



WORKING CONDITIONS OF WOMEN WORKING IN THE TEXTILE AND GARMENT SECTOR IN ETHIOPIA

August 2019



TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS	3
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
BACKGROUND	6
Rationale	6
Objectives	6
Scope	6
Methodology	7
Outline of the report	7
PART ONE	8
ASSESSMENT OF LEGAL AND POLICY DOCUMENTS ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN ETHIOPIA WITH A PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON WOMEN IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY	
1.1. Introduction	8
1.2. International legal and policy documents on political, social and economic rights of women	9
1.2.1. International policy documents on political, social and economic rights of women	9
Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030	9
The Beijing Platform For Action (BPFA)	9
1.2.2. International legal documents on the political, social and economic rights of women	11
Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR)	11
Beijing Declaration	12
Declaration on elimination of violence against women	12
International Convention on Civil And Political Rights (ICCPR)	12
International Convention of Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)	12
Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)	13
International Labor Organization (ILO) conventions	14
1.3. Regional legal and policy documents on political, social and economic rights of women	15
1.3.1. Regional policy documents on political, social and economic rights of women	15
The Dakar African Platform for action on women (Dakar Platform)	15
1.3.2. Regional legal documents on political, social and economic rights of women	15
The Addis Ababa declaration on the dakar african platform for action on women	15
African Charter on human and peoples rights (The Banjul Charter)	16
Protocol to the African charter on human and peoples' rights on the rights of women (Maputo Protocol)	16
1.4. National policy and legal documents on political, social and economic rights of women	17
1.4.1. National policy documents on political, social and economic rights of women	17
Ethiopian National policy on women	17
Federal democratic Republic of Ethiopia general education and training policy	18
Health policy of the transitional government of Ethiopia	18
FDRE Industrial Development Strategy Of Ethiopia	18
National employment policy and strategy of Ethiopia	19
1.4.2. National legal documents on political, social and economic rights of Women	19
The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia constitution (FDRE Constitution)	19
Amended Electoral Law of Ethiopia proclamation 532/2007	20
Labor proclamation 377/2003	20

Industrial park proclamation 886/2015	20
FDRE Criminal code proclamation No 414/2005	20
PART TWO	22
PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING THE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN IN THE TEXTILE AND GARMENT INDUSTRY	
2.1. An overview of the working conditions of female factory workers	22
2.1.1. Challenges experienced by female factory workers	22
2.1.2. Systems and practices to cater to the basic needs of female factory workers	28
2.2. An Overview Of Gender Based Violence In The Textile And Garment Industry	31
2.2.1. The State, Prevalence And Types Of Gender Based Violence	31
2.2.2. Redress Mechanisms For Gender Based Violence And Related Challenges	32
2.3. Inclusivity Of Working Environment For Women’s Leadership And Decision Making	33
2.3.1. Barriers And Opportunities For Women’s Leadership And Decision Making	33
2.3.2. Systems And Practices To Enable Women’s Leadership And Decision Making	33
2.3.3. Female Factory Workers’ Bargaining Power, Voice And Agency	34
2.4. Potential Solutions To Improve The Working Conditions Of Female Factory Workers	34
Short Term Recommendations	34
Long Term Recommendations	35
Conclusion	35
LIST OF REFERENCES	36
ANNEXES	37

LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
BPfA	Beijing Platform for Action
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CETU	Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FFWs	Female Factory Workers
GBV	Gender Based Violence
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
ICESCR	International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights
IFTLGWU	Industrial Federation of Textile, Leather and Garment Workers Unions
ILO	International Labour Organization
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UNIFEM	United Nations Development Fund for Women

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ethiopia was selected to be part of the Strategic Partnership for Supply Chain Transformation in the Textile and Garment Industry. This programme runs from 2017- 2020 and is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands. In Ethiopia, the programme is implemented by Mondiaal FNV with Industrial Federation of Textile, Leather and Garment Workers Unions [IFTLGWU] as the main trade union partner. This study is in the context of the Strategic Partnership for Supply Chain Transformation in the Textile and Garment Industry.

One of the key pillars of the Strategic Partnership for Supply Chain Transformation in the Textile and Garment Industry is gender based violence [GBV] whereby the aim is to eliminate GBV and discrimination from the workplace, particularly in the garment industry. Evidence from other countries indicates that GBV is prevalent in the textile and garment industry in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Bangladesh. However, given that the garment and textiles industry is a newly burgeoning industry in Ethiopia, there is limited documented information about the situation of women workers and gender relations in the garment industry in Ethiopia.

The overall aim of this research is to identify opportunities and barriers to enhance the working conditions of women engaged in the garment and textile industry. The outcome of the research will assist the IFTLGWU and Mondiaal FNV in determining the way forward with concrete policies and activities.

In order to achieve the objective of the research desk review and research of relevant legislation and policy documents were undertaken to do a mapping of the legal/policy context and mapping of actors; and KIIs and FGDs were also carried out in 9 local and foreign owned, large and small textile/garment enterprises with factory workers, union leaders and other key stakeholders within CETU as well as with management personnel of the selected factories.

The findings of the research are provided in two parts. The first part analyzes the three-tiered legal and policy documents on the rights of women in political, social and economic spheres of life. On international level, declarations, conventions and policies which Ethiopia has signed, ratified or adopted are discussed.

These include: Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Beijing Platform for Action (BPfA), Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR), Beijing Declaration, Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, International Covenants on Civil and

Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenants on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and ILO conventions.

On the regional level, the main legal document, The Protocol to African Human and Peoples Rights Charter on the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol) is signed but not ratified by Ethiopia. This protocol is however of major importance when it comes to women rights in Africa. The protocol as well as other policy and legal documents are discussed.

Nationally, the right of women is provided under the constitution on other substantive laws such as the Labor Proclamation, Industrial Park Proclamation, and the FDRE. The policy documents on women are also analyzed. The analysis starts from policy documents as legal stipulations emanate from policies.

The second part section covers the findings of this research on the practices, challenges and opportunities for improving the working conditions for women in the textile and garment industry. Challenges include: low income and pay gaps, challenges related to women's reproductive role; challenges related to shift work, challenges related to the nature of the work, discrimination, unfair treatment by supervisors and violation of rights, and lack of awareness and safety and health risks.

The systems and practices that are in place to cater to female factory workers' (FFWs) basic needs include awareness creation and productivity trainings & experience sharing programs, affirmative actions, maternity leaves, priority for trainings and systems and practices for the health and safety of FFWs - safety trainings, safety audits, safety materials, safety committees, medical coverage, factory clinics etc.

The third section covers the inclusivity and conduciveness of the working environment for women's leadership and decision making. In this section, the barriers and opportunities for women's leadership and decision

making, the systems and practices in place to cater thereto and the voice and agency and bargaining power of women factory workers are discussed. Furthermore, potential solutions deemed relevant by employers, female factory workers and union leaders are also discussed.

The potential solutions are divided into short term and long term solutions. The short term solutions include: setting up of minimum wage by the government; the need for CETU and the Federation to make tailor made interventions in each factory to help alleviate the existing challenges of female factory workers; the need for factories to rigorously work on implementing safety standards and providing safety materials, food and sanitary items (with a special focus on female sanitary items) and related facilities; the need for periodic and gender sensitive trainings to be provided for factory workers not only on company rules and regulations but also on personal development and leadership skills; gender sensitivity trainings needs to be provided for employers and management staff; gender based violence manuals have to be prepared in a clear manner and cascaded throughout all levels; factories should put in place up to standard facilities like clean toilets distinguished for men and women; there has to be separate changing rooms for women, there has to be

cafeterias serving good food; women committees should be capacitated to strongly take on and push women's agenda; union leaders should be equipped to protect women's rights and provide support when there are breaches; and learning opportunities, scholarships and language trainings must be provided for female factory workers to enhance their representation in leadership positions.

Long term recommendations include: setting up of minimum standards for medical coverage provided by factories for their employees by the government; setting up of minimum standards on the quality of safety materials provided for employees; factory clinics should be open 24/7 and should be equipped to provide significant treatments; daycare centers must be established in factories where there are none and the daycare centers must be provided with the required facilities; transportation services should be strengthen to protect the safety of female factory workers and separate buses should be provided for pregnant women and women carrying children; collective bargaining agreements should be revised to include women's issues, and has to be communicated before and after approval for female factory workers; and a comprehensive gender policy that integrates gender perspectives into account in all its work and address issues influenced by gender.

BACKGROUND

Ethiopia has ambitions to be the new sourcing hub for garments and textiles in Africa. The garment and textile industry has been prioritised by the government in its Growth and Transformation Plan GTP I and more strongly in the GTP II which was published late 2015. The main reasons for prioritising the sector include: cotton is grown in Ethiopia [for internal use and export], there is an existing textile industry [weaving/traditional clothes], the industry has the potential to provide sustainable employment for all categories of workers and the clothing market will always exist therefore there should be sustainable employment.

Ethiopia was selected to be part of the Strategic Partnership for Supply Chain Transformation in the Textile and Garment Industry. This programme runs from 2017- 2020 and is funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the Netherlands. The lead organisation of the programme is Fair Wear Foundation (FWF) and it is implemented by FWF, Mondiaal FNV and CNV in eight countries [Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Myanmar, Pakistan, and Vietnam]. In Ethiopia, the programme is implemented by Mondiaal FNV, the main trade union partner being Industrial Federation of Textile, Leather and Garment Workers Unions [IFTLGWU].

The objective of the programme in brief is 'Improved labour conditions in garment supply chains while ensuring a healthy and viable industry'. The three key pillars of the programme are Living Wage, Gender Based Violence and Social Dialogue. In Ethiopia Mondiaal FNV works in collaboration with the Global Union, IndustriALL which implements activities with the Industrial Federation of Textile, Leather and Garment Workers Unions [IFTLGWU]. Mondiaal FNV works closely with key stakeholders such as the Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions [CETU], ILO and Solidaridad. Both ILO and Solidaridad have bilateral projects with the IFTLGWU.

This study is in the context of the Strategic Partnership for Supply Chain Transformation in the Textile and Garment Industry as outlined above.

RATIONALE

One of the key pillars of the Strategic Partnership for Supply Chain Transformation in the Textile and Garment Industry is gender based violence [GBV] whereby the aim is to eliminate GBV and discrimination from the workplace, particularly in the garment industry. Evidence from other countries indicates that GBV is prevalent in the textile and garment industry in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Bangladesh. However, given that the garment and textiles industry is a newly

burgeoning industry in Ethiopia, there is limited documented information about the situation of women workers and gender relations in the garment industry in Ethiopia.

OBJECTIVES

The overall aim of this research is to identify opportunities and barriers to enhance the working conditions of women engaged in the garment and textile industry. The outcome of the research will assist the IFTLGWU and Mondiaal FNV in determining the way forward with concrete policies and activities.

SCOPE

This research includes two key components:

- 1. The first part is a mapping of the legislation and policy environment in relation to issues concerning women in the work place, particularly in the textile and garment sector in Ethiopia.** This mapping exercise also explores stakeholders active in tackling issues related to creating an equitable work environment for women in the textile and garment sector. Stakeholders include local and international NGOs, networks, employers' organisations, brands, government ministries, embassies, trade unions. This was undertaken to understand the laws and policies which exist to protect women, and to know who is responsible for implementing them, and to get a picture of which stakeholders are currently engaged in influencing or developing policies which assist women in relation to GBV & sexual harassment; equitable work environment and leadership & decision-making.
- 2. The second part of the research was conducted at union and factory level to gather information on practices, challenges and opportunities for improving working conditions for women in the textile and garment industry.** The output of this part of the research together with the legislation and policy environment assessment will be used to raise awareness of the trade union, at all levels on the situation and issues affecting women; and to

raise the awareness of the women at factory level on their rights. This part of the research includes:

- Collection of data and evidence about the working conditions of women in garment and textile industry and whether current labour laws meet their needs;
- Identification of gaps, challenges and opportunities for improving working conditions of women in the textile and garment industry;
- Gathering potential needs based solutions and interventions to improve the working conditions for women factory workers;

METHODOLOGY

- Desk review and research of relevant legislation and policy documents were undertaken to do a mapping of the legal/policy context and mapping of actors;
- The research was carried out in 9 textile/garment enterprises, local and foreign owned, large and small.
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) were conducted with national level union executives [IFTLGWU] and other key stakeholders within CETU as well as with management personnel of the selected 9 factories;
- Focus group discussions with female factory workers and union leaders from 9 textile and garment factories were conducted.

OUTLINE OF THE REPORT

This report has an executive summary, a background section outlining the rationale, the aim, the scope and the methodology of the research.

The body of the research is divided into two parts. Part one provides a brief overview of the legal and policy environment covering working conditions of women in the textile and garment sector.

Part two of the research provides a brief analysis of actual working conditions of women in the textile and garment sector, including the role of employers, investors and government officials. This section is followed by a brief conclusion.

PART ONE

ASSESSMENT OF LEGAL AND POLICY DOCUMENTS ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN IN ETHIOPIA WITH A PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON WOMEN IN THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY

1.1. INTRODUCTION

International, regional and national legal and policy documents enshrine and guarantee the rights of women. These documents could be documents specifically designed to ensure gender equality or general legal and policy documents. For instance, the Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a binding gender specific international legal document. The International Convention on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is a binding general human rights document applicable to both men and women equally. Women rights as encapsulated under these documents have its basis on equality. Taking into consideration the fact that equality is at the core of human rights; United Nations declared women rights as human rights.

The international and regional legal documents are human rights conventions and protocols on the one hand and declarations on the other. The formers are binding while the latter is non-binding. Binding legal documents impose duties on the signatory states to fulfill their duties. State parties must sign and ratify legal documents to be bound by it. Ratification is a procedure by which an international legal document becomes binding on a given state through approval by the legislator. Even though a legal document is signed it cannot bind a given state unless ratified. Ethiopia has signed and ratified all the binding legal documents discussed under this chapter except for the Maputo Protocol. The country has signed but not ratified this document.

Failure of states to fulfill their duties under international and regional legal documents that they have ratified entails legal obligation on state parties. It is possible for the aggrieved parties to seek justice before international or regional human rights courts as the

case may be. For instance for violations of the African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights (Banjul Charter), states can be sued before African Court of Human Rights. The violation of non-binding documents such as policies and declarations does not follow direct legal responsibilities. States have reporting duties on non-binding international policies. The Beijing Platform for Action is one example. State parties report to the Beijing Platform Committee on the implementation of the recommendations under the policy.

Human rights of women impose direct obligations on state parties who are signatories and have ratified to the international and regional legal documents. States have the duty to protect, to respect, to fulfill and to promote human rights of women.¹ On a national level, the rights of women are provided under national constitutions, substantive legal documents and policy documents. Constitutions provide the duty of states while other substantive legal documents regulate relationships between individuals and individuals and the government.

Legal equality of men and women is ensured not only by absence of laws that discriminate against women but also by inculcating laws that protect the needs and interests of men and women equally. In addition, laws should lay the basis for compensation of the wrongs of the past so that women have access to and control over resources equally with men. The protection of women's rights on international, regional and national level complementarily is the foundation to empower women. A country's legal framework and justice system can validly be argued as the most important means to eliminated gender based discrimination.² It is an immediate duty of states to provide legal protection on human rights in general and women rights in particular.³

¹These duties are comprehensive duties of states towards people on their human rights. The duty to protect is the duty of the state to provide protection from violation of human rights by others. Citizens have the right to get protection from government. The duty to fulfill entails the duty of the state to take positive action to provide for right holders. For instance, government has the duty to build schools to fulfill its duty on the right to education. The duty to respect means the duty of the government to refrain from violating the rights of individuals. Finally, the duty to promote means the duty of the government to disseminate information and educate societies about human rights.

²UNIFEM, Time for Action; Implementing CEDAW in Southeast Asia, Chapter 2.

³Under international human rights systems, state parties are duty bearers towards people. The duties of states are classified into two based on the time frame within which states shall fulfill these duties. Immediate duties are duties which state parties shall fulfill without immediately. Progressive duties are duties which can be fulfilled within some time frame due to the fact that these require human and capital resources. Promulgating laws that ensure human rights of people and repealing laws violate the rights of people are among the duties of states that need to be fulfilled immediately. Progressive duties could be building schools and health centers.

This section analyzes the three-tiered legal and policy documents on the rights of women in political, social and economic spheres of life. On international level, declarations, conventions and policies which Ethiopia has signed, ratified or adopted will be discussed. There are women rights laws and policies designed on African level. Among these documents, the main legal document is The Protocol to African Human and Peoples Rights Charter on the Rights of Women (Maputo Protocol). The Maputo protocol is signed but not ratified by Ethiopia. This protocol is however of major importance when it comes to women rights in Africa. The protocol as well as other policy and legal documents are discussed under this section. Nationally, the right of women is provided under the constitution on other substantive laws. The policy documents on women are also analyzed under this section. The analysis starts from policy documents as legal stipulations emanate from policies.

1.2. INTERNATIONAL LEGAL AND POLICY DOCUMENTS ON POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN

1.2.1. INTERNATIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS ON POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDG) 2030

The sustainable development goals 2030 are adopted with the aim of ensuring poverty free, healthy, peaceful and inclusive society everywhere in the world.⁴ The goal is divided into 17 integrated and indivisible agenda. The SDG goals 2030 were adopted in 2015.⁵ The United Nations 2017 report on the implementation of the SDG goals shows that gender inequality is still deeply entrenched.⁶ There is however progress in most fields even though women lag behind in almost all spheres of life. Women are less paid compared to men and there are lots of unpaid “women’s works”. There are however grounds of hope as there are many more girls in school now compared to 2000.⁷ The number of women engaged in paid work is on the rise.

One of the 17 goals of the SDG goals is achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls.

There are nine sub-goals under this goal. The very first sub-goal states the aspiration to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls. The SDG goals call up on government to cause the recognition of unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies. In addition, it provides the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.

Concerning other economic rights, the SDG goals provide that governments shall undertake reforms to ensure women’s equal rights to economic resources as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property including access to financial services. Women shall have equal rights in inheritance and natural resources in accordance with national laws. Regarding other rights of women the SDG goals states that, governments shall ensure elimination of gender based violence including harmful traditional practice and women trafficking, promotion of women’s participation in political spheres and enhance women’s access to technology and information.

THE BEIJING PLATFORM FOR ACTION (BPfA)

The BPfA was adopted on the fourth women conference in 1995, together with the Beijing Declaration. BPfA is the most comprehensive policy document on the rights of women internationally. It aims at eliminating obstacles that hinder women from participating in private and public sphere equally with men.⁸ The document comprises specific strategic objectives and actions on critical areas of concern. One of the critical areas of concern is women in power and in decision making.

The first strategic objective under this critical agenda is to take measures to ensure women’s equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision making. Under this strategic objective, there are actions proposed by the document to be taken by different stakeholders including governments, political parties, women’s organizations, international organizations, United Nations, research and academic institutions. The actions include promotion of the rights of women to be represented equally, building solidarity among women, develop career advancement programs and creating gender balance in national candidates

⁴United Nations Development Program, Sustainable Development Goals, 2015, Page 1.

⁵Ibid.

⁶United Nations, Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017, 2017, Page 5

⁷Ibid.

⁸The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action document

nominated for elections. Political parties particularly shall take actions to examine party structures that discriminate against women, to develop initiatives that allow women to participate fully and to incorporate gender issues in their political agenda.

The second strategic objective is to increase women's capacity to participate in decision-making and leadership. Stakeholders including government, national bodies, the private sector, political parties, trade unions and employers shall take actions to provide leadership and self-esteem training to women, ensure gender balanced composition in decision making positions, creating mentoring programs for women and to develop gender mechanisms to and training to encourage women to participate the electoral process.

Education and training of women is the second critical concern on the rights of women under the BPfA. The following six strategic objectives are provided under the BPfA;

- Ensuring equal access to education
- Eradicate illiteracy among women
- Improve women's access to vocational training science and technology and continuing education
- Develop non-discriminatory education and training
- Allocate sufficient resources for and monitor the implementation of educational reforms
- Promote life-long education and training for girls and women.

Under these strategic objectives stakeholders including governments, non-governmental organizations and national, regional and international organizations are directed to allocate resources to educate women, mainstream gender in educational curricula, provide informal education, and provide additional funding for special programs in mathematics, science and computer technology.

BPfA recognizes the rights of women for highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Women have unequal access to and use of health services. Discrimination against women in terms of lower access to nutritious food, vulnerability to HIV and gender based violence exacerbates health status of women. Lack of access to quality reproductive health services is also a challenge for women.

There are five strategic objectives under the critical concern.

- I. To increase women's access throughout the life cycle to appropriate, affordable and quality health care, information and related services.
Stakeholders shall implement international programs and plan of actions on health. They should provide primary health care service that includes accessible, affordable and available family planning.
- II. Strengthen preventive programs that promote women's health
Stakeholders shall prioritize educational programs to develop women's self-esteem knowledge acquire and health decision, encourage men to share household responsibility to reduce women's susceptibility to ill-health and adopt specific preventive measures to protect women.
- III. Undertake gender sensitive initiatives that address sexually transmitted diseases and reproductive health issues
Government and other institutions shall involve women in decision making in relation to policies and programs in sexually transmitted diseases, review laws that contribute to susceptibility to HIV and provide support on researches and information dissemination on reproductive health issues.
- IV. Promote research and disseminate information on women's health.
Actions need to be taken to promote gender sensitive research, increase the number of women in health research, increase financial support from all sources for preventive health services and disseminate available data and research findings.
- V. Increase resources and monitor follow up for women's health
Actions to be taken include increase budgetary allocation for primary health care and social services, develop innovative approaches to funding health services, formulate policies favorable to investment in women's health and provide appropriate resources assistance to youth organizations in areas of health.

Women and the economy is one of the critical areas of concern of BPfA. The document recognizes the considerable difference between men and women. Lack of equal participation of women in education and training restricts the equal participation of women in political sphere. There are six strategic objectives under these critical areas of concern. The first objective is to promote women's economic rights and independence, including access to employment, appropriate working conditions and control over economic resources.

Governments under this strategy should enact laws that ensure equal pay for equal work, implement laws and eliminate discriminatory practices in the labor market.

The second strategic objective is to facilitate women's equal access to resources, employment, markets and trade. Governments, banks and non-governmental institutions should promote women's self-employment, ensure equal access to job-trainings and mobilize the banking sector to increase lending and refinancing to women entrepreneurs. The third strategy is on providing business services, training and access to marketing information and technology, particularly to low-income women.

Thirdly, the strategy is to provide business services, trainings and access to markets, information and technology particularly to low income women. Actions that need to be taken include promotion of women's business, provide. Market and technology access to women in especially in rural areas and create non-discriminatory support services including funds for women.

The fourth strategy provides strengthen women's economic capacity and commercial networks. Under the strategy stakeholders shall adopt integrate gender perspective to all economic restructuring, adopt policies that create enabling environment for women self-help groups and provide business training for women. The fifth strategic objective is to eliminate occupational segregation and all forms of employment discrimination. Actions that need to be taken include; to implement international labor standards, eliminate discriminatory practices on basis of women's reproductive role and to promote election of women trade union officials. The last strategic objective is to promote harmonization of work and family responsibilities for women and men. Stakeholders shall take actions to adopt policies that ensure flexible working hours, ensuring part from working hours can be chosen by women, enact and enforce policies and laws on sexual harassment in all work places and ensure access to quality child care services.

The second strategic objective states government, research centers and other organizations shall study the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures. Finally governments shall eliminate trafficking in women and assist victims of violence due to prostitution and trafficking. Countries of origin, transit and destination shall work in collaboration to eliminate trafficking.

1.2.2. INTERNATIONAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS ON THE POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION ON HUMAN RIGHTS (UDHR)

The UDHR is a founding document on human rights that came up with elaborated human rights to give effect to the human rights provisions of the United Nations Charter. The rules under the UDHR are incorporated under many constitutions including the Ethiopian Constitution. The UDHR declares inherent dignity, equal and inalienable rights of all members of human family are the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. Article 1 declares that all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. UDHR entitles everyone to enjoy the rights provided there under without distinction among other things based on sex. Further article 21 declares that everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country directly or through representative chosen freely. The basis of the authority of government shall be expressed through genuine and periodic elections.

UDHR under article 26 declares the right to education. The declaration entitles citizens free education at least in elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary school is compulsory while technical and professional education shall be made generally available. Higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

The declaration recognizes the right of parents to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children. The same provision affirms that education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. Society in general shall be educated so to result in respect to the human rights of others including women.

UDHR declares the right to health with broader perspective. Article 25 provides the right to standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family including food, clothing, housing and medical care. In addition, necessary social services shall be provided. In the event of unemployment sickness, disability, widowhood, old-age or other lack of livelihood citizens have the right to security. Article 25 (2) states motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.

The right to equal pay for equal work is declared under article 23 of UDHR. Everyone has the right to work, to freely choose employment to just and favorable conditions of work and protection against unemployment. Further everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and for his family an existence worthy of human dignity.

Cognizant of the importance of trade unions to ensure better protection of labor rights the declaration recognizes the rights of individuals to form and join trade unions. Article 24 further declares the right to rest and leisure including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

BEIJING DECLARATION

The Beijing declaration provides that women's participation in decision making process and access to power, are fundamental for the achievement of equality, development and peace. The declaration recognizes the need for the commitment of governments for equal participation of women and men in all national, regional and international bodies and policy making process and the establishment or strengthening of mechanisms at all levels for accountability to the world's women.

Regarding education Beijing declaration states the determination of governments to promote people-centered sustainable development through the provision of life-long and basic education. States under the declaration have committed to ensure equal access to and equal treatment of women and men in education.

The declaration recognizes the right of all women to control all aspects of their health; in particular their own fertility is basic to their empowerment. States are determined to provide primary health care for girls and women. States shall ensure equal access to and equal treatment of men and women in health care and enhance women's sexual and reproductive health.

The declaration states the determination of states to promote women's economic independence including by eradicating persistent and increasing burden of poverty on women by addressing the structural causes of poverty through economic structures. States are also determined to ensure equal access to resources including land and credit.

The declaration affirms the determination of states to prevent and eliminate all forms of violence against women and girls. Governments should ensure the protection and promotion of human rights of women. In

order to protect women and girls in particular, states should respect international law including humanitarian law. Humanitarian laws are laws that govern states conduct of war. Under these laws it is prohibited to use sexual violence as weapon of war.

DECLARATION ON ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Violence against women is defined under article 1 to include any act of gender based violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether occurring in private or public life. Women's political, economic, social and civil rights are recognized under article 3 of the declaration. States shall take appropriate measures to eliminate violence against women. States shall exercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and to punish acts of violence against women. On primary level governments should adopt laws, policies and plan of actions to eliminate violence against women. To redress the harm against victims, states shall provide rehabilitation services to such women. Sensitizing law enforcement officers is essential to ensure victims have access to justice. Women who are especially vulnerable to violence shall be protected.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS (ICCPR)

ICCPR was adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1966. The convention recognizes that the human beings enjoy civil and political freedom and freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his civil and political rights. Article 3 of the convention provides the rights of women and men to enjoy the rights provided under the convention equally. ICCPR under article 25 provides the right of everyone to have the right and opportunity of everyone to participate in political sphere without unreasonable restrictions. The provision reiterates what is provided under article 21 of UDHR.

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS (ICESCR)

ICESCR is adopted in 1966. The convention provides the duties of states concerning economic, social and cultural rights of people. Together with ICCPR, ICESCR forms binding international bill of human rights. The human rights stipulated under the ICESCR are inter-related and interdependent with the human rights under ICCPR. For instance, the violation of the right to

health might take life. The right to health is a social right provided under ICESCR while the right to life is a civil right provided under ICCPR.

The convention repeats what is stipulated under article 26 of UDHR as analyzed above on the right to education. Article 13 of ICESCR adds that fundamental education shall be encouraged as far as possible, for those persons who have not received or completed the whole period of their primary education. In addition, under article 10, ICESCR imposes the duty on family to be responsible for education of dependent children.

In the same manner as UDHR, article 12 of ICESCR provides the right to enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Steps should be taken by state parties which are necessary for reduction of still-birth rate, infant mortality, improvement of all aspects of environment and industrial hygiene, prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, occupational and other diseases and creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

The ICESCR recognizes the right of individuals to form trade unions for the protection of one's rights. It is prohibited to restrict such right except as provide by law and for the purpose of national security or public order or to protect the rights of others under article 6 states are obliged to protect the right to work including the duty to provide technical and vocational guidance and training programs, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedoms. Apart from the guarantees provided under UDHR, article 7 of the convention providing the right of workers to fair wages and equal remuneration for work of equal value particularly women are guaranteed with conditions of work not inferior to those enjoyed by men with equal pay for equal work. The convention also guarantees equal opportunity to be promoted and safe and healthy working conditions.

CONVENTION ON ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN (CEDAW)

CEDAW is an international treaty adopted by the United Nations assembly in 1979. The convention provides broad definition of discrimination.⁹ The convention is the first international treaty to address the fundamental rights of women comprehensively and filling the gap under international human rights law.¹⁰ CEDAW is commonly termed as bill of women rights. Though CEDAW is one of the international treaties with high global consensus, it is regrettably one of the treaties with highest reservations.¹¹

Article 7 of CEDAW provides the duty of states to take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country. Particular duties of states are provided under article 7. Hence, states have the obligations to ensure the rights of women to vote in all elections, to be eligible for election, to participate in the formulation of government policy and implementation, to hold public office and to participate in all non-governmental organizations.

The General Recommendation no 23 which elaborates article 7 of CEDAW states that deep-rooted stereotypes and women's overburden in the house limits the participation of women in politics. The recommendation recommends that states shall eliminate de facto and de jure discrimination on participation of women in politics. States shall ensure the appointment of women in senior positions and consult women representative groups in formulation of policies. Countries should provide support to political parties to eliminate barriers that hinder women from taking part in politics while political parties are recommended to set aside minimum for women on their executive bodies.

The CEDAW under article 13 provides the duty of states to ensure equality in the field of education. In particular states have the responsibility to eliminate stereotypes to ensure same conditions for career and vocational guidance at all levels of education same opportunity to benefit from scholarships and access to programs of continuing education and reduction of

⁹Discrimination is defined as "any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status on basis, of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field." The definition doesn't only encompass direct discrimination which is targeted against women but also indirect discrimination that results from actions or inaction and has the effect of excluding women from enjoying their rights.

¹⁰Chelsea Purvis, The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, 2012.

¹¹European Parliament, How Could the Convention on Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women be implemented in the EU legal Framework?, 2011.

female dropout. Moreover, the convention obliges state parties to ensure same opportunities to participate actively in physical education. States shall provide specific education to ensure health and well-being of families including information and advice on family planning.

States under article 12 have the obligation to eliminate discrimination in health care services; thereby they shall ensure equal access to health care including family planning services. In addition, state parties are obliged to ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and post natal period, granting free services where necessary. Women should be provided with adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

Article 11 of CEDAW provides the right of women to work on profession of their choice. Women shall have the right to find work, get equal pay, promotion and training and have access to healthy and safe working conditions. Women should not be discriminated based on this reproductive role such as whether they are married, pregnant, just has a child or are looking after children. Assurances provided during retirement, unemployment, sickness and old age shall be provided equally to women and men. In addition, article 13 of the convention provides that women have equal rights with men in all areas of economic and social life; these include access to resources such as bank loan and family benefits.

There is no specific provision in the text of CEDAW that outlaws gender based violence. General recommendation 19 was adopted to establish the relationship between specific provisions of CEDAW and how these provisions provide protection against violence against women. The recommendation states that, the broad definition of discrimination encompasses violence against women. Article 11 of the convention declares equality of men and women in employment. Recommendation 19 states that equality in employment can be seriously impaired when women are subject to violence such as sexual harassment in workplace. Sexual harassment is defined to include unwelcome sexually determined behavior as physical contact and advances, sexually colored remarks showing pornography or sexual demands whether by words or actions. Such conduct is discriminatory when the woman has reasonable ground to believe that her objection would disadvantage her in connection with her employment, including recruitment or promotion, when it creates a hostile working environment.

Based on recommendation 19 states shall take the following specific measures to eliminate violence against women;

- Ensure that there are laws against gender based violence
- Ensure the compilation of statistics on extent, cause and effects of gender based violence
- Ensure that media respect and promote respect for women
- Take effective measures against attitudes and customs that perpetuate violence against women
- Provide support services to victims of violence and ensure that such services are accessible to rural women and;
- Report on the status of and measures taken against gender based violence

INTERNATIONAL LABOR ORGANIZATION (ILO) CONVENTIONS

Ethiopia has signed and ratified the following three ILO conventions on the right of women.

Equal Remuneration Convention No 100 (1951)-

This convention obliges states to ensure equal remuneration for men and women workers of equal value. The principle shall be applied by means of national laws and regulations, collective agreements of employers and employees and legally established machineries. To assist the implementation of the convention, it is provided under article 3 that, measures shall be taken to promote objective appraisal of work on basis of work to be performed.

Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention 156 (1981)

Article 3 of this convention provides that persons with family responsibilities who are engaged in or wish to engage in employment to exercise their rights to do so without being subject to discrimination. Measures shall be taken to develop and promote community services such as child care and family care services and facilities for workers with family responsibilities. Vocational and technical training programs shall be provide to enable such workers to return to the labor force. Family responsibilities shall not be a reason for termination of employment.

Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 111 (1958)

Member states to the convention are obliged to declare and pursue a national policy designed to promote equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation with a view to eliminating any discrimination among other grounds based on sex.

Governments shall have specific duties to seek co-operation with employers' and workers' organizations and other appropriate bodies in promoting the acceptance and observance of anti-discrimination policy. States shall amend laws that are discriminatory.

1.3. REGIONAL LEGAL AND POLICY DOCUMENTS ON POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN

1.3.1. REGIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS ON POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN

THE DAKAR AFRICAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION ON WOMEN (DAKAR PLATFORM)

The Dakar Platform was adopted in 1995 with the aim of designing comprehensive women policy on regional level. The platform provides gaps and areas of concern identified at national level and African level. Eleven areas of concerns were identified one of which is the political empowerment of women in Africa.

The platform states that policies to promote social and political integration must guarantee opportunities for women's full participation in decision that affects their interest. Participation of women in decision making ensures democracy, full development and diversity and innovation. Women should be enabled to participate in wide range of public and private organizations.

The Dakar Platform proposes that governments should increase expenditure in education. They shall direct resources so that adult female literacy is enhanced. The impact of appropriate policies and programs to address the gender disparities in education needs to be addressed. States should orient vocational and technical needs of the youth. Inappropriate curriculums that re-enforce gender stereotypes shall be amended. Women's participation in science and technology subjects at higher level as well as their participation in scientific research and formulation of science and technology policies shall be promoted. Moreover, the application of science and technology shall benefit women.

With regards to health young women should be provided with the requisite information so that they can make informed decision about their sexuality and fertility. In Africa, population development policies and programs must strive to improve the status of women while at the same time seeking to reduce the rates of

population growth, infant and child mortality and maternal mortality. There should be complete integration of reproductive health service at primary health care systems. Reproductive health and family planning service should also include protection against STDs.

Governments should subsidize health care service fees for women who cannot access health care services due to poverty.

The platform recognizes the disproportionate heavy burden of poverty on women. Women in Africa have major role in agriculture. There is a need to increase marketability of their products. Strengthening women's potential for management of food and food aid resources can ensure that women's priorities and their families' well-being are better served. Women in Africa must be empowered to participate in economic structures and policy formulation and in productive process itself. Governments should design strategies and actions in order to move away from the current welfare orientation to address the economic empowerment of women and in particular strengthen and support participation in trade and industry.

The platform states that violence deprives women of their ability to achieve equality and threatens their safety, freedom and autonomy. The root of violence against women needs to be analyzed by their historical, cultural and social origin. Governments should criminalize all types of violence. Stateless and refugee women are particularly vulnerable to violence and they shall be afforded protection. Governments, nongovernmental organizations and international organizations should establish information services.

1.3.2. REGIONAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS ON POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN

THE ADDIS ABABA DECLARATION ON THE DAKAR AFRICAN PLATFORM FOR ACTION ON WOMEN

States have declared their commitment to balance political, cultural and social policy options. The declaration affirms that the effective implementation of gender focused policies has been impeded by absence of women in decision making levels among other things. The declaration was adopted mainly to strengthen the commitment of states to implement the Dakar Platform for Action.

The declaration affirms that priority action should be taken for protecting the human rights of girls and

ensuring that they get nurture, care, education and opportunities. It is recognized that these actions enable achieving full potentials of girls equally with their brothers.

The declaration appreciates that African leaders have incorporated gender perspective in all activities of development process. The declaration recalls African women has in most cases deteriorated particularly among others in the field of economic empowerment. States have committed under the declaration to integrate women's concern in policy options and to harmonize economic growth with social equity.

AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES RIGHTS (THE BANJUL CHARTER)

The Banjul Charter was adopted in 1981. The charter has dedicated a provision under article 18 (3) for women rights. The provision obliges states to ensure the elimination of discrimination against women and also ensure the protection of the rights of women and the child as stipulated as stipulated under international declarations and conventions. This provision is a general provision applicable to all types of rights of women. Apart from this provision, the charter has other stipulations applicable to women and men equally. Article 13 (1) of the Banjul Charter provides that everyone has the right to participate freely in the government of his country, either directly or indirectly or through freely chosen representatives.

Article 17 of the Banjul Charter provides the right to education of individuals. Article 25 on the other hand states the duty of states to promote rights and freedoms as well as corresponding obligations and duties provided under the charter through teaching, education and publication. The right to equality of men and women being one of the rights provided under the charter education is not only a right but also means to realize other rights.

The charter under article 16 provides that every individual has the right to enjoy best attainable state of physical and mental health. This seems to set a lower standard as compared with international legal documents analyzed above that provide the right of individuals to highest attainable health. State parties shall take necessary measures to protect the health of their people and to ensure that they receive medical attention when they are sick. In addition, article 18 provides that family shall be the natural unit and basis of society. It shall be protected by the state which shall take care of its physical health and moral.

Article 15 of the charter provides the rights of individuals under equitable and satisfactory conditions unlike ICESCR and UDHR that provide favorable working condition; the charter seems to use lesser standard by using the term satisfactory condition instead of favorable condition. The Charter under article 4 states that human beings are inviolable. Every human being is entitled to respect for his life and the integrity of his person. No one may be arbitrarily deprived of his right.

PROTOCOL TO THE AFRICAN CHARTER ON HUMAN AND PEOPLES' RIGHTS ON THE RIGHTS OF WOMEN (MAPUTO PROTOCOL)

Maputo protocol was adopted for the reason that article 18 of Banjul Charter is insufficient to fully provide the rights of women in Africa. Ethiopia is a signatory to the protocol but has not ratified it yet. The protocol has incorporated rules that take into consideration the particular situations of African women. The protocol under article 9 provides the duty of states to ensure equal participation of women in political life of their countries through affirmative action enabling national legislations. Further states are obliged to ensure;

- Women participate without any discrimination in all elections;
- Women are represented equally at all levels with men in all electoral process; and
- Women are equal partners with men at all levels of development and implementation of state policies and development programs.

Moreover, states shall ensure increased and effective representation and participation of women at all levels of decision making.

African states are obliged under article 12 to eliminate all forms of discrimination and stereotypes in education against women. Gender based violence hinders women's access to education. The protocol in this regard obliged states to provide protection to women specially girl-children from gender based violence in schools. Counseling and rehabilitation shall be provided for women who suffer abuses and sexual harassment. The protocol provides the duty of states to take specific positive actions in;

- Promoting literacy among women;
- Promote education and training for women at all levels and in all disciplines particularly in the fields of science and technology and;
- Promote enrolment and retention of girls in schools and other training institutions.

The Maputo protocol gives due emphasis to reproductive health rights of women. Under article 14 the protocol obliges states to respect and promote the following rights of women

- The right to control fertility
- The right to decide the number of children, whether to have children or the spacing of children
- The right to choose any method of contraception
- The right to be protected from sexually transmitted disease including HIV/AIDS
- the right to be informed on one's health status and on the health status of one's partner, particularly if affected with sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, in accordance with internationally recognized standards and best practices;
- The right to have family planning education.

Article 14 (2) (a) and (b) of the protocol reiterates what is provided under article 12 of CEDAW. Sub article (c) uniquely provides the right to medical abortion. No international human rights document guarantees the right to medical abortion to women. Up on the fulfillment of any of the conditions under this provision, which includes rape, incest, sexual assault, mental or physical health of the mother or the fetus; medical abortion is permitted under the protocol.

The Maputo protocol under article 13 reiterates what is provided under article 11 of CEDAW. However, article 13 of the protocol adds that sexual harassment in workplace shall be punished. Support shall be granted to women who work in informal sectors including providing social insurance states shall take necessary measures to ensure the recognition of economic value of the work of women in home. Hand in hand, states shall promote that both parents bear the primary responsibility for the upbringing and development of children.

States have the duty to adopt and implement appropriate measures to ensure the protection of every women's right to respect for her dignity and protection of women from all forms of violence particularly sexual and verbal violence. In terms of measures that should be taken by states article 4 reiterates what is provided under general recommendation 19 on CEDAW as analyzed above.

1.4. NATIONAL POLICY AND LEGAL DOCUMENTS ON POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN

1.4.1. NATIONAL POLICY DOCUMENTS ON POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN

ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL POLICY ON WOMEN

The 1993 Ethiopian women policy was adopted by the then transitional government of Ethiopia. The policy was formulated by taking into consideration the differentiated needs and interests of women in rural and urban areas. The policy recognizes the role of women in popular movements. Ethiopian women took part in the struggle for the freedom and rights of the people but they have not benefited much from the fruits of the struggle. Women struggle were not organized and are not inculcated in government programs. One of the problems identified by the policy is the fact that women have low participation in government offices starting from local structure up to senior positions.

The objectives of the policies include the need to protect and respect the democratic and human rights of women in order to eliminate the inequality and inferiority of women in social, economic and political spheres. Based on this objective, the policy strategizes to ensure the right to vote, to be elected and to establish organizations and political parties. The policy directs that gender office shall be established in all of government offices and organizations to mainstream gender. Regional states women offices are also stakeholder in mainstreaming gender in all spheres of life.

Under its implementation strategy, the policy provides, the government shall ensure equality of women to participate in educational institutions of any kind including technical and vocational training institutions. Enhancing women education and training is also another strategy under the policy set to increase economic, social and political role of women.

The policy describes the health status of women as horrendous. The high number of maternal mortality and high birth rate exacerbated by lack of information about reproductive health worsens the problem. Government and communities shall strive to eliminate harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and early marriage through education. Women's rights to get information on health care, family planning, breastfeeding and lactation shall be guaranteed.

One of the strategies of the policy is to ensure equality in the provision of services including land distribution. Women shall have equal right to work, pay, promotion, appointment, transfer, termination and training in work. Special attention shall be given to rural women by creating measures that reduce burden of household chores and by creating programs that increase income generating mechanisms.

There is no specific policy direction with regards to violence against women under the policy. However, the policy provides that human rights of women shall be protected. Harmful traditional practices shall be eliminated through attitudinal change and awareness creation. In addition, women shall have the opportunity to protect their rights and get redress when their rights are violated.

FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA GENERAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING POLICY

This policy has general and specific objectives to ensure the provision of quality education in Ethiopia. The education policy is crafted to produce citizens that are productive, problem solving and who take responsibilities. Education is a tool to enhance basic knowledge and problem solving capacity and capability of society. Educated ensures elimination of harmful practices, development of useful culture and inculcating science and technology in the society. The policy states that education contributes a lion share in the protection of human rights, freedoms and mutual understandings.

Specific objectives of this policy include using education as a tool to change the attitude of the society about the role of women and guide the society on the right track concerning women rights. Regarding teachers, the policy provides that special attention shall be given to increasing the role of female teachers. Special support shall be provided to women in distributing educational facilities. The government shall provide financial support to increase the participation of women in education.

HEALTH POLICY OF THE TRANSITIONAL GOVERNMENT OF ETHIOPIA

The health policy is mainly focused on disease prevention. The policy states the direction that the government shall strive to provide health services with the limited resource in fair and equitable manner. Support shall be provided to those who cannot afford to pay for health services. Comprehensive sectorial strategies are provided under the policy. Environmental hygiene, nutrition, mental health, reduction of accidents and

occupation health are focused upon. Family health services shall be promoted through assuring adequate maternal health care, increasing awareness on maternal nutrition, promotion of breast-feeding, encouraging paternal engagement in family health and discouraging harmful traditional practices.

The policy sets out priority areas one of which is providing special attention to health needs of the family particularly women and children. In terms of strategy the policy states, inter-sectorial collaboration shall be emphasized in enriching the concept and intensifying the practice of family planning, particularly in the development of day-care centers in factories and enterprises and developing facilities for workers' health and safety in production sectors.

FDRE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF ETHIOPIA

This strategy is a comprehensive policy document that sets out policy directions with broad based focus on manufacturing and other industries. The strategy states that private investors are play a major role in the development of the country and hence shall be encouraged to engage in the economy. As per the policy the industrial development shall be led by agricultural development and shall focus on export market. Labor intensive Industries are prioritized by the strategy. The strategy mentions that garment industries are among these labor intensive industries. Focus on these industries will enable Ethiopia to use its comparative advantage in the international trade by using its unskilled and large number of labor in these industries. In addition, this will ensure fair distribution of resources to large number of unskilled labor as opposed to capital intensive industries.

There is no section in the policy that inculcates gender as an agenda. The policy states that the relationship between employer and employee is vital for industrial development. The conflicting interest of employees and employers in the industry is recognized under the policy. Employees have the interest to be paid satisfactory salary so that they can afford better living condition. Employers desire to pay less so that they can maximize profit. To maintain a balance between these conflicting interests, it shouldn't be expected of employers to pay higher salary until they make sustainable profit. At the same time, employers should respect the rights of employees. Employees should benefit from organizational development step by step.

NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT POLICY AND STRATEGY OF ETHIOPIA

Labor is recognized as one of the most important resources of Ethiopia under the Policy. The labor supply is continuously growing as the country has more population joining the labor force than leaving it. There is a high level of unemployment and underemployment. There is strong relationship between economic growth, employment and poverty reduction. The informal sector in urban areas absorbs many poor women. The problem with this sector is underemployment and low return in terms of economic gain. The policy states that the government shall support micro and small enterprises in order to enhance their productivity. Women play a major role in non-paying agricultural activities. In order to reduce rural poverty women and youth shall be introduced to non-farm activities and rural wage employment shall be introduced to ensure economic equity.

This policy recognizes the disparity between men and women in their ability to access jobs. Such disparity is a concern in ensuring a real distributional effect of economic development in a given country. Institutions such as Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs and Bureaus of Labor and Social Affairs at regional levels should support youth, women and poor households by assessing active labor market services. Affirmative action measures shall be taken so that a specified portion of beneficiaries of formal sector employment are women. The policy provides strategies for mainstreaming gender in employment generation including;

- 1) Enforcing affirmative action so that specified portion of beneficiaries of programs and projects are women.
- 2) Coordinating efforts to encourage institutions to target women as beneficiaries of skill and business development programs as well as schemes aimed at improving access to resources.
- 3) Encouraging gender-friendly appropriate technology to reduce the drudgery women's domestic and economic activity and enhance their productivity and incomes and as a result their income earning capacities.
- 4) Facilitating the establishment of child-care centers for young working mothers.

1.4.2. NATIONAL LEGAL DOCUMENTS ON POLITICAL, SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF WOMEN

THE FEDERAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ETHIOPIA CONSTITUTION (FDRE CONSTITUTION)

The constitution of Ethiopia is the supreme law of the land with the highest legal status in Ethiopia. As declared under article 9 of the FDRE constitution, all laws, practices and decisions of organs that are against the constitution shall be null and void. The constitution under article 25 recognizes the equality of people before the law and equal protection of the law. As per this provision, discrimination based on sex is prohibited. The FDRE Constitution has dedicated a provision to recognize the rights of women.

As per article 35 (3) of the constitution women shall be provided with affirmative measures so as to enable them to compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social and economic life as well as in public and private institutions. In general terms article 35 (1) provides the right of women for equal rights with men on the enjoyment of rights and protections provided by the constitution. One of the rights provided under the constitution is the right of citizens to vote and be elected. Article 38 of the constitution recognizes the rights of citizens to vote upon the attainment of age of 18, the right to be elected and the right to take part in political sphere by being a member of organizations including trade unions, labor organizations and professional associations. The provision further provides elections shall be free and fair.

The government of Ethiopia has obligation to allocate the ever increasing resources to provide to public health, education and other social services under article 41 of the FDRE constitution. Article 35 (3) provides that women are entitled to affirmative measures. The measures are given in private and public institutions so as to enable special attention; is given to women to compete and participate on basis of equality. Therefore, the constitution entitles women for affirmative measures in education both in private and public institutions.

Article 35 (4) of the constitution prohibits laws, customs or practices that cause mental and bodily harm. The state has the obligation to eliminate the influences of harmful customs on women. Moreover, to prevent harm arising from pregnancy and childbirth and in order to safeguard their health, women have the right of access to family planning education, information and capacity. In broad terms article 41 (4) provides the duty

of the government to allocate resources to public health, education and other social services. Regarding occupational health, article 42 (2) provides the rights of workers to healthy and safe work environment.

The constitution guarantees the right to maternity leave with full pay under article 34 (5). Maternity leave shall include pre-natal leave with full pay. As per article 35 (7) women have the right to acquire, administer, control, use and transfer property. In particular, they have rights of women to use, transfer, administer and control land is guaranteed. Women shall have equal right in employment, promotion, pay and transfer of pension entitlements.

The government has the duty to enforce laws to eliminate the influences of harmful customs as per article 35 (4) of the constitution. Laws, customs and practices that oppress or cause bodily or mental harm to women are prohibited. Article 14 and 15 of the constitution guarantees, the right to liberty and security of a person and the right to life respectively. Under article 16 it is provided that everyone has the right to protection against harm.

AMENDED ELECTORAL LAW OF ETHIOPIA PROCLAMATION 532/2007

The electoral principles set forth under article 26 of the proclamation states that any election shall be conducted on the basis of universal suffrage and by direct and secret ballot through which the electors express their consent freely without discrimination with equal participation. Constituencies as per article 20 shall be formed proportionally. Only single representative shall be elected from a constituency. Hence, simple majority system is used in Ethiopia. This system leaves votes below 50% unconsidered which negatively affects women candidates and political parties with large number of women candidates due to the fact that lower votes go to women.

LABOR PROCLAMATION 377/2003

The labor proclamation has dedicated a chapter on working conditions of women. Women shall not be discriminated against as regards employment and payment on basis of their sex. It is prohibited to employ women on type of work that is harmful to their health. There are particular protections provided for pregnant women. No pregnant women shall be assigned to night work between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. or be employed on overtime work or assigned outside her permanent place of work. If a pregnant women's job is dangerous to her health. She shall be transferred to another place of work. A contract of employment of a pregnant woman shall not be terminated based on reason related

to giving birth and pregnancy. Pregnant women are entitled to medical leave with pay based on recommendation of a medical doctor. Leave shall also be given with pay for medical examination. A total of 90 days maternity leave is guaranteed under the proclamation.

There is no minimum wage requirement provided under the labor law. The proclamation however, provides the duty of employers to comply with occupational health and safety requirements. Workers shall be properly notified concerning hazards of their respective occupations and precautions necessary to avoid accident and injury. Moreover, employers have the duty to provide workers with protective equipment, arrange medical examinations, ensure that work place and premises do not cause danger to the health and safety of workers.

INDUSTRIAL PARK PROCLAMATION 886/2015

The labor relationship between investors in industrial parks and employees is governed by labor proclamation number 377/2003. Labor contract can be negotiated between the employer and the employee by taking into account the peculiar features of industrial parks. The minimum rights of workers provided under the labor proclamation shall not be undermined by such contract as stipulated under article 28 (1) and 28 (2) of the industrial park proclamation.

Ministry of industry has the mandate to organize technical and vocational training in collaboration with concerned government entities and investors in industrial parks. The ministry is also mandated to facilitate technology transfer and skills development in general and domestic manufacturing sector capacity building through clustering and other best practice approaches.

FDRE CRIMINAL CODE PROCLAMATION NO 414/2005

The criminal code punishes criminal offences whether perpetrated against men or women. Physical violence such as bodily harm and assault, psychological violence such as insult and intimidation and sexual violence such as rape are punishable under the criminal code. The criminal code doesn't criminalize marital rape.

Starting from article 561, the code criminalizes harmful traditional practices including abduction, female circumcision and harmful traditional practices against pregnant women. Article 625 on the other hand, criminalizes procuring sexual intercourse or any other indecent act by taking advantage of her material or mental distress or of the authority he exercises over her by virtue of his option function or capacity as protector, teacher, master or employer.

ACTORS IN SUPPORTING THE GARMENT AND TEXTILE INDUSTRY IN ETHIOPIA	ROLES THE ACTORS PLAY IN SUPPORTING EMPLOYEES IN GENERAL AND WOMEN IN PARTICULAR
Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs	<p>Awareness creation about labor rights among employers</p> <p>Dispute resolution of collective disputes between employees and employers</p> <p>Issue directive on occupational safety, health and protection of working environment</p> <p>Issue directives on working conditions</p>
Ministry of Industry	<p>Engage in research on women's labor rights protection in industries</p> <p>Assess women rights protection in industries</p> <p>Assess the presence of facilities including proper latrine and breastfeeding rooms in factories</p> <p>Assess the presence of HIV/AIDS prevention system in factories</p> <p>Assess the presence of gender policies in factories</p> <p>Assess the presence of sexual harassment prevention method and system in the factories.</p> <p>Engage in dialogues with investors on the status of women rights protection</p> <p>Collaborate with other stakeholders such as International Labor Organization to provide support to factories to create awareness on women rights</p>
Confederation of Ethiopian Trade Unions	<p>Ensure the inculcation of the needs and interests of women in collective agreements</p> <p>Encourage the representation of women in leadership positions in trade unions</p> <p>Encourage the establishment of women's committee in trade unions</p> <p>Engage in practical assessment of the protection of women's rights</p>
International Labor Organization	<p>Capacity building</p> <p>Provide soft skill trainings to employees</p> <p>Provide women rights training to employees including managers and expatriates</p> <p>Provide labor right trainings to employers</p> <p>Structure Building</p> <p>Encourage women to be members of trade unions</p> <p>Encourage women to engage in collective bargaining</p> <p>Facilitate and support the establishment and operation of women's committee in trade unions</p> <p>Collaborate with gender departments of factories</p> <p>Referral Linkage</p> <p>Report cases of labor rights violation to the management of factories</p> <p>Engage in labor inspection including health and safety inspection</p>
Embassies	Provide financial resources for gender projects on women workers
H&M	<p>Engage in corporate social responsibility projects</p> <p>Provide projects with financial resources to ensure socially sustainable industry and decent work environment</p>
Non-governmental organizations	<p>Provide donation for women focused projects and trainings.</p> <p>Engage in awareness creation on women rights.</p>

PART TWO

PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVING THE WORKING CONDITIONS FOR WOMEN IN THE TEXTILE AND GARMENT INDUSTRY

This section covers the findings of this research on the practices, challenges and opportunities for improving the working conditions for women in the textile and garment industry. The findings are categorized into three main sections. The first section gives an overview of the working conditions of female factory workers working in the selected factories. In this section, the challenges of female factory workers are analyzed based on the information given by human resource managers and factory executives as well as the female factory workers themselves and the leaders of labor unions. Also covered in this section are the systems and practices that are in place to cater to women's basic needs which include support mechanisms, awareness creation mechanisms, safety and health issues and materials provided by the factory to protect women from different forms of harm at the workplace.

The second section deals with the state and prevalence of gender-based violence at the workplace including related challenges and redress mechanisms at an organizational level.

The third section covers the inclusivity and conduciveness of the working environment for women's leadership and decision making. In this section, the barriers and opportunities for women's leadership and decision making, the systems and practices in place to cater thereto and the voice and agency and bargaining power of women factory workers are discussed. Furthermore, potential solutions deemed relevant by employers, female factory workers and union leaders are also discussed in this section.

2.1. AN OVERVIEW OF THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF FEMALE FACTORY WORKERS

The working condition of female factory workers working in the textile and garment industry is found to be featured by various challenges. Female factory workers reported that most of their basic needs have not been fulfilled in the workplace.

2.1.1. CHALLENGES EXPERIENCED BY FEMALE FACTORY WORKERS

The challenges faced by female factory workers were found to be different from the perspectives of different actors. For example, some human resource managers and company representatives believe female factory workers faced no specific challenges just because of their gender while others especially the female factory workers themselves argue that there are challenges in relation to their gender. Challenges pertaining to low income and pay gaps, challenges related to women's reproductive role, issues related to shift work, the demanding nature of the work, discriminations, unfair treatment, violations of rights, lack of awareness and safety and health risks are some of the challenges that stood out among the research findings.

LOW INCOME AND PAY GAPS

Female factory workers, despite being majority of the employees in the textile and garment industry, are the most affected by low salaries. An average female factory worker earns 1100 Birr per month and this could range from 800 to 1400 Birr. A female factory worker shares, "I get paid 1000 Birr per month and I have been working in the industry for 18 years now; how am I supposed to retire with this salary? ...When we bring this to the attention of management, we are told that we can leave if this is not enough". This is also the case with other employees who have been working in the factories for over 20 years. One female factory worker goes stating:

"We do most of the work in the factory. But the salary we get is very small. I am paid 1000 Birr in this terrible economy. I spend 400 Birr for my child and 500 for other living expenses mostly related to my family. I am then left with only a 100 for myself. What am I supposed to do with a hundred Birr? ...We have asked multiple times for a salary increase but for every 5000 Birr they add as a salary increment for an executive, they only add 100 Birr for us. This is what we are dealing with."

Even for those women who do not have families, the situation is the same if not worse because their salary

is subjected to house rent, food expenses and personal expenses. According to a female factory worker, *“most of the young women left their parents’ houses to come and work in the factories [as the families live in rural places]... and the cheapest place to rent is 800 Birr”*.

This is also admitted by human resource managers, factory executives and union leaders. A factory executive said *“nationwide, the pay for women working in this industry is very small and this has detrimental effects on the living conditions of factory workers”*.

CETU women’s affairs officer also confirms this allegation by saying that *“there is no minimum wage requirement in the country so companies pay their employees based on their own scale”*. This structural problem, coupled with employers’ low salary scales affected the working as well as living conditions of female factory workers.

The female factory workers also say that they are subjected to gender pay gaps in the factories. Such discrimination however is subtle as they start with the same salary with the men. In the words of a male union leader *“although the starting salary [between male and female factory workers] is the same, through time they end up getting different salaries...for example, I and another female workers might be hired with 1300 as a starting salary. After a year, I will get a 200 Birr raise while she gets only a 100 Birr raise.”* Through time, this leaves the female factory workers earning much less than their male colleagues.

Gender pay gaps are among the leading sources of frustration for women factory workers. They complain that both men and women work on similar machines but they do not get equal pay. When they complain about this, they are told that it is related to their level of efficiency. But they argue otherwise. According to a female factory worker *“the management says they base raises on level of efficiency but this is not true as the machines record daily levels of efficiency and women also produce larger outputs and have higher levels of efficiency than the men.”* At times, they are not even given explanations as they say they are told to leave if they are not satisfied with the working conditions. This results in high rate of employee turnover as female factory workers are increasingly leaving their jobs in search of better paying jobs or staying home catering to their reproductive roles.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO WOMEN’S REPRODUCTIVE ROLE

The participants of this research agreed almost unanimously that female factory workers face several challenges at the workplace because of their reproductive roles. This starts with monthly struggles with menstrual cramps. One female factory worker shares, *“I am in constant pain when I am on my period. But I have to stand the whole day operating the machine. I can’t stand the whole day and my legs shake. I go to the clinic; I am supposed to be given 3 days break if I am this sick but they do not even give me one day. There are times when I just cry my eyes out and get back to work.”*

A human resource manager in one of the factories also senses this pain of female factory workers; he said *“There are women who get sick during their periods... but the issue of giving them leaves on such days can only be addressed government policies.”*

Another challenge female factory workers have to deal with is the working conditions during pregnancy. According to the participants, women still get to work on big machines during their pregnancy. As one female factory worker stated, *“pregnant women are expected to work on big machines until they finish their 7 months of pregnancy...as the collective agreement prohibits that.”* However, the female factory workers said it is still very difficult for them to work on machines even in the early months of their pregnancy.

While in some factories pregnant women get better treatments including better meal plans, decrease in workload and not being assigned on night shifts other issues still remain. For example, pregnant women would still have to push their way into the service buses as there is no company policy that requires other employees to give priority.

In many of the other factories however, the challenges faced by pregnant women are still multi-faceted. This starts at the recruitment stage. As one female factory worker stated, *“At the time of recruitment, they say they do not hire pregnant women. This is because they are worried about the three months paid leave they would be expected to provide. They even make you get tested with a pee sample and all.”*

“Not only pregnant women are excluded at recruitment, but the company also doesn’t take care of pregnant workers... although they have to eat more than three meals a day, here they mostly even skip breakfast not to miss the bus.”

Female factory workers complain that the food from the cafeteria is not nutritious enough for pregnant women and when they try to bring in their own food, they are told that they cannot bring food to the factory compound.

The challenges seem to multiply after the women give birth. Primarily, female factory workers have problems related to their maternity leave, breastfeeding, day care and shift works. In relation to their maternity cover, female factory workers working in government owned factories get 4 months of paid leave while female factory workers working in private owned factories get 3 months of paid maternal leave. However, these leaves are divided into pre-natal and post-natal leaves. According to the Ethiopian Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003 (article 88(4)), the one month maternity leave has to be taken before the woman gives birth; if she gives birth without taking that leave, or before the end of the month, the post-natal leave shall commence on the date she gives birth.

Without the understanding of this legal stipulation, the female factory workers work until they finish the nine months of pregnancy with the hope of forwarding their pre-natal month after delivery. However, employers tell them that they can only get two months of post-natal leave and this creates massive disappointment on the part of the female factory workers. As it is, the maternity leave is very short given that the employees have to come back and work full time two months after giving birth. A human resources manager from one of the companies admittedly states, *"The maternity leave for female factory workers is very short and at the end of their leave, they come back to work to be working 8 hours straight leaving their infants at home."*

As described by one female worker, *"the treatment that we get during the last months of pregnancy is that of a princess compared to how we are treated when we come back from maternity leave; it's like we have to compensate for the lost time...everything becomes so harsh"*. As female factory workers stated, they are forced to go back to working in the night shift right after they come back from their maternity leave.

In some of the factories, there are daycare centers while in the others the establishment of daycare centers is still at the review stage. In those factories where there are day cares, female factory workers say that they couldn't make the best out of it as some are working in the night shift as the daycare center only works from 9:00-5:00. As one woman shares "The

daycare doesn't really help me because I am a shift worker; I can't bring my child to the night shifts; even in the morning shift, I can't wake him up at 6:00 to bring him with me to work because it is too early." On top of that, getting children to the daycare centers using services buses is still a challenge for the women. The following quote from a female factory worker sums it all:

"The children come to the daycare centers with the 50 to 100 workers in the same service bus and they could easily catch any airborne disease. There was even a case where a car accident resulted in both the mother and the child getting injured. The mother is still in the hospital... Women bring in food in containers from previous night and the food will be staying in the container for a long time as there is no fridge in the daycare. Children also need air and something to play with and there is no playground in the daycare. If they have this playground, they will have the freedom and they wouldn't attack each other or miss their mothers all day. We have asked about this but we still haven't gotten a response. We have the gender and union's office but we can't find time to meet because there are 3 shifts and we miss each other as we might be in different shifts."

As also put by a union leader, *"when mothers are late to drop their kids off at the daycare center even for 5 to 10 minutes, the guards won't let them in. But it is not easy carrying around a child and changing them and they don't let go of their mothers easily either. After her shift as well, she has to run off to her kid to change and collect their clothes before coming back to the bus service and this times are really stressful for mothers and I think it should be corrected."*

The daycare centers being situated far from the factories, though a justified act considering the hazardous nature of the factories creates another stress for women who go and breastfeed their children in the 30 minutes break that they are allowed to take. As a union leader states *"The 30 minute break given to mothers to visit their children is not enough, especially considering the need of the children for their mothers at that age and the daycare is far away to come and go in limited time let alone breastfeed."*

Breastfeeding is another source of struggle for many of the female factory workers who just got back to work. Some women working in the night shift breastfeed the entire day but when they come to work at

night, they are very exhausted to be working on machines. According to the Federation President, issues like breastfeeding time are not included in the collective bargaining. These and other challenges related to their reproductive role are becoming the pushing factor for female factory workers to leave the workforce.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO SHIFT WORK

Female factory workers having both productive and reproductive roles have to juggle between responsibilities at home and at the workplace. Responsibilities at home are multiplied for women. In the words of a human resource manager, *“some of the female factory workers have husbands working here at the factory. In this case, despite sharing similar assignments at the workplace, the women cook, clean and pack lunch for their husbands and try to manage to be here on time.”*

A factory executive also stated that *“working the night shift is the worst thing for female factory workers. They are not at all happy to be here during the night time; they want to go home to their family”* and this problem gets worse when they leave a newborn at home.

Transportation is another issue for women working in the night shift. Some of the companies are located very far from the city where there is no public transport. As a factory executive in one of the factories admittedly states, *“there is no public transportation to the factory. We have some Bajajs (three wheelers) but they are not enough in number. It is practical to say that there is no transportation to the factory. Employees have to walk all the way here at most times and they arrive here late, which subjects them to warnings and penalties.”* Warnings and penalties are not the only misfortunes female factory workers have to deal with; their safety is at risk as well.

On the other hand, in the factories where transportation is provided, the service buses drop employees at the factory at 8:00 p.m. while their shift is due to start at 11:00 p.m. The female factory workers complain that they have no resting place to wait until their shift starts. One female factory worker goes stating *“we have requested for some mattresses so we could rest till our shift starts; but they refused and to make matters worse, they told us to stop using the pieces of cloths from production waste; the fabric that is thrown away! We can't even use that to rest! If they couldn't provide us with mattresses, they should at least be willing to have us dropped off at the factory by the time our shift starts.”*

Even those employees clocking out at 11:00 p.m. complain that the bus drops them off at bus stops but not at home. As one woman shares, *“It takes me 30 - 45 minutes to get home after the bus drops me off. There are ladies who have been stabbed before. They might think that you have money on you so they assault you and mug you.”* As a coping strategy, the women either walk in groups or call someone from home to accompany them on the road.

However, in some factories, employees are not allowed to bring their phones to the workplace with the intention of maintaining productivity by prohibiting phone use. But the employees complain that this is getting in the way of their safety by preventing them from calling home to be accompanied by a family member during the night time. A union leader shares, *“we pushed the agenda of allowing women to carry their phones to the workplace but employers also complain that workers fiddle with their phone, they hack into the factories' Wi-Fi, and there are also some employees that use ear-phones to listen to music from their phone and this is dangerous because it block alert sounds coming from the machines; so we are now a bit hesitant to push the agenda.”*

Availability of food during the night shift is also another issue that was mentioned by participants of the research. As they reported, the cafeterias work only at the day time and for the entire duration of their stay at the factory, which is close to 12 hours as they are dropped off earlier, they do not get any food because they are not allowed to bring food into the factory nor do they get access to tea or coffee.

CHALLENGES RELATED TO THE NATURE OF THE WORK

For women working in the textile and garment industry the nature of the work is another source of challenge. Although some management members argue that *“working in the textile industry is like working in a hotel as there are modern and hence safe machineries”* the female factory workers, union leaders and some other management members disagree. As one human resources manager stated, *“the nature of the work is very tiresome; the work is redundant...workers struggle with a sense of depression. There are incidents where workers scream and even faint...at times, this happens three to four times per day. When this happens, they associate it with being possessed by the devil given most of the workers in the factory are from rural areas. But I think this has to do with the stress and depression these women are dealing with.”*

In some departments, there is a loud voice coming out of the machines which makes it difficult to stand next to. But the female workers stand next to that machine for more eight hours. A male union leader asks *“Imagine how disturbing it could be for a pregnant woman and the fetus inside her?”*

The participants of the research unanimously agreed that the sector is highly labor-intensive. As a factory executive shares, *“majority of the workers in our factory are operators. They have to stand for 8 hours straight to keep the machines running...we all know how difficult it could be to stand even for 1-2 hours; and most of them have been doing this for many years and it is taking a toll on their health”.*

Many of the female factory workers share that they suffer from kidney diseases, knee and thigh problems, back and spinal problems etc. this is because they lift heavy sacks of clothing; pile a large size of fabric and push carts full of fabric. As one woman shares, *“We have to lift and load until the pile is taller than our heights. This exposes us to different accidents. The bags are filled with fabric and may weigh 30-60 kilograms depending on how they are packed.”*

Not only weight but also content is also another threat to the health of workers. As a union leader shares, *“In the sizing department, there is a very dangerous chemical called TLC. That department is not at all suitable for ladies. It’s not safe! There are similar departments with similar problems. There are females that work on hedge planting department, which is a department that deals with the waste from all the departments. It is a waste storage place with very dangerous chemicals in it.”* These and other challenges related to the nature of the work deteriorate women’s capacity to work; compromise their health and sense of ambition. As one female factory workers states, *“Due to the nature of the work in the factory and the long hours that we work here, our capacity decreases overtime. By 55 or 60 we are incapable to carry out our job. We want our pension age to be decreased to 50”.*

Furthermore, female factory workers report being cut, injured, fall and pricked at work.

DISCRIMINATIONS, UNFAIR TREATMENT BY SUPERVISORS AND VIOLATION OF RIGHTS

Apart from the demanding nature of the work, female factory workers allege that they have been subjected to different forms of violations at the workplace such as discrimination, unfair treatment and other forms of

rights violations. Female factory workers reported that they were being subjected to discrimination based on their gender as well as their status as factory workers.

On the issue of gender based discrimination, female factory workers state that they are treated much less than their male colleagues. As a female factory worker shares, *“The men in the factory are feared as they are vocal...they get better salary raises than us. Even when we complain, our complaints are not treated with the same weight as that of the men.”* A male union leader also agrees with this saying, *“The spinning department is one of the departments with the most female workers but is also the one with the highest female turnover. The men speak their minds so they aren’t affected but the women aren’t as vocal as the men. We just recently had 15 workers quit their jobs. The influences come in the form of high work load and un-proportional grouping of works among male and female workers. We are trying to fix this but it is still in progress.”*

Female factory workers are not only subjected to gender based discriminations, however, they also report to be subjected to discrimination based on their status in the factory. While other women who work in the management are treated better, this is not the case for factory workers. As one union leader shares, *“when it comes to breastfeeding breaks, a worker from the HR department is granted the right to go home once or twice a day to breastfeed her baby while our workers from the factory are not. It is not fair that workers from different departments are treated differently. They are both females. We were in a huge debate over this point with the administration...We are demanding for the same treatment for the female workers in the management and in the factory.”*

Female factory workers also report being treated unfairly by supervisors. This entails being told to go back home for coming late even during the night shift, being threatened to be marked absent for coming late, verbal abuse for making mistakes, and being hit by supervisors at worst.

One female factory worker shares,

“Once, I came in late and my supervisor came to my station and told me to leave... So I changed my uniform and went out; but I couldn’t go home. There was no service. So I went back in and sat at the office. But another supervisor asked me what happened and I told him. He called and talked to him for me and he let me back in at 10:00 p.m. If they had any respect for us they wouldn’t do this. I know

I was late; I know I have to work an hour more because I was an hour late. But he didn't even ask me why I was late."

Female factory workers also share that they are subjected to retaliatory measures if they got into disputes with the supervisors *"they threaten us with the attendance. They tell us unless we do as they want, they will mark us absent. When we go to HR and complain, they take their side and blame us. No one is willing to understand us"* says another female factory worker.

On top of this, female factory workers report that foreign supervisors tend to be more abusive than the local ones. A union leader, who was a focus group participant states, *"There is one Vietnamese supervisor that gets verbally abusive on female factory workers when they make mistakes. I even saw her hit them with a yarn with my own eyes"*.

Another factory requirement that is posing a challenge for employees is the requirement of carrying very small purses. As a rule, factory workers are only allowed to carry a purse that can only fit their cell-phones and a single sanitary pad. This factory requirement is set with the intention of preventing smuggling of fabrics out of the factory. However, the female factory workers complain that the single sanitary pad they are able to carry in their purses doesn't take them for their entire shift and nor do the factories provide any. As one female factory worker shares, *"A woman could use 2-3 pads per day and the size of the bag they permit cannot hold it. I believe that this is a basic necessity and the rules regarding this should change. If the rules can't be changed the clinic should at least provide this service for us."*

On top of this, the factory workers are subjected to a heavy bodily searching at the gate which they refer to as *"gross and embarrassing"* because there are times where the guards check whether a woman is wearing pads or are trying to smuggle fabric. When they complain about this to management they say they are told *"the search must be done to stop stealing of company property."*

Another form of violation of right female factory workers are facing is a rather structural one. As shared by a union leader:

"When it comes to workers' stay, they are usually terminated before the end of their five years. Women take most of the union and they are usually

the ones facing this. The company does this not to pay severance pay; which it would have to pay if they stay more than five years. So in order to evade this, a worker is usually fired on their fourth year of service. Also, if a person works for a year as a temporary worker and another four years as a permanent one and get terminated, they say the first year doesn't count because it was on a temporary employment. However, the law takes that person as a permanent employee after 45 days of service."

LACK OF AWARENESS AND SAFETY AND HEALTH RISKS

Among the reasons that subject female factory workers to different forms of abuse and harm is their lack of understanding of basic company etiquettes, productivity rules and safety and health issues. According to a factory executive, *"Even though we have provided the best facilities for women, such as toilets, they are not used properly so educating them on proper use of company facilities is essential. Since we work in three shifts, it is important that everyone understands and follows certain basic etiquettes that help maintain their health and activities."*

However, supervisors and employees agree that the female factory workers need basic skills trainings. Most of the female workers are young workers with no prior experience working in a company setting. Although they are provided induction trainings, these trainings are mainly focused on conduct and behavior at work. While this is a good start, employees say that they want a detailed training as to how to use the machines and protect their safety. A female factory worker highlights,

"There are no trainings or awareness creation events for the workers in the factory. Let's say one jobless person comes to the door asks for a job and gets employed. They are given induction training on work conduct and immediately placed on a machine to work. They are then placed on an 80°C hot machine and put to work. It is very difficult; and different types of accidents happen. A friend of mine lost 3 of her fingers on the job. She is now jobless and sits at home. She hasn't been provided with the appropriate medical care. It's been 8 months. Her medical bills are covered but her day to day life expenses are not. She is now in a lot of problem. The company is not insured so her medical expense is processed when she brings the receipts."

Safety and health risks in the workplace range from risks relating to the availability and use of safety materials, taking precautionary measures, etc.

While employers argue that they provide safety materials that are necessary for the job, employees allege that these are either of poor quality or not sufficient. A factory operations manager says, *"We provide every safety material from headgear to masks to uniforms etc... these safety materials are basic things that they must use. But they lack the awareness. We are trying to create awareness regarding this through the union."* But the workers argue otherwise. They say the masks that they are provided with for six months are of poor quality and only last for a couple of weeks; and the ear-plugs are also of poor quality that they burst in a very short time. The gloves are not suitable for their work as they are provided with surgical gloves which are supposed to be thrown after a single use.

Safety shoes are also another source of contention between factory workers and management. Employees allege that they are not provided with safety boots on a timely basis. As one female factory worker shares, *"I work in the chemical department but I haven't been provided with safety boots. I wear slippers to work...I asked and told that it was on its way; but they haven't given it to me yet"*.

Failure to take precautionary measures was also pointed out by factory workers as a safety risk. According to the employees, there are many workers in a room and it is suffocating as well as risky. A female factory worker tells why, *"From the twelve to fourteen doors of emergency exit only two are open; the others are locked; and we don't know the reason. If a fire breaks, it could all go wrong. The air can't even move freely as it is and we breathe in the dust from the fabrics. A risk of fire accidents, the health implications, all of this makes the overall work environment bad."*

With the above background information, the systems and practices that were laid by the factory to cater to the basic needs of female factory workers were analyzed. The following section provides a detail on this.

2.1.2. SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES TO CATER TO THE BASIC NEEDS OF FEMALE FACTORY WORKERS

In this research, the systems and practices that are in place in the factories to cater to the basic needs of female factory workers have been looked at from three dimensions. The first one is in terms of availability of awareness creation programs to help female factory workers engage in productive work. The second one is in terms of available support systems that are provided to female factory workers by the different actors in the

factory such as human resources department, factory operations department, labor unions, etc. The third dimension looked at the systems and practices in place to safeguard the health and safety of female factory workers.

AWARENESS CREATION TOWARDS PRODUCTIVITY

Majority of the factories that are covered in this research are found to be providing different types of trainings to help female factory workers engage in productive work. However, some of the factories state that their trainings are gender neutral. According to one factory executive, *"the culture of our company is set in such a way that employees are referred to as 'workers' instead of 'male' or 'female'. There are rights and responsibility for all employees that they must adhere to...And this doesn't have anything to do with gender...Therefore, there is no awareness creation program that is specific to one gender because we keep the work environment gender neutral."*

On the other hand, most of the factories provide three types of trainings for female workers. These are the general ones such as induction and on the job training and life skill trainings provided by women's associations and International Labor Organization (ILO). Regarding the induction trainings, they are provided for all employees regardless of sex. The topics covered on induction trainings are company policy, collective bargaining agreement, the Labor Proclamation. Thereafter, health and safety trainings commence. As a human resources manager explained, *"Once they are done with the preliminary topics, the environmental and health officer takes over and trains them on health and safety issues concerning the usage of the machines."*

After employees are deployed in the different departments, they are given on the job trainings on how to operate their respective equipment. As explained by a factory executive, *"There are different departments in the factories: spinning, mal working, rope tying, LCB sizing, room shape, finishing, inspection and product development. All these areas have experts that give training to the employees that are working there to guide them on the things they will be doing."*

The other type of training is on the topics of family planning, HIV/AIDS prevention and important life skills training provided by women's associations in the factories. The factory executives state that the women's associations, supported by ILO, give trainings of such sorts.

The other type of training system in place in some of the companies is an experience sharing structures laid out by companies as part of the succession planning system. This system was designed with the intention of cascading the work ethics and culture of the previous generation to the new corks. As a factory executive shares, *"We have created a platform where the workers from the previous generation can share their experience and wisdom to the new ones...We also have a trainings center tasked to provide platforms of knowledge transfer. We also have an incentive system in place for the previous workers as a motivation so that they can share their knowledge. This method is put in place for every worker in the company."*

Periodic trainings provided by HR as part of the Kaizen strategy is also highlighted by the management of some of the selected factories.

SUPPORT SYSTEMS AVAILED TO FEMALE FACTORY WORKERS

Many of the factories covered in this research stated that they make various types of efforts to support female factory workers. On the other hand, there are also factories that said they *"do not offer any type of special treatment for female factory workers as all employees are treated equally"* - as shared by an operations manager. In many of the factories however, as shared by members of management as well as union leaders and female factory workers themselves, there are different types of support mechanisms availed to female factory workers. These include, affirmative action on recruitment and promotion, supports related to maternity leaves, priority in getting trainings on different topics, medical coverage, and other types of supports from the labor union as well as women's committees.

As explained by a factory human rights manager, women are not only given priority upon recruitment but also in promotion. He said, *"There is a point advance system in any competitions for promotion. If by coincidence the woman and man score equal points, with the 3 advance points we still give the opportunity to the woman. For example if she scores 67 and he scores 70 with the 3 points advantage they get an even 70 score but she still gets the promotion and not him."*

The other type of support provided to female factory workers is related to maternity cover. According to a factory human resources manager, *"On top of the three months maternity leave we provide our female workers*

with a one month additional leave without pay. This gives female factory workers the option of staying with their newborn for an additional month."

In some of the factories, there are also different types of medical coverage availed to female factory workers. As shared by a factory executive, *"these include cervical cancer checkups for all the female workers; supporting with the medical care of a few of the workers with this condition; annual HIV checkups for all workers; support provided to workers living with the virus."* As shared by the factory executive and other female workers, supports provided to sick workers are made in collaboration with the company and monthly contributions by workers through the labor unions. In some of the factories, women's committees are also set up in line with the labor unions to support female factory workers.

Although these efforts have been going on in different factories, they do not seem to be addressing the issues of female factory workers. Female factory workers in one of the selected factories that had a focus group discussion for this research unanimously agreed that, *"they haven't received any kind of support from the women's committees"* while others say that they were at least of help in providing them with the venue to vent and discuss their issues.

The labor unions are also bashed by employees as failing to push their agenda. Female factory workers share that they left the labor unions because they didn't provide them with the support they needed. Some workers believe that *"the labor unions are under a lot of pressure by the company"*.

Others argue that the labor unions are doing as much as they do. As one female factory worker shares, *"the union has done some things to the betterment of the working conditions of employees. For example, in the past is if you are absent from work without permission there was a penalty of 3 days' salary but now the labor union has decreased this to 1 and a half days only. They also fight for people if they are mistreated or fired without a valid reason. We shouldn't disregard them because things didn't directly happen to us."* Some of the female factory workers don't even understand the role of the labor unions and say that they only make contributions because they are required to do so but not understand why.

SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF FEMALE FACTORY WORKERS

The findings of this research identified a number of systems and practices that are in place for the protection of the health and safety of female factory workers. These include safety trainings, safety audits, safety materials, safety committees/ departments/ offices, medical coverage, factory clinics, etc.

Safety trainings provided for employees include first aid trainings, fire safety trainings, trainings on personal hygiene and latrine use, etc. A female factory worker shares, *"They have trained us on giving first aid services when there are minor accidents like cuts; and we give each other first aids till reaching the factory clinic." Fire safety trainings are also another type of safety training provided for employees. Factory workers stated that "two workers from each department get trainings on fire safety."*

Trainings on personal hygiene, latrine use, family planning and prevention of sexually transmitted diseases are also provided for employees in some of the factories. There are also companies that provide contraceptives for female factory workers.

Safety audits are also identified as one of the systems and practices laid down by the factories. According to a human resources manager, their factory goes through a safety audit both internally and externally. The human resources manager states, *"the internal safety audits are carried out every 3 months and it includes inspection on availability of first aid kits, safety materials, availability of safety trainings for employees, exploitation of manpower, salary, and other factors that determine the working conditions of factory employees."*

In relation to this process, in some factories suggestion boxes are provided within the factory premises so that employees write down their grievances anonymously and put it in a box. The human resource manager stated that *"the suggestion boxes are opened regularly in the presence of a screening committee"*.

Furthermore, depending on the different structures of each factory, safety committees, safety and systems departments, environmental and safety offices that are entrusted upon carrying out safety related assignments are set up. As a human resources manager from one of the selected factories shared, *"we have established safety and discipline committees and make sure our female factory workers participate in those to maintain women's participation and protection in those."*

Some factories also provide medical coverage for workers. The types of medical coverage vary from factory to factory. While in some of the factories regular health checkups and treatment are availed to female factory workers, in others coverage is only limited to occupational injuries. A female factory worker stated *"We have a clinic on the site. If cases are beyond them we are referred to a hospital and everything is fully covered by the company. If it is beyond the nearby hospital we are sent to referral hospitals in major cities. All hospital costs are covered by the company except for food and drinks during the stay"*.

While factory executives pride themselves in availing clinics that are open in all of the three shifts, employees complain that the factory clinics lack efficiency and do not provide significant treatments except for painkillers. A female factory worker shares, *"the clinics might as well not be here, they might give painkillers but that is it. They don't refer you to bigger hospitals to get proper treatment."*

Exceptionally, there are factories that provide housing support for female factory workers and make sure that young girls get priority at the time of placement because they are the ones with higher safety risks.

Safety materials take the lion's share in discussions involving occupational safety and health. In this case management and factory workers seem to be on different pages. While members of management strongly argue that all the required safety materials are provided to employees, employees argue otherwise. According to members of management, the problem with safety materials is lack of proper use on the part of the employees whereas employees strongly disagree and say that they are provided with safety materials intermittently, the materials they have been provided with are of poor quality, and even those are not provided on a timely manner.

A human resources manager from one of the selected factories stated that, *"employees are provided with safety materials with respect to their departments. Workers in the printing department are given air masks and 1 liter of milk every day. In the sewing department, there are machines like the double sewing machines which have dust like powder particles so the workers need air masks. In the cutting and cleaning department gloves and masks are provided...however, there are problems with the proper usage of these items. The workers take them off complaining that it's too hot inside the plants...etc."*

On the other hand, female factory workers complain that this is not the case. As one female factory worker shares:

"The department I work in requires masks and glasses. We were given one year ago. But if one worker leaves and another is replaced, the new worker has to use the old one's mask which is unhygienic... also, we don't have glasses. This is another gap that needs to be addressed. These special machines require these glasses. It's on their manual. Because needles break and may get in to the eyes. Initially, it was given to us a year ago but those are now broken and lost. We don't have them anymore. When a person joins that department they need to be given these materials. Even the glasses they give us aren't up to standard. I had a hard time seeing after I used these glasses."

2.2. AN OVERVIEW OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE IN THE TEXTILE AND GARMENT INDUSTRY

Gender based violence, being one of the key pillars of the Strategic Partnership for Supply Chain Transformation in the Textile and Garment Industry, is chosen as the second main area of focus of this research. Following the overview of the working conditions of female factory workers, this research investigated the state and prevalence of gender based violence in the textile and garment industry. Moreover, this section puts light on the types of gender based violence existing in the textile and garment industries and redress mechanisms in place and challenges thereto.

2.2.1. THE STATE, PREVALENCE AND TYPES OF GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

The findings of this research show that a good number of factory executives, human resources managers and operations managers deny or are not informed of the existence of gender based violence in the selected factories while union leaders and female factory workers allege and provide anecdotal evidence that such exist and are prevalent.

A human resources manager in one of the factories goes on to stating that, *"There is no significant case of gender based violence in our company"*. While an operations manager in another factory states that, *"there has never been an occurrence of sexual harassment in this company"*. Again, a factory executive in the next factory reassures, *"when it comes to our factory, I have*

never faced a gender based violence issue as the employees in this company have been working here for a long time; they are either siblings or related in some way."

To begin with, the members of management and employees as well as the labour unions seem to be divided in their understanding of what constitutes gender based violence. The definition of gender based violence provided by factory executives and human resources managers and operations managers involve sexual assault, rape, insult, and sexual requests by male bosses, etc. A human resources manager said, *"In my perspective, it is sexual harassment which includes things like rape and forcing a woman to conduct something of a sexual nature that count as gender based violence. I don't think demeaning women and saying that they are not equal to men count as gender based violence."*

A general manager in one of the factories also agrees with the above statement and justifies, *"Women also commit violence against men. The women should not wear provocative clothes. It has been outlawed in Rwanda and Uganda. It is also not our culture, and men might be provoked to assault females. So if these issues were fixed, then the women wouldn't face problems. Women have also made a business out of this, they might say they were attacked sometimes but it's mainly their business."*

An operations manager also stated, *"For as to regard a certain incident as a case of gender based violence, the attack has to happen within the company premises; for anything that happens outside the company premises, we don't take any responsibility"*.

Nonetheless, female factory workers and union representatives strongly disagree with the position of the management on what constitutes gender based violence and the existence thereof. For them, any act of discrimination between a man and a woman, gender pay gaps, stalking, sending inappropriate messages, sexual favors, physical harms, groping, touching, being peeked at while changing, etc. perpetrated either by their supervisors or colleagues constitute gender based violence.

The following are few of the statements given by female factory workers on the non-sexual forms of gender based violence existing within the factories:

- *For me gender based violence has much to do with promotion. When there are female workers with*

almost 20 years of experience and they promote a man with less years of experience, this for me is gender based violence.

- Here, we are all assigned to a specific task. The men are never asked to leave their post to do some errands in the factory...belittling and making them run errands that are not part of their job description happens to the women all the time.
- When we leave the compound there a heavy bodily searching and they always keep the women longer and male workers gets in the buses and already take up all the seats by the time the women are done with our searches.

On the sexual forms of gender based violence, female factory workers reported several cases of sexual violence from foreign and Ethiopian supervisors as well as male colleagues. The following are few of the statements given by female factory workers and union leaders on cases of sexual violence:

- *In my department, my supervisor used to bother me a lot. Because I didn't submit to his sexual demands, I have a lower salary. He is a foreign citizen. He asked me to sleep with him and I said no. Because of this, he deducted my salary.*
- *I have a friend that told me a foreign supervisor offered her money to sleep with him. She said no and now he insults her and glares at her.*
- *There was this girl who was repeatedly asked out by her Ethiopian supervisor. She refused and he transferred her to a labor intensive machine. When she went to HR and reported the case, he said it's his mandate to assign whomever he wants to the machines and denied her allegations. HR then decided that he can even change departments let alone machines. So she was told that she can leave or to just continue working on the new machine. So she finally left.*
- *There was this girl who came from a rural area she was stalked by a foreign supervisor. Because of the language barrier, she couldn't communicate with him but he used to sit next to her all day; he used to send her messages; she said no but he persisted and she finally left.*
- *There was this foreign supervisor that used to grope and touch girls; one of the ladies slapped him and everyone told her she did great.*

Union leaders also reported that they have been informed of several instance of gender based violence and have disciplinary measures taken on the perpetrators. To the extent of having the perpetrators fired. However, they share that female factory workers do

not report such instances until the matter gets worse. They are afraid of being judged, they are shy, they don't know who to tell, etc. are some of the reasons pointed out by union leaders on female factory workers reluctance to report cases of gender based violence. As a union leader shares, *"we heard a rumor of some sort about a female factory worker being raped before the formation of the union, but it's all rumors... we don't have evidence nor was it reported"*.

The absence of a sexual harassment policy in almost all of the factories is regarded as the main problem in the gap in understanding what constitutes gender based violence and the reporting and redress mechanisms thereon.

2.2.2. REDRESS MECHANISMS FOR GENDER BASED VIOLENCE AND RELATED CHALLENGES

Redress mechanisms put in place to tackle issues of gender based violence vary from one factory to another. In some of the factories, labour unions, the women's committees, gender offices and discipline committees are entrusted upon the duty to look after such cases while in others, human resources department or labour unions tend to such matters.

In some of the factories issues of gender based violence are included in the human resource manual, in others in the employee code of conduct. There are also other factories that cover issues of gender based violence in their collective bargaining agreements. However, in all of the factories that were selected for this research was there a sexual harassment policy or a separate policy on gender based violence.

As part of the redress mechanisms on gender based violence, factory officials in some of the factories stated that issues of gender based violence were made part of the induction training.

Furthermore, there are very few factories that incorporate gender based violence as part of the safety audit process undertaken by their factories. A human resources manager shares, *"we conduct surprise audits and lay out platforms to listen to and address different complaints as they arise. The audit lasts for 30 minutes and includes 12 points like discrimination, company mission vision and so on and gender based violence is incorporated in those"*.

However, there are several bottle necks in addressing gender based violence including but not limited to the absence of a reporting mechanism, women being

reluctant to report cases of violence, absence of strong measures on perpetrators, and fear of retaliatory measures.

Female factory workers report their salaries being deducted, if they report cases of gender based violence perpetrated by supervisors. They also report that *“even if perpetrators are found guilty, no strong measures are taken on them.”* Because of this and other cultural reasons, female factory workers facing such challenges are reluctant to report cases.

In most cases, they are told to forgive the perpetrators so that he wouldn't lose his job and they will be the ones leaving their jobs at last. One of the female factory workers shares, *“I don't want to go to the gender office to report my abuse because they only tell us to reconcile. Why would I be a topic of discussion by telling my secret if no action is going to be taken on the perpetrator?”*

2.3. INCLUSIVITY OF WORKING ENVIRONMENT FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

This research also examines how inclusive and enabling the working environment in the textile and garment industry is for women's leadership and decision making. In assessing the inclusivity and enabling nature of the working environment, existing barriers and opportunities for women's leadership and decision making, female factory workers' bargaining power, voice and agency, the systems and practices to enable women's leadership and decision making are looked into.

2.3.1. BARRIERS AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

Existing opportunities in the different companies for women's leadership include learning opportunities, affirmative action in promotion and encouraging women to take up management level jobs. Female factory workers taking the majority in number is also regarded as an opportunity for women's leadership and decision making. This is because it is regarded as creating a safe space where women can support and grow each other.

However, there are quite a number of barriers in utilizing these opportunities. As described by a human resources manager in one of the factories, *“here is the*

major gap in our company. There are some women who have positions in the division level in the factory floor. The leadership begins in the level of group leader, then supervisor, then line leader, division leader, and department leader. Starting from group leaders, they are decision makers. The problem we face is on department level as there are no women at these levels.”

Different reasons are outlined in this regard including but not limited to language barriers, lack of educational background, high level of turnover which deprives female employees of acquiring the required level of experience, gender biases which entail women being regarded as not competent leaders, lack of trainings, double burden on women, lack aspiration on the part of the female factory workers, absence of role-models whom the female factory workers look up-to, female factory workers being denied of leaves of absence to pursue their education, etc.

On language barriers, a female factory worker shares, *“In this company, experience is not at all considered in promotion. Promotion is only based on the test results. This is not fair because I know how to do the job better because of the amount of time I have spent doing it. The test is in English, since it is a level 6 position. It is a written exam that asks to describe the job you do. Who can afford to learn English language with a 1000 Birr salary?”*

There are also other employees who stated that even if the company they work for provides learning opportunities, their supervisors do not allow them to get a leave of absence for tutorial classes and exams which in the end force them to drop out of school.

2.3.2. SYSTEMS AND PRACTICES TO ENABLE WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING

Although many of the factories in this research admittedly stated that *“they do not have systems put in place specifically on women's leadership and decision making,”* some of the textile and garment factories that were part of this research stated that they use advance point system to enhance women's leadership in their factories. This is incorporated in their human resources strategic plan which puts a target for 5 years' time on women's leadership.

Regarding women's decision making power, the factory officials stated, *“The women attend meetings equally with the men and have equal voices to men”.*

Some of the factories also give different skills trainings for women which would in turn help them become competitive for promotion.

In other companies, with the implementation of Kaizen standards, the officials are hopeful that they will have a number of committees in the future wherein they can nominate female leaders.

All in all, the selected factories for this research were found to lack a well thought and planned system to enable women's leadership and decision making.

2.3.3. FEMALE FACTORY WORKERS' BARGAINING POWER, VOICE AND AGENCY

When female factory workers were asked to share their knowledge on what is included in the collective agreements, most of them answered that they do not know what is included in the collective agreements. One woman shares, *"we do not know what is included in the collective agreements because they do not call us for a meeting when these things are discussed or after they have been signed."*

Some of them said they have been provided with a pamphlet incorporating rights and duties of employees as provided in the collective agreements and others said they could guess it to include points on annual leave, unpaid leaves, pregnant women's rights, etc.

Some of them argue, *"It is a well-rounded agreement with all our rights and duties included, but it is never implemented properly"*. But others strongly disagree and state that many issues concerning female factory workers like pay gaps, promotions, and discrimination are lacking in the collective agreements.

Union leaders also admit that the women's issues incorporated in the collective bargaining agreements are only limited to maternal leave and affirmative actions at the time of recruitment and promotion. They allege that, *"many of the women's issues are under negotiation and they will be incorporated in upcoming collective agreements"*. Also, some of the companies are new and their collective agreements have been on the negotiation stage for so long let alone being approved and consulted with female factory workers.

2.4. POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO IMPROVE THE WORKING CONDITIONS OF FEMALE FACTORY WORKERS

This section covers the need based solutions suggested by different actors in the textile and garment industry including female factory workers, factory executives, union leaders, human resources managers, operations managers, CETU women's affairs officer as well as federation president.

In light of the current working conditions of female factory workers, the following solutions have been recommended by the above actors and the recommendations are divided into short term and long term recommendations.

SHORT TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government should set minimum wage for factory workers;
- CETU and the Federation has to make tailor made interventions in each factory to help alleviate the existing challenges of female factory workers;
- Factories should rigorously work on implementing safety standards and providing safety materials, food and sanitary items (with a special focus on female sanitary items) and related facilities;
- Periodic and gender sensitive trainings must be provided for factory workers not only on company rules and regulations but also on personal development and leadership skills;
- Gender sensitivity trainings needs to be provided for employers and management staff;
- Gender based violence manuals have to be prepared in a clear manner and cascaded throughout all levels;
- Factories should put in place up to standard facilities like clean toilets distinguished for men and women; there has to be separate changing rooms for women, there has to be cafeterias serving good food;
- Women committees should be capacitated to strongly take on and push women's agenda;
- Union leaders should be equipped to protect women's rights and provide support when there are breaches; and
- Learning opportunities, scholarships and language trainings must be provided for female factory workers to enhance their representation in leadership positions.

LONG TERM RECOMMENDATIONS

- The government should set minimum standards for medical coverage provided by factories for their employees;
- The government should set minimum standards on the quality of safety materials provided for employees;
- Factory clinics should be open 24/7 and should be equipped to provide significant treatments;
- Daycare centers must be established in factories where there are none and the daycare centers must be provided with the required facilities;
- Transportation services should be strengthened to protect the safety of female factory workers and separate buses should be provided for pregnant women and women carrying children;
- Collective bargaining agreements should be revised to include women's issues, and has to be communicated before and after approval for female factory workers; and
- A comprehensive gender policy that integrates gender perspectives into account in all its work and address issues influenced by gender.

CONCLUSION

This report attempted to analyze the legal and policy environment as well as the existing experience on the working conditions of female factory workers. Accordingly, international, regional and national legal

and policy documents that safeguard women's rights and other mainstream documents and their responsiveness to gender equality have been critically analyzed.

The findings revealed by this research show that female factory workers endure several challenges such as low income and pay gaps, challenges related to women's reproductive role; challenges related to shift work, challenges related to the nature of the work, discrimination, unfair treatment by supervisors and violation of rights, and lack of awareness and safety and health risks. The challenges also include gender based violence at the workplace.

This being said, the attempts in different factories to cater to the basic needs of female factory workers have not also gone unrecognized. In fact it was revealed that many of the selected factories have already put in place systems and practices that cater to the basic needs of female factory workers such as awareness creation and productivity trainings, availing different forms of facilities such as day cares and transportation services, and providing different factory safety materials for female factory workers.

Nevertheless, there is a need for an intervention by several stakeholders such as government, the factories, union leaders, CETU and other key actors to alleviate the existing challenges experienced by female factory workers.

LIST OF REFERENCES

LEGAL AND POLICY DOCUMENTS

I. International Legal and Policy documents

- 1) Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women, 1979.
- 2) Declaration on Elimination of Violence Against Women, 1993.
- 3) International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, 1966.
- 4) International Convention on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, 1966.
- 5) International Labour Organization Convention on Equal Remuneration Convention No. 100 (1951)
- 6) International Labour Organization Convention Discrimination (Employment and Occupation) Convention 111 (1958)
- 7) International Labour Organization Convention Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention 156 (1981)
- 8) The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, 1995.
- 9) Universal Declaration on Human and Peoples Rights, 1948.
- 10) United Nations Development Program, Sustainable Development Goals, 2015.

II. Regional legal and policy documents

- 1) African Charter on Human and Peoples Rights, 1998.
 - 2) Dakar African Platform for Action on Women and Addis Ababa Declaration on Dakar Platform for Action, 1995.
 - 3) Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women, 2005.
- ### III. Ethiopian Legal and Policy Documents
- 1) Amended Electoral Law of Ethiopia Proclamation no 532/2007.
 - 2) Ethiopian National Policy on Women, 1993.
 - 3) Health Policy of the Transitional Government of Ethiopia, 1993.
 - 4) Industrial Park Proclamation 886/2015
 - 5) Labour Proclamation 377/2003
 - 6) National Employment Policy and Strategy of Ethiopia, 2009.
 - 7) The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Constitution, 1/1995.
 - 8) The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Criminal Code 414/2005.
 - 9) The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia General Education and Training Policy, 1994.
 - 10) The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Industrial Development Strategy of Ethiopia, 2002.

ANNEX 1

FACTORIES INCLUDED IN THE RESEARCH

1. Almeda textiles - Tigray
2. Arba Minch - South Region
3. Bahir Dar textiles - Amhara Region
4. Shintz - Bole Lemi Industry Park Addis Ababa
5. Ayka Addis - Addis Ababa
6. MNS - Oromia Region
7. Kombolcha Textiles - Amhara Region
8. Kanoria - Oromia Region
9. Maa Garmet - Tigray

This publication has been supported in part by the Strategic Partnership for Garment Supply Chain Transformation and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.



Government of the Netherlands

www.mondiaalfnv.nl