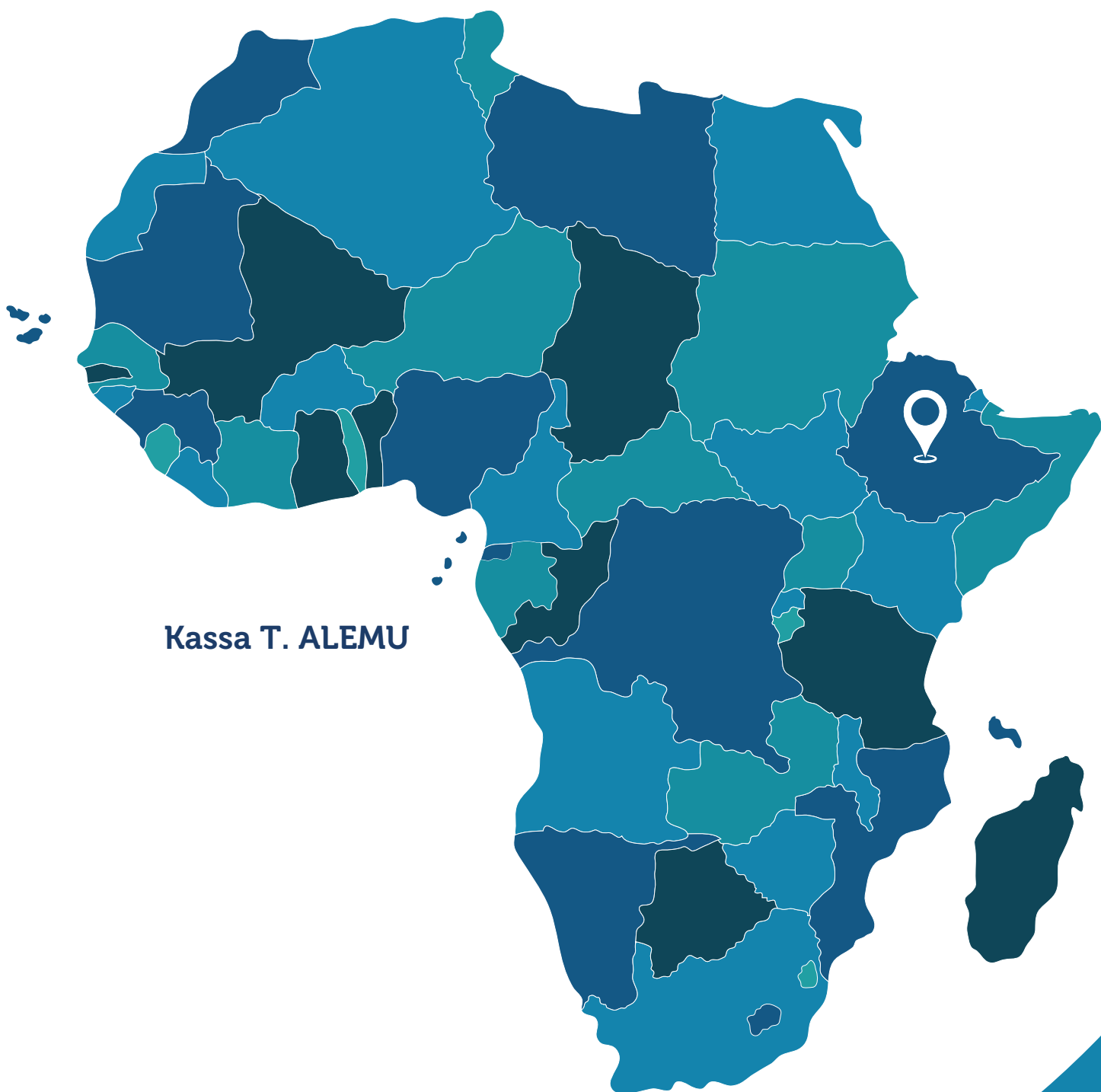


Africa's Social Policy Trajectories

Ethiopia



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Africa's Social Policy Trajectories

Ethiopia

Teshager Alemu KASSA

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Abstract

This research is driven by a desire to better understand social policy formulation and execution in three East African countries: Ethiopia, Sudan, and Djibouti. This case study examines gender equitable and transformational social policy in Ethiopia, as well as the implications for post-COVID-19 policy responses. The case focuses on four aspects of Ethiopian social policy: social security, education, health, and employment. The study spans the late colonial era (1940s) to the present. In order to comprehend the historical development of social policy in Ethiopia while taking gender relations into account, the study employs qualitative discourse analysis and process tracing based on secondary (public and unpublished sources) and primary data from multiple sources. The study shows that even if Ethiopia was not colonised, policy making and implementation were indirectly influenced by colonists. It is also evident that the ideology in the political economy of successive regimes has affected policy formulation and execution efforts. The dominating paradigm of capitalism and industrialisation impacted policies during the imperial era. The socialist philosophy was the guiding principle during the Derg era. The home-grown revolutionary democracy and developmental state paradigm dominated policies during the EPRD era. The incumbent Prosperity Party's social policies are shaped by another home-grown ideology, pragmatism. There are clear lessons to be drawn from the Ethiopian example, which has a number of distinctive characteristics. For the most part, policy and rhetoric are not backed by practice. Until the 1990s, the system was verifiably male-dominated. Gender issues, on the other hand, have been substantially examined by policymakers since the 1990s, and social policies have been gender-focused. These efforts notwithstanding, there are still gaps in implementing gender transformational social policy in Ethiopia. Some of these gaps are institutional capacity, resource availability, and political ideology and leadership.

Keywords: Social policy, gender, health, education, social security, transformative policy, post-COVID-19

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Ethiopia's gender equality and social policy reform is the topic of this case study. A landlocked country and Africa's second most populated after Nigeria, Ethiopia was expected to have 115 million people in 2020 (World Bank, 2021). With a growth rate of 6.1 percent in 2020, the country's economy is one of the fastest expanding in the world. It is, nonetheless, one of the poorest countries, with a national GDP per capita of \$890. One of the world's least developed countries, Ethiopia has encountered a number of political, economic, social, and environmental issues. Analysing the evolution of social policy reform in Ethiopia is therefore important for two reasons. One is the country's historical political independence during colonial times (Ethiopia is the only country in Africa that was not colonised), and the other is the relevance of Ethiopia's political experience to the context of African countries, as this case study is part of the Gender Equitable and Transformative Social Policy for Post-COVID-19 Africa (GETSPA) project initiated by the Institute of African Studies, University of Ghana.

During the reign of Menelik II (1889–1913), Ethiopia established its formal public organisations. The emperor advanced road construction, education, health and electricity, as well as the development of a central taxation system and the founding and construction of Addis Abeba. The reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I followed Menelik II in the early twentieth century. Haile Selassie's reign was primarily governed by modernisation philosophy, and he attempted to improve the public sector in line with a capitalist economy. However, his dictatorship came to an end on September 12, 1974. The Marxist-Leninist military government deposed the emperor and guided the socioeconomic system according to socialist principles. In 1991, the EPRDF overthrew the military administration and shifted its philosophy from a socialist to a market-based liberal economic system. Ethiopia saw a wide range of policy reforms in the social, economic, and political realms during this period. Unfortunately, the EPRDF's governance system and policies did not satisfy the majority's interests, and reform was initiated within the party in response to outside criticism. Following this reform, the present government has changed its name to the Prosperity Party. Since 2018, this party has ruled the country under the leadership of Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

Social policies are typically adopted to ensure that everyone in society lives in peace and harmony, with few or no disputes (Aravacik, 2018; Wright & Noble, 2010). Social justice, balance, integration, peace and development are key aspects that need clear cut guidelines for the ever-changing living conditions of humans. As such, important areas of human life including poverty reduction, welfare, justice, unemployment, pensions, healthcare, housing, education, crime and criminal justice need constant review as they continue to change alongside gender, population and health dynamics. In this regard, Ethiopia has comprehensive social policies established through traceable historical processes. Though the country presents different societal evolvement and transformation in its nation building journey, several of the issues seem to have a basic central resolve.

The goal of policy making is to develop answers to societal challenges. The solutions must be operational and capable of guiding diverse actors involved in various stages of policy formulation and execution (Fatih, 2021). The area of social policy studies emerged in Western countries mainly after World War II, coinciding with the establishment of the welfare state (Gooby-Taylor, 2019). Health services, social care, housing, financial benefits, pensions, and education were the primary areas of policy research.

Scholars next examined the implications of gender roles, focusing on gender, race and ethnicity, poverty, employment inequities, ageing policies, mental health difficulties, and childcare (Gooby-Taylor, 2019). Since then, however, most African countries have had a crisis of citizenship and statehood (Adesina, 2007).

Following regime changes in Ethiopia from Menelik II to the present, social policies, including those for social protection, education, health, and employment, have changed. In Ethiopia, social protection has a longer history and continues to be essential, with some non-formal institutions acting as the first line of reaction to shocks and vulnerabilities (Kassa et al., 2017). The formal social protection mechanism, on the other hand, began in the early 1960s in response to the International Labour Organisation's (ILO) statement concerning decent employment and social security for people, and has used emergency response mechanisms as a first line of response to shocks. Ethiopia started the world's largest productive safety net programme in 2005, with over 8 million users since then. Ethiopia has experienced tremendous social, economic, and political developments in recent decades. Healthcare coverage has swiftly grown, but much progress remains to be made; access to education has improved, but quality and employment remain concerns; and social protection is expanding, but equity and inclusivity persist. Access to jobs is improving, although the country's unemployment rate remains high. Overall, there is much to be done in terms of gender in Ethiopian social policies and their transformational nature. The goal of this case study is, therefore, to assess the historical development of social policy in Ethiopia from the colonial through the post-colonial era and up to the present day, taking into account social security, education, health and employment policies.

2.0 THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL POLICY IN THE COUNTRY

Gooby-Taylor (2019) defines social policy as "the ways in which societies around the world meet human needs for security, education, work, health, and well-being." Social policy is concerned with how countries and society adapt to global concerns such as social, demographic, and economic change, as well as poverty, migration and globalisation. Social policy examines the various responsibilities of national governments, families, civil society, the market, and international organisations in providing services and assistance from childhood to old age. Child and family support, schooling and education, housing and neighbourhood renewal, income maintenance and poverty reduction, unemployment support and training, pensions, and health and social care are all examples of services and support. Social policy seeks to identify and eliminate disparities in access to services and support among social groups defined by socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, migratory status, gender, sexual orientation, disability and age.

Assessing the problem of social policy in Ethiopia has paramount importance. On the one hand, social policy is context-specific; on the other hand, it is ideologically driven. What works in the developed world may not necessarily work in developing countries. Social policy in the context of Ethiopia focuses less on protection and more on social service provision such as education, health, water and sanitation (Kassa et al., 2017). This is in line with the argument by Adesina (2007) that social policy in Africa focuses on social services rather than protection as a prerequisite for economic growth and development. Mkandawire (2007) contends that social policy in developing countries can play a significant role in the

redistribution of resources, in the protection of vulnerable groups and for productive investment. However, this depends on how the relevant institutions are built and the socio-economic system is structured in the country.

The distinction between social and economic policies is also not clear, as redistribution, protection and production are considered more as matters of social rather than economic policy. As some scholars (Elson, 2004; Kabeer, 2004) argue, the social and economic world is fundamentally indivisible and any attempt to differentiate the two would border on ideological debate. Social policy is a means for the movement to intervene, whether the economic system is guided by the market, command or a combination of both. In a market economy, social policy is considered the cause of market distortion. Thus, neoliberals limit social policy to the provision of public goods which are undersupplied by the market, such as health, education and safety nets. Mkandawire (2004) called this a leader-follower model. On the other hand, some scholars see economic policy as a subset of social policy. According to this view, economic policy is an instrument to achieve social objectives and accumulation of wealth. In this regard, government social policies rely on protection, redistribution and production in pursuit of security, equality, growth and social cohesion. Others emphasise the integrated nature of social policy and economic policies (Midgley, 1995) and highlight the multiple roles that state social policy plays (Mkandawire, 2004). It is therefore possible to argue that the relationship between social and economic policies and the role of the government depends on socially constructed and ideologically differentiated positions.

Social policy is a subject that is often captured by powerful groups and elites, who make biased government policies with no measures to ensure accountability to the majority of the population. Modern states have a social contract between the citizens and the state whereby duties and rights are agreed to by all to further common interests. The COVID-19 pandemic intensified precarity, compelling a select few members of the executive to enhance policies in health, education, security, and work/employment. These policy changes have widened the gap between the rich and the poor, further eroding the small gains in equality and poverty reduction achieved since independence. This research traces the history of policy making and postulates that the current ineffective social policy formulation induced by the COVID-19 pandemic can spark a state breakdown or collapse. In addition, social policies in Africa lack a gender perspective. Therefore, gender equity and transformative social policy need to be given emphasis in the post-COVID era. This case study will assess what role social policy in Ethiopia is expected to play, whether and how it brings gender-equitable transformation, what institutions are relevant and what should be the nature of post-COVID-19 policies.

3.0 THEORIES, CONCEPTS AND METHODS

3.1 Concepts of Social Policy

Social policy is a subset of the broader area of policy studies. Foreign policy, trade policy, financial policy, defence policy, revenue policy, education policy, youth policy, population policy, labour policy, and several others may be implemented by the government in many sectors. Of these policies, those directly and indirectly related to social issues and the average person's daily existence are thought to fall within certain social policy parameters.

Scholars have defined social policy from a variety of angles. According to UNRISD (2005), social policy comprises "public policies and institutions aimed at protecting citizens from social contingencies and poverty, and ultimately enabling them to strive for their own life goals." From this perspective, social policy encompasses overarching concerns such as redistribution, production, reproduction, and protection, and it works in concert with economic policy to achieve national, social and economic objectives. Mkandawire (2011) defines social policy as "collective interventions that directly affect social welfare, social institutions, and social relations." It is concerned with the redistributive effects of economic policy, the protection of people from market fluctuations and changing life circumstances, the enhancement of members' productive potential, and the reconciliation of the burden of reproduction with that of other social tasks. Successful societies have assigned all these tasks to social programmes, albeit the weighting of tasks has varied across countries and within each country over time.

Social policy is a set of policies established to safeguard workers from the hazards of industrialisation, in conjunction with historical growth following the industrial revolution. Its provenance has resulted in a restricted definition of social policy. Following WWII, the narrow perspective on social policy began to shift. The rationale for this shift was that measures to defend the interests of the working class were insufficient to address social issues. As a result, many researchers suggested that social policy should be expanded to include all parts of society. In a broad sense, social policy is a set of measures taken to ensure that all segments of society live in peace and harmony. These measures include preventing unemployment, improving working conditions, providing a minimum wage, offering social security and benefits, eliminating inequity in income distribution, and ensuring social justice (Aravacik, 2019). Social policy encompasses all policies that secure the welfare of the state and individuals, as well as dynamic practices that change on a regular basis.

Adesina (2021) argues that the root causes of social problems in Africa can be addressed via sovereign and transformative social policy. Though Mkandawire maintains that transformative social policy must address the larger picture by connecting issues of production, reproduction, redistribution and protection, Adesina (2021) has extended transformative social policy frameworks to include social cohesion/state building as a fifth concern. Most scholars in gender studies are now considering taking into account a gender perspective of social policy. Social policy has its own set of guiding principles. Social needs and problems, equal rights and social justice, efficiency, equity and choice, altruism, reciprocity and obligation, and division, difference, and exclusion are the subjects and basic principles associated with social policy (Deacon, 2007).

3.2 Theories of Social Policy

According to Huer and Stephens (2012), theories about social policy that have their roots in social change are divided into three categories: those related to the economy—the logic of industrialism and the influence of neo-liberal globalisation; those related to the state—state centric/institutionalist approaches; and those related to society—the power resources approach and the influence of class conflict and ethnic divisions. Huber and Stephens (2012) claim that the theory of social policy which follows the logic of industrialism has been used to explain the rise of welfare states. Such postulations attribute the expansion of social policy to structural changes that generated an urban workforce with new sources of insecurity like unemployment and economic growth that provided income to pay for

social policies. The relevance of state institutions in policy reform is highlighted by the institutionalist theory of social policy. The power resources approach, which emphasises the influence of class conflict on social policy expansion, is the third theoretical category. It emphasises the significance of working-class political mobilisation through leftist parties and unions in socialist governments.

In their 2012 study, Huber and Stephens identify three power constellations or power resources theory: class and racial divisions in society, the state and its relationships to society, and external forces. However, they devote practically all their attention to how policies and laws are created at the highest levels of government. They pay little attention to how state organisations can reform, how local state institutions interact with the community, or how policy implementation is affected. This study uses the power resource theory to explain the changes in social policy brought about by the Ethiopian government's reforms and the impact of external pressures.

On the role of social policy, academics have proposed various strategies. As an illustration, Chachage (2007) contrasts the functional approach with the pragmatic approach and the liberal approach. Chachage has mostly employed the functional approach to study issues that interfere with the smooth reproduction of socioeconomic systems, with a particular emphasis on how to address issues that lead to instability and imbalances in a society. According to George and Wilding (1976), a social policy is what represents the remedy for the social issue in this situation. A long-standing issue with social order and social control is the functional approach to social policy. Since the beginning, this strategy has been anti-collectivist and pro-individualist, rejecting any attempts to influence market dynamics in the name of liberty and effectiveness.

On the other hand, Marshall's tradition, which began in the post-Second World War era, is linked to the pragmatic approach to social policy. According to Marshall (1967, 6), social policy was "the policy of the governments with regard to action having a direct impact on the welfare of citizens by providing them with services or income." The state's provision of social security, housing, income, education, healthcare and personal services was included in social policy. Thus, social provisioning by the state was recognised in Europe. In one sense, this was a response to the socialist nations of Eastern Europe, where full employment, public supply of social services, and price subsidies had allowed social policies to be largely integrated into the operation of the economy.

A liberal perspective, in contrast to the pragmatic approach, focused on how the market mechanism worked. The World Bank developed the paradigm for accumulation and fast development in Africa and East Africa, specifically in the 1960s, in part based on comparable tactics in Europe. When the global financial crisis first emerged in the 1970s, African nations were compelled to follow free market policies supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund under the pretext of structural adjustment programmes (SAPs). These measures attempted to liberate private capital, the functioning of which had been controlled by the state during the first ten years of independence. Wealth was to be concentrated in a few hands at the expense of the majority of producers in rural and urban regions who were facing ruin as a result of the protection and establishment of an environment that allowed for the operation of private capital (local and foreign). This process was accompanied by currency devaluations, price controls, the elimination or reduction of a number of taxes for investors, the imposition of a number of taxes on producers, the implementation of user fees (so-called cost-sharing in health, educa-

tion and other areas), the removal of subsidies for food and inputs for urban workers and rural producers, restrictions on wage increases, and layoffs of workers in the public and civil sectors, among others. With the establishment of SAPs, social policies that supported the public delivery of social services were essentially abandoned. In this study, social policy in Ethiopia is examined in relation to social security, education, health, and employment policy to determine the strategy the nation used.

3.3 Theorising Gender and Social Policy

The inability of conventional economic theories to create growth and end poverty has sparked a newfound interest in social institutions and policy. The scope and values of social policy are highly contested topics, but gender has been left out of these discussions. The structure of labour markets, the institutional foundation for social policy formulation (families, communities, markets, and governments), and the character of political contestation surrounding social policy are the three fundamental, interrelated domains in which Hassim and Razavi (2006) analyse gender and social policy. This study takes this hypothesis into consideration.

3.4 Transformative Social Policy

African theorists (Mkandawire, 2001; Adesina, 2008) refer to transformative social policy as being based on social solidarity and egalitarian values. These theories contend that social policy initiatives, such as services and benefits, are transformative if they are available to everyone equally. This interpretation of transformational social policy is consistent with a normative and developmental commitment to the right of citizens to basic human needs. When social policy supports fundamental societal needs like production, protection, reproduction, redistribution, social cohesion or nation-building, it often has transformative effects. Therefore, transformative social policy aims to ensure that everyone in a nation can engage in economic activity (production), regardless of their colour, gender, status, geography, or disability. Social policy is transformative when it makes it possible for the most vulnerable, at-risk, and underprivileged to receive fair redistribution of services, resources, and income. The emphasis on caring for people and integrating them into inclusive and equitable economic and political activities is a key component of transformative social policy (Taylor, 2014).

Social justice and human rights are the cornerstones of transformational social policy and practice. A human rights-based approach to social policy in Africa has a direct connection to tackling the disparities, prejudice, and numerous deprived conditions that people face. Applying a rights-based perspective to a study of social policy in South and Southeast Asia, Koehler (2017) suggests that for social policy to be transformative, it must also address the underlying causes of social injustices and inequality. Kempf and Dutta (2021) aver that social policies must support greater equality and human rights in addition to structural changes in the economic system if they are to be revolutionary.

3.5 Methods of the Study

The study follows the qualitative discourse analysis and process tracing approach using both historical and primary data from various sources to illuminate the development of social policy in Ethiopia taking gender relations into account. Four policy areas (social protection, education, health and employment) were targeted to analyse the historical trajectories of social policy and the gendered nature of social policies in Ethiopia. Secondary data were collected from published and unpublished sources from

various organisations (Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Ministry of Jobs and Innovation, CSA, WHO, ILO, UNESCO, etc.). National and local policies, rules and regulations and other legal documents were also reviewed with a focus on gender and transformative social policy. In addition, secondary data from the World Bank (2020) phone survey and other studies was used.

Primary data was collected from various stakeholders in the ministries already mentioned as well as in others such as the Ministry of Women, Children and Youth, Ministry of Science and Higher Education; and Ministry of National Planning and Development. Ten key informants (four women and six men) participated in the study. The primary data was collected via various channels of communication such as email, telephone calls, zoom and face to face meetings. Both primary and secondary data were analysed using thematic analysis techniques.

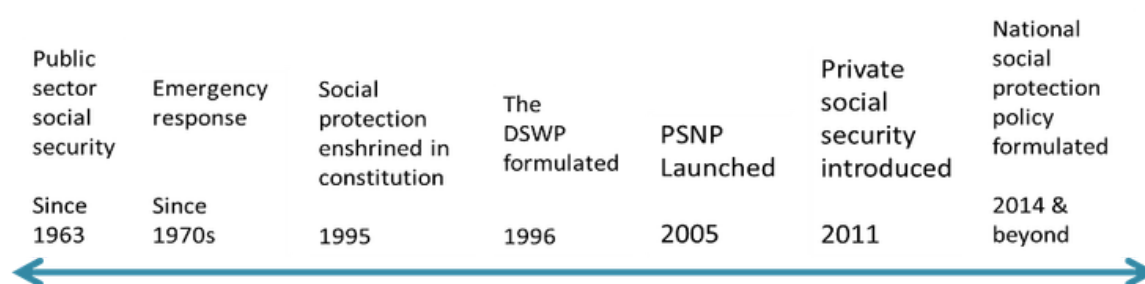
4.0 TRAJECTORIES OF SOCIAL POLICY IN THE COUNTRY

4.1 Social Security Policy

4.1.1 Introduction

Social security in Ethiopia has a long history. The country was one of the few in Africa that responded to the ILO declaration for decent work and social security for citizens in the early 1960s. In the 1970s, a huge emergency response was made by the Ethiopian government. In the 1990s, the government constitutionalised social security and formulated various policies in areas such as public sector social security in 1963, developmental social welfare in 1996, productive safety net in 2005, private sector social security in 2011, social protection in 2014, community health insurance in 2016 and many others that were introduced later. The policy efforts made by various governments in Ethiopia since the late empirical era are discussed as follows:

Figure 1: Evolution of social security policy in Ethiopia



4.1.2 Late Colonial Era (1940s-1950s)

During Ethiopia's colonial era, most of the social security system was informal. Menelik II's reign marked the beginning of the semi-formal pension system. During this time, a military servant who had grown old had the right to request that his son be appointed in his place by the authorities. To enable the son care for his elderly father, this was done. During the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie, the provision of pension benefits as such began to fall under national authority in a few specific instances. The first officially recognised pension system in Ethiopia was originally submitted to the parliament in December 1933 with a measure that provided for the pensioning of elderly and disabled troops. The measure set the retirement age at 70 years (Neger, 1942). This bill was in effect in the late colonial era.

4.1.3 The Early Post-Independence Era (late 1950s–1960s)

After the civil service matured and was organised in the late 1950s, a decision was made to offer pension benefits to employees. As a result, under Imperial Order No. 20 of 1958 (IEG, Negarit Gazeta), the Ministry of Pension was founded. The Public Servants' Pensions Decree No. 46 of 1961 was published in 1961 by the ruling party. Although there had long been semi-legalised pension systems, this was the first complex law in Ethiopian pension history.

The Public Servants Pensions Proclamation No. 209/1963, which established a programme to provide social insurance for public sector workers, including civil servants, police officers, and members of the armed forces, marked the beginning of formal public contributory social security in Ethiopia. The Decree (Proc. No. 46 of 1961) was amended and given a new number by the proclamation. The Public Servants Pensions Contribution Proclamation No. 199/1963 stipulates that both the employer and the employee must contribute to the pension fund. The benefits of this proclamation were limited to public officials and members of the police and armed forces, which was a flaw.

4.1.4 The Era of Crisis and Adjustment (1970s-mid-1990s)

To assist government employees and the military forces, many modifications to the Public Servants Pension Proclamation (Proclamation No. 5/1974) were implemented. Another decree issued in 1975 was Proclamation No. 49/1975 Concerning Employees of Government-Owned Undertakings. The proclamation grants pension rights to any person who is a permanent employee of an agricultural, commercial, industrial, transport, banking or insurance undertaking on the date of the undertaking's transfer, or who is employed thereafter; a person who is a permanent employee of a government-owned share company; or a permanent employee of the French Bank.

The Relief and Rehabilitation Commission was established as the first attempt to institutionalise emergency relief following the severe droughts and subsequent famines in the northern section of the country in the 1960s and 1970s (Lemma & Cochrane, 2019). However, following the overthrow of the imperial regime in 1974, food insecurity gained attention in public policy discourse (Pankhurst, Rahmato, & van Uffelen, 2013). In a significant departure from the earlier humanitarian food handouts, the military administration (1974–1991) started implementing food-for-work programmes and used the politics of starvation to legitimise its takeover of power. In addition to food-for-work programmes, the regime's disaster response policy included resettlement and villagisation. It institutionalised these measures by codifying them in the constitution of 1987 (Pankhurst, 1990). Politically, it signified "an evolution in government-citizen relations with regard to social protection services" (Lemma & Cochrane, 2019, 6). This can be seen historically as a significant turning point in Ethiopia's social protection system.

4.1.5 Beyond Adjustment (1990s–2018)

As a result of repeated droughts that left millions of people food insecure, the ruling EPRDF coalition developed a number of disaster response techniques after the rule changed in 1991. The National Policy on Disaster Prevention and Management, which made relief for physically fit people contingent on labour contributions through participation in Employment Generation Schemes, was one of the first initiatives the then transitional government launched in 1993 (Maxwell & Lirenso, 1994).

By introducing a productive paradigmatic commitment, this policy was the first concerted attempt by the government to relate emergency relief to developmental objectives and has since changed the entire social protection architecture of the nation (Lavers, 2016). The 1995 constitution of Ethiopia provides a legal framework favourable for the formulation and implementation of social policy. Article 41/5 of the Constitution states:

The State shall, within available means, allocate resources to provide rehabilitation and assistance to the physically and mentally disabled, the aged, and to children who are left without parents or guardian”.

Furthermore, Article 41/6 states:

“The state shall pursue policies which aim to expand job opportunities for the unemployed and the poor and shall accordingly undertake programmes and public work projects”.

Article 90/1 stipulates:

“...as resource capacity of the government permits, policies shall aim to provide all Ethiopians access to public health and education, clean water, housing, food and social security”.

The constitution gives a fertile ground for social protection policies in the country. The Developmental Social Welfare Policy (DSWP), the government's first official social protection policy that included preventive, rehabilitative, and developmental programmes, was adopted in 1996 (MoLSA, 1996). The 1996 DSWP demanded that persons receiving assistance put in their labour on development initiatives, a stipulation which indicated a limited approach to social protection and a conception that social interventions are productive rather than solely protective (MoLSA, 1996). The country experienced a severe drought in the early 2000s that affected between 13 and 14 million people. As a result, the New Coalition for Food Security was created. This organisation started discussions between the government and donors about alternatives to the prevailing emergency response of using food aid to fill consumption gaps. These discussions eventually led to the 2005 launch of the Productive Safety Net Programme (PSNP) (Lemma & Cochrane, 2019).

Mostly focused on rural areas, the PSNP, which is funded by the government and a group of donors, is the centrepiece of Ethiopia's social protection system. It was included in the 2002 implementation of the government's Food Security Strategy. With an estimated 8 million members, the PSNP has grown steadily from its initial 5.5 million users to rank as the second-largest social security programme in sub-Saharan Africa. It consists of two parts: labour-intensive public works and direct assistance, with public works being performed by 80 percent of the recipients. The elderly, crippled and chronically ill are excluded from performing public works and receive direct transfers in the form of food or cash instead (Hoddinott, 2019). The Urban Productive Safety Net Programme (UPSNP), a ten-year initiative to be carried out by the Ministry of Urban Formulation and Housing, was introduced in 2016 following the formulation of the Urban Food Security Strategy in 2015 (Endale, Pick, & Woldehanna, 2019).

Proclamation No. 715/2011, issued by the Ethiopian government, added employees of private organisations to the social security programme. Personnel of private organisations that labour for at least

45 days over a specific or indeterminate length of time, or on a single piece of work, including management personnel, are covered by the proclamation. In 2011, the government created the Private Organisations Employees' Social Security Agency to administer the social security fund for the private sector.

Another component of the social security system taking hold in Ethiopia is the Social Health Insurance programme. By issuing Proclamation No. 690/2010, the nation laid the groundwork for the development of a social health insurance system. It states that the social health insurance scheme's goal is to give beneficiaries access to high-quality, long-term, universal healthcare by sharing risks and lowering financial obstacles at the point of service delivery. The Ethiopian government then adopted Regulation No. 191/2010 to create the Ethiopian Health Insurance Agency (EHIA) in response to this declaration. The organisation's goal is to make sure that a fair and long-lasting health insurance system is available to all the nation's citizens. By developing a strong health insurance system that collects and manages member payments and guarantees the provision of high-quality healthcare to all citizens in a sustainable manner, it intends to achieve these goals. The Community-based Health Insurance (CBHI) concept was subsequently introduced in 2011 with the help of the EHIA. The government implemented CBHI in 2015–16 after the programme had been successfully piloted in 13 districts from 2011. Through prepayment and risk pooling arrangements, the government-driven programme seeks to provide the rural population and informal workers in urban areas with universal and equitable access to healthcare services (Endale, Pick, & Woldehanna, 2019). Smaller national coordinating units have been established to oversee project activities, and both the EHIA and the Ministry of Health serve as the project's executive and supervision units. The CBHI is a system that helps the portion of the community that works in both the urban and rural informal economy.

Ethiopia runs a national school feeding programme as part of its National School Health and Nutrition Strategy (Ministry of Education, 2012). Following the severe drought of 2015–16, the initiative was started with the aim of increasing school attendance, enhancing performance, and lowering the number of school dropouts by providing food and school supplies (UNICEF, 2019). In 2014 (MoLSA, 2014), Ethiopia created the thorough National Social Protection Policy. Promotion of productive safety nets, promotion of employment prospects and livelihoods, promotion of social insurance, and improvement of equitable access to and usage of basic services were chosen as the four interconnected emphasis areas for the policy's strategic directions (MoLSA, 2014). A fifth area of focus—the provision of legal protection and support services for persons who are vulnerable to violence and abuse—was included when the National Social Protection Strategy (NSPS) was introduced in 2016 (MoLSA, 2016).

Table 1: Key social protection policy instruments by focus area

Focus Area 1: Promote productive safety nets	Focus Area 2: Promote employment opportunities and improve livelihoods	Focus Area 3: Promote social insurance	Focus Area 4: Increase equitable access to health, education and other social services	Focus Area 5: Address violence, abuse, exploitation and provide legal protection and support
Unconditional social transfer	Technical support to on and off farm livelihoods	Mandatory social insurance	Social transfers for human capital development	Communications for prevention of abuse and exploitation
Conditional social transfers	Employment services and standards	Index-linked weather insurance	Health fee waivers and health insurance subsidies	Care for people living outside protective family environments
Public works	Financial services	Life insurance	Establishment of a social work system	Protective legal and policy environment
Scale up mechanisms for disaster response		Community based health insurance	Services of PWDs	Support to survivors of abuse and exploitation
			School feeding	Drop-in centres and hotline
				Establishment of a network of specialised service providers

Source: MOLSA (2014, 2016)

Key informants recounted that during the EPRDF era (1991–2019), social protection had positive outcomes, but they were not certain about the transformative nature of interventions. Though social protection was considered a flagship programme, key informants argued that it was a political instrument to benefit some and exclude others. Some mentioned that during this era, certain people might be excluded or forcefully graduated to exclude them from the programme, either for expressing political opposition to the regime or due to a high demand to join the programme. This argument is also supported by empirical researchers (Cochrane & Melisew, 2021; Cochrane & Tamiru, 2016).

4.1.6 The Era of post-COVID-19 (2019–)

The Ethiopian government did not make any significant policy change following the COVID-19 pandemic. However, some social protection initiatives were implemented in response to the pandemic. The responses focus on system resilience, adaptation and humanitarian assistance. System resilience strategy aims to minimise disruptions to routine programmes and to ensure the safe and timely delivery of benefits to regular social safety net clients. All beneficiaries are receiving transfers without conditions as a result of the pandemic's waiver of the public works requirement. Prior to the pandemic, beneficiaries also received three months' worth of payments in advance. In addition to the PSNP, a number of smaller-scale programmes, such as food banks, were established to help the weak (Abate et al., 2020). Both RPSNP and UPSNP received lump sum payments in advance.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs (MoLSA), according to key informants, is in charge of

organising the nation's social safety programmes. The ministry is working to assume its social protection coordination role through strategic actions: evaluating its capabilities; carrying out a rebranding initiative that focuses on strengthening the nation's social protection system by establishing an effective management and information system; setting up a national social protection council; and creating a fund that will turn a dispersed resource mobilisation system into a coordinated system. This was a substantial modification made following COVID-19, according to key informants. A proclamation for the creation of a national social protection fund and another for a national social protection council are two legal directives that the ministry is currently preparing. It is anticipated that these two declarations will enhance the effectiveness of social protection in the nation.

4.2 Gender and Social Security Policy

Social security was offered to both men and women working in the military and public sector during the late colonial era. Although the military regime appears to place women's issues on the political agenda, gender imbalance in social protection was far worse under the communist government (1974–1991). The military government's constitution from 1987 (PDRE, 1987) provides for equal rights for women and men and special support for women from the state. However, during this time, very little effective and positive action was taken on behalf of women.

It was during the EPRDF period (1990–2018) that emphasis was given to women and children in social protection. Social protection was constitutionalised (1995 constitution); a national women's policy recognised social protection; the food security programme (since 2003), the national productive safety net programme (since 2005), and the national social security policy (since 2014) give much attention to gender equality and the social recognition of women.

In 1993, the Ethiopian government published the National Policy for Ethiopian Women and established both a national and local Women's Affairs Office. At the time, this policy was audacious. To accomplish its goals, it identified 17 implementation strategies, the majority of which centred on issues of participation and gender equality. For instance, it promoted women's access to fundamental social services and emphasised women's rights to own property and profit from their labour. The implementation strategies included creating a Department of Women's Affairs in all ministries and government agencies, assisting women's organisations, encouraging research on reducing women's workloads, taking legal action to ensure equal pay for equal work, and focusing on the eradication of stereotypes and cultural practices that discriminate against women. The need for knowledge and services related to reproductive health and basic healthcare was also mentioned in the policy.

With Proclamation No. 691/2010, the Women's Affairs Office was reorganised and elevated to the ministry level. According to the law, the Ministry of Women, Youth, and Children's Affairs (MoWYCA) is responsible for coordinating and facilitating government initiatives and developing plans that enable women to participate in and profit from the growth of the nation. The Growth and Transformation Plan, as well as sector-specific plans for the health, education, and business sectors, mainstream gender and are strengthened by gender-responsive budgeting (Proclamation No. 970/2016). The government has also issued Proclamation No. 1097/2018, which mandates that all government institutions address women's issues in policies, legislation, development programmes and projects in order to increase accountability.

The Food Security Programme (2003–2020) and social security programmes in Ethiopia, both rural and urban, focus on the vulnerable, including children, women, people with disabilities, the elderly, the underemployed, and those at risk due to social and natural problems. The initiatives were created, according to key informants, to address issues of social equity, such as gender equality, and to institute policies that would improve social services to disadvantaged populations while also raising incomes and capabilities. The majority of PSNP beneficiaries—more than 50 percent—were female. The Food Security Programme's gender-specific provisions take into account the needs of female heads of households, pregnant women, and married women. The initiative offers breastfeeding mothers and pregnant women immediate assistance.

The Public Employees' Pension Proclamation No. 714/2011 establishes the prohibition of sex-based discrimination in retirement age, social security benefits, and the transfer of rights to survivors. The Ethiopian social security system provides guidelines for collecting benefits during retirement or if unable to work due to illness or injury. It also includes workers in both the public and private sectors. The benefits comprise gratuity and refundable pension contributions and include retirement pension, invalidity pension, incapacity pension, and survivors' pension. The gap in the social security legal framework that previously solely benefited government employees has been filled by the private sector Pension Proclamation No. 715/2011. In the execution of social security payments and the transfer of rights to survivors, the Proclamation stipulates non-discrimination on the basis of sex.

Table 2: Ethiopia's global gender gap index score in 2006 and 2020

Indicators	2006		2020	
	Rank	Score	Rank	Score
Overall Global Gender Gap Index	100	0.595	82	0.705
Economic participation and opportunity index	74	0.568	125	0.568
Educational attainment index	108	0.739	140	0.850
Health and survival index	87	0.969	63	0.976
Political empowerment index	61	0.102	16	0.427

Source: World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Index (2019)

Despite all these efforts, Ethiopia is ranked 123rd out of 162 nations in the UN Gender Inequality Index, which measures gender-based disparities in reproductive health, empowerment, and economic activity (UNDP, 2019). Table 4.2 shows that even though Ethiopia's government has made progress, its performance is still subpar.

4.3 Education Policy

4.3.1 Introduction

Ethiopia has a long history of its own writing system, calendar, arts, music, numeration, and poetic systems (Solomon, 2020). Both traditional (indigenous and religious) and modern education have evolved as part of the history of education in Ethiopia. Technically, the Ethiopian education system was

initiated indigenously, as Ethiopia was not colonised, unlike other African countries which were shaped by colonisers. Ethiopia's education system was nevertheless intrinsically shaped by external influences. This section, therefore, examines Ethiopia's education policy development from the late colonial era to date.

4.3.2 Late Colonial Era (1940s–1950s)

Traditional education (both indigenous and religious) has a long history in Ethiopia. Modern education, on the other hand, is a twentieth-century phenomenon that began under the rule of Emperor Menelik II (1889–1913). The emperor was adamant that the provision of modern education was necessary for both the development of Ethiopia as a modern state and the bolstering of already established political authority. The first modern school was opened by the emperor in 1908 (Teshome, 1979; Pankhurst, 1968). All children of school age obtained a universal primary education, thanks to Empress Zewditu Menelik, who is the direct descendant of Emperor Menelik II. She made the following proclamation on education in 1929: "All who do not send their sons and daughters to school so that they can learn writing and reading skills will be punished 50 Birr." The church would receive the money collected as payment for the penalty and use it to feed and clothe the needy. All church leaders in rural regions were to teach reading and writing in addition to their religious sermons (Ayalew, 2000, 159).

Empress Zewditu recognised the value of vocational training, which gave young people a means to support themselves financially. According to the proclamation up to this point, "the child has to learn one of the handicrafts available in our country after learning writing and reading to secure money for his life" (Ayalew, 2000). At the time, this notion was revolutionary because vocations like creating clay, smithing, and leather work were associated with lower castes. One hundred private schools were founded between 1906 and 1935 (Bender, 1976). Many Ethiopian schools taught in French until 1935. As a result, the school system at this time (1908–1935) was heavily influenced by French since not only were teachers and headmasters French, but exams were also conducted in their language.

The reconstruction period ran from the 1940s until the mid-1950s. Due to the extensive damage the Italians caused during their occupation (1935–41), the process of reconstructing Ethiopia's educational system began from scratch after their expulsion from the country. The government of this era shared the belief of previous governments that the country's independence could be ensured by its educated populace, and therefore promoted the advancement of education. As a result, the Ministry of Education and Fine Arts was founded in 1942, and nationwide efforts to improve education once more began. Ethiopia's educational system attracted the interest of Great Britain, which had helped free Ethiopia from Italian assault. From 1942 through 1954, British consultants had a significant impact on Ethiopia's educational system. British dominance was prevalent during this time. Students were required to take the General School Leaving Certificate Examination of Great Britain from the middle of the 1940s and into the 1950s. With the expansion of the University College in Addis Abeba during the following decades, the practice started to decline in 1951. Additionally, throughout this time, curricular development gradually advanced. In 1947–1948, the first official written curriculum was released. It was created by committees made up of both Ethiopians and people from other countries. Later, the educational system's organisational structure was modified in accordance with what were thought to be the interests of the ruling class. Between 1948 and 1968, a total of seven changes were made to the original curriculum.

4.3.3 The Early Post-Independence Era (late 1950s–1960s)

Even though Ethiopia was never colonised, outsiders (especially the French and British) heavily influenced education policy prior to the 1950s. British influence gradually declined between 1950 and 1955 when Americans began working at the Ministry of Education. The Long-Term Planning Committee was created by the government in 1955. The committee concentrated on the quick advancement of fundamental education for everyone as well as the applicability of the curriculum to the needs and goals of Ethiopians, with an emphasis on the cultural, social and economic features of the nation.

The Ethiopian School Leaving Certificate Examination (ESLCE) was the only recognised credential by the middle of the 1960s (Tekeste, 1990). The promotion of Amharic as the language of instruction at the primary school level was another notable change that occurred during this time. This modification, which was the first serious attempt to include multicultural education into the nation's formal educational system, was described by Tekeste as "the most significant reform of the decade" (1990, 8). This was made stronger by the broad understanding for technological cooperation between the governments of Ethiopia and the United States, which signalled the American educational system's supremacy in Ethiopia from 1965.

Through the Education Advisory Group, the United States had an impact on Ethiopian education policy development during this time (Zewdie, 2000). This group participated in the 1971 Education Sector Review as well as the activities of the Long-Term Planning Committee.

The imperial administration launched a thorough investigation into the educational system in response to escalating student agitation in universities and secondary schools and growing public unhappiness. The Education Sector Review (ESR), which was completed in July 1972, made several recommendations, including achieving universal primary education as quickly and affordably as possible, ruralising the curricula by incorporating informal training, equating educational opportunities, and connecting the entire system to the process of national development.

4.3.4 The era of crisis and adjustment (1970s–mid-1990s)

The Marxist-Leninist Derg came to power in the 1970s, and advisors from communist nations, namely the Soviet Union and East Germany, had a significant influence on education policy. "Serving better the interests of the masses and enhancing its contribution towards the establishment of a socialist society" (Zewdie, 2000, 79) was the primary tenet of the Eastern European Socialist philosophy. As a result, the country's educational system closely resembled that of Eastern Europe, and the objectives, curriculum, and instructional materials were developed in accordance with communist ideas. According to WPE (1984) and Tekeste (1990, 20), the main objectives of Ethiopia's socialist government's education policy were "to cultivate Marxist-Leninist ideology in the young generation, to develop knowledge in science and technology, in the new culture and the arts, and to integrate and co-ordinate research with production to enable the revolution to move forward and secure productive citizens." The catchphrases, "Education for production, for scientific research, and for political consciousness," later condensed these broad goals. The Derg made progress in raising elementary enrolment rates, despite politicising education policy and using it for ideological indoctrination (Tekeste, 1990).

A task force was established with the intention of updating the curriculum to conform with the new educational objectives in order to apply these new socialist concepts. Accordingly, it was declared in a policy directive published on December 20th, 1974, that citizens should have the right to free fundamental education "under the banner of education for all" (PMAC, cited in Seyoum, 1996). Based on this announcement, the Ministry of Education moved to align its educational priorities in order to progress universal primary education as quickly as possible while utilising the resources at hand (MoE, 1977). To harmonise school management with the communist ownership structure, Proclamation No. 103 of 1976 established public ownership of schools. However, schools attended by some wealthy families' and politicians' children continued to operate without interference from the government.

4.3.5 Beyond adjustment (1990s–2018)

Regional/ethnic armed insurgents overthrew the socialist form of government in 1991. Ethiopia became a federal state the same year after the EPRDF took control. The country entered a new era in 1994 with the implementation of the federal form of government, which was outfitted with a suitable educational strategy. Thus, since 1945, the country has had three policies, the third being the new government's educational policy. The main component of the new educational strategy that went into effect in 1994 was the addition of ethnic languages as basic education mediums.

Table 3: Ethiopia's education policies, programs and strategies since 1994

Policy/Programme Title	Period
Education and Training Policy	In place since 1994
Education Sector Development Program I	1997/8–2001/2
Education Sector Development Program II	2002/3–2004/5
Education Sector Development Program III	2005/6–2010/11
Alternative Basic Education	In place since 2001
National Adult Education Strategy	In place since 2008
National Technical and Vocational Educational Training Strategy	In place since 2008
Higher Education Proclamation	In place since 2009
Education Sector Development Program IV	2010/11–2014/15
Education Sector Development	2015/16–2019/20

Along with the country's education policy from 1994, a new Education and Training Policy (ETP) was issued, outlining the goals and purposes of Ethiopia's educational system. The Government of Ethiopia announced the first five-year Education Sector Development Program (ESDP-I) in 1997 within the context of the 1994 ETP, which was part of a 20-year indicative plan for the education sector that has been translated into a number of national ESDPs. The key objectives of the ESDP are to enhance

educational quality, relevance, efficiency and equity, and increase access to education, with an emphasis on primary education in rural and disadvantaged regions and the promotion of education for females as a first step to attaining universal primary education by 2015.

The goals and tactics of the first ESDP I (1997–1998–2001–2002) were directly derived from the Education and Training Policy. The following issues were to be improved during a five-year period in coordination with the donor organisations: (1) Rationalisation of the ineffective educational system (to optimise school operations by reviewing educational policies and procedures); (2) Enhancement of educational services in remote areas and for girls (to raise the enrolment ratio of girls to 45 percent); (3) Provision of high-quality education; and (4) Rationalisation of the low enrolment ratio (to raise primary school enrolment ratio to 50 percent by 2000).

The duration of ESDP II was intentionally limited to three years (2002/03 to 2004/05). Given that the delivery methods were specified, it seemed to be more thorough in its treatment of adult and non-formal education (MoE, 2002). The five-year ESDP III period ran from 2005/06 to 2009/10. The previous development programme's goals were reiterated with more detail on the number of adults to be trained (MoE 2005). The Alternative Basic Education (ABE) Programme, a non-formal education initiative that targets out-of-school youth aged seven to 14, was a way to supplement formal education and achieve the objectives. The programme lasts three years, which is comparable to a four-year basic primary education in a formal setting. The National Adult Education Strategy that was previously mentioned was designed and approved by the Ethiopian parliament during ESDP III (MoE 2008). The main goal of the strategy was to establish a well-thought-out, organised, and coordinated adult education system that would give youth and adults access to high-quality learning opportunities to enable them effectively contribute to Ethiopia's social, economic, and political development (MoE, 2008). Despite the National Adult Education Strategy's (NAES) expansive conception of adult education, the Functional Adult Literacy (FAL) programme was the only one that was implemented. The NAES also outlined the requirement for developing an adult education system, which must still be strongly connected to FAL or skills training.

A wide range of non-formal education and training goals are included in the National TVET Strategy in order to support long-term economic growth. According to the plan, non-formal TVET programmes provide employment-focused training to a variety of target populations, including school dropouts, persons in the workforce, people in employment, and marginalised groups in the labour market. These programmes are not yet consistently delivered, in contrast to traditional TVET. Although informal (on-the-job) training is common, there are currently no methods to recognise it because there is no organised system of assessment and certification (MoE, 2008). Priority initiatives that aid in resolving the issues mentioned in ESDP III are the main emphasis of ESDP IV. These are divided into two groups: those arranged by priority theme (quality, equity, and enhanced management) and those organised by sub-sector (general education, TVET, and higher education). The main goals of general education are to ensure that all children, youth and adults, with a focus on females, acquire the competencies, skills, values and attitudes necessary to participate fully in Ethiopia's social, economic and political development.

Quality secondary education serves as the foundation for and a bridge to meeting the demand of the

economy for middle class workers. TVET aims to promote demand-driven, high-quality technical and vocational education and training that are applicable to all sectors of the economy, at all levels, and for all people. It also aims to transfer accumulated and required technologies to Ethiopia while creating a workforce that is competent, motivated, adaptable and innovative. The objective of higher education is to produce and impart advanced and relevant information for socioeconomic development and poverty reduction with the aim of making Ethiopia a middle-income country by 2025. This is to be done by developing highly skilled, motivated and inventive human resources.

The fifth medium-term plan, ESDP V, was the main strategy guide for Ethiopia's educational advancement from 2015/16 to 2019/20. It is difficult to manage the enormous investment required to provide education for a growing population. It will be crucial to have strong leadership and direction, as well as efficient cooperation and communication within ministries and across all educational levels. The adoption and enactment of an education law, which is now in the draft stage, will support this effort during the ESDP V term. The goals of Ethiopia's education and training system are to develop competent citizens who can contribute to social, economic, political and cultural development through knowledge creation and transfer, as well as to: (1) Provide equal opportunities and participation for all, paying particular attention to disadvantaged groups; (2) Deliver quality education that meets the diverse learning needs of all children, youth and adults; (3) Provide high-quality education that is responsive to the needs of all children, youth and adults; (4) Encourage good leadership, administration and governance at all levels in order to accomplish educational objectives through the effective mobilisation of resources; 5) Encourage young people, adults and children to accept diversity and share similar beliefs and experiences.

Six important programmes have been selected for ESDP-V. Priority programmes reflect the goals and plans for the entire sector, from pre-primary to higher education, and are governed by educational levels and topics. Two priority programmes are included due to the size of general education. The first emphasises quality, whereas the second stresses accessibility, equity, and internal effectiveness. These issues with quality, access, equity, and efficiency are addressed collectively for the other levels. Additionally, a priority programme for management concerns is presented due to its significance to the execution of the plan. The top programmes are: (1) Developing managerial skills; (2) Quality in general education; (3) Access, equity, and internal efficiency in general education; (4) Adult and non-formal education; (5) Technical and Vocational Education and Training; and (6) Higher education. The declaration of 2003 (No. 351/2003) grants universities some autonomy. It is possible to exercise autonomy while managing employees, finances and internal structure, forming connections with other national and international organisations, etc. Additionally, Higher Education Proclamation No. 650/2009 gives universities the freedom to manage and control their basic operations. This decree grants universities the freedom to design their organisational structures and to implement new initiatives that foster high standards in education and research (Yohannes, 2016).

4.3.6 The era of Covid-19 (2019–)

The government of Ethiopia formally declared the closure of schools, from Kindergarten through Higher Education, on the 16th of March in 2020, following the first case confirmation on March 13, 2020. Virtual Learning Platforms (VLPs) have been a major emphasis for the Ministry of Science and Higher

Education. Additionally, the MoE created a concept note for the COVID-19 readiness and response strategy for the education sector on 3 April 2020. While schools were closed due to COVID-19, the goal of the response plan was to guarantee that learning continued at all levels. This included using digital technologies such as e-learning for secondary education and multi-media channels (radio, television, etc.) for primary schools. However, it was clear that lack of access to the internet, energy, technological know-how and gadgets (computers, radios, TVs, laptops, mobile phones, etc.); challenges with monitoring; and the low quality of education limited the ability to learn online. With the help of parents and their children, most private schools in metropolitan areas developed short-term solutions to maintain distance learning by uploading reading materials and assignments via Google Meet, Telegram, e-mail, and social media platforms.

In terms of policy change, key informants observed that the current government gives great emphasis to quality of education while earlier policies focused more on access to education. According to the key informant from the Ministry of Education, the two ministries (Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science and Higher Education) were merged to form the Ministry of Education. The government places emphasis on mainstreaming gender issues at higher, secondary and primary levels of education.

4.4 Gender and Education Policy

Prior to 1974, when imperial regimes were in power, men were favoured in many spheres of social, economic and political life. But under the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie I, Empress Menen, the emperor's wife, inaugurated the first girls' school in 1931 (Zewde, 2002)¹. The sole purpose of the school curriculum was to prepare girls for the traditionally feminine duties of mothers and wives. Male dominance was pervasive, which encouraged girls to organise for their rights in the 1950s (Zewde, 2014). While the military administration appeared to place women's issues on the political agenda and encourage girls to attend school, gender disparity grew even worse under the socialist Derg regime (1974–1991). The 1991 reform paved the way for other policy adjustments that considered the needs of women in terms of education. The education needs of girls at both higher and lower levels are recognised in the federal constitution from 1995, the national policy of women from 1993, the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP I-V), and numerous other specialised plans, programmes and strategies.

Gender barriers in education were intended to be eliminated by the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP I–V) and the gender strategy in the education sector. To promote women's and girls' access to, retention in, and completion of education, TVET, and skill-development programmes, the Ethiopian government has implemented a number of initiatives. In terms of social development, Ethiopia has made encouraging strides that have increased access to social services including education and healthcare. Free basic education is being provided, and this has made it possible for both boys and girls to fully access schooling. In terms of gender, the education policy acknowledges the significance of women's contributions to national development and has, as a result, articulated the need to incorporate gender into all educational interventions and focus education on changing society's perceptions of women's roles and contributions to development (FDRE, 1994a).

¹ Zewde, B. (2002a). *A history of modern Ethiopia: 1855–1991* (2nd ed.). Addis Ababa: Addis Ababa University Press.

Empowerment is anticipated to be favourably correlated with a woman's level of education; employment position, particularly employment for pay; and media exposure (AfHDR, 2016; Kishor, 2005). Overall, the key informants agreed that the education policy of the country gave equal chances to girls and boys at primary, secondary and higher levels. However, the challenge is still more for girls than boys and the gender gap is feasible. According to the key informants, there is a need to transform the policy, design a relevant strategy and implement it in the country.

4.5 Health Policy

4.5.1 Introduction

Ethiopia has a lengthy history of establishing health policies and providing health services. However, since 1993, these have evolved into a formal, organised health policy. The 1993 health policy highlights the need for inter-sectoral cooperation, democratisation, and decentralisation of the healthcare system. According to the Transitional Government of Ethiopia (1993), it was necessary to "accelerate the provision of safe and adequate water for urban and rural populations;" "develop safe disposal of human, household, agricultural, and industrial wastes and encourage recycling;" and "develop measures to improve the quality of housing and work premises for health." Since then, the health policy has inspired a number of health-related initiatives and plans of action. The following is a discussion of the evolution of health policy.

4.5.2 Late colonial era (1940s-1950s)

In Ethiopia, traditional healers were used to treat illnesses before the advent of modern medicine. During the reign of Emperor Menelik II (1889–1913), Ethiopia began to provide modern medical and healthcare services. Menelik called missionaries, primarily in Addis Abeba, to provide medications and offer medical services. He founded the first public hospital for Ethiopians in 1906 (Ali, 2011). However, it was under Emperor Haile Selassie that the Ministry of Public Health launched the first national health services in 1947 (Pankhurst, 1965). During this time, a number of domestic and foreign organisations funded the training of health professionals, primarily nurses, sanitary inspectors, and assistants. The Ministry of Health focused on public health and preventive medicine while creating training programmes for paramedical and auxiliary workers because it understood that the majority of ailments in Ethiopia could be avoided (Chang, 1969).

4.5.3 The early post-independence era (late 1950s–1960s)

In the northern town of Gondar, the Ministry of Health created a college for public health in 1952 with the guidance and assistance of WHO, UNICEF and USAID. Basic health services were paid for by a health levy put in place in 1959, but preventative healthcare and the management of epidemics mainly relied on outside aid. As part of the Second Five-Year Plan (1963–1967), the first national health policy and plan was developed in 1963 with a focus on rural communities. It was intended to emphasise integrated preventative and curative care while expanding a decentralised basic health services network through health centres and health stations. Given the limited resources, these goals were unattainable. This plan, along with the Third Five-Year Plan that followed (1968–1973), failed to achieve its goal of making the hospital-based and urban-biased system more egalitarian.

4.5.4 The era of crisis and adjustment (1970s-mid-1990s)

Socialist ideals served as the foundation for the socialist government's 1970s health strategy. The Alma Ata proclamation on primary healthcare was endorsed by the policy. In 1984, the Provisional Military Government of Socialist Ethiopia promised “to ensure full and meaningful life for the broad masses; all the necessary efforts will be undertaken to provide adequate health services.” As a result, the Ministry of Health developed a policy that prioritises rural healthcare, self-reliance, and community involvement in addition to disease prevention and control. The first health programme created entirely by Ethiopians was the 10-Year Perspective Health Plan, which ran from 1984/1985 through 1993/1994. The health plan's ambitious objectives included improving and expanding mother and child health services, such as immunising all expectant mothers and young children, increasing per capita visits to modern healthcare services, lowering infant and child mortality, and raising life expectancy. The plan placed a strong emphasis on inter-sectoral cooperation, community involvement, gradual vertical programme integration, and specialised health institutions. It promoted the construction of a six-tiered health services framework with degrees of increasing complexity to facilitate management, referral, support and training, as well as the provision of basic healthcare services at an affordable cost.

The Derg converted the mass groups it developed for popular involvement into a tool of political control since its top-down planning lacked the wide population power base required to be democratic. Although poor individuals could receive free care if suggested by their peasant groups and kebele, and government employees had half of their medical expenses paid by their employers, Ethiopia continued to pursue its fee-for-service approach following the revolution. The private sector remained active in the health sector throughout the Derg era, despite government restrictions on doctors' ability to keep private practices up until 1990 (Kloos et al., 1986). From 1983 to 1989, the expansion of health services was slowest for community health services, but it was notably quick for health stations and to a lesser extent for health centres.

4.5.5 Beyond adjustment (1990s–2018)

In 1993, the transitional administration released its health strategy, outlining its goals for the future growth of the healthcare industry over the following two decades. The goal of the policy was to improve the nation's overall socio-economic development efforts by reorganising the delivery system for healthcare. The key aspects of this programme were to extend the primary healthcare system, decentralise finances and politics, and promote collaboration and nongovernmental actor involvement.

To carry out the programme, two documents were developed in 1997 and 1998, respectively: the Healthcare and Financing Plan and the Health Sector Development Program (HSDP). In the programme under HSDP-I, which operated for the first five years (1997/98–2001/02), preventing disease and decentralising the delivery of health services were given major importance. In response to the failure to meet the objectives set forth in HSDP-I, a new strategy known as HSDP-II (2002/03–2004/05) was developed with the additional objective of including NGOs in the delivery of a basic health package. The improvement of the health status of the Ethiopian people is one of the health policy goals of the HSDP-III, which was established in 2005 and was to run from 2005/06 to 2009/10. This plan placed special emphasis on the need to increase national health spending, promote government-NGO cooperation, and recognise NGOs as vital partners in achieving universal primary healthcare coverage,

particularly at the woreda level. Based on the success of the preceding plan, HSDP-IV was introduced in 2010 and ran from 2010/11 to 2014/15.

Ethiopia has carried out four phases of successive HSDPs since 1997. The country made significant progress throughout this period in terms of expanding access to healthcare services and enhancing health outcomes. In just two decades, Ethiopia's health indices went from being among the lowest in Sub-Saharan Africa to being among the top performers. Millions of new infections and cases of infectious diseases including HIV, malaria and tuberculosis have been prevented, saving the lives of millions of children. All of this was accomplished while developing a health system that can maintain the benefits over time. Ethiopia however continues to have high rates of morbidity and mortality from preventable causes despite the considerable gains made. Additionally, there are differences in the adoption and coverage of high-effect interventions across various woredas and areas. In both public and private facilities, the quality of healthcare in terms of enhancing patient safety, efficacy and patient-centeredness is frequently variable and unreliable.

A pilot CBHI was introduced in Ethiopia in 2011 to improve access to healthcare (Ethiopian Health Insurance Agency, 2015). The CBHI promoted the use of outpatient and inpatient healthcare services provided by public facilities, but prohibited the use of plastic surgery, cosmetic surgery, and international medical care. Only services not provided in public facilities were sought in private facilities. In 2011, 41 percent of families were enrolled in the CBHI scheme; this number rose to 48 percent the following year, and by 2015, more than 82 percent of these households had renewed their enrolments (Ethiopian Health Insurance Agency, 2015). Although the Ethiopian government is dedicated to enrolling households in the CBHI programme, factors such as cost, accessibility, and the quality of the healthcare services affect people's willingness to enrol (Ethiopian Health Insurance Agency, 2015). Information will likely continue to be disseminated through educational initiatives and communications technology, which might help improve the CBHI's coverage across the nation.

Aiming to increase fairness, coverage, and usage of basic health services, as well as the standard of treatment, the health sector transformation plan from 2015/16–2019/20 has set lofty targets and aims to do so at all levels of the system. For the next five years, changes at the national level must be driven by a focus on quality and equity, which calls for a change in the status quo. By 2020, every Ethiopian would have access to safer, more efficient, more accessible, and more equitable treatment made possible by the development of a national healthcare quality strategy.

4.5.6 The Era of COVID-19 (2019–)

The Ethiopian government implemented public health and social measures in response to COVID-19, including awareness raising, sanitation and personal hygiene, case management (tracing, isolation, and treatment), social and physical segregation, educational initiatives, and social protection measures.

A key component of the Ethiopian government's involvement in COVID-19 has been raising public awareness. The country's health sector policy places a strong emphasis on prevention through the provision of primary healthcare, making public understanding of the nature of COVID-19, its symptoms, transmission and treatment essential. A number of stakeholders participated in raising awareness and adopted various policy actions in diverse contexts. Goshu et al. (2020) investigated the

level of public awareness regarding COVID-19 mitigation strategies and found that both rural and urban sections of the nation are now aware of the pandemic. Over 83 percent of rural and 95 percent of urban families were aware of the eight mitigation strategies (avoiding travel and crowds/gatherings, avoiding touching faces, social distancing, avoiding handshakes/physical greetings, and washing hands). More than 61 percent of rural residents and 77 percent of city dwellers knew about the use of masks or gloves as preventative measures.

In its response to COVID-19, the Federal Ministry of Health created a number of national implementation guidelines and protocols. All regional states and two city administrations identified and developed public and private facilities. The hotels, colleges, and universities (more than 40 universities) that had been acting as quarantine centres had also been made available to various people. To increase capacity to over 50,000 beds, some public university residence halls were turned into quarantine facilities. The Millennium Hall in Addis Abeba was converted into a temporary hospital with 1040 beds, 40 of which were used for an intensive care unit for coronavirus patients. Patients began reporting on June 2, 2020. Youth Sports Academy also made preparations to accept 300 patients. Identification, testing, isolation, care, and contact tracking of suspects were all carried out in accordance with the national comprehensive handbook created by the Ministry of Health with the assistance of various specialist bodies. However, given that several laboratory tests were required for patient discharge and follow-up, the facilities needed to increase their capacity for laboratory testing. Additionally, some isolation facilities had been sending samples to other facilities that lacked the capability to screen for COVID-19, which could impede and delay case detection.

The Ethiopian government enforced social distancing under the State of Emergency (Proclamation No. 3/320), urging citizens to remain two meters apart in all their necessary activities. The findings in this study also reveal some obstacles to social distancing practices. For instance, the typically small number of sleeping spaces per household indicated how challenging it would be to isolate oneself. As well as making it difficult to access COVID-19 prevention information shared over the phone and on the radio, limited electricity access, the spoiling of perishable foods, and unreliable internet connections discouraged working from home and could exacerbate inequality between children while home-schooling (Masters et al., 2020).

4.6 Gender and Health Policy

Although there were organised women's movements during the Imperial era (i.e., before 1974), men still held most positions in society's social, economic, and political spheres (Burgess, 2013). Despite the military government's claims that women and men had equal rights, gender disparity increased under the socialist Derg regime (1974–1991) (PDRE, 1987). The 1991 shift in government led to the first significant advancement in women's issues. In 1993, the EPRDF government approved a National Women's Policy and established a system of Women's Affairs Offices. The 1995 Ethiopian Constitution stipulates that women's rights are on a par with men's rights in all areas of social life. In accordance with Article 35, women must enjoy the same rights and protections as males in order to fully participate in Ethiopian society.

Other government plans and policies have adhered to this framework. One of these is the National Action Plan for Gender Equality, which ran from 2006 to 2010 and was subsequently incorporated into

the Plan for Accelerated and Sustainable Development to End Poverty. The Growth and Transformation Plans I and II, the Health Sector Transformation Plan (FMoH, 2015), and the One WASH National Program (FDRE, 2013), among others, all included similar themes. The provision of health services is highlighted in the National Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines. The goal of gender mainstreaming is to make sure that all members of society are represented equally in institutions, policies and programmes that address their needs and interests (MoWA, 2010).

The Health Extension Program of the Ethiopian government was established in response to the fundamental medical needs of the rural population. To make it easier for people to access high-quality, reasonably priced healthcare, extension workers who are selected from the local community offer door-to-door services. The Program focuses on maternity, neonatal, and child health interventions to the community with the aim of lowering maternal and child mortality. Special emphasis is given to women and children in rural regions. Women make up the majority of the staff in this extension programme. More than 38,000 female Health Extension Workers (HEWs) have been placed in more than 15,000 rural kebele health positions since the mid-2000s (Haile, 2014). By installing pit latrines in homes and giving families hygienic advice, they play a part in helping their communities' efforts to enhance cleanliness and public health. The Women's Development Army (WDA) assists HEWs. One- to five-member networks make up the WDA.

Five women from surrounding households are instructed by each lady, and these women then persuade their neighbours to modify their behaviour by constructing latrines and establishing separate cooking areas. With membership in community water, sanitation and hygiene committees (WASHCOs), there is positive discrimination in favour of women in the WASH sector. According to the One WASH National Program, women must be fairly represented and elected to positions of leadership within WASHCOs (FDRE, 2013). In addition, it specifies that 50 percent of WASHCO members shall be women in leadership roles. Despite this regulation, males continue to hold most technical and senior posts. A CBHI programme was also created to help women who, owing to financial, cultural and mobility barriers, have lower access to high-quality medical treatment.

An important source from the Ministry of Health maintains that Ethiopian health policy adequately addresses gender issues. The service primarily targets women and most service providers at the local level are women. However, the key informant believes that gender equality in the delivery of health services needs to be improved. The caregiving load is twice for women. At home and at work, they already bear a disproportionate amount of the responsibility for caring for sick or aging family members. This was clear both during and after COVID-19.

4.7 Employment/Work Policy

4.7.1 Introduction

Ethiopia's employment policies date back a long time. Yet, only when employment is methodically steered through policies and strategies can it serve as a link between growth and the eradication of poverty. Ethiopia must therefore implement a coordinated employment policy framework that addresses the problems of labour demand, labour supply, and labour market institutions in an integrated manner in order to deal with unemployment and underemployment. Such a policy framework should benefit the

working poor, the informal sector and smallholder farmers. Following is a discussion of the government's activities since the late colonial era.

4.7.2 Late colonial era (1940s–1950s)

The Ethiopian workers' movement was initially somewhat corporative, taking the shape of traditional Ethiopian groups like “ekub” and “edir,” neighbourhood self-help groups that offer services, provide mutual aid, and defend members' interests. The Franco-Ethiopian Railway Company Workers' Association, which was established in 1947, was one of the earliest labour organisations to follow the structure of a modern trade union. However, the first union was not officially recognised under the Civil Code (Civil Code Proclamation, No. 165/1960) until 1961.

4.7.3 The early post-independence era (late 1950s-1960s)

With the passage of Labour Relations Proclamation No. 210/1963, the first formal labour legislation came into existence. This declaration established the Labour Relations Board as a mechanism for resolving trade disputes, acknowledged the rights of associations of employers and employees, and recognised a system of collective bargaining. The 1963 Labour Proclamation favours businesses more than the majority of workers. The claim is that it is the decisions of these elite groups at the top of the governing institutions, rather than the demands and actions of the majority of workers, that dictate this labour proclamation. Even the most significant legislative texts of the time acknowledged the emperor's executive authority and his dominance over the institutions responsible for creating and carrying out national policy. There had never been a line of communication between the public (those in society who were impacted by policies, including workers), and those in charge of establishing them. Therefore, it was unlikely that the impacted groups were consulted both before and after making policy decisions (Mulugeta, 2005).

4.7.4 The Era of Crisis and Adjustment (1970s-mid-1990s)

A new instrument, Labour Proclamation No. 64/1975 which replaced the previous one from 1963, featured practically all the elements of socialist labour legislation. The workers were given various privileges under this labour proclamation. Labour legislation was founded on public ownership of the means of production throughout the Derg period (1974–1991) as part of the socialist order of state and society, and it was subject to central planning and management². Socialist principles served as the foundation for the centrally controlled employment strategy. As a primary policymaking framework, an industry-led approach was implemented. Although Ethiopia is an agrarian nation with over 80 percent of the population living in rural areas, there has been little focus on rural employment opportunities or support for smallholder farmers. Farmers were able to obtain land through an organised effort under the banner of “land to the tiller.” However, neither the Derg administration nor the monarchy had any plans to create rural jobs or change rural areas.

4.7.5 Beyond adjustment (1990s–2018)

The 1993 Labour Proclamation succeeded the 1975 Labour Proclamation when there was a regime change in 1991. Proclamation No. 377/2003 in turn took the place of the 1993 proclamation.

² https://www.ilo.org/ifpdial/information-resources/national-labour-law-profiles/WCMS_158894/lang--en/index.htm

Proclamation No. 1156/2019 then replaced Proclamation No. 377/2003. The proclamations from 2003 and 2019 both sought a compromise between the interests of businesses and those of employees. In 2009, Ethiopia created the National Employment Policy and Strategy (NEPS). To promote social welfare and equity through poverty reduction, the objectives had three dimensions: (1) Streamlining productive employment and decent working conditions in the nation; (2) Accelerating and sustaining economic growth and development through proper utilisation of the nation's labour force as the most important resource; and (3) Contributing to the reduction of global poverty.

The Council of Ministers approved the most recent version of the NEPS in April 2016, with the intention of promoting full, fruitful, and freely chosen decent work throughout the country. The Policy and Strategy is intended to address difficulties with labour and employment in the nation as well as concerns with unemployment and poverty eradication. The policy is essential for creating an environment that is productive for both companies and employees. Additionally, it prioritises women and individuals with disabilities by implementing helpful and encouraging tactics that guarantee equal participation in labour market and income-generating activities. Through the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Government of Ethiopia started the process of developing NEPS.

The strategy places a high priority on providing fair employment opportunities, enhancing employment services and knowledge about the labour market, fostering an environment that makes it easier to move from the informal to the formal economy, preserving industrial peace, and addressing other intersecting concerns for job development. Given the scope and multi-sectoral character of employment policy, it needs an integrated implementation strategy involving the government and other stakeholders. In the light of this, a National Employment Council was created, consisting of representatives from the relevant public sectors at the federal and regional levels, Workers' and Employers' Associations, representatives from the informal sector, and others as necessary.

The Ethiopian government is dedicated to collaborating with other interested parties to foster the development of respectable employment opportunities. Through consultation, social dialogue, and workplace cooperation, social partners—employers and workers (and their associations)—can play a significant role in resolving conflicts and labour disputes that may arise between them, ultimately promoting industrial peace and decent employment. Therefore, it is anticipated that businesses, employees, and their respective associations would cooperate closely with the government and make major contributions to economic and productivity growth, job creation, and revenue-generating activities. As a result, social partners are anticipated to actively contribute to the effective implementation of the employment policy as well as to the monitoring and evaluation of activities to obtain feedback and make necessary corrections.

Furthermore, most work is still in the unorganised sector, highlighting the labour market's fundamental limitations in delivering formal employment (FDRE, 2019). Despite the crucial role that micro and small businesses have played in lowering unemployment, the rate is still very high, standing at 19.1 percent in 2018 (FDRE, 2019), and it is expected to rise given the political unrest in 2019 and the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. The former proclamation (Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003) was repealed in 2019 by the new proclamation, No. 1156/2019. The latter clarifies concepts, modifies existing sections, and adds new requirements. Any foreigner “may only be employed in any type of work

in Ethiopia where he possesses a work permit given to him by the Ministry,” according to Labour Proclamation No. 1156/2019. Usually, work permits are issued alongside investment licenses for positions that cannot be filled by nationals or for senior managerial positions if the employer considers the position crucial to the operation of the company.

The Refugee Proclamation No. 1110/2019 recognises the rights of refugees to wage-earning employment in the same circumstances as the most favourable treatment accorded to foreign nationals, pursuant to national laws; however, foreign nationals in Ethiopia have a very limited right to work. The 2019 Proclamation accords refugees a treatment that goes beyond the minimum requirements provided in the 1951 Convention for practising liberal professions, giving foreign nationals in Ethiopia a very limited right to work. Mostly, a work permit is issued alongside investment licenses for positions that cannot be filled by nationals or for senior managerial positions if the employer feels that the position is crucial to the operation of the company.

Unlike the Imperial and Derg regimes, the EPRDF administration has employed ADLI as a policy framework, providing opportunities for rural smallholder farmers and informal labourers. The Rural Job Opportunity Creation Strategy (RJOCS) was one of the policy measures introduced by the MoA in 2017. The goal of this policy is to coordinate rural employment creation with other national development programmes (MOA, 2017). The RJOCS has eight goals: strengthening rural-urban linkages and market expansion for job creation; facilitating labour mobility for decent employment; promoting rural entrepreneurship; increasing the supply of decent, sustainable, and quality jobs; facilitating access to jobs for rural youth and women; and reducing overall rural unemployment (MOA, 2017).

4.7.6 The era of Covid-19 (2019–)

Ethiopia enacted a law that prohibits both governmental and private businesses from laying off employees while the country is under an emergency. The government, employers, and labour unions in Ethiopia came to an agreement on the COVID-19 workplace response protocol regarding the steps to be taken to combat the predicted effects of the pandemic on the economy and labour relations. The MoLSA’s 2019/20 protocol complies with ILO recommendations for managing natural and man-made catastrophes and responding to crises. Key informants stated that MOLSA monitors both private and public businesses, as well as employee petitions from 366 groups, and that it successfully fought off 12,004 layoffs as well as wage refusals and pay cuts during the COVID-19 period.

According to a World Bank survey (2020), households in Ethiopia that were employed prior to COVID-19 lost jobs following the pandemic for a variety of reasons, including lack of/temporary contracts, contract termination, the coronavirus, and retirement, and these variables have an uneven influence on men’s and women’s job losses. In three rounds of the survey, for example, company closures due to the coronavirus resulted in higher employment losses for male- than women-led families. The urban employment loss as a result of company closures caused by the pandemic was substantially greater than for rural areas. In all rounds of the survey, the pandemic response-related company closure resulted in higher employment losses for the poor than for the affluent.

The key informants revealed that employment in the formal sector was not affected by COVID-19

response since these sectors were instructed by the government to pay their employees' salaries. Some businesses continued to function in various modes. For example, some institutions delivered instruction through online platforms, while some industries continued to work with extreme caution and halted job cuts. However, others in the informal sector, such as housemaids and workers in the entertainment industry, were severely impacted by partial lockdowns and curiously, these vulnerable groups were assisted in diverse ways.

4.8 Gender and Employment Policy

The Ethiopian Constitution (1995), Ethiopian Women's Policy (1993), national gender mainstreaming programme, and numerous sector specific policies, regulations, and processes all generally recognise gender equality in access to work opportunities. By offering three months (90 days) of paid maternity leave, Labour Proclamation No. 377/2003 in particular created favourable workplace conditions for women. Sexual harassment and gender-based violence at work, however, were not addressed in the policy. The new labour proclamation (Labour Proclamation No. 1156/2019) was issued with broad-based provisions based on the limitations observed in Proclamation No. 377/2003, including strengthening women for targeted vocational and skill-training programmes to ensure their competency in the labour market; providing appropriate legal protection for women against gender-related discrimination in the labour market, employment, and at the workplace; strengthening supports that enhance women's access to education, training, and employment; and ensuring that women are treated equally under the law.

Rights and working conditions are governed by Labour Proclamation No. 1156/2019. These laws guarantee the right to employment, including the freedom to select a profession; equality and non-discrimination in hiring, promotion, salary, and other job-related decisions based on sex; and the right to equal pay for labour of equal value. Additionally, the legislative frameworks guarantee employment stability both during pregnancy and shortly after delivery and provide for paid maternity leave. The Labour Proclamation provides working women with a 120-day maternity leave while their male counterparts enjoy 10 days of paternity leave when a spouse gives birth.

The Ethiopian government is dedicated to taking all necessary steps to strike a balance between the protection of the family and the rights of women at work. A new piece of law, the Civil Servants Proclamation (No. 1064/2017)³, was enacted by the government in 2017 to provide better working conditions for civil servants, particularly working women. Discrimination in hiring and selection is forbidden by the Federal Civil Servants Proclamation No. 1064/2017. Equal compensation for equal effort is mandated under this Proclamation. "All positions of equal value shall have equal base salaries," it adds⁴. Furthermore, discrimination against women in compensation is prohibited by the Labour Proclamation. In order to address sexual harassment and sexual assault in the workplace, the Civil Servants Proclamation No. 1064/2017 outlines severe punitive sanctions. Additionally, the government is now focusing on migrant labour. Improvements to the working conditions and protection of the rights of Ethiopian migrant workers are accounted for by the Overseas Employment Proclamation (Proclamation No. 923/2016) and the recently updated Ethiopian Overseas Proclamation (Proclamation

³ Proclamation No. 1064/2017: Federal Civil Servants Proclamation

⁴ Proclamation No. 1156/2019: Article 89/2; Labour Proclamation No. 1156/2019: Article 14(1)(b)

No. 1246/2021). The law mandates a bilateral labour agreement and works to increase the labour market's gender responsiveness.

Although there is still a gender disparity, empirical evidence indicates that the trend is encouraging. Despite continuing gender imbalances in all sectors, the number of women participating in the labour force has steadily increased over time. While men make up 86.5 percent of the labour force, women make up 74.2 percent (UNDP, 2019). Compared to men, women are less likely to be rewarded for their work. For instance, 58 percent of female employees in small-scale manufacturing are unpaid family workers, compared to 40 percent of male employees (World Bank Group, 2019). Additionally, the agricultural industry employs about 40 percent of women (World Bank Group, 2019). Yet more than half of all agricultural workers who are women are not paid, and when they are, they earn less than men (Drucza & Tsegaye, 2018).

Ethiopia's urban unemployment rate is 19.1 percent, according to the 2018 World Bank Enterprise Survey Ethiopia (WBESE). Women experience unemployment at a rate of 26.4 percent, which is higher than that of men (12.2 percent). Predictably, the unemployment rate for young people is 30.9 percent for women and 19.0 percent for males. A similar pattern was observed in a recent study on young self-employment in Ethiopia, where the jobless rate for women in urban areas was nearly twice as high as that for men (14.4 percent) (28.1 percent vs. 14.4 percent). The study found that as people age, the discrepancy widens. Few women had full-time jobs. Only 27.8 percent of working women held permanent, full-time jobs, while 27.6 percent worked as full-time production workers, according to a 2018 World Bank poll. The poll also found that 33.9 percent of women continue to work full-time in non-production jobs.

Important contacts from the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs assert that Ethiopian policy directives ensure equal rights and obligations for men and women and condemn any kind of gender-based discrimination. In reality, there are still large gender differences in labour force participation.

5.0 GENDER AND SOCIAL POLICY IN ETHIOPIA: A BRIEF DISCUSSION

The Ethiopian government since the late colonial era can be divided into four categories. These are the Imperial Era (1941–1974), the Derg Era (1974–1991), the EPRDF Era (1991–2018) and the prosperity Era (2018–present).

The Imperial era was characterised by a monarchy and strong ties to capitalism. Western modernisation and industrialisation were major influences during this time. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, the monarchical government, and foreigners all had a significant impact on social policies. Most of the policies came from Western nations. As stated earlier, despite not having been colonised, the American, British, and French systems had a significant influence on Ethiopia's employment, health, and education policies. Social policies were not transformative or gender-egalitarian. Even though there were women's movements to advance their goals and create opportunities for organised access to power, much of social, economic and political life in imperial and feudal Ethiopia (i.e., before 1974) was controlled by men (see Burgess, 2013). Women were not allowed to possess or inherit land in Ethiopian society. They were supposed to submit to men and were discouraged from expressing their own thoughts.

Nevertheless, they were able to exercise a great deal of autonomy in their roles as mothers and food producers, both of which are domestic duties (Uwineza & Pearson, 2009). The military administration assumed political control during the Derg era and transformed the system into a centrally planned economy based on socialist camp ideals. Land tenure was abolished, rural land and other productive assets were nationalised, and land was transferred to farmers. Large collectivisation schemes (such as resettlement and villagisation) were implemented, and private commercial labourers and commercial farming were marginalised. Social policies at the time were centrally planned using socialist principles and heavily influenced by socialist nations. While the military administration seemed to place women's issues on the political agenda, gender inequality grew worse during the socialist Derg regime (1974–1991). According to Zewudie (1991), women are underrepresented in elite managerial, administrative, technical and scientific positions. Women and men enjoy equal rights, according to Article 36 of the military government's constitution from 1987, and the state “shall provide women with special support, particularly in education.” However, despite these patronising statements, very little effective and affirmative action was taken on behalf of women.

The country's federal system is based on ethnicity, and it was founded during the EPRDF era (1991–2018), after the previous administration ousted the military government. Significant changes in social and economic policy were generated by this regime change. The government switched from a centrally controlled to a decentralised economy. Price controls were eliminated, other economic and social policies were changed, and state farm holdings were privatised. The EPRDF also launched SAPs in line with the neoliberal reform agenda and embraced an export-oriented approach. The EPRDF government's overarching goal was to create a free market economic system. The gender issue was constitutionalised by the EPRDF government, and many national policies were created with gender considerations. The federal constitution ensures that women's rights are equal to those of men in all areas, including marriage; equal pay for equal work; paid maternity leave; the right to own, manage, control, use, and transfer property, with a focus on land and inheritance issues; and the right to family planning and education.

Before this constitutional clause, women were not afforded the same opportunities for education, training and productive work. They have had relatively little influence in decision-making processes, access to and control over productive economic resources. Women's socially prescribed roles throughout the Imperial and Derg eras were restricted to domestic tasks such as collecting firewood, fetching water, and caring for spouses and children. Gender concerns were given substantial consideration in a number of social measures following the EPRDF government's overhaul of its policies. Despite these endeavours, however, there are extremely few women holding skilled professional positions; most women work in tedious, low-paying, and unpaid jobs. The nation has not yet made enough investments to strengthen women's capabilities.

Currently (during the Prosperity Party era), the government has not made any significant changes on gender-related issues. However, it has given gender more of a focus in the nation's political, social and economic agenda. The government placed considerable attention on women and children in the post-COVID era and promoted social protection programmes.

6.0 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary

A broad overview reveals that Ethiopia's gender-equitable and transformative social policy has been improved by a variety of measures since the late colonial era. The synopsis is given as follows:

6.1.1 Social security policy

During Ethiopia's colonial era, much of the social security system was unofficial. Menelik II established a semi-formal pension system during his reign. However, the Public Servants Pensions Proclamation No. 209/1963, which established a programme to provide social insurance for public sector employees such as civil servants, police officers and members of the armed forces, was the earliest formal public contributory social security system in Ethiopia. During this time, men dominated social security policy.

The first attempt to institutionalise emergency assistance was in 1975 with the creation of the Assistance and Rehabilitation Commission in response to the severe droughts and subsequent famines that occurred in the northern section of the country in the 1960s and 1970s. This period was regarded as a significant turning point in Ethiopia's social protection system. As a result of repeated droughts that left millions of people food insecure, the ruling EPRDF coalition developed a number of disaster response techniques after the regime changed in 1991. The Ethiopian government's 1995 constitution provides a legislative framework that is helpful for the creation and execution of social policies. The DSWP, the government's first official social protection strategy that included preventive, rehabilitative, and developmental programmes, was adopted in 1996. In much of the nation, particularly in rural areas, the PSNP was launched in 2005. In 2016, this programme expanded to urban areas. Ethiopia developed a comprehensive national social protection programme in 2014 with five key areas: enhancing equitable access to and use of basic services; promoting productive safety nets; promoting employment opportunities and livelihoods; promoting social insurance; and enhancing the provision of legal protection and support services for those vulnerable to violence and abuse. The current Prosperity Party did not alter the social protection policy.

Gender inequality in social protection was possible in the socialist Derg era (1970–1990) and the late colonial era (1940–1970). Gender issues in social protection have received attention since the 1990s. Gender equality and societal acceptance of women were recognised by numerous policies, including the constitution. However, there are still shortcomings in application.

6.1.2 Education policy

Traditional education (both indigenous and religious) has a long history in Ethiopia. Modern education, on the other hand, is a twentieth-century phenomenon that had its start under the rule of Emperor Menelik II. Even though Ethiopia was never colonised, outsiders (especially the French and the British) heavily influenced education policy prior to the 1950s. British influence gradually declined between 1950 and 1955 when Americans began working at the Ministry of Education. When the Marxist-Leninist Derg came to power in the 1970s, advisors from communist nations, namely the Soviet Union and East Germany, had a significant influence on education policy. In 1991, regional/ethnic armed insurgents overthrew the socialist system of government. When the EPRDF took over in 1991, Ethiopia was

transformed into a federal state. The country entered a new era in 1994 when the federal system of government, complete with a proper educational policy, went into effect. Thus, the current government's educational strategy is the third in the nation's history since 1945. The adoption of ethnic languages as a medium of instruction for elementary school is the key component of the new educational policy that went into effect in 1994.

Prior to 1974, when imperial regimes were in power, men were favoured in many spheres of social, economic, and political life. Despite efforts by the military administration to place women's issues on the political agenda, gender inequality worsened during the socialist Derg regime (1974–1991). The 1991 reform paved the way for other policy adjustments that took into account the needs of women in terms of education. These needs have been acknowledged by the federal constitution (1995), the national policy on women (1993), the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP I-V), and numerous, more specialised programmes, policies and initiatives. The Education Sector Development Program (I-V) and the gender strategy in the education sector were intended to eliminate gender barriers to education. To promote women and girls' access to, retention in, and completion of education, TVET, and skill-development programmes, the Ethiopian government has implemented a number of initiatives. However, there are still issues with actual application.

6.1.3 Health policy

In Ethiopia, traditional healers were used to treat illnesses before the advent of modern medicine. Emperor Menelik II initiated the practice of modern medicine and the provision of health services in Ethiopia. As part of the Second Five-Year Plan (1963-1967), the first national health policy and plan was developed in 1963 with a focus on rural communities. Socialist ideals served as the foundation for the socialist government's 1970s health strategy. The EPRDF administration released its health strategy in 1993, and it attempted to reform the delivery of health services with the goal of positively influencing the nation's overall socio-economic development effort. Since 1991, fundamental changes to health policy have been enacted and a variety of health policies implemented that have given equal attention to men and women and addressed the needs and interests of everyone in society. Nevertheless, there are difficulties with actual implementation.

6.1.4 Employment/work policy

Ethiopia has a lengthy history of employment policy. Labour Relations Proclamation No. 210/1963 established the first official labour law. Almost all the elements of a socialist labour law were included in the new Labour Proclamation No. 64/1975, which replaced the earlier proclamation. Workers were given various privileges under this labour proclamation. The 1993 Labour Proclamation succeeded that of 1975 when there was a regime change in 1991. Proclamation No. 377/2003 took the place of this declaration but was in turn cancelled by Proclamation No. 1156/2019. The proclamations enacted in 2003 and 2019 both sought a compromise between the interests of businesses and those of employees. However, Ethiopia's NEPS was not created until 2009. The Council of Ministers approved the most recent version of the NEPS in April 2016, with the intention of promoting full, fruitful, and freely chosen decent work throughout the nation. The Policy and Strategy was intended to address difficulties with labour and employment as well as concerns with unemployment and poverty eradication. Although gender disparity persists, empirical evidence indicates that the trend is encouraging.

6.2 Conclusion

This case study examined gender-focused transformative social policy in Ethiopia. In order to investigate social security policy, education policy, health policy, and employment policy in the context of Ethiopia, a realist case-based methodology was adopted. The study acknowledges the role of social policy in establishing debates in certain national historical contexts. The study of social policy is fundamental to understanding how governments interact with their citizens and is essentially political. While Ethiopia was not colonised, the analysis reveals that foreign influence was present in all four sectors of the country. It was also determined that social policy has undergone a considerable transition. It is argued that social policy is a key tool used by the Ethiopian government to control social processes in order to lessen the social and political instability caused by structural development. However, social policy as it pertains in Ethiopia lacks vital transformative and gender-equitable dimensions.

6.3 Recommendations

The Ethiopian government has made efforts to modify social policy, but there have been significant challenges. These issues arise because internal democratic procedures had less of an impact on policy-making processes. The quality of social policy was declining, and inequality was at an all-time high. Lack of local policy actors' participation and unequal access were issues. Most social policies were reliant on money and ideologies from elsewhere. These problems were observable both during and after the COVID-19 era.

Based on the study's findings, the researcher suggests the following potential post-COVID-19 era policy responses:

- Having established core social programmes and robust legal structures, Ethiopia should create revolutionary social policy that is independent of the influence of international organisations and other nations.
- Foreign influence should be mitigated by formulating inclusive locally driven social policies.
- To leverage the improvement in gender equality and address persistent problems, theoretically articulated ideas should be complemented with practical, transformative gender equitable social policy.
- To augment the quality and equity of social services covered by Ethiopia's social policies, quality and capacity development must be prioritised.
- International organisations and development partners must work together to resolve the issues facing the country in the areas of health, education, labour and social protection.
- Ethiopia should prioritise institutional capacity building, sustainable resource production, and political leadership for the creation and implementation of gender equitable and revolutionary social policies.

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