objectives of decentralization usually include increased equity, responsiveness and quality of service, the results are often ambiguous and may result in a shedding of responsibilities for service provision to local governments without a corresponding increase in their capacity or funding.

Decentralization is not always without risks. Other researches and this research suggest that efforts need to be made to mitigate the potential risks of decentralization. If decentralization is to be effective, real powers and real resources need to be handed over to local administrations. The consequence of not doing so is that their ability to operate and their political legitimacy are hampered. On the other hand there are some of the risks associated with decentralization, which include increasing the power of local elites and officials in controlling water access, for instance *kebele* officials. This suggests the need for checks and balances at local level, thorough preparation of local administration and elected officials before delegating power to the local level.

There is an unquestioned assumption that women are natural conservers and managers of water. And this research also identified that water fetching is the responsibility of women in the Afar pastoral society. O'Reilly (2008) Women's groups must first and foremost serve the purpose of making the water supply system sustainable in the long run, i.e., women must be mobilized to take responsibility for the water management of their village. The health and hygiene education objective and the empowerment and self-help objective are important but should be subordinate to these overriding goals. Clear training on the issue should be given to women on how to use water sources.

The water resource office is a weak institution in terms of having adequate staffs and its own programs. There is no clear understanding of decentralization among the district administration staffs. Therefore, they need to develop their capacity in terms of implementing the policies of the federal and regional government.

Suggestions provided both by the respondents and concerned bodies in the study area are:

- There are unused water sources around the district because of shortage of budget and technical experts. Therefore, the concerned body should do something.
- The residents of the districts don't think that the local administration is responsible to provide them water both for drinking and washing/people/livestock
- Since the people are pastoralists they used different surface water for their livestock which is found far away from their home. Afar has arid and semi-arid environment and as a result there are limited rivers that can serve as a surface water for their livestock
- There is high turnover of technical experts as a result of low remuneration

Mitigation Measures that the local administration should focus/take to solve water related problems

- Fund raising strategy should be established to generate more income to finance the water sector
- Increasing the benefit of technical experts and attracting more labours
- Awareness creation should be given to the water resource office staffs with regard to decentralization. There is only token decentralization in place.

If the water supply for drinking becomes pipe line for the dwellers of the many kebelles, the most important benefits the respondents expect are;

- Getting water service regularly
- Getting clean and safe water
- Reducing water born diseases
- Saving time for girls so that they can go to school
- Saving money
- Facilitating women's household chores
- Allowing to plant edible vegetables etc

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