Practices and Challenges of Good Governance Packages in Bule Hora Town Water Supply, West Guji Zone, Ethiopia

Abdisa Olkeba Jima*

Abstract

The issue of good governance has become a concern of scholars across the world. Developing countries like Ethiopia are affected by the challenges of good governance because of weak mitigation mechanisms. Specifically, the issues of water governance have gotten the attention of scholars recently. This research scrutinizes the Bule Hora town's status of water and the practices and challenges of good governance in the water supply. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods. A researcher selected a sample of 99 participants from Bule Hora town households through a systematic random sampling technique. Findings show that the Bule Hora town's water coverage is 53.3%. The inefficiency of labor and ineffectiveness of the office to supply sufficient water challenge the town's water supply good governance. Moreover, the participation of the community in water governance could be higher besides problems of electric fluctuation, shortage of skilled workforce and manager rotation, financial constraints, and political interference in the water governance activity affecting the water provision of the town. It concluded that the level of effectiveness could be higher because Bule Hora town cannot supply pure water for residents with minimum cost, effort, and time. It recommends that the town diversify the water sources to increase the inhabitants' effective and efficient water supply. Further, the town needs to raise the participation of residents in water governance and activity.

Keywords: *Practices, Challenge, Good governance, Water supply, Bule Hora, Ethiopia*

Introduction

The term governance is an elusive term. For this reason, it is a multifaceted concept (Santiso, 2001; Rogers & Hall, 2003). It is the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage country affairs at all levels (APRM & AGA (2019). It is also related to the role of national, sub-national, and transnational authorities, companies, and non-profit organizations in tackling wicked issues in the policymaking and implementation process (Ysa *et al.*, 2014). It implements socially acceptable resource allocation effectively, thus an intensely political activity (Rogers & Hall, 2003). Sharma (2007) explains that countries have the responsibility to improve governance. World Wide Governance measured governance using six dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, government effectiveness,

* Bule Hora University, Ethiopia. Email: olkebabdisa@gmail.com

regulatory quality, maintenance law, and control of corruption (Kaufmann *et al.*, 2009; Kaufmann *et al.*, 2011). The six new aggregate measures capturing various governance dimensions provide evidence of a causal relationship between better governance to better development outcomes (Kaufmann *et al.*, 1999). However, the governance challenges are political market imperfections, policy incoherencies, levels of performance oversight or monitoring, challenges for collective action, and moral hazard (Jones *et al.*, 2014).

Nowadays, good governance has attracted the attention of many scholars. Good governance means different things to different organizations and actors within these organizations (Gisselquist, 2012; Grindle, 2010; Holmberg *et al.*, 2009; Wani, 2014). The agenda of good governance has grown longer over time (Grindle, 2004). It correlated with the potential to deliver significant improvements in living standards (Sharma, 2007). Consequently, international organizations such as the World Bank and the United Nations have emphasized the importance of good governance and sound institutions from a development perspective (Holmberg *et al.*, 2009). For donor institutions such as World Bank and IMF, good governance encompasses democracy and representation, human rights, the rule of law, efficient and effective public management, transparency, and accountability, developmental objectives, and a particular variety of economic and political institutions (Gisselquist, 2012). It allowed international agencies to discuss and engage more in politics (Grindle, 2010). Building and strengthening these institutional endowments is a precondition for good governance (Sharma, 2007).

Favoring a good governance agenda *vis-à-vis* development was popular in international development discourses in the post-World War II era. In developing nations, economic boost relies on effective good governance practice indicators (Peters & Pierre, 2012). Good governance is the best mechanism to enhance economic, political, and social development in developing countries. It helps to address the voice of the poorest; and accommodates the need and interests of the vulnerable groups in the decision-making process over the distribution of development resources (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2007). However, the argument revolves around the point that good governance is a necessary precondition for economic development; and without it, developing nations cannot reduce poverty (Khan, 2007; Uddin, 2019).

The African Union aims to promote democracy and good governance among its member states (APRM & AGA, 2019). African countries, measured by the world governance indicators, have a

low performance of good governance; and this, in turn, resulted in stifling their development. Based on an African governance survey conducted by the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) for 40 African countries from 2010 to 2013, Ethiopia's performance in accountability, transparency, law, efficiency, and effectiveness indices of good governance has fallen compared to that of other African countries (IIAG, 2013). Ethiopian governance scored 47.6%, considering safety and law, participation and human rights, sustainable economic opportunity, and human development (IIAG, 2013). This score is below half, which shows Ethiopian governance is the least compared to other African countries.

Water governance refers to the range of political, social, economic, and administrative systems in place to develop and manage water resources and the delivery of water services at different levels of society (Global Water Partnership, 2002 in Rogers & Hall, 2003). Basic principles such as open and transparent, inclusive and communicative, coherent and integrative, equitable and ethical, responsive and sustainable, and efficient and accountable are the core elements of managing effective water governance (Adelana, 2016; Rogers & Hall, 2003). The public sector provides over 90% of domestic water and wastewater services worldwide (Rogers & Hall, 2003). A range of public, private, and non-profit providers afford water (Jones *et al.*, 2014). However, the water supply does not share the qualities of the pure public good. Local authorities may lack sufficient power, resources, and incentives to effectively coordinate the different agencies and providers involved in supplying water. Water is a particularly politically salient resource, and there may be pressure on local politicians to protect access to water in a city. Also, the poorest households do not get water due to the cost of water services. Nevertheless, the proximity and quality of services in urban may be better than in rural areas (Jones *et al.*, 2014).

The main factors that challenge water resources management in Sub-Saharan Africa are the rapid urbanizing of cities, city development, urban infrastructure and implications on groundwater, and the hydro-geological setting of selected cities (Adelana, 2016). How to afford enough water to support the city's development is always a challenge. In Ethiopia, the practice of good governance in the provision of service delivery was poor (Nega *et al.*, 2020). The 1995 Ethiopian Constitution introduced the basic principles of good governance. However, the achievements made so far and the performance in good governance remained unsatisfactory. Taking this into

account, Ethiopia has also incorporated the good governance agenda as its core principle in the Growth and Transformation Plan-I (MoFED, 2009). Albeit Ethiopia has abundant water resources, the country faces challenges in efficiently developing and managing its water resources (Koyra & Mesene, 2020). The lack of experts, absence of ownership, low waste management system, institutional fragmentations, weak institutional capacities, and absence of accountabilities challenge good governance in Ethiopia, for example, Borkena River (Dessie *et al.*, 2019). Besides, Ethiopia's water supply condition is low; most of the population does not have access to safe and sufficient water supply facilities (McCornick *et al.*, 2003). About 33 million Ethiopians lack access to an improved water source (Water.org, 2020).

The lack of effective service delivery, transparency, responsiveness, participation, and accountability mechanisms over services hinders the prevalence of good governance (Yirga, 2010). By the same token, assigning ineffective, non-committed, and unqualified leaders to a position challenges good governance in the Oromia Region (Abagissa, 2019). Furthermore, incompetent, inefficient, and ineffective monitoring and evaluation systems were the main factors that contributed to the ineffectiveness of leadership practices of the town administration (Abagissa, 2019; Tikue, 2014). That needs the attention of scholars to investigate the challenges of good governance in the urban water supply.

Different scholars researched good governance challenges concerning land, the public sector, and town administrations in Ethiopia using different parameters - transparency, accountability, and participation. Meretu (2015) researched the prevalence of good governance in public sectors in Yirga Cheffe town administration, Gedeo Zone, Ethiopia, by using four indicators - transparency, accountability, participation, and equality, and found that the institutions have not been effective in any of the four good governance indicators. Furthermore, Yirga (2010) researched an assessment of the prevalence of good governance in public sectors in Debre Berhan town public institutions in Ethiopia using similar parameters that Meretu (2015) used. The researcher concluded that service users need to be more engaged in service-providing institutions, especially service delivery mechanisms for women and disadvantaged groups who were found to be performing poorly. Similarly, a study conducted by Tikue (2014) entitled an assessment of the prevalence of good governance in land administrations in Naeder Adet town, Tigray Region, used three different indicators of good governance - transparency, accountability, and participation. She found that good governance performance is hindered by the lack of

qualified manpower and inadequate resources, weak coordination among stakeholders, weak implementation capacity, weak public awareness coupled with a weak education system, absence of strong monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and prevalence of corruption.

However, the challenges of good governance packages on urban water supply have yet to get much attention. Consequently, this research intends to describe the practices and challenges of good governance packages in Bule Hora town water supply. The researcher employs the UNESCAP (2008) comprehensive parameters of good governance - accountability, efficiency, effectiveness, equality, participation, responsiveness, and transparency to scrutinize the Bule Hora town water supply office's practices and challenges of good governance.

Theoretical framework

Governance theories have to do with the various perspectives of governance and how they evolve (Ekundayo, 2017). Governance is not a recent phenomenon. It spanned many years. It also evolved from different theories. However, the researcher discussed interpretive theory, public choice theory, new public management theory, and good governance theory. The interpretive model focuses on meaning that shapes the actions and institutions and how they do. The model enables people to act in their beliefs and preferences, and we cannot read off people's beliefs and choices from the objective of facts about them (Bevir & Rhodes, 2002). This theory describes and interprets how many people conduct their lives (Dent, Khin, & Ismail, 2013)

Duncan Black founded public choice theory during the late 1940s in a sequence of papers primarily focused on voting within committees and elections (Rowley, 2008b). It is an inherently interdisciplinary field of economics and politics (Mueller, 2008; Rowley, 2008b). Public choice is defined as an optimal voting rule to explain why any leader rules for making the collective choice to escape (Rowley, 2008a). The theory states that government officials behave in a manner that maximizes their gain rather than furthering the public's interests. It is consistent with historically accepted approaches to economic analysis. Public choice adherents have implemented basic economic tenets into political science analysis (Schuster, n.d.). The theory focuses on the fragmentation and concentration of the tiers and units (George, 1997).

New public management (NPM) theory is the practical result of the private idea being better than

the public (Kapucu, 2006). It has been a dominant theory in public administration since 1980 (Fakhrul, 2015; Gruening, 2001; Hope, 2001; Kapucu, 2006). Issues like private-sector change and attack on the public sectors, economic theories and changing situations, technological change, the transformation of the public sector, production performance of public sectors, and professional management caused the emergency of NPM (Fakhrul, 2015). The main features of NPM are decentralization, strategic planning and management, separation of provision and production, competition, separation of politics and administration, and performance measurement. The changed management style, freedom to manage, improved accounting, personnel management, user charges, improved financial management, and more information technology featured NPM (Gruening, 2001). The NPM offers fundamental lessons and analyses for public management throughout the world because it is related to re-engineering the public sector. It is linked to the notion of trust in economic rationalism through the value creation for public money (Hope, 2001). Also, it provides services that citizens value to increase the autonomy of public managers. Further, it rewards organizations and individuals for enhancing the efficiency of public sector production (Fakhrul, 2015).

Governance can make a significant contribution to contemporary political theory (Peters, 2012). The good governance theory is associated with governing methods and structures in developing countries. It is a governance theory that sets some basic principles according to which a good government must run. Its principles include accountability, control, responsiveness, transparency, public participation, economy, and efficiency (Ekundayo, 2017). The concept of governance has become fashionable over the past several decades and is one of the most commonly used terms in political science. It integrates much of contemporary political science. Effective governance is provided with the involvement of state actors. Governance is a political concept that requires thinking about the forms of public action (Peters, 2012). It is a valuable contribution to our understanding of political life and especially to understanding policy choices (Ibid). Governance theories are also beneficial beyond the usual pale of studies of government or state-society interactions and can be a means of approaching issues such as failed states (Risse and Lehmkuhl, 2010, cited in peters 2012). The impartiality of institutions that exercise government authority explains the quality of governance (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008).

Good governance creates reliability, predictability, and accountability (Addink, 2018). In this research, the researcher used good governance theory because it enables the researcher to

describe the good governance element, like the effective and efficient water supply in Bule Hora town and equal distribution of water to residents. Thus, the researcher describes the level of accountability, transparency, and residents' participation in Bule Hora town's water and energy office.

Methodology of the Study

This research employed mixed approaches (both qualitative and quantitative methods). All methods have limitations; thus, using mixed research methods can solve the shortcoming (Creswell, 2003). A descriptive case study research design is used to describe the practices and challenges of good governance packages in Bule Hora town water supply. Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and questionnaires were applied to collect primary data. Semi-structured interviews were administered to the administrator of Bule Hora town's water and energy office, workers of the water supply office of the town, and local elders (*Abbaa Gadaa*, religious leaders, and locally respected elders). Three focus group discussions (one FGD for each kebele in the town) were administered to residents of Bule Hora town. Bule Hora town has three kebeles (Ejersa Fora, Burka Mididi, and Arda Biya Kebeles). Each FGD consists of ten participants. Questionnaires were also distributed to residents of the town. Secondary data include books, articles, magazines, reports, and archives applied to triangulate with primary data.

The target population of this study is the dwellers of Bule Hora town. According to the Bule Hora town report, 6507 households live in the town. The sample size of these populations was determined through a systematic random sampling technique by using the (Yemene.T., 1967) formula, i.e.,

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

Where,

N=total number of the target population

n=sample size

e=level of precision=0.1

Accordingly, the sample size of Bule Hora town residents is $n = \frac{6507}{1+6507(0.1)2} = 99$.

To triangulate the finding of the quantitative method with the qualitative method, the researcher selected 10 participants from the residents of each kebeles of the town via purposive sampling techniques - 30 from Bule Hora town (for FGDs). Three participants from local elders, three from the Bule Hora water and energy office, and two from *Abbaa Gadaas* were selected purposively for interview. Generally, the total sample of this study is 137 participants. For all participants, an attempt was made to balance the gender of participants.

To analyze this study, the researcher employed a multi-stage that involves qualitative and quantitative data analysis methods. The researcher analyzed qualitative data through thematic and content analysis. The frequency distribution, SPSS version 20, was used to analyze the quantitative methods. Using frequency distribution, the researcher determined what number of the population agreed and disagreed with the respective questions. Finally, the researcher cross-checked information obtained from the quantitative method with a qualitative method to triangulate the data.

Findings and Discussions

Status of Water Supply in Bule Hora Town

Interview results with the Bule Hora town water and energy office administrator showed that the town's current water coverage is 53.3%. The sources of the water supply in Bule Hora town are groundwater. Accordingly, the town constructed eight wells to supply water to the residents. However, one is dysfunctional nowadays. "In the Bule Hora town, the water is moved by electric power from the sources," interview results with a water and energy office expert. But it is distributed to consumers by gravity forces (as indicated in Figure 1).

Fig. 1: Flow of water in Bule Hora town

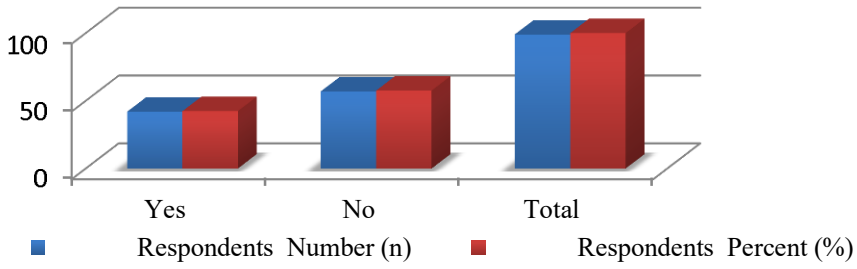
Source: Own computation based on field data, 2022

"In Bule Hora town, the building of squatter houses causes a shortage of water. When the town constructed water, the town had only three Kebeles. But the number of Kebeles has reached eight currently. As a result, water shortages occur in many Kebeles," Bule Hora's water and energy

office administrator stated in the interview. The town needs more water to supply those inhabitants. The building of squatter houses causes a water shortage because when the town provided the water facility, the current population was not considered. For this reason, water shortages occur in the town. Jones *et al.* (2014) present that local authorities may need more power, resources, and incentives to effectively coordinate the different agencies and providers involved in supplying water.

Similarly, Bule Hora resident focus group discussants claimed that there is a water shortage in the town. They noticed that the water distribution in the town was unfair and unbalanced. The focus group discussants of Ejersa Fora and Burka Mididi Kebeles complained that they could get pure water frequently within a week. However, the residents of Arda Biya Kebele could get more water than residents of other Kebeles. They could get it at least three to four times per week. The interview results with *Abbaa Gadaa*, religious leader, and local elders also showed that the water distribution could be fairer among all Kebeles in the town because of a lack of good governance and efficient water and energy office. As indicated in Figure 2 below, from 99 participants (households), the majority of them, 57.58%, responded that they do not have access to pipeline water in Bule Hora town. In contrast, only 42.42% of households can access pipeline water at their houses. That exhibits that many residents in Bule Hora town have no pipeline in their houses. Those households get water from the public watershed and from neighbors that have pipeline water.

Fig2: Accessability of pipe water to Bule Hora town residents



Source: Own computation based on field data, 2022

Local elders' interview results and resident focus group discussions with all kebeles residents showed that water is not distributed equally among all kebeles in Bule Hora town. The town's water and energy office administrator also admitted to the water shortage. He replied that the pipeline distribution differences caused an imbalance in water distribution. In the town, two types of pipes distribute water. Those are new pipes and old pipes. Residents who access water through new pipelines get more water than those who access old ones. The finding of this research showed a wide gap between the supplied water and the existing population in Bule Hora town. For this reason, water is not distributed to all residents daily. The town distributed water by shift.

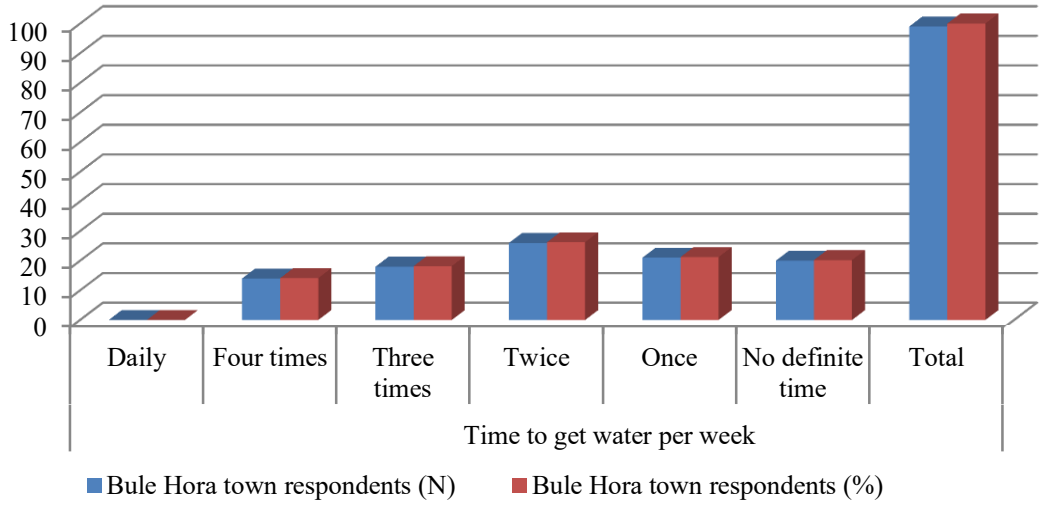
Figure 3 shows that Bule Hora town's residents need access to water daily. Most of the participants, 26.26%, in Bule Hora town get water twice a week. It follows that 21.21% of participants in Bule Hora town responded that they could get water once a week. That shows that nearly half percent of participants get water either once or twice per week. That challenged the livelihoods of the residents.

The Bule Hora town's water and energy office workers and administrators admitted to water shortage. The interview results with the water and energy office workers and the administrator revealed that the water status in Bule Hora town is about 50%. The total population of Bule Hora town is estimated to be 166,750. The Bule Hora town water and energy office administrator noticed that one person gets 80 liters per day, albeit they distribute water by shift. But this data contradicts data collected from the residents because the majority of the residents responded that they could get water twice a week frequently. The water and energy office administrator of the Bule Hora town summarized:

> *The causes of the unequal distribution and shortage of water are the high migration of people from rural areas to Bule Hora town, the availability of different NGOs, the establishment of Bule Hora University, and the opening of the Bule Hora teacher's college. Additionally, the town has become the capital city of the West Guji Zone since 2017. The town did not consider the three projects when it constructed the water.*

Adelana (2016) depicts that the rapidly urbanizing cities, city development, urban infrastructure, implications on groundwater, and hydro-geological setting of selected cities are the main factors that constrain water resources management in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Fig. 3: Frequency of getting water of residents in Bule Hora town



Source: Own computation based on field data, 2022

Practice and Status of Good Governance in Bule Hora Town's Water Supply

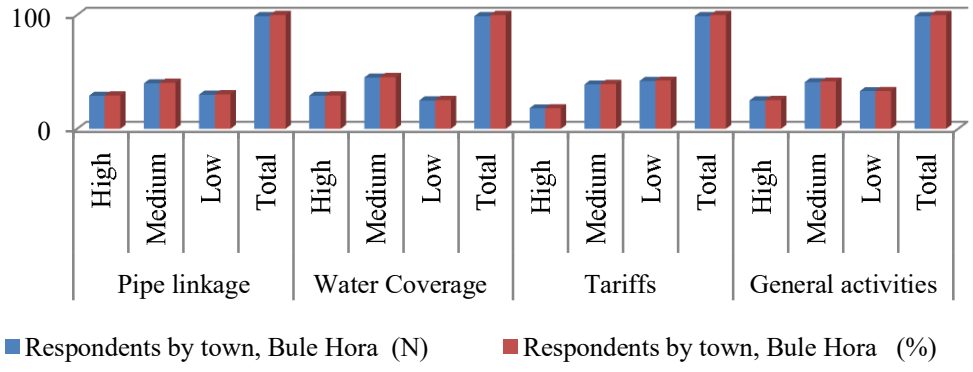
Most scholars define good governance as the proper use of public resources. In this research, good governance is defined as a mechanism of planning, implementing, monitoring, and evaluating water supply activities through the proper use of public resources. The central elements of good governance are usually eight. However, for this research, the researcher used only six pillars based on UNESCAP (2008) - transparency, accountability, equality, participation, responsiveness, and efficiency.

Transparency

Transparency is the clearness of all activities to water users in the Bule Hora town water supply office. IIAG (2013) summarizes that Ethiopia's performance in transparency indices of good governance has fallen compared to other African countries. The Bule Hora household focus group discussants showed transparency level is medium in the town's water supply office. However, the Bule Hora town households claimed that transparency status is low in water tariffs because there are no standardized rules to set the tariffs. For this reason, some residents are obliged to pay more money on water bills although they get little water.

As indicated in Figure 4, the statuses and levels of transparency in Bule Hora town's water and energy office differ based on the kinds of services. Regarding pipe linkage, the majority of participants, 40.40%, responded that the level of transparency is a medium in the Bule Hora town water pipe linkage. And the majority of the participants, 45.46%, in Bule Hora town responded that the transparency level is medium in water coverage and supply. Concerning tariffs, most participants, 42.42%, responded that tariff transparency is low in the Bule Hora town water sector. Finally, the level of general activities transparency is medium in the Bule Hora town because 41.41% of participants responded that the level is medium.

Fig.4: Levels of transparency in Bule Hora town water supply office



Source: Own computation based on the field data, 2022

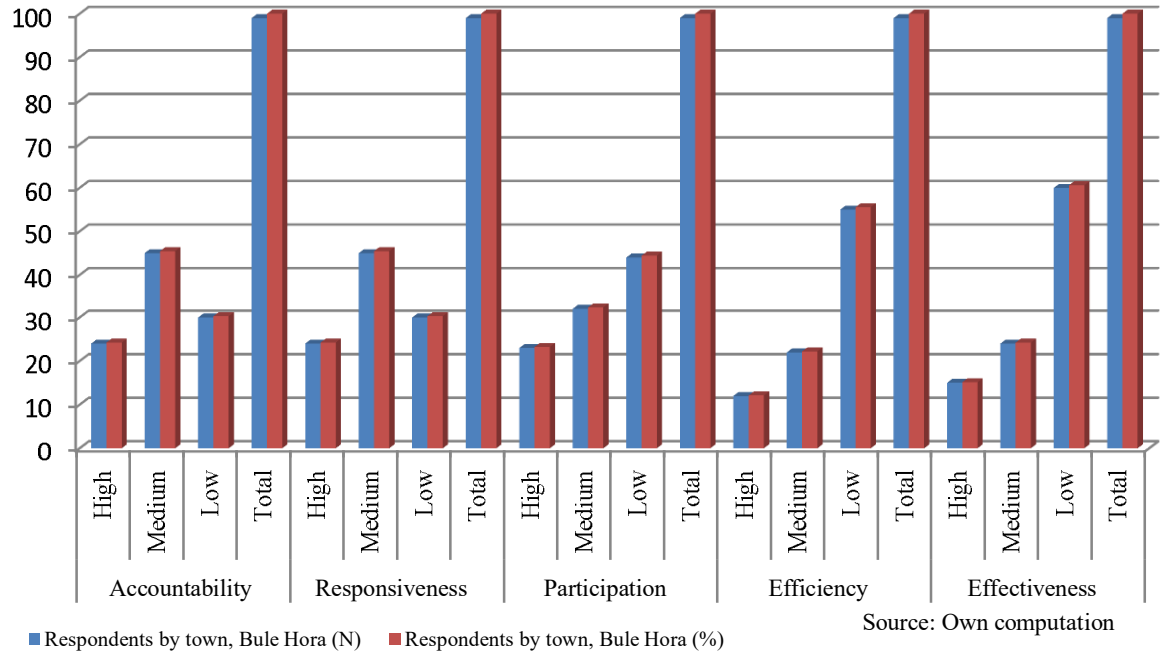
Accountability

Accountability is the Bule Hora town's water and energy office workers and administrators responsible for their failures. And yet, Bule Hora's focus group discussion results with residents showed that the accountability level is medium in the town. For the workers, who link pipe, accountability is low in the offices of the town. Those workers ask for money to stretch a new pipeline and repair the broken pipe. Dessie *et al.* (2019) remark that the absence of accountability challenges good governance in Borkena River, Ethiopia. But the Bule Hora town experts' interview results indicated that all workers are accountable for their failures. They added that the concrete complaint that made the workers responsible has yet to come to the office.

The qualitative finding of this research is consistent with the quantitative. Of the total sampled participants, the majority (as indicated in Figure 5), 45.46%, in Bule Hora town responded that the accountability level is medium in the town's water and energy office. From that, it can be

inferred that the accountability level is medium. As a result, attention has to be given to improving the levels of accountability in the town.

Fig.5: Levels of accountability, responsibility, participation, efficiency & effectiveness in Bule Hora town's water supply office



Source: Own computation

Responsiveness

Responsiveness is the process of giving necessary and sufficient answers to the households compliant who raise the water problem in Bule Hora town. Bule Hora town's water and energy office's interview results disclosed there were no organized complaints raised. However, the interview results from *Abbaa Gadaas*, elders, and focus group discussions with the town's households showed that the level of responsiveness could be higher because the workers are unwilling to accept the complaint. They raised compliances and questions concerning the tariffs and coverage of water. Yirga (2010) concludes that the lack of responsiveness mechanisms over services hinders the prevalence of good governance. Nevertheless, the office administrator denied the questions the households raised. But the administrator assured the researcher that there needed to be an organized and formal structure to solve the compliance.

As indicated in Figure 5, out of the total sampled participants, the majority of the participants responded that the responsiveness level is medium in the town. That means, in Bule Hora town, the majority of the participants, 45.56%, answered with a medium responsiveness level, whereas 30.30% responded that the responsiveness level is low because the pipeline workers bribe the community rather than repairing and stretching the line.

Participation

Community participation is the strategic good governance pillar; active participation solves many societal problems and help the government readdress its weakness. Interview results with Bule Hora town's water and energy office revealed that residents have participated in different levels during the pipes stretching. Among the total sample participants, 44.44% (as shown in Figure 5) responded that Bule Hora town's community participation level is low. Others, 32.32%, reacted that the households' participation level is medium in the Bule Hora town water supply.

Generally, the qualitative and quantitative findings of this research revealed that the households' participation level is low in the Bule Hora town water and energy office because the office does not raise community awareness participation. Yirga (2010) concludes that the lack of participation mechanisms in services hinders the prevalence of good governance in Ethiopia.

Efficiency and Effectiveness

Efficiency and effectiveness are two different terminologies but are used together as a single element of good governance. In this research, efficiency is defined as operating, linking pipes, and distributing water for Bule Hora town's residents to achieve the desired goals without wasted effort. The efficiency description, in this research, relates to the water and energy offices in the town's workers' competence. On the other hand, effectiveness is an effective solution to the water supply problem/efficiency capable of achieving the desired result with the minimum use of resources, time, and effort.

The Bule Hora town water and energy administrator interview results indicated a shortage in the electromechanical field, whereas the assigned workers are politically motivated, not professionals. These challenge the distribution of water in the town efficiently and effectively. The top leaders assigned town water and energy head based on political loyalty rather than efficiency and effectiveness. The households' focus group discussants disclosed that the water

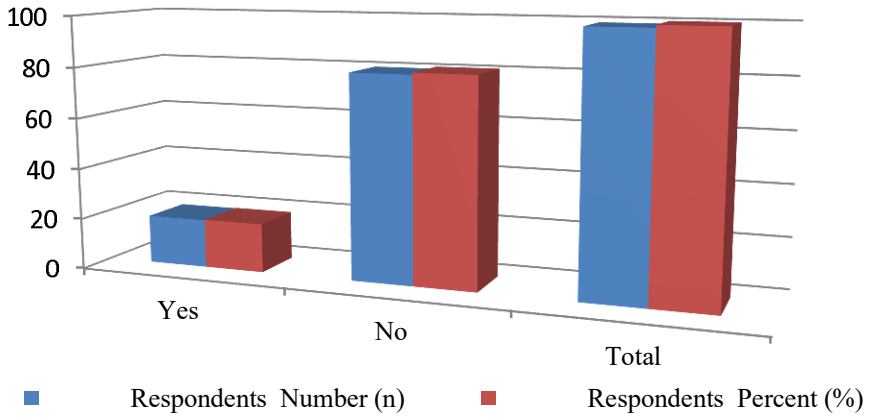
requests were politicized because the head of the office was politically inclined. So, residents do not request and complain about the water problem in the town. They further asserted that the competency of pipe linkers is low. Hence, they cannot fix the broken pipe very well. The water supply is low with minimum cost, energy, and time. So, ineffective leaders, the low commitment of leaders, and the leaders' promotion to higher positions without being sufficiently qualified challenge good governance (Abagissa, 2019). The administrator admits the workers' incompetency and ineffectiveness even though the office has a sufficient number of workers. The office has 61 workers, of which 31 are office workers, whereas 30 are field workers.

Ethiopia faces challenges in efficiently developing and managing its water resources (Koyra & Mesene, 2020). The quantitative findings also showed that the efficiency and effectiveness are low in the Bule Hora town water and energy office. Out of sampled participants, 55.56% (as demonstrated in Figure 5) responded to the efficiency lowness. And 60.60% of participants reacted to the low effectiveness in the office.

Equality

For this research, equality is the fair and balanced distribution of water for all households of Bule Hora town. All residents cannot get water equally in Bule Hora town because of unequal topography and inaccessibility of water for all of them. As indicated in Figure 6, out of the sampled participants, 80% in Bule Hora town responded that residents did not get water equally. The inequalities are visible and differ from Kebele to Kebele. The water inequality distribution is high in Ejersa Fora and Burka Mididi Kebeles in Bule Hora town. The Kebele's residents get water from a single reservoir. Contrarily, Arda Biya Kebele households get water from one. Consequently, the two Kebeles households get less water than the households of Arda Biya Kebele.

Fig 6: Equal distribution of water for all residents in Bule Hora town



Source: Own computation based on the field data, 2022

Households' focus group discussions, local elders, *Abbaa Gadaas* and religious leaders' interviews, and the town water administrator's interview results disclosed that the Kebeles water distribution inequality happened because of the non-equal replacement of old lines. Also, minimum water supply capacity and water reservoirs to distribute for the households in the town challenged it. That shows that the equality level is low in the Bule Hora town water supply office. However, Jones *et al.* (2014) remark that the poorest households do not get water due to the cost of water services. Thus, the office needs to work hard to improve the quality and level of equality in water supply and distribution.

Challenges of Good Governance in Bule Hora Town Water Supply Office

Many constraints in the Bule Hora town water and energy office challenged the sufficient water provision. Those challenges are the fluctuation of electric power, the water searching and designing problem, the labor shortage related to water, financial constraints, and politicians' interference.

Electric power fluctuation

The sources of water in Bule Hora town are groundwater. The town water and energy administrator interview results revealed that water is pulled out from the holes and fetched to reservoirs, as indicated in Figure 1, by electric power. Without sufficient electric power, the water cannot move to the basins because of the different natures of topography. "The lines of

pipe pass different ups and downs to supply water from sources to the reservoirs," said the administrator. It needs uninterrupted electric power to supply water for the town's residents. The town has no electricity independently; it receives electricity from the rural lines. That challenged the efficient water supply. The rural electric line power fluctuates frequently. The main factors that challenge water resources management in Sub-Saharan Africa are urban infrastructure and implications on groundwater (Adelana, 2016).

Searching and designing underground water problem

The town water and energy office administrator and water experts' interview results showed that all water sources are groundwater. There is no river near the town. They presented that the well water is dry during the dry season. The experts explained that we must construct groundwater in wet areas throughout the year. Otherwise, it dries when no rain is available. In the Burka Mididi Kebele, one well has dried recently. That reduces the town's water supply quantity. Jones *et al.* (2014) explain that local authorities may lack sufficient power, resources, and incentives to effectively coordinate the different agencies and providers involved in supplying water.

Shortage of professional manpower and rotation of manager

The town water and energy administrator interview results disclosed that the office needed more effective, efficient, qualified, and skilled professionals in hydraulics, electromechanical, and related fields. Moreover, most laborers are Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) graduates who need more skills to operate water and other technical issues. There are also low education opportunities in the office to increase the knowledge and skills of the experts. In the office, there are 61 laborers. Of this, 31 laborers work in the office, and 30 are field workers. Abagissa (2019) illustrates that the lack of competence and inefficient and ineffective monitoring and evaluation system were the main factors contributing to the ineffectiveness of the Oromia town leadership practice.

Similarly, "The head of the office is unprofessional and assigned into the office based on the political inclination," the research informants complained. For this reason, the head of the office needs more technical know-how about the water problems in the town. If the head favors the politicians, he/she can stay in power. If not, the higher politicians can remove him/her from the

position. The office technical expert interview results showed that politicians frequently removed many leaders from power. That challenges the implementation of the designed plan by that person. The newcomer face challenges during implementation because he/she does not know the detail. The office laborers also go to fieldwork for per diem. Dessie *et al.* (2019) demonstrate that the lack of experts, low waste management systems, institutional fragmentations, and weak institutional capacities challenge good governance in Ethiopia.

Financial constraints

The allocated budget is low for the Bule Hora town water and energy office compared with other sectors such as health and education. Nevertheless, water is necessary for life. According to the town water and energy administrator, a 100,000 Birr budget was allocated for the water service facility. However, this is a very meager budget to deal with the water problem in the town. The office manages water activities and the laborers' wages on the income generated from the water tariff bills. But the collected money through bill tariff is insufficient to provide more water for the residents, and in most instances, it is not used for the intended goals. There are no budget plans for the office at the town level. On the other hand, the number of Kebeles has increased from three to eight. The budget constraints challenge the office to ensure all kebeles' water affordability.

Interference of politicians

In developing countries like Ethiopia, all offices and sectors are dominated and manipulated by politicians. The town water and energy expert's interview results showed that the top leaders appointed the office leaders based on their political involvement and loyalty to the politicians rather than based on their professionals and skills. They further claimed that the water and energy office remained under cabinets. Proclamation No. 228/2020 was promulgated to separate the cabinet and water and energy office though dysfunctional.

Discussions

Governance is an essentially political concept that requires thinking about the forms of public action (Peters, 2012). The impartiality of institutions that exercise government authority explains the quality of governance (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008). Good governance creates reliability, predictability, and accountability (Addink, 2018). Relating to elements of good governance,

different scholars have stipulated different essentials. Keping (2018) presents good governance as featured by legitimacy, transparency, accountability, the rule of law, responsiveness, and effectiveness. On the other hand, Pomeranz & Stedman (2020) explain that good governance is featured by eight elements - inclusivity, fairness, transparency, accountability, legitimacy, direction, performance, and capability. Open and transparent, inclusive and communicative, coherent and integrative, equitable and ethical, responsive and sustainable, efficient and accountable are core elements of managing effective water governance (Adelana, 2016; Rogers & Hall, 2003). Good governance encompasses democracy and representation, human rights, the rule of law, efficient and effective public management, transparency, and accountability, developmental objectives, and a particular variety of economic and political institutions (Gisselquist, 2012). Without good governance, developing nations cannot reduce poverty (Khan, 2007; Uddin, 2019). The proximity and quality of urban services may be better than in rural areas (Jones *et al.*, 2014).

IIAG (2013) concludes that compared to that other African countries, good governance transparency indices are low in Ethiopia. Jones *et al.* (2014) add that local authorities have low power to supply quality water to residents in Ethiopia. Also, the finding of this paper is consistent with Jones *et al.* (2014) because Bule Hora's town water and energy office is unable to afford quality water for the residents due to the politicians' interference in the office. Further, a rival for power among politicians affects community participation; and a lack of communities' skills, abilities, and knowledge challenge it (Roncoli, Dowd-Uribe, Orlove, West, & Sanon, 2016). That is why the town's water and energy office leader is appointed based on loyalty and intimacy to the politicians rather than meritocracy. Transparency highly depends on public will (Beshi & Kaur, 2020).

Furthermore, good governance is challenged by a lack of accountability in the Ethiopian water supply (Dessie *et al.*, 2019). In Bule Hora town, the degree that office leaders are accountable for their failure is low. The indication is that only half residents of the town have access to water. If it is appropriately applied, accountability of government officials increases citizens' trust in government activities (Beshi & Kaur, 2020).

Similarly, the lack of responsiveness mechanisms over services hinders the prevalence of good governance (Yirga, 2010). "Citizens need to be governed fairly and seek the appropriate answer to their questions" (Beshi & Kaur, 2020). In Bule Hora town, the residents' questions cannot get appropriate responses because their questions are being politicized. Also, the lack of participation mechanisms over services hinders the prevalence of good governance in the country (Yirga, 2010). In the town, people commit to participating in water governance. However, they have missed the chance to do it because of the low coordination mechanism. In developing nations, economic boost relies on effective good governance practice indicators (Peters & Pierre, 2012). Abagissa (2019) explains that leaders' ineffective and inefficiency challenge the country's good governance. Ethiopia faces challenges in efficiently developing and managing its water resources, although the country is rich in water resources (Koyra & Mesene, 2020). This problem is boldly visible in Bule Hora town since the leaders have come to position politically. Efficient water governance creates a conducive environment for raising public awareness (Dwianika *et al.*, 2020).

Adelana (2016) presents that urbanization and urban infrastructures are the main factors constraining Sub-Saharan Africa's water supply. Ethiopia's water supply condition is low; most of the population does not have access to safe and sufficient water supply facilities (McCornick *et al.*, 2003). About 33 million Ethiopians lack access to an improved water source (water.org, 2020). Jones *et al.* (2014) remark that the poorest households do not get water due to the cost of water services. Generally, in Ethiopia, the practice of good governance in the water provision of service delivery was poor (Nega *et al.*, 2020), and particularly, the Bule Hora Town water provision was extremely poor.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The water problem is high in developing countries, especially sub-Saharan African countries, because of lacking capital to exploit water. As a developing country, Ethiopia faces good governance challenges to supply pure water to residents. It faces challenges in efficiently developing and managing its water resources (Koyra & Mesene, 2020). Albeit the providing pure water problem is higher in rural Ethiopia, the challenge is also high in urban areas. The main challenge to equal water supply and distribution is the problem of good governance packages. Good governance is the management of public resources in a manner that is essentially free of

abuse and corruption, with due regard for the rule of law and respect for people's rights to be engaged in public affairs. Governance is how decision-making is realized to implement (UNESCAP, 2008). From this definition, governance contains good governance and bad governance. If the designed decision is implemented properly, it is called good governance. If not, it is bad governance.

This research describes the practices and challenges of good governance packages in Bule Hora town water supply. The research finding shows that urban water coverage statuses are 53.3% in the town. Being a *woreda* town for years, it affects getting quality water. The coverage also varies from kebele to kebele. The water is transported by electric force from the sources in the town. And it is moved by gravity from the reservoirs to the households. Besides, the old pipelines do not fit the new ones in the town. Besides, unequal topographies also exacerbated the fairwater distribution in Bule Hora town and inefficient and ineffective water affordability. The town's residents get water from groundwater. However, only seven out of eight wells supply water. One well is dysfunctional today. In addition, the existing water coverage does not fit the town's population.

Concerning the town's good governance packages that challenge water supply, none of the six elements of good governance - transparency, accountability, participation, equality, efficiency and effectiveness, and responsiveness - used in this research are high. The findings revealed that the transparency, accountability, equality, and responsiveness levels are medium, and the participation, efficiency, and effectiveness level to afford water is low in Bule Hora town. The principal challenges of good governance in the town water supply office are the lack of electromechanical experts, low accountability and transparency in tariffs and unequal water distribution among all kebeles, and residents' low-level participation in water investment. The inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the office in supplying water, searching for and designing groundwater problems, politicians' interference, budget constraints, and rent-seeking of pipe link and pipe repair experts are also challenging the good governance of the office. It recommended that the town needs to increase its efficiency and effectiveness to raise the water coverage. Finally, the researcher has put a direction for future research. The research did not cover the roles

of NGOs and private sectors in urban water services. Future research should focus on how cooperation between government, NGOs, and private sectors can enhance urban water coverage.

Funding Acknowledgment

The researcher thanks Bule Hora University for funding the research.

References

Abagissa, J. (2019). Governance and Leadership Practices and Challenges in Ethiopia. The Case of Dukem Town, Oromia Regional state. *American Journal of Social Research*, *1*(7), 1–25.

Addink, G. H. (2018). Good Governance: Importance in Practice, Theories, and Definitions. *Halu Oleo Law Review*, *1*(1), 1–32. https://doi.org/10.33561/holrev.v1i1.2347

Adelana, M. (2016). Urbanization and Groundwater in Sub-Saharan Africa : The future challenge Segun Adelana Vice-President. *International Association of Hydrogeologists*, (November 2008).

APRM & AGA. (2019). *the Africa Governance Report: Promoting African Union Shared Values*.

Beshi, T. D., & Kaur, R. (2020). Public Trust in Local Government: Explaining the Role of Good Governance Practices. *Public Organization Review*, *20*(2), 337–350. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11115-019-00444-6

Bevir, M., & Rhodes, R. A. W. (2002). Interpretive Theory. In *Theory and Methods in Political Science* (pp. 131–152). Macmillan Education UK. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-230-62889-2_7

Boyne, G. A. (1997). Public choice theory and local government structure: An evaluation of reorganization in Scotland and Wales. *Local Government Studies*, *23*(3), 56–72. https://doi.org/10.1080/03003939708433876

Creswell, J. W. (2003). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dent, M., Khin, E. W. S., & Ismail, M. N. Bin. (2013). Critical and interpretive social science theory: A case study approach. *Actual Problems of Economics*, *146*(8), 268–275.

Dessie, S. H., Woldie, S. H., Teshome, M. T., & Mohammed, Y. A. (2019). Trends and Actors of Local Water Governance in Ethiopia: The Case of Borkena River. *Social Sciences*, *8*(5), 214. https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ss.20190805.12

Dwianika, A., Murwaningsari, E., & Suparta, W. (2020). Analysis Of Water Awareness, Accountability, And Governance To Improve Sustainability Of Firm's Performance In Urban Areas. *Geographia Technica*, *15*(1), 35–42. https://doi.org/10.21163/GT_2020.151.04

Ekundayo, W. J. (2017). Good Governance Theory and the Quest for Good Governance in Nigeria. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, *7*(5), 154–161.

Fakhrul, I. (2015). New Public Management (NPM): A dominating paradigm in public sectors. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, *9*(4), 141–152. https://doi.org/10.5897/ajpsir2015.0775

Gisselquist, R. (2012). *Good governance as a concept, and why this matters for development policy* (No. No. 2012/30).

Grindle, M. (2004). Good Enough Governance: Poverty Reduction and Reform in Developing

Countries. *An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, *17*(4), 525–548.

Grindle, M. (2010). Good Governance : The Inflation of an Idea. In *Faculty Research Working Paper Series* (No. RWP10-023).

Gruening, G. (2001). Origin and theoretical basis of New Public Management. *International Public Management Journal*, *4*, 1–25.

Holmberg, S., Rothstein, B., & Nasiritousi, N. (2009). Quality of government: What you get. *Annual Review of Political Science*, *12*, 135–161. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-100608-104510

Hope, K. R. (2001). The new public management: Context and practice in Africa. *International Public Management Journal*, *4*(2), 119–134. https://doi.org/10.1016/S1096-7494(01)00053-8

IIAG. (2013). *Ibrahim Index of African Governance: Summary*. Swindon.

Jones, H., Cummings, C., & Nixon, H. (2014). Services in the city: Governance and political economy in urban service delivery. In *Overseas Development Institute, London*.

Kapucu, N. (2006). New public management: Theory, ideology, and practice. In *Handbook of Globalization: Issues in Public Management* (pp. 883–898). Taylor and Francis.

Kaufmann, D. & Kraay, A. (2007). Governance Indicators: Where Are We, Where Should We Be Going? In *Policy Research Working Paper* (No. No. 4370.). Washington, DC.

Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2009). Governance matters VII: Aggregate and individual governance indicators 1996-2007. In *Non-State Actors as Standard Setters*. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511635519.007

Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Mastruzzi, M. (2011). The worldwide governance indicators: Methodology and analytical issues. *Hague Journal on the Rule of Law*, *3*(2), 220–246. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1876404511200046

Kaufmann, D., Kraay, A., & Zoido-lobatón, P. (1999). Governance Matters. *World Bank Policy Research Working Paper*, (August), 1–61.

Keping, Y. (2018). Governance and Good Governance: A New Framework for Political Analysis. *Fudan Journal of the Humanities and Social Sciences*, *11*(1), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40647-017-0197-4

Khan, M. H. (2007). Governance, Economic Growth, and development since the 1960s. In *DESA Working Paper* (No. No. 54). New York.

Koyra, I.& Mesene, M. (2020). Challenges, Experiences, and Opportunities of Water Resource Management in Ethiopia. *Journal of Resources Development and Management*, *62*, 1–9. https://doi.org/10.7176/jrdm/62-01

McCornick, P. G., Kamara, A. B., & Tadesse, G. (2003). Integrated water and land management research and capacity-building priorities for Ethiopia. *Proceedings of a MoWR/EARO/IWMI/ILRI International Workshop Held at ILRI, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*, (December), 267.

Meretu, T. A. (2015). Assessing the prevalence of good governance in public sectors in Gedeo Zone: Case of Yirga Cheffe town administration, Ethiopia. *Journal for Studies in Management and Planning*, *1*, 37–49.

Ministry of Finance and Economic Development (MoFED). (2009). *Ethiopia : Building on Progress : A Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP)*.

Addis Ababa.

Mueller, D. C. (2008). Public choice: An introduction. In C. K. Rowley & F. Schneider (Eds.), *Readings in Public Choice and Constitutional Political Economy* (Vol. 1, pp. 31–46). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-75870-1_2

Nega, M., Jemberu, G., Asress, D. (2020). good governance and service delivery in selected municipalities: The case study of East and West Gojjam Zones of Amhara regional state. *RUDN Journal of Public Administration*, *7*(4), 334–351. https://doi.org/10.22363/2312-8313-2020-7-4-334-351

Peters, G. & Pierre, J. (2012). *The SAGE handbook of public administration* (Concise Pa). London: Sage Publications Ltd. https://doi.org/https://www.doi.org/10.4135/9781446200506

Peters, B. G. (2012). Governance as Political Theory. In J. Yu & S. Guo (Eds.), *Civil society and governance in China* (Vol. 1, pp. 17–38). Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137092496

Pomeranz, E. F., & Stedman, R. C. (2020). Measuring good governance: piloting an instrument for evaluating good governance principles. *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning*, *22*(3), 428–440. https://doi.org/10.1080/1523908X.2020.1753181

Rogers, P. & Hall, A. (2003). Effective Water Governance. In *Global Water Partnership* (No. 7).

Roncoli, C., Dowd-Uribe, B., Orlove, B., West, C. T., & Sanon, M. (2016). Who counts, what counts: representation and accountability in water governance in the Upper Comoé sub-basin, Burkina Faso. *Natural Resources Forum*, *40*(1–2), 6–20. https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1111/1477-8947.12095

Rothstein, B., & Teorell, J. (2008). What is the quality of government? A theory of impartial government institutions. *Governance: An International Journal of Policy, Administration, and Institutions*, *21*(2), 165–190. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-0491.2008.00391.x

Rowley, C. K. (2008a). Public choice and constitutional political economy. In C.K. Rowley & F. G. Schneider (Eds.), *Readings in Public Choice and Constitutional Political Economy*: *Vol. I* (pp. 3–29). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-75870-1_1

Rowley, Charles K. (2008b). Public choice trailblazers versus the tyranny of the intellectual establishment. In C.K. Rowley & F. G. Schneider (Eds.), *Readings in Public Choice and Constitutional Political Economy* (Vol. 1, pp. 47–73). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-0-387-75870-1_3

Santiso, C. (2001). Good Governance and Aid Effectiveness: The World Bank and Conditionality. *The Georgetown Public Policy Review*, *7*(1), 1–22.

Schuster, W. M. (n.d.). *Public Choice Theory, the Constitution, and Public Understanding of the Copyright System*. 2247–2302.

Sharma, S. D. (2007). Democracy, good governance, and economic development. *Taiwan Journal of Democracy*, *3*(1), 29–62. https://doi.org/10.4135/9788132101130.n15

Tikue, M. A. (2014). *Assessment on Performance of Good Governance in Land Administration at Local Level: The Case of Naeder Adet Woreda, Tigray Region, Ethiopia* (Mekele University). Mekele University. Retrieved from https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/bitstream/handle/20.500.12413/4509/Assessment on Performance of Good Governance in Land Administration at Local level. pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

Uddin, N. (2019). Empowerment through participation in local governance: the case of Union Parishad in Bangladesh. *Public Administration and Policy*, *22*(1), 40–54.

https://doi.org/10.1108/pap-10-2018-0002
Wani, H. (2014). Constraints and Impediments of Good Governance in Africa: Future Prospects. *Afro-Asian Journal of Social Sciences*, *5*(5), 1–21.
Water.org. (2020). *Ethiopia's water and sanitation crisis*.
Yirga, K. (2010). *Assessment of the Prevalence of Good Governance In The Public Sector : the Case of Public Institutions in Debre Birhan Town*.
Ysa, T., Albareda, A., & Forberger, S. (2014). Chapter 2. What Is Governance? *ResearchGate*, (December), 2–10.