Research Paper

The Contribution of Decentralization in Enhancing Accountability and Service Delivery in Urban Governments: The Case of Dessie Town Administration. Amhara Regional State, Ethiopia.

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ABSTRACT: *The overall objective of the research is to assess the level of accountability relationship between actors and institutions involved in the delivery of basic social services at local level by taking Dessie town administrations as a showcase. A cross-sectional and explanatory design were used. The study also pursues a mixed (qualitative and quantitative) approaches. Both random and purposive sampling techniques were employed to identify the representative samples. Samples were selected based on feasible criteriaand at most 10% of the households were selected. Hence, a total of 135 samples were chosen to participate in the study. The findings of this study showed that the offices prepared performance standards to ensure accountability, the town administration has been providing various supports to service giving offices, there is less political interference in the activities of the offices, the ethics of workers is good, there is participation of residents in waste collection activities, the level of customer satisfaction is not high, and the workers have low level of educational performances.Some of the critical challenges of accountability include: Absence of strong follow-up and supervision, low level of water coverage, inadequate sources of finance, old system of water distribution and weak coordination among stakeholders. Recommendations include: The town City-Council should have strong follow-up and supervision mechanisms;the city administration should increase the water coverage and meet the UN standard;the city administration should find additional sources of water;the city administration should find adequate sources of finance;the town administration should modernize the distribution systems of the town; and there should be strong coordination among stakeholders of the town.*
Key Words: Accountability, Decentralization, Development, Governance,Government

I. INTRODUCTION

Since 1980's many countries throughout the world have been experimenting with some form of decentralization by transferring political, administrative and fiscal responsibilities to lower level governments. This global trend towards decentralization has been motivated by various factors and circumstances in each country. In some countries, it is linked to transition to democracy and market economy and in some others, it is a response to ethnic and regional conflicts and the failure of and frustration with centrally driven development paradigms (Manor, 1999; Devas, 2003).

Proponents of decentralization argue that by bringing government and service providers closer to the people, decentralization will improve governance by increasing the participation of the public in the local decision-making process, enhancing transparency and accountability in the management of public affairs. It is also considered to improve service delivery as decentralized governments have better knowledge about local conditions and preferences that in turn allow it to identify the mix and level of services demanded by the local population. Decentralization is also viewed as a way to improve responsiveness and efficiency of local governments by taking decision-making nearer to the people (Johnson, 2001; UNDP, 1999; Erland, 2008).

The issues of governance have been given much recognition and emphasis. It is believed that governance is a necessary precondition for successful development and poverty reduction. The multidimensional aspect of poverty encompasses powerlessness, voice-lessness, lack of accountability and responsiveness, and lack of (inadequate) access to basic services such as health, primary education, refuses (dry waste) collection, and water

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as components of poverty. Decentralization is at the center of a number of governance and service delivery reforms and poverty reduction initiatives (UN HABITAT 2002).

Theoretically, decentralization is believed to improve governance, service delivery and promote poverty reduction. However, international experience about the success of decentralization is inconclusive. In some countries, decentralization efforts generate improvements in service delivery through increased participation, whereas in some others decentralization neither improved governance nor the provision of public service and poverty reduction. Even in some countries, for instance Brazil and India the effects of decentralization vary substantially across different regions (Blair, 2000; Crook and Sverrisson, 2001).

Since1991, Ethiopia has been experimenting with decentralization in two phases. The first was the process of devolution of fiscal, political, administrative power and resources in the nine regions and the two city-states. It can be seen as "big push' or 'big band' decentralization in which substantial responsibilities and resources was quickly transferred to the regions. The second phase of decentralization was undertaken since 2001 with the transfer of power and resources to the Woredas(districts) in the so-called District Level Decentralization Program (DLDP). The first phase of decentralization is criticized for hindering the development of democratic and accountable local governments, capable of delivering services in a demand-responsive and sustainable manner (Tegegne and Birhanu, 2004).

As a result, since 2001 a new and the 2nd phase of decentralization program has been implemented with the objective of improving local governance, enhance the scope and quality of basic services such as health, education, water and sanitation and empower the communities to take more responsibility for determining their own priorities and hence contribute to poverty reduction and sustainable development. This process of decentralization and empowerment of the community, especially the poor at grassroots level has also been made part of the country's two poverty reduction strategy. First, in Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) and in the Program for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty (MoFED, 2009).

But, the promise of decentralization in improving services at local level depends on the way the accountability relationship works at local level. Therefore, this study tries to fill the research gap about the relationship of actors, strengths and weaknesses of accountability mechanisms and institutions established in the sample areas.

Beginning from 2001 various measures have been taken by both the federal and regional governments to deepen the decentralization process that was formally adopted in 1991 through devolving power, resource and responsibilities to lower level governments. These measures are believed to have their own implications of the various factors that prompted the introduction of the decentralization process to this level. However, whether the decentralization has been implemented towards achieving these core objectives and the magnitude with which it has brought the intended level of change has to be a subject of empirical investigation.

To date, various studies have been conducted on the various issues and aspects of decentralization. Some of these studies assessed the overall implementation of decentralization and its achievements and constraints on the ground. Others focused on the value added by the decentralization process for basic service delivery at local level (Garcia and Rajkumar, 2008; Kumera, 2006).

Despite the wide recognition about the necessity of strengthening and stimulating accountability processes and mechanisms for the success of decentralization in improving the delivery of services; the significance of strengthening the accountability of and Kebele administration to people at grassroots level as they have more contact with, access to and influence over local institutions than national level, has been neglected. There are few studies that even touch the issue of accountability in service delivery at local level (Yilmaz and Venugopal, 2008). However, most of these studies combined desk-based review with small field/empirical evidence and almost all of the studies did not conduct a randomly selected household survey to capture the views of the people in the selected sample town administrations.

The overall objective of the research is to assess the level of accountability relationship between actors and institutions involved in the delivery of basic social services at local level by taking Dessie town administrations as a showcase. The specific objectives of this study are to:
➤ Analyze the contribution of decentralization in strengthening local accountability relationships in the sample urban government;
➤ Assess the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms, institutions, processes and actors available at local level to hold elected representatives and service providers accountable in the delivery of basic social services at local level; and
➤ Identify the strength and weaknesses in the existing system of local accountability.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Accountability is an important political mechanism in good governance used to hold public officials responsible for their actions. It refers to holding bearers of responsibility for their performance and oversee and monitor their decisions. It also provides them an opportunity to clarify any ambiguities or charges brought against them. Accountability refers to a relationship between a principal and an agent. Accountability involves measures to ensure that the person or organization with the authority to provide a service actually delivers that service i.e. that providers and policy-makers are answerable for their actions, and to demonstrate that they have delivered (Ahamad et al, 2014; aidspan, 2015).

Decentralizationinvolves the transfer of responsibility, authority and power to plan, make decisions and manage resources, from higher to subordinate units or lower levels of governments, in order to facilitate efficient and effective service delivery (UN HABITAT 2002).

Devolution: involves the transfer of authority and power to local units of government, which operate in a quasi-autonomous manner outside the direct administrative control and structure of the central government. The basic feature of devolution is discretionary authority (Innocents and Mohammed, 2009; UN HABITAT 2002).

Fiscal Accountability: concerns monitoring and reporting on allocation, disbursement and utilization of financial resources, using the tools of auditing, budgeting and accounting i.e. the verification of income and expenditure.

➢ Administrative or Managerial Accountability: refers to the answerability of those with delegated authority for carrying out tasks according to agreed performance criteria, using mechanisms that reduce abuse, improve adherence to standards and foster learning for improved performance.

➢ Political Accountability: aims at ensuring that government delivers on electoral promises, fulfils the public trust, aggregates and represents citizens' interests, and responds to ongoing and emerging societal needs and concerns.

➢ Social Accountability: the broad range of actions and mechanisms beyond voting that citizens can use to hold the state to account, as well as actions on the part of government, civil society, media and other societal actors that promote or facilitate these efforts.

➢ Horizontal Accountability: refers to accountability measures introduced internally within an organization, for instance, supervisory systems or mechanisms for financial control. It is a way of describing operations of check and balance in decentralized system (Belir, 2007).

➢ Vertical Accountability: is where external actors hold individuals or organizations to account e.g. community leaders complain about poor service delivery or corrupt practices at their local health facility.

Merits of Decentralization

Scholars have documented a wide range of political and socioeconomic merits for adopting some form of decentralization. From the political perspective, decentralization is considered as a key strategy for promoting good governance.

Decentralization is an important process that allows decongestion of the central government and reduces the workload to manageable proportions. Decentralization empowers the local population. It improves service delivery. The breaking-up of the workload promotes greater efficiency, coordination and effectiveness in public service delivery. Since decision-making powers are transferred from the center to local institutions, decentralization provides an opportunity for local involvement in decision-making and harnessing local knowledge, resources and expertise in the development process (Ekpo, 2008).

Administrative decentralization is a key strategy that provides solutions to overloaded and over-centralized agencies (Boeninger, 1992). Concentration of the workload at the center promotes cost-effectiveness and greater coordination and efficiency in public resource utilization, service delivery and local development. For instance, by giving local institutions the power to make some decisions without constantly referring to the top levels, delays are minimized and responsiveness in development or project management is enhanced since decisions are flexible and adjusted to respond to circumstances on the ground. In addition, decentralization is regarded as a means of facilitating the even distribution of resources and minimizing development regional inequalities (Ibid).

The term accountability originates from the Latin Computare, meaning to count. To be accountable required a person to produce "a count of either the properties or money that has been left in his or her care. Accountability means that someone(X), who has been put in a position of responsibility(r) in relation to the interest of someone else(Y), is required to give an account (to Y) of how he has discharged his duties. Y is in a position to either punish or reward X's conduct in relation to (r)(aidspan,org, 2015). Accountability as an abstract noun refers to both the capacity of and obligation on someone to produce an account. Accountability was part of a family word in English that covered a number of interrelated meanings that had to do with issues of political representation, executive and administrative responsibilities, and legal liability.

Accountability is a broad concept that refers to a relationship between a principal and an agent. The principal, in our consideration of delivery of public services, has the role of delegating tasks, financing the provision of these tasks, and enforcing sanctions if these tasks are not completed at an acceptable standard. The

agent has the role of performing delegated tasks and informing the principal on progress. From this perspective, accountability can be understood as a relational process describing a specific relationship between two actors (institutions or individuals) characterized by the dimensions of (i) answerability and (ii) enforcement. Figure 1 below provides an illustration of the conceptualization of accountability (Ahamad et al, 2014).
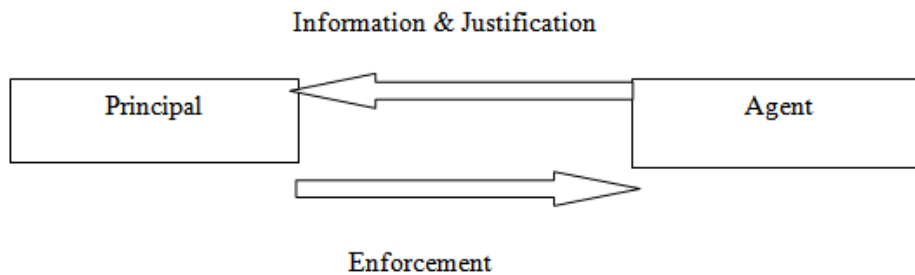

Information & Justification

Figure 1: Conceptualization of Accountability

Source: Adopted from Ahamad et al, 2014

Accountability is partly a matter of institutional design: formal checks and balances can and should be built into any constitutional architecture. But accountability requires political energy too: people, interest groups, civil society, the courts, the press, and opposition parties must insist that those who govern follow legitimate mandates and explain their actions. The same is true within governments: horizontal accountability depends upon the ability of one part of government to find out—and, where necessary, to stop or correct—what other sectors are doing. Those demanding accountabilities must be confident that they can do so safely, that officials will respond honestly, and that social needs and demands are taken seriously (Ibid).

There are various types of accountability. Accountability could be "administrative"," legal", "political", "professional", and "moral". Accountability might be "hierarchical", "legal", professional", "and political". There is a correlation between the various forms of exercising authority-hierarchical authority, expert authority, influence, exchange, and the different forms of accountability. Accordingly, "administrative accountability" corresponds to hierarchical authority, "professional accountability" corresponds to expert authority, "democratic accountability" to influence, "responsiveness" corresponds to exchange. Democratic accountability is a form of accountability that may be called "democratic", not in the sense that the other forms of accountability are not, but because it established a direct relationship with the citizens to whom public administration gives account directly. Democratic accountability judges the results of administrative action with the perspective of their incidence on individual citizens and on the social and economic life at large (UNDP, 2010).

Figure 2: Accountability Relationship
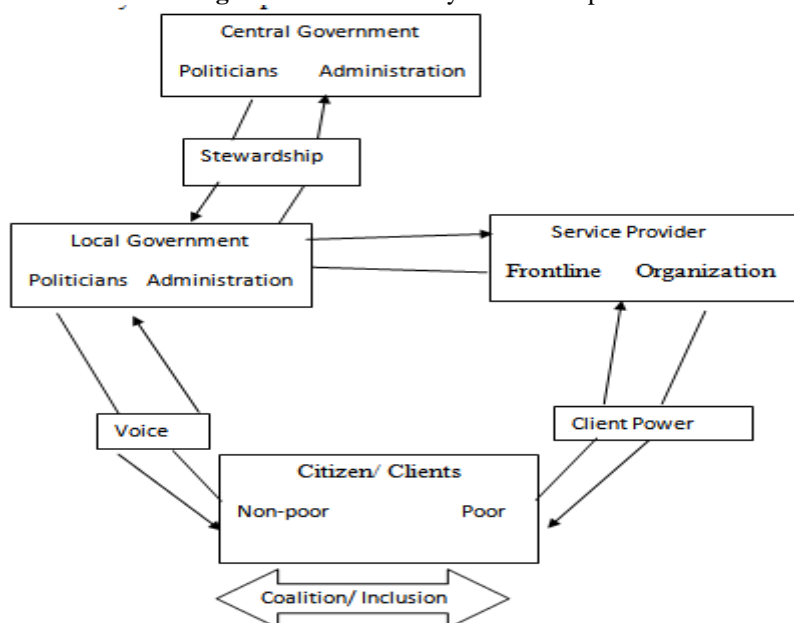
Source: Adopted from Ahamad et al, 2014

Accountability relationships can take two routes. The short route of accountability refers to a constellation in which the provider of a service is "directly accountable to clients (as in market transactions)." The long route of accountability involves the LG, who acts as a mediator in the accountability relationship between the citizenry and the service provider, by being accountable to citizens while holding providers to account. Both routes have their merits and weaknesses and the decision to use one versus the other is dependent on several factors such as sector characteristics, presence of externalities, and market strength. Client power may be very effective if the client has all necessary information to assess the performance of a provider. A key argument suggests that the long route of accountability is particularly relevant for public services that are vulnerable to market failures (i.e. in the presence of externalities) and those for which equity considerations play a pivotal role. For example, the literature widely agrees that client power may be an inadequate mechanism to ensure a collectively efficient level of provision of primary education. As the education sector yields high positive externalities for a society, individual clients tend to underestimate the benefits of education from a societal perspective and the service tends to be underprovided (Ahamad et al, 2014).

For the purpose of this study, accountability process is defined as a process consisting of three elements: the establishment of responsibility and expectations, monitoring and reporting and evaluation and feedback. The process of accountability is concerned with three different questions: who is accountable, to whom and for whom? In the case of political accountability, where this operates as a general mechanism through which citizens hold their legislators accountable through the electoral process (aidspan, org, 2015). When dealing with administrative responsibility, the question of who is accountable and to whom are rather complex. They suffer, respectively, from the problems that come from "many hands" and "many eyes ". It is indeed difficult to identify with precision where responsibility lies in decision taken about complex problems in complex organizations.

"To whom" should be accountable? Public servants are directly accountable to politicians and the government. Yet, public servant's accountability to their political "masters" or to their superiors in the bureaucratic hierarchy, can only be justified as part of a longer chain making themselves ultimately accountable to the citizens and the public at large. Demands for more effective accountability have tended to expand the instruments of accountability.

There is an importance given to both administrative transparency and citizen's right of information. By opening up the process of decision making to the public scrutiny, it is hoped that representatives and public officials will be forced to act in the public interest. The introduction of various forms of more direct control or input from the citizens is also additional mechanism of accountability. Institutions such as ombudsman, who can act as the direct control or input from the citizens. Institutions such as ombudsman who can act as the direct voices of the individual citizens vis a vis the public administration, or the recall of public officials is ways in which public officials and public decision making are supposed to be brought into more immediate contact with the wishes of the citizens. In addition, use of public opinion survey focus groups are other ways in which politicians tend to connect with the citizens and consider their views. Another avenue taken in the expansion of accountability, particularly, as a way of curbing corruption and regulating private interest in public offices, has been the introduction of stricter standards of conduct and the development of various registers of interests (Belir,2007).

The literature presents a broad range of system of accountability mechanisms ranging from institutional-driven mechanisms to organic social accountability mechanisms driven largely by community groups and networks. Some accountability mechanisms were also reported to be transient in nature, merely existing to address a specific issue or set of issues over a fixed period of time, whereas others were more permanent components, either embedded within policy frameworks, or incorporated within operations of institutions.

Figure 3: Analytical Framework for Accountability
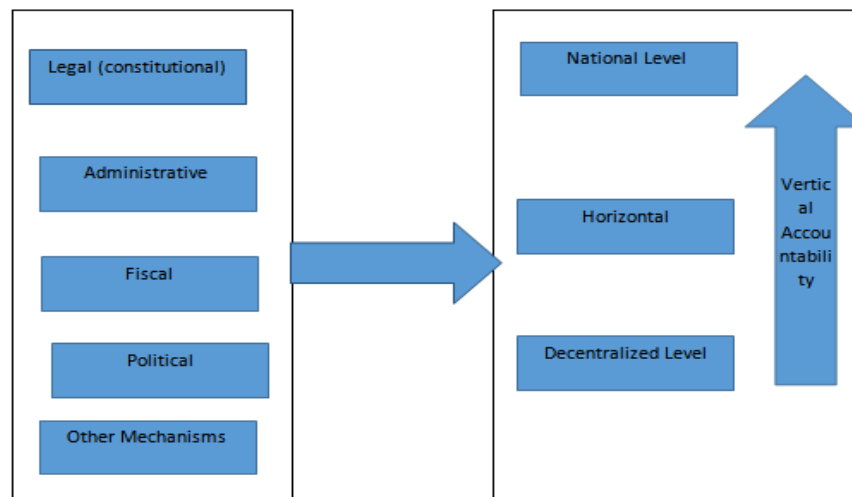
Source; Adopted from www.aidspan.org

III. METHODOLOGY

In this study, a cross-sectional and explanatory design were used. The study also pursues a mixed (qualitative and quantitative) approach for both data collection and analysis. Studying accountability of government institutions to the public requires comprehensive understanding of the views of the public and government officials and triangulation of evidences from both sides. Quantitative survey is quite helpful to solicit the views of the community in a house to house survey and customer tracking around offices when they are available seeking for the services. The survey enables to accommodate the views of the wider public after being included in the study by applying representative sampling scheme.

On top of that, qualitative method is also equally important to represent the views of government officials and key informants who can provide information regarding the status of accountability to the public in service delivery in line with the norms established under the urban government proclamations. The study accommodates views from both sides of the public and officials at local level. Hence it requires triangulation of evidences obtained from both sides after employing combinations of quantitative and qualitative methods. The quantitative method helps map the views of residents in the selected s pertaining to mechanisms and practices of accountability at their administration and the qualitative method is vital to sort out the same issue from the perspectives of officials and key informants in a detailed manner.

Data for the study were collected from both primary and secondary sources using various data collection instruments. Primary data were obtained from the House Hold survey, customer tracking around offices and key informant interviews with government officials and other relevant bodies. On the other hand, the study also relies on the review of related literature like books, journals, articles to integrate theoretical foundations of accountability with practical findings from the cases. Moreover, various documents, records, reports, proclamations and other official documents that can be accessed were consulted to substantiate the findings from the primary sources.

Both random and purposive sampling techniques were employed until the unit population is identified from whom data was collected. Representative Kebele Administrations were selected from Dessie town based on feasible criteria. This was done in consultation with the town government officials. Finally, proportional sampling technique was employed to select sample households in the study areas as a sampling frame and at most 10% of the households were selected to fill the survey questionnaires this being limited by the available time and resources. A growing body of literature recommends that in a situation where the total number of populations exceeds 10,000; its 10% become representative sample (Tadesse et al., 2013). Hence, a total of 135 samples were chosen to participate in the study.

Respondents for the key informant interview was selected purposively by considering who can give relevant and detailed information depending on the respondent official authority and the day to day engagement in relation to the issue under the study. The number of informants was determined based on the principle of data saturation.The study employs multiple methods and tools of data collection to be able to gather evidences from all possible sources. Accordingly, it utilizes questionnaire and key informant interview as a method of data collection. Document review is the other method to supplement and substantiate the findings from the above two methods.

The data for the survey were collected using a questionnaire that contain close end Questions. The household survey was conducted to capture the views and perceptions of the people about the existing channels and relationships of accountability in the delivery of basic social services and their awareness and use of these channels for holding political and service provider organizations and actors accountable, and the changes they notice overtime in these channels and mechanism. The Five-Point Likert Scale questionnaire (1=strongly Disagree; 2=disagree; 3=Unsure; 4= Agree and 5=Strongly Agree) was developed around key terms that indicate the accountability of politicians and service providers in the provision of basic social services.

The questionnaire was prepared in Amharic language and administered in face to face interaction with the respondents which carried out after recruiting and training enumerators from the localities.

The Key Informant interview was also conducted with purposively selected respondents. Informants were selected from service-related Community Based Organization such as Water Committees (boards); members of youth and women's associations. At kebele level discussions and interview were conducted with members of the Kebele cabinet, speakers of the council, heads and experts in water, sanitation, principals of selected primary schools and health extension workers in the two sample towns.The study gathered data from secondary sources which are important to supplement the evidences from the primary sources of data discussed above. Books, Journals, reports, articles, etc. with particular relevance to this study are going to be consulted in a bid to integrate theoretical discussions with primary evidences gathered from respondents. This may include proclamations, annual reports, manuals' and others.

The data analysis was following the research approach that employed by the study. The collection of quantitative data from the survey was automatically follow by coding of data which was fed to the recent version Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program. The findings from the analysis were presented in the form of tables, charts and graphs and described according to their implications. The data from qualitative method were organized and classified into groups based on similarity and finally described, narrated and quoted in tandem with the data from quantitative analysis. Triangulation was an important method to cross check and analyze the data from the household survey with the one gathered from key informants and government officials.

The principles of ethical code such as honesty, integrity, confidentiality, etc. was applied before and after the data collection procedures. Consent was asked from respondents. Their names were not made public without their agreement. Respondents were treated with great respect.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

According to the information from the Dessie town office of Education, there are a total of 298 students in a special needs class and about 2343 students registered in adult education classes. The data collected from the town education office indicated that education performance of the town are 97.14 percent, for KG, 96.54 percent for 1-8 grades and 99.22 percent for 9-12 grades. The performance for adult education is 104.97 percent.

Table1: Number of public schools and teachers

	Cycle	Schools	Number of Teachers
1	Primary (1-8 grades)	31	933
2	Secondary and Preparatory (9-12)	9	562

Source: Education Office of Dessie Town Administration

The interview indicated that there are 2 level 1(fulfill 25-49.9 percent), 13 level 2(fulfill 50 -69.9 percent and 27 level 3(70-89.9 percent) schools in Dessie town administration. We have no level 4 schools which fulfill more than 90 percent of requirements and standards.

Although the Education office is working in collaboration with Wollo University and Teachers College, there are major challenges to ensure quality education and accountability in schools.

Table 2: School Enrolment in Dessie Town Administration, 2018/19

	KG			Primary (1-8)			Secondary (9-12)		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
	3358	3135	6493	14245	13591	27836	5937	6307	12244

Source: Dessie Town Office of Education

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Table 3: Public Participation in Dry Waste Disposal, Dessie Town Administration (2019)

S.N	Activities Performed	Measurement	Amount	Hours	Birr		Participants		
					Birr	Cents	M	F	Total
1	Asphalt cleaning	Meter	3516.4	243.33	22500	00	4500	3750	8250
2	Canal opening and cleaning	Meter	2000	8.50	23076	00	750	250	1000
3	Road cleaning	Meter	4000	6.00	14844	00	450	288	738
4	Loading and transporting wastes	Biajo	20	10.30	5750	00	20	---	20
	Total		9536.4	430.90	66170	00	5720	4288	10008

Source: Dessie Town Environmental Protection Office, 2019

The interview conducted with the head of Environmental Office of Dessie town showed that the town has faced a number of challenges including, among others, lack of safety cloths, lack of milks for the workers, absence of free medical treatment, lack of vehicles, increasing budget for maintenance, lack of sites for waste disposal, and lack of youth participation in cleaning the town.

However, the head also indicated that there are encouraging performances of the office such as the involvement of the town leadership including the mayor in the clearing activities, strong leadership, ownership and priority given by leaders and professionals of the sub-cities to cleaning, participation of the youth and the society at large, and support of the town administration.

Interview with Design, Building and Maintenance and Supervision Case Tram Coordinator of Dessie Water and Sewerage Authorityshowed that Dessie town started clean water provision during the Italian occupation period in 19931 from one source which was known as Kurkur for 30, 000 people. It covered only 5 Km distance from the main source.

The Water Authority is directly accountable to the Amhara Regional State and there is a Board of Governance body in which the Mayor of the town is leader of the Board. The City-Council have not made strong follow-up supervision and support to the Authority. There are strong accountability mechanism and the people have strong culture of exercising their rights regarding water provision. There is a grievance handling unit in the organization. Most grievances are related with the supply of water meter. Recently there are two main sources of water for Dessie town. There are: Ground water and natural (spring) sources. According to the information from the authority, AckuaBillen and Pepsi have their own source of water. In 2011 E.C. The authority planned to reach 70 percent access to water and about 60.9 percent was achieved. However, the UN standard is recommended to be 80 percent and the town is able to cover only 35 percent of water coverage. Yet, the town was awarded an ISSO 2008 from African countries in its quality performance.

The town administration provided the authority with various equipment such as machinery and vehicles. The authority prepared annual capacity building training programs to the employees of the authority. According to the interview, there is a Forum established to make consultation with the customers of the town and there is a meeting within 3 months to discuss different issues related to the performance of the organization. Regarding the work ethics of employees, the Authority have taken disciplinary measures on two workers. Currently, there are 232 permanent and 70 contract workers in the organization.

As to major challenges of the Authority, the following are the critical problems. These are:
➢ Lack of adequate ground water source sufficient to provide clean water to the people of Dessie. There are only nine water source which are not sufficient to provide water.
➢ Although the Authority have few sources of finance from own source , it is not sufficient
➢ An old system of water distribution
➢ Difficult topography of the town another difficulty to reach all the clients
➢ There is weak coordination among stakeholders in the town such as road authority, telecommunication and electricity authorities.

The interview conducted with an expert revealed that the office prepared an annual plan to collect 86m^3 of waste from the town of Dessiein 2011. In the past six months the office was able collect a total of 26m^3 of waste. According to the expert, there are some considerations taken into account. These include there are months in which wastes will increase and there will be a house-to house collection of wastes 3 times per week. In this regard the current performance is 2 times per week. However, it could not be possible to access some remote areas such as areas of new settlements as the town is tremendous horizontal expansion. There are legally established Small Enterprises with a total of 500 members in the five Sub-cities and ten Kebeles of Dessie town administration which are engaged in dry waste collection activities. The Enterprises are performing based on the legal contract they had entered with the town. The Enterprises collect service fees based on some area classification such as first level, second level, third level, fourth level and fifth level. House-holds pay a monthly fee of 12 birr and the collected money is saved in the Bank.

The office has established structures and it is accountable to Development and Construction Department of the Municipality which in turn is accountable and evaluated by the City-Council. The employees are recruited based on merits and they have adequate technical and academic capacity to perform the duties assigned to each worker.

The interview made with an expert indicated that the tractors are not capable of collecting wastes from every sites of the town because the tractors were bought for agricultural activity purposes and lack the capacity to travel difficult topography in the town. Furthermore, the maintenance cost of the tractors is too high and out of 13 tractors available, 7 are not functional. There are also 1 Fiat and 1 Isuzu vehicles for collecting wastes.

Table 4: Public Participation in Dry Waste Disposal, Dessie Town Administration (2019)

S.N	Activities Performed	Measurement	Amount	Hours	Birr		Participants		
					Birr	Cents	M	F	Total
1	Asphalt cleaning	Meter	3516.4	243.33	22500	00	4500	3750	8250
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3	Road cleaning	Meter	4000	6.00	14844	00	450	288	738
4	Loading and transporting wastes	Biajo	20	10.30	5750	00	20	---	20
	Total		9536.4	430.90	66170	00	5720	4288	10008

Source: Dessie Town Environmental Protection Office, 2019.

As shown in Table 4 above, the public participation of the people of the town is enormous. The interviewed indicated that 42.5 percent of wastes are collected from House-Holds, 20 percent from Business firms and the remaining 28 percent are collected from road and canals. The office has provided several capacity building trainings regarding waste disposal both at regional, local and federal levels, and issues related to greening. There is one training program annually for the workers. According to the information, there are about 100 contract, 20 workers for greening, and 20 daily laborers in the town.

Evidences collected from documents indicated that the power and responsibility of the office include: Collecting wastes from individual houses and private organizations; deploying workers to the newly built resident houses; payment of monthly salary to the workers; addressing complaints forwarded to the office from the residents regarding the performances of workers; etc. According to the information from the office, there are about 800 workers. The vision of the office is to ensure sustainable environmental protection and to see beautiful and green town which is attractive for its residents.

According to the interview conducted with the expert in the office, the town has collected about 1680 quintalof dry wastes annually. To ensure accountability, the offices has conducted a number of activities such as awareness raising, provide transportations, and daily supervision on the performances of the workers. To strengthen the decentralization and accountability, the office could prepare its own specific regulations and implement it accordingly. Furthermore, various trainings have been provided to the workers. However, the training is not adequate. One of the critical challenges of the office is the workers have low level of educational performance in which most of them are able to read and write.

The office is always ready and committed to discuss and consult with the customers regarding the level of satisfaction and other problems. To make sure that quality service is provided to the customers and accountability and rule of law is observed, the office has taken a number of corrective and disciplinary measures such as giving oral reprimand to the workers, reduction of salary, and suspended some workers from their job.

The office also prepared performance standards to ensure accountability. Such as ensuring that workers complete their activities on the specified time, whether or not the workers did their job by identifying resident houses and private organizations, whether or not workers identify wastes according to their type such as renewable and non-renewable materials.

The town administration has been providing various supports including salary and provision of safety materials to the workers. From the discussion made with the experts, it is possible to understand that there less political interference in the activities of the office. The ethics of the workers is good and there is participation of the residents in the activities of waste collection in the town. But it is not satisfactory. Therefore, the level of customer satisfaction is not high.

V. SUMMARYAND RECOMMENDATION

Summary

The main problem encountered is the lack of cloths, free medical treatment and milk for employees who are engaged in waste collection. Although Wollo University promised several times, it failed to live up to its promises to support the town. The office made several discussions with the people of the town and 75 percent

of the customers said that our performance and service are good. However, we believe that there are some inaccessible areas that we could not provide our services.

The office has a grievance handling mechanism to ensure accountability of employees such as suggestion Box. We have also prepared several consultation programs with our clients. It is agreed that within 20 and 50 radiuses, customers are responsible to collect wastes. There are regular meeting programs at Sub-City levels and there are permanent Forums with the leaders.

The people have the right to evaluate our performances and provide their suggestions using office phone numbers, suggestion Boxes and even they could go to the Mayor of the town to inform whatever concerns they have. To ensure accountability of employees, we have fired 2 workers and gave oral reprimands form some employees. Generally, the work ethics of employees is good. The City administration provided the office several supports including annual budget of 6 million birr. There are also additional subsidy amounting to 3 million birrs. However, it is not sufficient to do our responsibilities.

Employees are recruited based on merit and there is no unnecessary political interference in our work. The interview also showed that the office has several challenges including lack of adequate vehicles, lack of maintenance budget, and lack of cites for waste disposal.

According to the findings of this study, the town administration has faced a number of challenges which might have an impact on accountability and service delivery. These include: Absence of strong follow-up and supervision, low level of water coverage, inadequate sources of finance, old system of water distribution and weak coordination among stakeholders.

Recommendation
- The town City-Council should have strong follow-up and supervision mechanisms;
- The city administration should increase the water coverage and meet the UN standard;
- The city administration should find additional sources of water;
- The city administration should find adequate sources of finance;
- The town administration should modernize the distribution systems of the town; and
- There should be strong coordination among stakeholders of the town

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