



## Water Governance: Factors affecting good governance packages in Negele town water supply, southern Oromia

Abdisa Olkeba Jima<sup>1\*</sup>, Misomsa Biri<sup>2</sup>, Haile Chuluke<sup>3</sup>, Bali Ejersa<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1,2,3,4</sup>Bule Hora University, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, Department of Governance and Development Studies,  
P.O. BOX 144, Bule Hora, Ethiopia.

\*E-mail: [olkebabdisa@gmail.com](mailto:olkebabdisa@gmail.com). Tel: +251930818102.

ORCID Id: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0183-0084>.

<sup>2</sup> E-mail: [misomsa@yahoo.com](mailto:misomsa@yahoo.com) <sup>3</sup> E-mail: [hailechuluke@gmail.com](mailto:hailechuluke@gmail.com) <sup>4</sup> E-mail: [baliejersa2@gmail.com](mailto:baliejersa2@gmail.com)

### Abstract

Good governance has become the center of administration systems and the concerns of scholars across the world. This research describes the level of good governance and factors affecting good governance packages in Negele town water supply, southern Oromia. The study used a mixed method approach—both qualitative and quantitative methods. A descriptive case study research design was used. A sample of 99 participants has been obtained from Negele town residents through a systematic random sampling technique. And interviews and focus group discussions were administered to 23 participants that were selected from residents, local elders, and water office leaders and workers purposively. The study used six pillars of UNESCAP (2008)—transparency, accountability, equality, participation, responsiveness, and efficiency and effectiveness—to describe the level of water governance in Negele town. Findings show that the Negele town status of urban water coverage is 52%. The level of transparency, participation, responsiveness, and efficiency of Negele town's water supply is medium. On the other hand, the level of equality, accountability, and effectiveness of the town's water supply is low. Furthermore, the incompleteness of the Genale project, financial constraints, labor complaints, and political inclination of the office governance are the major factors that affect the good governance package in the Negele town water supply office. It concluded that the inefficiency of labor and ineffectiveness of the office to supply sufficient water challenge the town's water supply good governance. It recommended that a sufficient budget need to be allocated for the Negele town water supply to distribute water to all residents equally, and politicians need to abstain to interfere in the water governance for political means.

**Keywords:** Water; Factors; Good governance; Water supply; Negele

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The term governance is defined by different scholars differently. Governance is a multifaceted concept (Santiso, 2001; Rogers & Hall, 2003). According to APRM & AGA (2019), governance refers to the exercise of economic, political, and administrative authority to manage country affairs at all levels. It is the role of national, sub-national, and transnational authorities, companies, and non-profit organizations to join to tackle wicked issues in the policymaking and implementation process (Ysa et al., 2014). It implements effectively socially acceptable allocation and regulation and is thus intensely political (Rogers & Hall, 2003). Sharma (2007) posits responsibility of countries is to improve governance, especially in failing and post-conflict states. World Wide Governance measured governance by using six dimensions: voice and accountability, political stability and absence of violence/terrorism, government effectiveness, 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). But 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).

Currently, good governance got 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 good governance agenda is unrealistically long and growing 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 International Monetary Fund (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). Good governance allowed international agencies to discuss and become more engaged 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 has been revolving around the point that good governance is a necessary precondition for economic development; and without good governance, developing nations cannot reduce poverty (Khan, 2007; Uddin, 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. The African Union aims to promote democracy and good governance among its member states (APRM & AGA, 2019). 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). 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 provide water (Jones et al., 2014). Basic principles: open and transparent, inclusive and communicative, coherent and integrative, equitable and ethical, responsive and sustainable, efficient, and accountable to manage effective water governance (Adelana, 2016; Rogers & Hall, 2003). But, 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. The poorest households do not get water due to the cost of water services. Nevertheless, the proximity and quality of services may be better than in rural areas (Jones et al., 2014).

How find enough water to support the city's development is always a challenge. 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 hydrogeological setting of selected cities (Adelana, 2016). 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. Even so, the achievements made so far and the performance in good governance remained unsatisfactory. Taking this into account, Ethiopia has also boldly incorporated the good governance agenda as its core principle in the Growth and Transformation Plan-I (MoFED, 2009). Albeit Ethiopia has an 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 (no single responsible institution), low waste management system, institutional fragmentations, weak institutional capacity, and absence of accountability challenge good governance in Borkena River, Ethiopia (Dessie et al., 2019).

In the Oromia region, the ineffective leaders, the low commitment of leaders, and the leaders' promotion to higher positions without being sufficiently qualified challenge good governance. And lack of competence, 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). The water supply condition in Ethiopia is low; and 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). That needs the attention of scholars to investigate the challenges of good governance in the urban water supply. The lack of effective service delivery, transparency, responsiveness, participation, and accountability mechanisms over services hinders the prevalence of good governance (Yirga, 2010).

Different scholars researched good governance challenges concerning land administrations and public sectors in Ethiopia by using transparency, accountability, and participation. However, the challenges of good governance packages on urban water supply have gotten little attention. Consequently, this research describes good governance package challenges in urban service delivery in water supply in Negele town, Southern Oromia, Ethiopia. The researchers employ the UNESCAP (2008) comprehensive parameters of good governance. These are accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness, equality, participation, responsiveness, transparency.

## 2. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

**Method of study:** This research employed mixed approaches (both qualitative and quantitative methods). All methods have limitations and thus, using mixed research methods can solve the shortcoming (Creswell, 2003). As a result, researchers used a mixed method to triangulate the data. A descriptive research design is used to examine the factors that challenge good governance packages in Negele town water supply.

**Tools of data collection:** Semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and questionnaires were applied to collect primary data. Semi-structured interviews were administered to administrators of the water and energy office of Negele town, workers of the water supply office of the town, and local elders and religious leaders. Two focus group discussions (one FGD with residents and one FGD with workers of the water supply office of the town) were administered to triangulate with quantitative data. Each FGD consists of eight participants. Questionnaires were also used for residents of the town. Secondary data include books, articles, magazines, reports, and archives that are applied to triangulate with primary data.

**Sample size and sample techniques:** The target population of this study is dwellers of Negele town. According to the Negele town report, 6712 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 Negele town is  $n = \frac{6712}{1 + 6712(0.1)^2} = 99$ .

To triangulate the finding of the quantitative method with the qualitative method, the researcher selected 16 participants from the residents of the town and workers of the office via purposive sampling techniques—eight participants from residents of the town and eight participants from Negele town water supply office (for FGD). Four participants from local elders and religious leaders and three participants from the Negele town water and energy office were selected

purposively for interview. Generally, the total sample of this study is 122 participants. For all participants, an attempt was made to balance the gender of participants.

**Data analysis method:** In the collected data analysis from the field, the researcher employed a multi-stage, qualitative, and quantitative data analysis. 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 qualitative methods to triangulate the data.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 3.1. STATUS OF WATER SUPPLY IN NEGELE TOWN

Interview results with the Negele town water and energy office administrator showed that the municipality's current water coverage is 52%. Nevertheless, Negele city has been a *zone* capital city for many years. The sources of the water supply in Negele town are the groundwater (from *Fuloo*), rainwater (*Boraa* Lake), and rivers (Genale River is still under construction) as the expert of the office replied. And the water is moved by electric force from the sources. But it is distributed to consumers by gravity forces (as indicated in Figure 1).



Fig. 1: Flow of water in Negele town

Source: Own computation based on field data, 2020

Interview results with the Negele town water and energy administrator showed that the town water coverage was 42%. Even so, it has increased to 52% recently. The population of Negele town is projected to be 90,000. The municipality has not had sufficient water to supply for those inhabitants. The building of squatter houses causes a shortage of water as well. When the town constructed water, the current population was not considered. For this reason, water shortages occur in the municipality. Jones et al. (2014) present that local authorities may lack sufficient power,

resources, and incentives to effectively coordinate the different agencies and providers involved in supplying water. The interview results with religious leaders and local elders also showed that the water distribution is not fair among all Kebeles in the municipality because of a lack of good governance and inefficient water and energy office.

In the same vein, the residents complained about the water shortage in Negele town. Negele town's household focus group discussants claimed:

*Some alteration is there in the Negele water supply. Yet, the municipality has not solved the water shortage. Since the town is found in a hot area, the water shortage is very high. Some of us get pipe water per week. Others get piped water once within 15 days. And some of us get it once a month. To wash the clothes and equipment in the house, we buy water from cart drivers. They fetch it from Bora Lake, an artificial lake constructed by the town's water and energy office. They bring directly and sell to us before purification. So it is not pure, and we do not use it for drinking. Also, it is expensive. The minimum cost of a 20-liter is 10 Birr. This cost is for residents near the lake. The cost increases as the distance between the lake and residents' homes increases. Those residents whose house is far away from the lake buy 20-liter water up to 50 Birr, which is expensive. The cost is beyond this one during the dry season because the lake can dry.*

As indicated in Figure 2, from 99 participants (households), the majority of them, 60.60%, responded that they do not have access to piped water at their houses in the town. In contrast, only 39.39% of the households do have access to piped water. That exhibits that many residents in Negele town have no pipeline in their houses. Those households get water from the public watershed and from neighbors that have pipeline water.

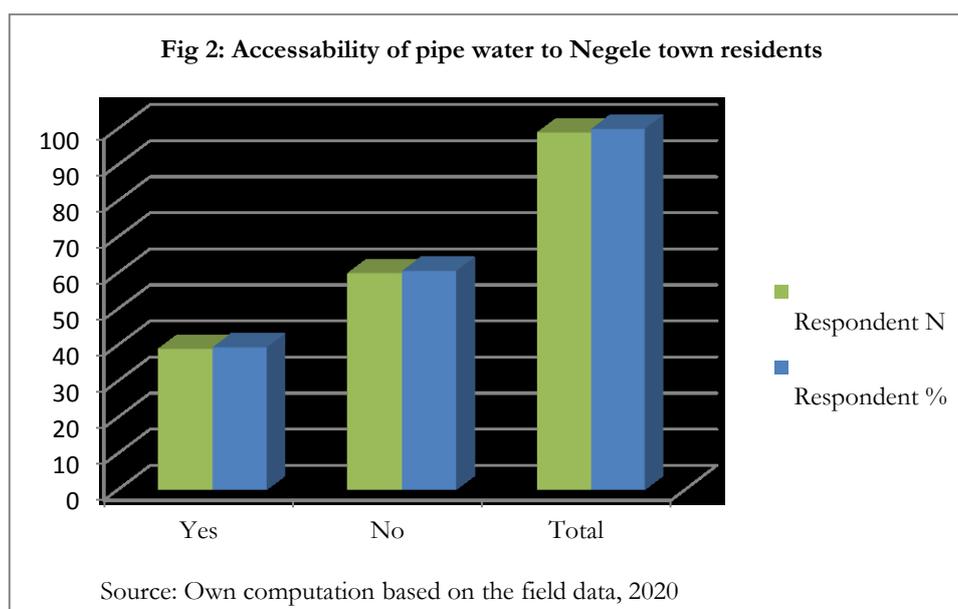
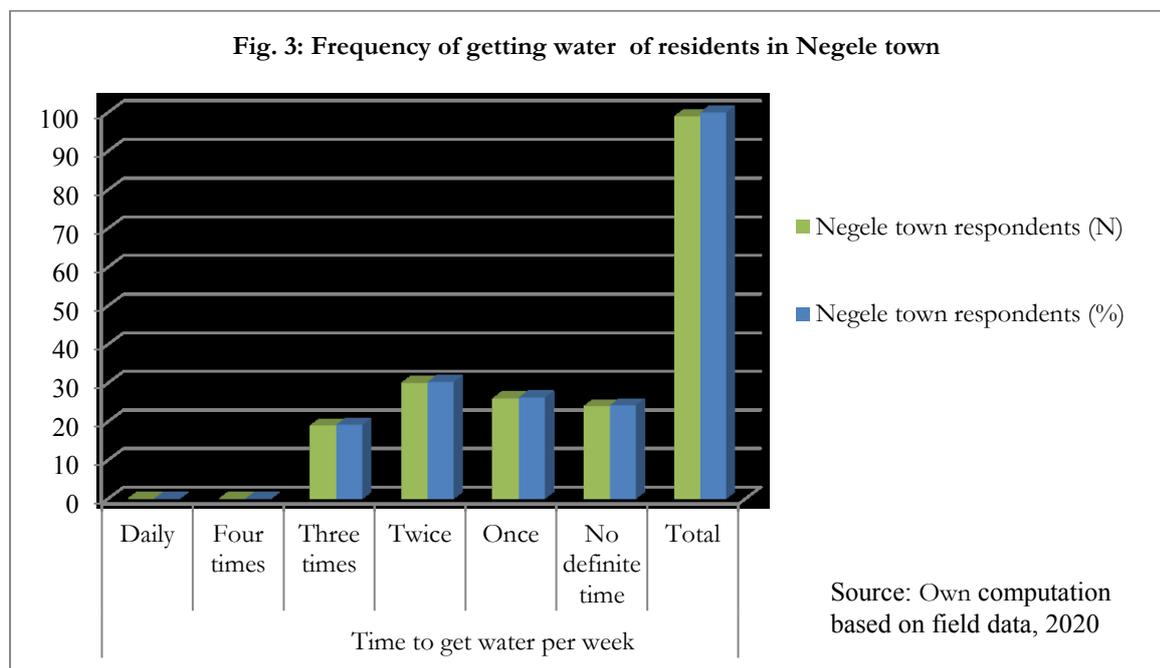


Fig 2: Accessibility of pipe water to Nagele town residents

Local elders' interview results and resident focus group discussions showed that water is not distributed equally among all kebeles in Negele town. Water and energy office administrators of the town admitted the shortage of water. He replied that the pipe differences caused an imbalance in water distribution. Two types of pipes distribute water. Those are new pipes and old pipes. Residents who accessed water through new pipelines get more water than residents who accessed water through old ones. The finding of this research showed that there is a wide gap between the supplied water and the existing population in the town. For this reason, water is not distributed to all residents daily. The municipalities distributed water by shift.

Figure 3 shows that the residents do not have access to water daily in town. The majority of the participants, 30.30%, in Negele town get water two times per week. It follows that 26.26% of the participants responded that they get water once a week. That shows that nearly half percent of participants get water either once or twice per week. That is very challenging for people who work at hotels, bars and restaurants, pensions, barbers, and garages because their works are related to water directly.



**Fig. 3: Frequency of getting water of residents in Negele town**

The Negele town water and energy office workers and administrators admitted a water shortage. The interview and focus group discussion results with the water and energy office of the town administrator and workers revealed the water status in the town is about 50%. The total

population of the town is 90,000. Adelana (2016) posits the main factors that challenge water resources management in Sub-Saharan Africa are the rapidly urbanizing cities, city development, urban infrastructure, implications on groundwater, and hydrogeological setting of selected cities.

### 3.2. LEVEL OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NEGELE TOWN WATER SUPPLY OFFICE

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 wise use of public resources by using six pillars of UNESCAP (2008)—transparency, accountability, equality, participation, responsiveness, and efficiency and effectiveness.

#### *Transparency*

Transparency is the clearness of all activities to water users in Negele town water supply. IIAG (2013) concluded that Ethiopia's performance in transparency indices of good governance has fallen compared to that of other African countries. The Negele town household focus group discussants showed transparency level is medium in the town’s water supply office.

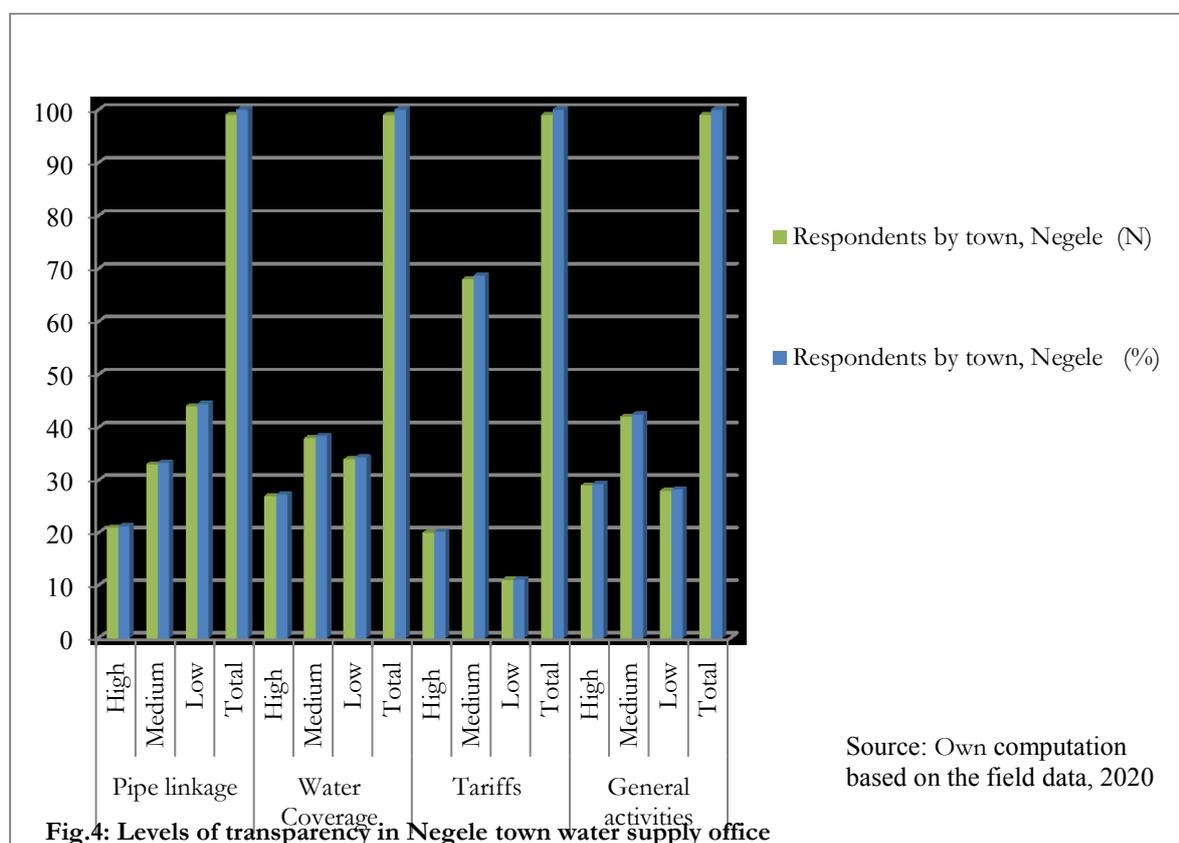


Fig.4: Levels of transparency in Negele town water supply office

As indicated in Figure 4, the levels of transparency in the town's water and energy office differ based on the kinds of services. Regarding pipe linkage, the majority of participants, 44.44%, responded that the transparency level is low in the town. Contrarily, 38.38% of participants responded that the transparency level is medium in water coverage and supply. Regarding tariffs, the majority of participants, 68.69%, responded that the level of tariff transparency is medium in the Negele town water sector. Lastly, the level of general activities transparency is medium in the town because 41.41% of the participants in the town responded that the level is medium.

### ***Accountability***

Accountability is the act in which the town's water and energy office workers and administrators are responsible for their failures. The Negele town water and energy office administrator stated that the accountability level is high in Negele town because workers do the job accurately. Related to the workers, who link pipes, accountability is low in the office of the town. Those workers ask for money to stretch a new pipeline and repair the broken pipe. The absence of accountability challenges good governance in Ethiopia (Dessie et al., 2019). Contrariwise, the Negele town experts' interview and focus group discussion results indicated that all workers are accountable for their failures. They further added that the concrete complaint that made the workers responsible did not come yet.

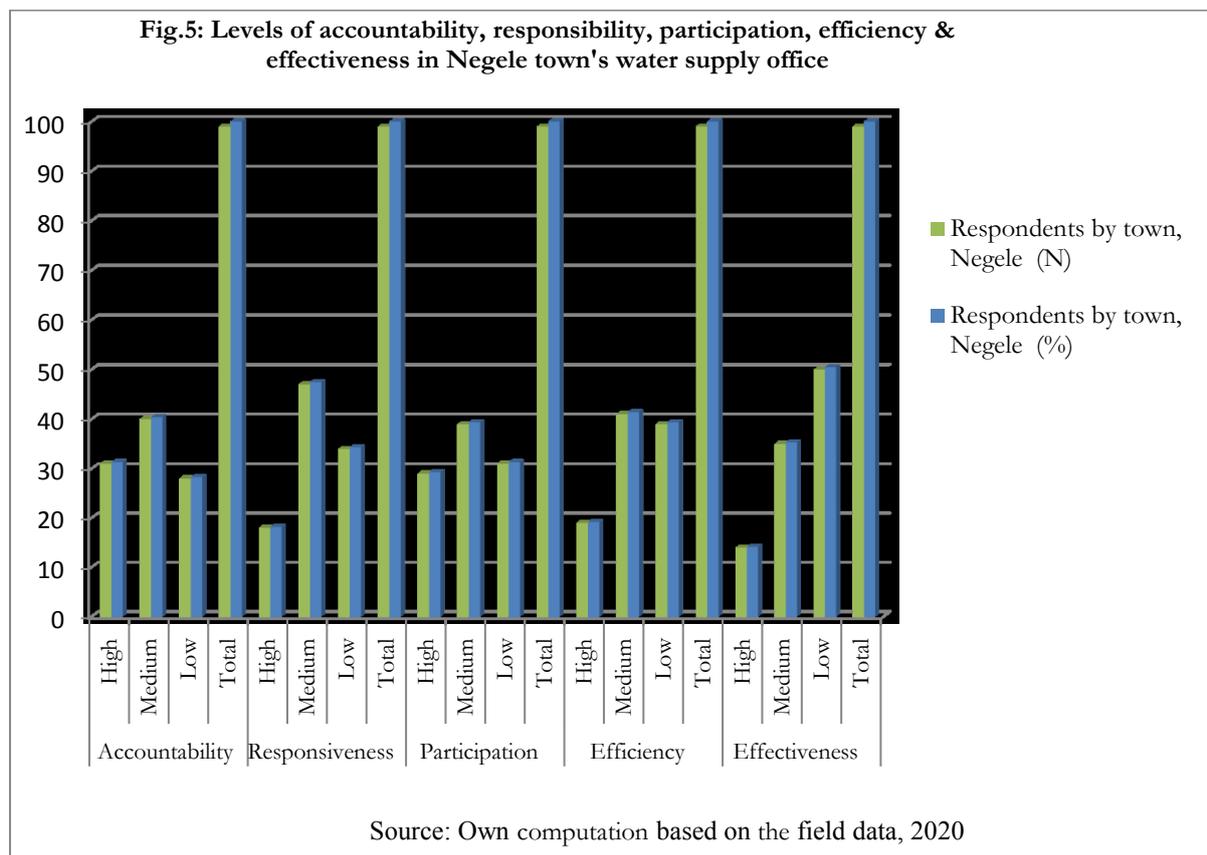
The quantitative finding of this research is consistent with the qualitative. Of the total sampled participants, the majority of participants (as indicated in Figure 5), 40.4%, responded that the accountability level is medium in the town's water and energy office. From that, we inferred that the accountability level is medium. As a result, attention needs to improve the levels of accountability in the town.

### ***Responsiveness***

Responsiveness is the process of giving necessary and sufficient answers to the households compliant who raise the water problem in the town. The town's water and energy office interview results disclosed there were no organized complaints raised. However, the interview results from religious leaders and elders, and focus group discussions with households showed that the level of responsiveness is low because the workers are unwilling to accept the complaint. They raised compliances and questions concerning the tariffs and coverage of water. The lack of

responsiveness mechanisms over services hinders the prevalence of good governance (Yirga, 2010).

Nevertheless, the administrator of the office denied the issues raised by the households. But the administrator did not deny that there was an organized and formal structure to solve the compliance.



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

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. In town, 47.47% of participants responded that the level of responsiveness is medium in the town's water supply and energy office. It follows that 34.34% of respondents chose that the level of responsiveness 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 because active participations solve many societal problems and help the government to readdress its weakness. Interview results with

Negele town's water and energy office revealed that residents have participated in different levels during the pipes stretching. Among the total sample participants, the majority of the participants, 39% (as indicated in Figure 5), responded that the participation level is medium in Negele town. And 31.31% of participants stated that the community participation level is low in the town.

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

### ***Efficiency and effectiveness***

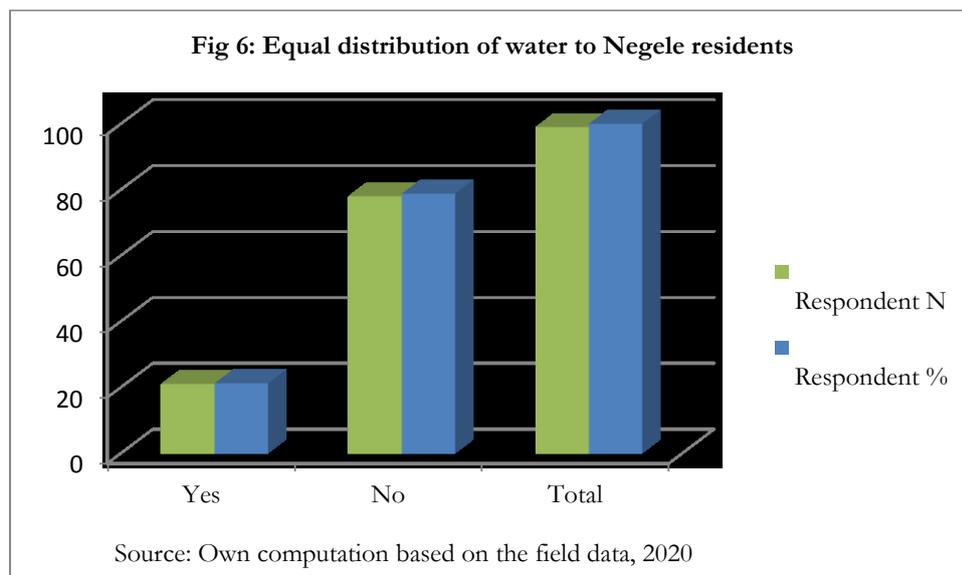
Efficiency and effectiveness are two different terminologies but are used together as single elements of good governance. In this research, efficiency is defined as the ability to operate, link pipes, and distribute water for Negele town's residents to achieve the desired goals without wasted effort. Efficiency is described, in this research, as workers' competence in the town's water and energy office. 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.

In the Negele town water and energy office, the efficiency and effectiveness level are not the same. As indicated in Figure 5, the efficiency level is medium. But the effectiveness level is low in the office. Technical and expert laborers are hired based on their competency. Conversely, the office could not afford sufficient water for all households with minimum cost, time, and energy. Out of sampled participants, 50.50% responded that the effectiveness level is low in the town. And 41.41% of participants responded to the medium efficiency level in the Negele town water and energy office. Ethiopia faces challenges in efficiently developing and managing its water resources (Koyra & Mesene, 2020).

The households' focus group discussants disclosed that the water requests were politicized because the head of the office is politically inclined. So, residents do not request and complain about the problem of water 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. Abagissa (2019) explains that ineffective leaders, the low commitment of leaders, and the leaders' promotion to higher positions without being sufficiently qualified challenge good governance. The administrator admitted the workers' incompetency and ineffectiveness.

### ***Equality***

For this research, equality is the fair and balanced distribution of water for all households in the town. All residents cannot get water equally in Negele town due to unequal topography and inaccessibility of water for all of them. As indicated in Figure 6, out of the sampled participants, 78.79% of participants in Negele towns responded that residents did not get water equally.



**Fig 6: Equal distribution of water to Negele residents**

The inequalities are visible and differ from Kebele to Kebele. Households' focus group discussions, local elders, religious leaders, and the town's water and energy office 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 both towns challenged it, according to worker focus group discussants. That shows that the equality level is low in Negele town's water supply office. Jones et al. (2014) remark 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.

### **3.3. CHALLENGES OF GOOD GOVERNANCE IN NEGELE TOWN WATER SUPPLY**

According to interview results and focus group discussions of residents, workers, and administrators, different factors challenged Negele town water and energy office water provision. Those factors affect good governance practices in the pure and hygienic water provision in the

town. The challenges are incomplete projects, financial constraints, laborers' complaints, and political inclination.

### ***Incomplete project***

To solve the shortage of water in Negele town, the Oromia water and energy office invested more than 6,000,000 Birr in Genale River ten years ago. But the completion of the project dragged on. The town water and energy administrator and expert's interview result indicated the contractor did not complete the Genale water project. But some of its portions began to produce water for the town. We anticipated solving the shortage of water during the inauguration. But after ten years, the water shortage is high. Local authorities may lack sufficient power, resources, and incentives to effectively coordinate the different agencies and providers involved in supplying water (Jones et al., 2014).

### ***Financial constraints***

Jones et al. (2014) explain that local authorities may lack sufficient resources, and incentives to effectively coordinate the different agencies and providers involved in supplying water. The Negele town water and energy office is administered by the enterprise. Hence, there is no allotted budget from the government for the office. The source of income for the office is the billing tariff collected from the water. "The bill tariff is not sufficient to construct the additional project to solve the shortage of water in the town," said the administrator. The administrator added that the billing tariff is low in Negele town when compared with other towns. The bill tariff for one-meter cube water is 3.5 Birr. In contrast, the office expenses 100,000 Birr for electric power. In contrast, the interview results with religious leaders and elders, and household focus group discussants showed that the billing tariff is not as low as the administrator stated because residents pay more than the mentioned values. The finding of this research showed that the office constructed one block to generate income from it.

### ***Labors complaint***

Labors vary based on academic qualification, experience, skills, and ability to operate. According to the administrator interview results, the experienced professionals complained of high payment. And yet, those professionals have low academic qualifications. Those types of labor believe only in experience. When competition comes, they are out of the competition because of their below-criteria academic rank. In return, they raise complaints about their failure. "Nevertheless, the office

adjusted salary two times within a year for the workers to cope with the current inflation,” said the administrator. Contrarily, the laborers claimed that complaints are raised because of nepotism during internal competition and screening. But the administrator interview results showed that they readdressed laborers' complaints by a committee found at different levels. If not solved, the board of the office solves it.

### ***Political domination***

“There are rules and regulations to run the office although the politicians do not respect it,” administrators and laborers claimed. The politicians use office the cars, trucks, and other properties for political purposes because their power is superior to the water and energy office. They also assign and appoint the leaders and head of office based on political inclination. The interview result with laborers stated that the politicians appoint the head office, who involves in politics and loyal to them. Professionals who have experience, good academic qualifications, and skills but do not favor politicians cannot get the position. Water is a particularly politically salient resource, and there may be pressure on local politicians to protect access to water in a city (Jones et al., 2014).

## **4. CONCLUSIONS**

The water problem is high in developing countries, especially, sub-Saharan countries because of lacking capital to exploit water. Ethiopia, as a developing country, faces good governance challenges to supply pure water to residents. 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. Governance contains good governance and bad governance. If the designed decision is implemented, it is called good governance. If not, it is bad governance. Good governance is the management of government 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.

This research described the levels of governance and factors that challenge good governance packages in Negele town water supply. The research finding showed that urban water coverage status is 52% in Negele town. Yet, Negele has been serving as a Zone town for many years. 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. Further, the old pipelines do not fit with the new ones. Negele town's residents get water from diversified sources—rainwater, underground water, and the Genale River albeit coverage is low.

Concerning good governance packages that challenge water supply, none of the six elements of good governance used in this research is high. The transparency, participation, equality, and responsiveness levels are medium in the town. Even so, the accountability, efficiency, and effectiveness level are low in Negele town. The inefficiency and ineffectiveness of the office to supply water, politicians' interference, budget constraints, and rent-seeking of pipe link and pipe repair experts are challenging the good governance of the office. Furthermore, the incomplete of the Genale project, financial constraints, fair competition-related labor complaints, and political domination affected good governance packages in the Negele town water and energy office. It recommended that private investors in the towns need to participate in the water supply for residents.

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