

Promoting Professionalism in the Civil Service of Laelay Adiabo Woreda, Tigray Region, Ethiopia: Challenges and Opportunities

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ABSTRACT

The government of Ethiopia has engaged in professionalizing the civil service of the country since 1991. Some of the measures taken include changing the old-ineffective and inefficient civil service through different reform programs (Tilaye, 2007). The rationale behind professionalizing the civil service is to retain competent, effective and efficient, innovative civil servants who are acquainted with the desired standards of knowledge, skill and attitudes to serve the public interests impartially and in a professional manner. Moreover, professional civil service is used as an instrument to implement the government development policies, strategies and programs for nation building and maintain welfare of the society (Adebabay, 2011). Unlike the above reality, Different scholars and reports reveal that the Ethiopian civil service in general and the study area in specific is still considered as un-professional one (Tilaye, 2007). Therefore, the objective of this Journal Article was to assess the challenges and opportunities to promote professionalism the civil service in Lelay Adiabo Woreda. To realize this objective, the study employed descriptive research design and/or the mixed research method-both quantitative and qualitative. Besides, relevant data was collected both primary and secondary data sources. Finally, the study has identified certain challenges that impede professionalism and certain opportunities. Accordingly, erosion of merit principles in recruitment, selection, and promotion, lack of civil servants neutrality and autonomy, training and development, Accountability were the major ones. On the other hand, government intervention through civil service reform programs, civil service proclamations and the opening of universities and training centers can be considered as the major opportunities to promote professionalism.

1. INTRODUCTION

Promoting professionalism in the civil service has become central agenda for governments which are dedicated and committed to serve their country and the general public interests. The notion behind is that; it is only through the professional civil service system that governments can reach the general public and implement their development policies and strategies on the ground (Klingner and Nalbandian, 1993). Professionalized civil service institution within a country are the guarantee for effective and efficient utilization of scarce resources, quality service delivery and customers satisfaction (meeting citizens' expectations) and insuring over all sustainable and fast development. Hence, civil service professionalism is essential to maintain the welfare of the general public and for sustainability of the government of the day. Some scholars even say, professional civil service is considered as a "life blood" of any government (Adebabay, 2011). Civil service system comprises two major elements- the human and non human aspects which operate together as a system. The human aspect involves the civil servants, who are hired on merit bases and the political appointees, mostly placed to lead the system. The non-human aspect involves the government rules and regulations, civil service proclamations, guiding principles, organizational structures, etc which are designed to govern the civil service system (Gottfried, 1988). Hence, Professionalism in the civil service is correlated with these two major elements and/or the overall performance of the civil service structure or institutions established by government proclamation (ibid, 1988).

The term civil service is explained as a branch of governmental service in which individuals are employed and retain on the basis of professional merit as proven by competitive examinations (OECD, 1997). Civil service professionalism is defined as "the overall values that guide the civil service-values like loyalty, neutrality, transparency, diligence, punctuality, effectiveness and efficiency, impartiality, accountability and others, which are specific to individual country" (United Nations, 2000). From the above definition, we can understand that civil service professionalism is about applying merit principle in career system-merit based recruitment, selection and promotion; keeping the neutrality of the civil service and/or civil servants; enhancing civil servants' competence and excellence through mechanisms like training; insuring system of accountability in the civil service.

It is believed that, the issue of promoting professionalism in the civil service began in association with the origin of the civil service, which goes back to the ancient Egyptian civilization in 3000B.C - when they developed a bureaucracy in response to the need to regulate waterways (Das, 1998). In the nineteenth century, industrialized countries were engaged in professionalizing the civil service through civil service reform programs in response to curb the challenges like nepotism, graft and scandals, corruption, favoritism and patronage from which the civil service was suffering (ibid, 1998). In the US America, the patronage (spoils) system which was instituted by Andrew Jackson in 1828 was replaced in 1883 by the Pendleton Civil Service Act that created a neutral, merit based system in the civil service (Gottfried, 1988)

In Africa, the issue of civil service professionalism emerged mainly during the years that followed immediately after independence and it was highly influenced by the single party and the control which this party exercised over the administration system and then created a type of civil service that was highly politicized. Their poor performance made the African civil service subject to continuous reform began in the 1970s, and still they are the objects of reform in the governance structure of Africa because the civil service is highly politicized and failed to meet public expectations and lack of responsiveness and professionalism in general (Bertucci, 1998).

The beginning of modern civil service in Ethiopia dates back to 1907 when Emperor Menelik II initiated the formation of ministers, mainly to sustain his power (Tilaye, 2007). Later Emperor Haileselassie I introduced various reform measures in modernizing public administration and in the appointment of salaried and educated personnel in the civil service based on the criteria of loyalty to the monarch and their family status rather than merit. The Derg (1974-1991) continued the centralization policy of the Emperor and seriously affected the development and professionalism of the civil service (ibid, 2007). Hence, these practices assures that the civil service during the three regimes was not neutral policy implementer, responsive to the peoples' interests, impartial, transparent, and accountable; among others- the civil service as an institution was not professional and loyal to the public. Currently, although the Ethiopian government is taking several measures to attain professionalism in the civil service; such as capacity building initiatives and/or civil service reform programs, the civil service of the nation is still considered as unprofessional one and suffering from multifaceted challenges (Tegegne and Alemayehu, 1995).

Therefore, the main objective of this study was to examine the challenges facing and/or impeding professionalism and on the contrary, the available opportunities in the civil service of the study area. Hence, based on this objective, the study addressed the following questions:

1. How the merit system is being implemented during the recruitment, selection and promotion process in the civil service of the study Woreda?
2. How the neutrality of the civil servants or civil service is insured?
3. How the training given to the civil servants is effective?
4. How the civil servants are accountable and how accountability is being insured in the civil service?
5. What major opportunities are there to promote professionalism in the civil service?

Since the study has identified the practical challenges related to the merit system, civil servants training and system of accountability, and the major opportunities to promote professionalism in the civil service, it is significant for the concerned bodies to give due attention on these areas and it may contribute to rectify the gaps and realize professional civil service in the study area and at regional level. As far as methodology is concerned, the study was conducted by using descriptive and mixed method approach and pertinent data was collected both from primary (questionnaire, interview, FGD) and secondary (documents) data sources.

2. Concepts of Promoting Professionalism in the Civil Service

The term civil service is explained as a branch of governmental service in which individuals are employed and retain on the basis of professional merit as proven by competitive examinations (OECD, 1997). Civil service professionalism is defined as "the overall practices and values that guide the civil service-loyalty, neutrality, transparency, diligence, punctuality, effectiveness and efficiency, impartiality, accountability and others, which are specific to individual country" (United Nations, 2000). Moreover, professionalism can be strengthened, promoted and insured in the civil service mainly through enforcing merit principle in career system (merit based recruitment, selection and promotion, maintaining neutrality of the civil service and/or civil servants), enhancing civil servants' competence and excellence through mechanisms like training, insuring system of accountability in the civil service and effectively utilizing the existing opportunities (Gottfried, 1988).

2.1 The Merit System in the Civil Service

The merit system is the process of recruiting, hiring and promoting government employees based on their performance results, seniority, qualifications and/or ability to perform a job, rather than on their political connections (ibid, 1988).

2.1.1 Merit Based Recruitment and Selection

Recruitment and selection are among the most critical human resource functions that determine the present and future success of organizations (Mondy et al., 1999). According to the same source, recruitment is the process of attracting individuals on timely basis, in sufficient numbers and with appropriate qualifications, and encouraging them to apply for the vacant job. Besides, Merit based selection is satisfied or realized in the civil service when selection is determined solely on the basis of relative ability, knowledge, and skills, after fair and open competition which assures that all applicants receive equal opportunity and treatment and finally the best-qualified among the applicants are hired for the job (Ricucci and Naff, 2008). Hence, the success and performance of organizations in particular and the civil service in general depend on the type of employees

attracted and selected.

2.1.2 The Merit Based Promotion

Merit based promotion is the process of transfer of employee to a job which pays more money or preferred status based on performance results, seniority or qualification-knowledge, skill and ability; which enables to enhance commitment and motivation for better performance; attract and retain skilled and competent employees; reduce employee turnover and promotes professionalism in the civil service (ibid, 1977).

2.2 Political Neutrality of the Civil Servants

To enhance professionalism- efficiency and fairness of the civil service, there is a need to protect the institution from overt political control. Although an institution can never be made fully free from politics, it must be protected from direct forms of partisan control (Peters and Pierre, 2004). Neutrality of the civil service in policy implementation is vital for realizing professional and well performing civil service. Having a non-partisan civil service means that out of the political appointee at the top, the civil servant under him serves what-ever government impartially gives them. An impartial civil service ensures that policies are implemented regardless of the political views of civil servants. According to Kernaghan and Langford (1990), a model of political neutrality in parliamentary system of government is outlined below:

- *Politics and policy are separated from administration. Thus politicians make policy decisions; civil/public servants execute these decisions;*
- *Civil/public servants are appointed and promoted on the basis of merit, rather than on the basis of party affiliation or contributions;*
- *Civil/public servants do not engage in political activities;*
- *Civil/public servants do not publicly express their view on government policies or administration;*
- *Public servants provide forthright and objective advice to their political executives protect the anonymity of civil servants by publicly accepting responsibility for departmental decision;*
- *Civil/public servants execute policy decisions loyally and zealously, irrespective of the philosophy and programs of the party in power and regardless of their personal opinions. As a result, civil servants enjoy security of tenure during good behavior and satisfactory performance.*

This model of political neutrality also asserts that the civil service is expected to be both loyal and responsive to government of the day. As already discussed above, the lack of neutrality or impartiality in the civil service hampers public service delivery. When it fails to recruit, retain, and reward the best possible people or when it subjects good people to bad systems, government's performance inevitably suffers and this in turn leads to weak development performance citizens' disappointment by the results (Walle, Nicolas et al., 2003). That is why the world has been engaged in professionalizing and capacitating the civil service and the bureaucrats-to establish a civil service that is neutral policy implementer, merit-based, competent, and accountable, among others.

2.3 Civil Servants Training

Training is the effort to increase the knowledge, skill, and abilities of new and existing employees/civil servants so that they can better accomplish their jobs, duties and responsibilities (Berman, E.M. et al, 2006). According to Riccuci and Naff (2008), effective employees training involves appropriate and participative training need assessment before training is delivered; adequate and relevant training in a manner to fill the gap and enhance performance; and all employees should receive equal training opportunity based on their requirements.

2.4 Accountability in the Civil Service

According to Kernaghan and Langford (1990), accountability is defined as "the obligation to answer for the fulfillment of assigned and accepted duties within the framework of the authority and resources provided".

A special importance is given on accountability in the context of professionalizing the civil service system in general and civil servants in particular in such a way that accountability is about accomplishing duties and responsibilities effectively and efficiently, behaving ethically, being loyal to the rules and regulations and the public in general. One of the major issues of contemporary governance is holding the civil servants accountable to their assigned responsibilities (Hangbarger, 2006). To do this governments devise two means by which civil servants are held accountable namely, directly and indirectly accountable; they can also be called as internal or external accountability.

2.5 Opportunities to Promote Professionalism in the Civil Service

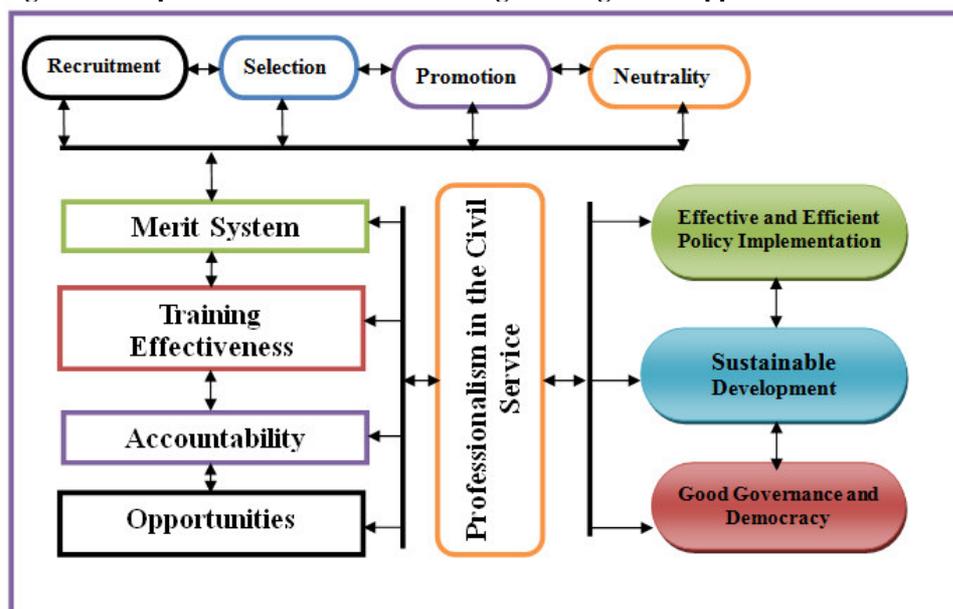
The opportunities that could be utilized to promote professionalism in the civil service are specific to the countries' nature or type of political economy-what is best for one county may be irrelevant for another (Hammer,1996). The opportunities can be from within-the will and initiatives of the government of the day to advance the civil service and from external-the emergence of new knowledge in management techniques, tools

and best practices which are vital to enhance the performance of the civil service. Generally speaking, civil service reform measures, different management tools and techniques exist from within or outside, which enable to right size the civil service, enhance performance management system, promote professional Ethical standards and set appropriate civil service rules, regulations can be acknowledged as opportunities to realize professional civil service (Hammer and Champy, 1996).

2.6 The Conceptual Framework

Based on the above literature review, the following conceptual framework is prepared to assess the challenges and opportunities to promote professionalism in the civil service.

Fig 2.1 Conceptual Framework for assessing challenges and opportunities



Source: Own Survey, 2013

The above conceptual framework or model depicts the relationship of concepts in civil service system and its professionalism. Civil service professionalism is considered as dependent variable which determined the independent variables-the merit system (merit based recruitment, merit based selection, merit based promotion and civil servants neutrality), the effectiveness of civil servants training, the nature of system of accountability and the availability of opportunities. Besides, when professionalism is insured in the civil service, government policies and strategies would be implemented effectively and efficiently, sustainable development will be maintained, good governance and democracy would be flourished. Hence, the intention of this research was to examine the challenges and opportunities that are facing to the civil service professionalism, through assessment of the major variables-merit system principles, training, accountability, and opportunities.

3. Results and Analysis

3.1 The Merit System Implementation and its Challenges

As stated in the literature review part, the state of implementation of merit system principles is key determinant factor to attract and retain best qualified civil servants/professionals and/or to insure professionalism in the civil service. When the merit system is deteriorated as a result of varied challenges, civil service professionalism would also be greatly affected. Therefore, the challenges facing to the merit system regarding the recruitment, selection, promotion process and/or neutrality of civil servants in Laelay_Adiabo are examined in the following sections.

3.1.1 The Recruitment Process

Recruitment is one of the most critical human resource functions in private and/or public organizations which determine the present and future success. According to business dictionary.com, recruitment is defined as the process of finding and attracting the best-qualified candidate (from within or outside of an organization) for a job opening, in a timely and cost effective manner. Moreover, recruitment is the process of attracting individuals on a timely basis, in sufficient numbers and with appropriate qualifications, and encouraging them to apply for jobs with an organization (Mondy et al., 1999). Recruitment process carried out in such manner is vital and contributes for professionalism to thrive in the civil service. Therefore, taking this concept in mind, assessment of challenges to the recruitment process in the study Woreda has been carried out, and the responses and/or

findings are presented and analyzed as follows:

Table 3.1: Respondents’ Level of Agreement on Recruitment on Timely Basis, Sufficient Number and Qualification of Applicants

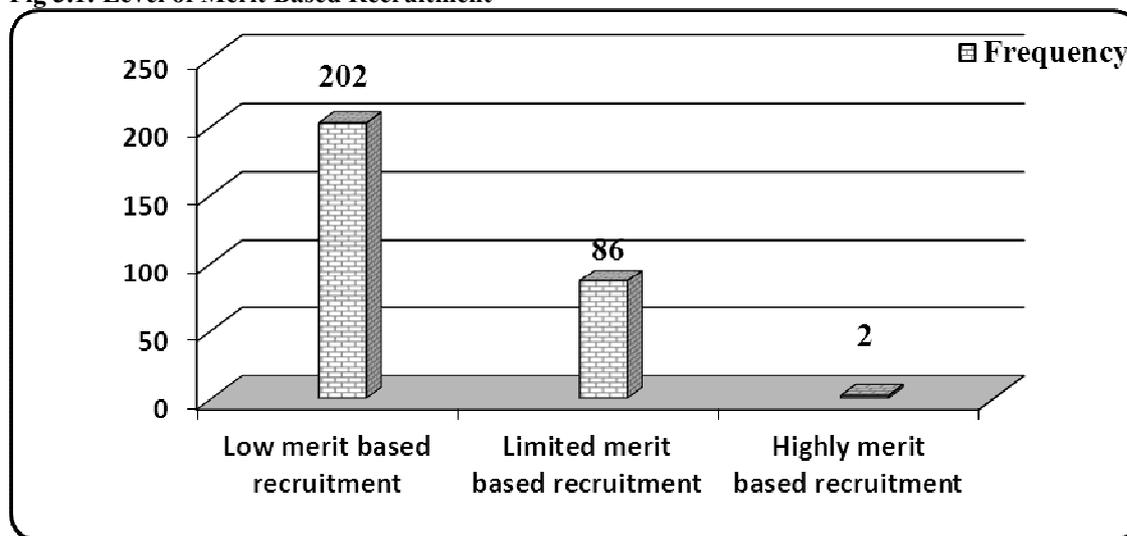
Level of Agreement	Questions and Responses					
	Recruitment on timely basis		Sufficient number of applicants		Qualification of applicants	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Strongly disagree	116	40.0	75	25.9	93	32.1
Disagree	142	49.0	131	45.2	130	44.8
Neutral	17	5.9	51	17.6	44	15.2
Agree	14	4.8	28	9.7	22	7.6
Strongly agree	1	.3	5	1.7	1	.3
Total	290	100.0	290	100.0	290	100.0

Source: Field survey, 2013

As it is displayed in the above Table 3.1, out of the total 290 respondents, 116(40%) and 142(49%) respond strongly disagree and Agree respectively to recruitment on timely basis. This shows that 89 % of the total respondents do not agree that recruitment is carried out at the right time. The remaining respondents, 17(5.9%), 14(4.8%) and 1(0.3%) replied Neutral, Agree and strongly agree respectively-which is much less than the disagreed respondents. With regard to sufficiency of applicants during recruitment, out of the total 290 respondents, 75(25.9%) and 131(45.2%) replied strongly disagree and agree respectively. This accounts 71.1% of the total respondents. The remaining 57(17.6%), 28(9.7%) and 5(1.7%) respondents said Neutral, Agree and strongly agree respectively. On top of this, for the question concerned with attracting and/or recruiting only the qualified applicants for employment, out of the total 290 respondents, 93(32.1%) and 130(44.8%), Strongly disagree and Disagree respectively that the applicants are qualified and fulfill the requirements for the job. This covers 76.9% out of the total respondents included in the survey questionnaire. The level of agreement of the rest 44(15.2%), 22(7.6%) and 1(0.3%) respondents is Neutral, Agree and strongly agree respectively-which is less than the cumulative response of Agree and strongly disagree.

Therefore, majority of the respondents do not agree to the fact that the recruitment process attracted sufficient number and qualified candidates and that is made at the right time, in Laelay_Adiabo Woreda (the study Woreda). This demonstrated that the recruitment process is not effectively executed and highly exposed to malpractices. Moreover, to examine the level of effectiveness and merit based recruitment in a more concise manner, the responses given to each of the three variable in the form of ordinal measurements (from highly agree to strongly disagree) are summarized in to three grouped and/or categories. To do so, point 5,4,3,2 and 1 were assigned to the five categories of level of agreements-Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree respectively. Therefore, since three indicators/measurements are included, the total points are between 3(lowest) and 15 (highest). Hence, the level of merit based recruitment is categorized as; Low merit based recruitment (3-6 points), Limited merit based recruitment (7-11 points) and highly merit based recruitment (12-15 points). To do so, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) is used and the result is summarized, presented, discussed and interpreted:

Fig 3.1: Level of Merit Based Recruitment



Source: Field Survey, 2013

As the above Figure 3.1 shows, out of the total 290 respondent 202(69.7%) replied that there is low merit based recruitment, 86(29.7%) replied there is limited merit based recruitment and 2(0.7%) said merit is highly respected/implemented in the recruitment process.

These findings confirm that candidates who have the desired qualification which the specific job requires are not attracted in a sufficient numbers and at the right time. According to the data obtained from focus group discussion, the major practices and/factors affecting to the recruitment process includes; weak efforts to attract qualified individuals the vacancy announcements are not administered in a manner that attract best qualified candidates. Nepotism and kickbacks are also hurdles to the merit based recruitment. Interference and impositions from the political masters are also greatly affecting the smooth executions of merit based recruitment.

Therefore, the above findings confirm that merit based recruitment is highly eroded. The human resources/civil servants recruitment process is poorly managed and executed in Laelay_Adiabo Woreda. Hence, this situation is highly affecting the civil service not to be professional, since professionalism in the civil service is realized only when the best qualified professionals/civil servants are recruited on merit-based (based on their qualification and experience).

3.1.2 The Selection Process

Selection is the process of interviewing and evaluating candidates for a specific job and selecting an individual for employment based on certain criteria (Ricucci and Naff, 2008). Merit based selection is satisfied or realized in the civil service when selection is determined solely on the basis relative ability, knowledge, and skills, after fair and open competition which assures that all applicants receive equal opportunity and treatment and finally the best-qualified among the applicants are hired for the job (ibid, 2008).

Hence, taking this in to consideration, to investigate how the selection process is carried out and its challenges in the study Woreda, data gathering tools like questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion are employed and the findings are presented and discussed below.

Table 3.2: Respondents Level of Agreement on Merit Based Selection

Level of Agreement	Questions and Responses							
	Appropriate selection criteria		Equal treatment of applicants		Employment after fair and open competition		Hiring the best-qualified among applicants	
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Strongly disagree	101	34.8	106	36.6	120	41.4	103	35.5
Disagree	136	46.9	131	45.2	127	43.8	135	46.6
Neutral	30	10.3	32	11.0	31	10.7	40	13.8
Agree	15	5.2	14	4.8	10	3.4	9	3.1
Strongly agree	8	2.8	7	2.4	2	.7	3	1.0
Total	290	100	290	100	290	100	290	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

As it is displayed in the above Table 3.2, out of the total 290 respondents 101(38%) respondents strongly disagree, 136(46.9%) respondents disagree, 30(10.3%) respondents are neutral, 15(5.2%) and 8(2.8%) respondents agree and strongly agree respectively that the selection criteria used in the study Woreda is appropriate. When we see the cumulative percent, 81.7% of the respondents replied that the selection criteria are not appropriate. The remaining 10.3% are neutral and 8% said that the selection criteria are appropriate or up to the required standard. In the case of equal treatment of applicants/candidates, out of the total 209 respondents, 106(36.6%) strongly disagree, 131(45.2%) disagree, 32(11%) are neutral, 14(4.8%) agree, and 7(2.4%) respondents strongly agree with the idea that all applicants/candidates receive equal treatment during the selection process.

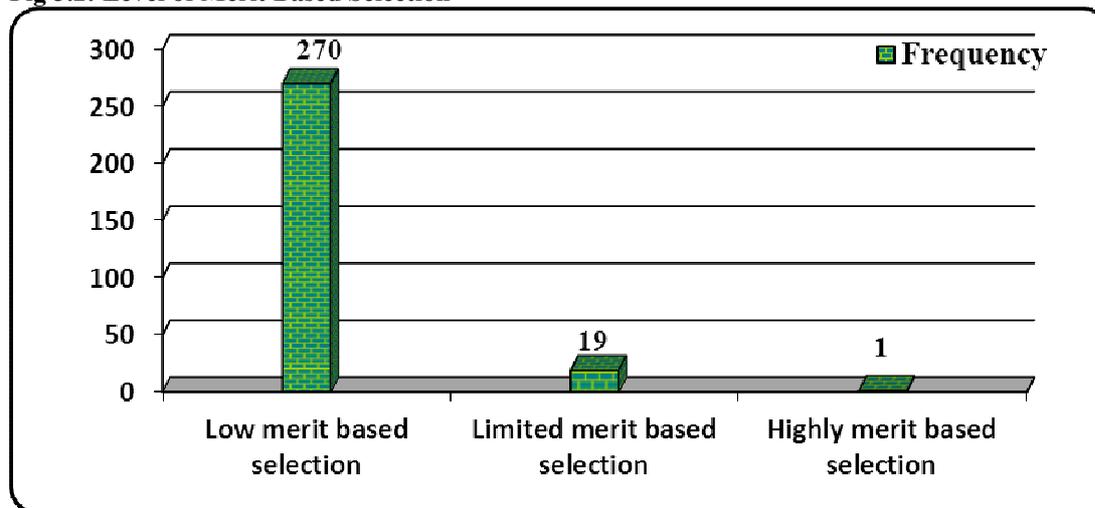
This shows that, majority of the respondents; that is, 81.8% confirmed there is no equal treatment of applicants. With regard to selection and/or employment after and open competition, out of the total respondents 85.2% said there is no fair and open competition during selection. The remaining 10.7% are neutral and 4.1% respondents replied there is fair and open competition. Moreover, out of the total 290 respondents 103(35.5%), 135(46.6%), 40(13.8%), 9(3.1%) and 3(1%) respondents strongly disagree, disagree, are neutral, agree and strongly agree that the best qualified individuals are selected from among the applicants respectively. This implies that 82.1% of the total respondents believe that candidates who best fit and own the required knowledge, skill and ability for the job are not selected in the study Woreda. 13.8% neither agree nor disagree with the idea and minor respondents, 4.1% replied that qualified individuals are selected among the applicants.

Therefore, when we look at the overall responses, it shows that most of the time the selection criteria used are not appropriate in such a way to know the qualities of applicants and differentiate accordingly, all candidates/applicants are not equally treated, selection is not after fair and open competition, and thus, the best qualified person is not selected for the job. This implies that the merit based selection process is highly eroded-

the right person at the right place is not realized in the study Woreda.

To examine the practices and challenges of selection process in the study Woreda, the above four indicators/variables are used and hence, the responses is summarized in to three major categories. For each five category of level of agreement in each question-strongly agree, agree neutral, disagree and strongly disagree; points 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1 was assigned. Thus, the total score lies between 20(highest) and 4(lowest). Accordingly, the level of merit based selection in the study Woreda is labeled in to three categories as; Low level of merit based selection (4-10 points), Limited level of merit based selection (11-15 points), and High level of merit based selection (16-20 points). Therefore, SPSS is used to analysis and the findings are summarized and presented below.

Fig 3.2: Level of Merit Based Selection



Source: Field survey, 2013

As it is revealed in the above Figure 3.2, out of the total 290 respondents, 270(93.1%) replied, there is low merit based selection in the study Woreda. 19(6.6%) respond the merit based selection is limited and the remaining insignificant respondent, 1(0.3%) replied there is high merit base selection.

According to the data obtained from Interview, Focus Group Discussion and survey questionnaire, factors that are negatively affecting the effective and merit based selection and/or professionalism in the civil service in the study Woreda emanate from different angles. The inappropriate recruitment process is resulting wrong selection, in a manner that, unqualified individuals are recruited for employment and then unfit individuals are selected from the pool of unqualified applicants for the job. On top of that, the tests, interview and other methods used in the civil servants selection process are very weak and in appropriate. The concerned human resource department lacks the desired capacity and commitment to prepare tests, interviews and other selection tools that can rate applicants and show who best fits for the job.

Moreover, recruitment and selection process in the study Woreda is carried out in a pool basis, by office of the civil service. Each office in the Woreda writes letter of employment requisition including the job specification, job description and the required number of new employee/s to the office of civil service. Accordingly the human resource departments organize and execute all the recruitment and selection activities in the Woreda as per the requirements of each office. Hence, this phenomenon resulted in poor and ineffective selection process. The human resource department lacks capacity to organize all these employment requests from all offices and what type and content of exam or interview should be prepared for each job. In this case, similar fashioned test if prepared for the diversified jobs.

The pool system of recruitment and selection is also exposed to nepotism and unfair treatment of all applicants. Sector offices are observed to intentional delay and/postpone employment request until someone who they need apply for employment and manuals, documents and even questions are given to some on in favor. Moreover, according to the head of civil service office of the study Woreda, certain gaps in the selection guidelines are causing for wrong selection. In most vacant announcements, it says; individuals who fulfill the listed fields and related. Here, which field if related or unrelated to the field specified in the announcement is creating illusions and pave the way for malpractices.

Therefore, the selection process in the study Woreda is not appropriate and merit based due to the factors listed above. Consequently, this resulted in unqualified human resources and/or civil servants accumulated in the civil service, having knowledge, skill attitude and ability below the job requires. This situation is a bottleneck for professionalism to thrive in the civil service of the study Woreda.

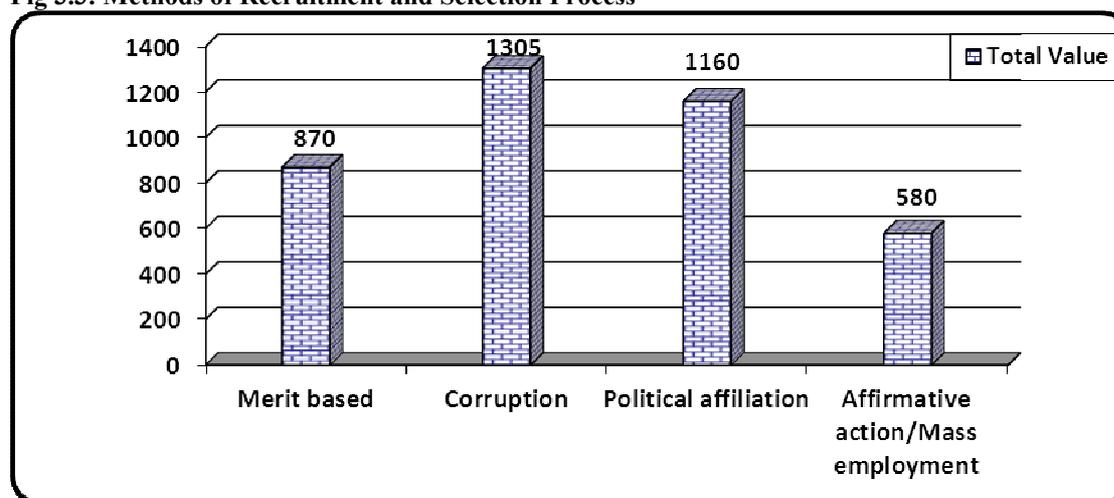
It is strongly believed that, although recruitment and selection functions can be treated separately, they

are highly related and are considered as two faces of a coin. Because, recruitment is an input for selection and selection is from recruitment. Hence, the major criteria used and the challenges commonly observed in the recruitment and selection process, in the study Woreda are addressed below:

3.1.3 The Method of Recruitment and Selection

As it is clearly stated in the above section, based on the responses obtained from questionnaire, interview and focus group discussion, the merit based recruitment and selection of civil servants in the study Woreda is highly eroded as a result of varied practices. The way how recruitment and selection of civil servants is executed and the major factors that are affecting to professionalism in the civil service in the study Woreda is examined. The civil servants included in the survey questionnaire were requested to assign points between 0 (none) and 5 (very high) points to the factors Merit based, Corruption-(nepotism and kickbacks), Political affiliation and Affirmative action/Mass employment that highly influence the recruitment and selection process. Thus, the maximum possible score point of each measurement could be 1450 and the lowest possible point could be zero (0). Accordingly, the responses and findings are summarized, presented and discussed below:

Fig 3.3: Methods of Recruitment and Selection Process



Source: Field Survey, 2013

The comparison was made among four variables (as it is seen in the above Figure 3.3); that is, merit basis-civil servants' qualification, experience and performance, Corruption-like nepotism and kickbacks, Political affiliation and others. Accordingly, the total score/weight given for each variable in descending order is: first corruption, with the maximum weight of 1305(90%), second political affiliation with total score of 1160(80%), third is merit based with total weight of 870(60%) and the fourth is affirmative action/mass employment with total weight of 580(40%). This indicates that the recruitment and selection process in the study Woreda is mainly affected by corruption-nepotism and kickbacks and political affiliation. According to the participants of the focus group discussion, most of the time recruitment and selection is made on bias and this has a negative effect on maintaining professionals in the organization.

3.1.4 Civil Servants' Promotion

Promotion refers to upward movement in present job leading to greater responsibilities, higher status and better salary. Promotion is the transfer of a civil servant/an employee to a job which pays more money or one that carries some preferred status and usually it is given based on merit (Mondy et.al, 1999). In a modern and professional civil service system, civil servants are promoted on merit basis; that is, based on their performance results, length of service and qualifications. Merit based promotion plays key role to promote and realize professionalism in the civil service in such a way that it help to recognize civil servants' performance for better commitment and motivation, creates sense of competition for better knowledge, skill, ability and benefits among civil servants, attract and retain qualified professionals.

The respondents' level of agreement on merit based promotion and the major factors affecting the civil service professionalism aligned with the way of promoting civil servants in the study Woreda has been presented and analyzed as follows.

Table 3.3: Merit Based Promotion

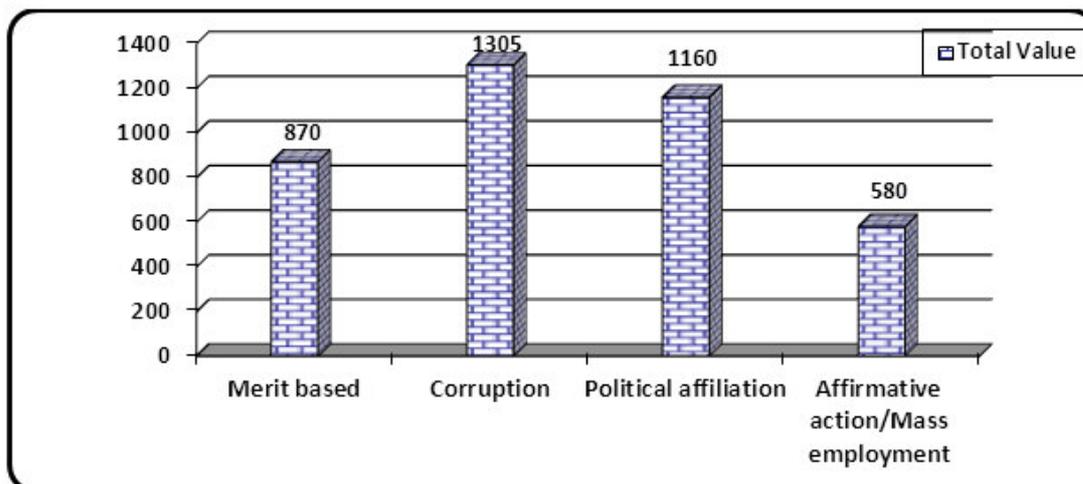
Civil servants are promoted on merit basis	Reponses		
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	114	39.3	81.4
Disagree	122	42.1	
Neutral	43	14.8	14.8
Agree	5	1.7	3.8
Strongly agree	6	2.1	
Total	290	100	100

Source: Field Survey, 2013

The above Table 3.3, illustrates that, out of the total 290 respondents, 6(2.1%), 5(1.7%), 43(14.8%), 122(42.1%), 114(39.3%) replied strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree and strongly disagree respectively to merit based promotions in the study Woreda. This shows that majority of the respondents and/or the cumulative number (percent); that is, 236 (81.4%) disagree and strongly disagree, 43(14.8%) are neutral and only 11(3.8%) agree and strongly agree, that merit is used as a basis in promoting civil servants.

Thus, the way how civil servants are promoted and what challenges are facing to the promotion function is assessed, and the respondents have them as it is displayed in the following Figure 3.4:

Fig 3.4: Factors Affecting and Method of Promotion



Source: field survey, 2013

In order to expose and rank the major factors affecting the promotion function, the respondents were requested to assign points between 0(none) and 5(very high) to each of the major factors listed as a basis of promotion. Accordingly, as it presented in the above Figure 4.6, the respondents have ranked political affiliation as first with total weight of 1334(92%), nepotism and/or kickbacks as second with total weight of 1073(74%), Affirmative action as third with total weight of 650(45%) and merit based promotion as fourth with total weight of 628(43%).

On top of this, participants of the focus group discussion said that civil servants who are members of the political party-T.P.L.F and those who engage in political party activities entertain promotions no matter what their performance result, experience and qualification is. Specially, jobs in the departments with attractive financial resources are occupied by those who are party members and who have intimacy with the political masters in the Woreda. Civil servants who have relatives in the human resource department and/or Woreda cabinet are promoted soon without fair and open competitions. Most of the times, merit based promotion is respected relatively at the lowest level positions-like janitors, guardians, secretaries, which have small remunerations and benefits.

Consequently, these situations are creating frustrations among the civil servants and are diminishing the commitment and motivation of the majority of civil servants in the study Woreda. As a result, qualified and skilled professionals and/or civil servants are leaving their jobs. Many other civil servants also forced to be members of the political party and build intimacy/affiliation with the political masters in the Woreda involuntarily; because that is the only option they have to get promoted.

3.2 Neutrality of the Civil Servants and Politicization of the Civil Service

For professionalism to thrive in the civil service system the civil service itself and/or the Civil servants need to be autonomous and politically neutral (Gottfried, 1988). Since civil servants are there to serve the government of the day and the general public in a neutral and impartial manner, the civil service should allow and protect them to act accordingly. When the neutrality of the civil servants is deteriorated, the merit system in the civil service will be demolished. Consequently, it would be challenging to promote professionalism in the civil service and on the contrary, the civil service system would be highly politicized. Having this in mind, the neutrality of the civil service/servants and the politicization of the civil service in the study Woreda is assessed and how it could be the immediate challenge to promote professionalism in the civil service is examined below.

Table 3.4: Civil Servants Level of Agreements on Political Neutrality

Civil servants are politically neutral policy implementers	Responses		
	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Strongly disagree	112	38.6	81.4
Disagree	124	42.8	
Neutral	43	14.8	14.8
Agree	9	3.1	3.8
Strongly agree	2	.7	
Total	290	100	100

Source, field survey, 2013

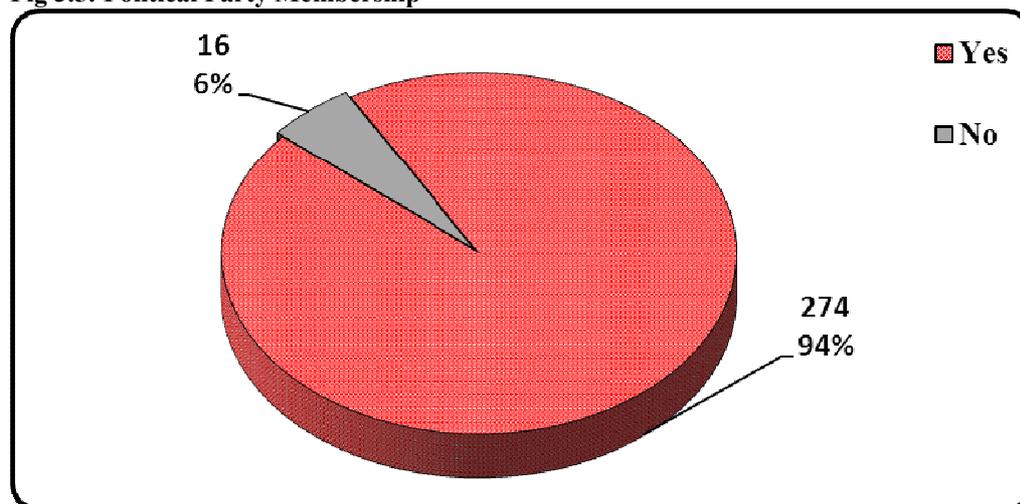
A survey is conducted to see if civil servants are politically neutral policy implementers. As it is illustrated in the above Table 3.4, out of the total 290 respondents, 112(38.6%) replied strongly disagree, 124(42.8%) replied disagree, 43(14.8%) replied neutral, 9(3.1%) replied agree, and 2(0.7%) respondents replied strongly agree; that civil servants in the study Woreda are politically neutral policy implementers. When we see the cumulative percent of these responses, the majority, 81.4 % of the total respondents are against, 14.8% of the total respondents are neutral and only 3.8% of the total respondents support the idea that civil servants are politically neutral policy implementers.

Therefore, this implies that the civil servants are not politically neutral and/or impartial policy implementers for government that hold the power by the will of the general public. In such a situation, it is not expected that civil servants can serve the government of the day and the public interest in a professional manner. The major challenges facing to the civil servants/service not to be neutral and/or impartial are addressed as follows:

3.2.1 Political Partisanship and Membership

A survey is conducted on the magnitude and depth of the civil servants' political partisanship and its consequences to merit system and promoting professionalism in the civil service in the study Woreda.

Fig 3.5: Political Party Membership



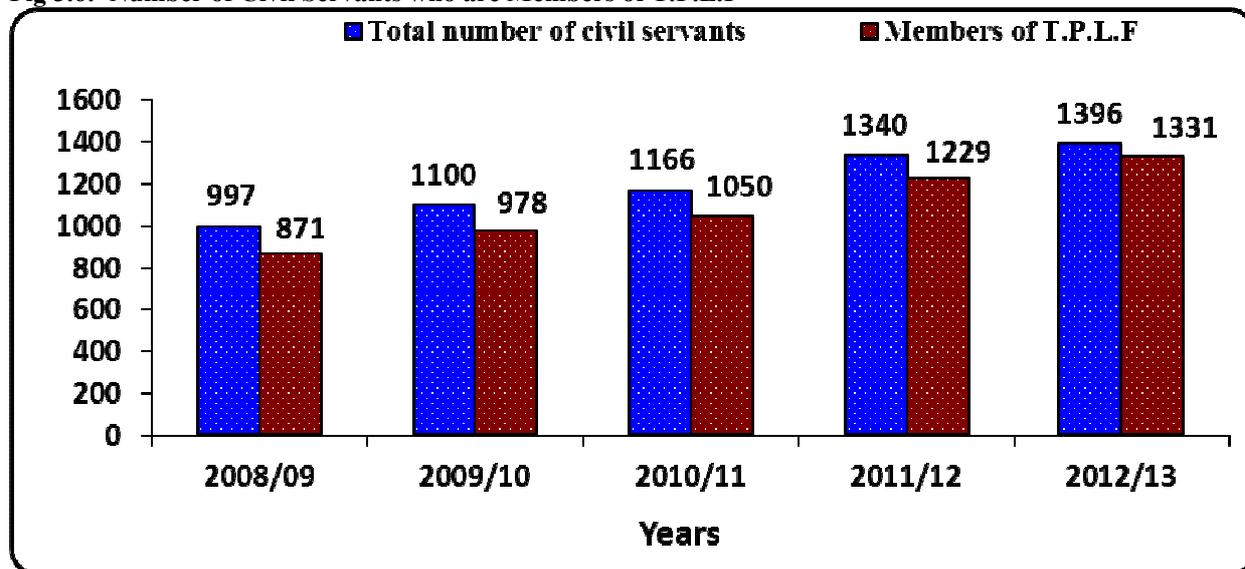
Source: Field survey, 2013

As it demonstrated in the above Figure 3.5, from the total 290 respondents-civil servants included in the survey questionnaire, 274 (94%) are members of political party and the remaining 16(6%) not members of any political party. Moreover, the respondents confirmed that, out of the total 274 civil servants who are members of political party, 271(99%) belong to the party in power-Tigray Peoples Liberation Front (T.P.L.F) and the remaining 4(1%), are members of other political parties.

Likewise, the total number of civil servants who are members of T.P.L.F, its growth over time- since

2008/09 up to 2012/13, and its proportion from the total civil servants in the study Woreda is presented here under. Besides, civil servants partisanship and its relationship and consequences to professionalism in the civil service are discussed.

Fig 3.6: Number of Civil Servants who are Members of T.P.L.F



Source: Laely-Adiabo, T.P.L.F HR department, 2013

The above Figure 3.6, shows that in the years 2008/09, 2009/10, 2010/11, 2011/12 and 2012/13, the number of civil servants who are members of the ruling party T.P.L.F was 871, 978, 1050, 1229 and 1331 respectively. This accounts 87%, 89%, 90%, 92% and 95% of the total civil servants in each year respectively. The trend shows that the political partisanship of civil servants is increasing from time to time. On top of this, according to the T.P.L.F human resource department, 51 civil servants are nominated and waiting for full party membership in the year 2013. According to Ato Mlaw, head administrator of the Woreda acknowledged that the process of increasing member employees is the stand of the party T.P.L.F applied in all Woredas of the region. Besides, he described that the party is intentionally doing this mainly for two reasons. The major one is to strengthen the financial resource of the party-because members have the duty to pay for membership monthly 1-3% of their salary and the second purpose is that partisanship is believed to enhance commitment and loyalty of employees to their party; hence, the government policies, strategies and programs would be effectively implemented on the ground. As a result, the demands and interests of the general public would be satisfied. Therefore, the effort is generally to serve the public better and realize over all sustainable development.

However, participants of the focus group discussion exposed that majority of the employees/civil servants become members involuntarily. Because, nonmember employees/civil servants are cornered or discriminated and ban from different benefits like; on time promotion, training and rewards. Above all, employees those who refuse to be members are considered as threats to the party and they have weak security of tenure irrespective of their performance results. Besides, all the interviewed office heads explained that; convincing and nominating the civil servants they supervise for party membership is one of the major tasks they should perform being member of the Woreda cabinet.

On the other hand, to verify whether political partisanship enhances employee performance and/or policy implementation, the performance results of the 271 civil servants who are members of T.P.L.F and 16 non member civil servants for the year 2011/12 is surveyed. Accordingly, the average performance result of the members of T.P.L.F and those who are non members of any political party is 81.5% and 79.5% respectively. This implies that, the performance result of the two groups are almost equal and both are rated as satisfactory according to the then employee evaluation and rating system in the study Woreda. Hence, this shows that increasing political partisanship contributes nothing for better performance and commitment of civil servants and is negatively affecting the performance and professionalism of the civil service.

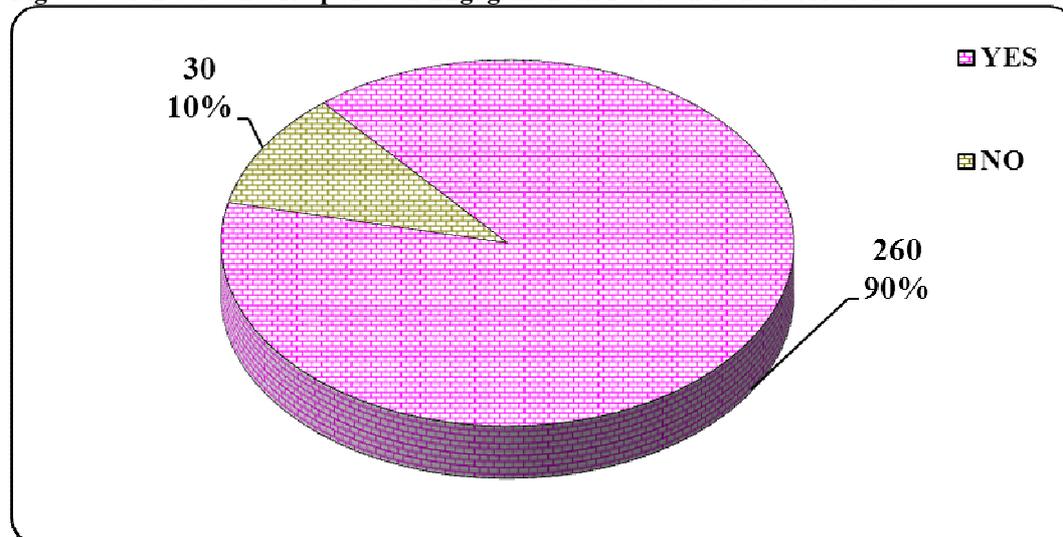
Therefore, the implication of these findings is that; the excessive political partisanship is resulting in over politicization of the civil service and frustration of civil servants. In addition, it contradicts to the notion that in a professional and modern civil service system, civil servants are neutral and impartial policy implementers of the government of the day. It is obvious that governments hold and/or lose their power only by the will of the general public through election. But, civil servants are always there to serve the government got the will of the public to hold power and govern temporarily. Currently 95% of the civil servants in the study Woreda are members of the ruling party-T.P.L.F thus, when another political party hold the power, these civil servants could

be dismissed from their position and replaced by other neutral or partisans to the government in power. Generally speaking, such kinds of practices are becoming hurdles for merit system and/or professionalism not to be appropriately implemented and realized in the civil service.

3.2.2 Civil Servants Engagement in Partisan Political Activities

Civil servants engagement in partisan political activities is a threat that can significantly affect the neutrality of civil servants and promoting professionalism in the civil service (Kernaghan, 1990). Survey is conducted to examine the extent of civil servants engagement in partisan activities and its consequences or effects on neutrality and professionalism in the civil service is presented and discussed below.

Fig 3.7: Civil Servants Response on Engagement in Partisan Political Activities



Source: field survey, 2013

The above Figure 3.7 shows that out of the total 290 respondents 260(260%) answered Yes, and the remaining 30(10%) respondents answered No, for engagement in partisan political activities. Besides, participants of the focus group discussion declared that, civil servants especially those who are members of the party in power engage in recurrent party activities and programs. The major partisan political activities include; conducting and participating in election campaigns, collecting membership fees, and participating in different seasonal party conferences or meetings. The member civil servants have timetable for party meeting twice every two week for around four hours-one is of cell and the other is of network meeting. These meetings are organized mainly to evaluate the performance and progress of the political party, members' contribution to their party, new members are nominated, and discussion on journals or newspapers prepared by the party for its political agenda is conducted. Moreover, all member civil servants participate in a monthly supreme meeting (Meseretawi widabe) for the whole day. All these activities are performed at normal government working hours, no matter what the willingness of the civil servants and interest of the customers is.

Thus, the above findings and observations in the study Woreda strongly contradict with the behavior and organization of neutral and professional civil service. For merit system and professionalism to flourish in the civil service, employees/civil servants shall not participate in partisan political activities; use their post, or responsibilities for political partisan purposes, which may be detrimental to the interests of the public service and customer satisfaction.

3.3 Training and Development Effectiveness

The primary initiative of the training function is to increase the knowledge, skill and abilities and/or attitudes of civil servants and supervisors so that they can better perform their responsibilities and can achieve/meet both individual and organizational goals (Ricucci and Naff, 2008). Both new and existing civil servants need training to understand how to perform their tasks and to acquire new knowledge, skill and abilities-lifelong learning to cope up with changing work environment and respond to the dynamic public interests. Indeed, effective civil servant training is found vital to realize professionalized civil service. So, survey is administered to examine the practical challenges and effectiveness of training in Laelay_Adiabo Woreda.

Accordingly, four major determinant factors or indicator for effective employees' training; that is, training need assessment, adequacy of training, relevance of training and equal opportunity are employed for assessment. Hence, the frequency of level of agreement for each variable replied by the surveyed civil servants is presented below:

Table 3.5: Respondents Level of Agreement on Training Effectiveness

Level of agreement	Questions and Responses (Frequency and Percent)							
	Training need assessment		Adequacy of training		Relevance of training		Equal training opportunity	
	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Strongly disagree	94	32.4	102	35.2	95	32.8	106	36.6
Disagree	141	48.6	141	48.6	134	46.2	120	41.4
Neutral	31	10.7	21	7.2	32	11.0	40	13.7
Agree	13	4.5	15	5.2	19	6.6	17	5.9
Strongly agree	11	3.8	11	3.8	10	3.4	7	2.4
Total	290	100	290	100	290	100	290	100

Source: Field survey, 2013

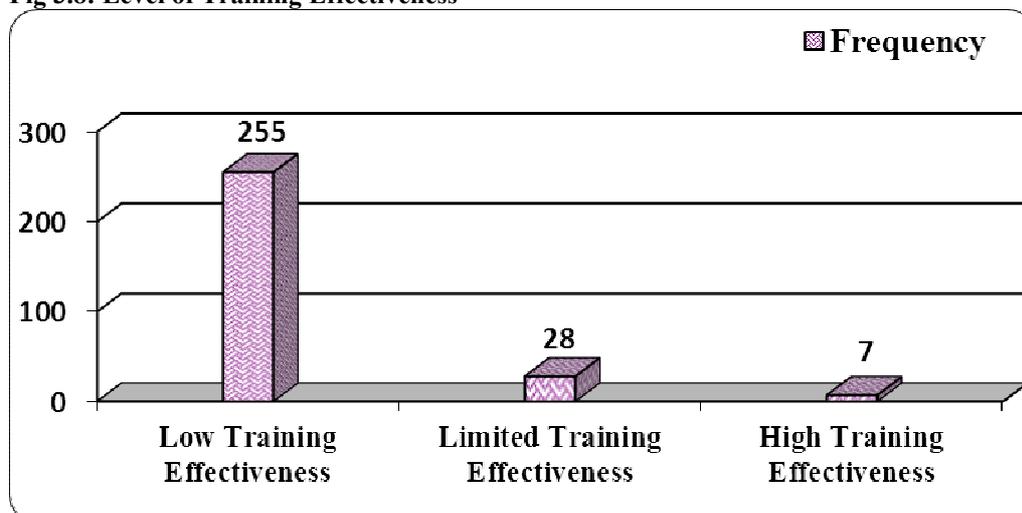
As it is revealed in the above Table 3.5, out of the total 290 surveyed civil servants, 94(32.4%) answered strongly disagree, 141(48.6%) answered disagree, 31(10.7%) respond neutral, 13(4.5%) answered agree, and 11(3.8%) answered strongly agree that there is training need assessment in the study woreda. This implies, the majority-81% of the total respondents disagreed and/or strongly disagreed, 10.7% are at the middle/neutral and only 8.3% are in favor.

Besides, in case of adequacy of training, out of the total 290 respondents, 102(35.2%), 141(48.6%), 21(7.2%), 15(5.2%), and 11(3.8%), replied strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree respectively that civil servants receive adequate training. This shows that, 83.8% of the respondents opposed the idea, 7.2% are at the mid, and the remaining 10% of the total respondents supported the idea that adequate training is given to civil servants.

For the relevance of the training given, out of the total 290 surveyed civil servants, 95(32.8%), 134(46.2%), 32(11%), 19(6.6%), and 10(3.4%) answered strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree that the training given to civil servants is relevant to perform their jobs, respectively. Hence, 79%, 11% and 10% of the total respondents are against, neutral and in support respectively. Further, out of the total 290 civil servants included in the assessment, 106(36.6%), 120(41.4%), 40(13.7%), 17(5.9%) and 7(2.4%) replied strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree and strongly agree respectively that all civil servants receive equal training opportunity. This implies that 78% of the respondents opposed, 13.7% of the respondents are in between, and only 8.3% of the respondents support the idea.

Further, to see the level of effectiveness of the training given to civil servants in the study Woreda, the responses of the above four indicators/variables are summarized together in to three major categories. Initially, the level of agreements were of five categories-strongly agree, agree neutral, disagree and strongly disagree and then points 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, was assigned respectively. Thus, since the variables/questions included are four, the total score lies between 20(highest training effectiveness) and 4(lowest training effectiveness). Accordingly, the effectiveness of the training delivered is grouped into three categories as: Low level of training effectiveness (4-10 points), Limited level of training effectiveness (11-15 points), and High level of training effectiveness (16-20 points). Thus it is analyzed using SPSS and the results are presented and discussed follows.

Fig 3.8: Level of Training Effectiveness



Source: field survey, 2013

The above Figure 3.8 illustrates the level of training effectiveness compiled from the responses of the four indicators/variables mentioned above. Accordingly, out of the total 290 surveyed civil servants, 255(87.9%)

replied low training effectiveness, 28(9.7%) limited training effectiveness, and 7(2.4%) answered high training effectiveness.

In addition, the key informant interviewees and civil servants participated in the focus group discussion exposed that; majority of the civil servants have knowledge, skill, and ability gap and need training to perform their tasks successfully. According to the head of the human resource, the implementation of both Business Process Reengineering (BPR) and Balanced Score Card (BSC) is disappointing, because of the poor civil servants training and awareness. In Tigray, the training function is decentralized up to Woreda level and every Woreda administration is expected to have training plan, identify training requirements, and organize or deliver adequate and relevant training to its civil servants in an equitable manner.

However, the data collected through focused group discussion shows that, most of the government offices in the Woreda do not have smart training plan and training need assessment (training audit). Most of the time, it is conducted blindly. The problem originates from the limited emphasis and concern that the leaders or political appointees give to civil servants training. Unlike the surveyed Woreda, in a modern or professional civil service system, sectors clearly identify number of trainees, the training needs, term of training and prepare the required resource to deliver the training. Besides, the training given is inadequate and is not relevant cannot fill the knowledge, skill and ability gap of the civil servants. The practice of training is highly linked with corruption or rent-seeking and political affiliation in the Woreda. Employees who are members of the political party are highly favored and given training priority. In the Woreda, there are civil servants never participated in training since their employment; while other receive frequently. Most of the time, trainees are selected by the will of their boss and the primary intention is to benefit them by the training allowance given. Moreover, no assessment and corrections is made after training.

Therefore, these findings demonstrate that the training function and/or practice in the study Woreda is ineffective and mismanage. Consequently, this situation become challenge for the civil service in promoting professionalism in such a way that the human resources or civil servants lack the desired competencies, knowledge, skill, and ability to perform their tasks satisfactorily and respond to the dynamic interests of the general public/customers.

3.4 Accountability in the Civil Service

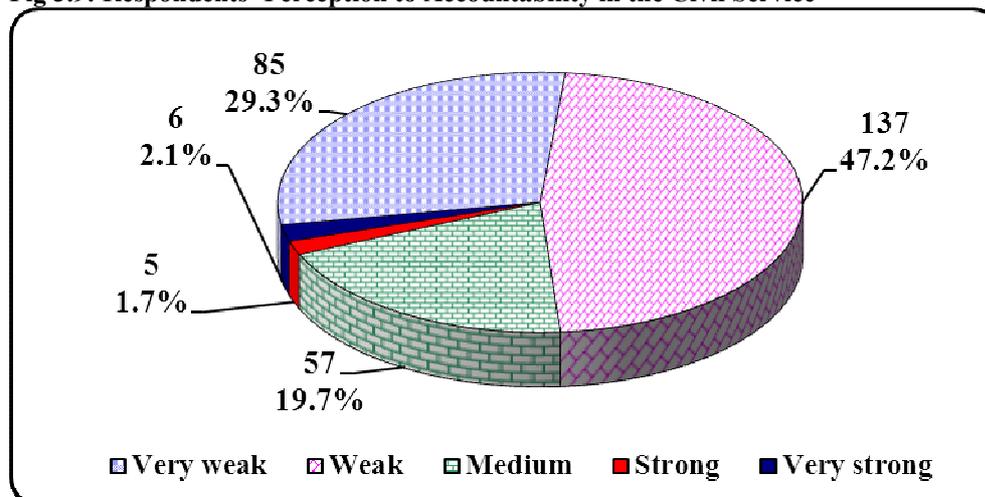
Accountability as defined by kernaghan and Langford (1990) is “the obligation to answer for the fulfillment of assigned and accepted duties within the framework of the authority and resource provided”. The system accountability in the civil service is sustained only when all actor are liable for their actions and receive consequences accordingly-answerability and consequence. Likewise, civil servants are accountable for the quality of their service, for carrying out assigned duties and for achieving policies, programs and plans of the government of the day in accordance with law, prevailing constraints, direction/guideline from their boss, and the available limited authority and resources at hand. In Tigray as a whole and in the study Woreda in specific, civil servants are internally accountable to their boss and externally to the Woreda council and/or the political appointees elected by the public. The internal mechanism of accountability for the civil servants in the study Woreda and the region a as whole include mainly performance appraisal on the basis of results, internal audit system and reports, among others for the accomplishment of specified tasks.

Hence, the system of accountability is linked with professionalism in the civil service and enables to effectively and efficiently utilize financial and human resources that results in better accomplishment of government policies and strategies and brings about sustainable development and welfare of the general public (ibid,1990).

Taking this concept in mind, assessment of challenges to the system of accountability in the civil service in general and the civil servants in particular is conducted and the results/findings obtained through survey questionnaire, interview, and focused group discussion is presented, discussed and interpreted below.

Hence, a survey questionnaire is administered to see the strength /weakness of the system of accountability from the civil servants point of view, and is presented below:

Fig 3.9: Respondents' Perception to Accountability in the Civil Service



Source: Field survey, 2013

The above Figure 3.9 shows that, out of the total 290 surveyed civil servants, 85(29.3%) answered the system of accountability in the civil service is very weak, 137(47.2%) respond weak, 57(19.7%) answered medium, 5(1.7%) replied strong, and the rest 6(2.1%) respond the system of accountability is very strong. This implies that, 76.5% of the total respondents believe accountability is at its lowest stage. 29.7% of the respondents believe accountability is somehow realized and only 3.8% of the total respondents noticed accountability is satisfactorily thriven in the civil service.

Thus, these results demonstrate that, as majority of the respondents agreed, the system of accountability seems deteriorated and the civil servants are not accountable for their actions as per the desired manner. Hence, the way of accounting the civil servants and the origins of the challenge to the system of accountability in the civil service and its effects on promoting professionalism has been presented, discussed and interpreted as follows.

3.4.1 The Council of the Woreda as a Safeguard to Accountability

As discussed above, in democratic states, the legislative body of the government has the duty to supervise the actions of the executive branch. Likewise, the civil servants as parts of the executive are externally accountable to the Woreda council. The Woreda council is expected to evaluate the appropriateness of the annual plan of each sector and approve budget requirements and evaluates the implementation progress in the regular meetings and through reporting mechanism.

However, Participants of the FGD explained that the Woreda council is not in a position to play its roles and/or duties and responsibilities as promised. According to the Woreda council speaker, the major challenges facing to the council includes that the head, vice head and other staffs of the council are members of the political party and are engaged in partisan activities and sent by the political masters to Tabias for seasonal campaign activities-no room and time to perform own duties. Besides, the council lacks autonomy and freedom to dispose its responsibilities. It is driven and its actions are solely determined by the Woreda cabinet in general and the Woreda head administrator.

Moreover, majority of the members of the Woreda council are farmers, Woreda cabinets and civil servants. Therefore, during adoption of the annual plan and evaluation of its accomplishments, the farmers do not have the capacity to understand what is going on, and then simply raise their hands and adopt everything that the Woreda head administrator desires. In addition to that, the council is not neutral and is facing chronic challenge to liable the political appointees and the civil servants; because, significant number of civil servants and political appointees are members of the Woreda council. The severity of the situation is presented and discussed below.

Table 3.6: Number of Civil Servants and Political Appointees who are Members of the Woreda Council

Total number of Council members	Numbers of civil servants members of council (1)	% of civil servants (2)	Woreda cabinet members of council (3)	% of Political appointees (4)	Total	
					1+3	2+4
258	57	22%	28	11%	85	33%

Source: Field Survey, 2013.

The above Table 3.6 depicts that out of the total 258 members of the Woreda council, 57(22%) are

civil servants and 28(11%) are Woreda cabinets. This shows that 85 or 33% of the total member of the Woreda council are executives assumed to be accountable to independent Woreda council but now they are accountable to themselves.

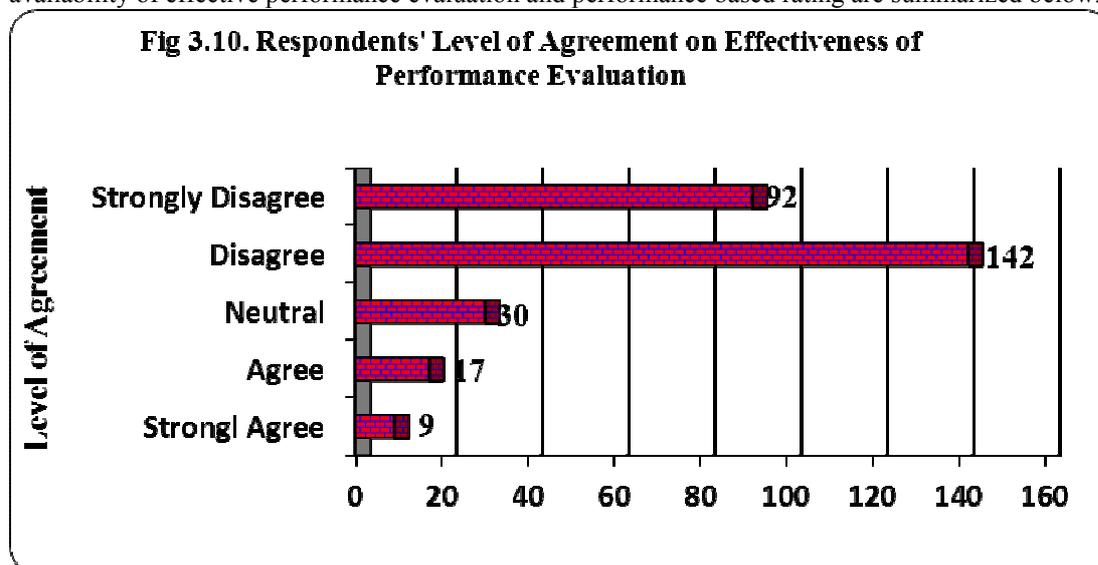
These situations become big challenge for the Woreda council not to appropriately dispose its institutional responsibilities. Both Woreda cabinet members and the civil servants have the potential and/or capacity to twist the decisions that negatively affect their interests. The Woreda council speaker exposed that, the failure occurred and sustained only because the political masters need it. The council is “*Toothless Lion*” and does not have the capacity and the required posture to take legal measures in case the civil servants or political appointees found guilty.

Moreover, according to the participants of the focus group discussion, over politicization and political partisanship collapsed the system of accountability in the civil service. Civil servants who are members of political party and in patronage affiliation are loosely accountable to their actions. Although all civil servants are externally accountable to the higher political appointees, the patronage network give them the freedom and remain untouched no matter how they perform their tasks. Civil servants who are under performers and even who committed guilty are entertaining security of tenure and no measure is taken on them.

The implication of the above findings is that, the external accountability of the civil servants’ is not insured mainly due to the political patronage or over politicization of the civil service, weak separation of power- the legislative and executive organs of the government in the study Woreda are merged. Therefore, these become chronic challenge for the civil service not to be professional in the manner that civil servants are not liable for their actions and then malpractices would flourish, instability and frustration is heightened and qualified professionals could leave the civil service.

3.4.2 Civil Servants Performance Evaluation as a Safeguard to Accountability

As discussed above, civil servants are internally accountable to their immediate boss through regular reporting and performance evaluation mechanisms. Civil servants should regularly report their job performances, and in turn the boss/supervisor is expected to evaluate and rate the performance of civil servants comparing planned activities versus completed and evaluation should be supplement by consequences based on the nature of performance. Therefore, the responses of surveyed civil servants on level of agreements concerning with the availability of effective performance evaluation and performance based rating are summarized below.



Source: Field Survey, 2012.

The above Figure 3.10 illustrates, out of the total 290 surveyed civil servants, 92(31.7%) answered strongly disagree, 142(49%) answered disagree, 30(10.3%) respond neutral, 17(5.9%) replied agree, and 9(3.1%) answered strongly agree. When we summarize in to three levels, 80.7% of the total respondents said that there is no effective performance evaluation and performance based employee rating, 10.3% of the respondents are neutral and the remaining, 9% of the total surveyed respondents are in favor of the idea.

Therefore, the findings imply that civil servants are not satisfied with their performance evaluation and are not rated based on their performance results. This also demonstrates that the system of accounting the civil servants aligning with answerability and consequence mechanism is undermined in the study Woreda.

On top of that, civil servants’ performance should be evaluated periodically-at the right time specified for varied reasons. Primarily, performance results help to shows the level of achievements of the planned activities and to act or take measures according to the nature of the performance results. Moreover, performance

result is used as a basis to rate and/or liable them. Hence, the extent of periodic evaluation of civil servants' performance is also assessed.

Table 3.7: Periodic Evaluation of Civil Servants' Performance

Period of performance evaluation		Total civil servants	Actual evaluated	% of evaluated	Total unevaluated	% of un evaluated
2011/12 (2004 E.C)	1 st semester	1340	625	46.6%	715	53.4%
	2 nd semester	1340	804	60%	536	40%
2012/13 (2005 E.C)	1 st semester	1396	280	20%	1116	80%

Source: Human Resource Department, 2013.

The above Table 3.7 shows; in the year 2011/12, 53.4% of the civil servants are unevaluated in the first semester. In the same year, second semester, 40% of the total civil servants are unevaluated. In the fiscal year 2012/13, the job performance of the 80% of the total civil servants is unevaluated. Further, the major challenges facing to the evaluation process and its consequences and implication to accountability and professionalism in the civil service has to be examined.

As the data gathered from interviewee and focused group discussion shows; the performance of the civil servants could not be evaluated appropriately at the right time mainly because of campaign centered discharge of activities and political patronage. The supervisors-evaluators and the civil servants are placed or sent to clustered Tabias by the Woreda administrators to engage in campaign activities like agricultural input distribution, health, water and sanitation, partisan activities and other seasonal programs . Although civil servants have agreed appropriate plans on hand, they are forced to engage in the campaign and perform activities not included in their plan. Therefore, the evaluation process is highly exposed to delay and bias. Moreover, the evaluation is hampered by party-affiliation and malpractices. The performance evaluation criteria employed are civil servants level of participation in the campaign activities and political partisanship activities. Those employees who have good political affiliation; no matter how they perform their ordinary activities, are rewarded, promoted; receive frequent training and development opportunities; whereas those non partisan or non affiliated civil servants, with remarkable task accomplishment suffer from isolations and frustrations. Practically, what matters is the intimacy and affiliation that the civil servants have with their boss and the political masters in the study Woreda.

Therefore, the implication of the above findings is that the performance evaluation is not carried out in a manner to differentiate or rate civil servants based on their ordinary task accomplishments-“the horse and the donkey are not differentiated”. As a result, the system of accountability is collapsed and become challenge to promote civil service professionalism in the study Woreda. The spirit of competition for better competencies and performance among the civil servants is deteriorated and professional civil servants are forced to leave their job.

3.5 Opportunities to Promote Professionalism in the Civil Service

As there are challenges, there are also opportunities to promote and insure professionalism in the civil service. The very complex nature of the civil service system makes it difficult to control and assess all the factors or variables positively or adversely affect it smooth functions. In the previous parts, the challenges facing to the civil service professionalism is examined from the merit based recruitment and selection, promotion, neutrality, training effectiveness and system of accountability point of view. On the contrary, in this part the major opportunities that are available in the external and/or internal environment to promote and realize professionalism in the civil service are addressed. The findings and discussion are made based on the data obtained from interview, surveyed questionnaire, focus group discussion and review of secondary sources. The following pillar opportunities are presented based on the opinions, attitudes obtained from the questionnaire, interview, FGD, and Secondary data.

3.5.1. Civil Service Rules and Regulations

As a promising initiative, the federal government of Ethiopia has adopted varied kinds of rules, regulations, guidelines and/or proclamations to keep the civil service system professional one. Among the many, the Federal Civil Servant Proclamation No.515/2007 is predominant one which is currently in use; adopted mainly to strengthen the justice system so as to give civil servants better protection and to effectively and efficiently manage human and financial resources in the civil service system. Likewise, the Tigray National Regional State has also adopted improved civil servants proclamation No. 189/2010/11(No. 189/2003 E.C). The purpose of the proclamation is to provide legal procedures to civil servants rights, responsibilities, and benefits. The proclamation also serves as a framework and/or pillar to guidelines or directives in the civil service of the region. Besides, the Regional State has been produced and put into operation different kinds of directives like; recruitment, selection and promotion, training and development directives, compliance handling,

3.5.2 Civil Service Reform as an Opportunity

The current Ethiopian government has taken number of measures to change the socio economic and political nature of the country and has been engaging in reforming the civil service for the last ten years (AH Consulting, 2010). The major reform measures considered as opportunities to advance the performance of the civil service system includes the five civil service sub-reform programs (Tilaye, 2007). These are:

- Top Management system reform sub program ;
- Human Resource Management System Reform Sub Program ;
- Service Delivery improvement Reform Sub Program ;
- Government Expenditure and Control reform Sub Program, and Ethics.

Therefore, these reform measures are strongly believed to reorganize and change the traditional working environment in the civil service and could significantly contribute in insuring professional civil service in a manner that it enables to effectively and efficiently use public financial and human resources.

3.5.3 The Growth and Transformation Plan

The current growth and transformation plan of the country is expected to push the country one step forward in socio-Economic, political and other sectors. Besides, the plan has included major pillars that carry the overall activities. Among these, building the capacities of the executives in general and the civil servants in particular is give due attention. Therefore, this will contribute to enhance the Knowledge, Skills and Attitude/Ability of civil servants and insure advanced civil service system that has the posture to implement the policies and strategies the government of the day.

3.5.4 Opening and Expansion of Universities and Training Institutions

The opening of different government and private training institutions and universities can play significant role in maintaining professionalism in the civil service. These universities and institutions have the capacity produce professionals who can be recruited and selected in the civil service. Moreover, government training institution and universities like the Ethiopian Civil Service University plays key role in building the capacities of the public sector in general and the civil service in particular.

Therefore, the concerned bodies and/or stakeholders in the civil service system need giving due consideration and exploit the opportunities mentioned to realize professionalism.

3.5 Conclusions

From the overall presentation, discussions, and analysis of the study, the challenges facing to civil service and impeding professionalism were due to violation of merit-based recruitment, selection and promotion which resulted because of political affiliation, mass employment and corruption (nepotism and kickbacks). Besides, lack of civil service and civil servants neutrality, poor training and development practices and poor system of accountability were part of the challenges. On the other hand, Government initiatives in reforming the civil service, civil service governing proclamations and the opening and expansion of universities and institutions can be considered as opportunities to promote professionalism in the civil service. But, its result was reversed because of these reasons.

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