

## Exploring the Prevalence of Gender Based Violence in Ethiopia's Special Economic Zones: Lessons from Hawassa Industrial Park

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the prevalence of GBV and its facilitating factors in Ethiopian industrial parks by taking evidence from the Hawassa Industrial Park. A mixed research approach and descriptive research design were applied. Quantitative data were collected from 345 respondents using a convenience sampling technique, while 10 participants were interviewed by applying purposive sampling. The quantitative and qualitative data were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics, chi-square, and binary logistic regression models. The results showed that GBV is prevalent in the park, as all female workers in the park experienced at least one form of it, which is dominantly psychological violence (94.3%), followed by sexual (76.2%) and physical violence (76.2%). Moreover, a chi-square test for independence result also showed that young female workers were more likely to experience sexual violence than adult female workers. Female workers from rural origins faced a higher likelihood of experiencing sexual violence compared to those from urban origins. Additionally, female workers who lived alone were more likely to experience physical and sexual violence than those who cohabited. Regarding the facilitating factors, the qualitative finding revealed that lack of awareness and economic problems (personal), cultural differences (work-related), poor implementation of policies and low compensation and benefits (organizational), and patriarchal culture (societal) factors are facilitating the act of GBV. In addition, the binary logistic regression result also showed that living condition, marital status, and education level of the respondents affect the GBV experience. Moreover, most of the GBV incidences were underreported, mainly due to fear of employment-related retaliation. Therefore, awareness-raising about GBV should be done among female workers, particularly for those who are from rural areas, through various capacity development training interventions in collaboration with stakeholders. In addition, minimum wage should be set to ensure a decent life for the park female workers. Furthermore, the implementation of local and international labor and anti-harassment-related laws and policies should be ensured in the park compound, and outside, comprehensive GBV risk assessment and prevention systems should be in place, accountability of perpetrators should be ensured, and also labor unions should be strengthened so as to prevent and reduce GBV prevalence in the park.

**Key words:** gender; Industry park; Gender based violence

### 1. Introduction

Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is a broad term that refers to any harmful act that is committed against a person's will because of their gender in a public or private sphere, and it may inflict

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physical, sexual, or mental harm (UNHCR, 2022). Even if it encompasses violence against women and men, this study focused on violence against women, since women are the primary victims (Bloom, 2008). Such violence occurs in every region of the world and affects people of all ages, races, social classes, and economic statuses. However, it is more prevalent in developing countries compared to the developed ones (Meinck et al., 2015). According to WHO (2021), 30% of women worldwide have suffered either physical and/or sexual violence at some point in their lives. A global study on the prevalence of violence against children found out that in the past years, such incidents were most prevalent in Africa and Asia (80%), followed by Europe (70%), and Latin America and North America (60%) (Meinck et al., 2015). An empirical study in the context of Ethiopia also showed that there is a high prevalence of violence towards women, particularly girls aged between 15 and 49. According to the Health and Demographic survey conducted by the Central Statistical Agency (2017), nearly one third of women in Ethiopia had experienced either physical or sexual violence. This widespread issue prevents a country's development since it reduces productivity, perpetuates generational violence, and prevents the promotion of gender equality. As a result, tackling this problem is one of the development goals of the 2030 Sustainable Goal agenda (Beyene et al., 2021).

Workplaces, whether physical or virtual, are among the places where different forms of GBV can occur in the form of bullying, mobbing, and sexual harassment based on a person's gender, race, language, political beliefs, national or social origin, etc. (Cruz & Klinger, 2016). Such kinds of violence in the workplace mainly affect female workers since most women work in lower-paying positions in unfavorable and vulnerable situations and have poor access to labor rights (Worke, Koricha, & Debelew, 2020). As a result, victims encounter depression, loss of self-esteem, injuries, unwanted pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, and disability up to death (Heise, Ellsberg, & Gottmoeller, 2002).

Previous studies show that 35 percent of women face violence in their workplace across the world, and 40 to 50 percent of these were subjected to different forms of sexual harassment, such as unwanted sexual advances and physical contact (European Economic and Social Committee, 2015). Similarly, a study conducted by Worke, Koricha, and Debelew (2020) found out that violence against women, especially workplace sexual violence, is a serious problem in Ethiopia. Industrial parks, or special economic zones, are forms of workplace establishments that are geographically delimited areas where governments promote industrial activity by providing common infrastructure to a group of industrial firms (Azmach, 2019). Industrial parks were introduced hundreds of years ago. The massive expansion of industrial parks was registered in the 1970s in the newly industrialized countries, and later it expanded to the different parts of the world, including many developing countries like Ethiopia, since they are considered as the main hub for economic growth by providing job opportunities for citizens. It is also assumed that by clustering into industrial parks, different scales of enterprises can take advantage of public infrastructures, gain various incentives provided by the government, access nearby labor markets, and other critical inputs to boost overall economic development (UNIDO, 2019). As a result, the Ethiopian government gave high attention to industrial park development to serve as a

springboard towards realizing the national vision of becoming a leading manufacturing hub in Africa and a low middle-income country by 2025 through job creation and expanding exports without increasing environmental strain. Thus, the government has opened up about 18 industry parks as of 2022, including Hawassa Industrial Park, and attracted foreign and local firms by providing a range of fiscal and non-fiscal incentives (Ferede, Berega, & Gurmessa, 2023; Ethiopian Investment Commission (EIC), 2017).

However, industry parks development has various concerns over land expropriations, poor labor conditions, and loss of public revenues that arise from shortcomings of the legal frameworks that govern their creation and operation. For instance, industrial parks are criticized for their failure to protect workers and affected people both within and outside the industry parks, their exemption from national laws, or their weak arrangements to ensure compliance (Cotula & Mouan, 2021). In line with this, Ethiopian garment factories uncovered numerous labor rights abuses that may facilitate the GBV incident. For instance, a report by the Worker Rights Consortium (WRC) (2018) found out the existence of unreasonable wage deductions for minor disciplinary violations or slow performance, verbal abuse of workers by their supervisors, discrimination against pregnant workers, a high incidence of workers getting unconscious due to overwork and other factors, and forced overtime work. In addition, news outlets reported that workers in Ethiopian industrial parks have a risk of various forms of labor rights violation, including stifling the right to unionization (Addis Fortune, 2022). These situations call for examining the social and environmental dimensions of industrial parks in Ethiopia, including violence against women as part of the problem.

The majority of studies on GBV globally focus on domestic violence and sexual violence in the wider community, which does not give sufficient attention to the workplace and also fails to capture the wider spectrum of the issue. There are also previous empirical studies that tried to examine various labor abuses in the industrial parks in Ethiopia (Ferede, Berega, & Gurmessa, 2023; Tesema, 2024), though they are not specifically focused on GBV.

The Hawassa Industrial Park, which is located about 275 km south of Addis Ababa, is among the most prominent industrial parks, is designed specifically for textile and garment manufacturing. As of 2023, twenty-five global textile firms like PVH have invested in the park. This study focuses on Hawassa Industrial Park because this park is relatively well established compared to other parts of the country and also consists of a large number of companies that dominantly engage in apparel and garment businesses whose significant numbers of workers are women. In addition, the garment industry is a promising industry for the country's industrial development, as the sector represented almost half of the worldwide exports of manufactured products of Ethiopia in 2019 and 2020. In addition, this park is considered a model by the Ethiopian government for the construction and management of other industrial zones (Bessette, 2022).

This study provides insight about the prevalence of GBV, facilitating factors, and disclosure and help-seeking behavior among female workers in the industry parks, which are a new form of workplace context. The study will also create an opportunity to reduce violence against female

workers by understanding the magnitude and its root causes and designing appropriate prevention strategies and by providing timely and adequate support services to the victims. Therefore, this study assesses the prevalence of GBV among female workers, the factors that facilitate the act and disclosure and help-seeking behavior of the victims in the park.

## **2. Theoretical Background**

### **2.1 Concept of GBV**

GBV is defined as "any act of violence that results in or is likely to result in physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion, or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life (UNHCR, 2022). Based on the relationship between the perpetrator and victim, it is classified as intimate partner violence and non-intimate partner violence, whereas it is classified as physical, psychological, sexual, or economic violence based on the type of GBV act (USAID, 2010). According to the American Psychological Association, physical violence refers to 'a deliberate aggression or violent behavior by one person toward another that results in bodily injury. Psychological violence, or emotional abuse, on the other hand, is the use of verbal and nonverbal communication to intentionally harm a person's mental state or to control them. WHO (2002) also defined sexual violence as "any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work."

### **2.2 Prevalence of GBV in the Workplace**

Workplace violence is an incident where the employee faced abuse, threats, bullying, intimidation, sexual harassment, racial harassment, and other forms of psychological violence in circumstances related to their work, including commuting to and from work (Cheung & Yip, 2017; Pillinger, 2017). ILO defined as "violence and harassment directed at persons because of their sex or gender and has moved GBV up the agenda for occupational health and safety (ILO, 2019). Workplace violence, particularly sexual harassment, has received increasing attention around the world due to the 2017 "Me Too" movement. Through this movement, women around the world made their experiences of sexual violence public; a substantial part of these experiences took place in their working lives (Vogelstein, Stone, & Burke, 2021). According to ILO, 8% of women and 5% of men worldwide had experienced sexual violence at work (ILO, 2022). However, women are disproportionately affected by violence in the workplace too, where they are asked for sexual favors, exposed to inappropriate jokes and comments, and experience unwanted physical contact that can amount to assault. Violence in the workplace resulted in direct costs stemming from accidents, illness, disability, and death; absenteeism; attrition of staff; and the like, and the indirect costs related to reduced work performance and the intangible costs, including damage to the image of an organization, decreased motivation, reduced

creativity, and disruption of the work environment (Jackson & Ashley, 2005). Despite its high prevalence and broad consequences, workplace violence, particularly GBV at work, remains underreported because of fear, stigma, blame, concern around retaliation, and further violence (Palermo & Peterman, 2011).

A research conducted on women union garment workers in Cambodia found that 87 percent of women garment workers had experienced verbal harassment or unwanted touching at work. In the same research, 71 percent of union women garment workers in Indonesia reported experiencing GBV at their work place (Solidarity Center, 2019). Similarly, a survey of 200 garment workers in Bangladesh in 2019 shows that 80 percent of the respondents reported that they had experienced sexual violence in their workplace (Benton, 2019). The research conducted on female garment workers in Indonesia found that 71% of them reported that they were experiencing GBV at their workplace. A survey carried out in Uganda among over 2,910 organizations showed that 90 percent of female employees had been sexually harassed by their male superiors while they are at work. A study by Worke, Koricha, and Debelew (2020) on the Prevalence of sexual violence in Ethiopian workplaces shows that the prevalence of sexual violence in Ethiopian workplaces is high, especially in the health sector and hospitality industry. The magnitude of overall violence against female construction workers in Addis Ababa was high (Asegu, et. al., 2023). The above empirical studies indicated that different forms of violence, including sexual violence, were prevalent all over places in the world. These violent acts show that GBV was directed against men and women, though it disproportionately affects female workers.

Though there are a wide range of acts that are considered GBV according to the UN Convention for the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, this study used the physical, psychological, and sexual dimensions of GBV as a conceptual framework while assessing it in the workplace. In addition, the ecological model of GBV was used to qualitatively explore the factors that facilitate the act of GBV in Hawassa Industry Park, which categorize the facilitating factors as personal, interpersonal, organizational, and social.

### **3. Research Methods**

This section presents study setting, participants, research approach, sampling and data collection procedures, measures of the core constructs, methods of data analysis and research ethics.

#### **3.1 Research Approach and Design**

The study employed a mixed research approach in order to get a comprehensive understanding of the issue by collecting, analyzing, and integrating both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative approach was applied to assess the prevalence of GBV in the study setting, examine the risk factors that increase the likelihood of GBV incidence, and assess the disclosure and help-seeking behavior of the victims. On the other hand, the qualitative study helps to explore the issue in depth and triangulate with the quantitative response since those who experienced them may be afraid to speak out.

The research design of the study is a convergent (embedded) mixed research strategy that helps the researcher to collect both quantitative and qualitative data at a time and integrate both results. Specifically, the study applied descriptive design, which was used since it helps to describe the state of affairs as it exists (Kothari, 2004).

### 3.2 Sampling Design

The target population of the study is female employees who have been working at Hawasa Industrial Parks for more than six months, as it is difficult to get sufficient respondents who worked there for a longer time due to the high turnover rate. Considering the total number of female workers in the selected industrial park as of 2023 (i.e., 21,768), the sample size of the quantitative respondents was determined using a sample size determination formula by Consuelo and Sevilla (2007), which is:

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

Where       $n$  = the number of required sample size  
                $N$  = the number of the target population, which is 21, 768 workers  
                $e$  = the margin of error which is 5%.

Therefore, the sample size was

$$n = \frac{21,768}{1 + 21,768(5\%)^2} = n = 393$$

Thus, convenience sampling was used to collect data from the female workers of the park at the gate of the park during home going time. This technique can be appropriate for selecting a sample when the members of the target population are homogeneous (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). In addition to this, qualitative data were collected from 10 purposively selected key informants who are assumed to have greater knowledge of the park, the GBV prevalence and facilitating factors, and the legal and institutional frameworks to respond to and prevent GBV in the park. The selected key informants were 2 employees of the park, 1 shed supervisor, 2 health professionals, 2 HR supervisors of two factories, 1 woman and children bureau officer, 1 security officer of the park, and 1 labor union leader.

### 3.3 Data Sources and Methods

The study used both primary and secondary data sources to collect data related to the prevalence of various forms of GBV, facilitating factors, and disclosure and help-seeking behavior of respondents. The sources of primary data are current female workers of the Industry Park, human resource management managers, shed supervisors, police officers, and officers from the Women and Children Affairs Bureau. Previous research articles, government laws and policies, company policies, and different reports were used as secondary data sources.

With regard to data collection methods, a validated survey questionnaire was used to collect data related to the different forms of GBV prevalent in the park and the risk factors that increase the likelihood of GBV occurrence. Qualitative data was gathered via semi-structured, in-depth interviews to triangulate the responses that were gathered via questionnaire. Thus, a semi-

structured interview guide was prepared and used to collect the qualitative data from key informants. Concerning the collection of the secondary data, the researcher conducted a desk review of national and regional legal frameworks, company anti-harassment policies, and reports.

### **3.4 Operational Definition**

The measurement tool was adapted from a previous study conducted by Abubeker et al. (2021). Thus, physical violence was assessed by asking a single question stated as, “Have you experienced any physical violence in the last six months in the park?” and five yes or no choices for exposure to different forms of physical violence (being slapped, pushed, hit with a fist, dragged, and thrown something at you). Psychological violence was assessed using a single question stated as, ‘Have you experienced any psychological violence in the last six months in the park?’ and four yes or no choices for exposure to different forms of psychological violence (being insulted, being humiliated, being intimidated, bullying, and referring to gender while insulting). Sexual violence was assessed by a single question stated as, “Have you experienced any sexual violence in the last six months in the park?” and five yes or no choices for exposure to different forms of sexual violence (discussing sex issues or telling vulgar jokes, staring, touching, making offensive remarks, and being forced to do something else sexual). The responses were categorized as yes or no, and a respondent who replied “yes” to at least one of the above-listed violent acts was considered a victim of GBV.

In addition, reporting/non-reporting of violence to the legal bodies is operationalized as reporting/non-reporting the GBV they had experienced to the concerned bodies in the park. A single question says, ‘Have you reported the GBV you experienced to the attention of the concerned bodies?’

### **3.5 Data Analysis Methods**

Descriptive analysis was employed to analyze and report the prevalence of various forms of GBV in the park, facilitating factors, disclosure, and help-seeking behavior of victims by using frequency and percentage. A chi-square test was used to assess the differences between the selected socio-demographic variables and any type of GBV during their lifetime. In addition, binary logistic regression was performed to determine to what extent the selected socio-demographic factors affect the experience of GBV among female workers of the park. Regarding the qualitative data, thematic analysis was used since it helps to examine narrations from in-depth interview responses by breaking the text into preconceived themes based on the conceptual framework used in this study.

### **3.6 Reliability Test**

Out of the 385 questionnaires, 345 of them were usable for further analysis. a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ) was computed to test the internal consistency of the responses. Cranach’s alpha value for physical violence was 0.854, psychological violence was 0.84, and sexual violence was

0.925, all of which show the existence of acceptable reliability ( $>.7$ ) in the responses (Hair et al., 2017).

## 4. Results and Discussions

### 4.1 Respondents Attributes

A total of 345 female Hawasa industry park workers completed the researcher-administered questionnaires. Most of the (83%) were aged 20-21 and came from rural areas (81%). Regarding their marital status, the majority of them (81%) were single. In addition, the majority of the respondents (77%) attained only lower-level high school (9–10 grades). It is also revealed that the majority of the respondents (78%) earn a monthly base salary of less than 1500 birr (which means less than \$15 per month) plus some variable pay based on performance, which is not adequate to sustain their lives. As a result, the majority of the respondents (81.7%) cope with low wages by cohabiting. These results show that most industry park female workers are young, migrated from rural areas for aspiring better opportunities, faced meager wages, and cohabited. This implies that the female workers of the park are vulnerable to GBV, as being young and with low incomes makes women more vulnerable to various types of GBV (Abubeker et al., 2021).

### 4.2 Exposure to GBV in the Workplace

A total of 76.1% of respondents had faced at least one form of physical violence in the last six months as it is indicated in the table below (Table 4.1). Specifically, 81.4% were slapped, 83.5% were pushed, 75.4% were hit with a fist or something that hurt, 73% were dragged, and 67.2% were thrown something on them. According to the interview participants, they faced various types of physical violence, including throwing things they had around, such as paper or cloth, dragging, and pushing rarely.

Table 4.1: Exposure of any type of GBV in the park

Physical Violence (n=345)	Yes (%)	Psychological violence (n=345)	Yes (%)	Sexual violence (n=345)	Yes (%)
Slapped you	81.4	Insulted me or made me feel bad	98.3	Attempted to discuss sex issue or tell vulgar jokes	79.4
Pushed you	83.5	Humiliated me in front of other people	93	Staring at me in a way that made me uncomfortable	83.2
Hit me with fist or with anything else	75.4	Done things to scare me on purpose	95.4	Touched me in a way that made me feel uncomfortable	76.8
Choked me on purpose or dragged me	73	Referred my gender while insulting	90.4	Make offensive remarks about my appearance	82.5
thrown something at me	67.2			Force me to do something else sexual that you did not want	59.1
Average	76.1	Average	94.27	Average	76.2

Source: Survey data (2024)

As it is shown in the table above (Table 4.1), a total of 94.3% of participants had experienced at least one form of psychological violence in the last six months. Concerning types of



psychological violence, 98.3% of the participants were insulted, 93% were humiliated in front of others, 95.4% were threatened to be scared, and 90.4% were referred to by their gender while insulted. The interview participants discussed that managers insult and shout at them, threaten them with expulsion from their job, and insult them using indecent words such as useless, donkey, and stones. In addition, they revealed that pregnant women are implicitly excluded from the recruitment process since they believe it inhibits production performance. This finding confirms with previous studies as they found out that workers in apparel and garment factories are routinely subject to verbal abuse, such as shouting; managers call them stupid, worthless, or trash, threaten to fire them, and castigate pregnant workers as if they are looking to avoid hard work and exclude them from employment (WRC, 2018; Tesema, 2024). Similarly, research conducted on female garment workers in Cambodia found out that 87% of women garment workers interviewed had experienced verbal harassment or unwanted touching at work (Solidarity Center, 2019).

Regarding sexual violence (Table 4.1), 76.2% of the respondents experienced one form of sexual violence in the last six months. Specifically, 79.4% experienced vulgar jokes, 83.2% experienced unwanted sexual attention (staring), 76.8% faced unwanted touch, 82.5% faced offensive comments on their body, and 59.1% experienced sexual coercion. As per the interview participants, women working in the park face various types of sexual violence, such as calling to the office for no reason, body touching, following them when they go to the women's toilets, showing sexual signs, and convincing them to have sex outside the park in exchange for money or for the removal of punishment or getting a promotion. However, company human resource officers claimed that sexual violence is a once-in-a-blue-moon incident within the park compound, but female workers face various forms of sexual violence, such as hacking and rape, while on their way to or from work. These findings are in line with findings of other studies. For example, a study conducted on 200 garment workers in Bangladesh shows that 80% of the respondents reported that they had experienced sexual violence and harassment in their work environment (Benton, 2019). Similarly, previous assessments made on Bole Lemi and Hawassa industry parks confirm the existence of sexual violence within and outside the park in the form of rape and sexual coercion, which managers use their power for granting of leave and promotion in exchange for sex (WRC, 2018). In general, it was found out that all sampled female workers in the park experience at least one form of GBV, which is dominantly psychological violence. This implies that GBV is one of the labor rights issues that need to be addressed in the park.

Table 4.2 shows the perpetrators of the physical violence. Regarding the perpetrators of physical violence, the majority of them were Ethiopian managers and supervisors (n = 200, 59.3%), followed by foreign managers and supervisors (n = 134, 39.8%), male office staff (n = 4, 1.2%), and male coworkers (n = 5, 5%). Psychological violence was mainly committed by Ethiopian managers and supervisors (n = 199, 57.7%), followed by foreign managers and supervisors (n = 177, 51.3%), male office staff (n = 24, 7%), and male coworkers (n = 4, 1.2%). In contrast, foreign managers and supervisors are the ones who practice sexual violence the most (n = 199, 61%), followed by Ethiopian managers and supervisors (n = 148, 45.4%), male office

staff (n = 18, 5.5%), and male coworkers (n = 16, 4.9%). The result shows that majority of the GBV perpetuated by managers or supervisor whether they are nationals or foreign. However, the data from interview participants shows that there are few lower level female supervisors who similarly perpetuate various forms of psychological violence including insult and threatening.

Table 4.2: Perpetuators of Physical, Psychological and Sexual Violence.

Perpetuator *	Physical violence (n= 353 )		Psychological violence (n=404)		Sexual violence (n=381)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Male Manager or supervisor (national)	200	59.3	199	57.7	148	45.4
Male Manager or Supervisor (foreign)	134	39.8	177	51.3	199	61
Male Office staff	4	1.2	24	7	18	5.5
Male Coworker	15	0.045	4	1.2	16	4.9
Total	353	104.7	104	117.1	381	116.9

\*Multiple responses are possible; PV=Physical violence; items were dichotomized (yes and no) during data collection

Source: Survey data (2024)

A chi- square test of independence was computed to determine whether socio demographic factors age, origin, and living condition are independent of physical violence and sexual violence. Psychological violence and the socio demographic factor were excluded from the test since it violates the test assumption which requires a cell to have a case > 5. Based on this, a chi-square test for independence result in the table below (Table 4.3) indicated that there is significant association between age and sexual violence  $\chi^2 (1, n=345) = 7.38, p = 0.025, \phi = 0.145$  and there is no significant association between age and physical violence. A chi-square test for independence result in the same table (Table 4.3) indicated that there is significant association between origin and sexual violence  $\chi^2 (1, n=345) = 7.458, p = 0.0254, \phi = 0.147$  and there is no significant association between origin and physical violence. Similarly, there is significant association between current living condition and physical violence  $\chi^2 (1, n=345) = 7.740, p = 0.005, \phi = 0.15$  and there is significant association between current living condition and sexual violence  $\chi^2 (1, n=345) = 10.724, p = 0.005, \phi = 0.176$ . This indicate that young female workers were more likely to experience sexual violence than adult female workers; female workers from rural origin are more likely to experience sexual violence than female workers from urban origin and female workers who live alone were more likely to experience physical and sexual violence than those who cohabit.

Table 4.3: chi- square test of Independence Result

Variable (n=345)		Type of GBV					
		Physical violence			Sexual violence		
		Yes	No	Chi-square	Yes	No	Chi-square
Age	young, n=285	215 (75.4%)	70 (24.6%)	Chi <sup>2</sup> =2.567 P=0.109	211 (74%)	74 (26%)	Chi <sup>2</sup> =7.383 P=0.025
	Adult, n=60	5 (15%)	9 (85%)		54 (90%)	6(10%)	
Origin	Urban, n=43	38 (88.4%)	5 (11.6%)	Chi <sup>2</sup> =3.534 P=0.060	38 (88.4%)	5 (11.6%)	Chi <sup>2</sup> =7.458 P=0.024
	Rural, n=302	228 (75.5%)	74 (24.5%)		225 (74.5%)	77 (25.5%)	
Current living condition	Alone, n=21	11 (52.4%)	10 (47.6%)	Chi <sup>2</sup> =7.740 P=0.005	10 (47.6%)	11 (52.4%)	Chi <sup>2</sup> =10.724 P=0.005
	Cohabit, n=324	266 (77.1%)	79 (22.9%)		255 (78.7%)	69 (21.3%)	

Source: Survey data (2024)

### 4.3 Factors Facilitating GBV

Though a plethora of factors may facilitate the act of GBV in organization, in this study the socio demographic attributes of the respondents (age, marital status, parents residence, living situation, monthly salary and education level) were considered and examined to what extent they predict the variance in experience to GBV using binary logistic regression technique. Binary logistic regression was performed to determine how age, place of origin, marital status, condition of living, monthly salary, and educational status affect a female worker's experience with GBV. The full model containing all predictors was statistically significant,  $\chi^2(6, N = 345) = 52.3, p < .001$ , indicating that the model was able to distinguish between respondents who experienced GBV and who had not experienced GBV. The model as a whole explained between 14.1% (Cox and Snell R square) and 21.3% (Nagelkerke R square) of the variance in GBV experience and correctly classified 79.4%.

As shown in the table below (Table 4.4). Only three of the independent variables made a statistically significant contribution to the model (living situation, marital status, and education level). Age, monthly salary, and parents' residence place didn't contribute significantly to the model. The strongest predictor of exposure to GBV was marital status, recording an odds ratio of 3.39. This indicates that respondents who were married were over three times more likely to experience GBV than those who were single, controlling for all other factors. Regarding living situation, those respondents who live alone were .27 more likely to be exposed to GBV than those who cohabit with friends or family, controlling for other variables in the model. In addition, those respondents who were lower than grade 10 were 0.015 times more likely to be

exposed to GBV than those who completed grade 10 and above, controlling for other variables in the model.

Table 4.4: Logistic Regression Test Result

		B	S.E.	Wald	df	Sig.	Exp(B)	95% C.I. for EXP(B)	
								Lower	Upper
Step 1 <sup>a</sup>	Age	-0.718	0.534	1.809	1	0.179	0.488	0.171	1.389
	Parents Residence	0.594	0.559	1.128	1	0.288	1.810	0.605	5.413
	Marital status	1.223	0.492	6.189	1	0.013	3.399	1.296	8.910
	Cohabit	-1.287	0.557	5.342	1	0.021	0.276	0.093	0.822
	Monthly salary	1.026	1.319	0.605	1	0.437	2.790	0.210	37.007
	Education level	-4.233	1.386	9.333	1	0.002	0.015	0.001	0.219
	Constant	-0.339	0.763	0.198	1	0.657	0.712		

Source: Survey data (2024)

Furthermore, the factors that were identified from the responses of interview participants were analyzed thematically and categorized the factors as personal, work related, organizational and social. Accordingly, the victim lack of awareness about GBV, their labour right and company policies and economic problem were considered as personal factors while cultural differences between the workers and managers/supervisors as the main personal and work unit level factor respectively. In addition to this, lack of strict implementation of company policies including anti-harassment policy, low compensation and benefit, production-centered management practice and secrecy over the park operation and a lack of government control over the operation of the industry park investors were identified as the main organizational-related factors that facilitate the act of GBV in the park. Finally, **participants identified** patriarchal culture and existences of poor security are the outside factors that aggravate GBV in the parks. In general, the analysis revealed that though all factors have a role in facilitating the act of GBV in the industry park, personal factors such as marital status, living situation and education level are the main factors that facilitate GBV incidents.

#### 4.4 Disclosure and Help Seeking Behavior

Even if industry parks are exempted from regular tax laws in Ethiopia, labor laws and other international and regional laws that Ethiopia has ratified, international treaties, and the Ethiopian

laws, including the labor law, which has addressed many gender issues, including GBV, equally apply in the industrial parks. In addition, the interview with two factory managers in the park showed that even if there are violations of the company's own labor standards and effective implementation of the country's labor law, almost all companies that are operating in the park have their anti-harassment policies, as it is one of the criteria by which their buyers evaluate them before purchasing.

The study examined the disclosure and help-seeking behavior of female workers who have experienced any type of GBV in the park. From the 345 female respondents who have experienced either form of GBV, the majority of them (72.8%) have not reported, while 94 (27.2%) of them reported the GBV incident they faced. In addition, out of the 94 who reported the incident, most of them (63%) believed that they did not obtain adequate support. This shows the existence of a low tendency to disclose the GBV incident and seek help from the responsible body among the victims. Previous studies also show that most of the GBV incidents are underreported in the park as well as in other places (Nebiyu, 2022; Palermo & Peterman, 2011). This implies that companies in the park, the government, and other stakeholders misunderstand the actual scope of the issue, which is a barrier to addressing the GBV problem effectively since it requires identifying all the cases of GBV that lie under the tip of the iceberg.

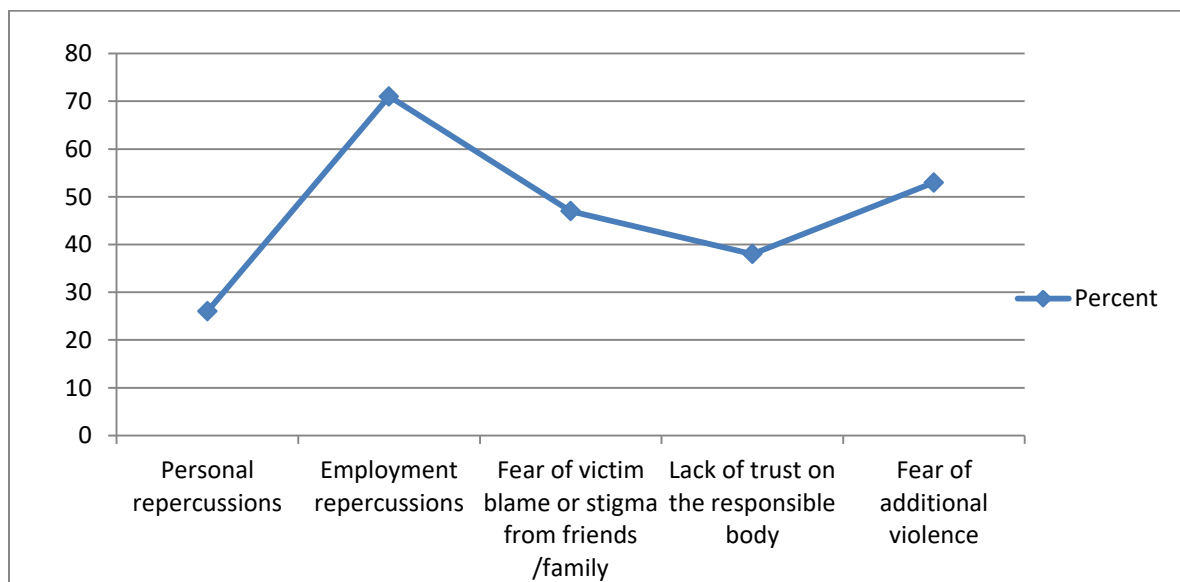


Figure 4.1: Reason for not reporting GBV incident

The 251 respondents who failed to report asked why they failed to report the incident. The figure above (Figure 4.1) shows that the majority of the respondents (71%) failed to report because they feared repercussion related to their employment, followed by fear of additional violence (53%) and fear of victim blame or stigma from friends/family (47%). Previous studies also identified the main reasons why the GBV victims reported the incidence, such as the sense of shame, fear of retaliation, economic dependence, imbalance in perpetrator/victim power relations, victim blaming, and the like (Moriña et al., 2024).

## 5. Conclusions and the Way Forward

Industrial parks, especially those dominated with apparel and garment companies, have the majority of workers who are young women from rural areas. These women are highly vulnerable to various forms of GBV due to the limited awareness and experience on many issues and the meager wage they get from their employment. Though it's found out that GBV is prevalent in the parks, the actual scope of the issue is misunderstood since victims have a low tendency to report and seek help mainly due to fear of retaliation, which is a barrier to addressing the GBV problem effectively. Finally, though the country's labor law is equally applied in the park and also most of the companies operating in the park have a robust set of labor standards, it has failed to prevent numerous GBV episodes in the parks they operate in in Ethiopia to which it applies.

Therefore, the government of Ethiopia should monitor and audit the implementation of the labor law, anti-harassment policies of the companies, and other local and international laws that are in place to prevent GBV. For this purpose, gender offices should be institutionalized and should be undertaken so as to prevent it in industry corporation branches, which are responsible for managing the parks. In addition, the park administration should ensure the effective implementation of human resource policies and anti-harassment of the companies, put in place a comprehensive GBV risk assessment and prevention system among companies operating in the park, and ensures accountability of GBV perpetrators. Moreover, labor unions in the industrial parks should be strengthened since they ensure the effective implementation of laws and policies and increase the tendency to fight for the rights of the park workers, including minimum wage floor and various abuses, including GBV. In addition, awareness rising about GBV should be done among female workers, particularly the women who came from rural areas through various capacity development training interventions in collaboration with stakeholders.

Finally, the study has several limitations as it relies on a descriptive cross-sectional study, which cannot establish a causal relationship between the main factors and GBV incidents. It is suggested that future research studies examine the cause-and-effect relationship between the factors and GBV incidences and further explore the GBV incidence in industrial parks of Ethiopia.

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