

# Women in industry: Legal and Social Attitudes

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## Introduction

The Government of Zimbabwe has as one of its principles, the full integration of women in the development process of this country. It abhors any form of discrimination against women and has time and again vowed to fight all forms of discrimination against any members belonging to the Zimbabwean society, especially women, who for several decades have suffered from a double-edged exploitative environment created, on the one hand, by certain negative practices in Zimbabwe's culture and on the other, by successive colonial regimes. This of course is in line with the Government's policy of Socialism based on Marxist-Leninist principles, and the goal of full employment has been a cornerstone of Zimbabwe's economic policy since independence in 1980.

Nowadays women are legally assured the same status in the labour market as men. In practice, however, their work situation continues to differ in important respects from that of men, and their status remains weaker. While the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs has campaigned for equal rights for women, there is no evidence so far to show that the gap between the sexes in terms of both pay and job opportunities is closing. Extensive data on women's working life in Zimbabwe collected during the 'United Nations Decade for Women, 1975-1985' revealed that Zimbabwe is one of the most sexually segregated labour markets in Africa. This may surprise many who believed that equality between sexes was an accomplished fact in this country in view of the numerous Acts passed by Parliament geared towards putting women on the same par with men in all spheres of life. It remains to be seen to what extent the 'Labour Relations Act', which will be referred to in this paper, will have the desired effect of finally creating a single, unified and egalitarian labour market in Zimbabwe for both women and men.

This paper will attempt to look into factors affecting women's participation in industry: legal, and social attitudes.

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Finally, it should be noted that opinions expressed in this paper are solely the responsibility of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of the Institute.

Immediately after the resounding election victory of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU PF) which brought it into power in 1980, the Government adopted the policy of scientific Socialism based on Marxist-Leninist principles so as to redress the inequalities that had prevailed in the Zimbabwean society during the past 90 years of colonialism. Further, the enunciation of a socio-economic policy of "Growth with Equity" which states, *inter alia* that the Government is determined to forge ahead with the task of building a progressive, non-racial and egalitarian society which draws on the energies and abilities of all its peoples, without regard to their race, colour or creed<sup>1</sup> was probably based on the realisation that in order to achieve social justice in the Zimbabwean society, the Government had not only to achieve equitable distribution of resources between various sectors and societal groups, but also the rectification of historical and traditional economic and social imbalances affecting Zimbabwean communities such as those between men and women<sup>2</sup>. This approach acknowledges the fact that meaningful development presupposes the total involvement and judicious utilisation of all human and material resources.

ZANU (PF)'s 2nd Congress abhorred discrimination against women and urged the Government to 'abolish all laws which oppress or discriminate women in employment, both public or private'<sup>3</sup>. One can safely say therefore, that the achievement of socialist goals in Zimbabwe depends very heavily on productive engagement and productivity of all able-bodied individuals. Despite all the legal rights women have so far acquired, this however has not been so, and perhaps one of the reasons why Zimbabwe still experiences very low levels of development is that women have been largely and shamefully discriminated in areas where they could have contributed very significantly to development. For example in employment, access to loan and credit facilities, in education and training for managerial and professional skills, in joining co-operatives on individual basis, and soon. There is no doubt that Zimbabwe has made efforts legally since 1980 to integrate women on an equal footing with men in all sectors, but results speak for themselves<sup>4</sup>.

It is the intention of this paper to address itself to the question of how these obstacles have affected the effectiveness of women in the industrial sector. But before that, two propositions can be made:

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- 1 'Growth with Equity' - An Economic Policy Statement. Feb. 1981, pp. 8-9.
  - 2 See Opening Address delivered at the Meeting to discuss the Matrimonial Causes Act, The Succession Bill and the Proposed National Women's Council, by the Hon. Prime Minister of Zimbabwe, R.G. Mugabe, 25th January 1986 - belvedere Teachers' College.
  - 3 ZANU Resolutions of the Second Congress. Harare, 8th August 1984.
  - 4 See the Zimbabwe Report on the United Nations Decade for Women, 1980-1985, Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs, p. 2.

(a) that every society has an obligation and duty to make the most effective use of its talents. It is therefore counter-productive to keep talented women in the house.

(b) that every society has to address itself to the question of how to operationalise the rights of both men and women so that it is possible for them to take part in areas of social, occupational and family life for which they are suited, as individuals and not as members of a certain sex, which is usually the case.

There is no doubt that the position and image of women in the Zimbabwean society has been changing as a result of economic, political, social and cultural factors. The most pervasive factor was that of colonialism which brought the following changes in its wake: the breakdown of tribal, social and economic organisations which acted as insurance for its members, the changing role of female labour as a result of growth and development of commodity and money relations, this in turn gave rise to immigration of women in the urban centres. This occurrence took place gradually because during the early period of colonialism it was unheard of for a woman to leave the locality of her kinsfolk and venture in far off lands. Even married women did not accompany husbands in urban areas during colonial times. It was the practice then for the menfolk to immigrate temporarily to town, earn just enough to pay compulsory annual hut tax and return to their villages or the colonialist authorities did not allow African workers to stay with their wives in the urban compounds, where male workers were housed. Delinquents were severely punished.

Since 1980 - the year of independence - however, the number of women in urban areas in Zimbabwe had increased <sup>1</sup>.

There are many reasons which explain this growth in the female urban population. Some women had come to accompany their husbands who, with the increasing security in employment since independence had moved to town permanently. Others migrated to urban areas, because they had education that qualified them to get jobs. Still others were female heads of households with children to look after. Perhaps, more important was the passing of the 'Legal Age of Majority Act, 1982' which states:

On and after the fixed date a person shall attain the legal age of majority on attaining the age of eighteen years<sup>2</sup>.

The Act makes no exception whatsoever. It applies to any "person". In particular it makes no difference if the "person" is a woman, or an African woman, or a married white woman, a single woman, or a widow. It applies to everyone of eighteen years or more without exception<sup>3</sup>. Due to a

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1 See the Zimbabwe Report on the United Nations Decade for Women, 1980-1985, op. cit. p. 4.

2 Legal Age of Majority Act 1982, Section 3 (1).

3 Paths are made by Walking - What the "Legal age of Majority" means to you p. 1-2 - Centre for Applied Social Sciences, University of Zimbabwe (Fundamental Rights and Personal Law Project).

combinaison of the above factors, the number of women urban dwellers gradually increased and were employed in public service, factories and industries, more or less in traditional occupations.

#### **Opportunities and type of work done by women**

Though women in Zimbabwe have been gradually increasing in towns because of the already mentioned factors, they still have lower opportunities for work than men. Three basic reasons may be advanced for this:

1. The first is the patriarchal concept of the importance of many children that keeps the women engaged in child bearing and rearing so that little opportunity is then left for them to participate in national economy, through wage employment<sup>1</sup>.

In other words women in Zimbabwe are throughout their lives faced with the tradition that the crown of a woman's life is to be a wife and mother. Despite the 'Legal Age of Majority Act, 1982', marriage is almost everywhere a partnership of unequals in fact, though of course not in theory. In a home where the husband goes to work and the wife is a housewife, the ideal situation would be for husbands and wives to share economic resources and discuss sensibly and rationally how money is to be spent. Unfortunately, this is not always the case since in reality negotiations about money are frequently acrimonious, secretive and devious. This is because some husbands are unwilling to declare their income to their wives and at the same time housework, which makes a lot of hard demands on a woman's life is regarded as unproductive work by society.

2. The second is the objection on the part of husbands who fear women's emancipation and liberation from male dominance, for it is true that work outside the home raises a woman's status and her independence which are indispensable conditions for equality between men and women granted to both sexes by the Constitution of Zimbabwe<sup>2</sup>.

This state of affairs might be explained by two factors:

(a) Women's emancipation and attempts to grant women equal rights are resented on the ground (never openly admitted) that they pose a threat to male power and domination.

(b) Complete insensitivity and lack of sympathy towards women's plight arise out of the misguided belief that women have nothing to complain about in the way they are treated since they are indeed inferior beings. This is

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1 See Speech delivered by the Zimbabwe Minister of Community Development and Women's Affairs, Hon. T.R. Nhongo at the National World Conference for Women, July, 1985.

2 'The Constitution of Zimbabwe' as amended at the 1st August, 1985, Chapter III (ii) p.9.

partly occasioned by our cultural beliefs and traditions<sup>1</sup>, and was reinforced by capitalism.

3. The Third is lack of education. Up to now some parents object to the education of girls because girls are bound to get married anyway, and are therefore treated as temporary boarders.

Education is regarded as a vital tool for participation in all channels of development and women's comparative lack of this important tool clearly excludes them from the main stream of development. It may be worthwhile to repeat here that boys and girls - under the law<sup>2</sup>, - have a right to learn the same subjects and the same technical skills, for there is no function in society which is peculiar to women as women or men as men. Both genders have similar natural abilities and it is natural for women to share occupations with men. In actual cases where education is available, with a few exceptions, girls tend to be taken in segregated schools at post primary school level where they learn subjects that are supposed to make them better wives and mothers - for example needlework, home economics and domestic science.

At post secondary level girls are trained in anthropology and psychology etc. These are geared for services and not for productive labour and have fewer returns. Training institutions and the University of Zimbabwe should take special measures not only to increase the number of women students but to encourage them to utilize their legal right to take up training in say, engineering and mechanical fields, and not just in fields traditionally open to women like nursing and teaching. These institutions can make a greater contribution to education by handling students on the basis of sex ratio to ensure that more women students are enrolled. After all women are 51 % of the population in Zimbabwe

#### **What type of jobs are women offered in Zimbabwe industry?**

According to the 'Labour Relations Act N 16 of 1985', no employer shall discriminate against any employee or prospective employee on grounds of race, tribe, place of origin, political opinion, colour or sex in relation, inter alia to the choice of persons for jobs or posts, training, advancement, apprenticeships, transfer, promotion or retrenchment<sup>3</sup>. This Act derives its power from the Constitution of Zimbabwe which is the supreme law<sup>4</sup>.

Despite all the legal declarations on the equality of men and women in Zimbabwe,

1. Women still tend to be given unskilled jobs that earn comparatively lower wages in a particular industry;

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1 See Speech by Hon. T.R. Nhongo, Minister of Community Development and Women's Affairs to the Public Service Association on January 25, 1984. See also 'Community Action' issue N 2, 1984.

2 See 'The Zimbabwe report on the United Nations Decade for Women - 1980-1985 op. cit. pp. 34-36.

3 See Labour Relations Act. N 6 of 1985 p. 179.

4 'Constitution of Zimbabwe' as amended at the 1st August, 1985, Chapter I, (3) p. 6.

2. they tend also to be found in industries such as Textiles, Catering Industry, Canning Industries, Food Industries.

3. In big and well known companies, women tend to be given jobs related to domestic activities - e.g. cooking in company canteens, cleaning and dusting of offices, grading of finished products, and secretarial duties.

4. Others work in posts or areas that are known as female enclaves such as the Registry, the typing pool and at junior accounts level. The same explanation may be advanced as was given above for case of discrimination in employment opportunities for women. There is the added factor of management's misguided attitude towards the employment of women. Management hold these views about female employment:

-that women are less productive than men since they tend to take a lot of time off. In effect what they are complaining about is absence during maternity leave, attendance of clinics during pregnancy and absence due to nursing sick children.

-that women have very low commitment to their jobs once they get married and start raising a family.

The actual hidden meaning is that:

-women may then leave employment due to husband transfer;

-may demand certain rights especially if they are stipulated by law;

-may be experiencing marital problems that will affect her work performance.

In Zimbabwe, legally a woman worker has the right to be off duty for up to 90 days on maternity leave during which she is entitled to up to 75 % of her salary. She is not supposed to lose her job or career prospects as had been the case before independence<sup>1</sup>. For the majority of employers these rights may go against the grain of their balance sheets and their profit and loss accounts. This may surely account for less employment opportunities for women especially with private employers.

Again, despite the 'Labour Relations Act (1985)' which forbids employers from discriminating against any employee *inter alia* on the grounds of sex, employers in industry do not offer the same opportunities (as men) for training in skilled work or promotion. This is because management does not think in terms of a long future career and women's promotion tend to take place on an *ad hoc* basis. The main reason advanced is that women are not bound to stay. This is nothing but sheer prejudice in place of fact. It fails to take into account the fact that most women in industries are single parents with responsibilities so they tend to be steady at their jobs. When it comes to leadership even where the majority of workers are women the supervisor will invariably be a man. This arises from the lopsided subject specialisation we observed above and managements' reluctance to train women in different areas of management, e.g. production, commerce, finance, personnel etc. that are prerequisite for promotion to supervisory roles.

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1 Labour Relations Act, N 6, 1985, pp. 189-191.

A woman too finds it traumatic to cope with the conflicts that may arise because of her job. Despite the 'Legal Age of Majority Act' which we have already cited above, a husband may also insist on controlling all of his wife's movements and activities even during office hours. Further, although the traditional role of the husband has changed with the times, as it is no longer necessary for the menfolk to protect the tribe or hunt for wild animals, yet they still take as their prerogative to do nothing to help in the house. A typical African husband in an urban area sees it as his right to spend all his evening in a pub or bar or doing some other extra curricular activities thus leaving all the household duties to his wife who might be holding a similar job. The consequence is that many a working woman suffer from work overloads, with a woman having to put in four to six hours a day attending to household activities on top of her job. Undoubtedly this arises from the traditional attitudes that see the roles of men and women in terms of a polarity rather than complementary to each other.

#### **Women also are to blame**

Women too are to blame for their lack of opportunities to advance. They tend to undervalue themselves and adjust their own goals downwards in accordance with a lower estimation of their own abilities. They do this despite all the legal rights granted to them by the Government.

Most women tend to take seriously other people's expectations of them, rather than developing their own self esteem. Admittedly a note can be written on the upbringing of girls in Zimbabwe. In our society, and indeed in many others, boys and girls are treated differently by adults from the moment they are born. Adults apparently encourage passive and dependent behaviour in girls and active and independent behaviour in boys. Children are very perceptive and will from an early stage begin to take notice that men and women have different life styles and that boys are considered more important than girls. These factors will definitely influence the pattern of the children's adult lives<sup>1</sup>.

Added to this, a girl with above average intelligence is treated as a freak, whereas a boy in a similar situation is said to be brilliant, a genius, etc. It is no wonder then that women fail to realise their own potential in the ways that the values of individuality and self fulfilment imply they could.

#### **Women managers: Characteristics**

According to the 'Labour Relations Act, 1985' no employer shall discriminate against any employee or prospective employee on grounds of race, tribe, place of origin, political opinion, colour or sex in relation to, *inter alia*, the choice of persons for jobs or posts, training, advancement,

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1 See "Social Attitudes - Hindrance to Women's Advancement" - (Community Action) op. cit. p. 26.

apprenticeships, transfer, promotion or retrenchment<sup>1</sup>. Despite this Act which prohibits employers from practising discrimination on the basis of sex,

1. Women still account for a small percentage of all managers.

2. They tend to be recruited on the basis of their expertise, i.e. degree or diploma holders. Unlike men, few of them come in totally unqualified or as trainees, a fact that has led a lot of women to comment that whereas a man will be treated as a manager and then as a man, women are too often considered first as women and then as managers. The other thing is that men have been known to rise from the rank of an errand boy to managerial position but the same would be impossible for a woman.

3. In order to get where she is a woman manager has to show exceptional ability, excellence and resilience.

4. Some are promoted for window dressing purposes in order to give a good image to the company.

5. Women managers tend to be on the average older in age about 35 years or more. This is of course a managerial tactic to get women who are past childbearing age.

#### **What is the explanation**

The economic, social, cultural and political factors we observed earlier come into play:

-Presently, Society tends to hold negative attitudes towards women in managerial positions. In accordance with the societal distribution of norms of expected behaviour, a managerial job requires the holder to have characteristics, temperament and attitudes that are usually ascribed more to men than women.

-Despite the legally declared equality of opportunities between men and women, women are not given the type of consideration and thought in terms of their future career prospects. While their male counterparts are singled out for talent spotting, women do not get similar attention.

-Educationally, there are fewer qualified graduate women than men, as such fewer women have the necessary qualifications to compete for top posts and fewer still get selected.

-Women themselves are not keen on marketing themselves and their abilities. Perhaps as a result of the socialisation, they tend to be different and fail to develop a knack or flair for public relations and the politics of the working place. Partly as a result of the restrictions imposed by society and especially by husbands, they will not be seen in the right places, get in the right situation and be seen to talk good sense. One can safely say that for women, it is the case of the light being kept under a bushel.

-Where women have succeeded in attaining managerial positions, they find themselves in a hostile atmosphere where it is therefore difficult to show their capabilities. Male workers, considering it improper for a woman to be

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1 See Labour Relations Act, 1985 p. 179.

in a position of authority over men, will not accept a woman "boss" and for the same reason employers might not consider placing a woman in such a position.

-Once women have established themselves in certain departments, they are reluctant to try any other area where they are not confident with the expertise.

-Women's refusal to take position of responsibility, arises from the fact that they do not want two demanding jobs respectively in the home and at the work place. The problem of overload - because of the traditional attitudes and the sexist division of labour which in our age has no basis, women in positions of responsibility find themselves having to put in four to seven hours of household duties in the home. It follows then that many women feel physically tired and this tension and irritability arising from overwork is transferred to the world of work, which to some people goes further to prove that women have nagging habits. Apart from the unequal distribution of tasks in the house, the other factors exacerbating the situation is lack of day care centres, nurseries and facilities as well as equipment and services that are necessary to alleviate the domestic load<sup>1</sup>.

#### What is to be done

Various countries go about the issue of women in employment in various ways. In Zimbabwe, the ruling Party - ZANU (PF) professes a belief in human equality and dignity regardless of sex, creed, race or nationality<sup>2</sup>. In order to accelerate the advancement of women and also to comply with the objectives of the United Nations decade for Women, the Government established the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs in April, 1981. The Ministry, in line with national development policies, places emphasis on the development of rural communities, in particular the improvement of the condition of women<sup>3</sup>. We can say that considerable measures have been taken to increase the participation of men and women in development in rural areas as in urban life.

Notwithstanding all the legal rights granted to women in Zimbabwe, the number of women in top or middle level position has remained very small. It is obvious then that something must be done, at different levels to increase women's employment. At the level of governments these include :

1. Creation of Positive Discrimination in favour of Women. At the moment, women are at a disadvantaged position in all areas, be it socially, culturally or politically. The main area where positive discrimination ought to take place is at the educational level, for this is the key not only to personal growth and development but it also provides the basis for acquiring the skills

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1 See Report on "Sub-Regional Workshop on Welfare Facilities for Women in Africa". 21 October - 1 November 1985. (Ministry of Labour)

2 See Zanu Resolutions of the Second Congress, Harare, 8th August 1984.

3 The Zimbabwe report on the United Nations Decade for Women, 1980-1985, op. cit. p. 6.

and knowledge necessary to ensure their participation in employment especially in more favourable positions. We can make the following policy suggestions:

- Girls should be provided more access to education by ensuring that school intake reflects the ratio of the sexes in the population. Also care must be taken that girls are not put in a stream which would not given them a chance of competing in high income and status jobs with their counterparts.

## 2.Provision of Rights by law

In many countries - Zimbabwe included, a floor of legal rights for women, has been enacted. But these rights have been to some extent rights in theory and not in practice. For example, the 'Equal Pay Act'<sup>1</sup> stipulates that men and women will earn equal payment for similar types of work. But by sheer use of semantics and dishonest use of job evaluation exercise, employers have created a number of loopholes that still enable them to pay discriminatory wages against women. In Zimbabwe it is argued that men and women are accorded equal rights in all fields, economic, cultural and social life and yet during the end of 1985, a year which marked the end of the United Nations Decade for Women whose themes were Equality, development and Peace, studies indicated that women do rarely reach the top positions.

In itself, creation of the enabling legislation is not sufficient. Additional legal and administrative measures to put these in effect are needed. To put it in other words legal rights express a general statement of intention committing the government to a general cause of action. Very rarely does the law spell out the detailed ways and means by which this law is to be implemented. It is necessary, however, that methods of implementing the law be stated. This may need creating bodies and institutions that will be responsible for the supervision and preparation of periodical reports as to how the law is being implemented. The Legal and Equal Opportunities department of the Ministry of Community Development and Women's Affairs has since its inception been engaged in trying to set up an "Equity Board" to carry out the above-mentioned functions but without success.

An interesting example of a country where the law was translated into practical procedures enabling the working mothers to get the co-operation of husbands, employers, and Trade Unions is the German Democratic Republic with its 1965 Code of Family Law. It states that both men and women have an equal responsibility for the education of children and housekeeping. Their relations therefore must take a form which permits the wife to combine her occupational and social life with motherhood. It goes on to state that the husband must not only be satisfied with giving a hand but that both must share equally the responsibilities of house and family. One of the

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1 'The Zimbabwe Report on the United Nations Decade for Women, 1980-1985' op. cit. op. 17.

recommendations made by the United Nations Decade Conference for Women in Nairobi, July 1985, is similar to the GDR law mentioned above.

3. Employers. What the employers will do or won't do will largely depend upon the type of economical environment in which they operate and the kind of sacrifice they are willing to make in the short run in order to reap the benefits in the future. Zimbabwe has a strong capitalist economic base and employers in the private sector tend to watch their profit margins very closely as it constitutes the main criteria for the success of the private companies. The Government must ensure that proper utilisation of manpower is understood by the private sector that it is a development issue<sup>1</sup>, and as such firms must not only be forced to take the qualified women available, but in addition they have also to think in terms of carrying out the following:

a) improve their recruitment and selection policies which so far have been designed in such a way that only a few apply and fewer still are selected.

b) redesign their jobs - changing the traditional pattern of work and introducing part-time and flexible hours providing continuity of women's work experience especially for working mothers.

c) re-launching women who have dropped out of employment for a long time.

d) providing facilities that make it easier for mothers to work

#### At societal level

This is the central area on which equal participation of men and women in employment hinges. As we have observed above, the main obstacles that keep women from taking jobs especially at top levels, are the attitude and prejudice of society against women. These include:

- roles within the family in which men refuse to participate in household duties;

the persistence of traditional family life even in the absence of the material conditions for their continued existence;

- the children's upbringing in which boys and girls are channelled to specific areas of employment through sex role stereotyping.

In conclusion, the Government of Zimbabwe has endeavoured to create certain rights through legislation, women's organisation (some political, e.g. ZANU (PF) Women's League) and even created a Ministry responsible for Women's Affairs. Women ministers, magistrates, Public Service Commissioners and a woman ambassador have been appointed. But one fact remains clear. These measures have only opened a path for a few exceptional women who have managed to maintain their occupational and family roles intact. It is only the unusual, the exceptional type of women who can manage to combine the demands of producing, rearing and managing a family with meeting the responsibilities of highly demanding jobs. The problem is not

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1 John F. Else, Zebbedia M. Gamanya and Kwanele, O. Jirira - "Economic Development in the African Context: Opportunities and Constraints" JOURNAL OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA, 1986, 1, pp. 75-87.

basically one of commitment, education or finding women with potential. Society has to look very carefully into the custom and practices both within the families and occupations with particular attention to the activities of men in the house. It is in the interest of Zimbabwe's development that all the reserves of the economy be put to use, but this will not be effected unless society takes an effort to see that tasks are allocated not on the basis of sex but individual competence. It is grossly inefficient, for example, to close off women with potential into housework simply because one is a woman and put a man with an interest in children to work on an assembly line on the basis of his being a man.

## Résumé

*Cet article examine les facteurs qui ont une incidence sur le rôle des Zimbabwéennes dans l'industrie ainsi que les réactions sociales et lois qui s'y greffent. Depuis son accession à l'indépendance le Zimbabwe pratique une politique économique qui repose essentiellement sur le plein emploi. Il soutient par ailleurs entre autres principes majeurs l'abolition de toute forme de discrimination à l'encontre de quelque membre de la société zimbabwéenne que ce soit, les femmes notamment qui pendant plusieurs dizaines d'années ont été victimes et de certaines pratiques négatives dans la culture de leur pays et des régimes coloniaux qui se sont succédé. Partant, la législation garantit aux femmes le même statut que les hommes sur le marché du travail.*

*Dans les faits néanmoins, la situation de la femme diffère toujours de façon sensible de celle des hommes sur le plan du travail. Par ailleurs l'écart relativement important entre le salaire des hommes et celui des femmes ainsi que la différence de taille entre les emplois offerts aux hommes et aux femmes ne font que renforcer le constat de l'infériorité du statut de la femme par rapport à celui de l'homme. En fait, à en juger par les informations disponibles le Zimbabwe est l'un des pays africains qui pratique le plus la ségrégation sur le marché du travail entre les hommes et les femmes; et ce, en dépit des nombreuses lois votées par le Parlement pour placer les femmes sur le même pied d'égalité que les hommes.*

*En général lorsque les femmes travaillent on leur confie des emplois n'appelant aucune spécialisation assortis de salaires peu élevés. Qui plus est, l'on les retrouve surtout en grand nombre dans les emplois où interviennent les activités ménagères comme cuisinières de cantines (dans les sociétés); elles balayent et époussetent également les bureaux, classent les produits finis et assument des fonctions de secrétaires.*

*Cette attitude discriminatoire envers les femmes au travail est à imputer à plusieurs facteurs: les opinions patriarcales sur la place de la femme dans la société, le système éducatif, le ressentiment éprouvé par la direction des sociétés et autres entreprises pour les droits et les responsabilités de reproduction des femmes, et leur amour-propre.*

*Les lois axées sur l'abolition de la discrimination contre les femmes sont en soi insuffisantes. Pour garantir l'application de ce type de législation, il convient de prendre d'autres mesures juridiques et administratives; ce qui signifie que le Zimbabwe devrait s'engager à appliquer une politique discriminatoire en faveur de la femme.*

*Une telle démarche appellerait donc entre autres l'offre de chances d'éducation égales aux hommes et aux femmes, des salaires égaux, un partage égal des responsabilités ménagères et de l'éducation des enfants, des modifications dans les politiques de recrutement et de sélection, une réorganisation des emplois, l'institution d'une certaine souplesse dans les horaires et l'introduction de structures propres à promouvoir le travail de la femme.*