

# Female Voice in Academic Publications: The ‘Female Voice’ in Ethiopian Journal of Development Research (EJDR)

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## Abstract

The proportion of female authors published in academic journals is much lower than male authors across various fields of disciplines. This article, looking at the life of the Ethiopian Journal of Development Research (EJDR), examines the extent to which the journal has served as a conduit of female voice. The primary concern of this article is on examining ‘the *status quo* or the what’ rather than ‘the why’ – with regard to the female voice in EJDR. In attempting to gauge the female voice, it looked into the number of female authors and the representation of women’s perspectives in knowledge production through publishing. For the number aspect, using descriptive analysis, the full list of EJDR publications since its inauguration were examined. The number was further assessed in light of the proportion of female representation in development field of study/studies, the rate of participation of females over the life time of the journal and recent increase in women and feminist scholarship focusing on Center for Gender Studies, a Center housed in the College publishing EJDR. For examining the representation of women’s perspectives in the production and dissemination of knowledge, content analysis was employed as the primary methodology. The examination looked into parameters like clustering of female publications in certain fields of studies and preference to qualitative methodology. The findings of the review show that about 12 females have appeared as authors and co-authors of articles across 11 issues of the EJDR, most of these appearing in recent issues. Seen in light of the life of the journal, the number may be very low but seen in terms of the proportion to the potential pool of female contributors, it is perhaps as well as could be expected. The recent increase of female authors in EJDR may be positively associated with the expansion of gender studies program’s in the College and beyond. Limitations in terms of lack of effort towards attracting female academicians to participate in the journal and poor promotional activities, even within the College, have been noted. The review reveals that clustering and concentration on women’s issues is not necessarily the case when it comes to female authored/co-authored articles in the EJDR. Various types of methodologies have also been employed in the female authored articles. Given the important role academic publishing plays towards advancing academic career and alternative views/knowledge, questions regarding who is getting published should be asked on a regular basis.

**Keywords:** Female voice, academic publications, EJDR

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## 1. Introduction

The female voice in academic publications has a particular meaning and significance. In the most direct sense, the female voice in academic publications refers to the proportion of female-authored articles in academic publications. In the higher education landscape, the proportion of women that get published tells stories. Publications are the culmination of research undertakings that require investments in time and resources. Publications also remain to be the single most important avenue for academic career advancement. A higher proportion of women that get published can be an indicator of the manner in which women are treated within the academia (Mathews and Andersen 2001).

The issue goes much more than numbers. Knowledge and forms of knowledge production are linked to different positions of power according to feminist standpoint thinking/theorizing (Harding 1993). Gender is one determinant factor in the distribution of power in society. Knowledge and perspectives reflected in academic publications are thus influenced by the different positions of power of the speaker, hence making the gender of the author an important factor. The female voice in academic publications, in this regard, refers to the particular perspective brought into ‘mainstream’ thinking through the participation of women in knowledge production and dissemination. The female voice opens access to diverse scholarly perspectives, perhaps to previously overlooked ‘forms of knowledge’. In this sense, the female voice in academic publishing is quite significant in broadening perspectives and widening sources as well as forms of knowledge.

Despite its significant contribution to knowledge production, the female voice is not very well represented in academic publications. Literature further shows that the thin representation of published females holds true across disciplines. A recent and first of its kind study explored articles and authors drawn from the corpus of JSTOR, a digital archive of scholarly papers, over a period of four centuries (1665 to 2011) (Wilson 2012). About two million articles, including papers in the hard sciences, the social sciences, law, history, philosophy, and education and overall representing

1765 fields and sub-fields, were examined. The findings showed that the proportion of female authors was much less than male authors across all fields of examination.<sup>1</sup> The same study showed that of the nearly 1,800 fields and subfields, explored across four centuries, women tended to cluster in some subfields. Various reasons were provided as explanations for this phenomenon ranging from the low percentage of females in the academia, in general, to that of discriminatory practices that tended to adversely affect female participation in research and publications (Wilson 2012).

The voice of women is not well represented in academic publications. Examining the forty plus years of experience of EJDR, this article attempts to present a picture with regard to the representation of the female voice in academic publication with a particular focus on development research and publication in Ethiopia. The article uses two related frameworks often employed in feminist theoretical perspectives – the absence of women from the public sphere and the pre-eminence given to knowledge produced in a scientific manner over any other forms of knowledge – as the broad frameworks of analysis, however, acknowledging the specific context of women’s realities in this part of the world.

Feminists, particularly those in the west, view higher education institutions as male dominated and patriarchal sites of knowledge production and dissemination. The exclusion of women from public sphere, such as education, is a consequence as well as an explanation for this. Despite over a century of struggle to make the public sphere an appropriate domain for women’s engagement, some locations have stubbornly remained to be the realms of men. The field of higher education is a good example of this phenomenon. Higher education institutions show relatively lower levels of representation of women, particularly as academicians and researchers.

The exclusion of women is also explained by the understanding of what constitutes knowledge. It is knowledge that is produced under certain conditions, i.e., objective/scientific knowledge produced through the use of scientific and rigorous methods that count. This effectively excludes knowledge derived from lived experience and documented through methods like oral tradition, which is often described as subjective. While the former

is associated with objectivity, thereby portraying masculine traits, the latter is associated with subjectivity, a feminine ascribed trait. Accordingly, women's writings may not be taken seriously as contributions to scientific knowledge (Cancian 1992).

A related explanation for a patriarchal system of knowledge production and dissemination through the higher education landscape is the exclusion/under-representation of women in decision-making sites, like editorial boards and processes. These sites have been regarded as the appropriate turf of men within the academia. The implication is that the very process of publication is skewed towards men that already have access to and are favoured by the system, either directly through systems of friendships, or favourable attitudes of editors and decision makers or both (Stegmiar *et al.* 2011).

All of these patriarchal ideas and structures informed and shaped the higher education landscape in Africa. This is, mainly, due to the colonial influence, which molded the African higher education landscape in the image of the experiences of the colonizers. Furthermore, the influence has continued in many ways including the unbalanced power relations that exist between higher educational institutions in Africa and those in former colonizing states and the attitude of trained African diaspora scholars working in western and African institutions. (Aina 2010; Samoff and Carrol 2004).

Although the higher education landscape in Africa is plagued by these patriarchal and discriminatory features, it is interesting to note that this picture is more of a product of the colonial experience rather than being a logical extension of the material realities of women and gender relations in African societies. In Africa, the experiences and conditions of women were, and still are, materially different from that of the west. In the African context, women are actively engaged in the public domain referring to production, community organization, anti-colonial struggle, among others, and the private sphere, namely household reproduction, thereby refusing to fit into the neatly woven 'public private' divide experience of women in the west (Taiwo 2003). Accordingly, the very thin representation of women (and, at times, exclusion) from the higher education landscape, particularly

as academicians, cannot simply be explained by the narrative of ‘a male only realm or public sphere’. Similarly, in the realm of knowledge production and dissemination, women have played significant roles both as repositories of knowledge, ranging from medicinal to far complex issues, as well as carrying forward knowledge through oral traditions.

Despite these differences in experience and material realities, the strong colonial influence in the birth and later development of higher education in Africa, has served to exclude women in the production and dissemination of knowledge in the context of higher education, research and academic publications. In the African context, thus, the exclusion of women is explained by the heavy hand of colonial experience that molds the landscape of higher education in the continent, which serves to undermine and exclude women.

The Ethiopian experience is no different from the broader African experience to the extent that western influence, in the birth and development of higher education in the country, is quite evident. This is despite the absence of direct colonial experience in the nation’s history. In Ethiopia, too, a patriarchal attitude and structure have served to tighten the grip on the door to higher education for women, thereby, limiting their representation to just 12% in the academia (MoE 2015).

This article, looking at the life of the Ethiopian Journal of Development Research (EJDR), established in 1974, examines the extent to which the journal has served as a conduit of female voice in various fields of development – considering the interdisciplinary nature of the journal. The journal is one of the pioneer development journals in the country devoted to the multi-disciplinary study of development problems of Ethiopia, in particular, and the less developed world, in general. This attempt is, in part, prompted by the lack of literature that examines the gender gap in academic publications in Ethiopia. It is hoped that it contributes to further research and inquiry on gender gap in publications in other fields of study.

## 2. Review of Literature

### 2.1. Female voice in academic publications

Academic publishing is the corner stone of success in academic career. Publications appearing in academic journals, book chapters, books and other forms of dissemination are important mechanisms of distributing research results to the wider community in any field of study. For researchers and academicians, publications provide the gateway for jobs as well as promotion. Overall academic success is also measured by the quantity and quality of publications of an academician. A career in the academia is thus, closely intertwined with publishing.

Although publishing is an important parameter in academic career, not all players within the academic world engage in and benefit from it to the same extent. The gender gap in academic publishing is one example of glaring differences impacting on academic career. Literature after literature, examining the level of representation of females in academic publications in various fields of studies, show that women lag in publication rates compared to men.

According to a recent study that explored articles and authors of about two million articles representing close to 1800 fields and sub-fields over a period of four centuries, the proportion of female authors was found to be much less than male authors across all fields of examination. Overall, only 22% of authors were found to be female authors over a course of four centuries of academic publications (Wilson, 2012). This study found that the low proportion of female publishing was true across disciplines. The proportion ranged from a low of 6.6% female authors in mathematics to a high of 37.2% of females published in the field of education (Wilson, 2012).

Studies assessing the gender gap in academic publishing in different disciplines echo similar findings. A study that reviewed the representation of females in academic publications in accounting journals over a ten-year period (1984-94) concluded that the rate of female publication remained quite low compared to males (Carnaghan *et al.* 1994). However, the study underlined that, in recent times, the rate appeared to be picking up from a low 8% to that of 16% of female authored articles, though it was still a very

low percentage compared to those of males (Carnaghan *et al.* 1994). Similarly, in the field of medicine, a significant gender authorship gap is noted in academic publications. A study that examined six prestigious medical journals in the US found out that, of over 7000 articles reviewed, it was only in 15.9% of the articles that women were first authors and 10.3% women were among the senior authors (Jagsi *et al.* 2006). A similar study on women's involvement in academic publishing in the field of educational psychology in the US shows that over the period of 1996-2004, the publication rate of female authors has remained lower than that of males despite gains in the number of women entering the profession as well as editorial positions in journals in the field (Evans and Moulder 2011). In the field of social work, where women predominate by about two third, a study concluded that the rate of publication by females in the various social work journals in the US was far from being at par with that of men (Kirk and Rosenblatt 1980). Similarly, in the field of sociology, which is said to witness the phenomenon of feminization, gender differences in patterns of publication in leading sociology journals are noted. According to a study that examined publication patterns of leading sociology journals over a period of 25 years, the findings showed that women continued to be underrepresented relative to men, though they were beginning to be better represented in an absolute sense (Rotchford *et al.* 1990). Further, where they published, women often occupied marginal locations within the structure of the discipline (Rotchford *et al.* 1990).

Concerning women's presence in editorial boards and its adverse implications, a study examined women's representation in editorial boards in management journals over a period of 15 years. The study looked into women's representation as authors and women's representation in editorial boards of the said journals and possible correlation. It used secondary data from 57 journals covering approximately 10,000 editorial board members and nearly 10,000 articles. The study concluded that women continued to be greatly under-represented in editorial boards of the examined journals (Metz and Wil Harzing 2009). This implies the persistent gender imbalance in the editorial boards of the management journals in the last 15 years, which has

contributed to hindering women's ability to attain scholarly recognition and advancement through publication (Metz and Wil Harzing 2009).

The literature on the subject from around the world as well as Africa, lists challenges female faculty members face to get into and thrive in the academia, academic publishing being one indicator of success in the academia. The major challenges include the stereotypical views and attitudes on women, the work-life balance, socialization and gender roles and manifest forms of gender-based discrimination. Stereotypical views and attitudes often lead to women's capabilities to be under-recognized (Idahosa 2014). These views imply that, often, female faculty, despite their qualifications, are denied collaborative opportunities with men and their research proposals and ideas are often not taken seriously (Edwards *et al.* 2011). Similarly, socialization and expectations around gender roles put women in isolation from male faculty. As such, women faculty are often excluded from informal networks of faculty, which are usually the sources of collaborative engagement, valuable information and scarce resources, which ultimately lead to research and publications (Beddoes *et al.* 2012).

These factors, that affect the performance of females in the academia, equally hold in the Ethiopian context. The negative misconceptions on women's capacity, which adversely affect their opportunities; misconceptions and faulty implementation of affirmative measures, which create antagonism among male colleagues; the pressure on time use and work burden arising from the work-family (life) balance; lack of or limited number of women in leadership positions and, associated with this, the lack of role models; as well as harassment and insecurity both within campus and surrounding communities, including during commuting, were identified as major challenges faced by female faculty members (Eerdewijk 2014). It is expected that these adverse circumstances would have implications not only on the number of female faculty, but also on their experience in terms of teaching, research and publication.

## **2.2. Assessing the female voice: the parameters**

Various parameters are employed in the literature to assess the female voice in academic publishing. By parameters, the reference here is to the standard



on the basis of which a pronouncement can be made about the adequacy of the representation of females in academic publications. A mere reference to numbers or percentages, for example, low or high level of representation of females in a given journal, may not, necessarily, tell the whole story. The number/percentage has to be looked at in light of a certain parameter that may provide background or context for further analysis and understanding. The most common parameters in the literature are: proportion of female representation in a given field of study, the rate of participation of females over the life time of a given journal and recent increase in women and feminist scholarship (Ward and Grant 1985; Mcelhinny *et al.* 2003; Sih and Nishikawa 1988; Kirk and Rosenblatt 1980).

### ***2.2.1. Proportion of female representation in a given field of study***

An important parameter in assessing the rate of female academic publishing is the proportion of women and men roughly represented in a particular field of study. The logic is that the proportion of female representation in a given field of study should be used as reference point to determine the representation of female authors in academic publications of the said field. This parameter of assessment is particularly useful when the field of study in question is specialized in nature or has professional associations that make tracking specialists in the field relatively easy. Where the field of study is diffused and multidisciplinary, like development studies, specialists from various fields can constitute the pool and the application of the above parameter may prove difficult (Ward and Grant 1985; Mcelhinny *et al.* 2003; Sih and Nishikawa 1988; Kirk and Rosenblatt 1980).

### ***2.2.2. The rate of participation of female authors over the life time of a given journal***

Another parameter that is often employed in assessing female representation in academic publications is the rate of participation of female authors over the life time of a given journal. This parameter takes into account the overall increase in the proportion of females entering into higher education and proceeding into the academia as researchers and academicians. With an increased pool, an increasing trend of female authors is expected. (Ward and Grant 1985; Mcelhinny *et al.* 2003; Sih and Nishikawa 1988; Kirk and Rosenblatt 1980).

### ***2.2.3. Women's studies and feminist scholarship***

Another parameter is the spread of women's studies and feminist scholarship over the last four to five decades, which is said to have opened the space for the scrutiny of various disciplines from a gender perspective (McDermott 1994). With the spread of women's studies programs, more and more fields of studies are beginning to be analysed from a gender perspective. With greater representation of women in these programs, female scholarship and authorship is on the rise.

### ***2.2.4. Patterns of female representation in academic publications***

The issue of partner refers to the following issues. Is there an increase in sole authorship, which carries heavier weight compared to collaborations? Where there is collaborative effort, are female authors first authors or do they come in second or third etc., positions? Is there concentration/clustering in some areas of inquiry as well as fields of studies compared to others? Are there differences in methodologies in research articles written by women and men? These and related questions speak to differences in the patterns of publications by women and men. Interestingly, the differences could have implications on the extent to which authors derive benefits from publications such as promotion, success in academic career as well as jobs. (Ward and Grant 1985; Mcelhinny et al. 2003; Sih and Nishikawa 1988; Kirk and Rosenblatt 1980).

### ***2.2.5. Co-authorship vs. sole authorship***

Co-authorship in academic publications can be looked at from different perspectives. First, co-authorship is a sign of collaborative effort. It tells stories with regard to collaborative opportunities that are available to members of the academia. The lesser the opportunity for collaboration, the lesser the possibility of co-authorship. The level of females appearing as co-authors is, thus, an indicator of the level of collaborative engagement. Studies show that although collaborative effort leading to co-authorship is on the rise across disciplines, the rate of female co-authorship is not rising on equal level as that of male only co-authorship. A possible explanation for this pattern is that women are less likely to be invited than men in collaborative research work (Teele and Tehelen 2017).

Second, co-authorship also tells a story with regard to the position that female authors occupy in collaborative efforts. Positions as first, second, third etc. authors in co-authorship are indicative of the level of effort put in by contributors, with first author position generally considered to be given to the person who made the largest contribution to the paper. Although this is the general assumption, author order in publications is also influenced by negotiation. Negotiating author order is as much affected by one's position in the academia as one's contribution to the published work. Studies show that women may be disadvantaged in negotiations due, in part, to lesser experience/exposure in negotiation as well as confidence issues (Wilson 2012). The study highlighted above, which examined over two million articles over a period of four centuries, found out that women were less likely to be first authors compared to men and further that women were more likely to appear as third, fourth, or fifth authors (Wilson 2012).

A third point to look into is to compare sole authorship vs. co-authorship when it comes to female authors in academic publications. The pattern shows a higher proportion of female representation as co-authors rather than as single authors in journal publications. This is also an indicator of the position that women occupy in the academia. Women come in as co-authors with men and, to a lesser degree, with other women. The explanation for this pattern comes from the higher standing that men usually have in universities – either having tenured positions or, often times, assuming senior positions, while women, that appear as co-authors, are not usually tenured or in a more junior position. Co-authorship for women is more often a reflection of the imbalance within the academia rather than a collaborative path (Wilson 2012).

#### ***2.2.6. Focus areas of research and publishing***

Another interesting pattern relates to what women focus on when they publish in scholarly journals. The literature shows certain patterns in this regard. For instance, one noted pattern is the clustering of women in certain subjects/fields of studies. The study that examined over two million articles published over four centuries showed that, out of nearly 1,800 fields and subfields explored across four centuries, women tended to cluster in some subfields (Wilson 2012). The clustering seems to revolve around gender/sex

role stereotypes. Accordingly, in those fields that women are said to be well present/represented, their representation in publications also increases. In fields like history, demography, and sociology, a proportion of over 30% of female authors has been recorded in the assessment that looked over two million articles in over 1,800 fields (Wilson 2012). Even within fields said to be favourable for women, clustering around women's issues is noted. A focus on issues like sex roles has been noted in the same literature. Similarly, it is reported that when work about women is conducted, it is more often written by a woman or women (Wilson 2012).

### ***2.2.7. Differences in methodology***

Another pattern relates to the methodology employed. Literature shows that women authors usually employ qualitative methodology as opposed to quantitative methodology (Evans and Moulder 2011). A study that explored the publication patterns of women in top political science journals showed, not only underrepresentation of women as academic authors compared to the relative number of women in the field, but also confirmed the methodological approaches of these top journals did not reflect the kind of work that female scholars were more likely to engage. Elaborating this finding further, the study underlined on the underrepresentation of qualitative methodology and qualitative work, which coincides with the underrepresentation of females in these journals (Teele and Thelen 2017).

## **3. Methodology and Approach**

In attempting to gauge the female voice in academic publishing, this article examines two interrelated areas: the number of female authors and the representation of women's perspectives in knowledge production through publishing. To this end, different sets of methodology are employed.

For the number aspect, using descriptive analysis, the full list of EJDR publications, since its inauguration, is examined. Accordingly, through reference, primarily to author's sex established mainly through names of authors, the female share of authorship is established. Authorship is further categorized into single and co/multiple authorship. This is significant in that it gives indications on manner of collaboration, importance of first author versus second and third authorship and its implications among others. The

overall result of this would give us the share of female authors in the 38 volumes and 76 issues of the EJDR to date.

For examining the representation of women's perspectives in the production and dissemination of knowledge, content analysis is employed as the primary methodology. Accordingly, female-authored articles in the EJDR are analysed to examine contents looking into the following thematic questions related to female publications: when do women publish? Is there a difference in perspective? Are there particular issues/areas of focus? Is there a particular approach/methodology? As the number of female authored articles is quite few in number, instead of sampling/selection, all articles authored by females were included for content analysis.

## **4. Findings and Discussions**

### **4.1. Brief description of EJDR**

The Ethiopian Journal of Development Research (EJDR) is a bi-annual journal devoted to development-oriented research. The Journal is currently published by the College of Development Studies at Addis Ababa University. The journal is one of the pioneer development journals in the country with its first issue appearing in 1974. It has since been published regularly reaching 38 volumes and 76 issues.

The journal covers wide areas of the development process. It is devoted to the multi-disciplinary study of development problems of Ethiopia, in particular, and the less developed world, in general. Book reviews, synopsis of major research, theoretical and methodological approaches in the general area of development are also acceptable to the publishers of this journal. Contributions are welcome from any part of the world.<sup>2</sup>

Over the years, the EJDR has benefited and continues to benefit from quite diverse and experienced editorial board members. Individuals at the top of their professions have served as editors in different capacities (chief editor, associate editor and managing editor). Editorial members are also drawn from both within the country as well as abroad. The gender representation of

members of the editorial board at different times shows quite slim representation, with quite few women serving in the editorial team.<sup>3</sup>

#### **4.2. The female voice in EJDR**

A descriptive review was attempted to determine the number of female-authored articles in the lifetime of the EJDR. To this end, all the available issues that have been published since the beginning of the journal, were reviewed. Towards establishing the number of female-authored articles in the journal, the names of the authors were examined. Accordingly, based on the common/usual use of names in Ethiopia, the names of female and male authors were distinguished. In other jurisdictions, studies of this nature usually employ established database systems like social security or national ID database to ascertain whether a given name is that of a female or male. Lacking such a system, this article used the approach of establishing names based on their common usage.

While making a distinction between female and male designated names was relatively easy in the majority of cases, there were cases where some names might be equally applied to males and females. At times, it proved difficult to determine whether a name belonged to a male or female as it was not a common name. These were some of the challenges faced in trying to determine female authorship based on names. In cases where the name in question could be used for both males and females, and when it became difficult to ascertain the gender of the author<sup>4</sup> attempt was made to ascertain the gender of the author through various mechanisms. First, where the corresponding address of the author in question was provided for in the article, attempt was made to contact the author to ascertain the gender. Second, in instances where corresponding address had not been provided and/or authors were not responsive to communications, previous and current members of the editorial team of EJDR were consulted to ascertain the gender. This approach was utilized as members of the editorial team had been in contact with the authors in question during the processing of the publication. Third, where the above two options failed, the ambiguous names and corresponding articles were dropped from consideration altogether.

Using the above processes, female authored articles were listed out for review. The review results show that about 12 females<sup>5</sup> have appeared as authors and co-authors of journal articles in the EJDR. The 12 female authors roughly compare with 380–500 male authors in the life time of the journal.<sup>6</sup> This number is quite low, particularly when compared to the number of male authors that have appeared in the lifetime of the EJDR.

The 12 female authors have appeared in 11 issues of the EJDR. The EJDR has had 38 volumes with about 76 issues in its lifetime, considering two issues per volume. It is roughly in 11 of these 70 plus issues that about 12 females have appeared as authors of academic articles. Again, this is not a favourable indicator in that it is roughly in just about 14% of the issues that females have appeared as authors/co-authors.

Looking at the numbers, one is tempted to conclude that the representation of female voice is indeed quite low. From the literature, one of the parameters for determining the level of representation of female voice in academic publications is the number of female-authored articles in the lifetime of a journal. In the lifetime of the EJDR, the proportion of female authors, which is about 12, is certainly not at par with the number of male authors that have appeared in the journal.

Although the number by itself tells a story, it is important to see this number in light of other parameters such as the proportion of female academics and researchers in the field of development studies as well as the growth in feminist scholarship (gender studies) in the country, which may have possible implications on the representation of the female voice in development research and publications.

Determining the proportion of female academics and researchers in the field over the years may not be an easy task in relation to EJDR as the subject area of coverage, that is, development studies is quite wide. As the official editorial policy of EJDR shows, EJDR publishes original research in the multi-disciplinary study/field of development problems and issues of Ethiopia, in particular and of the less developed world, in general. A cursory look at the areas covered in the journal shows that subject areas range from

the social sciences to the natural sciences. All areas/fields with development impact are open to be published in the journal. Similarly, the fields of specialization of authors show quite a range of areas.

In light of this, one proximate measure of determining the proportion of female academics in the subject areas/fields of coverage of EJDR would be to simply look into the proportion of females in the academia, save for quite technical and very specialized fields such as medicine, for example. Government reports show that the representation of females in the academia is quite low — a mere 12% female faculty in public higher educational institutions compared with 88% males (MoE 2016). This figure of 12% represents female academics in the entire public universities in the country, the potential target groups for EJDR publication possibly constituting a smaller sub-set of this 12% category/group. Bringing the picture down to Addis Ababa University, where EJDR is housed and thus may have broader audience within the University, the figure, though slightly better, is not that different. According to the 2016 staff profile of AAU, the proportion of female academic staff members stood at 15.07%. This again shows that within the narrow framework of AAU, the potential pool of female contributors to EJDR remains quite low. Considering the relatively low proportion of female academics and researchers both at country and AAU levels, both constituting potential target groups for EJDR publications, the number of female authors in EJDR, thus far, may not necessarily be characterized as too low. Seen in light of the life of the journal, the number may be very low but, when seen in terms of the proportion to the potential pool of female contributors, it is perhaps as well as could be expected.

Another factor, according to the literature, that may influence increased representation of female voice in academic publishing is the expansion of feminist scholarship or gender studies. The literature shows two-fold advantages in the expansion of gender studies programs. First, these programs are seen attracting more females into the academia, both as teachers and students. In so doing, it expands the potential pool of contributors to academic publishing. Second, it encourages the examination of mainstream fields of studies from a gender perspective. Both avenues contribute to an increase in female voice in academic publishing.



Looking at the first point, given that EJDR is housed within the College of Development Studies, which hosts the pioneer program in gender studies in the country, (Center for Gender Studies - CGS), it may be interesting to see if there is any link with the advent of CGS and EJDR's representation of female voice. The first part of the argument, that gender studies programs tend to increase the proportion of female academic staff and students, holds true in the context of Addis Ababa University. The overwhelming majority of staff and students of the gender studies program are female. An immediate link of this with EJDR is to see if this has resulted in contributions by female staff of gender studies in the EJDR publications. As the review of the female-authored articles revealed, this has not been the case. None of the female-authored articles in the EJDR have their authors from the Center for Gender Studies. Is this the case only with EJDR or with academic publishing in general? The answer to this question is important because if the publication profile of CGS staff is relatively well/good outside of EJDR, issues may be raised with regard to factors influencing publication within EJDR?

Some discussions were held with some CGS staff members towards assessing this question. The profile of those consulted does not show large number of publications. This may well be the case for many of the staff members within the center, given low levels of promotion that are directly tied to publication rates. The existing publications by staff members also appear in journals outside of EJDR. The discussion has revealed interesting insights. Though many of the members of the center are well aware of the existence of the journal, those who took part in the discussion shared that no particular challenge existed with regard to publishing with EJDR. The challenges towards publishing in general, such as time poverty, limited research opportunity and low level of collaboration among CGS staff or between CGS staff and outside, are raised as major challenges towards publishing, in general. Time poverty is a serious matter. The time allotted to research and publication, from the overall limited time available for productive work, often gets compromised because female academics have to engage more in activities such as consulting to make up for the pay gap that results of structural inequalities.

Although there is awareness on the existence of the journal, efforts towards attracting female academicians to participate in the journal have not been seen. It was also raised that general promotional activities, such as special calls for dedicated issues, announcing calls etc. are not common practices of the journal. Relatively newly established journals within the University come to mind when thinking of publishing for the staff of gender studies that took part in the discussion. This, they attributed to the promotional work done by these other journals which made them attractive. The limited promotion and limited mechanisms aimed at attracting women, the discussants said, might be a limitation, which the journal should overcome in the future.

With regard to the second point, i.e., gender studies encouraging the examination of mainstream fields from a gender perspective, although attribution may be difficult, an increase in scholarship in the area of ‘gender and other fields of studies’, particularly scrutinizing mainstream fields from a gender perspective, is noted (AAU Center for Gender Studies. 2016/17).<sup>7</sup> Keeping in mind the difficulty of attribution, the timing of the appearance of female authors in EJDR publications and the recent surge may indicate the expansion of gender studies program’s possible contribution to increased representation of female voice in publishing in the EJDR.

Looking at journal issues in which female authors have appeared, one notes that it is only of late that female begun to appear as authors in the journal. Although the journal came into being in the 1970s, the first female-authored articles appeared in 2006. Two females co-authored two articles with male authors in the first contribution by females in the EJDR. This was followed in 2008, with one female author and two more females appearing as authors in both the 2010 and 2012 issues, respectively. Also 2013 saw the highest number of females with three females appearing as authors in the journal’s history. The last issue with a female author was in 2015.

A brief review made above may allow making a point that an assessment of the number of female authors in EJDR does not give a conclusive picture as also confirmed by examination of the representation of female voice in the EJDR in light of different parameters. Although the proportion of female

authors is quite low, one needs to note this in light of the relatively low proportion of females in the academia, in general. This is in line with the feminist perspective, which shows the exclusion of females from the higher education landscape and its consequences. Women's presence in higher education, particularly as academicians and researchers, is indeed a necessary first step for any level of engagement in academic life and advancing academic career.

Further, although expansion of gender scholarship (noting the difficulty in attribution) may have played a role in the recent appearance of female authors in EJDR, the absence of female authors from gender studies program raises pertinent questions. Still the recent increase of female authors in EJDR may be a positive indication of increased female participation in the future perhaps due, in part, to the expansion of gender studies scholarship and research in the field of development studies.

#### **4.3. Patterns of female publishing: the case of EJDR**

Differences in the patterns of publications by females and males with implications on the extent to which authors derive benefits from publications such as promotion, success in academic career as well as jobs are observed. One such difference is the case of sole authorship which carries heavier weight compared to collaborations/co-authorships and women's place in collaborative effort, in particular, whether they appear as first authors or come in second or third etc. positions.

The review of the female-authored articles in EJDR shows that co-authorship is the predominant mode of female publishing. In all but one of the articles, women appear as co-authors mainly with men. It is only in one of the articles that a female appears as sole author. Again, it is only in one of 11 articles that two women co-authored. In all the remaining articles, where female authors appear, they appear as co-authors with male authors. Interestingly, female authors do not also appear as primary authors in all of the articles they co-author with male authors. Looking at this in light of the literature, it very much confirms with female patterns of publishing which is dominated by co-authorship. Interestingly, the pattern of females appearing

as secondary as opposed to primary authors in the literature is also the case in the EJDR.

Another pattern of female publication worth examining from the literature is whether there is concentration/clustering in some areas of inquiry as well as fields of studies compared to others. Similarly, a question can be posed as to whether there are differences in methodologies in research articles authored by women and men. These questions speak to differences in the patterns of publications by women and men with possible implications to the extent to which authors derive benefits from publications. These questions are important from the feminist perspective on knowledge and what constitute knowledge.

Feminist theories underscore that the understanding of what constitutes knowledge is one factor contributing to the exclusion of women from academic publishing. This is where the methodology and subject matter of publication in unison become quite relevant. What is the experience of female authors in the EJDR? Are the subjects of female-authored articles in areas where knowledge is derived from lived experiences, i.e., subjective knowledge dominates? Are the methodologies not rigorous enough – for example overreliance on qualitative methodology?

The review of the female-authored articles in EJDR shows that, instead of clustering in some areas/fields as is the case in the literature on female-authored articles, the articles of EJDR are spread over broad areas ranging from gender-based violence to irrigation and extension programs. Accordingly, there is diversity in the areas covered in the publications. The review of EJDR female-authored articles shows that out of the 11 articles, which feature female authors, seven articles have either directly or indirectly touched on gender. The level of engagement with gender issues differs, however. In some of the articles, gender considerations merely focus on numbers – where data is gathered along sex lines with little to none gender analysis of the data and the issues in question. In others, in-depth gender analysis, which looked into differences among the needs and interests of men and women and how these differences impact on development policies and practices, is addressed. The remaining four articles do not have any

gender component. This outcome shows that clustering and concentration on women's issues is not necessarily the case when it comes to female authored/co-authored articles in the EJDR.

Furthermore, one could note various types of methodologies employed in the production of articles featuring female authors; quantitative methodology employing survey and qualitative methodology using tools like in-depth interviews and focus groups remain predominant in the articles. Again, overreliance on qualitative methodology is not the common trend in EJDR female authored/co-authored articles.

Overall, these findings show a slight departure from the literature discussed above which shows relative concentration of females in some areas/fields of study, which, in turn, is the result of the concentration of women in certain fields of studies, particularly in the social sciences. Similarly, the finding in regards to the inquiry into methodology is also a departure from the literature which shows greater use of qualitative methodology as opposed to rigorous and quantitative methodologies by female authors. It is also a departure from the feminist critic of the perception of knowledge derived from lived experience, which is commonly drawn through the use of qualitative methodologies as lesser or non-scientific knowledge. The departure is, in part, explained by the interdisciplinary nature of the journal, which allows for diverse areas of coverage.

Looking at the analysis above, it is important to note that the number of articles featuring females is not that many to draw significant implication from these findings. However, if this trend continues into the future, arguably, it will lead to a more diversified female publications both in areas of engagement and in the use of diverse methodologies in development research.

## **5. Conclusions and the Way Forward**

This article focused on demonstrating the picture with regard to the representation of the female voice in academic publishing zooming on the EJDR. As the review of the EJDR has shown, there is low level of representation of the female voice in articles published in the journal.

However, this low number, 12 females authoring and/or co-authoring articles, has to be seen in light of the overall low level of representation of females in the academia at large. A number of implications may be drawn from this picture.

In academic publishing, a journal being an important avenue for knowledge production and dissemination, low level of female voice automatically translates into a much narrower avenue for females' contributions to knowledge production and dissemination. With the near absence of female voice in academic publications, we are losing out on our access to diverse scholarly perspectives, perhaps to previously overlooked 'forms of knowledge'. The possibility of broadening perspectives and widening sources as well as forms of knowledge in and through academic publishing therefore diminishes.

This outcome, in turn, is an indication of a much more systemic problem of power imbalance – gender inequality in the academia. As knowledge and forms of knowledge production are linked to different positions of power and gender is one determinant factor in the distribution of power in society, gender inequality in academia ultimately reflects on the kinds of knowledge and knower acknowledged, as such, in the academia through forums like academic publishing among others.

The latter point takes us to the direct contributions of publishing to academic career advancement for women and men alike. Lower levels of participation in academic publishing imply that female academics and researchers have a slimmer chance of advancing in the academic ladder. The dismal number of female academics in high-ranking positions of professors in the country is an indicator of this situation. Likewise, the very few women with high ranks and leadership positions make the academia an unattractive option for those in the pipeline and hence imposing long term impacts.

The primary concern of this article has been on examining 'the *status quo* or the what' rather than 'the why' – with regard to the female voice in EJDR publications. Given the important role academic publishing plays towards

advancing academic career and alternative views/knowledge, questions regarding who is getting published should be asked on a regular basis. Academic journals such as EJDR should take stalk of the diversity of their authors in terms of sex, academic background/discipline as well as areas of publication on a regular basis.

In the case of EJDR, there are important tasks ahead for the editorial team/board to properly understand the picture with regard to the female voice in EJDR. What does the picture look like? Why is it the way it is? To this end, the College, where the journal is housed, should push for further research on obstacles/barriers towards publishing by female academics and researchers. Further, the journal should take steps to encourage greater representation of female voice through special mechanisms.

### *Notes*

<sup>1</sup>The proportion ranges from a low of 6.6% female authors in mathematics to a high of 37.2% of females published in education.

<sup>2</sup>EJDR editorial policy.

<sup>3</sup>Review results of the EJDR editorial body.

<sup>4</sup>There are also foreign authors and thus ascertaining their names may not be easy.

<sup>5</sup>Given that some names have proved due to the ambiguity to determine the gender of the author, it is difficult to ascertain the number 12 as absolute number and hence the use of 'about 12' rather than 'only 12'.

<sup>6</sup>The journal publishes five articles per issue. Taking single authorship as the minimum the estimation shows about 380 authors in the 70 plus issues of the journal. However, as a cursory look at the articles shows co-authorship appears to be common. In light of this, if one takes about half of the articles published to be co-authored, then the number of authors may reach over 500.

<sup>7</sup>See Ethiopia's Beijing plus Twenty Country Report; See also AAU Gender Studies Assessment for curriculum review which make the connection between gender studies program and increase in gender scholarship in the country. Further, student thesis research work also supports this conclusion.

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