

HUMAN RESOURCE DYNAMICS IN TANZANIA'S RAIL SECTOR: A GENDER EQUALITY AND SOCIAL INCLUSION (GESI) ANALYSIS

N TANZARN

Independent International Consultant; Plot 21A Ismail Road, Mbuya, Kampala-Uganda; Email: tanzarn@yahoo.co.uk; info@nitetanzarn.com

ABSTRACT

This paper presents a Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) analysis of human resource dynamics within Tanzania's rail sector, focusing on the representation, participation, voice, and capacities of its workforce. It uncovers significant gender imbalances, with women markedly underrepresented in both technical fields and leadership roles. Through a comprehensive review of the legislative framework, workplace policies, and prevailing cultural attitudes, the analysis identifies a range of barriers hindering women's full engagement in the sector. These include obstacles to entering STEM-related fields, inadequate workplace facilities, and a general lack of gender-sensitive practices despite supportive legal provisions. Employing a mix of document review, key informant interviews, and extensive surveys, the study offers a detailed insight into these challenges. It advocates for a multifaceted strategy that not only tackles structural and cultural barriers but also fosters an environment where women can fully engage and excel. This includes policy reforms, targeted educational programs, and enhancements to workplace infrastructure, all aimed at harmonising the sector's human resource practices with international standards for gender equality. The ambition is to pave the way for the Tanzanian rail sector to become a model of gender inclusivity, thereby driving socio-economic growth and setting a benchmark for GESI in the wider transport industry.

Keywords: Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI), Human Resource Dynamics, Tanzania Rail Sector, Gender Representation, Inclusive Workplace Practices, Gender-Sensitive Infrastructure.

1. INTRODUCTION

The transport sector, globally recognised for its critical contribution to economic and social progress, exhibits pronounced gender dynamics. Worldwide, this sector tends towards male predominance, a pattern that is particularly evident within rail transport. This imbalance extends beyond employment figures, influencing workplace culture, policy structures, and career advancement opportunities. Rail transport, with its complex technical requirements and strategic importance, reflects these broader industry tendencies, often accentuating the gender disparities present.

In Tanzania, the rail industry, represented by the Tanzania Railway Corporation (TRC) and the Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA), exemplifies this male-dominated setting. While the rail sector plays a crucial role in the national economy by facilitating domestic and international trade, women remain notably underrepresented. This underrepresentation is especially marked in technical roles and leadership positions,

where female presence is minimal. The participation of women in the rail industry not only enriches the workforce but also brings diverse perspectives essential for innovative and sustainable growth.

This paper investigates the state of gender representation within Tanzania's rail sector. It carefully analyses the obstacles that hinder female participation and advancement, thereby illuminating the wider implications for gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) within this key industry. Through thorough examination, this discussion seeks to uncover the root causes of gender imbalances and to identify effective strategies for creating a more inclusive and equitable rail sector in Tanzania. Our aim is to offer concrete insights and actionable strategies to harness opportunities for enhanced gender equality and social inclusion, setting a precedent for GESI within the transport sector at large.

Through this analysis, we aspire to contribute to the transformation of the Tanzanian rail sector into a more equitable domain, thereby not only advancing the nation's transport industry but also reinforcing the commitment to GESI in a region poised for growth and innovation.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research undertaken in 2022 employed a comprehensive methodology to gain insights into gender dynamics within Tanzania's rail sector. The approach included a meticulous document review and structured interviews with key informants, coupled with a broad survey conducted both online and offline.

2.1 Document Review

The initial phase involved an extensive review of existing documentation related to gender representation and policies within the rail industry. This provided a foundational understanding of the sector's current state and historical context.

2.2 Key Informant Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with staff from the Tanzania Railways Corporation, focusing on staff in various roles such as engineers, human resource management, social safeguards specialists, and gender focal points. Further engagement with external entities like the Engineers Registration Board (ERB), Contractors Registration Board (CRB), Institution of Engineers Tanzania (IET) Women Chapter, and the Ministry of Health, Community Development, Gender, Elders and Children enriched the research with diverse perspectives.

2.3 Surveys

The research methodology was significantly enhanced by a comprehensive survey component conducted in 2022, encompassing both online and offline methods. This survey reached a total of 419 respondents, with 125 participating online and 294 through paper surveys. Among these participants, 39.9 percent (166) were female and 60.1 percent (252) were male, reflecting a diverse cross-section of the sector. The survey also achieved a broad geographical representation, with 16 percent (67) of the responses coming from headquarter staff and a substantial 84 percent (352) from station staff. This methodological approach provided a robust data set, enabling a detailed analysis of gender dynamics within the Tanzanian rail sector.

3. GENDER REPRESENTATION IN THE TANZANIAN RAIL SECTOR

The Tanzanian Constitution, Vision 2025, and the Employment and Labour Relations Act of 2004 set a framework for gender equality, advocating affirmative action, non-discrimination, and equal employment opportunities. The Constitution guarantees women's rights, mandating equal opportunities without discrimination. Vision 2025's commitment is to gender balance and women's empowerment in all socio-economic and political spheres. The Employment and Labour Relations Act of 2004 promotes equality and allows affirmative action to eliminate workplace discrimination.

However, despite these provisions and the global push for gender equality and social inclusion, the Tanzanian rail sector continues to display significant gender imbalances.

Within the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC), women's participation is disproportionately low. They comprise just 10 percent of TRC's staff and 12 percent of its management. Such a small percentage of women in influential roles limits their impact on decision-making and organisational culture, potentially stalling the advancement of gender-sensitive practices and a diverse workplace environment.

In officer roles, women's representation increases to 21.7 percent, but this figure falls to 8.3 percent for non-officer positions. The resulting gender divide suggests that women face hurdles in entering and progressing within the sector, which affects career development and contributes to a workforce hierarchy skewed against them.

The situation is more acute in technical roles, with women making up 18 percent of TRC engineers. This severe underrepresentation in STEM areas within rail highlights the gender barriers that persist and the stereotypes that discourage women from pursuing such careers.

Additionally, only 12.9 percent of station masters and 2.4 percent of more than 1,400 artisans are women, indicating pervasive gender imbalances in both operational leadership and skilled manual roles. This imbalance illustrates the extensive challenges women encounter in sectors traditionally dominated by men.

Notably concerning is the complete absence of women among over 130 locomotive drivers. This gap suggests significant barriers to entry and progression for women in these roles and potentially reflects an industry not perceived as welcoming to female employees.

This widespread underrepresentation carries significant consequences for the diversity, equity, and efficacy of the rail industry. It reinforces outdated gender stereotypes and biases in career selection, deterring women from considering rail transport as a viable career path, especially in roles traditionally viewed as suitable only for men.

A workforce enriched with diverse experiences and viewpoints is essential for driving innovation, enhancing problem-solving skills, and improving decision-making. Hence, it is crucial for the rail sector to become more inclusive and resilient, ensuring it is well-positioned to face future challenges. Addressing these imbalances is not just a matter of fairness but also a strategic imperative for the development of the rail industry in Tanzania.

4. PERCEIVED BARRIERS TO WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN THE RAIL SECTOR

The survey results indicate a variety of perceived barriers that affect women's participation in the railway industry within TRC and Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA), and their engagement as government employees, contractors, consultants, and private operators.

4.1 Few Girls and Women in STEM

The underrepresentation of girls and women in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) presents a fundamental barrier to formal employment. A significant 72.4% of survey respondents recognise this gap as a crucial issue.

Discussions with members of the Institution of Engineers Tanzania Women Chapter reveal that while the number of girls entering universities has seen some improvement, the participation rate remains low. Many female students face cultural pressures, including expectations to manage household work, which can negatively impact their academic performance and reduce their numbers in STEM subjects. Additionally, the tendency for girls to start families during their university years further affects their continued presence in these fields.

In Tanzanian secondary schools, students begin to choose between arts or sciences as early as S.2, with science subjects, the precursors to engineering, attracting more boys than girls. This critical juncture can significantly shape career paths, reinforcing the gender disparity seen in later stages of education and professional life.

The root of the problem lies in these early educational stages. To cultivate a more balanced gender representation in STEM, it is essential to implement strategies that support girls through secondary education and into tertiary levels. This support must address cultural expectations and provide the necessary resources to ensure that women not only enter but also thrive in STEM disciplines.

4.2 Physically Demanding Work in the Rail Sector

Over two-thirds of survey respondents (67.7%) view the physical demands of rail work as a barrier to women's participation. This perception necessitates ergonomic assessments and the provision of suitable equipment and support, making the physical tasks within the rail industry more accessible to women.

However, this perspective may be rooted in misconceptions. In Tanzania, the agricultural sector engages about 75% of the workforce, with women constituting 80% of this number. A significant portion of agricultural labour is carried out manually, without the aid of labour-saving or time-saving technologies, rendering it physically demanding. This raises the question: why are the physical demands of the rail sector seen as a barrier when women already perform strenuous tasks in agriculture?

The discrepancy may stem from entrenched stereotypes about the kinds of physical work deemed appropriate for women. The perception that the rail sector is unsuitable for women due to its physical demands does not align with the reality of women's capabilities, as demonstrated in the agricultural sector. To challenge and change these stereotypes, the rail industry must reassess its workplace practices and actively promote inclusivity in all roles, regardless of physical demands.

4.3 Lack of Childcare Facilities in the Workplace

The survey reveals that more than half of the respondents (56.2%) consider the lack of childcare facilities at work a significant barrier. The Employment and Labour Relations Act of 2004, while not mandating childcare provisions, does stipulate that breastfeeding employees are entitled to breaks for this purpose, up to two hours daily during work hours. This indicates that, at the very least, employers should facilitate breastfeeding facilities.

However, it appears that the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) does not provide such facilities. Female engineers report having to resort to improvisation for breast-pumping, which is far from ideal. Without dedicated childcare facilities, breastfeeding mothers may have to travel home to nurse, which is impractical and undermines the intent of the Act's provision.

The absence of on-site childcare facilities not only inconveniences working mothers but can also impact their job performance and career progression. It presents a clear need for the TRC and similar organisations to consider the establishment of such facilities to support their female workforce effectively, enabling them to balance their professional and parental responsibilities.

4.4 Inadequate Housing and Other Facilities at Railway Stations

A slight majority of the survey participants (51.2%) identify inadequate housing and facilities at railway stations as a significant issue. Often located in remote areas with few neighbours, these stations present particular challenges for safety and security, especially for single women. Furthermore, there is insufficient access to health and educational services, and the housing provided is typically designed with single men in mind, neglecting the needs of families or women.

These old structures and the lack of supportive amenities partly explain why only 12.9 percent of station masters are women. Enhancing living conditions and facilities at these stations is essential. By doing so, the rail industry could become a more appealing and supportive environment for women, potentially increasing their representation in roles such as station masters.

4.5 Inadequate Restroom and Locker Room Facilities

Just over half of the survey respondents (50.9%) agree that inadequate restroom and locker room facilities present a barrier in the workplace. The Occupational Health and Safety Act of 2003 mandates employers to ensure a safe and healthy working environment. This includes the provision of separate changing rooms, as well as sanitary and washroom facilities for women, men, and persons with disabilities. However, the absence of these separate facilities can significantly hinder women's participation in the workforce.

Lack of privacy and adequate sanitation facilities can lead to situations where women are exposed to gender-based violence and harassment. The absence of disposal bins for sanitary products forces women to keep used sanitary ware in their personal spaces, such as drawers or hand bags, which is unhygienic and undignified. Moreover, when facilities lack running water, it becomes challenging for women to manage their hygiene, particularly during their menstrual periods, further compounding the barrier to their full participation and comfort in the workplace.

Ensuring well-maintained, gender-specific facilities is essential for compliance with health and safety laws, and it is vital for women to work with dignity and without health risks. These provisions are fundamental to creating an inclusive and welcoming work environment, and they play a critical role in removing barriers for all employees, especially women.

4.6 Few Women Role Models in the Railway Industry

Nearly half of the survey respondents (47.0%) point to the scarcity of female role models in the railway industry as a significant barrier. This is not unexpected, given the sector's underrepresentation of women and its perception as predominantly male-oriented. While there have been initiatives to increase women's participation in the road sector, similar efforts in rail are lacking.

The shortage of women in leadership or technical roles within the Tanzania Railways Corporation (TRC) and Tanzania-Zambia Railway Authority (TAZARA) means aspiring female professionals have few examples to follow. This dearth of mentorship and guidance can impede their professional growth and affect their sense of belonging in the industry.

The Engineers Registration Board (ERB) launched a structured engineering apprenticeship programme (SEAP) in 2003 to support graduate engineers in developing their professional competence over three years. The Tanzania Engineers Registration (Amendment) Act of 2007 requires graduate engineers to accumulate at least three years of practical experience to qualify as professional engineers. The Institution of Engineers Tanzania (IET) Women Chapter reports an increase in women's participation in SEAP, a positive development attributed partly to Norwegian support, which facilitated training for 200 female engineers in three years.

Implementing mentorship programmes and visibility campaigns is essential to cultivate female role models in the railway industry. Such initiatives would not only support women's professional development but also inspire a new generation of female railway professionals, contributing to a more gender-balanced and inclusive sector.

4.7 The Railway Industry is Less Inclined to Employ Women

Approximately 42.8 percent of respondents believe the railway industry shows a reluctance to employ women, suggesting potential biases in hiring practices. Combatting this requires a commitment to equal opportunities and the active promotion of gender diversity in recruitment efforts.

The Employment and Labour Relations Act of 2004 sets a clear mandate against workplace discrimination, demanding that employers avoid discrimination, whether direct or indirect, against employees in any employment policy or practice, on grounds including but not limited to sex, gender, pregnancy, marital status, or family responsibility.

The Institution of Engineers Tanzania (IET) Women Chapter has highlighted the particular difficulties women face in securing employment within the private sector, noting an absence of flexibility. Pregnant women, for instance, often find themselves at a disadvantage in recruitment processes. The private sector's hesitation, driven by concerns over the financial implications of maternity leave, leads to the exclusion of young women of

reproductive age. This exclusion is underpinned by a profit-maximization rationale that views the provision of maternity leave as economically unfeasible.

Additionally, women themselves may be reluctant to accept positions in remote locations due to safety concerns or the desire to remain close to their families. These challenges underscore the need for more inclusive employment practices within the railway industry and the broader engineering sector, ensuring women can participate fully and safely in their chosen professions.

4.8 Women are Not Aware of the Opportunities in Rail

Approximately 37.4 percent of respondents agree that a significant number of women remain unaware of the opportunities available within the railway industry. The lack of awareness among women about these opportunities can be attributed to several factors, including traditional gender roles, stereotypes about the suitability of rail jobs for women, and a general lack of visibility of female professionals within the industry. To bridge this information gap, it is essential to develop and implement strategies that effectively reach out to potential female candidates.

These strategies might include collaboration with educational institutions, participation in career fairs, and the use of social media and other digital platforms to showcase the contributions of women in the rail industry. Highlighting success stories and providing clear information about training, mentorship programmes, and pathways to advancement within the sector can play a crucial role in attracting more women to consider careers in rail.

By raising awareness and challenging existing perceptions, the rail industry can work towards creating a more inclusive and diverse workforce, reflecting the broader societal shifts towards gender equality and empowerment.

4.9 Women Fear/are Not Interested in Working in Rail

Approximately 26.9 percent of respondents believe women either fear or lack interest in working in the rail industry, pointing to the need for a transformative change in its image and culture. The perception of rail jobs as high-risk occupations, often located in remote and potentially unsafe areas, alongside the industry's unappealing image and scarcity of female role models, contributes to this disinterest or apprehension. To attract more women, the rail sector must actively work towards creating a safer, more inclusive environment and rebrand itself to highlight the diverse, rewarding opportunities it offers.

4.10 Women Lack Capital to Become Rail Engineers/Contractors/Operators

Approximately 34.7% of respondents identify the lack of capital as a significant hurdle for women aspiring to become engineers, contractors, or operators in the sector. This financial barrier hampers women's ability to engage in entrepreneurial activities or pursue necessary training within the rail industry.

Financial solutions designed to meet the specific needs of women could play a pivotal role in fostering female entrepreneurship in the rail sector. The Public Procurement (Amendment) Act (PPA) of 2016 and its subsequent regulations mandate that all procurement entities allocate 30 percent of their annual procurement budget to special groups, including women, youth, older persons, and persons with disabilities. Despite this

provision, only 1.1 percent of the over 13,000 registered contracting firms are owned by women, indicating a gap in the effective utilisation of this legislation.

The cost of professional development programmes, such as the Structured Engineering Apprenticeship Programme (SEAP), also presents a financial challenge. Many women engineers find the approximate USD 250 monthly living allowance, totalling around USD 10,000 over three years for insurance and other incidentals, to be prohibitively expensive. Women constitute only 12 percent of the 33,899 registered engineers, a figure that, while not specific to the transport sector, signals their broader underrepresentation.

Furthermore, the ambition to become a locomotive driver is often thwarted by the high training costs, approximately USD 300, contributing to the absence of women in this role. Addressing these financial barriers through targeted support mechanisms, scholarships, and funding opportunities is crucial for increasing women's participation and representation in the rail sector.

4.11 Use of Foul Language in the Workplace

Approximately 27.2 percent of respondents identify the use of foul language in the workplace as an issue, highlighting concerns about professional conduct. This situation underscores the urgent necessity for the implementation of comprehensive codes of conduct alongside robust Human Resources policies. Such measures are essential to foster a respectful and professional work environment. Establishing clear guidelines on acceptable behaviour and communication, coupled with stringent enforcement mechanisms, can significantly mitigate the use of inappropriate language.

4.12 Sexual Harassment in the Workplace

Approximately 21.6 percent of respondents recognise sexual harassment as a pressing concern in the workplace, highlighting the need for decisive measures to foster a secure environment. The Employment and Labour Relations Act of 2004 categorises harassment as a discriminatory act and strictly prohibits it. Additionally, the Sexual Offences Special Provisions Act of 1998 (SOSPA) criminalises various forms of sexual misconduct, including harassment, imposing severe penalties for those convicted.

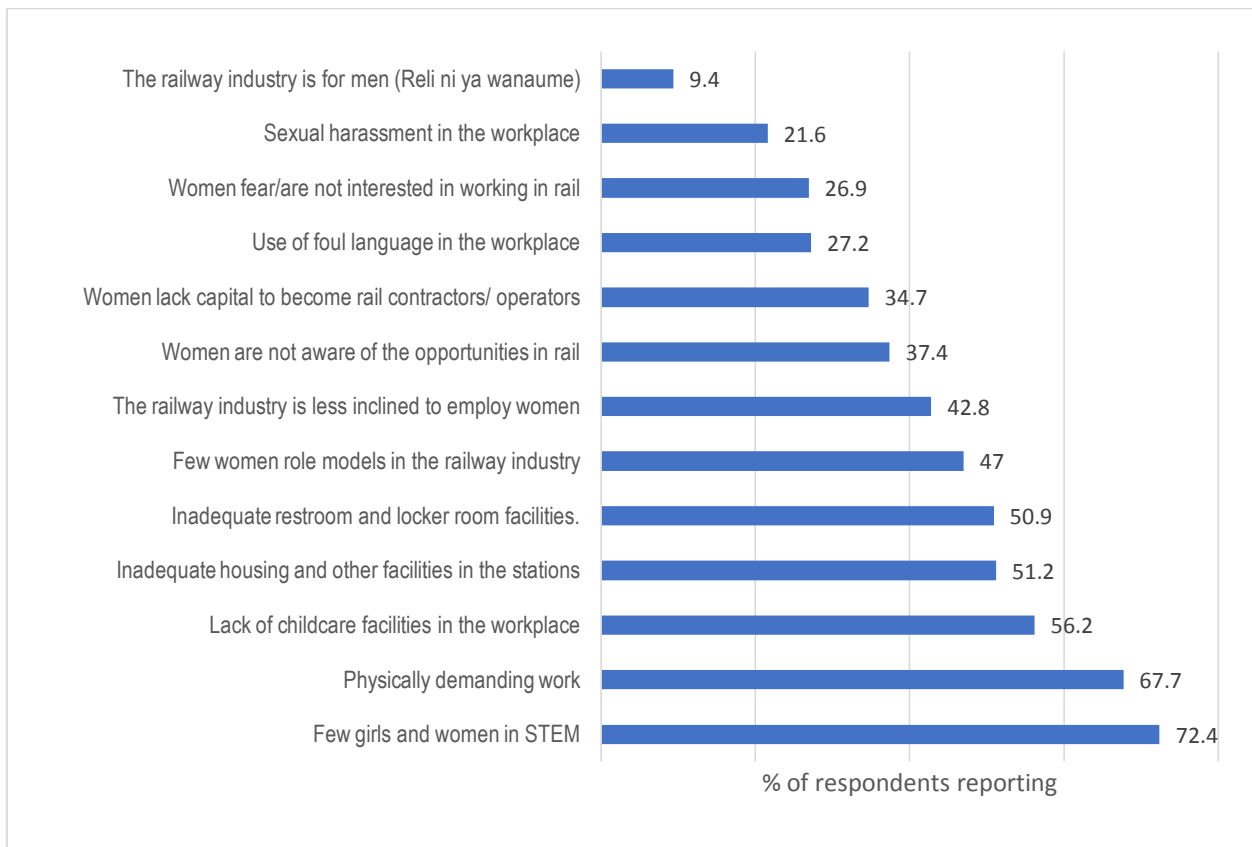
The Institution of Engineers Tanzania (IET) Women Chapter points out the underreporting of sexual harassment, often due to unclear definitions and understandings of such conduct. The Chapter has voiced concerns over the objectification of female engineers and the predatory behaviour they face. In response, the Engineers Registration Board (ERB) is developing a gender protection policy for the Structured Engineering Apprenticeship Programme (SEAP) to enhance workplace conduct.

In a significant move towards addressing these issues, the Tanzania Railway Corporation has drafted a Policy for Prevention and Response to Gender-Based Violence. This policy represents a proactive step in creating a safer, more respectful work environment, ensuring that all employees, particularly women, are protected from gender-based violence and harassment.

4.13 The Railway Industry is for Men (*Reli Ni Ya Wanaume*)

Only 9.4% of respondents agree with the statement "The railway industry is for men" (*Reli ni ya wanaume*). This suggests a positive shift in deeply rooted cultural stereotype that the

sector as an exclusively male domain. This change indicates that women entering the railway industry are no longer seen as transgressors but as rightful participants. This evolving mindset is a crucial step towards creating a more inclusive and diverse work environment within the railway sector.



Source: Tanzarn Nite, 2022. Tanzania Second Intermodal and Rail Development Project (TIRP 2). Gender survey of Tanzania Railways Corporation. Prepared for the World Bank

Figure 1: Perceived Barriers to Women’s Participation in Tanzania’s Railway Industry

5. LIMITED AWARENESS OF GOVERNMENT’S GESI COMMITMENTS

The discrepancy in awareness of the Tanzanian government's commitments to gender equality presents a significant barrier to the effective mainstreaming of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) in the rail sector. Statistics indicate that while there is a moderate level of awareness of constitutional obligations to mainstream GESI in the railways sector, the combined low to no knowledge is 25 percent.

For the Tanzania labour law provisions promoting decent employment opportunities for women, a combined 35.8 percent of respondents report low to no awareness. This pattern of limited knowledge extends to understanding the directives of the Development Vision 2025 with only 11.6 respondents indicating a high awareness. Furthermore, the gender equality and social inclusion provisions of the Public Procurement (Amendment) Act of 2016 are only highly known by 7.3% of respondents, with a worrying combined 50% having low to no awareness.

This lack of awareness could lead to minimal compliance with the laws and policies designed to protect and empower women, such as those outlawing discrimination and sexual harassment. For example, if staff members are not aware that sexual harassment is prohibited, the likelihood of reporting incidents or enforcing the law within the workplace is significantly reduced. This not only perpetuates the cycle of discrimination and

harassment but also undermines efforts to improve gender representation and create a supportive environment for women in the rail sector.

In conclusion, the lack of knowledge regarding gender commitments and protections is a barrier that intersects with and exacerbates other challenges faced by women in the rail industry. With statistics revealing a moderate level of awareness at best, there is a clear need to address this gap to ensure that GESI policies are both understood and implemented effectively.

Table 1: Level of Awareness of Government of Tanzania’s Commitments to Gender (n=419) - %

Government Commitment	High	Medium	Low	None
Constitutional obligations to mainstream gender in the railways sector	20.8	54.2	17.9	7.1
Tanzania labour law provisions for promoting decent employment opportunities for women	15.0	49.1	29.5	6.4
Gender policy directives of the Development Vision 2025	11.6	63.4	15.1	9.9
Gender equality and social inclusion provisions of the Public Procurement (Amendment) Act of 2016	7.3	41.8	35.8	15.2

Source: Tanzam Nite, 2022. Tanzania Second Intermodal and Rail Development Project (TIRP 2). Gender survey of Tanzania Railways Corporation. Prepared for the World Bank

6. INADEQUATE AWARENESS OF GENDER CONCEPTS

The survey data regarding the self-reported levels of understanding of gender concepts among reveals a nuanced picture of awareness, which is instrumental in the mainstreaming of Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) within the Tanzanian rail sector. Notably, a significant proportion of respondents demonstrate high to medium awareness of critical issues such as gender-based violence, sexual harassment, and life-work balance. However, despite these positive indicators, there remains a persistent gap in knowledge, with a noteworthy percentage of respondents exhibiting low to no understanding of these same issues.

For instance, while over a third of respondents exhibit high awareness of gender-based violence, a combined tenth remains minimally informed. This gap is concerning, as it can lead to underreporting and inadequate responses to such violence. Similarly, the awareness of sexual harassment in the workplace, although high for nearly 30%, is coupled with over 10% having scant knowledge, which could result in challenges to enforcing policies against such conduct effectively.

Moreover, the understanding of affirmative action and positive discrimination for women, which is high for just over a quarter of the participants, also shows that nearly one in ten respondents lacks basic awareness, possibly leading to resistance or misunderstandings about such policies' necessity. The concept of sexual exploitation and abuse shows a similar trend, with a high awareness rate that is overshadowed by a significant minority who remain uninformed.

These disparities in understanding are reflective of broader barriers to implementing GESI initiatives within the sector. The data suggests that while there is a foundation of awareness upon which to build, the lack of comprehensive understanding across all gender concepts can hinder the progress towards a fully inclusive and equitable work environment. To address these barriers, targeted educational initiatives and robust

communication strategies are required to elevate the understanding of gender issues across the board, ensuring that all members of the rail industry are equipped to foster and participate in a gender-responsive workplace.

Table 2: Self-Reported Levels of Understanding of Gender (n=419) - %

CONCEPT	HIGH	MEDIUM	LOW	NONE
Gender-based violence	36.7	53.2	6.3	3.8
Sexual harassment in the workplace	29.8	59.6	7.0	3.5
Life-work balance	28.3	63.0	5.2	3.5
Affirmative action for women	27.4	62.9	7.4	2.3
Sexual exploitation and abuse (towards beneficiaries/ partners)	27.1	58.8	8.2	5.9
Gender	26.6	67.8	3.4	2.3
Gender equity	25.8	65.6	7.0	1.6
Gender equality	22.0	73.4	2.3	2.3
Women's empowerment	20.6	69.1	7.4	2.9
Gender analysis	14.5	69.4	9.8	6.4
Gender mainstreaming	13.6	69.3	9.1	8.0
Women's time poverty	13.0	66.9	11.8	8.3
Sex/gender disaggregated data	12.9	74.1	8.2	4.7
Gender-responsive procurement	11.0	20.9	59.9	8.1
Gender-responsive budgeting	6.4	20.5	59.6	13.5

Source: Tanzarn Nite, 2022. Tanzania Second Intermodal and Rail Development Project (TIRP 2). Gender survey of Tanzania Railways Corporation. Prepared for the World Bank

7. THE ROLE OF WOMEN'S RIGHTS AND SOCIAL INCLUSION IN THE RAIL SECTOR

The significance of women's rights and social inclusion in the rail sector, particularly concerning its human resources, cannot be overstated. Integrating these principles transforms the sector from merely a means of transportation into a catalyst for social change and economic development. Here is why:

- Diverse perspectives enhance problem-solving:** Women bring unique insights and experiences, enriching the decision-making process. In a sector as dynamic and complex as rail transport, diverse perspectives lead to more creative solutions and innovative approaches to challenges.
- Equity promotes excellence:** Ensuring equal opportunities for women to participate in all aspects of the rail sector – from technical roles to leadership positions – elevates the standard of excellence. It sends a powerful message that meritocracy prevails, and the best talent is recognized and nurtured, irrespective of gender.
- Inclusion drives employee engagement:** When employees feel valued and included, their engagement and productivity increase. A rail sector that actively promotes GESI principles will benefit from a more committed and motivated workforce, leading to higher levels of service and operational efficiency.

4. **Reflecting societal values:** The rail sector is an integral part of the broader community it serves. By championing women's rights and social inclusion, the sector aligns itself with societal values, enhancing its reputation and strengthening its social license to operate.
5. **Economic growth through gender equality:** Numerous studies have shown that gender equality contributes to economic growth. By harnessing the full potential of its human resources, the rail sector can contribute significantly to the national economy.
6. **Precedent for Other Sectors:** The rail sector can set a benchmark for gender equality and social inclusion, inspiring other sectors to follow suit. This can lead to widespread societal benefits, including reduced gender gaps and enhanced social cohesion.

In conclusion, the integration of women's rights and social inclusion in the rail sector is not just a moral or legal imperative – it's a strategic investment in the sector's future and its role in societal advancement.

8. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Conclusions

The analysis of human resource dynamics in Tanzania's rail sector, through a gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) lens, has unearthed several critical insights. The sector, pivotal for Tanzania's economic and social development, is marred by pronounced gender imbalances, particularly in technical and leadership realms. Despite a robust legal framework advocating for gender equality and affirmative action, practical implementation falls short. Barriers are multifaceted, ranging from educational hurdles in STEM to workplace infrastructural inadequacies, all of which impede women's full participation and advancement.

A significant finding of this analysis is the dissonance between existing gender equality mandates and their realisation within the rail sector. This gap not only hampers the professional trajectory of women but also restricts the sector's potential for innovation and growth. The persistent underrepresentation of women, especially in decision-making and technical roles, limits the diversity of perspectives necessary for a dynamic and resilient rail sector.

Moreover, the survey highlighted a concerning lack of awareness about GESI commitments and gender concepts among sector professionals. This knowledge gap undermines the enforcement of gender-sensitive policies and contributes to the perpetuation of a workplace culture that is not fully inclusive.

8.2 Recommendations

1. Strengthen the implementation of existing gender equality laws within the rail sector. This includes rigorous enforcement of anti-discrimination laws, anti-sexual harassment laws, affirmative action, and the establishment of clear accountability mechanisms for GESI policies.

2. Launch targeted initiatives to encourage women's participation in STEM from early education through to higher education. This includes scholarships, mentorship programmes, and awareness campaigns to challenge stereotypes and promote rail sector careers among women.
3. Improve workplace conditions by ensuring the provision of essential facilities such as childcare, adequate housing, and gender-appropriate restrooms and locker rooms. These improvements are fundamental to creating a supportive environment for women.
4. Conduct comprehensive GESI training for all rail sector employees to elevate understanding and sensitivity towards gender issues. This should be complemented by campaigns to raise awareness of the legal rights and protections available to women in the workplace.
5. Increase the visibility of women in leadership and technical roles within the sector to inspire and encourage more women to pursue careers in rail. This could be achieved through mentorship programmes and highlighting success stories in sector communications.
6. Adopt and promote gender-inclusive recruitment practices to ensure a more balanced representation of women in all roles, including leadership and technical positions.

By addressing these recommendations, the Tanzanian rail sector can make significant strides towards achieving gender equality and social inclusion, thereby enhancing its capacity for innovation, sustainability, and growth.

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