Volume 17 Issue 12
Originally issued as F1

Global Journal of HUMAN-SOCIAL SCIENCE: F
Political Science
Volume 17 Issue 1 Version 1.0 Year 2017
Type: Double Blind Peer Reviewed International Research Journal
Publisher: Global Journals Inc. (USA)
Online ISSN: 2249-460x & Print ISSN: 0975-587X

An Appraisal of Voters Turn Out During the 2010 National Election of Ethiopia: The Case of Toke Kutaye Woreda

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GJHSS-F Classification: FOR Code: 360199p



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I. Introduction

a) Constitutional provision to achieve public political participation in Oromia regional state.

After the derg removed from power by the EPRDF in 1991, the philosophy of administration of the country is theoretically and little practically changed. The core point of governance is making people as a central decision maker from federal to kebele level. In 1994, written federal constitution of Ethiopia adopted in a way it reflects the importance of participation of the people for any things concerned to the people.

The article 8(1) of the national constitution has declared that "All sovereign power resides in the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples of Ethiopia".

This means it is only people who determine over its own affair by actively participating there in. Moreover, article 39(3) guaranteed such a right. Accordingly it says that;

Every Nation, Nationality and People in Ethiopia has the right to a full measure of self-government which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in state and Federal governments.

This provision is the provision that most importantly gave chance for participation in all aspects life of the society and it also allowed the formation of independent territorial governance (regional states) and government institutions in which the people actively participated over its own matter.

Again the constitution also recognized the existence of regional state and laid down the ground on which the autonomous regional state can be established. Accordingly article 46(1 and 2) mentioned as follow:

The Federal Democratic Republic shall comprise of States.

States shall be delimited on the basis of the settlement patterns, language, identity and consent of the peoples concerned .In contrast, article 47 of the constitution explicitly recognized nine regional state among which Oromia is mentioned Oromia regional state has established based on the above provided grounds. As autonomous state, it has also its own written constitution. The provision which is indicated in the national constitution also deducted as well as included in the constitution of Oromia regional state in a way it takes in to account the existing circumstances of the region. As far as classification is concerned, the provision of Oromia regional state constitution divided in to two general categories-namely Human right and Democratic right respectively the same to that of federal constitution.

The constitution of the region in its article 8 declared that sovereignty is resides in the Oromo people which can be manifested through their direct participation to elect their representative to government institutions even though it denied non-Oromo living in Oromia regional state as a decision makers. Moreover, article 38 of the constitution also mentioned the right to vote of the citizen of the region as per the article 38 of the federal constitution..

b) Participation in party membership in the 2010 election

The 2010 election has brought another dimension of public participation in party membership following the result of the 2005 election. The 2005 was officially declared the crisis of OPDO/EPRDF in every aspects of relation they want to have with the woreda people. Specifically speaking, having supporter and member in to the party was became taboo due to people hate them so that they designed another

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important technique to have member which was nationally implemented in the EPRDF.

There were three political parties in the woreda such as OPDO/EPRDF, OPC which is under Dr. Merera Gudina, ONC which was splited by the Tolasa Tesfaye and Bona Tadese from the ONC after the 2005 election. The OPDO/EPRDF used important ways of scaling up its member and supporter in away it endanger the survival of oppositions in the woreda in a unique ways. Public service was connected to membership to OPDO/EPRDF. This is not confined to a particular sector rather it was inclusively done in all sectors and every one explicitly asked identity card of the ruling party while one goes to compete for vacant job opportunity in the woreda and elsewhere in Oromia. Following the defeat the OPDO /EPRDF in the 2005 election evaluated its weakness and designed another direction[1].

However, the ruling party terrified farmers that the fertilizer should not be given and reminded that the people should ask ONC to give them a fertilizer and so that the farmers were regretted for what they did in the 2005 by forgetting that it is constitutionally guaranteed right[2].Later on OPDO/EPRDF collected farmers in the name of training on how to improve production of agriculture which was produced *Adda dure* (Model farmers) and this *Adda dure* farmers were those unconsciously became member of OPDO/EPRDF (Ibid).He also mentioned that it was also impossible to be employed in the government institution without being a member to the ruling party by stating that he was the very victims of it. Tulu Tadese in his part mentioned that this trend entered in universities and forced student of universities to register in the party to get job after graduation.

Again, this also has been part of the life of the high school student of the woreda. It was related with the clearance that is given by the woreda administration office. If student failed to become member in the ruling party, it couldn't be possible to get clearance which is needed for competition[3] .The competition is made between students to diploma program sponsored by government. Clearance means is identification of whether he /she is member in the ruling party(Ibid).The student don't want talk about politics in the class even debate is happen in the civic and ethical education class[4].

Contrary, *Alemu* who is the head of member recruitment head argued that our party touch the heart of many people of the woreda due to it extensively provided a social service that helped the party to have enormous amount of supporters and people also easily identified the different between our arty and opposition based on what we did for the wellbeing of the people while the opposition did nothing for the people of the woreda. Moreover, he argued that the opposition took side with the *neftanya.*[5] *Hirphasa badhane* [6] the member of electoral executer of the woreda said, the ruling party was able to posses supporters and members due to the government issued law which most importantly stop the miss behaviors of the opposition supporters that was prevailed in the 2005 election not to be prevailed again in the 2010 election. After the 2005 election, OPDO/EPRDF have scaled up the members to 8407 among which male constituted 6747 while women constituted 1660 in 2010 election(Source; the party office) where 80.2% was men and 19.8% was women.

This figure not include the member who changed the living place from the woreda to another and who withdraw from the party membership after 2005 election[7] .From all 80.2% of the members were farmers. The students constituted 7.4%,3.84 were urban small and micro interprises,3.81% urban residents and 5.4%the rests were civil servants. The opposition (OPC) recruited member since 2005 less than what have been done in 2005 election within three months. The figure of party member in the 2010 of OPC was 5027 where 4689 were men while 338 were women (source;the party office).Of this,93.2% was men while 6.8% was women. This indicated that women participation in a political activity is less while men soundly participated.

Hence, the gender balance was not achieved because in all parties membership except some extent better in the ruling party, the women participation is not significant. Arguably,it is the reflection of less participation in other decision making process of the woreda and it is the result of patriarchal administration have broaden its base in the country.

The two elections were held extremely different movement to produce supporters in the political parties in the woreda. It reflected the different move toward democratization of Ethiopia .The good beginning of the 2005 negated in the 2010 election in this regard.

c) Turnout in voter's registration in the 2010 election in Toke kutaye woreda.

Voter's registration of the 2010 national election of the woreda also showed a progressive change. This prevailed from the number of registered voters in comparison with that of 2005 registered voters. According to the report of NEBE of the 2010, the registered voters in the 2010 election at national level also increased from 27,372888 during 2005 election to

[1] Interview, Alemu Hirko, February,2013
[2] Interview, Dhabaa Delesa,March , 2013.
[3] Inerview, confidential kept, February 24/2013.
[4] Ibid.

[5] .Neftanya refers to an armed group of the northern society came with Menelik II and their collaborator and oppressed Oromo. Hence, they convinced people that OPC (Oromo people congruence) cooperated to bring back the past neftanya system.
[6]. This man has been stayed on that position since 2005 election.
[7] Interview, Alamu Hirko, March 2013

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31,926520 during the 2010 national election. This increment also prevailed in Toke Kutaye woreda even though it is not significant in amount.

The total amount of people registered during the 2005 election was 41,173 while it was 41,291 in the woreda in 2010 election. Despite the increment of voter's turnout in the woreda in the 2010, it was 41,292 voters who were registered out of 56,117 eligible voters. In this regard, 73.5% of eligible voters were registered. However, the good things was the registered voter had mostly casted the vote. Accordingly, 90% of the registered voter had casted in the 2010 election the stated woreda. More specifically, 93% of registered men voter had casted vote and accordingly 86.7% 0f women also casted vote in the same election.

In this view, differences among men and women reflected in registering and vote casting in the 2010 election in the woreda. The women were less participated in registering in the woreda despite statistically and eligibly high than men in the woreda as 2007 ECSA mentioned above. Again there also variation between eligible men and women in registering for voting where 78.4% of eligible men registered while that of women was only 68.9%. Moreover, registered women casted the vote again less than men. In this regard, there is still an influence women from the society and government also did not sufficiently worked on women awareness creation and public in general. *See the following table* .

d) Voters turnout in the 2010 general election in Toke Kutaye

Table 2: Source: NEBE (2010)

No	Participation	Public participation in number		
		Female	Male	Total
1	Registered	19824	21467	41,291
	Caster	17205	19962	37167
3	Non-caster	2619	1505	4124
4	Invalid votes	---	---	7323

Despite this, different argument was raised on the state of public participation in registration for voting in both elections. Hence, the following section will analyze it as good as possible. Different informant mentioned different reason for the increment of voter's registration of 2010 from the hot and competitive election of the 2005.The informant taken from the ruling and opposition parties and purposely selected people of the woreda only for this paper. *Alamu hirko*[8]on the side of OPDO has stated that the woreda people were more participant and so that showed this reality in participating actively in voter's registration. He further argued that, this is due to the people has got the long lasted claims through the ruling party i.e. OPDO.

Actually, the general voters turnout is not something to be criticized because the highest percentage had participated. However,it was not purely by the decision of the participants rather it is due external pressure.

Moreover, the increment of turnout was due to the stimulant memory of the 2005 election motivated people to participate[9].Contrary, *Fayera Camada* has argued that the local cadre registered people who disappointed by the 2005 election by going door to door through intimidating the one who failed to registered for election[10]. *Birhanu Lachisa* also shared that the member of ruling party those selected as "*Adda duree garee misooma*[11]" are ordered by the ruling party to go to force other to register by terrifying those failed to register and mostly it was the kebele cabinets who registered voters in *Leencaa kebele and* other kebele due to the order from the woreda OPDO office. This declared that, a defacto compulsory voting system had practiced in the woreda. Arguably, one cannot admit that accurate democratic consolidated can be achieved by forcefully increasing voters turn out and it is not the reflection genuine democratization process. However, It is crystal clear that voter's turnout is high in a country where voting is compulsory and has a penalty (Blais, Massicotte and Dobrzynska, 2003:1).

This facts was the fact that highly prevailed in the woreda[12].In addition, the known supporters opposition in many kebeles prohibited the kebele ID card not to vote and this was insured by woredas report committee due to the plan of delivering kebeles ID card was done less than what each kebeles have planned to do so[13]. In this connection, these kebeles officials responded that number of people who have residents ID card was very few due to they were limited the number people who asked the resident card based on the assumption that they would have not vote for the ruling party[14].

Despite this, arguably, the general increments was not sufficient as expected following the hot and competitive election of the 2005 election because it is believed that voters turn could be more high and hot

[9] Personal interview, dhabaa dalasa, march
[10] Personal Interview, Birhanu Lachisa, April,2013
[11] Adda duree garee misooma refers to those selected as model farmers of other farmers in performing what the government delegate to farmers. This model farmers are member to the ruling party .
[12] Ibid, Feyera Camada and Birhanu Lachisa.
[13] Interview, the confidential is kept, May 2013
[14] ibid

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than the 2005 election due to the fact that the 2005 election has putted its positive memory in a society. Even, the decline of women participation was viewed during the 2010 national election. *Addisu Hirphasa* has argued that the people did not register in 2010 election due to unexpected victory of the ruling party in the 2005 election.

In this connection, he argued that most of the registered voters of the woreda for the 2010 election were the member of the ruling party. *Daniel Hirko* stated that election has no change whether we vote or not due the general result will be the same[15].In contrast, *Dhabaa dalasa* (Personal interview, March 2013) mentioned that the ruling party intimidated the people by saying even though you did not voted for our party we assumes power, your vote is value less and it is our party who leads you whoever you voted for and hence people became passive in the 2010 election[16]. This indicated that the electoral system of Ethiopia is also another factor on public political participation. First past the post electoral system of Ethiopia facilitates the winner to take all in denying the votes of the minorities. This discourages the supporters of minority political parties not to participate in election due to the fact that their vote could not bring change on the result of election. Second; the disintegration of opposition also disappointed people to poorly participate and was a reason for pacification of the overall situation of the election. Thirdly, local officials were closely regulating people and hence public carelessly been watching everything[17].

Turnout in voting during the 2010 election in toke kutaye woreda Public participation in 2010 election has done in different situation. The 2005 election has affected public participation. The overall environment of the 2010 election was not hot and participatory. The people have participated passively when it is compared with the 2005 election in the woreda. Birhanu Lachisa who was the electoral officer of *one kebele* argued that the participation people in 2010 election is comparing two incomparable things when it is compared with the 2005 election in the woreda due to the fact that those forcedly registered voters again forcedly voted in 2010 election while in the 2005 the public willingly voted.

Similarly, Hirphasa Badhane also argued that it was somewhat cool when it is compared with the 2005 election. He also argued that the environment of the 2005 election was anarchy which couldn't be considered as hot participation of people due to the fact that the oppositions were running out of legal frame work. Actually, Alamu hirko from the ruling party have perceived the 2010 national election also incomparable regarding public participation on voting day. In this regard he mentioned that he don't know the perfect reason but he said that it may be because people came back to itself based on its vote of 2005 election for the opposition party which was not served its interest. Addisu Hirphasa in his part perceived that the 2010 less participatory because of most of the registered voters were the member of ruling party that pacified eagerness of the people to participate in election that was prevailed in 2005 election due to less competition among parties for election.

Despite this, as indicated in table 2, there was certain increment in terms of voters' participation on voting during 2010 election than 2005 election. From 41,291 registered voters, 37,167(90%) voters casted their vote in 2010 election in the woreda which was less than the 2005 election where it was 90.1% even though the difference is insignificant. After the hot and competitive election of 2005 election the increment was only by 59 voters when it is compared with the 2005 election. This voter voting progress is unsound increments because it was expected more than really what happen. In the 2005 election the participants were 37,108 while in the 2010 was 37,167 which the 2010 out of 56,117 eligible voters in the woreda. The progress is only by male voters while the women participant decreased from the 2005 status of women participation. As pointed out in both table 1 and 2,the women participants in the 2005 was 17,567 while in 2010 was decreased to 17,205 participant voters which decreased by 362 women voters .

Furthermore, unlike 2005 election non-caster also increased in 2010 election. In 2005 election non-caster were 4,065 and increased to 4,124 in 2010 election. Of this, it was the women that share the highest amount. In 2005, from 4,065 non-castes, women constituted 2,360 (58 percent) while men constituted 1705(42 percent).Again, from 4,124 non-casters, it is also the women that shared an exaggerated numbers. In this regard, from 4,124(10%) non-casters, the women's number was 2619(63.5%) while men share was 1505(46.5%).

Generally, women participation was decreased by 6.5 percents in 2010 election than 2005 election while that of men increased by 4.5 percents in the 2010 election when it is compared with 2005 election. Despite the decline of women participation in the toke kutaye woreda, it is obvious that the women participation in election less than that of men even in Western Europe where democracy was originated (Bishop, 2002; Conway et al., 1997; Inglehart and Norris, 2003; Lovenduski, 2001; Norris et al., 2004 as quoted by Mannarini, Legittimo and Talò 2008:97). However, as also indicated in the above table the invalid votes also increased in the 2010 election. The invalid votes in the 2005 were 3,434 while it was increased to 7,323(19.7%

[15] Personal interview, Daniel Hirko March, 2013
[16] Interviwe,Daba Delesa,ibid March,2013
[17] Ibid.

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of casted vote) which were more than double of 2005 election.

Even though the people have passively participated due to the previously mentioned reasons, there was some complaint between ruling and opposition parties supporters. The most notable conflict that was raised in the 2010 election of toke kutaye woreda was that of *Ajoo Beedoo kebele.* The reason for the conflict was as Fayera Camada mentioned, the observer of the ruling part attempted to take the vote bag during counting and in this response, the opposition observer prohibited it not to take the bag. Incontrast, the people or voters collected together around the polling station to force the concerned body to respect their votes[18] . It was in this situation that the federal police came and killed Alamu degaga the one who is known opposition supporter of the area and the people were also fired motor cycle of government[19].

Furthermore, the federal police have beaten all people including older people indiscriminately by taking out of their house during that night[20].The way electoral executers on each polling stations was also another problematic issue. Substantially, Fayera camada has noticed that the electoral officer of Guder 02 kebele gave double federal parliament voting one on behalf of regional voting paper for the ruling party's supporters. Moreover, the federal police prohibited the observer opposition(OPC) in *Toke Arfinjo* kebele of the woreda and only the ruling party that has dominate the electoral process[21].

Again, the voting and counting became inappropriate in that election. One of the kebele managers in the woreda have stated that "it was the kebele cabinets and kebele manager who made X on the voting paper of voters by going in to polling place". Incontrast, this kebele manager has also discussed with me the system by which they cheated the observer of opposition as the following manner;

"We sent one individual to woreda electoral officer to take permission paper to be observer of the party that was not participating in the woreda like CUD and (EDP) and accordingly the electoral office of the woreda gave permission to that person without the knowledge of the parties to be represented in that polling station. These individuals came and seat as an observer of CUD and EDP to facilitate the cheating of the ruling party in the woreda. Accordingly, he said when I go to the polling place to force the people to vote for the ruling party, the observer of opposition (OPC) tried to stop me from forcing people to vote for the ruling party and immediately the one who came as observer of CUD asked a question the observer of OPC by saying don't you think that we are the opposition observer? And again he told him that "he was seating to protect votes of his party from the ruling party and so that he convinced him that I was doing nothing". In this way the observer of the strong opposition party was became silent while I was voting on behalf of the voters. The voters were expected only sign to ensure that they were not absent from election. Beside this, he also stated that it was the ruling party member who counted the vote and disqualified votes of opposition party by adding X on the side of the symbol of the ruling party on the same voting paper of voters".

Ato Sasahulih kebede who is the secretary of CUD has admitted that the party has registered in the woreda to participate in the 2010 election and delegated representative to the constituency[22]. However; the electoral officer of the woreda had shown the profile of our representative to the ruling party. In this connection, the woreda administrator called our representative to their office and intimidated him. As a result, the party withdrew from election of the woreda at the beginning of the parties' registration program. Due to this fact, he said that the party has not delegate the party observor. Finally he concluded that, the representation of observer without the knowledge of the party reflected the usual cheating of the ruling party we notice in the country.

Moreover, EDP also criticized the action. Wondasen Teshome who is the head of the social affair of the party mentioned that, the party had not registered to participate in the woreda[23].Accordingly; he said that representation of observer without the recognition of EDP is the unlawful and undemocratic action. In addition, he also said that, the EDP has accepted by the people due the party's perfect clarification and so the ruling party has used this opportunity to divide the votes of opposition even at the place where we did not competed.

This was difficult to be resolved by the electoral officer of the woreda due to the fact that the officer were the ruling party member and come as neutral person[24] .Hence, the great disparities were occurred on protection of the immunity among political parties in the woreda when compared the 2005 election with the 2010 election due to the 2010 election has lost public trust in the woreda despite some progress.

e) Voters Education in toke kutaye woreda in enhancing voters turn out

It is obvious that anything cannot be performed without the knowledge of the specific issue. Knowledge can be obtained from information and education in general. Democracy and election are a new phenomenon in Africa due to the fact that it was introduced in post colonialism where societies

[18] Ibid, Fayera Camada
[19] Ibid.
[20] Ibid.
[21] Interview, Demoze Kumasa, March, 2013.
[22] Interview, Sasahulih Kebede, May, 2013.
[23] .Interview Wondasan Teshome, May 22/2013.
[24] .Interview, Birhanu Lachisa Appril,12/ 2013

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disintegrated[25] and not educated. Similarly it is also a new issue to Ethiopian, because it was introduced in post cold war or post- 1990 with coming of EPRDF to power.

It is also crystal clear that backwardness and poverty is the very challengers of the nation. To host genuine and democratic election, the public should know how election can be conducted. Incontrast, competition does not function without information, information requires tranisparency, competition ensures that political parties reflect the will of the people and put pressure on the state to deliver(Diwan 2009 :137). Voters education is targeted to aware the registered voters on the way they vote in election. It is also being given in Ethiopia during election. People in Toke kutaye woreda as a woreda in Ethiopia experienced voter's education during election in the effort of making election very participatory and competitive. Moreover, there are different means of educating voters

f) Voters Education during the 2010 election in Toke Kutaye Woreda

i. *Parties campaigning as voter's education*

Hangman (2010:5) has argued that the 2010 election of Ethiopia was so cool and pacified multi- party system as well as back to its very beginning in comparing with the election of the 2000 where opposition gained 0.2 percent in both cases. This was part and parcel of toke kutaye woreda. The campaigning was not eagerly attended by the people in the area[26].One of the kebele manager in the woreda whose confidential is kept said "We convinced the people that the leader of opposition party did not contributed money for road construction in the woreda where an ordinary people did so and people even stopped the movement of opposition on the road built by the ruling party and the people".Incontrast, he said "We told people that the opposition comes after five election without contributing nothing for that woreda people".

Hence, we convinced to make people not to go to the meeting of opposition and not to vote for them. Dhaba in his part said that the cadre of the ruling party, stayed in the farmer to regulate every activity of the farmers and so that forcefully stopped the movement of people and affected the political participation and decision of the society. However, there was certain sort of campaigning to aware people on election during that election. But it cannot be comparable with any criteria with the 2005 election where voter's education was massively provided. Hence,It was delivered by less degree where the inter-parties antagonism in that woreda have terrified people up to preferring election not to come. The antagonism was resulted to the death and arrest of people in the woreda as far as election comes to be conducted.

ii. *Media in voters Education*

As far as media is concerned, it was less fair than the 2005 election[27]. In fact; it was after the 2005 election that the Oromia Radio and Television has established in addition to Ethiopian Radio and Television. But what matter is how much of it is accessible to people. Tullu has argued that, even though the radio and television have opened, it is only economically better people uses it and people who have electric access too. Most of the *kebele* in the woreda are out of electric transmission because 86% live in rural area[28]. Arguably, lack of resource became another challenge of Ethiopian election and democratization in general. No any print media that can read and identify the arguments and policy choice of parties that can be provided during election. However, the ruling party provides *Oromia* news paper that is the ownership of the ruling party which disseminates the party's stands and the second is *Barisa* which is termed as public media[29] but it is party affiliated media and it is not given out of the member of the ruling party even for sell. I personally asked the one who distribute the news papers in the woreda council by payment and he was responded that it is only given for the party members.

It is only these two print media that can arrive to that woreda and distributed for the member of the ruling party and reserved in the libraries of schools and government office. It is in this way that the ruling party disseminates its program to civil servant. This highly created great difference between the ruling and opposition to inculcate their program by equal weight. Lijphart (1997:1) argued that unbalanced influence leads to unbalanced participation.

Alemu Hirko mentioned that there is no absence of print media in the woreda but it is due to lack of reading habit of the people in confidently talking that it is available in neighbor woreda i.e. Ambo woreda.

In fact, as he said there is less reading habit of people in the country as some publication asserts. However, he failed to understand the economic status and education status of the people of the woreda. The economic capacity of one nation is directly affect electoral process of the country (Blais, Massicotte and Dobrzynska 2003:4). Everybody knows that the most citizen of the country worry to cover its basic needs than going away many kilo meters in search of news paper in other woreda. Surprisingly, he also concluded that everybody have radio in its home and follow information about election consistently. This cannot be expected in

[25].The disintegration of African was due to divide and rule and colonial legacy implemented by European imperialists.
[26] Interview, Hirphasa Badhane March 2013.
[27] Interview, Bekele Nagaa, May,,2013.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Interview, Alemu Hirko, March 25/2013.

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a country in which many people are not educated and have no financial capacity to do so.

Actually, it is impossible to assume that people actively participate in attending media even if it is available in its woreda due the fact that many people are not experienced it ever before. Even I observed in Ambo town the degrees of public participation in reading news paper. Needless to add, the writer has asked the one who sell news paper on the status of public motivation in reading news paper in Ambo town. Accordingly, he said "People read sport news paper than other news paper". He also said that it is only limited amount of news paper that arrives the town mainly reporter, Addis zemen, vacancy and sport due to the reason he don't know. However,it is better than that of the toke woreda in any criteria because of no written news paper in the woreda available to the people. This does not mean that government should distribute news paper but the writer is arguing that the government should establish a system through which it can be accessible.

iii. *Civil society in voters Educations*

The issue of civil society in the woreda is the reflection of what is going on in the country where less CSO at the county level. Incontrast, the role CSO in voter's education in 2010 election in the woreda has almost no role in voter's education in the woreda. Even, Hirphasa Badhane mentioned that it is less than what has observed in the 2005 election at national level. He mentioned only one civic organization namely Ethiopian patriotic association that arrived the woreda capital Guder. He again stated that these have not participated in voter's education but simply came at the eve of the election to observe over all environment of the election. Fayera Chamada has also stated that he has not observed any CSO in the woreda.

Similarly Alamu Hirko shared this idea but he said that government have done voters education role. However, it is difficult to say that voters education achieved due to the fact mentioned in the previous section which downgraded the status of voters education in the woreda. Hence, the role of CSO in voter's education was very less and more likely no CSO in the woreda despite its little positive side in this regard. Arguably; this was the consequence of unconducive CSO law of the 2009 of the country that undermined the economic capacity of CSO to participate in voter's education at national level. Hence; the voter's education was subjected to conflictual relations of political parties during campaigning in which the ruling party had dominated the process in the woreda.

g) The role of the woredas electoral officer in electoral administration in both elections.

Since 30 years ago, election management has emerged as part of democratic-building and democratic consolidation (Lopez-Pintor, 2000:15).To conduct free, air and competitive election in the multi-party democracy, there should be independent institution like electoral management bodies to properly judge the competent actor for political power. In this regard, different democratic countries have established electoral management body at different time for instance; USA established her federal electoral commission in 1975 while Australia established 1984.

As far as electoral management body is concerned in Ethiopia, it was established in 2007 by the parliament after the contentious election of the 2005 election. This does not mean that no electoral management body in the country but it was not established as independent institutions instead temporarily collection of individuals for the period of election.

In toke kutaye woreda in 2005 election, the electoral officers were the one who closely worked with the people due to it was delegated in each kebele at the bottom level. There were three challenges from electoral officer to conduct accurate and impartial vote administration. One, the neutrality of woredas and kebele electoral officer was questionable. According to the electoral law of Ethiopia, the electoral officers are elected by the people and work in a neutral way from any political parties influence.

However, Dejene debela one of the kebele managers of the woreda said, the electoral officer of kebele were also ruling party affiliated. Similarly, Merera (2002:168) generally argued that it is handy picked by the ruling party. Infact, the kebele electoral officer clearly informs the public specially on how one make X on the voting card[30].He said there were those told us by murmuring whom we have to elect[31].Eventhough, the electoral officers does good work in providing voters education they were biased due to they were member in the ruling party. As empirical fact, one of the electoral officers of the woreda is apparently a mayor of *Guder* town the capital of the woreda on the place where one is politically assigned. Hirphasa badhane the member of electoral officer of the woreda said that they were assigned to that position by government because of they are impartial and free from membership in any political party. This by itself is not clear due to the fact that government led by ruling party assign them and so that it is unconvincing that they are impartial.

It was not clear through which these individuals assigned to that position but know previously that they were member of OPDO and were attending the OPDO meeting[32]. Hirphasa Badhane the electoral officer of the woreda was not willing to make interview without the permission of the office of OPDO and woreda head who is politically appointed. In this respect, one can

[30] Interview, Fikadu Chalchisa March 2013.
[31] Ibid.
[32] Interview, Daniel Hirko February, 2013 and other whom confidential was kept February 25/2013)

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understand that their neutrality is affected by the ruling party to perform their jurisdictive right and responsibilities as the principle. Similarly dhaba dalasa and Tulu Tadese have mentioned that they were not observed election when the electoral officer in their kebele have directly elected by the people. Even this is not true at the woreda level because they were assigned than by public election. Second, the individuals are not committed and they are temporarily assigned to that position with no payment. In this regard, Buzayo Kuma has argued that the electoral officer has no their own office for this purpose. The officers have not documented any profile regarding election, parties registered and case of complaints among parties in the woreda. This declared that, the institution has no accountability for the duties it is assigned in that particular woreda.

The electoral office of the woreda had re-structured following the establishment of NEBE after 2005 election as an independent local electoral officers. Accordingly, the electoral officer of toke kutaye woreda has established after the 2005 election as independent institution and performed its first electoral management in 2010 elections. The institutions draw its channel to kebele level. However, as indicated in the previous discussion, the local electoral officer elected to that position is not clear[33]. The vote administration by electoral officer also was too controversial in the woreda due to the reason that they were affiliated to the ruling party[34].

Moreover, the electoral officers of woreda were not committed to proper conducting electoral administration. Hirpasa badhane has mentioned that the institution properly conducted the responsibility of electoral administration. In this connection, he argued that lack of finance discouraging to actively perform such tasks. In addition, the institution, the officers are working this task in addition to their formal activities for which they were being paid a salary[35].This affects the commitment of electoral officers to perform their task due to the absence of salary for it and double responsibility[36].

Despite this, there was some sort efforts made in facilitating and providing logistic that can be used for election .However; the officers were not tangibly impartial because most of them were the member of the ruling party while the others were performs what they were ordered by the ruling party. For instance, the member of the ruling party, who is going to be electoral officer as impartial exit paper from party when four months left for election to be conducted and in contrast, the clearance given from the ruling party to the one who request clearance and he/she would be appointed as electoral officer.Inaddition, some are directly appointed by the ruling party cabinet[37].Arguably, in such a way that it couldn't normally impartial due to the fact that the appointment of the officers was one sided.

Practically speaking, one of the strong opposition party of the woreda (OPC) has that it was difficult to provide complain to the inistitution. Incontrast, Fayera Chamada who is the OPC office director of the woreda has mentioned that the institution was clothed the office while we go to provide our complain when the ruling party had arrest our supporter, intimidated our observer and cheat the polling process in collaboration with the ruling party. Moreover, it was also not given any remedy for the complain the party had provided[38]. Contrary, Hirphasa Badhane reacted to this claim as was a groundless complains raised by the OPC. In addition he said, the OPC failed to respect the decision of its representative when he was resigned himself from competition on behalf of the party. Accordingly, the institution had addressed that it is the right of the person and so that the party cannot force a person to do what he had not want to do[39].

II. Conclusion and Recommendation

a) *Conclusion*

It is after 1991, that conventional public political participation is explicitly being implemented because it is constitutionally allowed. However, the implementation became problematic.

There were two broad problems.
These are:

A. The past trend was still influencing people not to participate in election actively. Eventhough, popular election is the current means officials appointment, the people is not well informed to distinguish this regime from the past régimes because of Voter's education is not comprehensive due to the reason that it is a few people that are well informed and hence, voters awareness creation till not sound to change the past legacy in the mind of the society to speed up the democratization process of the country
B. The unconducive situation that prevailed during election discourages people not to participate in election because of undemocratic relations of political parties competing for power in the woreda.

The relation of political parties in Ethiopia is not in a position to attract the public to participate in political activities and election in general. Usually,as election is coming to be conducted, parties and supporters

[33] Interview, Barsisa Lamma, May, 3/2013
[34] Interview, birhanu Lachisa, April, 2013 and other those confidential is kept).
[35] Ibid
[36] Informal Interview,Yisma jirru march 18,2013
[37] Interview, confidential is kept, May 4, 2013
[38] Ibid.
[39] Ibid.

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competitions is unfairly prevailed due to the fact that they even physically compete each other where peoples killed during election than in normal circumstance.

In this respect, 2010 Ethiopian national elections have shown its own distinct manifestations.

The bad consequence of the 2005 election, a strategic change of the ruling party and weakness and pressure on opposition party has influenced public participation in 2010 election. In this process many people were killed while other arrested. Incontrast, following the victory of EPRDF at national levels the local officials passively affected people voted for the oppositions and a couple proclamation were un properly used by local official's and unclear way of an appointment of electoral officers at different level also another problem in the 2010 election.

Moreover, the split of opposition parties disappointed the people not to participate in election from then on ward. Infact, public voter's registration was increased in degree in the 2010 election. This is the cumulative result of the ruling party after election mainly; the ruling party has improved after evaluating itself following the 2005 election and membership connected to the ruling party to get public services. Despite the progress of voter's registration, the general situation of the 2010 election is cool in comparison with the 2005 election due to the aforementioned reasons.

Toke Kutaye woreda as part and parcel of Ethiopian territory and as a base of opposition supporter, what mentioned above prevailed in the woreda in full and also in part.

The 2010 election similarly observed by some observer at national level despite opposition undermined the observer as was not impartial and not different from the ruling party while the reverse was happen in the woreda when it is compared with the 2005 election. Actually, the voters turn out was better than the 2005 election because it exceed in 180 voters where the women voters turn out was decreased from the 2005 election while that of men increased and compensate that of women. However, overall situation of the 2010 election was pacified because the ruling party of the woreda highly dominated the scene in all aspects which minimized competition among political parties in the woreda.

The ruling party has brought a party channel to each public service on which a party cabinet participate. Farmers, Civil servant, Merchant and university and college graduates have unreservedly joined the ruling party for survival than accepting it. The farmers were intimidated by the OPDO because of the 2005 election in which they vote for opposition. The local cadres moved to people not to vote for opposition particularly OPC by telling them if you vote for them, you will be punished as result of it was alleged opposition terrorist and we can continue on power because it is obvious to win at national level as was in 2005 election. Civil servant also became member of the ruling party and some of them became dormant by the calculation of they would lose promotion and further education opportunity.

Moreover, youth especially university and college graduates provided two alternatives. One was being a member in OPDO and getting job after graduation while the second alternative was losing job and become member in opposition or being neutral. Even being a neutral from any political party cannot help to be employed equally with the member of ruling party. These were affected public to actively participate during the 2010 election of the country.

As discussed above, Voters registration in the 2010 was exceed that of the 2005 in fewer amounts. The people participation in voter's registration was less hot in comparison with the 2005 election despite its highest turn out in comparison with the 2005 election in the woreda. The forceful registration was made by going door to door and through *garee misooma* which was affiliated by ruling party and existing in each *kebele*. The absence voters from registration at the beginning was due to the public did not trust overall environment of the electoral process and people assumed that the vote would be stolen by the ruling party highly the member of the ruling party were early registered[40]. In general, even though, the country has not adopted compulsory voting, what happen in the 2010 election was manifested a defacto compulsory voting system in the woreda where people have forcefully participated in the election to only increase voters turn out.

The other was, the campaigning process by itself was not comprehensively good to mobilize people to participate in election. The ruling party has dominated the campaigning process by using lower administrative organ and farmers association who mostly recruited as member of the party after 2005 election. Beside this, the ruling party had also improved itself in number of ways[41] after 2005 election through building some infrastructure mainly putting a corner stone for hospital in the woreda. The oppositions in their part were very weak while it was compared with their performance of the 2005 election. They were not moved to the people to teach their program while the ruling party highly changed its own history of the 2005 election even though government task and party task was impossible to be distinguished in it and avoided equal field of competition for all party in campaigning.

The voting day was also not good and not participatory as good as 2005 election was. In the 2010 registering and voting was telling to the people at eve of the Election Day by local cadres of the ruling party of the

[40] Interview, Damoze Kumasa may 2013.

[41] .The ruling party started to closely discuss with the people unlike in the previous elections.

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woreda. Despite this, 9.98% percent was failed to vote in that election. Electoral officers did not discharged their own responsibility in protecting miss-behavior of the members and the supporters of ruling party and observer while they were talking to people to vote for ruling party and even voted by the themselves on behalf of voters in some kebeles .

Even, the way the electoral officer of the woreda have appointed against the law due to most of them appointed by the ruling party as neutral .In many kebele, the electorates and the one elected as electoral officer were the member of the ruling party while in other they came as electoral officer by the assignment of the ruling party.

In this regard, the public did not know that electoral officer could be elected as the representative and so that they did not claim this to be so (Interview, Barsisa Lemma, may, 4, 2013). This also because of people is lacking education in the society that paved the way for cheating of election by parties.

The vote counting also was problematic in the 2010 election of the woreda. The observers of OPDO and OPC had challenged each other on counting and led to dispute where one man has killed by federal police and peoples were indiscriminately tortured and beat in *ajo bedo kebele.* In other rural kebele the ruling party has counted unlike urban kebele due to the local militias avoided the observer of opposition forcefully. Hence, the ruling party OPDO/EPRDF has won the election in the woreda. This victory was the result of;

a) The inter-mixing of the public power and party responsibility by the ruling party of the woreda which extensively captured students, civil servant, farmers and merchants as whole.
b) The weakness of opposition parties was very remarkable. ONC which was victorious in the 2005 election was splited in to ONC and OPC have disappointed the people not to vote for them and not to participate again. Moreover, the OPC and ONC did not perform very well to mobilize people as well as 2005 election. Even OPC who was stronger opposition in the woreda did less work when it is compared with the 2005 election. It was not arrived even where infrastructure is better than other areas.
c) The carrot and stick approach of the ruling party making opposition out of domain in the woreda in which money and employment as carrot and imprisonment, intimidiation, cheating and beating were used as stick to be successful unlike the 2005 election.
d) The unexpected victory of the ruling party in the 2005 election at national level that made difficult the aftermath the election where voters regretted for their voting for opposition due to the local cadres stayed in that placed and affected people in many ways.

III. Recommendations

As far as recommendation is concerned, the above challenges of public political participation observed in the woreda can be addressed or reduced by employing the following techniques.

- Proportional representation electoral system can solve electoral system related problem that affected public political participation. This kind of electoral system despite its drawback can fill the magnified weakness of majority vote system being implemented in Ethiopia. Proportional representation (PR) is give the minorities a seat in the parliament based on the percentage of the vote they get from the public and it help political and Ethnic minority to have proper seat in a diversified society like Ethiopia .
- In this regard, absolute difference cannot be prevailed between the winner party or candidate and the defeated party or candidates. Hence, the policy, proclamation and program cannot be easily approved due to the fact that the difference between the winner and the defeated parties or candidates is narrow. This encourages the people to participate in election because their vote can bring change on election result than the majority vote and also increase voters turn out as the study of (Blais, Massicotte and Dobrzynska, 2003:1) on 61 democratic country following a third wave of democratization since 1990 .
- Electronic voting system should be adopted. E-voting system can minimize any problem on voting and vote counting because there is no manual contact that can disrupt electoral result and hence all parties and supporters most probably can accept the result of elections. Moreover, voters can vote without going to polling area by using an internet. This helps to the increment of voters' turnout and In this regard, democratization and federal system can be consolidated in advance and creates national consensus among all.
- Uncompromisingly detaching public responsibility from party responsibility could be a core solution. Hence; the government should design a clear system to control such activities.
- The highest emphasis should be given to independent public vote than externally disrupting electoral process and result. If this is so, there will be a consensus among parties and society as whole because it is the public that can mediate political parties through its vote.
- The legislations made by government should be implemented in way it arbiter all political parties and supporters in democratization process of the country than unfairly favoring a single dominant political party in multiparty democracy.

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- The electoral officer should be assigned free of other extra responsibility to that position and so that it increase the commitment of the officers.
- There should be an extensive planned and programmed voter's education and voting observer in rural Ethiopia where majority of the voters and illiterate's people resides.
- The Fundamental constitutional provision should me respected particularly article 16 of anti-terrorist proclamation that was violated article 26(1) of the 1995 constitution which subjected public privacy to police institution should amended due to it allow arbitrary searching of the house of people without the permission of court .In this way people can highly participate without any fear and so that it increase accurate voters turnout. Hence, democratization and federal system project of the country can somewhat be ensured.

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