



Serving Soup with Perforated Spoon: Leadership Opportunities for Secondary Schools Female Leaders in Nepal

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Abstract

While the number of women leading schools has increased, they are more likely to achieve headship in small and basic schools rather than large and secondary schools. The asymmetrical representation of women in secondary school leadership is a pervasive phenomenon in the entire world. Despite having strong yearnings with required credentials, women are sidelined from the opportunity because of marginalizing policies and climate within schools. This study is undertaken to unveil the perception of female secondary school heads regarding the limited leadership opportunities for females in secondary schools in terms of policies, organizational culture, and socio-cultural aspects. Since the inquiry in such content remains less explored in the context of Nepal, this study is expected to fill the gap. This study employed an interpretive paradigm along with a qualitative approach. Key Informant Interview (KII) guidelines were used as tools for the collection of in-depth information. Fifteen female secondary school heads, having in-depth knowledge pertaining to the subject under investigation, from Chitwan district were selected purposively. The result displays that women school leaders have to grapple with impractical policies like maternity leave, head teacher selection, and secondary teacher selection; organizational culture such as extended and unscheduled work, lack of respect, and biased evaluation systems; and socio-cultural aspects as unequal distribution of domestic responsibilities, double burden, and cultural taboos. The study warrants gender sensitive policies and culture of the organization for the development of women school leaders. This exploration could provide insightful avenues for policy makers, educationists, educational institutions, and to all those who wish gender parity in school leadership.

Keywords: Case study, female leadership, leadership opportunities, schools

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Introduction

The under-representation of women in secondary school leadership is a universal phenomenon. Nearly 94 million teachers work worldwide, amongst which about 70% in primary and 50% in secondary level schools are women (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 2023). In Nepal, around 285,000 teachers work in the school system. Among the teaching workforce, women constitute 54.1% at the primary and 19% at the secondary level. Yet only 17% of the female teachers hold headship in schools on average (Ministry of Education, Science and Technology [MoEST], 2023). Furthermore, in the secondary school leadership roles, the proportion additionally diminishes. As the level of educational institutions increases, the dearth of female leadership surges in the same ratio. On the contrary, the evolving academic situation in Nepal is characterized by women and girls surpassing men and boys in educational attainment. In the workforce too, women constituted about 1.6 million more than men (Danish Trade Union Development Agency [DTUDA], 2022). This entails women workforce participation must exceed men. Juxtaposing this notion, just a little over a quarter (27.6%) of women participated in the workforce (World Bank [WB], 2022) and few in leadership. The gulf in gender leadership in secondary schools overtly shows there exist opportunity gaps among the genders, and innumerable drivers are contributing to it. This begs the question, “What barred women from taking on the leadership opportunities?” despite their involvement in teaching being on par men on average. Of note, we lack exact data on women leading secondary schools in Nepal. This shows the gravity of the issue is not only undermined by the state but also indifferent to it.

American Association of University Women (AAUW) (2016) claimed the leadership opportunities bring about additional financial compensations that could enhance women’s influence in her personal as well as public life. In the same way, Devicienti et al. (2016) mentioned women leaders are more committed to the need of the employees managing part-time schedules to those who are in need of it and award full-time jobs who aspire to it. Hence, the authors in the Italian case claimed women leaders are susceptible to curtailing unemployment issues. In the same way, merely the working status of a mother has a tremendous effect on the lives of children within a family. McGinn et al. (2019) revealed daughters of working mothers are likely to be employed, and if employed, achieve higher status and payment than unemployed mothers’ girl children. The authors further established that the sons of working mothers are more likely to spend time on domestic responsibilities than the daughters. In this sense, mothers’ employment could be linked with rupturing the stereotypically ingrained culture of gendered division of work. Sandberg (2013) claimed the established concept of males as ‘breadwinners’ compels men to work longer hours to meet the growing expenses of the family. Consequently, the fathers get less time to indulge with children and social activities that finally hamper their emotional life.

Aslam (2023) asserted that female school leaders foster inclusive and collaborative work environment that is less hierarchical, authoritative, and division of labor. Consequently, it boosted up staff morale and students' outcomes. Likewise, Jangid and Dalal (n.d.) studied the impact of female leadership on academic performance in schools and reached the conclusion that female led schools have high teacher satisfaction, student engagement, and academic results. Setlhodi and Ramatsui (2024) claimed female leaders have higher grit and determination to achieve the objectives of the school so they allow less preference to their personal self; hence more resilient. Maharromiyati et al. (2024) mentioned that female school leaders' help to subvert the established stereotypical notion that female are followers, not leaders. In addition, the authors highlighted effective leadership traits women leaders possess like conflict management and creating inclusive organizational culture. Realizing intersectionality within women, Johnson (2024) studied the need for employing more minority women in K-12 school leadership. The author claimed that appointing more minority women in school leadership can have a positive effect on racism, poverty, work-life balance, and oppression. Women leaders have to struggle harder to establish themselves compared to men. They have to fight back socio-cultural, organizational, personal, and many times policy barriers for the ascension to the headship. These hurdles have made women leaders more resilient and competent hence can perform better than the male counterpart (Bruyn & Mestry, 2020; Kotiranta et al., 2007).

In the context of Nepal, too manifold of studies were taken related to the gender and school leadership. To succeed in school leadership roles studies highlighted the role of policy, structural and family support (Pant & Shiwakoti, 2025; Khadka, 2024). In addition to it, improved school settings such as good school facilities and due respect from the school community motivates women leaders (Subedi, 2023; Ghimire, 2023). However, the issue like the barriers women faced to access leadership opportunities in terms of policy, organizational culture, a socio-cultural aspects are being less explored. This study was undertaken to fulfill this gap.

The main objective of this study was to uncover the perceptions of the women leading secondary schools pertaining to the leadership opportunities, focusing on the roles of policies, organizational culture, and socio-cultural aspects. This study is pertinent for four significant reasons: i) the context of an influx of large numbers of females in teaching, ii) the evolving situation of a male deficit in teaching, iii) the underrepresentation of females in secondary school headship, and iv) fulfilling the gap in literature. Finally, this study helped uncover issues in policy, organizational culture, and sociocultural aspects that impede women from thriving. The findings could be useful to all the stakeholders concerned with education for the utilization of women's potential. If this study was not undertaken, the status quo of unequal representation in leadership could prevail. The prosperity could be less achieved.

Methods and Procedures

This study followed an interpretative paradigm applying a qualitative research approach. Fifteen female school heads (five retired and ten in the service) from Chitwan district were selected on purpose to answer the research questions. Those female school leaders who served as heads for at least five years in community schools and each from different ethnic groups were selected as informants.

Study Tools

This study employed Key Informants Interview (KIIs) guidelines as study tools for collecting the information. The informants were insured for confidentiality of the information and anonymity of their identity. After obtaining informed consent, the interview was taken in a predetermined time according to the convenience of the participants. The interview was conducted in the office, which was well ventilated and without any disturbances. The participants were informed that they could exit the interview anytime they wished and could avoid answering the particular or entire items they felt uncomfortable with. The interview was recorded on a recorder for capturing all the information intact.

Data Analysis

The information collected was transcribed into Nepali and translated into English by the first author and then transcription and translation were verified by the second author. This information was separately coded, categorized, and thematically analyzed using content analysis. Prior to analysis, themes were merged and finalized in mutual understanding. In doing so, just three major themes were generated and analyzed as per content.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical considerations were followed before, during, and after the study process. Written consent was obtained from each participant for taking the interview and recording. Further, they were informed of their anonymity and confidentiality of their information shared during the interview.

Results

This section illuminates three themes that were generated from the obtained information: i) policy barriers, ii) organizational barriers, and iii) sociocultural barriers for the development of women leaders

Policy Barriers

The participants of this study commonly viewed the policies regarding maternity and paternity, head teacher selection, and secondary-level teachers' recruitment TSC as the main factors that create a basis for awarding fewer opportunities for female aspirants. They also viewed prevalent provision of maternity as impractical, gender-biased, and perpetuating stereotypes. One of the participants (P12) in this issue said:

The maternity leave policy itself is impractical. For instance, the maternity issue is taken as a homogeneous experience and awarded an equal day off (98 days) in all the situations. Our policy does not address the demand of the cases of multiple births, stillbirth, and emergency termination of pregnancies, miscarriage, and the cases in which those working parents who are childless want to adopt a child. How can such complexities be addressed by a single remedy? [KII, Participant 12]

As per the above verbatim the prevalent maternity policy bears considerable improvement issues. There are varied complications related to maternity; however. The policy only acknowledges childbirth ignoring other critical reproductive health problems. Furthermore, another participant perceived leave policy as gender-biased and stereotype-affirming. In this regard, participant (P5) viewed:

The variation in days off for the parents of newly born children in our country is blatantly gender biased against women. Fathers are allotted two weeks of leave whereas mothers are provisioned 98 days off. It justifies the stereotype that child care is predominantly women's domain. So, this policy perpetuates gender discrimination. [KII, Participant 5]

Based on the above narrative, the gap in the days awarded to the new parents for handling childbirth issues inadvertently justifies that women are primary caretakers. Instead of diminishing gender discrimination, it validates the status quo. In the same way, the criteria for the selection of head teacher and devolution of authority of school education to the local government further exacerbate women's spaces in leadership. In this regard, one of the participants (P3) articulated:

Women secondary teachers are very few in number and the majority of them are newly appointed. The head teacher selection framework values seniority or experience highly, ignoring other leadership aspirations and competencies.

Furthermore, the devolution of the responsibility of school education in local government has further impaired the opportunities for women aspiring to school leadership. Since women have less access to politics and the local government is heavily dominated by males, they do not favor women possessing different chemistry. [KII, Participant 3]

On the basis of the verbatim headteacher selection guideline and devolution of school education responsibility to the local government, it has impaired chances for women in school leadership roles. In addition to the headteacher selection procedure, the secondary teacher selection policy also poses significant challenges for aspiring women leaders. Respondent (P2) uttered:

The prevailing primary teacher selection is at the district level, whereas secondary teachers are in the province. Many women serving in the lower levels and the freshers choose not to apply for the secondary posts despite having qualifications and aspirations. This “choice” is emanated from societal expectations and cultural stigma. Women are made to fear living away from home for security reasons and home responsibilities. [KII, Participant 2]

This expression of the respondents pointed secondary teachers’ selection policy itself favors males and discourages females, as not all the women have equal chances of mobility. Highlighting insufficient policy measures for female leadership development, a female school head (P10) expressed:

Though the policies are changed, the difficulties and hardships women school heads have to face are as they were. Policies are formed for rhetoric. I have viewed the policies developed for enhancing women in school leadership as serving soup with a perforated spoon- observed from a distance, it’s okay; seen minutely, the recipients get nothing. How can women benefit from policies when there are sociocultural, organizational, and personal drivers? [KII, Participant 10]

Based on the understanding of the female headteacher, the policies developed so far have a negligible effect on developing women as school heads. She demands substantial changes in policies that could drive equality of outcomes.

Organizational Barriers

The culture of the organization heavily influences the leadership aspirations of the workers. Organizational culture encompasses the environment for the preparation, acquisition, and development of the personnel. Organizational culture that awards equal chances for the development of its diverse talents is likely to prosper in this competitive world, for skills are learned behavior. Role expectations that leadership

demand are distracting for women because they perceive school leaders have to work visibly hard to prove themselves. One of the informants (P8) added:

One of my female friends did not apply for headship though she was the most senior in the school she worked in, for the headteacher had to attend schools in the early hours during extra classes. Headteachers in secondary schools have to work visibly hard, such as attending meetings off-school hours, invigilating the constructions of the school infrastructures, and frequently visiting the funding organizations for managing the resource. It is tough for working mums for it disturbs work-life equilibrium. [KII, Participant 8]

Based on the perception of the informant, working conditions for women school leaders are not gender sensitive. In the crucial years of having young family members it is less conducive for women to carry on school leadership responsibilities. As a result they less aspire for the role. However, once they miss out the opportunity they are derailed forever. Along with this, the acknowledgment of women leaders' personal life demands by the school community also determines leadership aspirations. In this issue, one of the female headteacher (P6) said:

The SMC (School Management Committee) chairman told me to call upon a meeting at 7.30 am. I corresponded with all the SMC members. However, none of the women members attended the meeting, because it was the time for the preparation of the children for school. I attended the meeting despite my domestic obligations. The meeting could not be conducted. Since then, the meetings were called upon the time on consensus. [KII, Participant 6]

This view exposed a seemingly very minor but critical issue. Women and men have different life experiences. So, the situation that men are comfortable with may not be so for women. Such a situation impedes women's leadership prospects. Therefore, all the decisions, even if they are minor, should be inclusive. In the same way, the attitude of the stakeholders towards women leaders further determines navigating leadership roles. In this regard, one of the female school heads (P14) said:

The students and guardians do not accord as equal respect to women leaders as to men. Once I was in the office room, one of the male guardians came to the office room and asked whereabouts the headteacher was. I politely requested him to put the things. He hesitated to talk to me, and when other male teachers came to the office, he shifted his position near the teachers and put his queries. So, do the students. [KII, Participant 14]

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This experience of the female school head is replicated into organizational culture in the form of patriarchy. Still, the mind model of leadership is pervasively male. The structural changes in the Nepalese political system are also unlikely to alter much for women's leadership development. In this regard (P4) expressed:

The local education regulations provisioned ward chairpersons as the SMC chairpersons in many local governments. Alarming, there are only 69 women elected among a total of 6743 wards in Nepal. The role of SMC chairperson is fundamental for the selection of the panel of experts to appoint the principal. Consequently, male candidates will get the favor. [KII, Participant 4]

This account of the female headteacher presented disparity in awarding the leadership opportunities among men and women. Men make norms for leadership, including the qualifications that adhere to their characteristics. As a result, women do not benefit from it.

Socio-cultural Barriers

The entrenched culture of male domination is ingrained into the institutional working model as well. Every organization in a less dynamic society is characterized by the replica of the gendered socialization agent. Sociocultural aspects pose an impediment to a remarkable extent for the development of women as secondary school leaders. Women are accepted as basic school leaders more easily than they are as secondary school leaders. Addressing the suffocation and difficulties women have to endure, one of the participants (P7) said:

The ancient gendered work division pushed women into the domestic responsibilities and men outside the homes. Sadly, the stereotype did not leave women even when they were working beyond domestic spheres in the modern world. Consequently, they are double burdened. [KII, Participant 7]

This expression shows working women are double burdened with home responsibilities as well as office. Subsequently, they have little time spared for career prospects. Regarding the unequal responsibility, she further added, “A more interesting fact is that even if the spouse is unemployed, the domestic responsibilities go to women because of biased sociocultural practices”.

Generally, a woman’s duty in the traditional family is hectic. She has to manage her sleeping hours to accomplish her duties. She is at the bottom of the family hierarchy. Expressing the challenges, she endured, one of the female head teachers (P11) said:

My school was an hour cycling distance away. So, I had to take my meal before 8.30 am. It would have been too early for other members to take a meal with me. So, I used to have my portion of food and reserved some for others. Some days later, I discovered that my in-laws cooked other food and wasted the reserved because the food taken after the daughter-in-law is impure according to their conviction. So, I started cooking only for myself. [KII, Participant 11]

This belief system establishes the false consciousness that women are subservient to men. This entrenched culture of male supremacy hampers the confidence of the women

to accomplish any task. In the same way, the opportunities gap between two equally educated men and women from the same family is crystal clear in traditional families. In this regard, a women school head (P15) said:

I married some twenty years ago. My husband was my classmate. Though we both were studying, he was a student by virtue, and I was his helper in some sense. I used to cook food, wash clothes, clean the surroundings, welcome the guests, and attend the social events. He was just a student. We both entered the workforce. The same situation continued even after employment. His duty was over after office time, whereas my next shift commenced-home work. [KII, Participant 15]

This shows unequal distribution of duties among men and women because of sociocultural norms. This situation leads to unequal leadership opportunities among genders. Moreover, the prevalent social psychology in the traditional society pressurizes women to have children as soon as possible after marriage; otherwise, they are stigmatized, humiliated, and questioned. In this regard, one of the female headteachers (P9) said:

Working women are criticized for not having children, and if they have children, again they are criticized for leaving the children in the care of others. If they do not have any working status and spend time looking after children again, they are branded as ‘just’ a mother. [KII, Participant 9]

These situations portray women as unable to decide their life choices on their own. Sometimes they have to be guided by sociocultural drivers, in some cases by the organizational culture, and in some cases by policy. These factors are not all in favor of women.

Discussion

The results of this study are triangulated with the existing literature. Some of the findings of this study coincide whereas some contradicts with the studies made earlier. This section is divided into three main heads like policy barriers, organizational barriers, and sociocultural barriers.

Policy Barriers

This study found that maternity policy itself is impractical and discriminatory. Hence, it is less likely to fulfill the practical demand of women’s workforce. The existing policy pertaining to maternity awards is 98 consecutive days off, and it is the same in every situation. It has ignored the degree of complications of maternity like multiple births, subsequent birth, emergency termination of pregnancies, stillborn,

miscarriage, and other medical conditions. Higher complications warrant an additional leave. More liberal than the present study, the in England mentioned 52 weeks of maternity leave, among which two weeks are mandatory in general and four weeks are mandatory for those in factory working status. In addition to the English provision, the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD, 2024) mentioned Finnish provision to address multiple births: 84 days per additional child. Similarly, France offered more generous maternity policies. It has different policies for multiple births and subsequent births. In the condition of twin maternity lasts for 34 weeks, whereas in triplet maternity lasts for 46 weeks. Similarly, in the first and second births, a total of 16 weeks, and for the third and more, 26 weeks maternity leave are awarded (Amantea et al., 2025). In the same way, the gap in the days off for working fathers and mothers (two to fourteen weeks) to care newborns is also perceived by the participants as discriminatory. This policy presupposes that females are the primary caretakers, which helps to perpetuate gender stereotypes and maintain gendered status quo.

Our study further illustrated that the head teacher selection guideline is biased against women as a result few women being in school leadership. The headteacher selection guideline prioritizes top seniority or experience (MOE, 2019), and as many women entered the service after the state implemented inclusive principles, hence awarding fewer chances for leadership roles. Similarly, Maranto et al. (2019) asserted that female teachers advance more slowly compared to males in their career paths because of the career system. Generally, we find strict leadership standards, limited access, and a biased evaluation system of the organization limit women's potential (Bishop, 2022). To overcome such biases, Tarbutton (2019) suggested non-traditional avenues to leadership along with the provisions that acknowledge and appreciate the struggles women make to fulfill family responsibilities. According to Meyerson and Fletcher (2000), the crux of women's asymmetrical presence in leadership is that men have formulated many workplace policies, norms, and practices that dovetail with male experience. In the same line, Andela (2000) claimed that until a substantial number of women leaders get the opportunity to participate in policy formation, women's status is likely to change less. Khumalo (2021) highlighted political will as a crucial aspect for proper policy implementation in the context of South Africa. The author further added headteacher selection panel was comprised mostly of males and favored males. Pervasive culture of male domination, nepotism, and lack of effective access to justice limit women's access to public employment (Faernsveden & Farnsworth, 2012).

The policy of secondary teacher selection of TSC was also perceived as an impending factor for female school leaders. The prevalent policy of the selection of secondary teachers at the state level discourages many females from applying for the post even though they possess academic credentials. This decision is emanated from an entrenched cultural belief that women are insecure and fragile in the absence of a male

guardian. Consequently, there are very few female secondary teachers in the pipeline. Similar to our findings, the discriminatory policy for the age of retirement between men and women (60 and 55 years) in Vietnam discourages women from striving for higher promotions. Furthermore, the promotion path poses challenges as certification from government for training programs is a must for promotion. Again, the eligibility for the training program includes three to five years of working experience and 26 to 28 years of age. However, a woman in her late twenties is much more likely to be involved in maternal and uxorial roles. Consequently, most of the women are barred from development prospects (UNDP, 2019). Zenger and Folkman (2019) claimed that an ambition gap exists between men and women during different spans of their careers. The authors further asserted that around 25 career growth ambitions between men and women diverge to a large extent in favor of men, merge around 40, and since then women's surge while men's decline. So, the policymakers should be aware that the young family responsibility prepares women less to seek promotions.

Organizational Barriers

Organizational culture plays an important role in creating an opportunity gap in secondary school leadership. According to our findings, the demand for school leadership, like extended and unscheduled working hours, lack of respect from the school community, and biased panel of experts for headteacher selection awards fewer chances for women in management roles. Similar to our findings, Abbas et al. (2021) in the context of Pakistan claimed that women are denied leadership positions because they are supposedly unable to manage domestic and career responsibilities. Simultaneously, a study in Nepal mentioned that poor resources in schools, time scarcity, and fragile teams in schools dampen women's drive to management roles (Subedi, 2023). The instance of lack of cooperation among the school community, as Sinyosi and Potokri (2021) mentioned, de-motivates female leaders. The authors further activities of students - alcoholism, substance usage, unwillingness to learn, and ill-discipline; parents- unwilling to cooperate on children's education and unavailability; and teachers- lack of respect and coordination and lack of interest in teaching in the South African context. On contrast to the general findings that women leaders are undermined, Nzeli (2013) conducted a study in Kenya that proclaimed students, teachers, and the guardians equally accorded female school heads as they are easily approachable and encourage students.

Gobena (2014) mentioned male domination in management positions as one of the important causes for favoring men for leadership roles. In the context of this study in Nepal, in most of the cases, SMC heads, heads of education in local government, and the panel for the selection of headteachers are males. The general belief that a higher

proportion women in school management create an environment for the selection of female school heads, however, a study in Spain by Campos-García and Zúñiga-Vicente (2019) claimed higher proportion of women in the school management team and school's overall performance is negative whereas having a woman school head or a greater number of women teachers is positive and significant. However, merely appointing women leaders at the top roles is likely to change women's status in the organization less. If the women leaders internalize the organizational culture, which is in most cases in the male model, she is female on outside and in essence, she is male. And if she could not internalize, she could not sustain the position (Fitzgerald, 2015). Therefore, appointing women at the management and policy level is likely to change the environment less unless fundamental changes in organizational culture are made.

Sociocultural Barriers

Sociocultural issues like gendered division of work, double burden, and unequal distribution of household chores and cultural taboos are creating obstacles for women to the top roles. Concurrent to this study's findings, Marissa Garza (2019) mentioned lack of balance between work and life impedes women from aspiring to leadership. The author added in many instances women do not apply for promotion not for performance issues but because not all the women are equally mobile since family obligations differ. In the same way, Gobena (2014) asserted home contexts prepare women less ambitious to aspire for the role, especially when there is a young family. Replacing this findings, Tarbuton (2019) claimed that duties induced from personal relationships are critical for creating unequal chances for leadership roles. Irregular and discontinued service because of the young family responsibility sometimes derails them from the potential candidates (Zhang, 2024). Consequently, women delay their careers until their children are grown, which changes their career trajectory, giving younger men a benefit in hiring (Bronars, 2015). Women leaders dream of an easier life when their children grow. Even when the children are grown, Preeti (2021) declared that women leaders are less likely to garner support in domestic chores. Extended family obligations, as Abbas et al. (2021) proclaimed, like cooking, managing groceries, child care, sanitation, and even nursing a sick child, is burdened upon her.

Cultural taboos in Bhutan, like women belonging to domestic space, and they are followers, not leaders, hinder women from career development chances and exposure in public life (Dawa & Ugyen, 2022). Similarly, Islamic tradition does not expect women in leadership roles because the roles bear with extra devotion of time and mind, consequently leaving less time for household roles (Airin, 2010). Abbas et al. (2021) mentioned women are accepted in peripheral roles in schools and in medical fields but not in leadership, as leaders have to sit together with male colleagues and

participate in meetings with the public that is not culturally accepted. It is not only gender and religion that impede women from leadership; sometimes marital status also plays challenging roles. Dzimiri and Jita (2022) studied the challenges of novice school heads and mentioned women having similar religious faith and marital status are less stigmatized by society than having different religious faith and unmarried status.

Personal choices people made are never made in a vacuum. Organizational working conditions, cultural expectations, and personal experiences drive leadership aspiration (AAUW, 2016). Women found the prevailing situation to a larger extent not favorable for them so, less hanker for it. However, those who could retaliate with the unfavorable environment could prove themselves successful. Bruyn and Mestry (2020) in this regard claimed women leaders who navigated their pathway to leadership through different organizational, cultural, and societal biases are more resilient and goal-oriented and hence, can perform better.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the stark absence of women in secondary school leadership is resulted from the limited access to the leadership opportunities because of the barriers that are related to policy, organization culture, and sociocultural aspects. Policy related issues include impractical maternity, secondary school teacher and headteacher selection practices. Similarly, organizational experiences such as extended and unscheduled working environment, lack of respect from the school community, and biased evaluation practices, curbs women's aspiration for school headship. Double burden, unequal responsibilities of domestic works, cultural taboos, and gendered work division constitute sociocultural barriers that limit women's potential. For developing women in secondary school leadership as par men nontraditional avenues to leadership opportunities, gender balanced selection panels, and family-friendly working conditions must be insured. Endless encouragement and support from the team members and family members are of great importance for motivation women to achieve the roles. Finally awareness education to the community regarding the importance of women school leaders can have an additional impact for upholding more women.

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