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# **The Role of Gender Based Perceived Fairness Towards Enhancing Performance of Women, the Case of Three International Organizations in Addis Ababa**

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April 2022  
Addis Ababa Ethiopia

**The Role of Gender Based Perceived Fairness Towards  
Enhancing Performance of Women, the Case of Three  
International Organizations in Addis Ababa**

A Thesis Submitted to College of Business and Economics, Addis  
Ababa University in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Management

April 2022

## Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis entitled **“The Role of Gender Based Perceived Fairness Towards Enhancing Performance of Women, the Case of Three International Organizations in Addis Ababa”** is my own original work and that all sources have been truthfully reported and acknowledged, and that this document has not been submitted for a degree to any other University.

Name of Author

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## Statement of Certificate

This is to certify that Emebet Regassa Bikila has completed her thesis entitled **“The Role of Gender Based Perceived Fairness Towards Enhancing Performance of Women, the Case of Three International Organizations in Addis Ababa”** in the case of three international organizations in Addis Ababa (IRC, DCA & NCA) is her original work and is submitted for examination with my approval as a thesis.

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## Examiners' Statement

This is to certify that the thesis entitled, **“The Role of Gender Based Perceived Fairness Towards Enhancing Performance of Women, the Case of Three International Organizations in Addis Ababa”** (IRC, DCA & NCA) was carried out by Emebet Regassa under the supervision of Amare Abawa (Ph.D) submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Business Administration complies with the regulations of the University.

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Date

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## ACRONYMS

AA	Affirmative Action
ACHPR	Article 9 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights
AU	African Union
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination all forms of Discrimination against women
DCA	Dan Church Aid
EU	European Union
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
HR	Human resources
HRM	Human Resources Management
HRMP	Human Resources Management Practice
IRC	International Rescue Committee
KAP	Knowledge, Attitude and Practice
KII	Key Informant Interview
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
SHRM	Strategic Human Resources Management
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organization

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## **Abstract**

Affirmative Action, which is considered as the function of perceived fairness, is one of globally recognized positive action program while it is also subject of debates among its supporters and opponents. The program had been introduced in America before half a century as an instrument to overcome discrimination and improve the benefits and participations of the assumed marginalized group of people including women. The proponents of this program believe that it is an equity action that helps as a remedy for past discrimination, solution for current and potentially future discriminations and temporarily paves ways for fair and/or equal participation of the target until equality and justice is ensured. This study is conducted to examine the role of gender based Affirmative Action towards enhancing performance of women in three organizations. To assess the awareness and practice of AA and its role on women performance, mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative research method was implemented through survey questionnaire, KII interview questions and secondary data assessment. The research design employed for this study is descriptive. Survey questionnaires were distributed to 54 women employees of the target organization to acquire their awareness about the AA and its practice in their organization as well as its role on performance of women in terms of competency, personal development, and career development. Similarly, 6 KII were targeted to share information about the AA provision in their organization. Policies of the organization are also assessed to further dig out about the commitment of the organizations in provision of gender-based AA and its effect. The overall outcome of the study shows that, though women employees have relatively better awareness of the program and the policies of the organization show some commitment on provision of gender-based AA, the content of the policy is not adequate as well and the trend of putting the policy in practice is minimal. Hence, gender-based AA is playing a very small role towards enhancing the performance of women despite the intended expectation. The researcher has recommended better options to improve the role of the program on the intended goal.

**Keywords:** Affirmative Action/Perceived fairness, Human Resource Management Practices, Employees Performance.

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. Introduction

This study emphasizes on analyzing the link between perceived fairness and its contribution in improving women's performance. It tries to assess the awareness and practice of perceived fairness and its implication on the achievement and failure of women in the target organization. Hence, this chapter presents the general theoretical background of the research area, the main problem intended to be addressed by this research, objective, and the significance as well as the overall structure of the study.

### 1.1 Background

Gender issue is one of the topics of fieriest debates that is grabbing the attention of global leaders, governments, development agents, business personnel etc. i.e., it is an issue at global, country, community, and even at a family level. This issue becomes a topic following the development of human efforts to create conducive living environment and make sure that the protection of human rights and benefits in terms role and responsibilities. The desire and effort to achieve a better live reveals the need for examining some habits and practices which appears to be gender biases and inclines towards the benefit of some people at the expenses of others. Hence, some norms and trends become questionable while fair treatment is assumed as a means to restore the benefit of all. Unfortunately, it appears difficult to ensure gender equivalence only through equal treatment as the imbalanced way of lives cannot be easily changed. Hence, fairness (fair treatment) becomes an approach of an effort to minimize inequality and improve the deep-rooted bias of some groups. In other words, to realize fair distribution of resources and share of responsibility, positive discrimination of the previously advantaged group and favour to the disadvantaged group has been put in practice to create fairness.

Fairness can be defined as an action that is knowingly committed with the expectation of justice eradicating past discrimination through fair services Michalis, A. C. (Ed.), in *Encyclopaedia of Quality of Life and Well-Being Research*, 2014) defines perceived fairness as: "any element of the environment perceived by individuals or collectives as fair according to previous norms or standards." It further explains it as distributive justice, saying; "perceptions of fairness have to do

with the rules and social norms governing how outcomes should be distributed...” (Peiró J.M., Martínez-Tur V., Moliner C. (2014)). While the main role of perceived fairness goes significantly to achieve gender equality, perceived fairness practiced for the past half a century is designated as an affirmative action.

From gender perspectives, affirmative action is a commitment of governments as an effort to attain gender equality through fair distribution of benefits and responsibilities. Gender based affirmative action strives to give privilege to women by positively discriminating men which is referred to as perceived fairness. According to Rebecca L. Berkeley (1996), affirmative action is defined as an action that attempt to equalize the opportunity for disadvantaged groups mainly women and racial minorities by explicitly considering their defining characteristics (sex or race) which has been the basis for discrimination. It is considered as a positive measure espoused to remedy past discrimination against a class of individuals sharing a common characteristic. Faye J: Konrad, Alison M (2002), presents Affirmative Action as it operates in two realms: employment and education. In both realms, according to them, the underlying principle is the same. This means, affirmative action exists when an organization deploys resources to make sure that people in designated categories receive fair treatment.

Though, fairness and moral based justice in aspiration towards the benefits of all humans has been experienced by many nations, the practice of legal based fairness from the point of view of enforcing law does not has long history. Literature documented that affirmative action was first adopted in the United States through the Executive Order 10925 issued by the then President John F. Kennedy in 1961. Since then, many countries follow the footsteps of the USA and tried to adopt policies, rules and regulation that will put affirmative action in to practice. International conventions and agreements have also shown good effort to familiarize the issue of affirmative action. Based on these and other factors, gender-based affirmative action is being practiced at different level of governmental and nongovernmental institutions, agencies, private sectors etc. It also becomes a manifestation of fairness towards achieving equality through enhancing women capacity and performance within the confines of attaining human rights. Writers affirm that, affirmative action includes a broad range of policies and practices that are designed to promote equality, while it is not free of critique and argument until now. Since its inception in the 1960s, volumes of moral, legal, and policy arguments has produced both to justify and undermine the

very existence affirmative action. (Jerry Kangt and Mahzarin R. Banajitt, 2006). In fact, Oana Crusmac, asserted, affirmative action is a “public or private program designed to equalize the opportunities for employment or admission for historically disadvantaged groups that had been denied an equal treatment because of gender. Hence the main goal of affirmative action programs is to remedy the irrational and morally irrelevant discrimination of the “group” and design a sort of compensation through fair approach. (Oana Crusmac, 2019).

Despite various and continued arguments on the issue of gender based affirmative action, it has continued to be a sensitive point, being key measure for the pro-affirmative action groups to realize gender equality. Hence, in addition to universal conventions and declarations, Ethiopian government has also adopted the program of affirmative action and tried to implement it at different levels. The government has designed policies and regulations that enable the implementation of gender based affirmative action. Similarly, stakeholders including non-governmental institutions, private firms and companies adopt the program of affirmation action and provide fair service. Hence, gender based affirmative actions are as such very familiar policies and strategies of governments, development practitioners, political candidate, international conventions, and the like. It is implemented by many and used as a slogan of fairness and an effort towards inclusive economic, social, and political development. In other words, it is considered as equity to bring equality and used as justification for the practice of gender equality. But the effort of achieving gender equalities seemingly remains a title of arguments while true gender equality is still in question.

Hence despite using gender based affirmative action as a means to support historically discriminated group through equity so as to bring equal share of benefit, there was not concrete evidence as to how far this effort has brought the intended result. This means, beyond putting an effort to pave ways for full participation of women in all aspects of lives without discrimination, it needs to be measured how far this opportunity has helped women towards better performance. Especially, the participation of women in all aspects of human lives including enjoying all human rights, performing well, and sharing key position which enables them to make decision on important issues needs practical evaluation. As gender based affirmative action is so controversial and is still under debate its level of effectiveness in achieving the intended goal especially towards assuring gender equality is something that needs critical evaluation.

Jerald Greenberg Jason A. Colquitt (2005) stated that, for an action (discrimination) occurred, that could be done differently, fair treatment is supposed to contribute to the efforts of correction of the discrimination. Hence, as a temporary measure to abandon, discrimination, AA needs to play the role of enabling the target (women) perform better and sustain in the competitive labor market. That is why J.W.F. van Rooyen (2000), mentioned the major elements of affirmative action as comprehensive human resources, as a purposeful program of action to achieve set goals by employers for balanced staffing and provision of special training and other accommodating measures. Sabbagh (2011) also added, Affirmative action encompasses any measure that allocates resources such as admission to jobs, promotions, public contracts, business loans.

Garcelon Janelle (2015) the underlying motive for affirmative action is the Constitutional principle of equal opportunity which holds that all persons have the right to equal access to self-development and the persons with equal abilities should have equal opportunities. Hence, AA needs to consider enhancing the performance of the target as a key factor to make sure that the beneficiaries of AA are well qualified and also capable of sustaining in the market based on their better performance. Hence, the components: job opportunities and promotion, Training, and personal development are extracted as of major Affirmative Action provision.

On the other hand, Employee's performance, according to World Health Organization (2010), is a combination of staff available (retained and present) and staff being competent, productive and responsive. Accordingly, when staff members are available their performance is determined by productivity, responsiveness, and competence. While these elements are influenced by absence of motivation and job satisfaction, achieving employee performance on the other hand, require facilitating strategies to improve productivity, responsiveness and competences at all levels in an organization. Khan (2006) argues that employee performance as the degree of accomplishment of the task that makes up an employees' job while performance is determined by an employees' capacity, which relates to the extent at which an individual possesses the relevant skills, abilities, knowledge and experience to perform and availability of opportunity to perform. Hence, this study tries to assess the role of affirmative action towards enhancing the performance of women.

This brief background tries to introduce what an affirmative action is, its effort to eradicate discrimination and achieve equality through various provisions, and how it is related to employee's

performance. Even though there are various HRM practices as an input of performance, the researcher focused only on three HRM practices: Competence (quality work delivery), Personal Development and Career Development. Finally, the research examines key findings from qualitative and quantitative data that contribute both positively and negatively and suggest further recommendations for further improvements.

## 1.2 Statement of Problem

The question of gender equality remains a sensitive issue of the politicians and development actors. Creating a world where all human being can live with freedom from violence and discriminatory service, get equal share of resource and responsibilities, attain equality without any preconditions including gender, race, religion, personal belief and the like is crucial. Above all, as women counts for half of the population of the world, UN (World Population Prospects 2019) they have the right to be free of discrimination, deserve equal rights and need recognition to their contribution to the wellbeing of mankind. In this regard, all the international and regional declaration and conventions such as by UN, EU, AU and other sectors considers gender equality issue as sensitive topic which needs special attention and lasting solution.

Gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls is one of the 17 goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable development. The issue is raised by UN as the demand by women for gender equality, is the unfinished business of this time. Hence, the goal of assuring equal participation of women and men in positions of power and decision-making is increasingly grabbing attention at global level. (Furtado, Moreira, & Mota, 2021).

However, despite taking the issue of gender equality as an agenda of discussion and developing policies that improve the participation of women, achieving gender equality in practice, especially at society level remains unanswered. Specifically, achieving gender equality at key leadership positions seems the issue that may need next generation as the participation of women in this position of organizations remains with a clear and a huge gap. In fact, as it has been stated by Dzodzi Tsikata (2009), affirmative action is considered as a set of measures adopted by governments, public and private institutions to address a history of systemic discrimination and exclusion of particular social groups in the interests of certain development goals. And hence, it is expected to improve development indicators by reducing inequalities and facilitating the

contribution of groups to development. But though the program discusses about those packages of provision that enable the target to access service and benefit from those area from which they were discriminated, the effort of the program in term of improving the agency's capability and hence performance is the area that is untouched. As the program is still under debate in the sense that it supports the unqualified group to attain some position, the program needs to turn its direction mainly towards enhancing the capability of the target so that they can compete in the global market. It is only through this and only this way that the program can abandon discrimination for good.

However, in spite of the implementation of perceived fairness especially in education and employment sectors and other institutions, the aspiration of women empowerment and assuring gender equality in all aspects, mainly in key leadership positions is not likely to be an easy work and may not be fruitful. The problem, however, is though there are efforts to bring some women to the leadership position in terms of quota or to imitate equality in political leadership, the true gender equality in economic benefit and social affairs, key leadership position and the like has to be evaluated only and only based on their performance and competence.

As Crosby, Faye J; Konrad, Alison, (2002) stated, Affirmative Action policies command attention as they tap into basic debates about fairness. But even if it is assumed governments AA defenders and actors are committed to fairness, but the history of achieving fairness for all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity or gender, has been far from perfect. This evidently implies that affirmative action is the ongoing issue that needs further attention for studies, and improvement to attain the intended goal.

Several studies have been conducted on the importance of perceived fairness, especially to justify equity to bring equality and respond to the counter argument of the issue. But most literature fails to evaluate how far the application of gender based Affirmative Action is contributing for the enhancement of women's performance in terms of personal development, competence (quality work delivery), career development and paved ways for their practical empowerment and equal share of benefits and responsibilities in key areas of work and leadership positions. Many literatures: articles, books, reports and policies narrate the opportunities to be obtained from the action. But this is only helping to justify the importance of the action, from its positive side and, it will be crucial to evaluate the level of achievement especially in terms of performance from the perspective of the women's perception about the program and the implementation of the program.

It is also crucial to evaluate how far the intended goal by the action is achieved if the organization has properly implemented the program and identify the unintended hidden factors that are delaying the effectiveness of the action and the efforts of assuring gender equality.

Despite the statistical data that shows the number of women enrolled in education, gender-based employment ratio of an organization, and placement quota in some political positions to make sure the presence of women and pseudo response to the required accountability for women participation, no efforts have been made either by the government or any other institution to measure how far the perception and application of affirmative action is determining performance of women. As part of the commitment to make sure the benefit of affirmative action, the government and any other concerned sectors failed to pay attention and assess how far women are benefiting from the program and achieve better performance and hence succeed throughout the available paths. While the issue needs careful attention, as gender based Affirmative Action is still under debate and can easily fire-back on the moral of women and potentially undermine their capacity, the concerned body is supposed to conduct continuous assessment and identify any other factors that are affecting the intention of Affirmative Action so that performance of women will not be compromised.

Hence, this research is an attempt to contribute to the quality and practical need-based policies that strive to assure gender equality. To that end, the study strives to evaluate the effect of gender based Affirmative Action awareness and practice on the performance of women. It will try to identify how women employees perceive the contribution of perceived fairness on women's performance and recommending alternative means to overcome. The topic is chosen based on practical experience and awareness of the issue to critically evaluate from the perspective of policies and human resource management as well as performance in relation to gender equality in leadership. Moreover, the study has made an effort to substantiate the issue from HRM and employee's performance direction which is somehow new area.

### 1.3 Core Argument

The awareness and implementation of perceived fairness (Affirmative Action) has significant contribution towards enhancing performance of women and attaining gender equality. In this regard, unsolved and commitment related obstacles that are hindering all the effort of the program

should to be identified and addressed to as to empower women, enhance their capacity and improve their performance and bring meaningful gender equality in all aspects.

## 1.4 Objective of the Study

### 1.4.1 General Objective

The main objective of the thesis is to explore the contribution of gender based affirmative action towards enhancing performance of women in three international organizations namely: International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Church Aid and Dan Church Aid.

### 1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the Study

Specifically, this study attempts to address the following objectives.

- ❖ To assess, affirmative Action application in the three organization and level of awareness by their staff
- ❖ To assess the level of gender based affirmative action implementation in the three organizations,
- ❖ To explore the awareness, implementation and perception of gender based affirmative action and its contributing towards enhancing performance of women

## 1.5 Research Questions

The core question of this study is: To what extent has the awareness and implementation of perceived fairness (gender based Affirmative Action) is contributing for the performance enhancement of women employees in three organizations? Hence, the study tries to answer the following specific research questions:

1. To what extent are the three organizations applying (having policy and communicate that to their staff) gender based affirmative action and how far do their staff are aware of it?
2. To what extent are the three organizations implementing gender based affirmative action and how far do their staff are aware of it?
3. How far do the awareness, implementation and perception of gender based affirmative action is contributing towards enhancing performance of women

## 1.6 Significance of the Study

This study mainly tries to address the core objective that is mentioned above. In addition to that, it will contribute to the efforts of creating a better understanding of the role of affirmative action in enhancing performance of women. It will help to see the remaining gaps in implementing AA to attain gender equality, especially through enhancing performance of women. It will also contribute critical ideas for policy makers to have the necessary caution and consideration of the issue while designing human right and gender related policies.

## 1.7 Scope of the Study

The study made a tight focus on the contribution of gender-based Affirmative Action awareness and implementation on performance of women from three major perspectives, namely: Competence (quality work delivery), Personal Development, and Career Development, in three organizations. Though there are various factors that can affect performance, the researcher will consider only these three (competence /quality work delivery, personal development and Career development) as key factors of performance for this study. Conceptually this study strives only to examine the effect of gender based affirmative action awareness and practice on performance of women by considering theoretical aspect of gender based affirmative action and performance, mainly awareness of the staffs about AA, policies of the organization, and implementation levels of the program. Concerning methodological scope, this study will use quantitative and qualitative research design. The rationale behind using both quantitative qualitative approaches is, to measure the level of gender based affirmative action awareness and practice its consequent effect on performance of women, and why the effects are so, based on the awareness of selected survey and KII target as well as secondary document review. Similarly, the study will focus only on female employees as a primary beneficiary of the program.

## 1.8 Limitation of the Study

Shortage of time and scarcity finance limited the scope of the research to include multiple organizations and level of study which led the researcher to miss the opportunity of comparative analysis of the issue. As this study is conducted within a very limited sample organizations and populations, it is not possible to conclude that the outcome can represent the whole reality of the

program and its effect. This means that further studies are mandatory to create better data and more suggestive outcomes. Similarly, this research can potentially face bridging gaps with future researchers, as there is no much effort to study this issue and put in practice mainly because of the fact that AA is not considered in strict terms since besides using the issue for leap service of politicians and decision makers. Hence, there might not be effort to continue such study and come up with better alternative that will help to put AA in to practice and attain the intended change.

## 1.9 Organization of the Paper

The study report organized into five Chapters: The first chapter contains the introductory part which mainly included background, statement of the problem, core argument, objective of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the coverage, limitation of the study and organization of the paper. Chapter two deals with review of literature covering theoretical aspects and practice levels of gender based affirmative action. The third chapter presents research methodology: the research design, methods, sample size and study area of data collection and analysis. Chapter four is about data analysis and discussion of results. The final chapter summarizes, concludes, and present the possible recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## 1.10. Operational Definition of Terms

**Perceived Fairness:** Perceptions of fairness refer to any element of the environment perceived by individuals or collectives as fair according to previous norms or standards (Alex C. Michalos, 2014)

**Affirmative Action:** A program of positive action, undertaken with conviction and effort to overcome the present effects of past practices, policies, or barriers to equal employment opportunity and to achieve full and fair participation of women, minorities and individuals with disabilities found to be underutilized in the workforce based on availability (State of Minnesota Department of Public Safety July 1, 2020)

**Competence:** A cluster of highly interrelated attributes, including knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) that give rise to the behaviours needed to perform a given job effectively. Or the capacity of an individual (or a collective) to successfully (according to certain formal or informal

criteria, set by oneself or by somebody else) handle certain situations or complete a certain task or job (Ellström, 2008)

**Personal Development:** All formal and other learning by which individuals develop their skills, acquire, and improve their professional knowledge and qualifications according to their own needs and those of the company.

**Career Development:** A formal approach taken by an organization to help its people acquire the skills and experiences needed to perform current and future jobs.

**Employees' Performance:** A combination of staff available (retained and present) and staff being competent, productive and responsive (WHO, 2010).

**Performance:** The effectiveness of the activities of employees that contribute to the realization of organizational goals

## CHAPTER TWO

### 2. Review of Related Literature

Under this chapter pertinent literature: journal articles and research findings relevant to this research were reviewed from secondary sources. As it has been tried to signify in the problem statement, the researcher has observed that there is a gap of assessing and indicating the contribution of gender based Affirmative Action in enhancing performance of women. Hence, though there are no such studies conducted on the issue, the researcher has tried to consult other literature that will give clear incite about gender based affirmative action and its relationship with performance as well as the importance of focusing on this issue to address discrimination and assure equality. Accordingly, the first section discusses theoretical review on fairness, perceived fairness, and historical background of affirmative action. Section two covers about awareness and arguments of affirmative action while section three discusses the provision of affirmative action in relation to performance. Finally, conceptual framework is developed based on variables (independent variables: awareness of affirmative action and dependent variable, women performance). A figure is presented to conceptualize the relationship between the independent and dependent variables.

#### 2.1. Overview of History and Denotation of Perceived Fairness

Article I of Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948, p.2), states that “All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights...” Article 2 further stated that “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status...”

There are other universal, continental, regional and country level commitments towards achieving equality among human beings and gender equality. Some of them includes the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), Sustainable Development Goal (2015) continuation of Millennium development goal, Beijing Platform of 1995, Protocol to the African charter on human and people’s rights on the rights of women in Africa 2004 and Solemn Declaration on Gender Equality in Africa 2004 among those rights that strive to pave ways towards equality. These and other declarations of Human Rights and equality

are considered as the binding right for all human beings throughout the world. However, despite such declaration and other human and moral rights that are guaranteed in country laws, religious scriptures, like Bible and the like, human beings have been and are being experiencing discrimination and unfair treatments.

Not all humans have the same access to resource, control over common properties, given equal rights to employment, leadership position and so on. Specifically, women are among these groups who have been in historical and ongoing discrimination in terms of attaining equal right in property ownership, access and control, employment, education opportunities, leadership positions and decision making on issues that affects their lives. As stated above, the fairness theory also argues that fairness or fair treatment is mandatory to correct the past and ongoing discrimination and attain equality among human beings. As part of commitment of attaining equality among human beings, leaders and fighters for right are trying to come up with better conditions that can potentially correct the past discrimination and enable to attain equality. One of these efforts is the idea of affirmative action.

Historically affirmative action is started in United States of America and as the point was initially coined in America, the country is the owner of the very idea. Since the initial introduction of the very idea of affirmative action in 1941, it has been through various promising and surface stages. According to Jonathan S. Leonard (1989) statement, “Affirmative action is a descendant of the movement to secure the civil rights of blacks”. It begins with President Roosevelt's Executive Order 8002 of 1941. A series of executive orders has barred racial discrimination by federal contractors. One measure of the controversy surrounding affirmative action is that it is embedded in presidential orders on which Congress has so far successfully avoided taking a position. However, President Kennedy's Executive Order 10925 of 1961 was the first to require contractors to take affirmative action, and the first to establish specific sanctions including termination of contracts and debarment.

Oana Crusmac (2019) also states that, “Affirmative action was firstly adopted in the United States through the Executive Order 10925 issued by President John F. Kennedy in 1961.” The Executive Order demanded that government contractors “take affirmative action to ensure that applicants to

be employed, and employees to be treated during employment without taking into account race, color, religion, or national origin". However, this initial form of the document did not provide quotas or methods, but only stressed that those who have been discriminated in the past should not undergo the same treatment in the future. Crummett stated that, Women were included in the target group of affirmative action policies only in 1967 through the Executive Order 11375 issued by the then President Lyndon B. Johnson, through the prohibition on discrimination based on sex.

Other scholars including: Sabbagh (2011), Harry J. Holzer Georgetown and David Neumark (2006), Jonathan S. Leonard (1989), Garcelon Janelle (2015), Leonard, Walter J (1975), Julio Faundez (1994) are among those who strive to discuss the issue of affirmative action and its controversial nature that initiate arguments among many. Affirmative action involves treating people belonging to a specified group differently so that they obtain an equitable share of a specified good. In the area of employment, its object is generally to ensure that the target group is equitably represented in the work force of a particular employer. Julio Faundez (1994) stated that affirmative action originated from USA to prohibit unfair discrimination against certain groups of people because of no job-related characteristics in terms of civil right act 1960. Hence, Affirmative action is a set of policies that are designed to promote inclusion of all individuals thereby addressing concern regarding discrimination some form of present in essence in the late 1905.

Though it does not have uniform perception Affirmative action has been defined as a fair treatment that provides remedies for past and ongoing discriminations. Rebecca L. Berkeley (1996), define Affirmative action as an attempt to equalize the opportunity for women and racial minorities by explicitly taking into account their defining characteristics sex or race which has been the basis for discrimination. Hence, Affirmative action is a positive measure taken by employers to remedy past discrimination against a class of individuals sharing a common characteristic.

According to Sabbagh (2011), affirmative action encompasses any measure that allocates resources - such as admission to selected universities or professional schools, jobs, promotions, public contracts, business loans, or rights to buy, sell, or use land through a process that takes into account individual membership in underrepresented groups. Hence the purpose is to increase the proportion of individuals from those groups in the labor force, entrepreneurial class, or student

population from which they have been excluded as a result of state sanctioned oppression in the past or societal discrimination in the present.

Garcelon Janelle (2015) also stated that the underlying motive for affirmative action is the Constitutional principle of equal opportunity. This principle holds that all persons have the right to equal access to self-development and the persons with equal abilities should have equal opportunities. The idea strives to raise that historical discrimination has brought some consequence of inequality which now requires strategic treatment. As such, because of past discrimination and unequal treatment, inequality pervades between women and men, people of different races, color, and the like. Hence, affirmative action is assumed as a remedy of healing this inequality through fair treatment; positively discriminating those group who are assumed as advantageous of past discrimination.

The scholars like Oana Crusmac (2019) mentioned that affirmative action is a “public or private program designed to equalize the opportunities for employment or admission for historically disadvantaged groups by considering even those characteristics that have been used to deny them an equal treatment.” The main goal of an affirmative action program is to remedy the irrational discrimination (meaning discrimination which is irrelevant e.g. based on race or gender) in assessing an individual’s capacity or value and to reconfigure the distribution of income and opportunities as it should have been if society was fair from a competitive point of view. According to these statements, Affirmative action program consists of two main components: a corrective one (remediation, equalization as result), and a compensatory one.

Bobo, (1998); Konrad & Hartmann, (2001) on the other hand stated that, affirmative action is one type of intervention for change in equity driven political agendas. The program which started in the USA, classified three positions of affirmative action namely: a compensatory procedure that strive to address injustices of the past; a corrective tool that aim to address present discrimination and finally, affirmative action is an intervention intended to promote social equality and diversity. Accordingly, the affirmative action programs tend to consist of organizational goals for increasing the representation of historically excluded groups including women, timetables for their achievement and the introduction of strategies and practices to support the targets.

According to Furtado, J.V.; Moreira, A.C.; Mota, J. (2021) Affirmative action (AA) is understood as initiatives which simply compensate for societal barriers that hinder women from having equal access to representation. It attempts to redress past disadvantages and disparate labor outcomes for minorities women included. For example, gender quotas or gender AA can be defined as initiatives meant to improve women's presence and representation in legislature, government, and industry. However, the most common mechanisms for increasing women's participation both in politics and decision-making positions are electoral and corporative quotas, implying a mandatory percentage of women in leadership positions. It typically involves creating a percentage target for the representation of women, as a group who have been historically excluded or underrepresented. Though it varies from country to country and organizations, gender quotas through AA usually aim at producing a "critical mass" of female candidates and leaders.

But then it is difficult to conclude that affirmative action is a remedy to bring gender equalities for only the past and existing discrimination. Because fair treatments somehow seem crucial to balance, nature-based responsibilities that affect full participation of women in social, economic and political affairs. Though the nature-based responsibilities including childbirth, breast feeding, and other issues associated with childbearing are among women's role which are in fact, a means for generation continuity, it affects their full-scale participation in other physical and emotional related role. And hence, unless some remedies that allow fair treatment of women that can compensate their natural role that affects their other activity is imbalance, it is difficult to think of gender equality even if there is no historical or recent gender-based discrimination. Hence, the practical and meaningful provision of affirmation action is somehow having a role in reducing challenges of women and enhancing their valuable role. That is why various countries use the concepts of Affirmative action with different terms.

Lederer Nicole M. (2013), in his book entitled "Affirmative Action: A Never-Ending Story?" stated that a universal definition of affirmative action does not exist though the concept of affirmative action exists since the late 1900s. However, the concept of affirmative action has been further developed over time to include elements like the preferential treatment for historically disadvantaged classes. According to Nicole M. Lederer, the definition and implementation of affirmative action differs due to the different cultural and political backgrounds of countries that are using it. Consequently, different countries and organizations use different terms to describe

affirmative action and related policies. Whereas countries including Brazil, Northern Ireland, Namibia, USA and the Republic South Africa use the term ‘affirmative action’ for their preferential treatment of previously and currently disadvantaged classes, Australia uses ‘equal employment opportunity’ Canada uses ‘employment equity’, the United Kingdom uses ‘positive action’, India uses ‘positive discrimination’ and ‘reservations’, and Sri Lanka uses ‘standardization’. However, it seems that, this lack of universal definition of affirmative action indicates the difficulty of establishing a common understanding for the concept. It is claimed that the difficulty in coming up with universal definition of affirmative action is due to its constantly changing meaning over time, which started out as remedial steps for past discrimination, and developed into obligations to hire individuals of disadvantaged groups in employment.

## 2. 2. Fairness Theories

Theoretically, fairness is an ethical concept that argues as ‘broad principles are able to describe the nature of what represents a just society while it is argued that all what is required for a society to be just is for it to be fair as justice is a characteristic of society rather than individuals (Schneider, Nathan, 2005). In other words, if justice is a characteristic of society, to be fair is to provide justice for all members of the given society. However, being fair does not represent equal treatment. Rather, fair treatment is a kind of treatment that gives priority, for those who are historically discriminated, and assumed as equal treatment may not address their problem as equal as other who used to be free of injustice. Folger, R., and Russell Cropanzano (2001) discussed fairness theory as it emphasizes that justice is a social process in which people assign one another blame and credit. From this perspective, they asserted that justice helps human beings to deal with mixed motive and interdependent interactions. Fairness principles of social conduct promote civil order and aid in the management of conflicting interests. How we adapt to or become alienated from others involves the accountability of evaluating other people by standards of fair conduct.

The writers further asserted:

“Fairness theory treats the severity of an adverse experience (Would judgments) in conjunction with inferences about the conduct of other people (Could and Should judgments). Would judgments reflect differences between actual and counterfactual (i.e., referent) events as two classes of experience. An actual unfairness, whether distributive, procedural, or interactional, differs from fairness

as the counterfactual. Distributive or procedural justice norms as counterfactuals make possible the experience of distributive or procedural injustice; interactional injustice as insensitive treatment entails sensitive treatment as the counterfactual that makes the insensitivity seem so adverse by contrast. (Folger, R., and Russell Cropanzano, 2001, p. 46)

Lippert-Rasmussen, K., & Petersen, T. S. (2020) also explain as “Justice requires the adoption of any means of reducing the degree to which members of some groups have worse opportunities than others where this inequality does not simply reflect differential choices, which is not otherwise unjust and to which there is no better alternative.”

In Folger and Cropanzano (1998; 2001), discussed as, Fairness Theory provides a mechanism to generate understanding of how justice perceptions are made, and to suggest specific rational and emotional processes through which any kind of fairness judgment may be formed. That means Fairness Theory gives the field a different way to look at justice from multidimensional point, without relying on specific sources or targets.

According to Amanda Marie (2011) Fairness Theory argues that perceptions of unfairness are formulated through a cognitive process that evaluates an event in terms of the presence or absence of injury or harm, the commission or omission of discretionary conduct on the part of the entity responsible for the injury or harm, and whether or not an ethical or moral standard was violated by such conduct (termed “Would,” “Could,” and “Should,” respectively). Consequentially, Fairness Theory suggests that judgments of fairness are driven primarily by the assignment of blame, or accountability. Amanda (2011) explains that: The model borrows from research on responsibility (Schlenker, 1997) and counterfactual thinking (Roese, 1997) to propose that the assessment of the fairness of a situation is made through a series of counterfactual judgments that occur only when specific conditions are met. As it proposes, there are three necessary elements for a circumstance to be considered unfair which are: 1. injury (harm must be done, called the “would” counterfactual), 2 discretionary conduct (the perpetrator of the harm must have acted under his/her own will and control, called the “could” counterfactual), and 3. moral transgression (the action of the perpetrator must violate some moral or ethical normative standard, called the “should” counterfactual). Therefore, according to Fairness Theory, to determine the fairness of a situation,

an individual engages in would, could, and should counterfactual judgments evaluating whether harm, control, and moral infraction are present by imagining a counterfactual situation and comparing that referent to the current reality while the outcome of this counterfactual analysis is said to determine whether unfairness is perceived. Fairness Theory, hence, assumes, all three of these conditions (i.e, an affirmative judgment regarding the Would, Could, and Should counterfactual) must be met in order for unfairness to be perceived. This means, unfairness is perceived when harm has occurred, the person responsible had control over his/her actions, and those actions violated an ethical standard. If one or more of these conditions is not met, fairness theory suggests that the circumstances will not be perceived as unfair.

Jerald Greenberg Jason A. Colquitt (2005) stated that the primary emphasis in fairness theory is the explanation of what people mean when they say that an experience was fair or unfair. In other words what are the factors that determine whether individuals perceive fairness or not. They explained that Fairness Theory differentiate itself from other justice theory as it highlights the important role of accountability judgments. The theory emphasizes the counterfactual thinking of (Roese ,1997) as fundamental reasoning procedure in the evaluation of accountability and hence, fairness. Particularly, the three types of counterfactual thought are emphasized in order to evaluate an experience as unfair. As per this connotation, a person needs to suppose that injury which could be potentially prevented has occurred and that it violates someone's moral or other standards that dictate what "should" have happened. When a person judges that injury has occurred which the target causing the injury could have acted differently and that according to some standard the target should have acted differently injustice will be perceived. As related to this, Fair treatment is supposed to contribute to the efforts of correction of the past discrimination as the result of persons natural character means gender.

The principle of affirmative action is promoting societal equality through the preferential treatment of socially and economically disadvantaged member of the community perhaps because of historical reasons, mainly discrimination. Fairness is characterized by equity, respect, justice, and stewardship of the shared world, among people and in their relations to other living beings. Hence, fairness theory provides concepts to name what we observe and to explain relationships between

concepts. The theory allows us to explain what we see and to figure out how to bring about change as it is a tool that enables us to identify a problem and to plan a means for altering the situation.

The fairness theory addresses both the issue of personally unwarranted adversity and the issue of its social origins in the interpersonal conduct of others; by addressing the accountability of interpersonal conduct, it puts the two halves of the fairness story together into an integrative model. This synthesis is the story of how mutually restrained social conduct can sustain a moral community.

### 2.3. Perception, Arguments, Challenges and Fates of Perceived Fairness

The concepts and practice of affirmative action is facing disputes and has been on various paths. Naturally, affirmative action consists of activities that favoured some groups while it positively discriminates others. The very idea of gender based affirmative action is to compensate women as the affected target through positive discrimination of men as the one who are not victim of discrimination or as the one who have created the discrimination. In this sense, the aim of the provision of gender based affirmative action is an equity that strives to correct the inequality through fair treatment and enabling the victims to come to the same level of their competent.

However, broadly, there are at least two types of perceptions of this action. The first groups are supports of affirmative action as a crucial means to enables the victims of discrimination to overcome historical and ongoing challenges through fair treatment. These groups believe that, through the provision of AA, targets can be able to come to the equal levels of competence. The second groups are those who reject the provision of gender based affirmative action. According to their argument, AA is incapable method to solve discrimination and inequality, but rather potentially can be a cause for further exposure to discrimination and stereotyping.

The very effort of Affirmative Action refers to a set of practices undertaken by employers, university admissions offices, and government agencies to go beyond none discrimination, with the goal of actively improving the economic status of minorities and women with regard to employment, education, and business ownership and growth, Harry J. Holzer Georgetown and David Neumark (2006). They explain, supporters of Affirmative Action argue that these policies are necessary to offset the systematic barriers that women continue to face in pursuing education

and employment opportunities. In this view, discrimination and pernicious stereotypes have persisted into the present, while the cumulative effects of past discrimination also continue to hobble underrepresented groups in a variety of ways. Thus, Affirmative Action is needed to counter these barriers and to equalize opportunity in the areas of higher education, employment, and procurement of government contracts. Furthermore, the women who benefit from Affirmative Action are largely qualified to successfully perform the tasks required of them as employees, students, and contractors, even if their credentials on paper are somewhat weaker than those of men whom they replace. And Affirmative Action benefits a wide range of individuals, and is essential if the rewards of good jobs, university slots, and government contracts are to be distributed equitably and fairly.

Janelle Garcelon (2015) strengthens this idea saying that, there are several justifications for affirmative action. Though the beneficiaries and the method vary depending on which justification is being used, affirmative action usually aims to give opportunities to individuals from marginalized groups that might not otherwise be afforded a certain opportunity. According to her, unless affirmative action is put in place, those groups (women) perhaps unable to attain the better opportunity for the fact that they are not in equal position to compete with the fellow people due to the past and existing discrimination that marginalize them.

Hannah Schildberg-Hörisch Chi Trieu Jana Willrodt (2020) discussed that, proponents of affirmative action argue that a truly fair policy should take disadvantages gender into account when evaluating performance to compensate for a lack of opportunities due to discrimination, historical injustice, or the “accident of birth”. On the other hand, opponents argue that under affirmative action decisions such as university admission, hiring or promotion choices are not purely based on merit which goes against the ideal of a “fair” policy that should select or reward the best performers. The underlying conflict in this, according to these writers, debate is the collision of different fairness ideals originating from different theories of distributive justice. Each recognizes a distinct view on which factors of their performance individuals should be held accountable for. This means, the three stylized factors that determine an individual’s performance are effort, ability and luck. They further stated that:

*“From a libertarian point of view, individuals should be held accountable for all the three factors, making affirmative action unnecessary. Meritocracism, however,*

*posits that only personal factors, i.e., effort and ability, should be considered when assessing someone's performance, justifying affirmative action that compensates for differences in luck. According to choose egalitarianism, people should be held accountable only for factors within their control. This means affirmative action policies should offset bad luck and differences in ability, but not self-chosen effort. Finally, strict egalitarianism strives for complete distributive equality, thus calling for policies that counterbalance differences in all three factors." Hannah Schildberg-Hörisch Chi Trieu Jana Willrodt 2020, p.2)*

According to, Julio Faundez (1994), there are a number of arguments against affirmative action assuming its "reverse discrimination" which enforce barriers between people rather than breaking down them. In fact, the moral basis of Affirmative Action is that no individual or group has been responsible for articulating one position as affirmative action is not marked by a rule. He stated, one of the central problems for affirmative action has been the inability to develop a cohesive, analytical framework. Nevertheless, over the last 30 years, three rationales have been articulated for the creation and implementation that become the moral basis for affirmative action. The first is compensation, which refers to addressing previous discrimination and correction, while the second is diversification, which concerns the importance of creating a multicultural society. The third pertains to the amendment of present discrimination, through Equal Opportunity (EO) argument. Consequently, we can consider these as distinct but interrelated rationales as past, present, and future-oriented reasons.

Feminist wings also argue that affirmative action is the effort to correct the past and existing discrimination so that equality can be realized. According to them, as a result of their historical exclusion from political agency, economic opportunity, and educational access, people of color and women have limited access to the resources, institutions, relationships, and capital necessary for success. Hence, providing equal opportunity for the person who is not in equal status is perhaps does not lead us to equal benefit. The reality is that there are various actions that manifest the existence of stereotyping and discrimination of women. Such negative stereotypes can affect the behaviour and decisions of all people, even those who do not consciously believe in the validity of those stereotypes; people are often not even aware they are using stereotypes. Efforts to promote

equal opportunity are necessary as these discriminatory forces continue to create disadvantage for some and prevent equal opportunity for all.

On the other hand, opponents of AA argue that discrimination; either present or past now plays a relatively small role in the determination of educational and employment differences across race and gender groups. Rather, it is the weaknesses in early family and school environments that continue to generate low skills among underrepresented minorities, which in turn generate lower representation and poorer performance in highly paid jobs and university positions for these groups (Bobo, L. (2001). Other also mentioned:

*“To the extent that women continue to lag behind men in labor market outcomes, these gaps are largely attributable to individual choices made by women themselves especially related to fertility and motherhood (Furchtgott-Roth and Stolber, 1999). As a consequence, the critics argue that Affirmative Action leads to the hiring or promotion in jobs, and to the admission to universities, of less-qualified minorities who perform poorly. It thus constitutes an attempt to equalize results or outcomes, rather than opportunity. Finally, the supposed beneficiaries of Affirmative Action are themselves hurt, as they find themselves in positions in which they ultimately fail. Affirmative Action might also help perpetuate negative stigmas regarding the abilities of minorities (Sowell, 2005). In this view, Affirmative Action is grossly unfair – not only to white males and to employers, but also to the underrepresented groups whom these policies are intended to help” Harry J. Holzer Georgetown and David Neumark (2006, p.7).*

Andrea Crandall (2004) stated Feminist’s belief that says, women and men are equal whereas Affirmative Action seeks to undermine discrimination by promoting the interests of women and minorities at the expense of equality. However, employers are forced to consider not the qualifications of an individual alone, but their race, gender, and sexual orientation, as well. On the other hand, in an attempt to promote equality by physical force, affirmative action has undermined women’s efforts for real equality. Any progress made by women now is cast into doubt, with people tempted to ask, “Is the woman really outstanding or is she riding the coat tails of misguided social policy?”. She further stated:

*“Supporters of Affirmative Action do not argue that this policy is “fair.” They believe that discrimination is omnipresent and blame for it rests squarely on the shoulders of white men, so the end justifies the means. They try to morally justify*

*discrimination against men, if it means we get a few more jobs for women. But there is a doubt whether this is countering discrimination or constructing politically correct statistics. Ending discrimination means creating harmony and mutual respect between different groups of people mutual respect, not “an eye for an eye” favoritism. Two opposing versions of discrimination do not cancel each other out to form equality.” (Andrea Crandall, 2004, p. 5),*

Others argue that, in the labor market, there is virtually no evidence that the qualifications or performance of females lag behind those of males because of Affirmative Action. As stated above, affirmative action strives to enable fair treatment for those who have been facing discrimination in the past, recently and can potentially be vulnerable for further discrimination because of the existing structure. Oana Crusmac (2019) also stated that, Affirmative action programs consist of corrective (remediation, equalization as result), and a compensatory measure while both components are heavily rejected by critics. According to her, the corrective argument “supports the elimination of the existing biases in the hiring process” whereas the compensatory argument takes into account the effects of the acts of discrimination made in the past (negative consequences for those discriminated, positive outcomes for the descendants of the discriminators). Then she said that “I agree with Mosley’s highlight that compensation is justified because it is aimed at reinstating the opportunities which those disadvantaged were deprived from through long periods of discrimination and bringing them to the level where they could have already been in the absence of historical oppression.”

Moreover, affirmative action supports the redress of prevailing exclusionary practices that still exist in contemporary society through specific actions such as affirmative and inclusive practices. Such an inclusive, practices aim to: (a.) extend justice towards certain target groups; (b.) redistribute society’s resources (jobs, higher education positions etc); (c.) justify the social sacrifices resulting from the redistribution of society’s resources. The rejection of affirmative action measures is generated by the manner in which its opponents position themselves to these three elements of inclusive practices said, Oana Crusmac (2019). As such, critics start by invoking the argument that women and racial minorities that are no longer excluded from the scope of justice. As a result, goes their claim, society does not need to be reconfigured.

Affirmative action opponents turn a blind eye to the effects of race and gender on access to opportunity. But common sense tells us that any attempt to solve a problem by ignoring it makes no sense at all. Imagine trying to eliminate the deadly consequences of lead poisoning by being blind to lead paint! If we want to create opportunities that are truly equal, we need to address the barriers to opportunity. Promoting equality and supporting affirmative action go hand in hand! The opponent of Affirmative action argues that it rewards the unqualified. The supporters reject this idea in that, affirmative action helps to offset barriers that unfairly block the pathways of qualified target who are fully able to succeed. In so doing, it promotes equal opportunity since we have an equal playing field and that the most qualified people are the ones who get ahead.

Finally, I would like to conclude the discussion on the argument and fate of affirmative action by looking at the discussion of Julio Faundez (1994). According to him, the need for affirmative action stems from the realization that equal opportunities does not produce results which are fair or even economically sensible policies giving preferential treatment to victims of discrimination should be aimed at eliminating the present consequences of past discrimination. As such, affirmative action involves treating people belonging to a specified group differently so that they obtain an equitable share of a specified good. This means, in the area of employment, its object is generally to ensure that the target group is equitably represented in the work force of a particular employer.

However, affirmative action is a controversial issue because it is seen as a challenge to the liberal principle of equality and because it is regarded as an undesirable intervention in decisions which, on efficiency grounds, are better left to the discretion of management. That is why critics of affirmative action point out that, it has a negative effect on the general morale of the work force. According to this argument, Julio Faundez (1994) said, those who benefit from the policy are made to feel that they are under-qualified for the job, those who are not members of the target group feel that they have been treated unfairly and lose their drive to work. Critics also point out that affirmative action policies only benefit a small segment within the target group, generally those who are better educated and hence do not need affirmative action to secure a job or a promotion. Thus, affirmative action not only fails to improve the lot of the target group, but also worsens differences within it.

On the other hand, proponents of affirmative action, claim that measures which improve job opportunities for members of target group act as an incentive for them to compete and develop new skills. As such by promoting wider participation of members of the target group in the labor market, affirmative action improves the morale of the workplace, and makes a contribution toward this policy, the fact that some individuals are given the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities and skills enhances the standing of the whole group in society.

Affirmative action not unlike any other public policy can be good, bad or even indifferent. A poorly designed or badly administered affirmative action policy can bring about enormous economic and political hardship both to individuals and to society. Affirmative action, on the other hand, can also be a necessary and useful policy tool to bring about social justice and to further the process of national reconciliation. Affirmative action is a powerful and delicate instrument which ought to be used with caution.

#### 2.4. The Need of Perceived Fairness as Part of Human Resource Management

Advocate of Affirmative Action argues that fairness is a key measure to correct the past, present and potentially future discrimination against some groups of people including women. Universal Declaration of Human Right issued that all human beings have the right to enjoy equal treatment and benefit from what they deserve. However, despite this women and other groups of people have been facing discrimination and denied equal right to enjoy benefit as equal as others. The 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), come up with a comprehensive framework to guide all rights-based action for gender equality. The CEDAW understood gender inequality as it is to be the result of discrimination against women. Hence, CEDAW calls for equality in outcomes rather than simply equality in opportunities. This means, to achieve equality as an outcome, there has to be remedial intervention (fair treatment) to compensate the existing inequalities so as to achieve equality.

Similarly, the UN Declaration 1993 on the Elimination of Violence Against Women affirms that the phenomenon violates, impairs or nullifies women's human rights and their exercise of fundamental freedoms. It states that gender-based violence takes many different forms and is experienced in a range of crisis and non-crisis settings which is deeply rooted in structural relationships of inequality between women and men. Hence, advocates of affirmative action argue

that women need especial treatments that enable them to overcome such deep-rooted discrimination and inequalities between men and women.

J.W.F. van Rooyen (2000) in his work entitled summarized guide to the Affirmative Action (Employment) Act (Act 29 of 1998) for Namibia stated that, the three core elements of Affirmative action contained in the American Executive Order of 1965 [workforce analysis, equal opportunity, and equitable representation] continue to constitute the basic ingredients of affirmative action policies in most countries of the world. These major elements of affirmative action justify the need and why it needs to be implemented. Accordingly, the rationale of Affirmative means that: –

- comprehensive human resources affirmative action audits need to be conducted employing transparent, objective methods.
- all discriminatory practices, both direct and indirect and both formal and informal must be identified and eliminated.
- employers need to embark on purposeful programs of action to achieve set goals for balanced staffing over a realistic period of time.
- special training and other accommodating measures must be specifically targeted at disadvantaged or formerly disadvantaged groups; and
- in selecting amongst candidates of similar ability or potential, members of disadvantaged groups should enjoy preferential consideration

In this sense, AA needs to be part of human resource development package having special consideration for the target of AA. In the effort to balance staffing and providing capacity building trainings, HR policies needs to indicate the priority to provide training for target and enhance their capacity of competence with the fellow workers. This means all the above requirements shall be practice though HR management J.W.F. van Rooyen (2000)

According to this writer, though the implementation of affirmative action measures restricts the opportunities of some persons, this restriction of opportunities is a consequence of the removal of a privilege hitherto enjoyed by those who benefited from the previous status quo. Naturally, affirmative action measures are provisionally designed to dismantle employment inequities and not to exclude any persons, simply because they belong to a certain group they cannot correctly be deemed unjust. He said:

*“Affirmative action does not stem from prejudice against a particular societal group, no it is intended to stigmatize its members. Affirmative action programs are needed to raise the socio-economic level of groups subjected to long-standing patterns of discrimination. In this sense the policy helps to redress generations of lost opportunities for such groups. But quite apart from moral considerations, on a purely pragmatic level, affirmative action, through its methodical investment in under-utilized human resource potential, makes excellent business sense. It helps to unlock the latent capacity of enterprises which have heretofore been restricted through prejudicial policies and practices, whether intentional or not.” J.W.F. van Rooyen, 2000, p 12).*

Andrea Crandall (2004) under her article “The Flaws of Affirmative Action: A Feminist Perspective” stated that:

*“Discrimination is a tenacious problem because it involves changing people’s opinions about each other. Affirmative Action was designed to counteract this problem by promoting the rights of women and minorities in the workplace.... Affirmative Action seeks to undermine discrimination by promoting the interests of women and minorities at the expense of equality” (Andrea Crandall, 2004, p. 5).*

Janelle Garcelon (2015) argues that affirmative action is one of the key practices with several justifications for its importance though it can take many different forms. Even if the beneficiaries and the methods may vary depending on which justification is being used, affirmative action usually aims to give opportunities to individuals from marginalized groups that might not otherwise be afforded a certain opportunity. Hence, he defends AA considering it from the perspectives of its aim to reach marginalized individuals. Some of his justifications are:

- **The Need for Role Models:** AA provides better role models for individuals from marginalized groups. In a case where affirmative action is invoked for the purpose of providing role models, a well-qualified candidate’s membership in a marginalized group “[seems] to be, itself, a qualification”
- **The Need to Better Serve Communities:** AA could be justified in responding to the need for professionals that can better serve a community. This justification assumes the

possibility for a member of a marginalized group to learn successfully from someone who is not a member of the same marginalized group, will give them an opportunity to acquire better knowledge and serve their community.

- **The Need for Diversity:** This also allows for one's race (or sex, or religion, etc.) to act as a qualification, is the need for diversity within the classroom or the workplace. By allowing people from marginalized groups the opportunity to enter the same space as the dominant groups, increased diversity and creates a more enriched environment, benefiting both types of individuals.
- **Compensation of past Discrimination:** AA is a remedy when certain groups have been denied entrance to certain institutions or denied employment at certain places simply by virtue of them being a member of a marginalized group.
- **Equality of Opportunity:** This is the basic principle that there are no limitations, both for formal, and informal, on who can be chosen to fill an open position. But if there have been some limitations preventing a group of people from obtaining certain positions, AA will be used to make up for the failure to provide equality of opportunity by deliberately choosing candidates who have been denied the opportunity to pursue a position. Janelle Garcelon (2015).

Affirmative action needs to go beyond symbolic representation and provide the target with some importing facility that enables them to become competent and have meaningful participations. Hence, it needs to incorporate training programs, outreach efforts, and other positive steps. These procedures should be incorporated into the company's written personnel policies, human resource management policies. Employers with written affirmative action programs must implement them, keep them on file and update them annually. van Eerdewijk Franz Wong Fetenu Bekele Lenesil Asfaw Mahlet Mariem (2015), argues that in principle, affirmative action needs to be comprehensive that incorporate all the remedies that enable the benefiter attain the intended achievement. Hence, a comprehensive affirmative action strategy, according to them, encompasses measures related to access to institutions, as well as academic and leadership support, and a gender-friendly environment. To realize this, the Educational Sector Development Program (ESDP)-IV sets a frame for such a comprehensive approach to affirmative action and also recommended to further operationalize and implement this comprehensive approach.

According to Nicole M. Lederer (2013), the term ‘affirmative action’ includes various measures including action as ‘outreach or support programs; allocation and reallocation of resources; preferential treatment; targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion; numerical goals connected with time frames; and quota systems. Hence, affirmative action can be understood to be a temporally limited proactive measure to remedy lingering effects of past systemic discrimination, prevent present and future systemic discrimination, and to promote substantive equality of qualified individuals of disadvantaged groups in significant areas of society.

According to this writer, AA needs to be part of organizational commitment to allocate and reallocate resources let us say in terms of investing in capacity development, practice privileged treatment; targeted recruitment, hiring and promotion which includes, prioritizing women in staff recruitment and practicing promotion and appraisal for women employees based on their capacity or by being committed to improve their capacity; numerical goals connected with time frames, like hiring more women to make sure gender balance in the employees; and quota system like dedicating some position for women employees. Then all these AA related practices are directly related to human resource management policies and commitment of an organization. Asha Nagendra (2014), stated, the role of Human Resource Management is paving ways to obtain utmost individual development, effective working connection between employers and employees, employees and employers, and desirable molding of human resources. As it is the recruitment, selection, utilization, development, motivation and compensation of human resources by the organization, incorporating the practice of AA is part of the organizational commitment to enhance the capacity of women and bring them up to competence and hence to better performance.

## 2.5. The Effort and Impacts of Perceived Fairness Toward Enhancing Performance of Women

According to Furtado, J.V.; Moreira, A.C.; Mota, J. (2021), the introduction of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls is one of the 17 goals of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development goal. The UN Secretary-General António Guterres has consistently focused on the long-standing demand by women for gender equality. He argues that gender equality is “the unfinished business of our time”. As this inference, the goal of gender equality,

which defined as the equal participation of women and men in positions of power and decision-making, has gained increased attention globally over the past decades.

At global regional and national level, the gender equality issues and measures taken to eradicate those factors that affect attaining equality have been considered as the major topics that will be addressed through the efforts of creating better world where all human beings equally enjoy better lives. Taking affirmative action as one of the means to reduce discrimination, which is key factor of inequalities efforts have been made at global level to improve women participation in all human affairs. Evidence shows that, starting in 1975, with the United Nations General Assembly (UN) proclaiming 1976–1985 as the UN Decade for Women several UN resolutions targeted an increase in the proportion of women in leadership positions. Furtado, J.V.; Moreira, A.C.; Mota, J. (2021), stated that: “The spread of a myriad of affirmative action (AA) and equal employment opportunity (EEO) initiatives was also promoted with the aim of reducing the underrepresentation of women (and minorities in general) both in politics and leadership positions”.

Nicole Busby (2006) also stated that, the use of affirmative action to increase women's representation in employment is recognized under European Community law. According to him, the European Court of Justice has identified affirmative action permissible under EC law and what constitutes reverse discrimination, deemed incompatible with the equal treatment principles.

Similarly, Article 9 of the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights (ACHPR) on the Rights of Women in Africa was adopted in Maputo in July 2003 and entered into force a month later on 25 November 2005. It has clearly secured the Right of women to Participate in the Political and Decision-Making Process. Sub article of the protocol stated that: The states Parties shall take specific positive action such as enacting laws that clearly stipulate and encourage the participation of women in the political life of their countries on equal footing with men. Accordingly, these affirmative actions, national legislation and other measures should ensure that: women participation and representation in election without any discrimination. The article makes provision for the use of affirmative action and enabling legislation including other measures to ensure women's rights.

As stated above, Affirmative actions have started before half a century and various countries have adopted the concept and practicing at different level. Ethiopia is one of these countries that have

adopted the concept of Affirmative action. The country has shown its commitment by including the necessity of affirmative action in its constitution and other legal frameworks. Federal Democratic Republic Ethiopia (FDRE) Constitution, (1994), Article 35, sub article 1 stated that, “Women shall, in the enjoyment of rights and protections provided for by this Constitution, have equal right with men.” The same article, under sub article 8 states that, “Women shall have a right to equality in employment, promotion, pay, and the transfer of pension entitlements. However, considering the existence of inequality, Sub Article 3 specified that, “The historical legacy of inequality and discrimination suffered by women in Ethiopia taken into account, women, in order to remedy this legacy, are entitled to affirmative measures. The purpose of such measures shall be to provide special attention to women so as to enable them compete and participate on the basis of equality with men in political, social and economic life as well as in public and private institutions.”

Similarly, Federal Civil Servants Proclamation No. 515/2007, (2007), Article 13 sub-Article 1, stated that, “There shall be no discrimination among job seekers or civil servants in filling vacancies because of their ethnic origin, sex, religion, political outlook, disability, HIV/AIDS or any other ground.” Sub Article 2 further stated, “A vacant position shall be filled only by a person who meets the qualification required for the position and scores higher than other candidates. When it comes to Sub Article 3, it says, “Notwithstanding the provisions of Sub Articles (1) and (2) of this Article, in recruitment promotion and deployment preference shall be given to: a) female candidates; b) candidates with disabilities; and c) members of nationalities comparatively less represented in the government office, having equal or close scores to that other candidate.”

Regarding the Provision of Federal Civil, Servants Proclamation No. 515/2007, Wondemagegn Tadesse (2013), stated that, “In its principles of non-discrimination “among job seekers or civil servants in filling vacancies”” and merit-based filling of vacancies, the law for federal civil service provides preference to “female candidates,” in “recruitment, promotion and deployment.” According to him, the four aspects of this law that should be emphasized here are: the principle of non-discrimination is enshrined; employment is merit-based; Affirmative Actions is applied at all stages of employment relations at the time of employment, promotion and deployment; and finally, three categories of (potential) employees are identified to benefit from AA namely women, persons with disability and members of nationalities less represented.

The implication of securing the measures of affirmative action, specifically gender-based AA is recognizing the existence of inequalities, for which remedies are provided, as well as efforts towards attaining equalities through equity of fair treatment. The Ethiopian government commitment towards the provision of affirmative action further secured in the “Definition of Powers and Duties of the Executive Organs of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia Proclamation No. 691/2010, under Article 28(6 & 7), which stated that, The Ministry of Women, Children and Youth Affairs, shall have the powers and duties to identify discriminatory practices affecting women, and device means for the proper application of women's right to affirmative actions guaranteed at the national level and follow the implementation of same.

Anouka van Eerdewijk Franz Wong Fetenu Bekele Lenesil Asfaw Mahlet Mariem (2015), explained that, in terms of targets and trends and in respect to the national policy context, affirmative measures, and women’s rights to equality in employment are enshrined in the Ethiopian Constitution. For instance, the national education policy, ESDP-IV, 2010 – 2015, explicitly mentions affirmative action as it includes Access, Support, both academic and leadership, and a gender-friendly environment (including anti-harassment measures).

Based on these and other supportive law and proclamations in Ethiopia and international commitments towards attaining equality through fairness, various governmental and nongovernmental institutions in Ethiopia are in some way practicing the implementation of Affirmative Action at different levels. For instance, it is publicly known that, Ministry of Education is officially applying affirmative action for higher education entrance as well as in terms of providing further supports for female university students. One of these manifestations is the effort of University Gender offices in provision of Tutorial class for female students.

*Dzodzi Tsikata (2009) stated that:*

*“... affirmative action is an opportunity to be proactive about women's gender interests. The growing numbers of women candidates suggests that there are women interested in political office that could make valuable contributions through their participation in governance. Affirmative Action provides more female role models and improves awareness of the issues. It is also a guarantee for gender balanced policy making at all levels of government. It can also allow considerable*

*skills to be brought into decision making structures. Because of their experiences in life, women are good managers, experienced at multi-tasking and getting things done.” ( Dzodzi Tsikata (2009, p. 30).*

Despite the efforts of Applying affirmative Action, it is also as crucial to see the impact. Globally and in Case of Ethiopia, there are institutions that applies affirmative action in vacancies fulfilment, promotion of female workers, personal capacity development and enhancing their competence. From the beginning, affirmative Action supported in the formal source, like legislative, policy, or other measures providing it, in its efforts of securing social, economic, or political aspects as well as provision of training as part of capacity development, preferential treatment or quota.

Wondemagegn Tadesse (2013), stated concerning the Ethiopian context that, according to the Constitution, the purpose of the measures of AA is to ensure equality in “political, economic and social life” which indicates the extensiveness of the envisioned measures of AA that may be taken to ensure equality of women. However, AA is mostly in education and employment while political participation is recognized to an extent, which is little more than nominal. This means, existing measures of AA have failed to cover major areas of underrepresentation of women including in business opportunities, and higher decision making.

In fact, provision of special training programs to target groups (women), which could be for university admission, employment or promotion, allocation of special funds for a training of a target group or creating employment opportunity, establishment of numerical goals and timetables, like percentage of women parliamentarians, in leadership position, quotas, etc. are among the expectation to be outcome of Affirmative Action. However, despite the efforts shown in the document, it is difficult to see actions beyond employment opportunities in entry positions, that have developed that improve the competence of women in all areas including leadership positions through enhancing their capacity in that aspect. In other words, as a temporary measure to solve the current inequality, affirmative action supposed to play the role of capacity development in addition to entry point so that women can become competent based on their merit rather than waiting for quota.

However, it is difficult to boldly speak the impact of affirmative action as there are no concrete evidence. Wondemagegn Tadesse (2013), stated that, there is no studies or evidence that shows the level of the implementation of affirmative action and its impact. As AA is temporary intervention, there shall be empirical evidence suggests AA should be terminated as soon as its objectives of substantive equality are achieved. Secondly, there seem to exist reluctance to record or publish the progress achieved through measures of AA in Ethiopia as there is not a trend in measuring and reporting number of employees or students, who have benefited from measures of AA, in both in the civil service and educational statistics. The fact is that Affirmative action is part of the human rights law of Ethiopia and also rooted both in international and national laws. He stated that.

*“Despite the country’s human rights obligations that require extensive forms and fields of AA to enhance equality, however, the review has indicated that fields and forms of AA are very limited. The fields of AA are concentrated in the civil service and higher education, without much policy or legal programs to embrace target groups in the rural community and private sector. The measures of AA are also “weak” forms, which have not taken due account of measures of affirmative mobilization and fairness that would benefit target groups with little social resistance. Although there is little evidence to conclusively state on the effectiveness of AA, statistics in the civil service and higher education indicate that equality aimed by AA has not been achieved. For example, in higher education, the participation of women is only 26% while in the civil service it is less than 35%. These partial figures indicate that the country has not yet overcome its history of discrimination and marginalization to foresee the end of AA” (Wondemagegn Tadesse, 2013, p. 192).*

Unfortunately, there is no evidence about the country in general and a specific organization in particular that evaluates and monitors the effective application of affirmative action for women. The researcher observed that, in most vacancies of official sites, there is only a phrase 'Women applicants are highly encouraged'. But nothing is known how and when do organizations encourage women in the employment sector, what specific measures will be taken in order to encourage women applicants and how does the Ethiopian law provide in this regard.

Literatures revealed that, Affirmative action is part of HR policy which help to ensure equal employment opportunities focusing on marginalized groups including women with main objectives to form fair access to employment opportunities and to create a qualified workforce regardless of employee's background. Crosby, Faye J; Konrad, Alison, (2002), also states that, AA aspire to increase diversity, through targeted recruitment of women it help to: correct, employment practices that hamper equal employment opportunity by analyzing specific practices and implementing corrective actions, strengthen accountability and evaluation by assigning major responsibility to agency heads and their designees, promote support for equal employment opportunity and workforce diversity by providing training regarding these topics and fair employment practices to employees, supervisors, managers and executives. The actual programs that come under the general heading of affirmative action are diverse which include policies affecting college and university admissions, private-sector employment, government contracting, disbursement of scholarships and grants, legislative districting, and jury selection.

## 2.6. Women's Performance and Affirmative Action

Opponents of AA argue that the action is promoting the under-qualified individual which creates potentially further discrimination. AA contradicts with "fair" policy as it considers the less performer (Hannah Schildberg-Hörisch Chi Trieu Jana Willrodt, 2020). Others also argue that, the program is supporting those who are less performer because of weaknesses in early family and school environments that continue to generate low skills, which in turn generate lower representation and poorer performance in highly paid jobs and university positions for these groups This argument further continued saying, women continue to lag behind men in labor market outcomes, these gaps are largely attributable to individual choices made by women themselves especially related to fertility and motherhood. But Affirmative Action leads to the hiring or promotion in job, of less qualified who perform poorly and attempt to equalize results or outcomes, rather than opportunity. However, the beneficiaries of AA are themselves hurt, as they find themselves in positions in which they ultimately fail, and this perpetuate negative stigmas regarding their abilities.

On the other hand, Supporters of Affirmative Action argues that the program shall give backing those individuals who qualify to the given position as well as provide packages that enable the target to have better capacity to perform the given role. According to Sabbagh (2011), affirmative

action encompasses any measure that allocates resources such as admission to jobs, promotions, public contracts, business loans. Jerald Greenberg Jason A. Colquitt (2005) in their explanation of fairness theory, also stated, for an action (discrimination) occurred, that could be done differently, fair treatment is supposed to contribute to the efforts of correction of the discrimination. Hence, as a temporary measure to abandon, discrimination, AA need to play the role of enabling the target (women) perform better and sustain in the competitive labor market. That is why J.W.F. van Rooyen (2000), mention the major elements of affirmative action as comprehensive human resources, as a purposeful programs of action to achieve set goals by employers for balanced staffing and provision of special training and other accommodating measures.

As part of commitment to Article 35 of its constitution, Ethiopian government also developed women policy in 1994 which significantly indicate the need to women capacity development. This is mainly to make sure the capability of women and enhancement of their performance. The policy stated that, in order to make women more efficient in their work and be aware of their problems they need to have skills through training, discussions, networking and other possible means to bring out their potential and work in their full capacity. Thus, to materialize the advancement of women at all levels building the capacity of all the stake holders and more so the women themselves through resource (allocation training) establishing appropriate infrastructure etc. is a mandatory step towards achieving our goal (UN, Women Watch, 2017-2008). This will infer the fact that, capacity building is the package of affirmative action.

In support of this, Garcelon Janelle (2015) also stated that the underlying motive for affirmative action is the Constitutional principle of equal opportunity which holds that all persons have the right to equal access to self-development and the persons with equal abilities should have equal opportunities. Hence, AA needs to consider enhancing the performance of the target as a key factor to make sure beneficiaries of AA are well qualified and also capable of sustaining in the market based on their better performance. To meet its goal of eradicating discrimination and attain equality, AA needs to work towards enhancing the capacity of the target so that they can compete in the market with their capability, or merit, but not because of their gender or race. But in the competition, mere provision of opportunity does not solve the problem rather that creating further discrimination.

From the scholar's argument, the components: job opportunities and promotion, Training, and personal development are extracted as of major Affirmative action provision. These components are not simple practice of entry point, but also can be considered as key factors of employees' performance. As the main objective of this study is examining the effect of AA on performance of women, the following discussion will try to conceptualize employee's performance, based on AA provision on career development in terms of job opportunities and promotion, competence (quality work delivery) as training and related provisions and personal development (mental, physical and spiritual) as a key factor of performance. In other words, quality work delivery(competence), personal development and Career development will be considered as outcome of affirmative action as well and key factors of performance. Hence, I will try to establish justification through discussing what these terms are and their relationship with performance. Then I will start the discussion through employee's performance

### 2.6.1. Performance

According to Aidah Nassazi (2013), Employee performance is normally seen in terms of outcomes as well as in terms of behavior while other also believe that employee's performance is measured against the performance standards set by the organization. But it is good to consider, productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and profitability to measures employee's performance. Employee performance is a core concept within work and organizational psychology. It is a multidimensional concept and a term synonymous with human resources and is all about performance of employees in a given organization and the level at which the employees perform their work. It has to do with all the job activities expected of an employee and how well those activities are carried out (Kavoo & Kiruri, 2013). Employee performance is also viewed at in terms of outcomes, as well as in terms of behavior (Armstrong, 2009).

Employee's performance, according to World Health Organization (2010), is a combination of staff available (retained and present) and staff being competent, productive and responsive. Accordingly, when staff members are available their performance is determined by productivity, responsiveness, and competence. While these elements are influenced by absence of motivation and job satisfaction, achieving employee performance on the other hand, require facilitating strategies to improve productivity, responsiveness and competences at all levels in an organization.

According to Khan (2006) definition, employee performance is the degree of accomplishment of the task that makes up an employees' job. For him job performance is determined by an employees' capacity, which relates to the extent to which an individual possesses the relevant skills, abilities, **knowledge and experience** to perform and **availability of opportunity** to perform.

Cole (2008) also stated that, employees' performance is measured against the performance standards set by the organization. Performance is the achievement of specified task measured against predetermined or set standards of accuracy, completeness, cost and speed. Amin (2013) added, an employees' performance is determined during job performance reviews. This leads us to note that, better human resources management practices have significant impact on organizations productivity. Abdulla (2009) pointed out that training and development, teamwork, and human resources planning have correlation with an organizations business performance. Hence, having better human resources management practices cannot be ignored when thinking of an employees' performance. As efficiency is a key factor for the given organization to survive in the competing world, it in return employee's performance is a crucial point to maintain better position and sustain in the work force.

So, in the assumption that, performance is a key to sustain in the work force, it is possible to infer that, better human resources management of the organization is a means to achieve the ultimate goal of the organization. Better human resource management on the other hand can be based on various measures taken by the organization in terms of providing facilities that improve employee's performance as well as means of measurement. According to Revanth Periyasamy (2020), Employee performance is a measurement of how well or how poorly an employee conducts their required job duties and how promptly they meet their deadlines or requirements. There are three key factors that influence employee performances. These are: Training and Development, Employee Engagement, and Company Culture. This means, while executing their job, employee performance can be affected by internal and external factors including the employer, personal problems and many other external factors that may affect.

Mutsotso (2010) points out that **education and training increase employees' job skills**, and their perception towards efficiency and effectiveness in carrying their operations. It further causes employees to exhibit higher feelings of satisfaction, motivation and consequently increase in production. This therefore means organizations that have high-capacity building are likely to

experience increased performance characterized by a motivated workforce. Skills building initiatives are very important to employees. Hatice (2012) noted that the skills building activities performed by organizations indicates that the organization cares for its employees. While many organizations invest in their employees, the employees on the other hand derive job satisfaction from their work which in turn leads to increased employee performance. However, this development depends on the individual employees' willingness to develop, organizational culture, top management attitude and organizational opportunities for growth.

In any case, performance is a key factor for organizational efficiency while capability is a prerequisite for employees for better accomplishment. On the other hand, availing better facilities to improve the performance of its employees is as crucial as the demand of better standing. This means, for those organizations committed to contribute towards achieving equality through equality action to their employees, working towards improving the performance of employees can be one of the key measures. In other words, if affirmative action has something to do with achieving equality through equity, it is then accountable to deal with enabling the target to be better perform in the given role and compete with others for sustenance.

From the discussion of employees' performance, it is possible to infer that, employee's performance can be enhanced through the HRM practices and provision of various packages. Performance is the result of cumulative efforts of HRM practice while some of these practices that related to AA. As a base for performance, which has evaluated from the provision of AA, I will try to discuss in detail how the selected HRM practice has strong relation with performance. These are:

- A) Quality work Delivery (competence)
- B) Personal Development
- C) Career Development

#### **A) Quality work delivery (competence)**

Competence, according to Ellström, P.E. & Kock, H. (2008), is an attribute of the employee, which can be considered as a kind of human capital or a human resource that can be translated into a certain level of performance. More specifically, competence refers to the capacity of an

individual/s to successfully handle certain situations or complete a certain task or job. Competence is a measurable pattern of skills, knowledge, abilities, behaviors and other characteristics needed to perform and fulfil one's job responsibilities. It has key role in enhancing employee contribution and performance. Competence based performance management addresses how a person accomplishes job responsibilities in addition to what a person accomplishes. It has huge factor not only on individual, but also in overall performance of the organization (Daniela Walters, 2016).

Wardhani, N. K., W., & ., H. (2018) states that, Competence represents one's performance. From the competence of employees, the HRM can know how a person is responsible, able to complete his job, solve problems and communicate in fostering good relationships related tasks instructed by superiors. Accordingly, competence can be used to plan, assist and develop one's behavior and performance. Similarly, competence can cause or be used to predict a person's performance; if he/she has a high competence, he/she will have a high performance as well. This means, competence includes behavioral characteristics that can indicate the difference between those who perform high performance.

Ashley Donohoe (2019) stated that, evaluating quality of work and efficiency helps to prevent expensive mistake and reduces wasted time, materials and effort. Then evaluating the effectiveness of capacity building packages and individual competence will help the company to determine if employees are best equipped to perform their jobs. Michael A. Akinbowale, Melanie E. Lourens and Dinesh C. Jinabhai (2014), discussed that, measuring the employee's performance covers the evaluation of the main tasks completed and the **accomplishments of the employee in a given time period** in comparison with the goals set at the beginning of the period. Measuring also encompasses the **quality of the accomplishments**, the compliance with the **desired standards**, the costs involved, and the time taken in achieving the results.

Similarly, Kwon (2009), stated, employees' performance is measured against the performance standards set by the organization including productivity, **efficiency, effectiveness**, and **quality** and profitability measures and customer feedback. Competence is the ability of employees to meet the desired objectives or target while quality is the characteristic of products or services that bear an ability to satisfy the stated or implied needs (Subbarao, Armstrong, 2006 & 2009). Aidah Nassazi

(2013), states that improving employee competencies through effective training programs, improves the overall performance of the employees to effectively perform the current job furthermore enhance the knowledge, skills and attitude of the workers necessary for the future job. This will in turn contribute to superior organizational performance. This means, through training, the employee competencies are developed and enable them to implement the job-related work efficiently and achieve firm objectives in a competitive manner. Hence, competence is a basis for quality work delivery which leads to employee's overall performance. Then the role of affirmative action is expected to be enhancing performance of the target through provision of trainings and capacity building packages which improve their competence. Hence, this research will use competence /quality work delivery as a key factor of performance.

## B) Personal Development

It is said that AA has contribution to personal development. As a key factor of performance, personal development has a role of ensuring the employees' well-being in terms of enhancing their mental, physical, and spatial welfare. This will in turn help them to increase their productivity, its performance and feel more comfortable in their workplace.

Vasciuc, C.G. (2020) discussed that Personal development initiatives are an activity or set of activities decided or granted by the employer, designed to develop different types of skills, attitudes related to the employment-employees, of a company or an organization. Personal development, according to Vasciuc, C.G. (2020) is formal and other learning by which individuals develop their skills and improve their professional knowledge and qualifications. Hence, personal development can be considered as the engine of business growth, since people who acquire better skills can perform as better as they can respond to the future needs of the company.

Continuous efforts of provision of personal development packages which focus on developing skills and knowledge of employee improve their performance. In other words, the company can increase its level of competitiveness and performance through a personal growth program. As the training initiatives that focused on personal development help to strengthen the motivations of the employees, the collective performance of both individual and company can be enhanced (Vasciuc, C.G. 2020). He further stated that:

*“With knowledge, time management skills, organizational methodologies and management techniques, managers can use them as valuable assets for the company's productivity and performance. Personal development helps to enhance creativity and harmony in personal, social and professional life by encouraging the individual to overcome their difficulties (managing their stress, time, improving communication, relationships with others, achieving their goals). The benefits of personal development are manifold. At work is considered an indispensable tool for competition, in everyday life it is a tool to cope with life's challenges (you can learn how to combat fears and escape from comfort zone). Therefore, it is essential to progress to develop various skills, to create a positive, optimistic, learning-oriented attitude, so people are capable of much more when they are perfected.” (Vasciuc, C.G. 2020, p. 141).*

The employees' personal development becomes essential in the current management as the companies are getting a real competitive advantage through careful personal development strategy. This also helps employees to establish a better relationship with themselves and others. The personal development ensures the employees' well-being, so that they increase their productivity. Thus, personal development becomes indispensable to the nowadays' management, being advantageous for the company, because not only does it improve communication within the company, but it also has an impact on its performance and productivity Vasciuc, C.G. (2020). Therefore, Personal development is a key factor of performance which play a crucial role towards the capability of individuals and their performance.

### C) Career Development

Wardhani, N. K., W., & H. (2018) defines career development as a sequence of promotion to positions that are more demanding responsibility in or cross the hierarchy of employment relations during one's working life. Career development has linkage with performance as employees who have job performance tend to improve in their career and known by people who decide on promotions, transfers and other career opportunities. According to them, those who succeed in careers are employees who continue to perform well. Hidayat, Muhammad, (2020), also stated Career development as a formal approach undertaken by organization to ensure its employees suitable qualifications and abilities as well as experience are properly utilized. This means,

companies need to manage career development of their employees to make sure their productivity is maintained and able to encourage them to better performance. He further mentioned that career development will increase effectiveness and creativity of human resources in the effort to support corporate to achieve its goals. Thus, a career development shows development of individual employees in level or rank of position that can be achieved during work period in an organization which is very important for someone as it affect performance and job satisfaction.

As a key factor of performance, career development has significant effect on performance and the achievement of organizational goal. It also helps the organization to maintain qualified employees and sustain its productivity. Farooqui, M.S.; Nagendra, A. (2014), also stated that, A clear career development management process for the employee will reduce turn over, as career development have a great impact on whether organizations can meet corporate goals and individuals meet personal goals. Hence, only those organizations that negotiate careers will survive into the next century. The implication is that, paying attention to career development helps an organization to attract top staff and retain valued employees. This means, supporting career development and growth of employees is mandated by the Philosophy of Human Resources Management. In turn, as part of HRM AA action expected to play intensive role in enhancing the career development of women so that they able to perform better and sustain in the global market. This means, enhancing their performance capacity is the crucial means to abandon discrimination and assure gender equality.

### 1.11 Conceptual Framework

The application of gender based affirmative action (Perceived Fairness) supposed they are likely having an important and positive influence on performance of women employees' and paving ways for better participation of women and achieving gender equality.

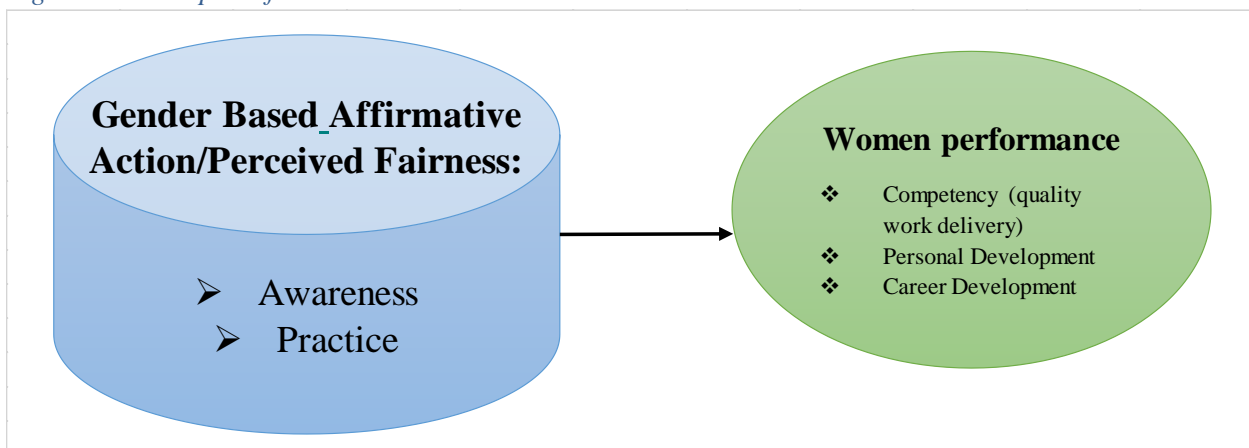
The dependent variable of women employees' performance is influenced by the practice of gender based affirmative action (as it will be discussed in literature). Hence, the researcher has chosen four independent variables which are practice of gender based affirmative Action: Team Building and Leadership, Conflict Resolution (Solving Conflicts), Career Management/Professionalism, Communication Skill, Time Management and Effectiveness and efficiency and as contributor for

**competence (quality work Delivery).** The second independent variables which are considered as practice of gender based affirmative action are: Setting personal goal and Commitment to deliver personal plans, Facing and overcoming challenges, progressively improving my income, managing work life balance and improving one’s education status, and improving one’s self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and assertiveness as a contributor for **personal development**. The third independent variables of affirmative action are Career Growth, position improvement, Competence, getting recognition, award of good performance and promotion Attaining leadership/managerial positions, Attaining Better salary, as a factors for **career development** women employees.

In addition to these practice, awareness of employees about the very concept and level of practice of Affirmative Action in their organization also considered as independent variable which affect the three dependent variable of performance. This is mainly because of the fact that, if the employees are well aware of their entitlements of AA in the organization, they can claim for their rights and if this can influence the implementation, their performance can be enhanced.

Based on the theories and related literature reviewed, the following diagram is developed to show the linkage between the awareness and practices of perceived fairness in terms of improving competence, personal development and career development independent variables and Women employees’ performance – dependent variable.

*Figure 1: Conceptual framework*



Source: own work based previous similar research

# **CHAPTER THREE**

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### Introduction

This study is aimed at examining the effect of perceived fairness on performance of women in three International non-governmental Organizations (International Rescue Committee (IRC), Dan Church Aid (DCA) and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA). This chapter covers and discusses about the research design, target population, sample, sampling techniques sources of data, and data collection procedures used in obtaining the required data.

#### 3.1. Research Design

Research design is a key characteristic of research which shows the How aspects of a research work. According to the definition Burns & Grove (2003) research design considered as a blueprint for conducting a study with maximum control over factors that may interfere with the validity of the findings. Other scholar, Kothari (2004) also defines research design as the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy in procedure. According to him, research design is the conceptual structure of a given research which constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data. Thus, the research design employed for this study is descriptive.

In this research, the researcher uses mixed approach of qualitative and quantitative research methodology. To undertake the qualitative and quantitative study research approach, survey, interview and observations were designed and employed as a suitable method. Quantitative approach is used to ask targets for their awareness of the practice of the issue in a structured way so that research can produce hard facts and statistics that guide the researcher. Qualitative approach is used to study the policy documents and know the KAP (knowledge, Attitude and Practice) of the human resource department actors in terms of the policy design and implementation through interview using open ended questions. This was mainly employed to triangulate the response of survey targets with the policy document as well as the response of KII. This study utilized a

relational research design in an effort to examine the provision of fairness (affirmative action) and its effect on performance of women.

### 3.2. Sources of Data

The data for this study was drawn from primary and secondary data sources. The primary sources were those original data collected by the researcher from the respondents and then analysed and interpreted. These were mainly obtained from the responses of respondents' self-completion questionnaires, open ended interview questions and researcher's observation and review of secondary data. The secondary sources of data refer to data collected by researcher which includes handbooks, gender policies, declarations, annual reports, employment policies, relevant information from the organization's human resource polies, and other documented materials. Data were gathered from primary and secondary sources in order to triangulate the theoretical and practical aspects of the concept under study.

### 3.3. Target Population

The target population of this research were selected women employees at the Country Office (Addis Ababa) of three International non-governmental Organization (International Rescue Committee (IRC), Dan Church Aid (DCA) and Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) and whereas the total women population (staff) of the three organizations for (Country office) Addis Ababa is 63 by the time this research had been planned (information provided orally by HR personnel of the three organization). The study tightly focuses only on women employees as it aspires to find the effects of gender based affirmative action and as such women are the direct targets of this program. The target women populations for this study are 54 women employees from lower to higher level but their academic rank (preparation) is higher than diploma. The academic status is intentionally (purposefully) considered as it influences to show as to whether they have been benefiting from the subject under study or not. Similarly, the study selected 6 employees as targets of Key Information Interview (2 for each organization).

### 3.4. Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

A sample is a selection of a group of people or events from a population to be able to find out true facts about the sample that will be true of the population. This becomes necessary as the entire population cannot be studied due to the size, inaccessibility, time and financial constraints.

Since obtaining a representative sample was critical to demonstrate a valid conclusion pertaining to the issue of this study, random sampling techniques was used to select a sample size and to analyze the relationship among the variables. Hence, to get relevant data the study considered the larger the sample size among the existing target because the more the sample size the more precise the estimation would be the difference in the characteristics of the population. From different methods of calculating sample size, the study used simplified international research sample size determination formula that is developed by Yamane (1967) (*adopted from other Thesis*), with the desired confidence level is 95% Ajay and Micah (2014).

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

where:

n - Designates the sample size the research uses.

N -Denotes the total number of women employees who represents the women in the organization

e – Stands for maximum variability or margin of error 5% (0.05).

1 – Designates the probability of the event occurring.

$$\begin{aligned}n &= 63 / (1+63(0.05)^2) \\ &= 63/1.1575 \\ &= 54.42765\end{aligned}$$

As per the calculated sample size result, which is 54.4, questionnaires were distributed to 54 women employees in the organization whose academic status is higher than Diploma. Though it was possible to consider all the 63 employees, 54 was also selected as the issue requires better awareness and level of education to clearly understand the questions and respond accordingly, the target sizes remain 54 since all the remain 9 women's level of education is less than diploma.

Accordingly, 13 women from DCA, 16 women from NCA and 21 women from IRC have participated in the survey

### 3.5 Data Collection Instrument

To address the objective of the study primary data were gathered from a self-administered questionnaire that was filled by the women employees of the three organizations. Questionnaires were distributed in person and also through email to reach respondents as per their convenience. The researcher developed data collection tools that contain structured questionnaires consisting of close-ended questions and organized into three sections including demographic questions that inquire about the respondents: their gender, age, education level, work experience in the organization and marital status. The second section of the questionnaires requires the awareness of the respondent about gender based affirmative action and the level that their organization is applying them. The 3<sup>rd</sup> section of the questionnaires tries to measure the effect of Affirmative Action on Women Employee's Capability and Competence (quality work delivery), Personal Development, and Career Development and furthermore if it is rather negatively contributing to the challenges that is hindering the performance of women. The three basic independent variables, Capability of Competence, Personal Development, and Career Development are intended to represent as components of performance. Hence, the researcher tried to come up with better components of questions that feed these three major areas. All the responses except for the first section were rated on 3-points nominal scale: "Yes" = 3, "Not Sure" = 2 and "No" = 1. As the issue of the research is somehow somehow to measure the awareness of the respondent as well as the practice of Affirmative action and its contribution to their performance, it is quite evident that gathering qualitative data that will help to triangulate the two responses is important. This is mainly because of the fact that, there is high potential of vague responses which seems lack of awareness of the issue or absence of practice. Hence, it is only through triangulation that we can arrive to the exact output of the assessment. Then the researcher developed open ended question which will go to key informants from the three organizations.

## 3.6. Data Collection Procedures

### 3.6.1. Pilot Testing of Questionnaire

The questionnaire designed was pre-tested to make sure the clarity of each question before its actual administration. This was done by distributing 10 questionnaires. After collecting them it was noted that some questions are either confusing or not clearly understood immediately. Hence, the researcher revisited them and simplified it for more clarity.

### 3.6.2. Distribution and Administration of Questionnaires

After getting approval from the management of the three organizations, the questionnaires were distributed to respondents in person and through email with the help of the human resource heads of the organizations. Continuous follow up calls and email reminders were made to encourage timely feedback. Moreover, a period of three to seven days had been given for respondents to attend the questionnaires and collection was done based on their interest and commitment to finalize their responses. Interview with Key informant was conducted after the collection and analysis of survey question was made. The aim of this method was to skim through the overall response of the survey and come up with better interview questions that can enable to gather better information that will help to triangulate with the response of the survey. This was mainly helpful to clarify any vague result of the survey question as well as able to determine the overall results of the inquiries with concert evidence.

### 3.6.3. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis technique was applied using descriptive statistics. Descriptive statistics was found to be helpful to describe how employees perceive the way the things are. To analyze data, both qualitative and quantitative techniques employed. The data gathered though closed ended questionnaire analyzed through quantities techniques. Accordingly, frequency counts, and percentage, employed to analyze the data obtained. The raw data obtained from respondents through questionnaires' paper organized and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 25 for analysis and interpretation. The qualitative data gathered by using interview and document analysis analyzed, table used to display the profile of respondents. Finally,

the major finding of the study clearly reported, conclusion reached, and workable recommendation is given.

### 3.6.4. Reliability Test

A Cronbach's alpha test was done to establish how closely related the variables are in the study. As known Cronbach's values range from 0 to 1. However, values at or above 0.7 are desirable. Based on this assertion the data was considered acceptable with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.9134. The findings are presented in the table below.

**Table 3.1: Reliability Test**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>
Awareness of AA	0.813	10
Effect of AA on competence (quality work delivery)	0.907	5
Effect of AA on personal development	0.957	5
Effect of AA on career development	0.933	4
Negative effect of AA on women employees	0.957	7
<b>Overall</b>	<b>0.9134</b>	<b>31</b>

*Data Source: Own survey data, 2022*

### 3.7. Ethical Consideration

The ethical issues were considered during the questionnaire's distribution and KII. Hence, that whatever they respond to the questions raised by researchers would be kept anonymous. The researcher assured them that the data would be used only for academic purpose, and that the information they give would be kept confidential.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## 4. Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

### Introduction

This chapter takes us to the detailed data presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the findings. The analysis starts with a description of the respondents' demographic profiles and followed by responses on specific questions raised to address the awareness of the staff about the gender based affirmative action as well as the policy implementation in their organization. The next analysis will go to the third part which will discuss the effect of affirmative action on the competence (quality work delivery), personal development, and career development and lastly see if there are negative effects of gender based Affirmative action provision. The total sample of the study was 54.51 (95%) of questionnaires distributed were returned which is considered as an excellent return rate. Finally, the analysis will consider the secondary document review and response of KII and triangulate with the survey responses.

### 4.1. Descriptive Statistics

Having entered the responses from the questionnaires into the IBM SPSS Version 25, the researcher generated various reports for presentations and interpretations. Descriptive statistics was used to generate the required outputs such as frequency, and percentage as well as qualitative responses. The following sections are descriptive statistics generated from the SPSS and presented the findings for discussions and interpretations. Similarly, data gathered through qualitative methodology also discussed under this section.

In order to analyze the responses in the survey questionnaires, a scale with a range of 1 to 3 was used. Accordingly, the rates that are closer to 1 and 2 (which represents "No" and "not sure") shows magnitude of the negative and the rates which represented by 3 was with higher level of agreement or yes to questions raised. On the other hand, data gathered through observation and KII also analyzed and triangulated with survey outcomes.

#### 4.1.1. Respondents personal' Profile

The researcher included a section in the questionnaire to gather information on respondents' profile, such as age, gender, marital status, education level, and years of service in the organizations. Accordingly, data on respondents' profile are presented to give a clear background which are very helpful in the responses that follow.

Table 4.1.1: Survey Respondents' personal Profile

Items	Category	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
Age	18 – 28	16	31.4	31.4	31.4
	29 – 39	30	58.8	58.8	58.8
	40-50	5	9.8	9.8	9.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Gender	Female	51	100	100	100
	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Educational Level	BA/BSc Degree	21	41.2	41.2	41.2
	MA/MSc Degree	30	58.8	58.8	58.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	
Marital Status	Single	19	37.3	68.3	68.3
	Married	29	56.9	31.7	
	Divorced	3	5.9		
	<b>Total</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	
Service Years	< 1 year	12	23.5	23.5	23.5
	1 to 5 years	26	51.0	51.0	51.0
	6 to 10 years	7	13.7	13.7	13.7
	≥11 Years	6	11.8	11.8	11.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	

Data Source: Own survey data, 2022

The first category in this table shows age of the respondents. Accordingly, 16 (31.4%) of the respondent are in the age margin of 18-28. The age of most respondent 30 (58.8%) were between 29 and 38 while 5 (9.8%) respondents were between the age of 40 to 50. In general, most respondents were in the range of age between 29 and 39.

The second category in this table represents data on gender of the sample respondents. As it has been stated under chapter three, the researcher targeted only female employees as the issue of the study mainly gender-based affirmative Action. Hence, all the 51 respondents are female

employees. The third category in this table demonstrates the education level of the target respondents. The summary of the data indicates that 21 (41.2%) respondents hold BA/BSc Degree while 30 (58.8%) were MA/MSc Degree holder. None of the respondents are diploma holder or are in other education level. In general, the education statuses of the respondent shows that all the respondents were over the educational level of bachelor’s degree while most of them are MA/MSc Degree holders. This result is helpful to assume that these respondents are academically in a good status to understand and rationally respond to the surveys.

The fourth category in the table is marital status of the respondents. 19 (37.3%) of the respondents were single while majority, 29 (56.9%) were married. Among the respondent, 3 (5.9%) are also married but in the status of divorce. This shows that more than half of the respondent targets were married staff as compared to single and divorced staff. The fifth and final category in the table shows the respondents’ years of service in the given organization. Accordingly, the service time of 12 (23.5%) is less than one year while majority of the respondents 26 (51%) served between 1 to 5 years. Similarly, 7 (13.7%) served between 6 to 10 years whereas 6 (11.8%) served in the organization for more than 11 years. In general, 39 (76.5%) of the respondents had a service year of 1 and above and it is expected that they have somehow adequate exposure and experience in the organization to provide valuable response concerning to the level of implementation and effects of perceived fairness in the organization

#### 4.1.2. Respondents’ awareness of Affirmative Action policy and its level of Implementation in their organization

Before discussing about the effect of perceived fairness on the performance of women, it is important to see, to what extent do the target respondents know what affirmative action itself, and how their organization is implementing the police. Hence, the component inquiries about the awareness of the target are summarized under Table 4.1.2

Table 4.1.2: Women Employees Awareness of Affirmative Action

Items	Rating Scale/Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Do you know what affirmative action is	Yes	42	82.4
	Not Sure	8	15.7
	No	1	2
Does your organization have affirmative action policy (Yes or No)	Yes	44	86.3
	Not Sure		

	No	7	13.8
Has HR department formally communicated you about affirmative action policy of the organization	Yes	29	56.9
	Not Sure	10	19.6
	No	12	23.5
Do you know that the organization is applying affirmative action to give priority for women employees in employment opportunity?	Yes	32	62.7
	Not Sure	13	25.5
	No	6	11.8
Do you know if your organization is applying affirmative action to improve women employees' competence (quality work delivery)?	Yes	4	7.8
	Not Sure	8	15.7
	No	39	76.5
Do you know if your organization is applying affirmative action to improve personal development of women employees: through, education, training, and other capacity building package opportunities	Yes	5	9.8
	Not Sure	20	39.2
	No	26	51.0
Do you know if your organization is applying affirmative action which highly considerate of women in work-life balance of women employees	Yes	1	2.0
	Not Sure	25	49.0
	No	25	49.0
Do you know if your organization is applying affirmative action to improve career development of women employees in terms of promotion, appraisal	Yes	6	11.8
	Not Sure	23	45.1
	No	22	43.1
Do you know if your organization is applying affirmative action to increase number of Women employees in higher/manager position	Yes	2	3.9
	Not Sure	29	56.9
	No	20	39.2
Is Number of women in leadership position is as equal as men	Yes	2	3.9
	Not Sure	21	41.2
	No	28	54.9

*Data Source: Own survey data, 2022*

About 10 (ten) questions presented to assess the awareness of respondents about affirmative action, as well as how far does it implemented in their organization. The first question was straight forward whether they know what affirmative action is or not. 42 (82.4%) respondents confirmed as they know what it is while 1(2%) stated as she does not know what it is. 8 (15.7%) of the respondent also are not sure what AA means. The result shows that though majority of the respondent are aware of AA, there are staff members who are not sure what the program mean itself, not only its benefit. Similarly, 44 (86.3%) witnessed that their organization has affirmative Action policy while 7 of them doubt the existence of policy in their organization. In terms of communicating the AA policy to the staff members, 29 (56.9%) said the HR have communicated about AA. But 22 (43%) responded as they are not communicated about the AA policy of the organization. The response of the second and third question indicated that, the existence and the functionality level of affirmative

action policy of the organization is not fully communicated to the staff. This shows that communicating the AA policy is not strictly taken to be part of the induction or there is no commitment to let the staff know about the policy and what it has.

For the question raised to assess whether they know if their organization is applying affirmative action to give priority for women employees in employment opportunity. 32 (62. %) provide positive response. However, 19 (37.3%) are not sure about it. Similarly, they are asked if their organization is applying affirmative action to improve women employees' competence (quality work delivery). Only 4 (7.8%) agreed with this point while majority of them 47 (92.2%) revealed as there is no such effort in their organization. The result of the two questions implies that, though they know as their organization provide priority for female employees, they do not know, or have not seen their organization's commitment to apply affirmative action as an effort to improve female employee's competence.

The next question raised to the respondents was whether their organization is applying affirmative action to improve personal development of women employees including educational opportunities, training, and other capacity building package. 46 (90.2%) of them confirmed that they have not seen such effort and only 5 (9.8%) of them said yes. However, the result of this question indicates that, the organizations are not providing educational opportunities, training, and other capacity building packages as part of AA. The next question raised to learn more the awareness of the target was about the trend of their organization in applying affirmative action to consider women employees work-life balance. Only 1 respondent said yes whereas 50 (98%) disagreed. This means, AA is not applied in these organization to consider work-life balance of women employees as part of their personal development.

Regarding the question raised if the application of AA in their organization is helping to improve career development of women employees in terms of promotion, appraisal, 6 (11.8%) said yes while majority, 46 (88.2%) doubt as this is true. According to this response, the organizations are not applying AA to promote female employees as part of affirmative action commitment. In connection with this point, question was also raised if their organization is applying affirmative action to increase number of Women employees in higher/manager position. 49 (96.1%) of the respondent, disagreed and only 2 (3.9%) of them believes that is true. However, the overall response to this question indicated that, their organization is not applying AA to improve number

of women employees in leadership position. The response to the next question, about equivalence of number of women in leadership position with men, only 2(3.9%) of the respondent said yes while 49(96.1%) disagree. This mean, number of women in the leadership position is not equals to men. In general, though the respondents are aware of AA and exitance of its policy in their organization, they are not quite sure how far the policy is put in practice and effecting the participation and performance of women employees.

#### 4.1.3. Contribution of Affirmative Action on Women Employee’s Performance in terms of competence (quality work delivery),

Capability of facilitating activities with quality and maintaining that path is one of the key factors of better performance. Hence, if gender based affirmative action is committed to abandon discrimination, it is imperative to turn its eyes towards enabling the target to become capable of delivering the given role with quality. Otherwise, supporting women only at the entry point perhaps not enable them to perform better and sustain in the competition or it does not let them to be free from discrimination. Thus, as one of the essential elements of performance, the competence related questions were raised to the respondents and results are summarized in the following table.

Table 4.1.3: Role of Affirmative Action on Women Employee’s performance in terms of competence (quality work delivery),

Items	Rating Scale/Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think the provision of Affirmative Action has helped you in improving your capability of competence (quality work delivery) in terms of:			
Team building and leadership	Yes		
	Not Sure		
	No	51	100
Conflict Resolution (Solving Conflicts)	Yes	7	13.7
	Not Sure	24	47.1
	No	20	39.2
Career Management/Professionalism, communication skill	Yes	4	7.8
	Not Sure	26	51.0
	No	21	41.2
Time Management	Yes	3	5.9
	Not Sure	28	54.9
	No	20	39.2
Effectiveness and efficiency	Yes	3	5.9
	Not Sure	26	51.0
	No	22	43.1

*Data Source: Own survey data, 2022*

Regarding the competence (quality work delivery), the respondents were asked whether AA is helping them in terms of Team building and leadership so that their performance will be enhanced. All 51(100%) were responded “no” which indicate as AA has no contribution in this point. The next question under this category is whether AA is helping them to improve their capacity in Conflict Resolution. 44(86.3%) of the respondent said “no” and “not sure” while only 7(13.7%) feels that AA has helped them in this role. Hence, the level of AA practiced in the organization has no role in improving the capacity of staff in terms of conflict resolution.

Role of AA in improving female employees’ skills in Career Management/Professionalism and communication was the next question. 4(7.8%) of the respondent said yes while the rest 47 (91.2) feels AA has not role in this case. Similarly, they were asked if AA is helping them in better time management. Only 3(5.9%) positive confirmation while 48 (94.1%) disagree with that. Finally, they were asked is the provision of AA is enhancing their Effectiveness and efficiency. Their response was almost similar to the preceding as only 3(5.9%) give positive confirmation and 48 (94.1%) said “no”. The result under this section shows that, more than 90% respondent confirmed as AA is not paying to improve their performance in terms of Team building and leadership, Conflict Resolution, Career Management/Professionalism, communication, Time Management and improving their Effectiveness and efficiency. This means, AA has no contribution in this aspect of the target respondents and women employees in general.

#### 4.1.4. Contribution of Affirmative Action on Women Employee’s performance in terms of Personal Development

Now a days, actors of development specially those who strive to achieve gender equality underlines the need for working towards personal development which mainly focuses on agency building. Improving the capacity of a particular person considered as a key foundation to unleash the potential of the individual to perform what expected from him/her and sustainably compete in the labor market. Hence, personal development is a crucial factor of better performance in given role as well as all over the life. As defender of Affirmative action mentioned, discrimination of women can potentially affect their opportunity of grabbing better personal development options. This will affect their degree of competition as well as capacity to maintain their position, or to attract better opportunities even if they got an offer through affirmative action. Hence, better

personal development allows one to be proactive and take charge in their actions so that she/he can perform better.

Accordingly, the role of affirmative action in personal development as key element of women performance considered in the assessment. Thus, the effect of affirmative action in personal development then women’s performance has been raised to respondents and the results are analyzed in Table 4.1.4.

Table 4.1.4: Role of AA on Women Employee’s performance in terms of Personal Development,

Items	Rating Scale/Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think the provision of Affirmative Action has helped you in improving your Personal Development in terms of?			
Setting personal goal and Commitment to deliver personal plans	Yes	1	2.0
	Not Sure	26	51.0
	No	24	47.1
Facing and overcoming challenges	Yes	2	3.9
	Not Sure	25	49.0
	No	24	47.1
Progressively improving my income	Yes		
	Not Sure	25	49.1
	No	26	51.0
Managing work life balance and improving my education status	Yes	2	3.9
	Not Sure	23	45.1
	No	26	51.0
Improving my self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and assertiveness	Yes	1	2.0
	Not Sure	26	51.0
	No	24	47.1

*Data Source: Own survey data, 2022*

To know the contribution of affirmative action in their personal development, the respondents were asked whether they have AA based support to help them set personal goal and Commitment to deliver personal plans. Within 50(98.1%) “No/not sure” responses, they shown as they have never received such support while Only 1 person confirmed as she accessed such kind of support. Concerning to personal capacity improvement in overcoming tough situations, 49(96.1%) responded as they did not get any capacity building support through affirmative action in this regard. Only 2 (3.9%) proved as they get such capacity building support through affirmative action. The result of the two question clearly indicates as no efforts was paid to improve the personal capacity in this regard through AA.

Respondents were also asked whether the provision of AA is progressively improving their income. But all of them 51(100%) reacted as this is not true in their case. This means, unless a wone pay effort in her own way, AA was not applied to improve the income of women employees. The next question was about how AA is helping them in managing work life balance. 2 (3.9) confirmed as it helps them while 49(96.1%) replied as it did not help them in this aspect. Genuinely speaking, most women employees share huge obligations or double burden as they have responsibilities at their home well as at workplace. Therefore, creating conducive work environment in which women have work-life balance is a crucial point to enhance women's personal development and hence improve their performance. Unfortunately, the result of assessment display as AA fail to play this role.

Finally, they were asked if AA has helped them in improving their self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and assertiveness. Only 1 (2%) confirmed its help in this aspect while 49(96.1%) replied "No". Though self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and assertiveness has key contribution in performance of women employees, the result clearly show as AA has no plying any role in improving this aspect of the employees. In general, the survey results in personal development of the women employees, the role of AA is very minimal. This shows that there is not a possibility of option for women employees' personal development, and this could have a significant negative impact on their performance.

#### 4.1.5. Contribution of AA on Women Employee's performance in terms of Career Development

Career development is one of the motivating factors of employees to achieve better performance. Therefore, availing and implementing career development package in organization help employees build a sustainable, future-proof and adaptable approach to the management of their careers as it is the link between an individuals' drive and motivation and the organization's talent management strategy. That is why it is considered as one of the most important exercises of performance enhancement. Thus, the application of AA in employees' career development system has been surveyed in this section and the results are presented in Table 4.1.5 below.

Table 4.1.5: Role of AA on Women Employee’s performance in terms of Career Development.

Items	Rating Scale/Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think the provision of Affirmative Action has helped you in improving your Career Development in terms of?			
Career Growth, position improvement	Yes	5	9.8
	Not Sure	26	51.0
	No	20	39.2
Competence, getting recognition, award of good performance and promotion	Yes	6	11.8
	Not Sure	24	47.1
	No	21	41.2
Attaining leadership/managerial positions	Yes	2	3.9
	Not Sure	26	51.0
	No	23	45.1
Attaining Better salary	Yes	9	17.6
	Not Sure	26	51.0
	No	16	31.4

*Data Source: Own survey data, 2022*

The respondents were asked whether AA has contributed to their Career Growth, and position improvement to improve their performance, and their responses revealed that there were inadequate career growth opportunities with the largest result of 46 (90.2%) while only 5(9.8%) feels it has contribution. Moreover, their responses to the question on competence, getting recognition, award of good performance and promotion as the result of AA, indicted that 45 (88.3%) negative and only 6(11.8%) feels positive. The above result of both questions indicated that, AA has nothing to do in terms of supporting female employees to attain career grown, promotion, become competent, get recognition and awards of better performance.

In addition, the response for the role of AA in enabling female employees to attain leadership/managerial positions indicates as only 1 (2%) benefited while 49(96.1%) are not. The final question raised if it enables them to Attain Better salary, 9 (17.6%) said yes but benefited while 44(82.4%) were confirmed that AA has no contribution in improving their salary gain and hence enhance their performance. This scenario shows that AA is not taking role in improving staff performance through paving ways for career development.

Career growth is one of the determinant factors of performance as well as attainment of better position and income. As Dzodzi Tsikata (2009) stated, Affirmative Action supposed to provides more female role models and improves awareness of the issues. It is also expected to guarantee gender balanced policy making at all levels of government and allow considerable skills to be

brought into decision making structures. If not lack of opportunity and existing discrimination women are good managers, experienced at multi-tasking and getting things. Dzodzi Tsikata (2009). Hence, Affirmative action needs to play role of paving ways for women career development. As it has seen from the survey result the reverse is true for the target organization.

#### 4.1.6. Negative contribution (if any) of Affirmative Action on Women Employee’s Performance

Coming across the argument on affirmative action and the position of opponents, it sparks the curiosity to know, in case affirmative action is playing destructive role on performance of women. As it has been tried to see, critics of AA argued that women’s lag is not the consequence of discrimination. It rather happens because of their own choice. But AA tries to bring these women to the hiring or promotion in jobs, and to the admission to universities, while they are still less qualified who perform poorly. This in turn leads the supposed beneficiaries of Affirmative Action to be victim themselves, as they find themselves in positions in which they ultimately fail. AA rather might also help perpetuate negative stigmas regarding the abilities of and in this view, Affirmative Action is grossly unfair...

From this point and other view of AA adversaries, related questions were raised in the survey and the results were summarized in Table 4.1.6 below.

Table 4.1.6: Destructive Effect of AA on Women Employee’s performance

Items	Rating Scale/Alternatives	Frequency	Percentage
Do you think the provision of Affirmative Action has negatively affected performance of women employees in terms of?			
Exposing them to Discrimination	Yes	14	27.5
	Not Sure	22	43.1
	No	17	33.3
Undermining my capacity	Yes	15	29.4
	Not Sure	22	43.1
	No	14	27.5
Stereotyping all women	Yes	15	29.4
	Not Sure	22	43.1
	No	14	27.5
Decreasing my self-confidence as an employee	Yes	9	17.6
	Not Sure	22	43.1
	No	20	39.2
Denying recognition of my achievement	Yes	10	19.6
	Not Sure	22	43.1

	No	19	37.3
Discouraging my efforts and other women employees	Yes	8	15.7
	Not Sure	25	49.0
	No	18	35.3
Associating all my performance as it is because of the especial favor because of Affirmative Action	Yes	4	7.8
	Not Sure	26	51.0
	No	21	41.2

*Data Source: Own survey data, 2022*

The respondents were asked whether the provision of AA is exposing them to discrimination. 14(27.5%) of the respondent believes that AA subjecting them to discrimination whereas 39 (62.5%) do not believe it is. They were also asked if AA is Undermining their capacity and stereotyping all women. 15(29.4%) assumes it is true while 36(70.6%) do not think AA is Undermining capacity of women and stereotyping them all.

Similarly, the survey result shows that 42(82.4%) of the respondent do not agree with the idea that AA Decreasing their self-confidence as an employee while 9(17.6%) accept it. On the other hand, 10(19.6%) has a fear that the existence of AA can lead others to deny to recognition of their achievement. But 41(80.4%) rejected this thought. Another question raised was whether AA discouraging their efforts and other women employees to improve their capacity. 33(84.3%) disagree with this point while 8(15.7%) were believes that it is true.

The final question raised to respondents was whether AA mislead other to associate all women performance as it is because of the especial favor through Affirmative Action. Among the respondent only 4(7.8%) accept this view and 37(92.2%) do not think AA will hinder their independent performance of AA. On average 11(21%) of the respondent believes that the provision of AA has negative effect on the performance of women. However, significant number, 40(79%) of the respondent deny the idea of negative effect of AA on performance of women. This means, though the number of respondents who are curious of negative effect of AA is not insignificant, still majority of them accept the positive role of AA than its destructive side. Hence, it is possible to conclude that majority of the respondent has positive perception if AA is provided as it will be helpful to improve capacity of women so their performance.

#### 4.1.7. Organizational policies of Affirmative Action on Women Employee's performance

As part of quantitative data gathering, the researcher has reviewed the existing affirmative action related policies of the three organization. All the three organizations, International Rescue Committee, Dan Church Aid and Norwegian Church Did do not have separate affirmative action policy but slightly incorporated the affirmative action programs in their Human Recourse manual. Hence, I will try to assess their content of AA one by one.

Chapter two subchapter 2.7 of IRC's National Staff personnel policy and Resource manual states about policy of Gender equality. It says,

*"The IRC recognizes that gender equality is fundamental to the achievement of our organizational mission. As such the IRC is committed to the promotion of Gender equality in all aspect of our operation and Programs. Our organizational policies, procedures and action demonstrates this commitment...full version of Gender Equality is Appendix 6."*  
(IRC NSPP&HRM 2020, p. 9)

In addition to this statement, the Manual also stated under chapter three sub section 4.17 about staff development policy, saying:

*"The IRC globally committed to developing a strong learning culture in which everyone is able achieve their full potential and which will increase job satisfaction and support career development as well as to achieve IRC vision, Mission and strategic priorities. As the result, IRC Ethiopia Believes that it is important to have clear staff development policy and procedures to realize its goal. Full version on policy for staff development is Appendix 15."* (IRC NSPP&HRM 2020, p. 28)

As it can be seen for these two statements, IRC has committed to make sure the staff development as well as gender equality. Officially, IRC practice affirmative action in terms of making sure that at least 30% of applicants for new vacancy potion are women, if not, the vacancy will be re-advertised. It also provides 10 points for female competent in the short list and pass the written exam and ready for interview. This is one of its commitments to realize gender equality through AA. Unfortunately, even if, IRC provides HR manual to all new employee as part of induction and

communication of organizational policies and procedure, it does not show commitment to provide the appendixes which have the detailed contents of the issue for which it has committed.

Hence, expect the unconfirmed rumours that the organization has a pledge of various affirmative package in the appendix of gender equality and staff development program, it was difficult to confirm what they are. As the result, there is no way to evaluate how far the affirmative action packages of IRC is affecting the performance of women employees as the provision of additional 10 points of iterance cannot guarantee the competence of the employee during her stays in the organization. On the other hand, the denial of the HR department to share the detailed policy of the organization, perhaps can led to suspect that, if the organization is not committed to put in practice what it has promised in the policy. However, this can only be realized through further study or justification of the organizational management.

Coming back to the DCA Policy, the organization has put some statements about the provision of affirmative action under section 5.3 for Female National Internship Program and 13.4.3. Hardship allowances. The first section states that, DCA has an aim of empowering young female graduates to increase their ability and probability of employment in humanitarian and development work, and hence, DCA Ethiopia has initiated a Female National Internship Programme which is applicable only for female. Similarly, DCA Ethiopia will pay hardship allowance for male employees 40 % while it is 35% for male employees. These can be considered as a commitment to improve performance of women by availing accessibility for work/employment and providing an opportunity for fresh graduates so that they can enhance their experiences and competence. Similarly, the provision of better hardship allowance encourages women to pay more efforts to join the organization which can be considered as adding value to performance. Apart from these, the organization states under section 8. about staff competence development (training) as a package to encourages in-service staff training and development. This is mainly to give the staff an opportunity to develop their professional competence and acquire new skills to enhance performance and improve their contribution to the achievement of the aims and objectives of DCA. (Dan Church Aid Ethiopia staff manual, 2021). However, there is no clear statement that shows, if any priority has been given to female staff as a package of affirmative action.

In addition, DCA global has a policy document named “Action Guide Gender Equality”. This document is expected to be used by all DCA offices in all country. One paragraph of the policy states that:

“Gender Equality is a cross-cutting commitment in DCA and is integral to DCA's rights-based commitment and value base. Therefore, it is an important aspect of the rights-based approach considering the all-pervasive systemic gender discrimination and gender inequality. Gender equality is essential to achieve sustainable development. Although there is not one common definition of Gender Equality, DCA understands and defines gender equality as: The equal enjoyment of human rights by all regardless of their sex. Gender equality is about considering the needs and rights of women, men, boys and girls and other gender identities to equally enjoy all human rights. This can sometimes lead to applying special affirmative actions.” (Action Guide Gender Equality, DCA , 2021, p. 1)

From this statement, it is possible to infer that the organization at global level is committed to gender equality through Applying affirmative action. This means, the organization is aware of the existing inequality and advocate AA as a means to attain equality. However, no detailed explanation was provided concerning to what kind of AA is implemented, how and until when. In general, though the two points on internship and hardship allowance, that mentioned DCA Ethiopia’s HR manual no further statement about procedure of affirmative action program that dedicated to enhancing the performance of female employees.

The last document I have gone through is the “Norwegian Church Aid's National Staff Handbook” Section 3 of staff handbook states about recruitment. According to sub section 3.1, “Recruitment Policy of NCA aims for diversity and is committed to being an equal opportunity employer. This means in all recruitment processes there must not be any discrimination against religion, ethnicity, culture, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation, and political views. Discriminatory practices in the workplace will not be tolerated. NCA also strives for a gender balance across all levels of the organization and women and men should both be given the same opportunities for career development and equity in remuneration.”

This statement clearly indicates that, the organization does not tolerate discrimination, and also strive to create gender balance, by giving the same opportunities for women’s and men’s career

development and equity in remuneration. This means the equity (affirmative action) is both for women and men, but no further explanation in what condition this will be put in practice. This shows, though the organization somehow, strive for gender equality in workplace, no mechanism is mentioned how to bring gender balance from the market where the competent are assumed not in the same status of competition, and hence affirmative approach can help to minimize the imbalance.

Similarly, under section 12. of the manual, the commitment of the organization is mentioned in terms of assuring training and development of employee for their ongoing development at work. The manual states that, training, and development at NCA can take place through: On the job training; Short courses / seminars / events offered by external institutions / organizations or initiated by NCA staff; and Studies / Formal education. Though all these statements show the commitment of the organization for staff capacity development and hence improve the performance, no priority or affirmative action points are mentioned.

This means, the organizational statement in striving to bring gender balance, seems that, it will give equal opportunity for both with the assumption that the competent will come in equal position to contend for the given position. In fact, I am not sure how the organization will address the fact that, from the beginning, the applicant of the vacancy position can potentially be less women from the reality in the market. Hence, unless priority will be given or strategy are in place to encourage female applicants and employees, how gender balance will be maintained in the absence of gender balance even during the entry? In relation to gender-based AA to improve the performance of female employees, there is not any statement in the manual.

#### 4.1.8. Organizational HR personnel's view of Affirmative Action on Women Employee's performance

Having seen the policy documents of the three organizations, let us now see the summary of key informant interview from these organizations. The researcher has conducted interview with six (two from each organization). The key informants are selected based on their position in the HR department and role in facilitating the HR development package of the organization including gender based affirmative action. Accordingly, the profile of KII from the three organization is summarized in the table below.

Table 4.1.7: KII Respondents' personal Profile

	Total Participants	Sex		Education Level		Position title				Years of service	
	HR personnel	Female	Male	BA	MA/MBA	HR and ADMIN Head	HR and Admin manager	HR manager	HR officer	1-2 years	3 & above
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>

*Data Source: Own survey data, 2022*

The KII respondents were asked what HR policies their organization has, to improve the best of employee's capacity in general and women employees in particular. All of them replied that, their organization has only HR policy in which some components of staff capacity building mentioned and no other separate policy documents. One of the NCA respondent mentioned that "The NCA has general HR policy which will be used by members of Act Alliance. The HR policy has the general content of staff management and no specific package for women. It incorporates all the components of countries HR policies." (anonyms)

Regarding to how their organization communicate staff about organizational HR policies in general and women related policies. All the respondents of the three-organizations mentioned that there is an organizational induction program for new staff which will take one to two weeks. During this period, HR and other department of the organization will assign a person who will provide all the important information about the organization, HR policies, role, and responsibility. In this session the employee will learn all polices of the organization including gender related provisions. This means, there is a platform in all the three organization to communicate about the polies including gender related provisions, of the organization. The KII respondent also asked to list the packages of affirmative action policy in their organization. All the three responded that there is a priority for female employees in every vacancy post. The respondents confirmed that, all the three organizations, are implementing the national law which dictates to give priority for female in case both female and male candidate get similar score during competition. DCA respondent, said that there is a slight room for female employees to be give priority with undefined additional points. This means, if the examiners found the women candidates to be relatively competent but men candidate excelled with few marks, there is a room for the examiner to give 1 to 1.5 marks to female candidate, so that she can succeed.

For both DCA and NCA, if female and male candidate score the same mark, female candidate will be given priority for the given position. There are also other training packages that aim to

enhance the overall capacity and awareness of the staff in the two organizations. These includes, on job training, self-training (online packages), annual code of conduct refresher training, etc. These training addresses both male and female to enable male employees understand the situation of women and become supportive. But there are no other specific benefit packages or affirmative action for female employees that deal with capacity development or performance enhancing packages. The other NCA respondent said, “No affirmative action for women everybody is treated equally”. However, the HR representative of DCA fail to mention at least about provision of Female National Internship Program which was guaranteed in the HR manual. This puts their awareness level about the issue in question.

In the case of IRC, the respondent revealed that, there are affirmative action packages for female employees. For instance, the re-advertising of vacancy (in case there are less 30% of female applicants), aims to attract more female applicants and is an opportunity for females to compete for the positions. In addition to the, the official 10 marks for female candidates, there is a platform for female employees to discuss on gender issues. Similarly, there are also a woman group at work in the organization which create safe space for female employees to exchange experience. There is a separate one classroom in IRC that dedicated only for female employees where they can take rest when they are in menstrual or pregnant.

The answers of the respondent indicated that, though all the three have some practice of AA, IRC, has relatively some policy-based package and practice of gender based affirmative action. The KII also asked their opinion, on how does the affirmative action policy support women employees to improve their Quality of work delivery, Personal development, and Career development. One of the respondents from IRC, said, as the policy-based AA in the organization, at least, inspire women employees to achieve more by helping them in identifying a career move and to look for new things career wise. This means, even if there are no clearly indicated packages that provided to enhance the performance of women, the minimum effort starting from the entry has some contribution in terms of encouraging female employees and initiating them to improve the career path.

This respondent was asked to mention what other packages of AA are there in the Annexed tools (*Appendix 6 & 15*) that enhance the performance of female employees in terms of the above components and also if the staff are provided with these documents. The respondent replied as she is not sure whether staff has seen that document and but as there are no other practice in the organization expect the one mentioned above. The respondents from NCA and DCA, replied that, they doubt if AA improves the performance of women. They mentioned that the provision of affirmative has no clear specification and target. It focusses on all female who deserve support or not. This has two negative effects according to them. The first effect is the AA reaches those women who are already capable of performing but need only little support. But the AA package is incapable of reaching the most marginalized women who really need that support. As the result, the program fails to reach the mass and its effect is doesn't count or is minimal compared to the need. The second problem is, despite its failure to reach the neediest women, the program targets are all women, and this put them to be discriminated as non-competent or inferior to men. This affects the moral of many capable women who do not need AA, especially in academics and work environment. They strictly argued that the method of AA provision has problem and incapable of solving women's challenge, rather exposing them to further discrimination. Hence, they do not believe that, in its current, nature, AA is capable of enhancing performance of women. This shows that the function off AA is not in the same level in the organization while the perception of the HR personnel also somehow negative about the program.

The respondent also asked how they look at the reflection of women employees about the affirmative action policy. All the respondent, reflected that, since there is no adequate and clear information about the detailed provision of AA and its goal, most women employees are not happy about it. Because they feel that, though they are not beneficiary of AA, they are vulnerable of discrimination which resulted from the perception that AA is provided for women for they are weak, or incompetent compared to men. This is mainly because of the fact that, the program lacks clarity and specification on who to support, how, with what goal and until when.

Regarding to the challenge they encounter in implementing the affirmative action policy, the respondent said that, though the organization said in policy that it committed to gender equality, there is no clear direction guideline on how to realize gender equality in practice. For instance, one

of the IRC respondents sad, though the female employee joins the organization being supported with the additional mark, there is no other ongoing capacity building packages that target women to enhance their capacity. Since most women are still sharing huge role at household and in family issue, they are somehow, under pressure to continue education or look for other ongoing capacity building programs. Hence, unless the AA policy contribute towards solving such challenges, it is difficult to think of gender equality in work environment specially in leadership position. On the other hand, both NCA and DCA respondent said, no challenge is encountered as there is no extended affirmative action package in the organization. From the response of the KII it is possible to note that, the program is not up to solve the capacity challenges of women and hence the attitude of the employees is not positive.

Regarding to the question raised to know overall impression of the KII about the implementation of affirmative action policy, one of the respondents said the program needs, conducting survey is very crucial to evaluate the program and manage it properly. The other said, "It is not good to implement affirmative action if there should be gender equality." The response of 5 KII indicates that they are not happy with the current methods of AA. This indicates that, the practice of AA in general and particularly in the give organization is not have same perception. In terms of attitude even the HR practitioners are somehow against the program rather that utilizing the policy to enhance the capacity of women and then their performance.

### 4.3. Discussion

As the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the 1993 of UN Declaration, discriminations are rooted in structural relationships of inequality between women and men, and hence, affirmative action has enabled women to overcome such deep-rooted discrimination. J.W.F. van Rooyen (2000) also argued that employers need to embark on purposeful program of affirmative action to achieve set goals for balanced staffing over a realistic period. In addition, special training and other accommodating measures must be specifically targeted at disadvantaged or formerly disadvantaged groups so that equality is achieved. Inferring these and other points raised by the supporters of affirmative action, it is intended to play the role of creating welcoming working environment in which women can access fair treatment, including given priorities, capacity building programs, trainings, promotions and the like so that they can become competent in the given situation.

As scholars like, J.W.F. van Rooyen (2000) stated, despite the moral considerations, affirmative action, makes excellent business sense on a purely pragmatic level, through its methodical investment in under-utilized human resource potential. Because it helps to unlock the latent capacity of enterprises which have heretofore been restricted through prejudicial policies and practices,

As Janelle Garcelon (2015) also stated, Affirmative action is expected to play the role of enabling Better Service of Communities, creating diversity at workplace, putting in place the attempts of and practice of compensating for past discrimination and injustice and finally assuring Equality of Opportunities for all. While referring affirmative action as remedy of discrimination, it implies that it will bring equality. But how? If discrimination isolate women form equal role and benefit, and if AA is remedy to open the door through enabling entrance and paving ways for sustainable competition, but fail to do so, how can discrimination be abounded? In other words, even if the marginalized women got an entry point, let us say, as an employee of the organization, if there is no any other packages that reduce the previous and ongoing factors that affect the competence of the women which prohibited them from equal competition, how is it possible to attain equality? What if the discrimination factors continue to persist because of the inability of the women to meet some requirements in the organization, simply because she is unable to attain some skills? If AA fail to provide ongoing service like, ongoing skill development packages, personal and career development trainings, how come the women still considered as equal as men who used to be free of discrimination, had opportunity to attain capacity development programs and improve his competence?

Moreover, the final survey question finding indicated that even if, on average, 40.5(79.5%) of respondents, believe that the provision of AA cannot be the cause of further discrimination, significant number of respondents 10.7(21%) thinks that AA is facilitating further discrimination against women. In addition, though the HR policy of the organization somehow indicates the commitment of the organization, most of the HR actors, who were responding to KII question, believes that the policy of affirmative action itself has problem and is not capable realizing gender equality. According to them, AA is not needed in their organization since the women employees who apply for their organization are as competent as men. And hence the existence of AA policy

has no role in attaining gender equality rather than being a cause of further discrimination on women employees.

The question is without any effort, how gender equality is achieved? Perhaps we could think of that this respondent believes that way as the number of male and female employees are equal in their organization. But the reality is the reverse. For instance, number of Female employees in IRC, Addis Ababa office shows there are only 38(26%) women out of 142 total employees. Similarly, from the total employees of DCA, women are 18(27%) out of 65 staff. So, where is the gender equality that the KII respondent said, at least in terms of equal number of male and female employees, even despite considering number of women in leadership position? And also, if these organizations are assuming they are implementing affirmative action policy, though it has very minimal component, to attain gender equality in their work force when and how?

Is their policy of AA is developed based on the need of real data that indicates the practical gaps of women that led them to be victim of discrimination, marginalized, and left behind, unable to compete, perform better and sustain in proficiency? Does their AA policy have adequate content that is capable to address practical need of those women? Do the actors of the policy acquire better awareness of the factors that facilitate discrimination, the need for AA and how to implement, at least the existing policy? Therefore, if the application of Affirmative action in these organizations fails to address the performance capacity of women, how can it meet the goal of the organizations at least the commitment of attaining gender equality?

#### 4.4. Chapter Summary

The effort of this study was to assess the effect of gender based affirmative action on performance of women from the perspectives of competence (quality work delivery), personal and career development. To evaluate the role of AA in enhancing or affecting the performance of women, qualitative and quantitative data were gathered and, descriptive statistics was used to analyze the outcome of each element and the results were presented in a tabulated format generated from the application as well as general description from the KII and observation.

The result from the quantitative survey revealed that most of the respondents do not believe that AA is playing the role of enhancing the performance of women employees. On the other hand, the result of the question raised to know if there is negative effect on performance of women showed

that, significant employees believe as the provision of AA has negative effect in terms of exposing the women to generalized discrimination and leading them to feel or seen as inferior.

The result of observation to the organizational practice of AA and content in their policies, also shows that, though all the three organization have components of Affirmative action, their level of commitment in terms of including packages as implementing them is slightly different. From the discussion with KII respondents, the researcher able to learn that, despite the efforts of policies in terms of presenting AA action component in their HR manual, the implementer of the policy holds contradictory perception and attitude on the methodology and target of AA. This is partly form lack of awareness even about the provision of AA in their HR policy as well as the importance of AA for this who are still facing discrimination. Hence, this led most of the respondent to have negative opinion about the program and doubt if the program is helping women to improve their performance.

The study has revealed that, to make AA effective, it needs to be one of human resource management policy component in the organizations as per the discussion and commitments of global and national commitments to fight inequality. As AA is considered to be remedy for discrimination and means to overcome inequality, it supposed to be properly managed as critical components of HR management. But though AA supposed to have meaningful effect on human resource management practice and hence performance of female employees', the level of commitment to apply AA remain insignificant and hence its effect is minimal.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter summarizes the key findings of the study, conclusion, and recommendations. The purpose of this study was to measure the effect of gender-based AA action on performance of women in three non-governmental organizations in Addis Ababa. The assessment was conducted based on three factors of performance: Competence (quality work delivery), Personal Development, and Career Development. The study tried to see if the provision of AA is positively contributing or negatively affecting the performance of women based on quantitative and qualitative approach. In this chapter, the researcher will attempt to summarize the finding of survey triangulating with result of KII and observation. This study provides one of the first researches in this title and gives a hint for global and national commitments for human rights through fighting discrimination. It also gives a clue for gender equality defenders and managers to think on how affirmative action designed and applied to address discrimination and contribute to gender equality.

### 5.1. Summary of Major Findings

#### ➤ Respondents' awareness of Affirmative Action and Implementation level

The overall result of the assessment about the awareness of survey target on AA and its implementation in their organization reveals that, only 16 (32.75%) among 51 respondents are aware of AA and how far their organization is implementing to improve their performance of women. Accordingly, though the KII respondents mentioned that the organization has induction package in which it informs all the HR policy provision including AA, the extent of information provision and commitment to let the staff know the AA action policies of the organization and its effort to improve the performance of women is very minimal. In addition to the survey respondents, the KII respondents' awareness is nearly poor and their attitude towards the provision of AA is somehow negative. This entails that, unless the staff knows the benefit package for which they are entitled including AA, they will not claim for service. Consequently, there is high potential of not implementing AA to enhance the performance of women even if policies are there. Similarly, if the HR actors fails to have better awareness of AA and how to implement it to bring

the intended result, it is difficult to expect any positive outcome from the program except the program. IN the revers it has potential pf contributing for further discrimination of women.

- Contribution of AA on Performance of Women in terms of Competence, Personal and Career Development.

In terms of competence (quality work delivery), the finding shows that on average about 48(97.34%) which are majority of the respondents, do not believe the current level of AA provision is capable of enhancing the competence of the women. Similarly, about 50 (98 %) of respondent also disagree that AA is contributing to the personal development to women and hence their performance. In terms of career development, only 5 (11%) the affirmative practice of their organization has contribution in career development of women while 46 (89 %) disagree with this point.

The fining of all qualitative, quantitative and observation, indicates that, there are gaps both in the policy and the implementation mechanisms. The organization practice some components of AA like, provision of additional mark in IRC and internship in DCA, practiced by default and the police is not accusable by staff. No staff member also asked for policy as a reference. On the other hand, the policy fails to include the important components of AA that is capable of responding to the capacity requirement of women which is intended to enhance their performance. Similarly, the implementers of affirmative action policy fail to communicate at least the existing package of the policy so that the staff strive to get the benefit. Similarly, the staff including the HR personnel's awareness and understanding of AA is not adequate to implement or benefit from the program. Then the failure to have the policy with key components coupled with the poor implementation unable to improve performance of women and reduce discrimination, consequently delayed the achievement of gender equality which is at least the goal of these organizations.

## 5.2. Conclusions

The main objective of the study is to examine the contribution of gender based affirmative action on performance of women in three organizations namely: International Rescue Committee, Norwegian Church Aid and Dan Church Aid. The output of this study encompasses previous research findings by indicating a better understanding of what role can affirmative action play to

abandon discrimination through enhancing the performance of women and paving way for gender equality.

The objectives of the study were met; women performance can be affected through provision of AA as goal-oriented action or poor implementation of AA as catalyst of further discrimination. The study shows that first and for most AA is a global, regional and national commitment to reduce discrimination, and secondly AA polices are part of HR management policy and theoretically committed to attain gender equality through AA provisions of capacity building packages that enhance women's performance, thirdly there is less commitment in designing appropriate AA policy, communicating to the staff and implementing as per the promise and finally, both the AA policy implementer and beneficiaries are afraid of capability of the policy to solve the intended problem as it lacks efficiency, but rather, the pseudo presentation of the policy can facilitate further discrimination and stereotyping of all women.

The general outcome shows that

- Gender based Affirmative Action has long time history and practice in different countries at various level. The overall goal of the policy commitment is to abolish discrimination and women marginalization by paving ways through fair treatment and provision of packages that enhance the capacity of women and competence as to usher to gender equality.
- The study results also revealed that the level of gender based Affirmative action implementation in the three organizations is more or less moderate, as the organizations fail to clearly let the staff know what components of AA are there and committed to implement the whole package.
- As the components of the AA policy of the organization does not clearly state as to how they address the potential capacity gaps of women employees to enhance their capacity, performance, and it's supposed contribution to enhance the performance of is not effective.
- The result of the assessment also shows that the absence of properly designed AA, inadequate awareness of the program by HR personnel and poor commitment to communicate the staff about it mislead the staff to perceive AA is a program to support all women as they are less performers, which creates further discrimination. This further creates sense of inferiority and undermining the capacity of women.

## 5.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed by the researcher as alternative solutions to effectively design Affirmative action and properly implement, so that it can play the intended role of abolishing discrimination against women.

- Global, regional, and national actors of gender based Affirmative Action have to clearly state the basic components of the policy, for whom it is, how it shall be addressed in organizational or institutional level, so that it can be able to fight discrimination and women marginalization by paving ways for fair treatment and provision of effective packages that enhance the capacity of women and competence so as to lead to gender equality.
- The organizations must put in place clear components of the AA in their policy, at least to the level it enables to achieve their organizational goal, and
  - Specify components of gender based affirmative and methods of implementation,
  - Properly and clearly communicate their staff about the policy and for whom it is intended.
  - Enable their HR personnel to have adequate awareness about the policy and how to implement it,
  - Develop proper goal and indicate when to achieve that
  - Develop evaluation tools that help to measure the level of achievement
- Discrimination can lead to marginalization and then to lack of opportunity. Even if opportunities come their way, lack of competence can create further discrimination, Hence, in order to break the cycle of discrimination which resulted from poor design and implementation AA, the policy need to consider and incorporate all the important components that can enhance the capacity of the women and hence, their sustainable and progressive competence so that they can become and remain equal.
- Managements and HR personnel, as responsible body in staff capacity building and creating conducive work environment, shall be committed to have better awareness of AA, for whom it is and how it can meet the intended goal. Hence, they shall be the first in checking the policy, its relevance and committed to effective implementation.

- Last but not the least, other researchers can also use the information of this study to conduct similar studies that will contribute to the effective staff management that enable gender equality through enhancing the capability of women performance.

### 5.3. Limitation and Future Research Direction

The researcher would like to recommend that, given the complication of gender issues and affirmative action, undertaking further research will be very important specially to clearly indicate the importance of enhancing performance capacity of women as a key component to reduce discrimination and attain gender equality. The researcher believes that unless AA policy incorporates packages of congoing capacity building for women employees, it is difficult to improve their performance and hence attain equality. Though the issue is very wide that needs to be seen from different perspectives, the researcher was constrained to include as many as possible organization and female employees, to come up with more data that can help for conclusion. Thus, it is further recommended to conduct more detailed research on this topic to cover other governmental and non-government institutions, special academic institutions to come up with better information that help to improve the policy.

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## Appendix: Questionnaires

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**Faculty Of Business and Economics**  
**DEPARTMENT OF MANAGEMENT MASTER PROGRAM**

**Dear Respondents,**

**Subject: Filling Questionnaire**

As a student of MBA in Management at Addis Ababa University, I am currently working on my graduation thesis with the objective of examining the effect of gender based affirmative action on performance of women. My Topic is “Gender Based Affirmative Actions: Examining the effect of Perceived Fairness on the Performance of Women in the Case of \_\_\_\_\_

Hence, I would kindly request your support in filling the questioners with honesty to the level of your understanding. In connection to this, I would like to assure you that the questionnaires you are filling does not have any impact on you and responses you give in this questionnaire is used only for academic purposes. The questionnaire contains three sections: the first section is your personal profile, and the second section is all about your awareness of Affirmative action policy of your organization. The third part is about your understanding and witness on the effect of affirmative action on performance of women. Please answer all questions. I would like to thank you in advance for your co-operation and for scarifying your valuable time. Please note that:

1. You do not need to write your name.
2. The researcher apricate your kind support to get the filled questionnaire back within three-seven days.
3. All information given would be treated with at most confidentiality.

Once Again, \thank you in advance!

**Section A: - General Demographic Data**

1. Age: 18 – 28  29 – 39  40-50  51-60
2. Gender: Male  Female
3. Educational background. Diploma  BA/BSc Degree  MA/MSc Degree

Other please specify, \_\_\_\_\_

4. Marital status Single  Married  Divorced  Widowed

5. How long have you been working in this organization?

<1 year  1-5years  6-10 years  ≥11 Years

Please put “√” or any other symbol to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements by marking the appropriate boxes. Use the alternative below for sections, B, & C:

**Yes (3) Not sure (2) No (1)**

**Section B: level of Affirmative Action Awareness and Implementation**

No	Questions	Yes	Not Sure	No
1	Do you know what affirmative action is			
2	Does your organization have affirmative action policy (Yes or No)			
3	Has HR department formally communicated you about affirmative action policy of the organization			
4	Do you know that the organization is applying affirmative action to give priority for women employees in employment opportunity			
5	Do you know if your organization is applying affirmative action to improve women employees' quality work delivery?			
6	Do you know if your organization is applying affirmative action to improve personal development of women employees: through, education, training, and other capacity building package opportunities			
7	Does organization is applying affirmative action which highly considerate of women in work-life balance of women employees			
8	Does your organization is applying affirmative action to improve career development of women employees in terms of promotion, appraisal			
9	Does your organization is applying affirmative action to increase number of Women employees in higher/manager position			
10	Is Number of women in leadership position is as equal as men			

**Section C: Measuring Effect of Affirmative Action on Women Employee's Capability of Quality Work Delivery, Personal Development, and Career Development.**

No.	Question	Yes	Not Sure	No
<b>A</b>	<b>Quality Work Delivery,</b>			
1	Do you think the provision of <i>Affirmative Action has helped you</i> in improving your capability of <b>quality work delivery</b> in terms of?			
1.1	Women capacity building packages for Quality work delivery			
1.2	Conflict Resolution (Solving Conflicts)			
1.3	Career Management/Professionalism, communication skill			
1.4	Time Management			
1.5	Effectiveness and efficiency			
<b>B</b>	<b>Personal Development</b>			
1	Do you think the provision of <i>Affirmative Action has helped you</i> to improve your <b>personal development</b> in terms of?			
1.1	Setting personal goal and Commitment to deliver personal plans			
1.2	Facing and overcoming challenges			
1.3	Progressively improving my income			
1.4	Managing work life balance and improving my education status			

1.5	Improving my self-awareness, self-esteem, self-confidence, and assertiveness			
<b>C</b>	<b>Career Development</b>	Yes	Not Sure	No
1	Do you think the provision of <i>Affirmative Action has helped you</i> to improve your <b>Career Development</b> in terms of?			
1.1	Career Growth, position improvement			
1.2	Competency, getting recognition, award of good performance and promotion			
1.3	Attaining leadership/managerial positions			
1.4	Attaining Better salary			
<b>D</b>	<b>Unintended Impacts of Perceived Fairness</b>	Yes	Not Sure	No
1	Do you think the provision of <b>Affirmative Action has negatively</b> affected performance of women employees in terms of:			
1.1	By exposing me to Discrimination			
1.2	Undermining my capacity			
1.3	Stereotyping all women			
1.4	Decreasing my self-confidence as an employee			
1.5	Denying recognition of my achievement			
1.6	Discouraging my efforts and other women employees			
1.7	Associating all my performance as it is because of the especial favor because of Affirmative Action			

## Key informant questions

- What is your name (Anonyms)
- What is your position in the organization?
- How long did you work in the organization?
- Your education backgrounds
- Sex

1. What HR policies does the organization has to use the best of employee's capacity in general and women employees in particular?
2. How do you communicate your staff about your organizational HR policies in general and women related policies in particular?
3. What are the packages of affirmative action policy of your organization?
4. In your opinion, how does the affirmative action policy support women employees to improve their:
  - a. Quality of work delivery?
  - b. Personal development?
  - c. Career development?
5. What challenges do you encounter in implementing the affirmative action policy?
6. What is your overall impression about the implementation of affirmative action policy?
7. In your opinion, how do you evaluate the reflection of women employees about the affirmative action policy?