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Gender as Equity: Impact of Gender Disparity in the World of Work: The Cases of Hawassa Industrial Park

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ABSTRACT: Gender equality and women empowerment has been considered moral and legal issues. More recently, these issues have taken on a very different connotation, mainly regarding economic efficiency. Gender imbalances affect economic efficiency in the allocation of resources as well as the enhancement of labor productivity for sustainable development in the industrial sector. This research article attempts to discuss gender disparity in the world of work specifically focusing on the cases of Hawassa Industrial Park. Throughout the study, the researcher employed a qualitative research method accompanied by an in-depth data collection tool. Indeed, the study finding reveals that the concern of gender at Hawassa industrial park business and industry companies are not sufficiently engaged in mean-streaming gender issues, and linked to the education sector to influence the skill-set of women and fresh graduates as well as lower to senior existing staff which multifaceted women barriers to level themselves with counter man. As a result, poorly trained staff of the industrial park contributed to low productivity and high staff turnover which affects the efficiency of operating companies within the industrial park.

KEYWORDS: Gender Disparity, Industrial Park, Working Environment, Gender and Development, Status of Women

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender varies from society to society, from culture to culture. Gender may differ even in crisis periods of societies (Nonviolent Education and Research Association, 2019). Because cultural elements come to the fore even in meeting the most basic needs (e.g., “hunger is hunger, but what is food is determined by culture and food is obtained depending on culture”) “every society has a gender system” (Rubin, 2016, p.180). Indeed, feminist evidence shows that gender has been built by society for decades (Briggs 2018); that it has “a fluid structure” (Nystrom, 2007, as cited in (Sandberg, 2013), "reproduced throughout identity creation" and cannot be considered "as a natural identity within the basic identity categories" (Butler, 1990). This construction, fluid structure, and this unnatural identity production are problematic for many societies. Most of the literature on gender focus on prejudice against women, neglect, discrimination, inequality of opportunity, financial gain differences, psychological and physical exploitation, role equality, gender equality, gender freedom, justice, and these researches demand acceptance, even the appreciation of gender differences, and claims for equity and positive discrimination and more *equitable and fair world for men and women* (usually for women!) (Demir, 1997; Donovan, 2001; Heywood, 2014; Hogg & Vaughan, 2017; Reiter, 2012; Unterhalter, 2005).

For the last few years, the Ethiopian government has recognized the critical role women's empowerment plays in achieving its development goals and consequently instituted various legal and policy reforms. Major instruments for gender equality include the constitutional prohibition of gender discrimination and the guarantee of equal rights to women, reforms to the penal code, affirmative action policies for women, the ratification of international women's, children's, and human rights treaties, and various civil sector reforms to create a favorable environment for women workers (Benzene, 2015). Gender inequality is entrenched in social, economic, cultural, and political structures and thus closely intertwined with every development challenge ranging from the elimination of poverty to the promotion of peace and democracy. In other words, countries will not be able to combat poverty and ensure sustained development without a deliberate attempt to overcome gender inequality. In the last twenty years, there has emerged a wealth of knowledge and experience on the nature of gender-based discrimination as well as the steps needed to achieve gender equality. It has also been realized that the attainment of equal rights between the two sexes and improved women's status benefits men as well. For instance, educating girls translates into better conditions for the whole household, in terms of better health, nutrition, and education for the family (MoWA, 2006-2010) as well as poverty reduction in the country.

Indeed, Industrialization can significantly contribute to poverty reduction and shared prosperity. However, women are often precluded from access to secure and well-paid jobs in manufacturing industries and related service sectors, and their participation in the development of new technologies remains limited (UNIDO, 2022). Gender equality means equality in rights, responsibilities, and opportunities. In this context, it is about ensuring that the interests and needs of women and men are given equal weight in industrial policy design and implementation (UNIDO, 2022). While the manufacturing sector was growing in Ethiopia in terms of, the number of firms, employment, output, value addition, exports, and

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investment still yet minimal. Growth figures appear to be high mainly because of the country's low industrial base. In practice, the sector has not grown as per the country's growth potential and goals as stipulated in GTP I and GTP II (Gebeyehu, 2022).

In the last decade, the Ethiopian economy has been one of the most thriving in the world, with an average of 10.8% growth per year (World Bank 2016). One of the most important reasons for this impressive double-digit economic growth has been the government-led development and expansion of the textile industry (Sustainability Agents SUSA GmbH, 2017). According to SUSA (2017); as part of its development strategy, the Ethiopian government has been actively promoting the textile and garment industry. They have done this by implementing sector development plans and offering incentive schemes to foreign investors, which has made Ethiopia an attractive country for apparel companies who face constant pressure to keep up with competitive pricing. A result of these development efforts is the recently inaugurated Hawassa Industrial Park (HIP) –the biggest eco-industrial Park in the country that has already attracted significant foreign investment and has been operating since 2016 (Sustainability Agents SUSA GmbH, 2017). The positive development of the textile and garment manufacturing industry in Ethiopia, however, has not been without any challenges. Despite the implementation of best practices and lessons learned from other Industrial Parks in the country, foreign investors currently operating in the HIP have already reported several challenges, including high rates of tardiness and absenteeism, high turnover rates, and dissatisfaction among their workers (Sustainability Agents SUSA GmbH, 2017). While reviewing various research related to this study lacks or limited emphasis on the gender-related disparity in the world of work and its impact on the socio-economic development of the country, specifically focusing on Hawassa Industrial Park; indeed this study tries to assess the gap or limitation of thus studies and to bring new insight and understanding in the theoretical and conceptual framework towards gender related social research, as well directive input for government and government development entities, policy-makers and government and private sectors investing companies in the area.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

2.1. Background of Study Area

Ethiopia is a low-income country with ambitious plans to become Sub-Saharan Africa's leader in light of manufacturing. The Government of Ethiopia has embarked on an industrialization strategy based on the creation of special economic zones as centers of export-oriented light manufacturing. The flagship industrial park of this strategy is located in Hawassa, a city with around 300,000 inhabitants in southern Ethiopia (World Bank 2016). Which opened in July 2016, and has been described as the Ethiopian government's "flagship" industrial park. It is anchored by global textile firm PVH (formerly Phillips Van Heusen), but 21 other firms have invested as well. Production started at a relatively small scale in late 2016, with the first exports in mid-2017(World Bank, 2016). By early 2019, about 25,000 workers were hired across the 52 factory sheds of the park (World Bank, 2016). At the initial stage, the industry park is expected to employ 60,000 workers, working on a double shift (World Bank, 2016). PVH alone expects to export $100m worth of clothing per year from Hawassa. In total, the government projects that the park could generate about $1 billion in exports per year (World Bank 2016).

The Industrial Park (HIP) is located at the heart of Hawassa, the capital city of both Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Regional State and Sidama Region and a premium holiday destination (EIC, 2022). Known for its hospitality, Hawassa is home to a diverse group of people. Hawassa has now added to its profile a state-of-the-art and the country's flagship textile and apparel industrial park that has world-class infrastructure and a convenient plug-and-play environment (EIC, 2022). The park covers a total land area of 3 million m2. Phase I of HIP covers a land area of 1.4 million m2, of which 410,000 m2 is a factory shed built-up area (EIC, 2022). It has an additional area allocated for shared facilities such as apartments for about 1000 expatriate staff, a One-Stop Shop Service building, commercial buildings, apartments for 100 residents, a health center, and an exhibition center. The HIP is the first sustainable textile and apparel park in Africa (EIC, 2022), consistent with the Ethiopian Government's commitment to a green economy, HIP is designed, constructed, and operated as an eco-friendly park. It has a water and waste treatment plant that uses the latest technology for treating and recycling about 90% of the water used in the park (EIC, 2022). To this end, a zero-liquid discharge (ZLD) facility, the first of its kind in Africa, has been built with a daily processing capacity of 11 million litter effluent/ day (EIC, 2022). Apart from minimizing the impact on surrounding soil salinity, groundwater pollution, or ecology of river bodies, this technology helps conserve water resources through recovery and re-use of treated effluent. The technology further enables the recovery and reuse of salt used in the textile dyeing process (EIC, 2022). For this purpose, more than 32,700 m2 wide zero liquid discharge (ZLD) facilities have been constructed and more than 1.5 km of effluent Line; 13 km of recycle water line; 15 km of sewerage line, and more than 20 km of integrated drainage lines have been constructed (EIC, 2022).

2.2. Research Design

For this particular study, Descriptive Research Design would be proved as the most appropriate design, because it is a fact-finding study for adequate and accurate interpretation of the collected data. Particularly, the researcher employed this research method to be undertaken using the descriptive method since it is used to provide vivid, convincing, reliable, and valid data interpretation and analysis. Hence, the qualitative data collection method, aids in gathering, interpreting, and analysing a comparative overview of collected qualitative data.

2.3. Research Approach

The researcher employed a Qualitative research approach to systematically investigate and explore the study focus, by organizing, collating, and analysing primary data collected via in-depth interviews with the target sample group of the study.

2.4. Study Population

The study primarily focuses on Hawassa Industrial Park's formally employed workers which include; senior-level managerial officials, middle-level and sub-section lead managers, specialized experts, and lower-level workers. These serve as the study population from which the sample frame is drawn from it. Throughout the study period, separate in-depth interviews were undertaken with identified sample respondents of the study.

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2.5. Sources of Data

The primary sources of data for this mini research were Hawassa Industrial Park formally employed workers, As well as a review of secondary data from previously conducted research, and articles of journals on the topic, and their gaps or limitations, through a critical review of various journal of Articles, literatures, policies and strategies which used to make valid conclusion of the study.

2.5.1. In-depth Interview

An in-depth interview is an open-ended, discovery-oriented method to obtain detailed information about a topic from participants of this research. As a qualitative data collection method; it enables to explore in depth a respondent's point of view, experiences, feelings, and perspectives towards the study. These types of interviews are often conducted at the beginning of a larger research project when there are questions about how to narrow the focus of the research, or what questions need to be explored through the research. They are therefore an especially good choice for communities and researchers who have unique research goals that do not easily fit into some of the common objectives. Participants in an in-depth interview are encouraged and promoted to talk in-depth about the topic throughout the study.

As an in-depth interview is considered a qualitative method of data collection, it is also called qualitative interviewing. According to Patton (1987), there are three basic approaches to conducting qualitative interviewing. These include; informal conversational interviews, a general interview guide approach, and standardized open-ended interviews. Being flexible and continuous, the interviewer in an in-depth interview asks the questions orally to the interviewee and records the answers. Therefore, throughout the data collection process, in-depth interviews i.e. semi-structured and unstructured data collection methods will be employed to depth understanding of the study under investigation as well as uncover more detailed and in-depth information from identified sample groups of the study.

2.6. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The data gathered through the in-depth interview as above stated organized in line with the objectives of the research, following qualitative analytical procedures in which the research is employed. Collected qualitative data categorized logically for identification of patterns in and between the concepts, as well as some quantitative data via using content analyses.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Throughout history and the world, divisions of labor have developed along the lines of sex. Hence, while work is an activity performed historically by both women and men, gender in virtually all societies has been an important basis of societal organization (Wharton, 2005). The sexual division of labor thus refers to the process through which tasks are assigned based on sex. This division of labor is one of the most fundamental ways that sex distinctions are expressed in social institutions (Wharton, 2005). Many argue that sex and age represent the oldest forms of the division of labor. Even at the dawn of the twenty-first century, however, sex continues to be a key basis on which tasks are divided. There are many different views as to why societies differentiate labor based on gender. Some locate the origins of the gender-based division of labor in the fact that women historically have had primary responsibilities for the care of children. Children's dependence on their mothers' care shapes the type of labor women can perform (Collins et al., 1993).

Conversely, men's greater average physical strength makes other activities more likely to be their responsibility. In hunting and gathering societies, for example, women were more likely to be gatherers and men to be hunters. While each set of tasks contributed to the group's survival by providing food that supplied necessary calories, women's labor provided most of the food supply (Lenski et al., 1995; Tanner and Zihlman 1976). More generally, evidence suggests that when women's labor is less vital to family survival than men's, their relative social status also declines (Guttentag, and Secord, 1983). Historical and geographical variations in female infanticide and resulting sex ratios thus can be correlated with the relative value of female labor (Wharton, 2005).

These arguments suggest that the sexual division of labor whereby women and men specialize in different activities is also linked to the relative status of each sex (Wharton, 2005). In particular, the relative contributions of women's and men's labor to survival influence the degree to which each sex is socially valued – and hence the degree of sex inequality. Women and men are more equal in societies where the value of their labor is more similar (Wharton, 2005). Not everyone accepts this argument, however, and its relevance for understanding the sexual division of labor in today's society is quite limited. An alternative explanation for the sexual division of labor views it less as a response to women's and men's differing childcare responsibilities than as a cultural practice that justifies the devaluation of women (Wharton, 2005). In this view, the sexual division of labor is rooted in gender, not sex. Moreover, these analysts question the relevance of attempts to explain the "origins" of the sexual division of labor, preferring instead to focus on how the sexual division of labor is reproduced in contemporary societies (Wharton, 2005)

The study of this theoretical framework section illustrated the essential theory that Rouse (2007) explained theory as ideas that unify a collection of concepts in a meaningful manner by accurately describing the relations between them. Like many African Countries, the majority of Ethiopian women hold low status in the society. Studies conducted by Almaz, (1991), and Hirut (2004) indicated that women have been denied equal access to education, training, and gainful employment opportunities, and their involvement in policy formulation and decision-making processes has been minimal. Women play a vital role in the community by taking care of all societal activities. However, they do not enjoy the fruits of their labor and suffer from political, economic, societal, and cultural marginalization (HoraEA, 2014). According to Meaza (2009), although many women have played important political and leadership roles in the history of Ethiopia, only a few are visible in the existent literature (Meaza, 2009). In support of this idea, as Teshome (1979) in (Hora EA, 2014) stated, in Ethiopian history, women made great contributions in both out and indoor activities. They have been actively participating in rural areas in agriculture, commercial, undertaking reproduction, and social responsibilities. However, their misfortunes of living in the shadow of men have hidden from view such highly notable performances of women as well as in the industry sectors.

3.1. Liberal Approach

The liberal approach toward equal employment opportunity in organizations is aimed at achieving the removal of discriminatory policies and practices in employment (Faiza, 2015). The approach endeavors to create equal terms and conditions of employment for women and men. The

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proponents of the liberal approach regard men and women as equal in terms of their current socio-economic positions and do not acknowledge any differences between them. They argue that employment practices and policies should be the same for both men and women (Jewson and Mason, 1986). according to Straw's (1989) work on equal employment opportunities draws on the liberal approach. Straw defines equality at three levels in organizations: equal chances at the recruitment level, equal access to the selection level, and equal shares in the organizational hierarchy. Since the argument is founded on the assumption of gender neutrality. Despite this, the liberal approach tends to discount or simply ignore the structural inequalities in employment, which are rooted in traditions, history, and culture. For instance, the institution of patriarchy deeply entrenched in the form of certain traditional practices is hardly acknowledged mostly in developing countries.

According to Faiza (2015), the liberal approach towards equal employment opportunity (EEO) has been in practice in the USA, Australia, and other European contexts. The business case is focused on convincing managerial audiences that equality is profitable (Schwartz, 1992) assuming that employers would make their decisions of recruitment, selection, and career development based on bottom-line considerations. However, the liberal approach is much of effective in Western societies which doesn't consider the barrier most developing countries confront to ensure gender equality in the world of work.

3.2. Radical Approach

In opposition to the liberal perspective of EEO, the radical approach differentiates between dominant groups, such as middle-class white able-bodied men, and subordinate groups, such as women, ethnic minorities, and the disabled. The radical approach challenges the existing organizational and social structures, in the quest for equality for such disadvantaged groups based on some ethical and moral principles (Jewson and Mason, 1986). Organizations that seek to implement equal employment opportunity through radical approaches use affirmative action and positive discrimination as commonly adopted tools which are mostly practices in third-world countries. The approach treats men and women as essentially different from each other in terms of their biological as well as social identities. According to Faiza (2015), Radical approaches ensure the noticeable attendance of both women and men at the workplace and seek the eradication of the barriers to advancement faced by disadvantaged groups. The approach is usually adopted by organizations possessing strong political and ethical considerations and values.

Indeed, Adler and Izraeli (1988) identify three phases of a radical change strategy for women's employment: 1) identifying the distinctive contributions of both women and men, 2) creating enabling conditions for both kinds of contributions to be made and rewarded within organizations, and 3) finding ways in which both contributions can be combined for more powerful managerial procedures and solutions to the organization's problems. Since the radical approach is aimed at making a women's position better to bring them in line with their male counterparts. Lowery (1995) argues that affirmative action becomes the thrashing post and rallying cry of many white men. However, there is no evidence that women have disenfranchised the power of the male middle class or have even begun to challenge their dominance in the workplace. In contrast, Watson (1994) argues that an equal employment policy is usually "a compromise which recognizes women's differences from men but tries to iron these out by finding ways to enable more women to join men's worlds." according to Watson argument the structure of organizations should be changed in a way that these differences can no longer serve as a barrier to women's employment. Discrimination in hiring decisions is a complex phenomenon in organizational life. Members of the discriminated groups experience different kinds and levels of discrimination because of several complex and intersectional attributes, which they may possess. Improving one group's position does not necessarily translate into equal opportunities for others.

According to Daly (1978), affirmative action is a ‘reform tokenism’, something that delays real change towards attaining equality. Even though some scholars argue that the radical approach is “retrogressive in further dividing the already divided powerless groups” (Cockburn, 1989). Cockburn argues that although the radical approach may improve the relative position of one disadvantaged group, it does not ensure the improvement like the gendered organization itself.

3.3. Transformational Approach

Cockburn (1989) proposes the concept of transformational change towards equal employment opportunities as an alternate mechanism rather than the liberal and radical approaches argument. Cockburn (1989) treats the liberal approach as being incapable of meeting its equality targets and radical approach. The approach, she argues, tends to boost the interests of some disadvantaged groups such as women, ethnic minorities, and disabled workers, yet it does not challenge gendered hierarchal structures that exist in traditional society. Her proposed transformational change approach has a two-pronged agenda: short-term and long-term (Faiza, 2015). The short-term agenda is aimed at struggling with inequalities in organizational life. The long-term agenda by comparison seeks to change the organizational structures and cultures to form a democratic organization, where equality is sustained throughout the organizational system.

This what similar to the one that is identified by other scholars (such as Morrison et al., 1987) whose approaches towards EEO are informed from diversity theory. The approach argues that organisations benefit from diverse workforces including workers from disadvantaged groups of the society. However, the type of organization assumed by transformational change is broader than the one offered by diversity theory (Ozbilgin & Woodward, 2003). while Diversity theory is predominantly focused on the business case. In contrast, the transformational approach is mainly concerned with moral and ethical cases for equality. Diversity theory much more emphasis on the multi-cultural approach to promoting equality in organizations, which assumes that women and ethnic minorities will provide organizations with new ideas and ways of working if they have greater representation in the workforce. It does not recognize the existence of gender and racial imbalance and power and culture in current organizational settings. The business case tends to discriminate legitimately against some disadvantaged groups who are under-skilled and cannot improve the competitive edge of the organization (at least partially because of their marginal position in society). The diversity discourse's exclusive emphasis is on the diversity of the managerial elite where policies originate. Transformational change aims at changing organizational systems to promote diversity among its entire staff, not only as a business choice but also as a moral and ethical requirement. At least in the short term, transformational change relies on measures such as mainstreaming.

Indeed, mainstreaming can be the major organizational task for equal opportunity. It is an action that aims to amalgamate equal opportunities into the mainstream of organizational thinking, strategy, planning, resource allocation, and decision-making within organizations (Foster, 1990).

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It seems to support the short-term agenda of transformational ideology in aiming to ensure equality within organizational systems. But for the long-term agenda, it is essential to alter the systems that have led to the present position of gender inequality, to establish an open systems democracy, where members of different groups enjoy equal representation and occupational benefits in employment. According to Buzzanell (1995), this transformation can be achieved if individuals are free of social gender stereotypes in their thinking, interacting, and organizing. In the meanwhile, Ramsay and Parker (1992) proposed a model of bureaucracy which is beneficial to gender equality. Their proposed models can be located between classical bureaucracy and anti-bureaucracy, hence its name: neo-bureaucracy. "Neo-bureaucratic organizations would be continually attempting to refuse the fixity of patriarchal and capitalist imperatives whilst recognizing the power of organized labor to bring wider social benefits" (Ramsay and Parker, 1992).

The transformational approach, despite its advantages, has hardly been adopted for any practical application in existing organizations of most developing countries. According to Cockburn (1989), there are two main reasons for this. Firstly, pressure groups such as women and ethnic groups do not indicate strong cooperation and coordination with each other and secondly, there is a lack of strong working relationships between these groups and the trade unions. With the redistribution of power to promote equality between members of the organization, there can be conflicts that hinder the application of the transformational approach. Ramsay and Parker's (1992) work on neo-bureaucratic organizations is one of the ideal visions of transformation but since it indicates real change in the distribution of power, the conflict between the existing holders of power and the one who lacks power is unavoidable. Organisational change involves two kinds of conflicts: one is between the powerful and powerless and the other is between the members of the different disadvantaged groups themselves within the organization. They argue that the progressive part of conflict should be considered as well. To achieve change in organizations, actions should be organized and alliances should be built with the members of the organization who currently enjoy the power and support equal opportunity initiatives, even though these policies will bring restrictions on their currently favored positions.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Conceptual Approach to Gender

Gender used to be seen as the “psychological, social, and cultural aspects of maleness and femaleness” (Kessler and McKenna, 1978) – in other words, it represented the characteristics taken on by males and females as they encountered social life and culture through socialization. While a start, this conception of gender is much too narrow. As we will see, even those who believe that there are some important biological or genetic differences between women and men agree that the natural (i.e., biological, physiological, or genetic) and the social cannot be cleanly separated. Scientists of all kinds are discovering that these are not discrete realms (Wharton, 2005). A second problem with this conception of gender is its tendency to assume that gender is an exclusively individual characteristic. In this view, gender is seen as a set of traits or behavioral dispositions that people come to possess based on their assignment to a particular sex category(Wharton, 2005).

Working definition of Gender as a "system of social practices"; in which this system creates and maintains gender distinctions and "organizes relations of inequality based on [these distinctions]." In this view, gender involves the creation of both differences and inequalities (Wharton, 2005). But which social practices are most important in creating gender distinctions and inequalities, and these practices operate in societies? One inadvertent consequence of an individualist view of gender is that women and men are often portrayed as either villains or victims – oppressing, exploiting, or defending against each other (Wharton, 2005). While inequality does not just happen, how it happens is more complex than this. Just as gender must be viewed not simply as a property of individuals, so too, gender inequality must be understood as the product of a more complex set of social forces(Wharton, 2005). These may include the actions of individuals, but they are also to be found in the expectations that guide our interactions, the composition of our social groups, and the structures and practices of the institutions we move through in our daily lives. These forces are subject to human intervention and change but are not always visible, known, or understood (Wharton, 2005). Their invisibility is one source of their power over us. They are subtle, may be unconscious, and are reproduced often without conscious intent or design. As we learn how gender operates, however, we will be better equipped to challenge it and remake the world more self-consciously and in ways that we desire (Wharton, 2005).

4.2. Gender and Women Development

Gender disparity is a key challenge throughout the developing world. Women are at a disadvantage at the household, community, and general societal levels. Within the household, women have less access to and control over resources and limited influence over household decisions. Beyond the household, women have limited access to communal resources and are under-represented in public decision-making bodies; have limited bargaining power in markets such as the labor market and often lack the opportunity to improve their socioeconomic position (Elizbeth, 2008). Gender equality and empowerment of women have long been considered moral and legal issues. More recently, these issues have taken on a very different connotation, mainly in terms of economic efficiency. Gender imbalances affect economic efficiency in the allocation of resources as well as the enhancement of productivity for sustainable development (Sanga, 2008). There is universal recognition that gender equality and women's empowerment are necessary conditions to achieve sustainable development, as supported by evidence from several studies. For example, women`s empowerment is not simply an amoral issue but also may present an opportunity for growth. To properly support development efforts, there is a need for the production of gender-sensitive data in support of sound policy-making, planning, program formulation, implementation, and monitoring (Lutz, 2007).

4.2.1. Gender and Sustainable Development Agenda

Gender is deep-rooted in socio-cultural, economic, and political structures, and thus, gender equality is closely linked to every development agenda, ranging from the elimination of poverty to the promotion of peace and democratic rights. Without deliberate and sustained efforts to overcome gender inequality, ensuring inclusive and sustainable development will be far from reaching. In its multiple essences, education remains one of the key instruments to promote gender equality and enhance equitable growth (MoE, 2014). Many of the studies and articles on gender begin by revealing the differences between gender and sex (Budak & Kucuksen, 2018). Gender, which differs from one's biological characteristics

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(i.e., sex), is "socially oriented" and is "the social position that one associates with being a woman or a man" and it is the "personal characteristics" that are the reflection of this position (Diamond, 2002). Thus, "gender is the dimension of social organization that shapes one's communication with others and their thoughts about themselves" (Macionis, 2012). It is "a cultural process that juxtaposes the notions of womanhood and manhood and imposes the roles assigned to men and women" (Heywood, 2014). These social identities constructed by society, as prejudiced as possible affect values, image, behaviors, belief, academic achievement, the use of intelligence and memory, creativity, choice of profession, financial gain, perceptions of self-efficacy and success, and even stress level (Altunbay, 2015; Amogne, 2015).

The income of Women is low as compared to men and most of them are dependent on men economically, which is also the reason for their exclusion from development and its effects on community work (Alam. A, 2010). Gender disparity in developing countries in general and in Ethiopia, in particular, contributes to low status of living, low access to productive resources such as land, lack of access to education, unequal employment opportunities, basic health services, and protection of basic human rights, low decision making, violence, and harmful traditional practices. These are some of the indicators of the socio-economic marginalization of women in the country (MoFED, 2006). The commitment is witnessed or seen by gender and development measures taken by the government as well as formulated various economic and social policies that served as a base for the formulation of the sector development program and enhanced the participation of women in the political, economic, and social development of the country (MoARD, 2010). However, the status of women in the study area compared to men is disadvantageous and hold a lower position in all economic, political, social, and cultural affairs. Although institutional measures and many efforts have been made by the government due to the multidimensional problem faced by women, there are still differences in historical and socio-economic indicators between men and women in the formal work engagement all of which demand continued comprehensive action.

4.3. The Status of Women in Ethiopia

According to Sida (2003) status of women is their position or rank among others, usually compared with that of men; measured in terms of educational attainment, employment, and remuneration, occupational type, access to services and benefits, opportunities to participate in decision making, and politics. In general, it indicates the place of women in society to enjoy certain privileges, rights, duties, roles, power, and authority. The right to control the number and spacing of their children is not enjoyed by the majority of Ethiopian women. Ethiopian women's status is low where they: (a) are generally poorer than men because they earn less; (b) are less educated; (c) are increasingly becoming heads of households, with no resources to support their dependent; (d) do not enjoy due acknowledgment for their labor contribution, particularly in agriculture, and (e) do not have decision-making power. While, Ethiopia is a patriarchal society that keeps women at a subordinate position, using religion and culture as an excuse. These excuses have for many years been supported by laws and legislation that uphold patriarchy and women's subordination. This has brought about and maintained disparities between men and women, in the division of labor, share of benefits, in law and state, in how households are organized, and how these are interrelated (Sida, 2003).

4.4. Gender Gap and Transformative Policy

Greater participation of women in economic activities is an important pathway to poverty reduction and economic development. In Ethiopia, women account for about half of the labor force and possess a significant potential to contribute to national growth. Acknowledging this crucial role that woman empowerment plays in achieving the country's development goal as it is reflected in its legal and policy frameworks. Yet, the labor force participation of women is still far from the potential and there is a notable gender gap concerning participation in measured economic activities (Helen, and Lamessa, 2022).

According to Helen, and Lamessa (2022), overall participation of women in the labor force is found to be significantly lower than men. Except for non-farm enterprise ownership, relative to men, women show lower participation in all economic activities. In wage employment, women's participation is lower by half as compared to men's, and those who participate are underrepresented in top positions while dominating elementary occupations. As to ownership of non-farm enterprises, significant gender disparity is not observed. However, women-owned enterprises show less achievement in terms of various business performance indicators. Particularly, women-owned enterprises seem to perform less in terms of sales, business legalization, number of hired workers, and firm size. Existing and emerging manufacturing industries in general, and priority sectors in particular, provide formal employment opportunities for youth and women. In addition, employment in the manufacturing sector tends to be the sole source of employment for the majority of women, especially younger ones, and for many, it is their first job (UNDP, 2018).

According to the United Nations Development Program (UNDP, 2018), women workers dominate in labor-intensive, semi and low-skilled sub-sectors, primarily textiles, garments, leather, and agro-processing. ICT electronics and pharmaceutical manufacturing are the emerging sub-sectors that increasingly employ more women, especially on factory floors. The proportion of women workers in metal and engineering manufacturing appears to be disproportionately low, where women's participation in technical production is low or even zero. This is followed by chemical industries. Clear gender segregation is observed in different activities across value chains within each sub-sector as well. Cultural assumptions and gender relations seem to have more weight than the skill sets needed to perform the jobs in determining where in the value chain we tend to encounter women.

Such gender gaps in economic activities and outcomes are rooted in cultures, social norms, and structural conditions that shape the roles, responsibilities, and positions of women in society. Women in Ethiopia often bear the high burden of household chores with no monetary return and face labor market segregation as they largely participate in informal sectors which are not officially counted as an economic activity. They also have a low level of education as well as limited ownership of, and access to, productive resources and services, such as land, finance, training, and time curtailing their ability and potential to partake in economic activities (IDRC, 2020; MOWCY, UNICEF Ethiopia, & SPRI 2019). Bringing gender parity in socio-economic systems thus requires measures ranging from changing cultural and social norms to devising and implementing transformational gender policies. Change in social norms which redefines the role and position of women in a household and the society are needed to safeguard the betterment of women in education, employment, and overall economic activity. Gender transformative policy which treats gender issues as a special focus area instead of following a simple holistic approach that integrates them within already existing development policy models' is also very essential to meet targets that lead to gender balance in various spheres (Bekana, 2020).

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4.5. Gender-Based Division of Labour

Gender-based social organization involves not only the division of labor but also values attached to each sex and behavior by which the activities of each sex are evaluated socially and culturally. Hence, the gender-based division of labor in the family is based on gender roles and behaviors assigned to a man and a woman in the studied traditional peasant communities (Emirie, 2005). In this connection, Hirut Terefe (2000) notes that "Gender roles are practices and activities carried out by men and women, which lead to an economically and socially constructed division of labor" (Hirut 2000). This implies the marginalization of women in the social, political, and economic spheres across the world.

4.5.1. Gender in Trade and Industry

Women in rural areas play vital roles in food production, preservation, and storage. They are responsible for processing foods for consumption and marketing the surplus locally to generate income. Although women's participation in traditional food processing is high, their participation in food processing industries is insignificant. The food products and beverages industrial group ranks first in terms of the number of establishments in the large and medium scale category. According to the statistical survey of May (1999), compared to other industrial groups, the manufacture of the food products also ranks first in terms and number of persons engaged. Of the total number of employees engaged in the manufacture of food products and beverages (medium and large scale industries) in the public and private, only 19% are female (Sida 2003). Women's low status in education, income, and time constraints for self-advancement, have hindered them from participating in employment in industries. They are either unaware of them or are not given the required training, priority being given to men because in most instances men would have the necessary basic education to participate in the training.

4.5.2. Women Employability

Women's education, employment, and earnings are essential in the fight against poverty, not only because of the direct and interrelated contribution they make to household welfare but also because of the personal power they provide women in shaping and making family decisions and in redirecting household spending on essential needs, especially in favor of children's health and education (UNICEF, 1999). In some developing countries, the mother's schooling is also found to have a larger impact on girls' education than that of the father (Hill and King, 1995). However, despite receiving increasing attention in Africa, international comparison based on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Index reveals that most African countries for which data are available rank particularly poorly in terms of economic participation, education, health, and political empowerment (World Economic Forum, 2009). Yet, still relatively little is known about gender inequality in many African countries, and even less is known about how to design more effective policies to reduce them. According to Meaza (2009), in Ethiopia, the participation of women in different economic activities is generally within and outside formal work/employee significantly hindered by multiple factors including structural barriers, unequal socio-economic opportunities, and inadequate access to education, mentors, and support networks.

4.6. Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Gender equality and empowerment of women have long been considered moral and legal issues. More recently, these issues have taken on a very different connotation, mainly in terms of economic efficiency. Gender imbalances affect economic efficiency in the allocation of resources as well as the enhancement of productivity for sustainable development (Sanga, 2008). There is universal recognition that gender equality and women's empowerment are necessary conditions to achieve sustainable development, as supported by evidence from several studies. For example, women`s empowerment is not simply an amoral issue but also may present an opportunity for growth (Bayissa, 2019) and transformation in the industrial sectors.

4.6.1. Women's Access to Education

Women's low status in education, income, and time constraints for self-advancement, have hindered them from participating in community development. They are either unaware of them or are not given the required training, priority being given to men because in most instances men would have the necessary basic education to participate in the training. Facilitating a condition to access education and equipping them with knowledge and skills will have a pivotal role in women's engagement (Sida, 2003).

4.6.2. Adequate Skills, Knowledge, and Experience

The lack of an adequately qualified workforce from the lower to middle management level is particularly challenging for the companies in the HIP and is one of the main barriers to seeing the full potential of HIP. At present, business and industry are not sufficiently engaged and linked to the education sector to influence the skill set of fresh graduates as well as senior staff. Poorly trained managers contribute to low productivity and high staff fluctuation which hinders efficient production. Most companies therefore continue to resort to using international staff. This is expensive, creates frustration among local staff, contradicts the development goals of Ethiopian authorities and international donors, and finally diminishes business profitability. Training that is provided at educational institutions is generally not practice-oriented and lacks the necessary links to industry. New graduates are not adequately prepared to work in export-oriented factories and have limited imagination about what their careers could look like. It is questionable if HIP will become fully successful as long as these challenges are not addressed. Therefore, the HIP Investors Association (IA) has decided to establish a Career Development Unit (CDU) at HIP which will link the educational sector with the industry, will close skills gaps by providing job preparation training, which will provide centralized placement services, and support appropriate career guidance for lower and middle managers. Thus gaps are more aggravated when considering the gender gap exists among men and women. Mostly the lower positions are occupied by women and have limited opportunities to upgrade and advance their education as well as income level compared to men employed in the IP.

Industrialization and industrial policies take place within economic structures characterized by gender bias in several dimensions. In turn, they further shape gendered economic structures by either reducing or reinforcing gender inequalities. Gender-differentiated distributional effects result not just from job creation/destruction across manufacturing sub-sectors, but also because of new products and consumption opportunities made available by the development of the manufacturing sector. Industrialization can reduce gender gaps in employment if it leads to the expansion of sectors that offer women more and better job opportunities than those previously available to them in other sectors. However, sectoral and

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occupational segregation by gender has only marginally declined over the last three decades in most developing countries, despite an increase in female labor force participation (ILO, 2017a).

Gender-based hierarchical segregation also tends to persist in services enabled by manufacturing or facilitated by the development of new technologies such as jobs in the information and communication sector. Technological diffusion and new consumption opportunities can reduce the time women must spend on household chores, thus reducing and redistributing the burden of unpaid domestic work and care. However, some researchers find no reduction in women's unpaid housework despite the greater availability of household appliances in some industrialized countries (Bittman, et al., 2004; Offer, 2006) and others point out that such devices are of little relevance to women living in areas lacking basic water and energy infrastructure (Mitter, 2004). The potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) for empowering women is not unequivocal either. Empirical research (Elnaggar, 2008; Buskens and Webb, 2009) illustrates challenges for women in using ICTs, primarily due to practical constraints such as literacy, education, financial resources, and infrastructure.

4.6.3. Life Skills and Gender Transformation

Life-skills programs for adolescents generally seek to build skills and behaviors that facilitate communication, decision-making, emotion management, relationship development, and overall success in life. By either supplementing formal education or providing much-needed opportunities for out-of-school adolescents, such programs aim to empower adolescents (Baird et al., 2021). More recently, programs have increasingly aspired to be 'gender transformative' as well – that is, to shift gender roles to be more equitable by challenging norms, attitudes, and gendered systems (Levy et al., 2020).

4.7. Gender Disparity Patterns in Manufacturing

A systematic aggregate picture of the main constraints and forces at play at the country level is necessary to inform relevant gender-equitable industrial policies. This analysis is informed by two studies (Tejani and Milberg, 2016) examining (i) broad trends in female shares of manufacturing employment and (ii) a detailed sectoral analysis of manufacturing to assess the importance of within-industry versus sectoral reallocation effects on female manufacturing employment. The two studies provide a comprehensive overview of manufacturing employment data from the 1970s through to the 2000s (Tejani and Milberg, 2016). The first identifiable pattern that emerges is feminization in the early stages of industrialization and de-feminization in the more advanced stages. In the early stages, labor-intensive manufactured goods are produced by female labor that is comparatively cheap due to occupational segregation and large gender wage gaps, thus stimulating profits in the short run and generating higher levels of female labor force participation. More advanced stages of industrialization are marked by substantial technological upgrading of production towards capital intensity, which invariably results in a declining female share of employment which mostly characterizes Hawassa Industrial Park.

4.7.1. Gender Disparity Among HIP Employees

According to an in-depth interview informant of this study, currently, the industrial park hosts nearly 22 international companies engaged in the manufacturing of garments and textiles. Thus companies mostly produce woven shirts, sports fabrics, wear, T-shirts, underwear garments, sock sand tights, suits, jeans, children's clothes, diapers, and garment accessories. Thus companies have employed nearly 30, 000 workers, and almost 85% of them work in lower positions which are occupied by women. The remaining 15% at the supervisory level are dominantly occupied by male workers of these companies. This gender-based disparity clearly shows that gender-based distinction disparately affects the social and economic well-being of women employees who work in exploitative working environments.

4.7.2. Employment Support Services of Operating Companies

The current recognition of the beneficial effect of female education is a relatively recent shift in the human capital concept. Early human capital analysis did not include women as a separate category of analysis. In the 1960s, Becker claimed that the gain to women from additional schooling could be determined by family earnings rather than by personal earnings as very few women participated in the labor force, especially after marriage (Becker, 1975). The empirical analysis of the effects of education excluded wives "since their labor force behavior is strongly influenced by their husband's income and the number and age distribution of their children" (Chiswick, 1970). Most employed women under these manufacturing companies hold primary and secondary school certificates and aren't even able to complete their secondary and tertiary education due to socio-economic, and cultural barriers. Even though, are employed at the Industrial Parks they have limited opportunities to access skill and knowledge-enhancing short-term, medium, and long-term training to upgrade their efficiency and effectiveness in their area of work. Such hindrances maintain women under/below wages which even unable to fulfill their daily basic needs.

4.7.2.1. Housing and Health Support Services

Even though HIP has established modern residential apartments that can accommodate nearly 1000 residents, which is mostly unaffordable for those employed at lower wages. As per the finding of this study still, operating companies within the industrial parks have a limited health support services provision system for employed workers, employed workers at garment and textile manufacturers face difficulties in affording their medical expenses which results in weak or un-advanced hospitalized health support services as well as a minimal wage payment for their labors. This and other multifaceted living and working conditions of employed workers have created an immense negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the industrial parks. In spite, of the fact that non-governmental development entities work in cooperation with these companies (including Care – Ethiopia, and DSW) to provide health and gender-related skill training.

CONCLUSION

To ensure gender equality as well as to attain sustainable development Women's education, employment for earnings are essential in the fight against poverty, not only because of the direct and interrelated contribution they make to household welfare and livelihood improvement. But also because of the personal power they provide women in shaping and making family decisions and in redirecting household spending on essential needs, especially in favor of children's health and education. Even though the participation of women in different economic activities is generally within and outside formal work/employees are too limited in most rural areas part of the country due to structural and cultural barriers, unequal

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socio-economic opportunities, and inadequate access to education, and mentor and supportive networks among others. Indeed, Industrialization can significantly contribute to poverty reduction and shared prosperity. However, women are often precluded from access to secure and well-paid jobs in manufacturing industries and service sectors, and their participation in the development of new technologies remains limited and mostly engages minimal wage payment. This is mainly due to Women's low status in education, income, and time constraints for self-advancement, which have hindered them from participating in employment in the manufacturing sector.

However, in Hawassa Industrial Park, the potential impact of women's participation is either unaware or are not given the required training, as a result, priority is given to men because in most instances men would have the necessary basic education to participate in the training. As a result of this socio-economic, political, and cultural marginalization women, accompanied by a lack of adequately qualified workforce skills to participate from the lower to middle management level is particularly challenging for women for the companies in the HIP. This becomes one of the main barriers to seeing the full potential of HIP. At present, businesses of the industrial part are not sufficiently engaged and linked to the education sector to improve the skill-set of freshly joined graduates as well as lower, middle, and senior existing staffs which multifaceted women barriers to level themselves with counter man. Poorly trained staff of the industrial park contribute to low productivity and high staff fluctuation which hinders the efficient production system of the industrial park. Therefore, to ensure the efficient productivity of the industrial park the following key recommendations were made;

- Establish employees' mentor-ship and Gender Mainstreaming centers to address the gender gap within the industrial park.
- Strengthen corporate capacity building and skill training with public and private education and training centers and entities, specifically TVETs.
- Establish or strengthen Social protection/Security for lower grade/wage employed workers, including access to health insurance, credit services, education, and housing concerns.
- Maintain strong linkage with private and public employment services providing centers and institutions to address the human resource needs of operating companies in the industrial park.

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