

**FACTORS AFFECTING FEMALE STUDENTS' ACADAMIC
ACHIEVEMENT IN SOME SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS
OF AWBARE WOREDA, ETHIOPIA SOMALI REGION**

MEd THESIS

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**Factors Affecting Female Students' Academic achievement in Some
Selected Secondary Schools of Awbare Woreda, Ethiopia Somali
Region**

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family father Girmay Abraha, my mother Abriha Gebrewubet, my sister Hadas Girmay and my beloved brothers who brought me up with love and affection as well as for their kind assistance and dedicated encouragement throughout my study.

STATEMENT OF THE AUTHOR

By my signature below, I declare and affirm that this Thesis is my own work. I have followed all ethical and technical principles of scholarship in the preparation, data collection, data analysis and compilation of this Thesis. Any scholarly matter that is included in the Thesis has been given recognition through citations.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

EDPM	Educational Development Program and Management
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
HU	Haramaya University
MoE	Ministry of Education
NGOs	None Governmental Organizations
PTAs	Parent and Teachers Associations
PROAP	Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific
REB	Regional Education Bureau
SNNPR	South Nation Nationalities and Peoples Regional State of Ethiopia
TGE	Transitional Government of Ethiopia
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
US	United States
WEB	Woreda Education Bureau
WEOs	Woreda Education Officials
ZEB	Zonal Educational Bureau

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

The author was born on Jan 12, 1986G.C. in Wukro Woreda of Tigray Regional State, Ethiopia. He attended his elementary and junior secondary schools in Mineta and Baati-Akor, schools respectively. His secondary and preparatory education was attended in Wukro Secondary and Preparatory school. Having completed these elementary, secondary and preparatory schools; he joined Addis Ababa University and earned Bachelor of Science degree in Biology in August 27, 2007. After graduation, he has been teaching Biology in Moyale Secondary and Preparatory school, Somali Regional State and then he joined Haramaya University School of Graduate studies College of Natural and Computational Science Department of Biology in 2010 to study M.Ed in Biology in the summer program.

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Factors Affecting Female Students' Academic Achievement in Some Selected Secondary Schools of Awbare Woreda, Somali Region

Kibue Girmay

ABSTRACT

Education is a tool to enable citizens to make all rounded participation in development process. The participation of females in socio-economic programs especially depends on their educational background. Educating girls and women is critical to achieve the benefits as well as the improvement in the areas of health, fertility and nutrition. Thus, females must be treated equally with males to attain educational access, which is necessary to increase their participation in different development programs. This study was meant to investigate factors affecting female students' academic achievement in some selected secondary schools of Awbare Woreda in Ethiopia Somali region. A total of 200 grade 10 female students were selected by using available sampling from three purposively chosen government secondary schools. In addition, purposively chosen female teachers (N=6), school principals (N=3), Parents and Teachers Associations' (N=7) and Woreda Education Officials (N=2) were respondents of the study. Three data gathering instruments, viz: questionnaire, interviews and Focus Group Discussions were used. The validity and reliability of the data gathering tools were duly checked. Content validity was checked by thesis supervisors and that of reliability (internal consistence) was estimated (= 0.86) by using Cronbach alpha at 0.05 confidence level. The collected data were analyzed by using both quantitative and qualitative methods. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were employed to analyze quantitative data, whereas descriptions and conceptualizations were used to analyze qualitative data. The analysis of data revealed the following findings. The socio-economic (such as low income level of parents) and socio-cultural (such as early marriage, female genital mutilation, intensive house chores) factors; school-related factors (such as lack of: proper guidance and counseling, special supports, girls club and affirmative action's; awareness creating movements; role model female teachers), personal factors (like low motivation of females to participate in academic and co-curricular activities in their schools) and parents' educational backgrounds (most of them being illiterate), all in one way or the other have negatively affected the academic achievement of the female students in the study area. Thus, it is recommended that schools, in collaboration with other concerned bodies, should organize awareness creating workshops about female education and challenges they are facing in their schooling; guidance and counseling and affirmative action should be thought by schools, role model teachers should be employed in secondary schools.

Key words: Academic achievement, Factors, Female students, Secondary school

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is valued because it contributes to national development through provision of an appropriate human resource that helps to spur productivity and eliminate poverty, disease and ignorance. Education of girls, in particular, contributes to the various aspects of their lives such as increased productivity, family health and nutrition, reduced fertility rates and related child mortality rates (Psacharopoulos and Patrinos, 2004). The role it plays and its possible contribution to the intellectual growth and development of the society have become points of common concern in both developed and developing countries (Abera, 1999). Education enables individuals and the society to make an all-rounded participation in the development process by acquiring knowledge, abilities and skills. Education also plays a role in promoting respect for human rights and democratic values, creating the condition for equality, mutual understanding and cooperation among people. Thus, it is an indispensable prerequisite for developing the capacity of participation in all aspects of development (Befekadu, 2000).

Schools, colleges and universities have no worth without students. Students are most essential asset for any educational institute. The social and economic development of the country is directly linked with student academic performance. The students' performance (academic achievement) plays an important role in producing the best quality graduates who will become great leader and manpower for the country thus responsible for the country's economic and social development (Ali *et.al*, 2009). Educating girls and women is critical not merely to achieve personal benefits but also for the improvement in the areas of human resource development of the society (Egenti and Omoruyi, 2011). The benefits of investing in human capitals are especially pertinent for women in developing countries where gender equity in education is often lagging behind. Without educating women, national endeavors can be less effective and the efforts of women are weaker. Equal opportunity of education for both sexes is

equally important. In a number of developing countries, the participation of women in education is characterized by low enrolment and poor performance. The significant contribution of female education is expressed in terms of economic, cultural and political aspect of a country.

Obanya (2005) stated that an educated female is likely to become more competent and knowledgeable mother, a more productive and better paid worker, an informed citizen and a self confident person. According to Agarwal (2004), female education importance for developing countries might include increased economic productivity, high family incomes, delayed marriages, reduced fertility rates, and improved health and survival rates for infants and children. Geiger (2002) indicated that the benefits of education relates to more or less in all aspects of development. Education empowers women to participate in the public and political life. The potential benefits of education are always present but females' education often has stronger and more significant impact than males' education. This does not mean education is unnecessary for males. One of the Ethiopia's research efforts pointed out that girl are at lower level of school attainment and correspondingly lower level of literacy, political integration, and economic productivity than males (Seged *et al.*, 1991).

Like in many other educational systems in Africa, gender disparities are prevalent in Ethiopia. The limited participation of girls in the Ethiopian education system is linked to the historical development of education in the country. As the grade level of education increases, the number of female students starts to decline (Ayalew, 2000). A research on secondary female education of Dire Dawa showed that females at the secondary education leave the school either because of failure, dropout or to join the labor force. These are the possible reasons why at the higher primary and secondary education level the number of females decreased significantly (Girma, 2007). The few women that are fortunate enough to join colleges and higher learning institutions can be characterized by lower academic performance and higher rates of forced withdrawal. Consequently, such inequity in education has a serious life-long impact on their opportunities to participate in the country's political power sharing, economic privileges as well as social representations.

The study by Nigatu (2008) indicated that considerable attention should be paid to

improve access and quality at secondary level education because there is some indication that secondary level education may provide higher returns, especially for girls. Besides, female schooling at secondary level is more consistently and strongly associated with increased decision making and mobility for women. According to Glick (2008), it is also frequently found that the demand for girl's schooling is more responsive than boys' to gender neutral changes in school cost or distance as well as quality. That is why educating women plays an important role in the socio-economic development of a country, because it has an important effect on the family in particular and the society in general than men's education. It has been aptly remarked, "If you educate a boy, you educate an individual; if you educate a girl, you educate the whole family".

There are several factors that affect female students' academic achievements. According to Tadesse (2009), family, student and school characteristics are significantly affecting female students' academic achievement in South Nation Nationalities and Peoples Regional State of Ethiopia (SNNPR). In addition a study conducted by Kassa (2006) showed that factors like home related factors, parents' education level, lack of role models, qualified teachers and early marriage are affects female students' academic achievement in Dawuro Zone, Tocha Woreda SNNPR.

Table 1: Average score of female and male students of three Secondary Schools

Name of secondary school	Academic year in Ethiopia	Average score from 100	
		Female	Male
Awbare	2004	58.7	68.6
	2005	61	78
	2006	57.8	73.6
Lefe-Isa	2004	60.3	75.5
	2005	58.4	67.8
	2006	59	73.7
Derwanaji	2004	56.6	72.6
	2005	59.4	69.4
	2006	62.4	74.5

Source: From the record office of three secondary schools of Awbare Woreda (2007E.C)

Although female education is vital for all the social and economic matters, as my experience and review of related literatures reveal, studies related to factors affecting female students' academic achievement were not studied and properly documented in

secondary schools found in Awbare Woreda, Ethiopia Somali Region. This shows that there was needed to conduct a study to assess the current status of female students' academic achievement in secondary schools in the study area.

Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate the major factors that affect female students' academic achievement in some selected secondary schools of Awbare Woreda, Ethiopia Somali Region. Thus, the study attempted to find out answers to the following questions.

1. Does parents' educational level effect female students' academic achievement in the study area?
2. Do socio-economic and cultural practice of parents affect female students' academic achievement in the study area?
3. Do school related factors affect female students' academic achievement in the study area?
4. Do personal factors affect female students' academic achievement in the study area?
5. What should be done to enhance the female students' academic achievement of in the study area?

The main objective of this research was to investigate the major factors that affect female students' academic achievement in some selected Secondary Schools of Awbare Woreda, Ethiopia Somali Region.

The specific objectives of this study were to:

1. Assess the influence of parents' educational level on the female students' academic achievement in the study area.
2. Investigate the influence of socio-economic and cultural practice of the parents on the female students' academic achievement in the study area.
3. Assess the influences of school related factors on female students' academic achievement in the study area.
4. Assess the influence of personal factors on female students' academic achievements in the study area.
5. Suggest some strategies that could help to increase female students' academic achievement in the study area.

The findings of this study are important especially for female students, parents, teachers, school leaders and policy makers. It is believed that the present study increases awareness of students, parents, teachers and school leaders on the factors that negatively affect female students' the academic achievement of the in the study area. Further, the results of the study help the policy makers to review the existing educational policy (emphasizing on the girls education such as participation in special support, minimizing rate of attrition etc) and design more supportive policies in a way that encourage female students' enrollment, achievement and graduation. Lastly, the findings are useful for Governmental and NGOs who are interested in improving females' education in the study area.

The primary concern of this study was to investigate the major factors that affect the female students' academic achievement in three Secondary Schools of Awbare Woreda, Somali Region. The scope of the study was delimited to three Secondary Schools (Awbare, Darwanaji and Lefe Isa) of Awbare Woreda, Somali Region. Mainly, tenth grade female students were the target population. In addition to this, female teachers, school principals, Woreda Educational Experts and PTAs were subjects of the study.

All attempts were made to make the present study more scientific. However, as a young and novice researcher, the researcher of the present study should admit that there might be knowledge gap, lack of expertise and outstanding techniques required to produce a highly scientific paper/thesis. In addition, all the factors affecting female students' academic achievements were not studied- only some were focused. All these limitations might have affected the quality and outcome of the present study. Thus, this paper is by no means exhaustive and silver bullet for the problem under study. These gaps may be filled by the succeeding researchers.

Lastly, since the study was conducted in only three secondary schools found in Awbare Woreda, Somali region, the findings of this study might not be generalized to all the secondary schools found in the region.

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. The Concept of Females' Education

Female education is a catch-all term for a complex set of issues and debates surrounding education (primary education, secondary education, tertiary education, and health education in particular) for girls and women. It includes areas of gender equality and access to education, and its connection to the alleviation of poverty. Also involved are the issues of single-sex education and religious education in that the division of education along gender lines as well as religious teachings on education have been traditionally dominant and are still highly relevant in contemporary discussions of educating females as a global consideration. Alemayehu (2003) described that it was noted that increased participation of girls, particularly at secondary education level, does not only improve their families own quality of life, but that of their communities and nations. Wudu and Yonas (2008) further explained that educated mothers have better families and standard of living. Their children's school enrolments are also well ensured. Their communities benefit from the intellectual, political and economic participation of all members, while their nation prospers with the added contribution from the females. But society for centuries is not aware about it and thus females face various difficulties throughout the different levels of education system.

According to Agarwal (2004), female education has great role in developing countries might include increased economic productivity, high family incomes, delayed marriages, reduced fertility rates, and improved health and survival rates for infants and children. King and Hill (1993) argued that educating females yields far-reaching benefits for girls and women themselves, their families and societies in which they live. The benefits of investing in human capitals are especially pertinent for females in

developing countries where gender equity in education is often lagging behind. Without educating women, national endeavors can be less effective and the efforts of women are weaker (Obanya, 2005). Equal opportunity of education for both sexes is equally important. In a number of developing countries, the participation of women in education is characterized by low enrolment and poor performance. The significant contribution of female education is expressed in terms of economic, cultural and political aspect of a country.

2.2. Importance of Female Education

Good performance in secondary school is very important for a country's future success. A person who is successful in education that plays an important role in nation building. Education helps to increase the basic physical and material wellbeing of the people of a given society's in economic, social and cultural development aspects. It also helps to increase the people of a given society's basic physical and material wellbeing of economic, social and material developments (UNESCO, 2002). In addition, educating girls enhance economic productivity, reduces fertility rates, lower infant and maternal mortality and improves the health and nutritional status of children. It also promotes sound management of environmental resources and is closely linked to the reduction of poverty through women's absorption in the economy as employees and in self – employment (World Bank, 2008).

Education is an indispensable means for effective participation in the society and economy's of the twenty-first century which is influenced by globalization (King, 1990). It has a direct and positive effect on earnings, farm productivity and human fertility, as well as intergenerational effect on child health and nutrition. Therefore, the education of females has particular significance to Ethiopia's effort to economic and social development. Hertz (1991) expressed their belief that economic and social returns to education for women are substantial. Female education is linked with latter marriage, lower fertility rates, the desire for smaller families and increased practice of contraception. The relationship becomes very much stronger as level of female's education increases. With this regard today girls' education is widely recognized as the most effective development investment a country can make (King, 1990). For the gain from education to be realized fully, it is highly important to increase the

participation of women in all sectors. Educated women raise a healthier family, apply improved hygiene and nutrition practice, and become productive both at home and work places. In addition, it initiates women to apply family planning which helps them to have relatively fewer and better educated children.

2.3. Policies on Mainstreaming Gender in Education in Ethiopia

After the fall of the military regime in Ethiopia, government policies began to consider the need to address gender inequality in socio-economic and political arena. Thus, addressing gender issues has received considerable attention by understanding its crucial role in poverty reduction, ensuring good governance and democracy. As a result, all major policy documents clearly articulate the gender question. For instance, the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia (FDRE, 1995), Article 35. Sub Article 3, states that: “The historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia taken into account women, in order to remedy this legacy, are entitled to affirmative measures. The purpose of such measures shall be to provide special attention to women so as to enable them compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social, and economic life as well as in public and private institutions.”

Within the constitutional framework, the New Education and Training Policy further articulated the need to address the longstanding inequity and discrimination suffered by Ethiopian women, as follows. “Special attention will be given to women and to those students who did not get educational opportunities in the preparation, distribution, and use of educational support input (TGE, 1994; Article 3.7.7.). “ Similarly, the Ethiopian Higher Education Proclamation (FDRE, 2003) also further articulated the need to implement affirmative action for women, students with disabilities and native students of disadvantaged regions: “Entry assessment or admission procedures designed for any female, disabled student, a student who completed high school education in a developing region and who is native of the

nationality of such region or student from nationality whose participation in higher education is low shall be different from others. They shall, during their stay in the institution, get special support; particulars of such support shall be determined by the “Ministry” (Article 6: 3).”

The Government of Ethiopia has prepared and issued the gender mainstreaming guidelines and checklists for education sector, intended to education offices at various levels, Teacher Training Institutes and schools (MoE, 2004). This document gives clear directions to the concerned on how to ensure access and equity, quality and relevance with efficiency. Thus, it is now apparent that the policy frameworks addressing the issue of gender equity as well as fostering female retention and success in education seem to be in place. Asmaru (2010) also explained that the Government is keen in enforcing the gender sensitive policies and programs to achieve equity in educational sector.

2.4. Factors Influencing Female Students’ Academic Achievement

There are many factors that affect enrollment rate of students. These factors are more likely reflected on females' education. Among the factors that are affecting females' academic achievement are socio-economic condition of parents, parents demand for their daughter's labor, distance from home to school/or availability of schools, presence of female teachers, school environment related factors, political and institutional factors, religious outlook of parents, engagement of females in early marriage, levels of education of the parents and parents attitudes towards females' education.

2.4.1. Socio-economic factors

Socio-economic status is one of the most researched and debated factor among educational professionals that contribute towards the academic performance of students. The most prevalent argument is that the socioeconomic status of learners affects the quality of their academic performance. Most of the experts argue that the low socioeconomic status has negative effect on the academic performance of students

because the basic needs of students remain unfulfilled and hence they do not perform better academically. The low socioeconomic status causes environmental deficiencies which results in low self esteem of students (US Department of Education, 2003).

Socio-economic condition of the family is one of the factors that can affect parent's decision to send a child to school. According to Kane (2004), there are two types of costs of schooling, direct cost of schooling including, tuition and fees, the cost of books, uniforms and supplies, required by the school, the cost of transportation, lodging and board required for attending the school. The other cost is opportunity costs or indirect cost. It may be higher wages for child labor in families with more productive farms or business and in families more dependent on children, and other expenses are the major hindrance for the parents not to educate or remove children particularly girls from school. The expected returns to sending daughters to school do not exceed the cost of doing so, female education as an investment becomes unattractive to parents.

Direct schooling costs have been found to be the major reason parents offer for not educating girls or for removing them from the school. Apart from tuition, such costs include house rent, fees for registration and admission, examinations, school building fund, and the cost of uniforms, provision of furniture, extra tutorials and transportation. World Bank (2006) explained economic wellbeing appears to be a stronger correlate of school completion and school enrolment in Ethiopia. Endeshaw (2007) pointed out that poverty and the fiscal crises, which force families to cover shortfalls, have a devastating impact on households and participation in education, particularly for girls. According to the World Bank (2004), the role of poverty was great in females' education. Even if the perceived benefits and costs of sending their children to an additional year of school were the same for poor and non-poor parents alike, the poor might choose less schooling for their children because they must weigh current costs more heavily relative to future benefits. Furthermore the cost of education is more expensive for the poor than for the rich. For instance, research in Tanzania, Vietnam and Indonesia showed that poor families spend less than wealthy families on their children's education, but it costs them more in proportion to their income (Kane, 2004). In Egypt, too, cost of schooling was the most important reason

often cited by parents for not sending their children to school.

Even where primary education is free, household educational expenditure can be heavy. Apart from tuition, other cost items such as fees for registration, admission, examination, and boarding, school building fund, book rental, the cost of uniforms, and the provision of furniture, extra tutorials and transportation can affect females' participation in education. When parents decide to hold back their children from going to schools because of financial constraints it is the girls that are to be withdrawn from schools. Girls in Africa and, in fact, in almost every region of the world work more than boys, regardless of whether they are in school and of whether adult women are present and working in the household (Kane, 2004). The importance of girls' labor for agricultural, domestic and marketing tasks has been well documented. When it comes to childcare, girls are more likely to be involved than boys. And children in rural areas spend more time doing physical works than that of in urban areas.

UNESCO (2003), proved that the time spent by girls working in the garden, fetching water and fire wood, carrying or helping in marketing activities, or doing home processing products for sale can be especially important in poorer families where the perception of benefit from the schooling of girls are dimmer. From this point, it is possible to conclude that girls are the main sources of income for their family especially for poorest ones, and the need for their physical labor (income generating activities) is often given priority over their education. The academic performance of girls in schooling has been found to have links with socio-economic factors. According to Teshome (2002), the most important of these factors include direct and opportunity costs of schooling, limited employment opportunities, socioeconomic status, and the economic value of girls, rural / urban residence, and the level of parental education and their attitudes. Many studies in developing countries using household survey data found that girls' schooling is more sensitive to cost, however defined, than that of boys'. Distance to school or the absence of a nearby school has stronger negative impact on female than male enrolments (Glick, 2008). In East African countries, for example, higher school fees increase the dropout probabilities for girls, but have no effect on boys (Lloyd, 2005).

In general, several studies suggest that the direct costs or financial constraints hold back more girls than boys from schooling. The opportunity costs of girls' schooling are associated with resources/services lost due to sending the child to school. Child labor is indispensable to the survival of many rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa and agricultural work, household chores (cooking, collecting fuel, fetching water), marketing as well as child care services are required from children, with more from girls (Odaga and Haneveld, 1995). As noted by Teshome (2002), in many Sub-Saharan African societies the continuing importance of bride price, polygamy, adultery lines, and value accorded to marriage and motherhood depress the relevance and demand for female education.

2.4.2. Socio-cultural factors

The socialization process in the society is one of the major constraints impacting on the girls' participation in education. This process starts in the family and continues in the school and in the society at large. Socio-cultural beliefs, customs, practices, early pregnancy, insecurity, girls' expectations and other traditions play a significant role in decisions to enroll and or withdraw girls from school. Generally, there may be a deep-rooted cultural bias as suggested by the disempowered position of women in Ethiopian society (World Bank, 2006). Religion is frequently associated with low female participation in schools (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995). The reasons have to do with the fear of parents based on the assumption that education promotes values and behavior for girls that are contrary to cultural norms. Girls' expectations of their school performance and career prospects play significant roles in their persistence at school. Odaga and Heneveld (1995) showed that both girls and boys have low expectations of female achievements in school and of career prospects. Diaw (2010) also opined that cultural barriers exert strong and adverse influence on girls' education

by early marriage, teenage pregnancies, traditional values of patriarchal society, and gender based violence.

The vulnerability of girls often becomes more when girls are adolescent and approaching secondary school. At this level girls' sexual maturity can cause parents to be more anxious about their daughters' safety at school and girls' risk of pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. For instance menstruation in the absence of appropriate facilities and supplies, girls in Zimbabwe miss an average more than 60 days per year for this reason. MOE (2004) indicated that families tend to influence the upbringing of their daughters based on the cultural values and religious norms. At early age girls are taught to be quiet shy and most importantly obedient, hence, their inability to express themselves and interact with teachers and students in class make them isolated. Likewise, many students face difficulties in adapting the environment they are learning in which at the end causes poor academic performance. Females are encouraged to get married and establish families at a very early age. In fact, early marriage and abduction are the major cultural problems hindering females' education.

2.4.2.1. Early marriage

Marriage is a social institution that unites people in a special form of mutual dependence for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family. As a social practice entered into through a public act, religious or traditional ceremony, it reflects the purposes, character, and customs of the society in which it is found. Many societies have norms that limit the age of young girls to enter into marriage, but in some cases the age limit does not take into consideration their physiological readiness for childbearing. Erulkar and Muthengi, (2009) marriage often takes place at ages much earlier than the legally ratified minimum age. Early marriage is the marriage of children and an adolescent below the age of 18. The practice of early marriage is most common in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. In specific parts of West Africa, East Africa and South Asia, marriage before puberty is not unusual. In North Africa, the Middle East, and other parts of Asia marriage shortly after puberty is common among those living traditional lifestyles. Marriages of female adolescents between sixteen and eighteen years of age are also common in parts of Latin America and Eastern

Europe (Plan UK Report, 2011).

2.4.2.2. Female genital mutilation

WHO (2010) described that female genital mutilation refers to a variety of operations on the private parts of women and young girls that involves partial or total removal of the external genitalia. The practice causes injury to female genital organs for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons. WHO (2008) documented some of the implications of female genital mutilation on the health of women and girls. This included death that occurred because of over bleeding extreme pain that is caused by the cutting. Traumatic stress caused by what one has to undergo and severe infection that occurred because of the tools used. Other effects included urine retention, injury to neighboring organs severe bleeding, painful sexual intercourse, and complications in labor and painful periods.

Female genital mutilation (FGM) is recognized internationally as a violation of human rights and women. The practice reflects deep-rooted inequality between men and women, and constitutes discrimination against women (UN, 2007). FGM is one of the cultural practices still being practiced in developing nations and has spread to other parts of the world such as Europe and North America, where immigrant families have settled despite global efforts to abandon the practice (UNICEF, 2005). Some 3 million girls face FGM every year. The argument for FGM continuation is that the practice is a traditional cultural rite of passage. Early marriages deny the girl-child the right to education. Mustafa (2001) stated that FGM is more common in Muslim communities than in other religious institutions. For example, in Sudan, Egypt and Somalia where the majority of people are Islamic, 80% of Muslim women versus 18% of Christian women are mutilated.

2.4.2.3. Religion

Religion is frequently associated with low female participation in schools (Odaga and Heneveld, 1995). Religion, especially Islam, is usually associated with low female participation in schools (Colclough and Lewin 1993). The history of the imposition of formal western education, which is associated with Christianity, and the pressure to

convert, is still very much an issue in some Islamic regions. It is evident that some parents prefer Islamic education for their daughters, as the fear that western education promotes values and behavior for girls which are contrary to cultural norms (often articulated as religious edicts) remains strong (Kane and De Brun 1993). However, religion is often a proxy for cultural views about appropriate female roles and it is necessary, although difficult, to distinguish between these factors. In Guinea, religious beliefs are reported to keep children, particularly girls, away from public school. A study team came across three villages where no children were sent to school because of religious reasons and one village where there was more resistance to educating girls than boys. Koranic school co-exists with public school but, depending on religious beliefs and gendered expectations of appropriate education for boys and girls, some communities send most children, mainly boys and few girls, to public school. The general perception is that girls "only need to learn prayers" and have no use for reading as they are unlikely to become scholars. This expectation appears to be transferred to expectations for children's schooling in the public system. Consequently girls tend to attend Koranic school for less time than do boys (Anderson, 1994).

2.4.3. Parents educational background

Panos Ethiopia (2006) further explained that fathers and mothers educational background affect females' education differently and mothers' literacy does not affect as much as fathers' literacy for daughters to attend schooling in a patriarchal society like Ethiopia. Ager (2002) suggested that females' education is strongly and adversely affected by parents who are illiterates than literates. As many educators have found that if the educational background of the parents is very well, their job position may also be well. Then, the good position of the parents indicates that they may have good economical background.

Parental educational level is an important predictor of children's educational and behavioral outcomes (Davis-Kean, 2005). Krashen (2005) concluded that students

whose parents are educated score higher on standardized tests than those whose parents were not educated. Educated parents can better communicate with their children regarding the school work, activities and the information being taught at school. They can better assist their children in their work and participate at school (Fantuzzo and Tighe, 2000). Theory of Educational Productivity determined three groups of nine factors based on affective, cognitive and behavioral skills for optimization of learning that affect the quality of academic performance: Aptitude (ability, development and motivation); instruction (amount and quality); environment (home, classroom, peers and television) (Roberts, 2007).

The home environment also affects the academic performance of students. Educated parents can provide such an environment that suits best for academic success of their children. The school authorities can provide counseling and guidance to parents for creating positive home environment for improvement in students' quality of work (Marzano, 2003). The academic performance of students heavily depends upon the parental involvement in their academic activities to attain the higher level of quality in academic success (Barnard, 2004; Shumox and Lomax, 2001). There is a range of factors that affect on the quality of performance of students (Waters and Marzano, 2006). A series of variables are to be considered when to identify the affecting factors towards quality of academic success. Identifying the most contributing variables in quality of academic performance is a very complex and challenging job.

2.4.4. School related factors

When one thinks of the constraints, limits and obstacles to girls' education in developing countries like Ethiopia; it is natural tendency to think in terms of ideas and concepts, for instance cultural traditions and discrimination against girls. However, sometimes, the small but concrete things make a difference. One of these is the place where a school is located (UNESCO, 2004). As different researchers have pointed out, school environment is one of the major factors that affect participation of female students (World Bank, 1988). More precisely, factors like the absence or shortage of instructional materials, the attitude of teachers towards female education, inappropriate content of curricula, distance from home to school, poor administration of the school, absence of guidance and counseling service, facilities for personal

welfare, drop out and the like are the most common factors affecting girls' participation in education.

As Secondary schools in Ethiopia are scattered over great distance, and are mostly located in urban centers, parents do not dare to send their daughters to such a far distance. The journey may be unsafe, since many girls at this school age experience harassment and physical attack on the way. Schools, like any other social context, are the sites of power relationships among teachers, staff and students, and among students themselves. The UN Study on Violence Against Children notes that violence at schools has both physical and psychological forms, and can be expressed as punishment; discrimination; sexual or gender-based violence; bullying; fighting; gang violence; and violence via new technologies (Nicola *et al.*, 2008). The same authors further explained that violence is generally carried out by offenders known to the child (such as relatives and authority figures, including teachers and school authorities), and it provides a hint of the magnitude of the problem of school-based sexual violence.

Indeed, in this UN Study for five sub-Saharan African countries also pointed out that between 10% and 30% of students had been physically forced to have sex. It was reported that attitude of teachers towards female students also affects their survival and academic performance (Tella, 2007). The curriculum and materials carry both implicit and explicit message that characterizes women as inferior, helpless and dependent being. Alemayehu (2003) indicated that women and girls remain invisible in most text books. Because the numbers of females who reach higher education are small, girls who suffer from excessive teaching of male teachers; and males' attitudes, behavior and learning styles might differ from those of females. Besides, the presence of gender bias in textbooks and teaching materials can affect females' participation in education. Many text books and teaching materials have pronouns of sex bias, which can discourage girls from thinking of themselves as good students or as suited to any job. Often books portray men as intelligent and adventurous, seeking employment in new, exciting, and profitable fields. Women are depicted as passive admiring, and suited only for traditional roles (World Bank, 1991).

2.4.4.1. Proper guidance and counseling

Guidance and counseling has been conceptualized as a programme of activities which has provided us with the gateway out of the existing numerous problems in our present age of complex scientific and technological development (Okobiah and Okorodudu, 2004). The UNESCO module on guidance and counseling (2000) also posited that Guidance is a programme of services to individuals based on their needs and the influence of environmental factors. Guidance and counseling is a professional field which has a broad range of activities, programmes and services geared toward assisting individuals to understand themselves, their problems, their school environment and their world and also to develop adequate capacity for making wise choices and decisions. Noble (2006), students' academic accomplishments and activities, perceptions of their coping strategies and positive attributions, and background characteristics (i.e., family income, parents' level of education, guidance from parents and number of negative situations in the home) were indirectly related to their composite scores, through academic achievement in high school.

The students face a lot of problems in developing positive study attitudes and study habits. Guidance is of the factor through which a student can improve his study attitudes and study habits and is directly proportional to academic achievement. The students who are properly guided by their parents have performed well in the exams. The guidance from the teacher also affects the student performance. The guidance from the parents and the teachers indirectly affect the performance of the students (Husain, 2006). Student support services designed to improve students' academic performances at early ages and help them set and work toward academic goals have been found to counter academic barriers such as teachers or counselors who discourage females from taking advanced classes.

2.4.4.2. Female teachers as role model Teachers

Lack of role models is another deficiency in the schools of the country in motivating girls to learn further number of female teachers is very less in Secondary levels, and this situation makes the directions for the girls missed. Landel and Gergel (2009)

strongly argued that increasing the number of role models will enhance the urge and motivation to learn with good performance for the girls in schools. Many of the girls, particularly those coming from rural areas, do not realize the purpose of their learning in schools, due to lack of conviction of the benefits. The lack of role models fails to convince them the awaiting status and opportunities. Shortage of female teachers or successful cases around adds to this deficiency. One of the most compelling arguments for increasing the number of women teachers in schools relates to the positive impact that doing so has on girls' education. There is evidence to show a correlation between the number of women teachers and girls' enrollment, especially in sub-Saharan Africa. In countries where there are more or less equal numbers of male and female primary teachers, there is close to gender parity in student intake. In contrast, in countries where women constitute only 20% of teachers, there are far more boys than girls entering school (UNESCO, 2003).

However, as highlighted in recent research from Nepal, such large-scale trends mask more complex patterns at the local level. According to Bista (2005) the relationship between women teachers and girls' enrollment is more than a simple cause and effect, as there are many factors that prevent girls from attending school some of which also impact on the number of women teachers. Increasing the number of women teachers has to be accompanied by other strategies to promote girls' education, such as ensuring that the timing of the school day fits with girls' domestic workloads, and ensuring a high quality of education in a safe and secure environment. The presence of women in schools can also impact positively on girls' retention in school and on their achievement. Studies have shown a positive impact from women teachers on girls' (and boys') achievement. A female role model can support and encourage girls to successfully complete their studies and maybe even continue studying to become teachers, themselves. She can also be there to listen to any problems and provide guidance when necessary (UNESCO PROAP, 2000).

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Description of Study Area

The study was conducted in Awbare Woreda which is found in Somali Regional State. The study area is 744 kilometer far from Addis Ababa. Awbare also known as Teferi Ber which is part of Jigjiga Zone bordered on the Southwest by Jigjiga, on the West by Shinile Zone, on the East by Somalia Land and on Southeast by Kebri Beyah (Roble, 2014).

3.2. Research Design

To collect relevant data and address research questions properly, a cross sectional descriptive survey research design was used. In addition, the study employed mixed research approaches to collect data related to the factors that affect female students' academic achievement in the study area. The mixed data collection method involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches.

3.3. Study Populations

The study populations of the present study were grade ten female students (200), grade nine female teachers (6), school principals(3), Parent-Teachers Associations (7) and Woreda Education officials(2).

3.4. Sample Size Determination and Sampling Techniques

3.4.1. Study region

The present study was conducted in Somali Region, which is located in the Eastern part of Ethiopia. The region was purposively chosen for the following reasons. First, Somali is the place where the researcher's permanent working place [Awbare Woreda] is located. This means that the researcher has good opportunities to examine what was actually going on in those schools; and gained good knowledge or awareness about the existing situations in the schools located in the study area. Second; Somali region is one of the regions which have inequality of education in terms of sex (female and male). Male students are grater both in number and academic achievements than female students. Third, there is no research works done in the area

on factors that affect female students' academic achievement.

3.4.2. Schools

Totally there are seven secondary schools in Awbare Woreda. However, all these secondary schools were not subjected to be included in the study sample. Three secondary schools (Awbare, Darwonaji and Lefe Isa) were purposively chosen because of their longer age and experience than other schools. From these schools, grade ten female students were randomly selected.

3.4.3. Students

The universe of this study included three secondary schools having a total of 200 grade ten female students. All these female students (200) were taken for the sample study.

Table 2: The sample size of the respondents from the three sample schools

No.	Name of Secondary school	Number of female students(population)	Sample size	Sampling technique
1	Darwonaji	N ₁ =56	n ₁ =56	Available
2	Awbare	N ₂ =80	n ₂ =80	Available
3	Lefe-Isa	N ₃ =64	n ₃ =64	Available
	Total	N=200	n=200	Available

3.4.4. Teachers

Totally there are 24 teachers teaching grade nine students. Of these, six female teachers were selected purposefully and considered for interview. Only female teachers were selected to take part in this study on the assumption that female teachers have more approach to female students than male teachers.

3.4.5. School Principals, WEE and PTAs

Since these respondents were directly or indirectly involved in the teaching-learning process respondents from WEBH and PTA were considered to be vital. Thus, randomly chosen school principals (3), Parent-Teachers Associations (7) and Woreda Education Officials (2) were participated in focus group discussion (FGD).

3.5. Instruments of Data Collection

In this study, three data gathering instruments were used. These were questionnaire, focus group discussion and semi-structured interview. The way such instruments was developed and scored is explained as follow.

3.5.1. Questionnaire

A questionnaire was the major data collecting tools of the present study. It was designed in line with the research questions and objectives. A total of 30 open ended and close ended items were prepared (English language) and administered to grade ten female students. The questionnir-e was administered to students and filled on face-to-face basis. In addition, while filling out the questionnaire on face-to-face basis, some translations and further explanations of important terms and questions were offered to help students duly understand and respond to the items accordingly.

Before the questionnaires were administered to the respondents, their validity and reliability were checked. First, the validity of the items was checked by two randomly selected veteran staffs from EDPM. The same was also re-checked and approved by my advisors. This certainly helped the researcher to obtain valuable comments and suggestions on the items prepared. Second, pilot study was carried out in a randomly selected 20 female students (in Togo-Wuchale secondary school which was not included in the sample schools) to estimate the reliability of the items. Accordingly, the items were checked for this internal consistence by using Cronbach alpha (at = 0.05 confidence level).It was found out that the items were reliable for this internal consistence (=0.86).

3.5.2. Interview

Interview was the other data collecting tool used in this study. Semi-structured interview items were prepared for the supposed interviewees. The grammatical and conceptual accuracy of the items was checked by English language teachers from the

sample schools and my advisors. Six female teachers were chosen purposefully from the three secondary schools were interviewed and six questions were prepared and conducted in English language.

3.5.3. Focus group discussion

Focus group discussion (FGD) is one of the tools used to gather the required information. The purpose and structure of the FGD guide (schedule) is similar to that of interview but with the intention of generating valuable information through intensive interactive dialogue among participants. During the FGDs, debates and hot discussion was triggered among the participants on the issues. Hence, valuable information was surfaced and a relevant point was jotted down. School principals (3), Woreda Education Officials (2) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) (7) were participating in FGD. Participants and schools for FGD were selected purposefully. Five questions were prepared in Somali language for the FGD and held in each of the three sample schools. Finally the themes were translated into English language verbatim.

3.6. Data Analysis

In this study, both quantitative and qualitative data analysis techniques were employed. The data gathered through the questionnaire (closed ended) from female students were tabulated and analyzed using the descriptive statistics (percentage and frequency). The qualitative data collected through questionnaire (open ended), interviews and focused group discussion were analyzed through narrations, descriptions and conceptualization and presented along with the quantitative data.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Characteristics of Respondents

Sample populations of 200 female students were selected by available method from three secondary schools. Six female teachers, three school principals, two woreda educational officials and seven parent-teacher associations were selected by

availability sampling. A questionnaire was distributed to 200 female students. On the other hand three-focused group discussions were held with school principals, woreda educational officials and parent-teachers association in the three secondary schools. Interviews were held with the six female teachers.

Table 3: Background Information on Female Student Respondents

No.	Item	Frequency	percentage
1	School		
	A.Awbare	80	40
	B.Lefeisa	64	32
	C.Darwonaje	56	28
	Total	200	100
2	Age		
	A. 15 and below years	42	21
	B. 16-19 years	138	69
	C. 20-22 years	14	7
	D. 23 and above	6	3
	Total	200	100
3	Marital status		
	A. Married	31	15.5
	B. Single	140	70
	C. Divorced	29	14.5
	Total	200	100
4	Religion		
	A. Orthodox	14	7
	B. Muslim	186	93
	C. Protestant	-	-
	Total	200	100

As indicated in Table 3, the total sample size of female students were considered from the three schools was 200. Of these, 40% belongs to Awbare followed by Lefe-Isa (32%) and Darwonaje (28%). With regards to their age the majority (69%) of female students were ranged between 16-19 years. This shows that most students are over aged according to the age standard for secondary school (15-16) ages. This age is a period when an adolescent faces a lot of emotional problem. This may have its own negative influence on the female students' academic achievement through male harassment, females' need for spouses etc. The rest respondents' ages ranged 15 and below were 42 (21%), 20-22 were 14 (7%) and above 23 age 6 (3%) respondents. When we see the marital status of female student respondents, 140 (70%) were single,

31(15.5%) were married and 29(14.5%) were divorced. Concerning the type of religion of female student respondents, 186(93%) were Muslims and 14(7%) were orthodox Christians.

4.2. Factors Affecting Female Students' Academic Achievement

4.2.1. Socio-economic factors

Table 4: Children's chances go to school

No.	Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
1	Do boys and girls have equal chance go to school?	A. Yes	32	16
		B. No	168	84
		C. I am not certain	-	-
		Total	200	100
2	If your response to question number "1" is No, who gets more chance?	A. Boys	160	80
		B. Girls	40	20
		Total	200	100

As shown in Table 4, most of the respondents replied that there was no equal chance for boys and girls go to school in the study area. About 168(84%) of the respondents have revealed that boys have more chance to enter school than girls. This finding is supported by the finding of Teshome (2002), females' chance to join school is highly determined by parents. Parents give first chance of education for their sons' than daughters. The opportunity costs of girls' schooling are associated with services lost due to sending girls to school. Girls' labor is necessary to the survival of many rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa and agricultural work, household chores (cooking, collecting fuel, fetching water), marketing as well as child care services are required.

Concerning this, during focused group discussion most of them affirmed that they give first chance of education for their sons' than daughters. They want their girls' labor more than their education. This demonstrates clearly that discrimination in access to schoolings is sharply concentrated on females. The parents do not have much awareness about the benefits of educating girls. Most of the students' parents are poor and they want their children's labor, especially that of females for household activities. This implies that poverty is one factor, which negatively affects girls'

access to participation in education and results in low academic achievement of female students’.

During the interviewee the female teachers pointed out the same response to the question, “Do boys and girls have equal chance go to school?” They revealed that “The community cannot see boys and girls on equal position. Boys are very important than girls. In the absence of father, a boy takes responsibility of the family because boys are physically strong. Even if, a woman can manage a household, parents believe that she cannot do as a good as man. As a result any courage and support will be given to boys only. No equal time allocation for boys and girls at home. Boys have enough time for studying but females have not. Parents demanded females for domestic work rather than encouraging them for studying, doing assignment, home work and other educational activities rather.”

1. Parents’ economic status

The academic performance of girls in schooling has been found to have links with socio-economic factors. According to Teshome (2002), the most important of these factors include direct and opportunity costs of schooling, limited employment opportunities, socio-economic status, and the economic value of girls. Parents’ ability to support their daughters is mostly depending on their income level. Parents’ willing to support their daughters cost by providing stationary, house rent, uniform and other related expenses. Parents’ income is the most influential in respect of supporting their daughters in schooling. To some extent in also affects girls’ performance in schools.

Table 5: Views of respondents about their parents’ economic status

No.	Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
3	Do your parents’ fulfill all your educational materials?	A. Yes	67	33.5
		B. No	133	66.5
		C.I am not certain	-	-
		Total	200	100

4	How do you rate your parents' income status?	A. High	32	16
		B. medium	47	23.5
		C. low	121	60.5
		Total	200	100

As can be seen from Table 5, most of the respondents 133(66.5%) replied that they do not get full financial support from their parents. This finding is supported by Wudie and Philipos (2014) economic constraints seriously affect female students' academic achievement, students from poor families failed to fulfill necessities such as educational materials, cosmetics, recreation, etc. 67(33.5%) of respondents get financial support for required educational materials.

Concerning item 4 of Table 5, 121(60%) respondents replied that the income status of their parents is very low. This shows that poor families could not support their students' financially and this will end up with low academic achievement of female students. This indicates that financial problem have negative effect on the academic achievement of female students.

4.2.2. Socio-cultural factors and practices

1. Household chores

Heady (2003) argued that there is negative relationship between academic achievement and work. Additional working hours decrease a child's reading and computational ability, whereas with additional hours of school attendance and study the reading and computational ability increases. UNESCO (2003), proved that the time spent by girls working in the fetching water and fire wood, carrying in marketing activities, doing home processing products for sale can be especially important in poorer families where the perception of benefit from the schooling of girls are dimmer. Table 6, shows that the influence of household chores on female academic achievement and their participation on their education.

Table 6: The effect of household chores on females' education.

No.	Item	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
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5	From your past experience who was engaged more in house hold chores?	A.Male	8	4
		B.Femal	19	96
		Total	200	100

As indicated in Table 6, 192(96%) of the respondents affirmed that females are more engaged in household chores. The burden of household chores was one important factor that affects the girls. After return from school, they are expected to help their mothers or undertake activities like fetching water and firewood, cooking, taking care of younger children, washing clothes, cleaning the house etc. This workload makes them tired, and unable to study or do school assignments. Moreover, they don't get time for it even if they wish to do so. Going to school without doing assignments makes them inferior in the eyes of teachers, demoralized, and ultimately become poor in their academic achievement.

In relation to the above item, respondent were asked as to "what kind of work are female students engaged in more?" For this open ended question, the majority of respondents replied that females are engaged in works such cooking food, collecting firewood, washing clothes, fetching water, taking care of children, grinding, working in the farms, keeping goats and sheeps, and income generating activities for their families and themselves. Because of the above reasons parents are interested in engaging their daughters in doing home activities rather than sending them to schools. The perception of the benefit is that educating the daughters is less important than they benefit from what the girls do in the household. So the above facts show that poor parents often invest less on their daughters' education. This goes in conformity with the result obtained by Kane (2004) and UNESCO (2003).

Table 7: Frequency of house chores done by female students

No.	Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
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7	When do you perform your house chores?	A. Before and after class time	121	60.5
		B. Before class time	14	7
		C. After class time	55	27.5
		D. I do not work	10	5
		Total	200	100
8	How often do you do them?	A. Always	136	68
		B. Some times	54	27
		C. Rarely	10	5
		Total	200	100

Table 7, item 7 indicates that 121(60.5%) of the respondents replied that they work before and after class, 55(27.5%) after class time, 14(7%) before class time and 10(5%) of the respondents did not work. This finding indicates that female students spend most of their times by working house hold activities. They do not have time to study, to work their home work and assignment, to go tutorial classes and to write notes. This causes in low academic achievement of female students.

Concerning item 8 “how often they performed their house hold activities?” The majority 136(68%) of the respondents replied that they perform house hold activities always and number of female students is greater than that of males in absenteeism from school. Academic achievement and absenteeism are inversely related. If absenteeism increases academic achievement will decrease. On the other hand 54(27%) of the respondents affirmed that they carry out household work some times, the rest 10(5%) respondents reported that they carry out household activities rarely.

2. Early Marriage

Engagements of females in marriage at early age result in low females' participation in education. In Ethiopia too where early marriage is practiced, it is vivid that early marriage is one of the reasons for the low enrollment of females in education. Early marriage is used as a means of securing daughter's futures (Erulkar and Muthengi, 2009). This massively impedes the educational progress of girls. Table 9 presents respondents' view regarding the effect of early marriage on females' schooling.

Table 9: The effect of early marriage on the female students' academic achievement

No	Item	Response	Frequency	Percentage
11	Do your parents enforce you to get married rather than going to school?	A.Yes	173	86.5
		B.No	8	4
		C.I am not certain	17	8.5
		Total	200	100

As can be seen from Table 9, 173(86.5%) of the respondents affirmed that parents enforced their daughters to get married rather than going to school. This confirms that the finding that early marriage retards the participation of female in education (UNESCO, 2003). In relation to the above item, respondent were asked as to "why parents enforce their daughters to get married rather than going to school?" Most of the respondents replied that "because in the whole society there is a believe that girls should not go to school but they have to get married and bear children and do house hold cores and keep cattle and camels. Above all it is religious moral to have females remained at home rather than going to school."

Table 10: Age at which most females get married

No.	Item	Response	Frequency	Percentage
13	From your experiences, at which age do most female get married?	A.12-13	15	7.5
		B.14-17	135	67.5
		C.18-20	44	22
		D.20 above	6	3
		Total	200	100

Concerning the age at which most females get married, in the study area, the majority 135(67.5%) of the respondents said that females get married between the age of 14

≥

and 17, whereas 44(22%) replied between 18 and 20, 15(7.5%) between 12-13 and 6(3%) at age of 20. In this study the age gap that ranges from 14-17 years is when most girls are to marry. With regards to schooling this age gap is also the time that girls are supposed to be enrolled in secondary schools. In such circumstance there is no doubt that the participation of females would be lower at these levels of education and their academic achievement then decrease.

3. Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation refers to a variety of operations on the private parts of women and young girls that involves partial or total removal of the external genitalia. The practice causes injury to female genital organs for cultural or non-therapeutic reasons. FGM also contributes to psychological trauma, physiological problems and stress, and makes the girl unable to focus on her studies (WHO, 2010). Table 11, indicates that female genital mutilation practiced and insures that how much it affects the female students' academic achievement in the study area.

Table 11: The effect of female genital mutilation on academic achievement of female students'

No.	Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
14	Is female genital mutilation practiced in your community?	A. Yes	176	88
		B. No	5	2.5
		C. I am not certain	19	9.5
		Total	200	100
15	Do you believe female genital mutilation affect your academic achievement?	A. Yes	164	82
		B. No	15	7.5
		C. I am not certain	21	10.5
		Total	200	100

As can be seen from responses to item 14 of Table 11, 176(88%) of the respondents affirmed that female genital mutilation has been practiced in the study area. On the other hand 21(10.5%) of the respondents replied that they did not certain female genital mutilation practiced. The rest 15(7.5%) of the respondents replied that female genital mutilation is not practiced in the study area.

Response to item 15 of Table 11, indicates that, 164(82%) of the respondents replied that female genital mutilation negatively affects female academic achievement. This finding is similar with the finding of MoE (2008) described that FGM practice and consequent weak academic achievement of female students' was reported in this study from Bale, East Hararghe, Somali and other parts of the country. During interview the female teachers revealed that "Female genital mutilation does cause physical, sexual and social health consequences to those who undergo the procedure. The consequences are either short or long- term depending on the type of FGM practiced on the individual. In any case, FGM causes more absentism from class and results low academic achievement of female students". The rest 15(7.5%) respondents responded that female genital mutilation did not have negative effect on females academic achievement. 21(10.5%) of the respondents were not certain on the effect of female genital mutilation.

4.2.3. Parents' Educational Background

Table 12: Responses of respondents about their parents' educational background

No	Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
16	Do your parents follow up your education and give you feedback?	A. Yes	45	22.5
		B. No	146	73
		C. I am not certain	9	4.5
		Total	200	100
17	Father's educational background	A. illiterate	122	61
		B. 1-8	31	15.5
		C. 9-12	20	10
		D. diploma	16	8
		E. Degree and above	11	5.5
		Total	200	100
18	Mother's educational background	A. illiterate	162	71
		B. 1-8	28	14
		C. 9-12	22	11
		D. diploma	8	4
		E. Degree and above	-	-
		Total	200	100

Concerning the educational backgrounds of the parents of female students, 122(61%) were from illiterate (uneducated) fathers while 88 (39%) were from educated fathers. Similarly, 162(71%) were from illiterate (uneducated) mothers while 38(29%) were from educated mothers. Regarding the level of education of fathers, those who were from grade 1-8 were 31(15.5%), 9-12 grades were 20(10%), diploma were 16(8%), degree and above were 11(5.5%). As to mothers' education 1-8 grades were 28(14%), 9-12 grades were 22(11), diploma were 8(4%) and no mother of the respondents have degree and above. From this we can deduce that most of female students' parents are uneducated. So that parent's education has an important influence on females' participation in education. Educated parents would perceive the need of females' education in a better way than those who are not educated. Educated parents might also facilitate the girls' learning at home and encourage in doing school homework. This finding is similar with the finding of Schiller *et al.* (2002) also argued that regardless of national context, parents who have more educated appear better able to provide their children with the academic and social support important for educational success when compared to parents with less educated. Parental education background and female academic achievement have a direct relationship. Students who came from educated parents are aware of some school challenges and their parents also aware of tackling the challenges.

4.2.4. School related factors'

1. Lack of guidance and counseling

Table 13: Level of guidance and counseling service in sample schools

No.	Item	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
19	The level of guidance and counseling service for female students' in the school is:	A. High	14	7
		B. medium	54	27
		C. low	132	66
		Total	200	100

Table 13 shows, 132(66%) respondents responded that the level of guidance and counseling service for female students' in the study area is low. The lack of guidance and counseling service for female students' in the study area has negative impact on their academic achievement. On the other hand 54(27%) replied that they get medium guidance and counseling service and 14(7%) of respondents pointed out that high

guidance and counseling service in their school.

In relation to the above item, respondent were asked as to “What is the role of guidance and counseling service for female students’ in your school?” Most of them responded that if there was, it has lots of advantage to female students in rejecting parents’ pressure to stop them from schooling. They would also refuse to get married and stop female genital mutilation and even they can persuade their parents to change the immoral religious attitude towards their daughters and education at the moment as a whole. In addition, during focus group discussion the participants revealed that guidance and counseling is an integral part of educational system in the society. Guidance programmes for secondary school female students are designed to address the physical, emotional, social, vocational and academic difficulties of adolescent students. This is to complement learning in the classroom and also enhance academic achievements of students.

2. Role Model Female Teachers

The promotion of female teacher has been recommended as a strategy to encourage girls’ education. The advantage of this is that apart from providing positive role models to young girls, particularly in rural areas, parents feel at ease about their daughters’ safety by the presence of female teachers. Thus the presence of more female teachers in schools has positive effect on female participation in education.

Table 14: Lack of more female teachers in school

No.	Item	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
21	Do you think that lack of more female teachers in your schools have negatively affect on female students’ academic achievement education?	A.Yes	165	82.5
		B.No	30	15
		C.I am not certain	5	2.5
		Total	200	100

As can be seen from the Table 14, 165(82.5%) of the respondents replied that the presence of more female teachers in school has a positive effect on female students’ academic achievement. The finding of Kirk (2006) has shown a positive impact of

from female teachers on females' academic achievement. A female role model can support and encourage girls to successfully complete their studies, provide guidance (on early marriage and FGM) and ensure protection for females from unwanted attention to from boys and even from sexual abuse. On the other hand, 30(15%) replied that the presence of more female teachers does not have a positive effect on female student participation in education. The rest 5(2.5%) replied that they are not certain of the positive effect of the presence of female teachers on female students' education. From this, one can deduce that the presence of female teacher encourages the participation of female students in education.

3. Special support

Table 15: Level of Teachers' special support to female students

No.	Item	Response	Frequency	Percentage
22	What extent of special support given by your teachers in the school?	A. High	9	4.5
		B. Medium	69	34.5
		C. Low	122	61
		Total	200	100

As indicated in Table 15, when asked how much especial support teachers give to female students 122(61%) of the respondents indicated that teachers give low support (tutorial classes) to female students. 69 (34.5%) of respondents replied that teachers give medium support to female students, and only 9(4.5%) responded that teachers give high support to female students. This finding supported by the participants of the focus discussion pointed out that the attitude of teachers towards girls' education and motivation and commitment to support female students to improve academic achievement was very low. Further, they stated as no provision of special class for girls' to inspire and the females to achieve more. This is due to the small number of female teachers in secondary school of the study area.

Regarding to the above question, female teacher respondents' pointed out that the poor performance of female students in secondary level was due to high demand for domestic work, heavy household workload as well as taking responsibility at home,

and inadequate involvement of parents and lack of continuous support by moral, financial and material from their parents due to poor income capacity of parents. And failure of teachers' commitment to assist female students, and negative attitude of community towards girls' schooling and low perception or stereotype of students being a woman are factors affect females' academic achievement.

4. Absence of gender club

Table 16: Views of female students about the availability of gender club in their schools

No.	Item	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
23	Is there girls club in your school?	A. Yes	-	-
		B. No	168	84
		C. I am certain	43	16
		Total	200	100

As can be seen in Table 16, the majority of the respondents 168(84%) replied that there is no girls club in their school, the rest 43(16%) respondents were not certain about it. This finding is similar with the finding of MoE (2008), the absence of girls club affects female students' academic achievement. In addition the respondents replied to the question "what is the role of girls club on female education?" School girls' clubs are important for to bring them together, make them active and handle some of the problems they face. It helps female students to be free and do their best and boost their ability in everything in the school. In Addition it is very important for female students to investigate the main factors affecting their academic achievement and come to solution. Especially, it helps them to discuss on the issue of early marriage and female genital mutilation.

4.2.5. Personal Factors

Table 17: The interaction of female students with their subject teachers

No.	Item	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
25	How do you rate your academic relationship with your subject teachers?	A. High	24	12
		B. Medium	50	25
		C. Low	126	63
		Total	200	100

Table 17 indicated that most 126(63%) of the respondents responded that their relationship with subject teachers is low. This means female students do not have good participation in the class lesson and cause them to have low academic achievement. On the other hand 50(25%) of the respondents replied that they have medium relationship while 24(12%) respondents have high approach to their subject teachers.

Table 18: Female students' self-confidence as viewed with male students

No.	Items	Responses	Frequency	Percentage
26	Do you believe that females are equally competent with males in education?	A. Yes	34	17
		B. No	166	83
		C. I not certain	-	-
		Total	200	100

Table 18, indicated that 166(83%) of the respondents affirmed that they do not believe that females are equally competent with males in their education. This finding similar with the finding of Tadese (2007) females are believe to be lower than males in their education. This is a result of patriarchal culture, where submissiveness is expected from females in household and community levels. It results in low self esteem, and lack of self confidence, which are reflected in education as well. The rest 34(17%) respondents replied that they believe that females are equally competent with males. For the question “What do you think most affects your performance in your schooling?” the respondents replied that, “ because of their parents always order to do house hold activities such as garden, fetching water and fire wood, carrying or helping in marketing activities. Female students do not have time even to go to school every day. In addition to this, other society’s perception and religion affects the female students’ academic achievement.”

Teacher respondents’ pointed out traditional attitude towards girls’ schooling has effect on academic performance of female students. Majority of the community of the region is illiterate and have no sufficient ideas about the benefit of education. The family as well as community have negative attitude in education. Due to this reason girls fill hopelessness, unable to see bright future and resulting in low academic

achievement of female students.

Table 19: Lack of motivation in female students

No.	Item	Response	Frequency	Percentage
28	What is motivation of female students to learn the lesson?	A. High	35	17.5
		B. Medium	62	31
		C. Low	103	51.5
		Total	200	100

Table 19 indicated that 103(51.5%) of respondents affirmed that motivation of female students is low, 62(31%) respondents medium and 35(17.5%) respondents have low motivation to learn the lesson. This indicates that most of the respondents (have medium and low motivation) were not given attention to the lesson and leads to have low academic achievement. This finding is similar with the finding of [Launius \(1997\)](#), when female students are not motivated in a class; a common outcome is a lost desire to attend class, followed by frequent absences and causes low academic achievement of female students’.

Several political and institutional factors also constrain female students’ academic achievement. The political will to tackle the problems of nonparticipation and non-enrollment of girls is a key factor in improving educational outcomes of all children, and especially for girls’ participation in education. Table 19 present respondents’ view regarding effort of political and administrative bodies to increase females’ participation in education.

Table 20: Opinion of Female students on the commitment of political and administrative bodies to increase females’ participation in education.

No.	Item	Responses	Frequency	Percentag
29	The effort of political and administrative bodies, especially woman’s affairs office, to increase females’ participation in education is	A. High	-	-
		B. Medium	34	17
		C. Low	166	83
		Total	2000	100

Table 20 shows, 166(83%) of the respondents replied that the effort of political and administrative bodies, especially women affairs, to increase females' participation in education is low. Most of female teachers affirmed that woreda government bodies do not discuss their daughters' educations except the school principals and teachers. In the study area early marriage and female genital mutilation highly practiced. This shows government bodies did not take measure on those harmful practices like female genital mutilation and did not tried to stop early marriage. This shows that political, administration and women's affairs contribution in females' participation in education is low. During focus group discussion all the members discussed on how to improve the female education and concluded that teachers, education office of the woreda, religion leaders and parents together with concerned body should discus and bring one long lasting solution in encouraging female students' participation in education and to increase their academic achievement. Especially on early marriage, female genital mutilation, religious attitude on female education, guidance and counseling must be given to parents to change the attitude they have towards their female education.

4.3. Strategies Improved the Female Students' Academic Achievement

The strategies that follow whether working from inside or outside the classroom have been proven to increase female students' academic achievements. Each promotes in its own way the model of a school that seeks to ensure effective learning in safe, healthy gender sensitive and child-centered environments. All respondents were given their response to the question "What do you think should be done to improve female students' academic achievement?" the strategies which improve female students' academic achievement as suggested and prioritized by respondents are:

- Decreasing the domestic work load of female students
- Recruiting and training more female teachers
- Providing alternative education for girls
- Taking special measures to reach the most disadvantaged girls.
- Encouraging girls' participation and activism for education.

- Involving the local community in schools' activities
- Establish and activate gender club each secondary schools

5. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter, summary of the major findings, conclusions drawn from the findings and recommendations, based on the conclusions, are concisely presented.

5.1. Summary

The main purpose of this study was to investigate factors affecting female students' academic achievement in three secondary schools of Awbare Woreda in Somali regional state. To attain the objectives of the study, specific research questions were set which are related to the effects of parents' socio-economic and educational status/level; Socio-cultural practices of parents/society; and school linked factors that affect female students' academic achievement in the study area. A total of 200 grade 10 female students were selected by using available sampling from three purposively chosen government secondary schools. In addition, purposively chosen female teachers (N=6), school principals (N=3), PTA members (N=7) and WEEs (N=2) were respondents of the study. To properly address the research questions, the study used questionnaire (a principal data gathering tool), interview and FGDs as tools of data collection. Before collecting the data, the validity and reliability of the data gathering tools (questionnaires) were duly checked and found to be appropriate. Both quantitative and qualitative methods of data analysis were employed to analyze the collected data.

The study discussed and analyzed results of factors affecting the academic achievement of female students' that emerged from different aspects. These included socio-cultural factors (early marriage, female genital mutilation, engaging females in intensive house chores), socio-economic factors (low income level of parents),

educational background of parents (most of them being illiterate) and school related factors (lack of proper: guidance and counseling, special supports and affirmative action's; awareness creating movements; role model female teachers), personal factors (low motivation and low-self concept of females to participate in academic and co-curricular activities in their schools. All those factors in one way or the other have negatively affected the academic achievement of the female students in the study area. In addition to this, the study discussed points regarding strategies that could help to increase female students' academic achievement were discussed.

5.2. Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study and summary made above, the following conclusive remarks can be made about the study.

Ministry of education of FDRE, in its various policy documents (such as MOE, 1994; 2002, etc) has stipulated the importance of female education to social, economic and political achievements. In addition, the same documents have highlighted the various factors that can negatively affect the active participation of the females in education, their achievements in academic matters and affirmative action's needs to be fostered to encourage females schooling and their educational attainments.

Although a number of policy documents are produced and couples of intervention strategies have been tried, the present study indicated that there is still much to do in relation to females participation (enrollment) and achievements (successful completion of schooling) in Somali regional state, especially in Awbare Woreda. This is because, as reported by the present study, a number of factors were identified affecting female students' academic achievement in the study area as presented and discussed below.

First, parents' educational background/level (their understanding level, attitudes towards and perceptions about education) plays an important role in either constructively or unconstructively affecting females' education. In line with this, the present study unveiled that the surveyed female students' parents were mainly

illiterates. This means that parents couldn't help their children (female students) in their academic matters. Thus, it can be inferred that female students' academic achievements were partly affected by the parents' educational level (illiteracy).

Second, the socio-economic factors, i.e., parents' capacity to provide their children with what they want for academic purposes, are other vital factors that affect students (here female students') academic participation and achievement. In connection to this, the study investigated that the studied female students' parents income was minimal and this has been reported as affecting their (females) academic performances, i.e., parents were not in a good position to cover various educational expenses (cloths, meal, transport, house renting, stationary materials, etc).

Third, Socio-cultural factors, which in this study refers to what the society beliefs, feels, thinks and do, are other important factors that can affirmatively/negatively affects female students' academic performances. In connection to this, the present study found out that early marriage, engaging females in routine house chores, socio-cultural factors negatively affected female students' academic achievement.

Fourth, it goes without saying that schools play vital roles in assisting students' learning through creating conducive learning environment, proper guidance and counseling, taking confirmatory actions (esp. for females) and the like. In line with this, the major school-related factors, as reported by the this study, were lack of: special supports (for example tutorials) and affirmative action's; proper guidance and counseling related to female students' academic, social and private/personal issues; role model female teachers in the schools; awareness creating movements/campaigns related to the female education, its importance, and socio-cultural influences imposed on females.

Lastly, as we know, learning is primarily an individual endeavor, i.e., learning requires interest, motivation, commitment, confidence and hard work. In this study, these variables (personal factors) were assessed if they were practiced by the female students or not. Interestingly, almost all the respondents indicated that they were not

motivated to learning and had low self-concept (females perform less than males). Thus, it can be concluded that lack of motivation and low self-perception has unconstructively affected their academic achievements.

The overall implication is that if females are not actively engaged in academic matters, not supported and encouraged by the family, society and schools, they will not succeed with their education and hence can't be successful. Thus, the following recommendations are formulated in order to assist the alleviation of the abovementioned problems.

5.3. Recommendations

- Parents' educational level was reported mainly as low (illiterates). Thus, parents are advised to hire tutors and encourage their children (female students) to attend tutorials in the schools. In addition, parents, through PTA, should talk to schools for the tutorial programs to be arranged.
- Socio-economic status of the studied female students' parents was minimal. Thus, it recommended that schools, in collaboration with WEB/ZEB, NGOs/GOs, including rich people and volunteers, should find ways to help needy female students sustain their education and attain their goals (achievement).
- Socio-cultural practices (mainly early marriage, female genital mutilation, intensive house chores, and) exercised by the children's family were reported severely affecting female students academic achievement. Thus, it is suggested that concerned bodies such as school authorities, WEB, ZEB, REB, religious elders and Women affairs should aware the society about female education, its importance and harmful practices. In addition, parents should share house chores among the family members. Time should be aside for females to study their lessons.
- Personal factors (such as lack of motivation and low self-concepts) were reported adversely affecting female students' academic achievement in the study area. Thus, students should be properly guided, advised and supervised

by their parents and schools including other concerned bodies. In addition, female students are strongly advised to understand that they can improve their lives and contribute to their country provided that they learn properly and grasp the required knowledge and skills.

- School-related factors such as lack of: girls club, special supports (for example tutorials) and affirmative action's; proper guidance and counseling related to female students' academic, social and private/personal issues; role model female teachers in the schools; awareness creating movements/campaigns related to the female education, its importance, and socio-cultural influences imposed on females) were identified as major factors influencing female students' academic achievement of in the study area.

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix I.

HARAMAYA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES

COLLEGE OF NATURAL AND COMPUTATIONAL SCIENCE

DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

A. Questionnaire for Secondary School Female Students of Awbare Woreda.

Dear Students,

The purpose of this study is to assess factors that affect the academic achievement of female students in some selected secondary schools of Awbare woreda in Ethiopia Somali region. To realize this, relevant data should be collect from the appropriate respondents like you. The responses you provide play an important role in the conclusions and recommendations that will be made at the end of this study. Thus, you are kindly requested to answer questions attached here with the questionnaire.

Part I: General Directions

- There is no need to write your name
- The responses you provide will be used for research purpose only

- Before you fill the questionnaire, make sure that you have understood the items properly.
- If you face any difficulty while filling it, please feel free to ask and get assistance from me!
- Respond to each item - please don't jump questions.

Thank you very much in advance for your co-operation!

Part II: Fill in the spaces provided or encircle one of the given alternatives

Name of your school: _____

Age: A) under 14 B) 15-17 C) 18-20 D) 21 above

Marital status: A) Single B) Married C) Divorced

1. Do boys and girls have equal chance go to school?

A. Yes B. No C. I am not certain

2. If your response to question number "1" is No, who gets more chance?

A. Male B. Female

3. Do your parents' fulfill all your educational materials?

A. Yes B. No C. I am not certain

4. How do you rate your parents' income status?

A. High B. Medium C. Low

5. From your past experience who was engaged more in house hold activities?

A. Male B. Female

6. What kind of work females are engaged in more?

7. When do you perform your house chores?

- A. Before and after class time B. Before class time C. After class time
 D. I do not work
8. How often do you do them? A. Always B. Sometimes C. Rarely
9. What is religion of your parents? A. Muslim B. Orthodox
 C. Protestant D. Catholic

10. Do you think that your parents' religion affect your academic achievement?
 A. Yes B. No C. I am not certain

11. Do your parents enforce you to get married rather go to school?
 A. Yes B. No C. I am not certain

12. Why parents enforced you to get married rather than go to school?

13. From your experiences, at which age do most female get married?
 A. 13 and below B. 14-17 C. 18-20 D. 20 above

14. Is female genital mutilation practiced in your community?
 A. Yes B. No C. I am not certain

15. Do you believe female genital mutilation affect your academic achievement?
 A. Yes B. No C. I am not certain

16. Do your parents follow up your education and give you feedback?
 A. Yes B. No C. I am not certain

17. Please indicate educational level of your parents in the table below.

Parents	illiterate	1-8	9-12	diploma	Degree and above
Father					

Mother					
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19. The level of guidance and counseling service for female students' in the school is:
 A. High B. medium C. low

20. What is the role of guidance and counseling service for female students' in your school?

21. Do you think that lack of more female teachers in your schools have negatively affect on female students' academic achievement education?

A. Yes B.No C.I am not certain

22. How do you rate special supports provided to Female students in your school?

A. High B. Medium C. Low

23. Is there girls club in your school? A. Yes B. No C. I am certain

24. What is the role of gender club on female education?

25. How do you rate your academic relationship with your subject teachers?

A. High B. Medium C. Low

26. How much is your motivation on your education?

26. Do you believe that females are equally competent with males?

A. Yes B. No C. I not certain

27. What do you think most affects your performance in your schooling?"

28. What is motivation of female students to learn the lesson?

A. High B. Medium C. Low

29. The effort of political and administrative bodies, especially woman's affairs office, to increase females' participation in education is:

- A. High B. Medium C. Low

30. What do you think should be done to improve female students' academic achievement?

Appendix II

B. Interview Guide for Female Teachers

Dear Teachers,

Good morning/ good afternoon Sir/Madam, my name is Kibue Girmay, a graduate student in the department of Biology studies, Haramaya University, doing a research study for my M.Ed. thesis entitled **“Factors Affecting Academic Achievement of Female Students’ in Some Selected Secondary School in Awbare Woreda, Somali Region”**.

I would like to appreciate your genuine co-operation and willingness to my interview. Your genuine responses and idea have their own significant contribution to the study. As a result, I kindly request you to provide me with your required information for the study. I would like to inform you that the information you provide me with will only be used purely for academic and research purpose by the researcher and hence will be kept confidential.

- Do boys and girls have equal chance go to school? If why
- Do you believe female genital mutilation affect female students' academic achievement?
- What do you think most affects female students' academic achievements your school?
- What socio-cultural believes that influences or results negatively on female students' academic achievement? If yes, mention them
- What do you comment about community attitude towards girls schooling?
- What do you think should be done to improve female students' academic achievement?

Appendix III

C. Check list for conducting Focused Group Discussions with school principals, parents-teachers association (PTA) and woreda educational officials.

1. Do boys and girls have equal chance go to school? Who get more chance? Why?
2. What do you think of the various factors affecting female students' academic achievement?
3. What is the role of guidance and counseling service for female students' in your school?
4. What is the importance of educating females to this community?
5. What do you think should be done to improve female students' academic

achievement?

Thank you very much!