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A Profile on Gender Relations

Towards Gender Equality in Ethiopia



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List of abbreviations and Acronyms

AAU	Addis Ababa University
ADLI	Agricultural Development Led Industrialization
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
BCC	Behavioural Change Communication
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEDAW	Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CERTWID	Centre for Research Training and Information for Women In Development
CRDA	Christian Relief and Development Association
CSA	Central Statistics Authority
CSE	Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia
DHS	Demographic Health Survey
DPPC	Disaster Prevention and Preparedness commission
EAMWA	East African Media Women Association
EMWA	Ethiopian Media Women Association
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
ESID	Environmentally Sustainable Industrial Development
EU	European Union
EWDF	Ethiopian Women Development Fund
EWLA	Ethiopian Women Lawyers Association
EWRMP	Ethiopian Water Resource Management Policy
FAWE	Forum for African Women Educationalists
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FEMSEDA	Federal Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
FoE	Forum for Environment
FP	Family Planning
GAW	Group for the Advancement of Women
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrollment Ratio
GNP	Gross National Product
GPA	Grade Point Average
HIV	Human Immuno Virus
HLS	Household Livelihood Security
HSDP	Health Sector Development Programme
ICRC	International Confederation of the Red Cross
ICT	Information communication Technology
IEC	Information Education and Communication
IIRR	International Institute for Rural Reconstruction
ILO	International Labour organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMR	Infant Mortality Rate
IOM	International Office for Migration
I-PRSP	Interim- Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper

MDG	Millennium Development Goal
MFI	Micro-Finance Institution
MOA	Ministry of agriculture
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOLSA	Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs
MTCT	Mother to Child Transmission
NCA	Norwegian Church Aid
ND	Not Dated
NESDE	Network for Environmental and Sustainable Development in Ethiopia
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
OAU	Organization Of African Unity
PER	Public Expenditure Review
PLWHA	People Living With HIV/AIDS
PM	Prime Minister
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
SDP	Sector Development Programme
Sida	Swedish International Development Agency
SNNPRA	Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples Regional Administration
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
TOR	Terms Of Reference
TPLF	Tigrean People's Liberation Front
TV	Television
U5M	Under Five Mortality
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UN/DAW	UN Division for the Advancement of Women
UN/DHR	UN Declaration of Human Rights
UNDAF	United nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNIFEM	United Nations development Fund for Women
USD	United States Dollar
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
WAD	Women's Affair Department
WAO	Women's Affairs Office
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organization
WIDP	Women in Development Project
WSSD	World Summit for Sustainable Development

Executive Summary

This country gender profile provides comparative information on men and women in Ethiopia covering a wide range of issues, with particular reference to poverty and other economic, political, legal socio-economic and socio-cultural factors. Three topics namely, the girl child, HIV/AIDS and human rights and governance are given separate coverage, because of the need to give special attention to the issues. The paper is an outcome of a gender equality assessment undertaken, that enabled the examination of existing situation, actions taken to address disparities, stakeholders involved, and identification of opportunities for intervention. The objective of the exercise was provision of information on Ethiopia for the facilitation of gender aware country strategies and projects development, as well as policy dialogue.

The document covers three broad areas presented in six chapters. Chapter one provides brief background, chapter two examines existing situation of gender equality in the areas cited above, chapters three, four, and five present efforts made nationally, in terms of policy formulation and implementation, and interventions by national and international actors. In chapter six, opportunities for intervention have been identified and presented.

The country is diverse in topography, people, temperature ethnic groups and cultures. The population projection for 2002, according to the 1994 census was 67.7 million 50.2% male and 49.8% female, 84.1% residing in the rural areas. There is a large number of female headed households up to 22.2% in Cities. An interesting male majority is observed, with a wide gap in Afar. Pastoralists form 12% of the population occupying 60% of the land, that are least developed. Population growth rate has decreased from 3.1% to 2.9% in the last decade. Life expectancy estimated to have gone down from 51–53 years to 47–49 years because of HIV/AIDS. Harmful traditional practices like female genital mutilation, early marriage, abduction are rampant in the country.

The economy is mainly based on agriculture, and food insecurity is a common phenomenon. Industry is not developed. The leading industry is food and beverages, with women forming only 19% of the employees, despite their engagement in traditional processing of all food stuff.

Women's low status is expressed in their lack of decision making opportunities, asset ownership, overwork on farm and home which is not acknowledged, small percentage (30.8%) of female employment in the formal sector, engaged in clerical and fiscal administrative position, earning below Birr 200.00 per month. Women are mainly employed in the informal sector, where earnings and security is low. The percentage of women in professional positions is only 29%, compared to men of 71%, because their educational attainment is also low.

Illiteracy is high at 74%, 54% for male and 75% for female. Success rate in education for women is lower than men, the gap getting wider as one goes higher the educational ladder, as a result there limited number of women professionals.

Health coverage is low at 51%, and within this low health service coverage, the special health needs of women are not considered, with the exception of the reproductive health issues. HIV/AIDS awareness level for women is 8% against 23% for men. Unwanted pregnancy and

Abortion is a common problem in the youth, and female youth are more vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection probably because of widespread practices like rape, early marriage and high rate of teenage prostitution.

Livelihood security low, because focus is only on increasing production, not considering storage and processing losses. Processing associated factors (fuel, water and processors) are not looked into.

Environment depletion is experienced in the form of land degradation, decreased forest cover, desertification, wildlife extinction, urban pollution, poor waste management, and efforts to reverse this are at the preliminary stage. Women who are more attached to the environment due to their roles and responsibilities, are excluded from decisions. However it has been observed that the environmental policy is gender sensitive and there are high hopes for its effective implementation.

Poverty is rampant in the country with 45% (47% of the rural and 33% of the urban) of the population not meeting basic food and non-food needs, women affected more than men. There is high rate of IMR 166/1000 live births, under five mortality of 97/1000 live births. An improvement in mortality has been observed in the last decade by 21% for IMR and 18% for the under five.

Female constitute 49.3% of the youth that make up 20.6% of the total population. The youth face enormous problems of unemployment, vulnerability to HIV/AIDS infection, the situation worse for female than male. According to the National AIDS Council in the 15–24 age group, women make the majority of the infected.

Among the rural to urban migrant population women make the majority. These women leave their rural residence to run away from forced early marriages, divorce, death of parents and similar situations. They often come with no specific plans or resources, and they suffer especially in the first two years, with not much improvement even in later years.

Disabled women suffer from a multitude of hardships: they suffer as women, as disabled individuals, and as disabled women. They are victims of violence in addition to those other afflictions suffered by men as well, are overworked, and can not attend special schools because there are not many.

Women's access to information technology is minimal, with no access even the radio, the most widely available information source for the majority of the rural population. Their participation in the media especially at the decision making level is extremely low. As a result women are badly portrayed. But attempts are being made to address this issue.

There are many international conventions ratified by Ethiopia and reflected in the Constitution, but we are yet to see improvements in women's rights. Women's participation in decision making at all levels is low. There is low level of participation in parliament, though parliamentary seat has gone up from 2.4% to 7.7% between the two elections.

Policies formulation and ratification of conventions have been made. There are good policies including on women. Implementation has often been a problem, mainly due to limited capacity, unsatisfactory understanding of the policy by implementers, especially those on women. There is also attitudinal problem with regards to gender equality, and

often there are competing priorities, and it is often women's issues that are pushed away.

National actors have been found to lack capacity particularly human resources, gender desks are severely understaffed, and there is a large room for competence building in these areas. The involvement of men in gender equality work is something that needs serious consideration as both sexes need to work together to ensure success. There is need of coordination of activities by NGOs, civil societies, bilateral and multilateral agencies to effectively reduce poverty in the country and ensure that women benefit as well.

Eight broad categories of issues (Food Security, Social Services, Employment of Women, Harmful Traditional Practices, HIV/AIDS, Good Governance, Information Technology, Capacity Building of National Actors) have been identified as areas for intervention for funding agencies.

1. Background

1.1 Overview of the Country

Ethiopia is the tenth largest country in Africa, covering an area of 1.1 million square kilometers, with considerable diversity consisting of deserts, lush plateaus, tropical lowlands, high altitude mountains and plains below sea level. The climatic condition also varies with the topography, temperatures ranging between 47°C in the Afar depression and 10°C in the highlands. This diversity causes enormous difficulties in communication with adverse effects on urbanization and spread of education. On the other hand, it has helped to preserve the identity of the various population and sub-groups, the feeding habits and their cultures. The 2000 Demographic and Health Survey has confirmed that, Ethiopia is one of the least urbanized countries in the world with less than 14% of the country urbanized in 1994.

This ancient country exhibits diversity also in peoples and cultures with about 80 ethnic groups, owning a unique alphabet that has existed for more than 3000 years. Christianity and Islam are the main religions, 51% Orthodox Christians, 33% Moslem, 10% Protestants, the rest follow other faiths. Ethiopia has always maintained its independence, ruled by successive emperors and kings with a feudal system of government, until the military take over of 1974, that lasted until its overthrow in May 1991. Currently, a federal system of government exists, with members of parliament elected every five years. The parliament is made up of two houses, the House of the Council of Peoples Representatives and the House of Federal States. The federal states have elected members from the Kebele, Woreda, and Zonal administrative units. The current administrative boundary has nine regional states, Addis Ababa City Administration and Dire Dawa Administration Council.

Agriculture accounts for 54% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), employs about 80% of the population accounting for about 90% of the exports. The country has moved from a central command to a market-oriented economy. According to the 1994 census, it was projected that the population would be 67.7 million by the year 2002. According to DHS 2000, there was a slight decline in population growth rate over the decade from 3.1% in 1984 to 2.9% in 1994. Over the same period, life expectancy for both males and females estimated at 51–53 did not improve, and is expected to decline to 47–49 years, because of AIDS.

Ethiopia is one of the least developed countries in the world with a GNP of USD100/Capita in 1998, a health service coverage of only 51%, adult literacy rate of around 23% and primary school enrollment of 50%. The poor socio-economic status has been complicated by AIDS pandemic in the last two decades.

The majority of the population live in the highlands, engaged mainly in farming, while in the lowlands, the mostly pastoral population move about with their livestock in search of grass and water. Pastoralists occupy 60% of the territory and constitute about 12% of the total population. The majority live in regions that are least developed characterized by poverty, high level of illiteracy, inadequate infrastructure, particularly roads, least served with health services and receiving the least attention in external support. In Ethiopia as a whole, 45.5% of the population live in absolute poverty, the majority of whom are women, worse in the rural (47.5%), than in urban (33.2%) areas. Sixty per cent of the population live within more than half a day walk from all weather roads.

1.2 The Status of Women

Status of women is their position or rank in relation to others, usually compared with that of men; measured in terms of educational attainment, employment and remuneration, occupational type, access to services and benefits, opportunities to participate in decision making and politics. In general, it indicates the place of women in a society to enjoy certain privileges, rights, duties, roles, power and authority.

The right to control the number and spacing of their children is not enjoyed by the majority of Ethiopian women. Ethiopian women's status is low where they: (a) are generally poorer than men because they earn less; (b) are less educated; (c) are increasingly becoming heads of households, with no resources to support their dependents; (d) do not enjoy due acknowledgment for their labour contribution, particularly in agriculture, and (e) do not have decision making power. Ethiopia is a patriarchal society that keeps women at a subordinate position, using religion and culture as an excuse. These excuses have for many years been supported by laws and legislation that uphold patriarchy and women's subordination. This has brought about and maintained disparities between men and women, in division of labour, share of benefits, in law and state, in how households are organized, and how these are interrelated.

In most instances, globally women form half or a little more than half of the population, but in Ethiopia, nationally men outnumber women though slightly, but significantly in Afar (14 in every 100). This could be because of the prevailing harmful traditional practices, including FGM, discrimination against girls in food allocation, early marriage as young as 7 or 8 years, rape, abduction followed by rape, and other practices related to health and well-being. As a result, fewer girls than boys survive into adulthood. Women make a slight majority in urban centres and head 22.2% of the households, with more female headed households in urban centres than in the rural areas.



1.3 Purpose of the Country Gender Profile

The recognition that equality between men and women as a precondition for effective and sustainable development, forms the basis for Sweden's focus on gender equality in its development cooperation. Sida has initiated a gender equality assessment, for its development assistance. The purpose of this Country Gender Profile is to provide information on Ethiopia for the facilitation of gender aware country strategies, and projects development, as well as policy dialogue. It provides comparative status of women and men with particular reference to poverty and other economic, political, legal, socio-economic and socio-cultural factors. The document would serve as a resource to the development of the Sida strategy paper for Ethiopia. It will also be useful in briefing consultants and Sida personnel undertaking assignments in Ethiopia.

1.4 Methodology

The profile was prepared as a desk review of documents and interview of individuals concerned and working on gender matters. Information was gathered from government ministries, parliament, civil society organizations, women's groups and networks, other relevant groups, academic institutions, private sectors, donors including NGOs, Bilateral, and international organizations.

2. Gender Equality in Ethiopia

2.1 Overall Economic Situation

The current Government issued in 1991, a new economic policy reform which aims at transforming the economy in a manner that responds to market forces, while at the same time making the private sector the engine of growth. The country's long-term development strategy, deeply rooted in the economic policy is Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI) which stresses the important contribution of agriculture to economic and industrial development. Specifically, the objective is to bring about a structural transformation in the productivity of peasant agriculture and to streamline and construct the manufacturing sector, so that it makes extensive use of the country's natural resources and human power. Consequently, the interdependent agricultural and industrial development strategy is expected to enhance overall economic development. Some economists argue, that focus on rural neglecting urban, has resulted in decreased purchasing capacity in cities, negatively impacting on rural productivity.

2.1.1 Gender and Agriculture

Ethiopia is an agricultural-based economy, with more than 85% of its population largely depending on the agricultural sector for its livelihood. The sector currently accounts for 52% of GDP and 90% of the total foreign exchange earnings. The agricultural sector is dominated by small scale resource poor farmers who produce 90–95% of all cereals and oil seeds and grow 98% of the coffee produced in Ethiopia. Fifteen percent of the farming population are women.

The agricultural economy is characterized by food insecurity largely due to low productivity compounded by storage and processing losses, high rate of population growth, and workload on women. Food insecurity is getting worse all the time, because of the factors cited, and the low status of women which has led to misdirected development programmes, that do not take into account women's vital role in agriculture. Traditionally men gain access to land, except female heads of households. Plowing is designated to men, and women owning land, hire men for plowing to get only a portion of the output. With the exception of female heads of households, women have minimal role in decisions related to land distribution and agricultural production.

It is estimated that the average Ethiopian woman has a working day of 12–14 hours, much of it spent in hard physical labour. Women's role as producers in its present form, is generally detrimental to their well-being and that of their children. In the peak agricultural season, women spent up to 10 hours per day in the field. The heaviest workload on a woman during the pre-harvest and harvest generally coincides with the period of lowest household food availability increasing the strain on her, the situation being aggravated if she is pregnant or lactating.

Women's participation in food production is vital, with an estimated 60 and 80 per cent of the total labour expended on farming activities in Africa contributed by them. But, as modernization reorganizes agricultural production and marketing, women are increasingly marginalized. They continue to work in production, their labour may increase but they lose access to the new resources that increase productivity. As agriculture becomes devoted to cash crops, women are left to provide for family food consumption on the least productive land, while men specialized in production of these new crops for cash sales.

The process of introducing modern technologies, in agriculture inputs, planning and harvesting or storage and marketing has not been gender-sensitive. Agricultural services worked with male farmers, credit could only be extended to individuals with land titles and other collateral. Activities like marketing, traditionally female dominated at village level, are taken over by men once they became sophisticated with motorization and transport, and linkages of villages to cities and ports were established. This is because the new technology demanded greater financial resources and wider geographical linkages than women could acquire.

2.1.2 Gender and Industry

Women in the rural areas play vital roles in food production, preservation and storage. They are totally responsible for processing foods for consumption and marketing the surplus locally to generate income. They are involved in making invariably all food stores and containers with the exception of granaries. Although women's participation in the traditional food processing is high, their participation at food processing industries is insignificant. The food products and beverages industrial group ranks first in terms of the number of establishments in the large and medium scale category. According to the statistical survey of May 1999, compared to other industrial groups, the manufacture of the food products also ranks first in terms and number of persons engaged. Of the total number of employees engaged in the manufacture of food products and beverages (medium and large scale industries) in the public and private, only 19% are female.

Women's low status in education, income and time constraint for self advancement, have hindered them from participating in employment in industries. They are either unaware about them, or are not given the required training, priority being given to men because in most instances men would have the necessary basic education to participate in the training. The number of Ethiopian women participating in industry and commerce is insignificant, due to lack of access to productive resources, such as land and credit, advisory services, training and information, and thus unable to benefit from industrial and commercial activities. The limited financial capacity of women would also hinder them from using available technology.

2.1.3 Gender and Employment

Employment in this context is defined as work done to earn money, and includes both formal and informal employment.

2.1.3.1 Formal Employment: Women are underrepresented in the formal sector. In the year 1999/00, among all government employees women constituted only 30.75%. While this is the national picture, we see a wide regional variation. Addis Ababa has an almost equal number of (50.13) male and female government employees while some emerging regions have low figure for female government employees, 19.94% in Somali and 27.19% in Afar. The 30.75% referred to could be misleading as close scrutiny of the statistics show that women are highly concentrated in the routine type and low paying jobs. For example, looking at the Federal picture we find only 13.01% of the employees in professional and scientific fields, and only 14.0% in administrative position. Women are highly concentrated in jobs such as clerical and fiscal (63.35%) and custodial and manual (48.07%). This might be related to the problems girls face in accessing and succeeding in their education. As the Personnel Statistics shows among the employees who have a 1–4 years of college or university education, only 18.35% were women. However, this does not rule out the fact that even without the requirement of education women still have limited opportunities of employment compared to men. According to the statistics released by the Federal Service Commission, among those illiterate government employees in 1999/00, 73.3% were male and 27.7% were female. This shows that women have problems in employment opportunities even when they have equal qualifications with men. This situation has serious implications on the empowerment and decision-making opportunities as well as earnings of women. At the federal, women make up 54.43% of the individuals who earn a salary of between Birr 105.00 and 199.00. On the other hand only 7.36% of the individuals who earn a salary within the range of Birr 180.00 and 199.00 were women. A related issue is promotion. In the year 1999/00, in all the regions except Addis Ababa, more male employees was promoted than females. In Addis Ababa 52.6% of those promoted were women while in Oromiyaa, Harari, Gambella, SNNPRA the percentages were 28.9, 23.0, 25.6, and 22.9 respectively.

2.1.3.2 Informal Employment: Women are involved in the informal sector in large numbers. They could either be employed by other people or be self-employed. According to a survey carried out by CSA in 1996, 64.93% of those engaged in the informal sectors were women. This figure included women who were operators and those who were owners.

Many of the women engaged in the informal sector are in small businesses that require small capital, not demanding sophisticated management and bookkeeping skills. According to a survey undertaken on 300 women in Addis Ababa, selling of vegetables and fruits, bakes like enjera and bread, charcoal and firewood, traditional drinks, second hand clothes and shoes, handicrafts, and goods such as sugar and salt were the major trades women were engaged in. However, a little more than half of them were engaged in selling fruits and vegetables with the rationale that this trade requires a very small capital (Hayat, ND). According to the same study women engaged in the informal sector encounter a variety of problems. These are lack of working capital and business skills, unavailability of convenient working place, low demand, and harassment

by the police for doing business in the streets. However, lack of working capital was identified to be the most serious problem by more than 80% of the respondents. Another study by Zenebework et al outlines the constraints women entrepreneurs face as follows:

- absence of sufficient and secure space and location;
- absence of clearly defined municipal policy resulting in inconsistency of regulations and licensing;
- poor urban management of street vending;
- harassment and confiscation of goods by officials especially the police;
- lack of infrastructure and services; and
- lack of representation and voice in urban planning.

In reaction to these problems, the Ethiopian government has taken initiatives to support micro finance institutions by establishing such funds as Ethiopian Women Development Fund (EWDF) and the Federal Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agency (FEMSEDA). EWDF supports poor women both financially and in capacity building while FEMSEDA assists Regional Micro and Small Enterprises Development Agencies in their effort to support operators. The government has also lifted the requirement of licensing for enterprises with an initial capital of less than Birr 1000.00 (Zenebework et al, 2001).

According to papers by Wolday Amha, micro-credit and Micro-financing activities in Ethiopia were initiated and supported by National/ International NGOs and government projects. In 1995, there were 30 NGOs offering credit in the country but their activities were concentrated in urban areas. After the 40/96 proclamation, NGOs were prohibited from direct involvement in saving and credit activities. However, they still are active in the area, initiating and supporting MFIs. Since the National Bank of Ethiopia, has limited capacity to enforce the regulatory framework, some NGOs are still directly involved in micro-finance activities. Some of these are the Lutheran World Federation, Norwegian Church AID, Self-Help Development International, and according to the assessment done by Zenebework et al, micro-financing schemes have improved the lives of many women. However, there are still problems that women face despite the assistance.

In the last five years, the micro-finance industry showed growth both in coverage and performance. By the end of 2001, there were nineteen MFIs registered with the National Bank of Ethiopia, and delivered financial services for over 500,000 clients. These MFIs meet less than 9% of the demand for financial services, indicating a significant unmet demand. The figure for female clients is generally encouraging. Of those MFIs operating more in rural areas, the percentage of women clients was least for Oromiyaa credit and Savings Institution (12%), and highest for Meket, and Buussa Gonofa MFIs (85%), the rest fall between 30% and 60%.

2.2 Socio-economic Situation

2.2.1 Gender and Livelihood Security

The term Livelihood refers to the means of living for individuals, groups or communities, and in this context, reference is made to the household.

Security relates to secure ownership of or access to resources and income earning activities, including reserves and assets to offset risks, and meet contingencies. Livelihood security more specifically household livelihood security (HLS), is defined as “adequate and sustainable access to sufficient income and resources to meet basic needs”. The basic needs include food, water, health, education, shelter, community participation, and leisure. HLS is thus aggregate securities of the basic needs cited above. For this country gender profile however, focus will be on food, education, health and water.

2.2.1.1 Food Security: Food security implies access to food, for both men and women as well as children, at all times, adequate in quality and quantity. It is available food which goes beyond food production, where losses and the number of people are considered, both of which determine the amount of food that goes into each individual’s mouth. How food is shared in the family, is also a vital factor, since traditional food distribution within the family, provides the least priority to women after men and children. Increased food production and proper methods of food storage and preservation ensures that more of what is produced is available for consumption. Food consumption is also dependent on food processing facilities and access to household services (water, fuel, grinding mills and other processors).

Water Supply: Water is required for drinking, washing, food processing and preparation. Women collect water from a long distance which could take hours, and/or the source could be unclean. An intervention that brings clean water nearer to the residence has multiple influence on food security, namely:

- Reduction of water-borne diseases, as a result of clean water consumption;
- Saving in energy and time for the woman;
- Improved personal and environmental hygiene for the community

Fuel-Wood: Fuel-wood is a day-to-day necessity for all rural families, mainly for food processing and cooking. Women gather leaves, twigs and branches often from distant places. They could find animal dung in the house, but poorer families may have to collect dung from open grazing fields to produce a dried cake for fuel. This takes so much of the woman’s time and energy. The impact of smoke on women’s health is profound. Even though fuel-saving stoves and kerosene stoves are now available, the majority of rural families do not have access to them. They are either too expensive or have not been distributed for sale to the rural community. The supply of kerosene in remote rural areas could be problematic. The ever increasing cost of electricity, has discouraged the use of electric mitad for making enjera, and this will cause more pressure to the scarce fuel wood.

Grinding Mill: Food-stuff mostly cereals have to be converted into flours before baking. Many rural women have to do the grinding between stone grinders, a task requiring a huge amount of energy and time. The

introduction of a grinding mill in the community will relieve the woman from this difficult task.

The neglect of women in agriculture, education and health sectors has been and continues to be one of the fundamental causes of food insecurity. Education of women has an impact on food security, as an educated woman is more likely to delay marriage, practice family planning (FP), leading to smaller family size and more available food. Informal education particularly on health ensures proper use of available food, better personal hygiene, and utilization of FP services. Women's involvement in agricultural activities should be acknowledged, to better select the type and target of agricultural assistance. This should follow a proper assessment of who is involved in what activity. Improved food processing technology at household and community levels would ease women's workload, and greatly contribute towards the achievement of food security.

2.2.1.2 Education: Education is considered to be an important means to social mobility on an individual level, and the driving force behind economic, social, and cultural development at the national level. Developing countries put strong emphasis on education in order to accelerate the development process. It has become obvious that women's education is closely related to important development issues, such as their participation in productive activities, population growth, reproductive health and health status of the family, and the education of children in general and that of daughters in particular. But still, we witness the disadvantageous position of women in terms of access to and success in education.

According to (MOE 2000), the illiteracy rate is 74% (54% for males and 75% for females). The Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) for primary schools, grades 1 to 8 shows that significant number

of the Ethiopian children do not have access to education. According to a statistical document from the Ministry of Education, in the academic year 1999/2000 the national GER was 57.4%, i.e., 42.6% of the Ethiopian children were out of school. The GER by gender shows that the ratio for girls was 47% and for boys 67.3%. There is also a high region based difference. For example, in Afar the total GER was 11.5% (12.7% for boys and 9.8 for girls). In the same year, the percentage of female students in senior high schools was 41.49%, with a wide variation among regions. In the academic year 1999/2000, in Addis Ababa the percentage of female students in senior high schools was 50.43%, 31.42% in SNNPRA and 35.36% in Afar. The gender inequality in education widens as one goes up higher in the educational ladder. In the academic year 1999/2000, among the students who managed to enter colleges at diploma level, only 24.4% were women. This figure goes further down for females in degree programmes of various higher education institutes where only 13.2% were females.

The representation of women in Science and Technical education is even more dismal. Among the 3,427 students in government technical and vocational schools, in the academic year 1999/2000, the number of girls was only 811. At the tertiary level of education, in the academic

year 1999/2000, among the 571 students who joined the Faculty of Medicine, only 81 were women. In Natural Sciences, we had 2846 students, among whom only 329 were women. Finally, among the 1082 students who were in the Faculty of Technology, only 78 were women.

The statistics in the previous paragraphs show that women are not in a favorable situation for education. Several studies show that a number of economic, social, and cultural problems constrain women from attending and succeeding in education. However, it is also known that there are several female students who succeed overcoming the problems using their own personal and social resources. Therefore, measures should be taken that focuses on creating favorable social environment and at the same time focusing on inculcating values and traits that help women to become strong to overcome or go around the problems.

2.2.1.3 Health: Ethiopian women suffer disproportionately from ill-health primarily because of cultural influences and poverty that inequitably affects them. These include (a) socially condoned violence against girls and women, in the form of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), early marriage, abduction and eventual rape, followed by forced marriage; (b) socio-culturally endorsed division of labor that exposes girls and women to high energy expenditure and severe physical and psychological stress, leaving no time for self growth, and seeking health care; and (c) nutritional depletion as a result of unfair food distribution in the household, and nutritional taboos. Women suffer the consequences of frequent pregnancy, childbirth and breast-feeding. Poor women have to work harder to feed the large family, and are forced to eat less to ensure that others eat. They suffer from a higher rate of morbidity, even discounting issues like early marriage and FGM complications.

Women's health needs thus comprise of the general health needs of the population and special needs, but which are not met adequately, due to the existing misconception of health, consisting of (a) the assumption that infection and disease affect men and women equally; (b) a health sector operating with a medical model of health, dealing with defined diseases, without paying attention to the socio-economic determinants of health, especially on women; and (c) focus of researchers and medical practitioners on pregnant and lactating women, and FP services; the focus based on the view upon women as primarily important for their reproductive function.

The health policy pays attention to the special needs of women and children, the rural population, and pastoralists. The Health Sector Development Programme (HSDP) formulated in 1996, is an implementation strategy for the National Health Policy. Gender mainstreaming is recognized as a cross-cutting issue, among the components of the HSDP. The HSDP documents address perspectives of gender equity, and this implies recognition of the specific health problems of men and women as well as the recognition of the need to address the conditions that shape these specific health problems.

Data disaggregated by sex is often unavailable above the health centre level, starting at District hospitals aggregation becomes the norm, and this makes it difficult to plan and implement effective health intervention.

2.2.1.4 Water: Water is a livelihood issue for about 20% of the population and about 12% of pastoral communities, who live in environments with less than 600mm of annual rainfall. Water is a health issue for approximately 69% of the population, who do not have access to clean potable water. Water supply coverage in rural areas is only 24%, with almost 40% of existing rural water supply schemes known to be non-functioning, at any one time. Lack of water and/or inadequate water management cause inefficient use of land for agricultural purposes, contributing to soil erosion, low productivity and to food insecurity. Lack of closely available water sources are known to have negatively impacted on school attendance by children, especially girls.

The government approved the Ethiopian Water Resource Management Policy (EWRMP) in 1999. The main goal of the policy is to enhance and promote all national efforts towards the efficient, equitable and optimum utilization of the available water resources of the country for socio-economic development on sustainable basis. One of the fundamental principles of EWRMP is “promotion of the participation of all stakeholders, user communities specially women” inherent in this, is collection of user’s fees. There seems to be lack of sensitivity to women when the policy that requires collection of water user’s fee was formulated, as poor women may not be able to pay. This could result in either the households’ water consumption going down or opting for unprotected water sources.

2.2.2 Gender and Sustainable Development

Sustainable development means improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems, which results in sustainable economy. It consists of policies, strategies, plans, production systems, and technologies used in executing projects and programmes aimed at satisfying real human needs in continuity. This is while maintaining environmental quality, biodiversity, the resilience of ecosystems, and the welfare of all organisms by integrating conservation, management, and rational utilization of resources at individual, institutional, community, national, regional, and global levels.

A key prerequisite for sustainability is maintaining the constancy of the stock of natural resources and environmental quality. But because environment in many instances has become degraded by human activities, the problem of maintaining the constancy of the capital stock is not just one of stopping further environmental degradation but also one of enhancement. Environmental degradation has been seen in decreased soil quality, global warming, ozone depletion, land degradation and loss of soil fertility and productivity, and loss of biodiversity.

Gender is fundamental in understanding human interaction with the environment. Three strongly interrelated factors namely sexual division of labour, the feminization of poverty and women’s subordinate position, explain why gender, environment and development are so closely related. Existing gender division of labour makes poor rural women vital contributors to agriculture and solely responsible for the collection of firewood, and water. This means that women and men have different knowledge on the use and management of natural resources and different

interests in these matters. Women's knowledge about the environment is often more comprehensive.

Poor women are the first to suffer from environmental problems, because they are so directly dependent on natural resources, for their livelihood. Feminization of poverty implies that the worldwide crisis of environment and development policies, and cooperation have caused a relatively worse impoverishment among women. The subordinate position of women implies that women have less access and control over resources than men. This inequality frustrates the capacity of poor women to sustain livelihood, and at the same time hampers their contribution to sustainable environmental management. Women's lack of decision-making power over the use of resources and the direction of development in general, stops them from protesting against developments causing environmental degradation.

Ethiopia suffers from Environmental destabilization manifested in land degradation, decreased forest cover, desertification, wildlife extinction, urban pollution, poor waste management, and biodiversity disruption. Because of a decline in land fertility and small land holdings, there is food shortage in many parts of the country. This is compounded by the rapid increase in population, which contribute to resource depletion. Waste disposal is becoming a serious problem, with no organized system of waste disposal and collection facilities. Disposal is around the homestead or farther away, but always in the open. Pollution is on the rise and serious preparedness does not exist. Rivers are polluted, animals suffer from various ailments, many dying from obstruction through ingestion of plastic sheets.

Through the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), Ethiopia is working with the Organization of African Unity (OAU), to develop the African Model Law for the Recognition of the Rights of Local Communities, farmers and breeders, and for the regulation of access to biological resources. In 1997, the Forum for Environment (FoE) was launched, an ad-hoc grouping of individuals with various backgrounds, and some NGO representatives concerned with environmental issues. There is also a completed work on a study for Environmentally Sustainable Industrial Development (ESID). NGOs working in the country address environmental issues, particularly those that help communities improve basic services like water supplies and clinics. Network for Environmental and Sustainable Development in Ethiopia (NESDE) provides a forum for networking between government offices and NGOs.

Ethiopia has adopted Agenda 21, but has not paid much attention to it, focusing on efforts to develop the convention on biological diversity and the convention to combat desertification, and has also formulated Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia (CSE). The CSE is not an attempt to realize the objectives of Agenda 21 in the Ethiopian context, it however remains the closest policy, strategic and programme document that Ethiopia has so far articulated for the realization of sustainable development in the country (NESDE).

The Federal policy on Natural Resources and the Environment was set down in 1996, with a conceptual framework for development that puts natural resources into six categories namely: Human, Genetic, Renewable, Non-Renewable, Emotive/Mountain And Orographic/

Scenic Resources. The human resource is taken to be central and steps are suggested to ensure participation. The integration of social, cultural and gender issues in sustainable resource and environmental development is one of the eleventh strategies for implementation. It is believed that Ethiopia has one of the most comprehensive and progressive environmental policies in the world. Despite this however, it was observed that the I-PRSP did not contain anything which fully recognizes the contribution of sustainable management of the environment to poverty reduction. This it is hoped will be rectified when the final PRSP is written.

Other activities include the formulation of the National Action Programme, mainstreaming gender in the action plan, and the CSE, establishment of Regional Environmental Committees that are chaired by vice-presidents of the regions, and membership with the international committee on combating desertification. The Women's Affairs department has been established over a year ago, gender support committee from different disciplines has also been formed to see gap and assess environmental impact. Gender focused activities seem to be at a preliminary stage consisting of formulation of policies, strategies, and guidelines, gender and environment awareness creation. The issue of gender was not raised at a discussion of Agenda 21 implementation, from NGOs and Civil Society's perspectives as part of the preparation process for World summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD).

2.2.3 Poverty Analysis and Policy Implications

Poverty is "not having enough for subsistence", and is subsequent to social injustice, manifested by unequal power relations among citizens, as well as gender inequality, as a result of which women suffer the most. It is a deprivation of bare necessities of life, including food, clothing, and shelter. It is estimated that 50% of the Ethiopian population live below the food poverty line unable to meet the minimum nutritional food requirements. Combining the basic food and non-food needs, it is estimated that 45% of the population, the majority of whom are women are poor, 47% of the rural and 33% of the urban population.

Mortality rates are expressions of a country's socio-economic situation, and the quality of the life of the population. IMR is high at 97/1000, so also U5M at 166/1000 live births. Mortality is consistently lower in urban areas. There has been a decline in IMR by 21% and in U5M by 18%, in the last decade. This information would help to evaluate the impacts of some of the major policies like population, women and health. Generally, excess mortality in boys is observed, and this is in line with the universal phenomenon; surprisingly however, there is an excess though slight, in female child mortality, which could be reflective of child rearing, male children given priority, in feeding and health care seeking. DHS also found that large or very large children experienced the greatest mortality followed by small or very small children, and this finding was presented as surprising. There may however be an explanation if the deaths occurred to neonates. Mother's pelvic deformity due to child malnutrition, and vaginal scarring due to FGM may have caused damage to the child during birth.

The causes of poverty in rural areas include lack of income, absence of income generating opportunities, disease and malnutrition, lack of decent health care, schooling and clean drinking water. This is compounded by the fast depletion of natural resources, the increasingly shrinkage of cultivable land, an agricultural output that does not match the population. The manifestation of urban poverty are a fast growing street population, homelessness, overcrowding, prostitution, beggary, and unemployment. There is an influx of immigrants from the rural, many engaged in begging. In the urban setting beggary has become a profitable venture, encouraging expansion of the trade. It is an issue that must be addressed by all concerned to find a way of stopping street begging. Life in the street as a way of existence should not be allowed to continue, as it does not solve problems in poverty, but aggravates it.

In the recent PRSP consultative processes, it has been established at Woreda and Regional levels that, poverty primarily affects women, followed by the elderly and the youth. Women are affected the most, as they are uneducated, have no access to resources and do not participate in decision making, because of gender relations. Gender relation describes socially and culturally determined roles and responsibilities of men and women. As a result of these roles and responsibilities, the causes and experience of poverty differ by gender. Their priorities in poverty reduction measures also differ. Women are limited by poor access to and control over productive resources, unequal access to services like credits, inputs and agricultural extension; unequal access to social services like education and health as well as lack of decision making power. For instance, less than 25% of women are able to decide by themselves on contraceptive use, showing the low degree of autonomy of women to exercise their reproductive rights.

These differences and their impacts on the lives of women must be analyzed and understood fully to tackle poverty in Ethiopia. A gender responsive budget has been identified as a major tool to effectively address the existing gender gaps in the country. The participation of men and women, gender focal persons and experts in government and civil society groups who are often marginalized must be encouraged in policy dialogues.

Absence of gender disaggregated data masks the extent to which women and men are affected by poverty. Almost all data available for poverty analysis is aggregated and does not show the existing disparities between men and women. Gender disaggregated basic data must be generated for poverty reduction. Appropriate mechanisms and resources for the generation of the stated data must be designed and made available. Gender as a cross-cutting issue needs to be integrated in all interventions, policies, and sectors.

2.3 Socio-Cultural Situation

2.3.1 Gender and Demographic Issues

According to projections made based on the 1994 census, in the year 2002 the Ethiopian population is 67,672,000, of whom 33,707,000 (50.2%) are male and 33,513,000 (49.8%) are female. Among the total population 84.1% live in rural areas of whom 49.79% are women.

2.3.1.1 The Youth: Based on the projection made on the 1994 census, for the year 2000, the total population between the ages of 15–24, usually called youth, was 13,066,230, making up 20.58% of the total population. Among these 6,441,728 (49.30%) are females, consistent with the proportion in the total population. About 2,291,808 or close to 18% of the youth live in urban areas while the rest, live in rural areas. About 52% of the youth living in urban areas, and nearly 49% living in rural areas are women. The youth is facing serious challenges, severer for females. According to a survey undertaken by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 11% of the female respondents never had opportunities to go to school as opposed to 3% of the male respondents, and 30.2% of the girls in contrast to 18.6% of the boys explained that they did not have any special skill. The same study reveals that unwanted pregnancy is highly prevalent among unwed female youth in urban areas, and according to the survey the major reason for this problem was engagement in pre-marital sex because of promise of marriage. This is related to complications and death caused by illegal abortion. According to one study carried out in Addis Ababa, among the deaths that occur because of pregnancy and birth related complications, about 54% are caused by illegal abortion. This situation has several health, economic, social, and psychological repercussions. Another study carried out in St. Paul Hospital showed that among those who were admitted because of illegal abortion, 90.2% were between the ages of 15 and 29.

Currently, the major threatening health hazard for the youth is HIV/AIDS. According National AIDS Council, in the 15–24 age group, women make the majority of the infected, probably because of harmful traditional practices. Another serious threat is unemployment.

2.3.1.2 Female Headed Households: The assumption that households are made up of conventional families where both the man and woman are present no more holds true. Female-headed households are increasing in great numbers. The census shows that as early as 1994 among the entire households in the country, 22.2% were female headed. Many of the female-headed households were found in urban areas: 35.05% of the households in urban areas and 20.08% of the households in rural areas were female-headed. In Addis Ababa 32.8% of the households were female headed. Similar figures are reported in the Demographic and Health Survey (DHS) of 2000. Conflicts and war, migration, mortality due HIV/AIDS, and divorce are some of the reasons for increasing number of female-headed households. One major feature of female-headed households is their increased vulnerability to poverty. A study conducted in Addis Ababa shows that among the female-headed households in Addis Ababa, 52% belong to the low-income category and 89.19% of the women are engaged in the informal sector, from which they earn just enough to survive.

A number of social and cultural factors are responsible for this. Women encounter several economic, social and cultural constraints that affect their access to education and resources. As a result their opportunity for employment and decent earning is minimal compared to their male counterparts. Under these circumstances, when divorce occurs the woman's income goes down while the man's income goes up. This

problem is exacerbated because often times children stay with their mothers in the case of divorce. According to the DHS, 71% of children under 15 live with both parents, 14% with their mothers while only 4.4% live with their fathers, and 10% live with neither parent. Similarly, when a partner dies the woman's income deteriorates.

Though initiatives have been taken to alleviate poverty in women, because of lack of gender sensitivity and unavailability of appropriate policies and strategies, women's gender specific needs are overlooked in planning and implementation of development programs and projects.

2.3.1.3 Migration: The major trend of migration is rural-urban. According to the 1994 census, among the people who migrated to urban centers, 52.51% were females. Studies have established a number of reasons for this high rate of female migration to the urban centers. According to a study completed in March 2002, some of the reasons were search for a job, education, and other opportunities, forced or early marriage, divorce, death of parents, and the motive to live with relatives in the city. The same study revealed that more than half of the migrants were female-headed households. These households did not have sufficient and stable income. The women explained that the first two years after their migration were bad. In addition to the lack of decent income, migrant women especially household heads encounter a wide variety of psychosocial problems. As explained in the study, the women had to struggle with work and family responsibilities. Their lives were full of stress, insecurity, uncertainties and challenges.

A more extensive study done in 5 regions of Ethiopia showed that, male migrants are more likely to bring resources to cities to help establish themselves than female migrants. Further, in employment, males were more involved than females in temporary work and, to a lesser extent, in full time work while female migrants were seen to depend more on help from relatives. This shows that the constraints women experience in accessing networks to facilitate post-migration adjustments. The survey concluded that women were less successful in finding jobs than men, which pushes them to engage in the informal sector, with all the problems explained earlier.

2.3.1.4 Disability: Various factors such as infectious diseases, malnutrition, war, episodes of drought and famine and problems related to pre-and post natal care of mothers and children have dramatically increased the number of disabled population in Ethiopia. Poverty and ignorance exacerbate the problems. Knowingly and unknowingly disabled children are exploited and excluded from normal family routines. Harmful traditional practices also play their part in raising the number of disabled individuals. For girls, FGM, fistula caused by obstructed labour accompanying early marriage and pelvic deformity, maternal related risks, incision of lower limbs, maternity related risks contribute significantly to increasing the number of disabled women (Tirusew, 1993). In a national baseline survey undertaken in 1995, among the 5085 households in which the questionnaire was administered 14.7% had persons with disabilities. Most of the disabled persons fell under: impaired vision

(30.4%), mobility disorder (30.9%), and chronic health problems such as epilepsy and leprosy (10.3%). Among these, close to 40% were women. The lower figure for female disabled, could be due to war induced disability that affects mainly the male population.

All disabled individuals encounter attitudinal problems from able-bodied individuals. Lack of education, training and employment opportunities; inaccessibility of social services; and lack of implementation of laws and policies that ensure equal opportunities; are added problems. Disabled women encounter special problems in addition to those commonly shared with disabled men. Many researchers express this, as “double disability”. A study conducted in 1999 in Addis Ababa, on persons with hearing, visual, and motor impairments, showed that, at home female disabled are overburdened with household chores and many neither had the opportunity to go to school nor got the permission and time to interact with other individuals.

A study conducted in six regions of Ethiopia on girls who have visual and hearing disability and mental retardation showed that, visually and hearing impaired girls do not have early childhood educational experiences. The problem was worse for visually impaired. In many instances, institutions like the church and the Koran schools offer some services. However, public schools and in some cases NGO supported schools were the major service providers for girls with visual and hearing disability. Looking at access to education for visually and hearing impaired individuals, the trend over the years shows that the attendance rate of girls was much lower than that of boys. For example, for the academic years 1995/96, 1996/97, 1997/98, 1998/99 and 1999/00 the percentage of visually impaired female students in primary cycle, that is, from grades 1–4 were 32.6%, 31.1%, 31.7%, 37.3%, and 37.9% respectively. In addition to the limited opportunities girls have in terms of access to school, the unfavorable school environment is another constraint they face. Unavailability of toilets, school distance, unavailability of disability specific instructional materials, low qualification of teachers were found to be some of the problems girls with disabilities encounter (Amare et al, 2001). In one study girls with motor impairment and hearing impairment reported that inconsiderateness and discouragement on the part of teachers to be serious constraints (Tirusew, 2001).

Studies show that disabled individuals face discrimination in employment. The magnitude is severer for women. Similarly, once employed the opportunity for promotion, further training and other privileges were found to be more scarce for female disabled than male disabled. Studies and personal testimonies also reveal that disabled women have much more constraints in social engagements and marital relationships than do male disabled. Several studies and day-to-day observations show that disabled women are exposed to several forms of violence: physical including sexual violence, psychological, as well as various forms of hard labor.

2.3.1.5 Traditional Practices: Traditions are long established and generally accepted customs or practices that have been handed down from generation to generation usually by word of mouth or by practice without

writing. Tradition gives meaning to people's life, and implies continuity, authority of ancestors, and conformity. The term signifies the historical aspect of culture, and it is a mode of thinking, the implementation of which could be useful or harmful. There are many traditional practices that are harmful, but accepted and widely practiced. These practices have been created and nurtured by society to ensure women's low status.

In common with pre-industrial societies, most ethnic cultures in Ethiopia are interwoven with myths, superstition and false conceptions of humans, the psychic and sexual life which contradict the basic findings of sciences. As a result, there are traditional practices in almost all ethnic cultures which adversely affect the health of its people, goals of equality, and hinder economic development. It is being recognized more and more that women and children suffer from adverse effects of traditional practices from infancy throughout their lifetime. Women are generally discriminated against in favour of men as revealed in preferential access to food, health care, as well as education. The need for early marriage to ensure virginity exposes the woman to the risks that accompany early pregnancy. In addition, women are exposed to health risks including bodily mutilations the most widely spread of which is female Genital mutilation (FGM), which sometimes is mildly referred to as female circumcision.

FGM involves the removal of parts or whole of external female genitalia, classified by WHO into types I, II, III, and IV. The operation is usually performed using razor blade, knife or pieces of broken glass. In Ethiopia almost all types of FGM are performed in individual homes by traditional medical practitioners, who in most cases are women. The practice does immeasurable harm to the health of women and girls. Eighty per cent of all women and in some parts of the country up to 100% are mutilated, making FGM a top priority among the harmful traditional practices in the country. In some cases the origin of FGM and other practices have been given religious coverage to exploit women's loyalty to culture and faith, and thereby compel them into accepting and even defending practices that have negative impact on their health.

2.3.2 Gender in the Media and Information Technology

2.3.2.1 Gender and Media: Media is one of the most important socializing agents. As Alemseged pointed out, millions of lives are being conditioned and shaped by what is heard on the radio, what is viewed on television, video and cinema films; what is read in print and what is seen on the stage. Media transmit values and attitudes that highly affect the attitude and behavior of individuals. The issue of women and media can be looked at from three perspectives: women's portrayal, the content, and women as media consumers. According to Lulit G/Michael, the relationship between consumers and their decision making capacity impacts on portrayal.

It is a universal phenomenon that women and men are portrayed in stereotypical ways, more intensified in many developing countries. As Andersen (1988) indicated, not only are women and men cast in traditional roles, but both are omitted from roles that portray them in a variety of social context. Women tend to be portrayed in roles in which

they are trivialized, condemned, or narrowly defined, resulting in the “symbolic annihilation” of women by the media. Men on the other hand, are usually depicted in high-status jobs in which they dominate women. A similar situation is observed in Ethiopia. Agaredech in her paper on gender and media explains how her informants found the media, specifically, the radio and TV gender biased. Women are usually portrayed doing domestic chores, or appearing as sex objects and sometimes, they are presented to be selfish and cruel. She also contends that some of the materials can perpetuate violence against women. In a similar vein, Alem Seged contends that the portrayal of women falls under two categories: misrepresentation and under-representation. This, according to his argument results from the fact that the media is still a male preserve. He also explains how the media either blatantly or subtly explains the female body.

Alem Seged explains that, the content produced by the Ethiopian national media is done through a hierarchical channel flowing from top to producers. The contents include national and international current affairs, development issues and entertainment. Both electronic and print media have contents on women’s issues. Radio and TV have weekly regular programs and the three national newspapers contain regular weekly columns. These programmes feature a number of political, legal, social, and economic issues as they relate to women. However, lack of public participation, lack of consideration of women as subjects, and the treatment of all women as being homogeneous are some of the observable problems (Alem Seged, 1999).

2.3.2.2 Gender and Information Technology Utilization by women of modern communication technology like telephone Radio, TV, Internet is minimal says Lulit. For instance, even educated women do not watch TV as much as men, because women often are busy assisting their children with their homework, or supervising household activities. In situations where a woman could sit down to watch, the choice of channel is frequently decided by men. The rural radio ownership of only 12.8% is generally limited to men, and when the men go out of the house, they remove the batteries, hindering women’s utilization. Addressing the radio ownership and running issue could ensure that women have more access to information.

Many women do not receive information from the media. This was observed in HIV/AIDS information dissemination and reception presented in the DHS 2000. The survey showed that, men were more likely than women to have heard of AIDS on the radio 53.9%, than women 30%, and the TV, men 12.8%, and women 7.7%. Radio ownership was 12.8% rural, and 61.3% urban.

As Noah Samara in one of his speeches explained information is at the heart of education; information is the basis of health; information defines every aspect of production, distribution and exchange; and information defines social relationship at all levels. These days there is a fast rate of information transmission and exchange; and this is made possible because of Information Communication Technologies (ICTs). ICTs are growing at a faster rate than any other technology and affecting

every aspect of people's lives. There is no doubt that such advances present tremendous opportunities for human development. ICTs have the potential to reduce poverty, empower people and facilitate the democratization process. However, it can also widen the gaps between the haves and the have-nots and between women and men. The voices and concerns of women with low or no incomes, and with limited access to education, to public institutions, and to positions of decision-making risk to be further marginalized (Domminguez, 2001).

There are a number of constraints women encounter in accessing information, especially accessing information using ICTs. According to (Dominguez, 2001), Ethiopian women face similar constraints in accessing ICTs with women in other African countries. These include low literacy, limited access to resources and decision-making, limited or no access to computers, limited telecommunication infrastructure, unreliable telephone line, high cost of telephone calls, and lack of time. Women who have access usually use ICTs for work purposes, and not for personal growth. Even in their work women's utilization of ICTs is often limited to using e-mails.

However, considering the important role ICTs play in provision of information and reducing poverty some efforts need to be made to create access. The Worldspace satellite radio network does not at this stage seem to assist rural Ethiopian women, because there is a missing technological link between the satellite and the rural village. Further, the initial cost of the receiver and the low rural electricity coverage and high bill is beyond the reach of the majority of Ethiopians. Ethiopian women are excluded even from conventional information sources. A good example here is the case of agricultural extension programmes, where information is almost wholly transmitted to men, although women contribute substantially to agricultural production.

The formation of the Ethiopian Media Women Association (EMWA), with the objectives of training and exchange of experience for capacity building is an attempt to address problems of gender and the media. Ethiopia is also a member of the East African Media women Association (EAMWA).

2.4 The Girl Child

The girl-child is discriminated against from the earliest stages of life, throughout her childhood and into adulthood. She is a victim of son preference, is subjected to harmful traditional practices, suffers from unequal division of labour, marriage is customarily the only vocation in life, performed at a tender age, where she is excluded from the decision making process in regard to her spouse, and reproductive health. In some communities, she is subjected to widow inheritance, and is hardest hit by political and ethnic conflict.

2.4.1 Information on the Specific Constraints

Girls are assigned a subordinate position in the home, and the community resulting in lowered self-esteem. This is reinforced by gender-biased educational processes including curricula, educational material, teachers' attitudes and classroom interaction, leading to under-achievement. Boys

are brought up to achieve and be self-reliant, are seen as major bread winners; whereas girls are brought up to conform, be obedient and dependent, their reproductive role taken as primary occupation. The consequences of these have been that men are less bothered about social approval and more reliant upon internal standards of excellence in contrast to women who are conformist, pursuable, and more vulnerable to interpersonal rejection. Women do not expect to achieve, underestimate their academic abilities; and a strong commitment to an activity or career outside the home is rare. The biased educational system and lack of family commitment to girls' education has created the gap between male and female student enrollment and success at all educational levels.

2.4.2 Violence against Girl Children (Women)

Women's low status can both be a cause and a consequence of violence against them. In all Ethiopian cultures, women and girls are subjected to physical, sexual and psychological abuse, in the family and the community. Violence involving beating, rape, FGM, abduction, early marriage, nutritional taboos and unregulated fertility are well established traditions that negatively affect the health and well-being of the woman, and are violations of human rights but not considered so, by the societies concerned. Sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions, trafficking in women and forced prostitution, are also common practices.

Gender-based violence is a neglected but a recently acknowledged social and health problem. The practice is intensified by social pressures, notably the shame of denouncing certain acts that have been perpetuated against women due to: their lack of access to legal information, aid or protection; the lack of laws that effectively prohibit violence against women; failure to reform existing laws; and the absence of educational and other means to address the causes and consequences of violence.

Rape of women including small girls and babies, sexual harassment and intimidation have become widespread, and cause for serious concern. It is estimated that 3 women are raped each day in each of the 28 Woredas, in Addis Ababa making it an alarming total of 30660, rape cases every year. A study based on school surveys, showed that 78% of girls expressed fear of rape because they have been repeatedly threatened. In the same study 74% of the girls reported that they were harassed daily, and 26% of the girls have been raped more than once. Abduction is a widespread and common practice especially in SNNPRA, The prevalent practices of abduction and rape have affected girls education, as well as exerting long-term physiological and psychological impact. Early marriage as young as 7 or 8 years often to men much older, is common even though the legal age for both men and women is 20 years. This practice is more common in some regions than in others, for instance it is widely practiced in Amahara Regional State. Serious health complications accompany the practice.

2.5 HIV/AIDS

There is a high prevalence of HIV/AIDS infection in Ethiopia, life expectancy is falling, and efforts to reduce poverty are undermined. HIV/AIDS poses the foremost threat to development, and thus the disease cannot be viewed as merely one among competing priorities in the nation's development. The impact of AIDS has been devastating, with an estimated 750,000 children orphaned, and in urban areas AIDS patients occupy half of the hospital beds. About 90 per cent of reported AIDS cases are in the productive and reproductive important age group of 20–49 years. In the 15–24 years age group women make the majority of the infected, presumably because of practices like rape and early marriage and the high rate of teenage prostitution.

2.5.1 *Spread in Urban/Rural Areas*

HIV was first detected in 1984, and the first AIDS case reported in 1986. Prevalence in the adult population increased quickly in the 1990s during which time it rose from an estimated 3.2% in 1993 to 7.3% in 1999. According to AIDS Council, rates among women attending ante natal clinics at sentinel surveillance sites in Addis Ababa have exceeded 10% since 1993 and recently estimated at 15.1%. Higher rates have been reported (19% – Gambella), and (20.8% Baher Dar). No routine surveillance exists in the rural areas, and is difficult to estimate the level and trend of the prevalence. However, prediction for the rural population by the year 2000 was 5%. Generally, an estimated 5000 people are newly infected each week in the country.

There are direct and indirect causes for the rapid spread of the epidemic; the direct causes are unprotected sex, and high frequency of causal sex relationships. The indirect causes include (a) poverty characterized by high rate of unemployment, high rate of prostitution, both of which affect women more, and high rate of economic migration; (b) low level of awareness about the infection, with misconception about the virus, its transmission and prevention and lack of information is commoner in women. During discussions in many forums, prostitution, pornographic video shows, alcohol and substance abuse; in some instances the way anti-HIV/AIDS messages (including condom advertisements), have been identified, as factors that intensify the spread of HIV infections.

Women are more vulnerable to HIV infection than men, due to biological, cultural and socio-economic reasons. Promiscuity is common, and practices like abduction, rape and FGM affecting women only are rampant. They are exposed to risks of unwanted pregnancy, unsafe abortion, early marriage usually to older men, and sexually transmitted infections. The presence of a huge mobile community consisting of the military, displaced and permanent mobile people, is also an indirect cause of the rapid spread.

2.5.2 *Awareness and Attitudes about HIV Infection*

The level of awareness about HIV/AIDS in the general population particularly in the rural areas is low. Three times as many women (23%) as men (8%) have not heard of AIDS or do not know if it can be

avoided. Three in four women and nine in ten men believe there is a way to avoid getting infected with AIDS. Rural residents, women in Somali and men in Gambella regions are less likely than urban dwellers and residents of other regions to have heard of HIV/AIDS.

Attitudes towards the infection is commonly observed in silence about the epidemic, probably because of the stigma and discrimination against PLWHA, and denial about the extent of the problem in the country. There is a lot of misconception with regard to the mode of HIV transmission, prevention methods and care for those living with the virus. Forty five percent women and 50% men were seen to be willing to care for relatives with AIDS. Unmarried youth 15–19 year olds, urban dwellers, and those with at least secondary education are more willing than others to care for relatives infected with HIV/AIDS.

2.5.3 National Policies and Strategies

A national task force was established in 1985, and two medium term prevention and control plans were implemented between 1987 and 1996. HIV/AIDS policy was formulated in 1998 to provide an enabling environment for a multi-sectoral approach to activities. The National AIDS Council headed by the president of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia was established in April 2000, membership consisting of sector Ministries, Regional States, NGOs, religious institutions, civil societies and PLWHA. The council oversees the implementation of the federal and regional plans. A National HIV/AIDS Board of Advisors has been appointed to oversee the plan, and a National AIDS Prevention and Control Secretariat is also established under the prime Minister's Office to coordinate and facilitate the multi-sectoral response to HIV/AIDS.

Priority areas of intervention incorporate, IEC and BCC; Condom Promotion and Distribution; (VCT) services; management of STIs; Blood Safety; Universal Precautions; Prevention MTCT; Care and Support; Legislation and Human Rights; Surveillance and Research. Even though peoples awareness about HIV infection has increased, a corresponding behavioural change has not been observed, which necessitated a shift from IEC to BCC. The IEC component consists of consistent message on the transmission and prevention to the general public, specific target groups prioritized in the order of youth, women, commercial sex workers, unformed people, mobile labour force, farmers, and workers.

The strategies involve establishing HIV/AIDS forums in women and kebele associations, NGOs and CBOs; establishing VCT services in health facilities for pregnant women, promoting access to VCT centres in non-medical settings, involving PLWHA in IEC intervention, support activities to promote economic empowerment of women, and initiatives that fight harmful traditional practices that expose to the infection.

Commercial sex work is an area in which many women are engaged, and their involvement in multi-numeral sexual partners with the accompanying frequent incidence of STIs exposes them to the risk of HIV infection. The strategies of intervention include network of commercial sex workers, peer group education, establishing health facilities, strength-

ening STI management, and supporting the creation of alternative sources of income.

2.6 Human Rights and Governance

Governance is the relations between the state, civil society and the private sector. It could be seen as the totality of the exercise of authority in the management of the country's affairs comprising the complex mechanisms, processes, and institutions through which citizens and groups articulate their interests, exercise their legal rights, and mediate their differences (CRDA, 2001). Good governance has at least three dimensions; political, economic, and social governance.

2.6.1 Political Governance

Political governance has a range of issues two of which are human rights and participation.

2.6.1.1 Human Rights of Women: Ethiopia has ratified both the UN Charter adopted in 1948 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) of 1949. Both these international instruments prohibit the negative discrimination of women based on their sex. The UDHR identifies targets and requires the promotion and protection of civil, political, economic, and social rights of people. Though the UDHR prohibits all forms of discrimination based on sex, an additional instrument was necessary, to accommodate the special situation and needs of women, and accelerate the process of closing the gap between men and women. Accordingly the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) was adopted in 1981. Ethiopia ratified the convention in the same year. CEDAW outlines a variety of political, social, economic, and legislative issues that States have to work on to eliminate discrimination against women and create equality between men and women. It also reiterates that state parties will adopt the necessary measures to achieve human rights of women identified in the Convention. CEDAW also discusses a procedure of reporting and follow up of the measures states have taken up in order to eliminate discrimination against women.

The Constitution adopted in 1995 by the FDRE has amplified the provisions given to women, and assures women of equal rights with men in every sphere and affirmative actions would be taken in order to remedy the sufferings of women because of past inequalities. It also reiterates the rights of women to own and administer property. It re-sounds women's right to family planning services and to paid pre-and post-delivery maternity leaves. Since the ratification of the 1995 Constitution, a number of strides have been made in the past few years in amending discriminatory laws. Now the pension benefits of women civil servants is given to their survivors, maternity leave has been extended from 45 days to 3 months, and the family law has been revised. However, there is still a lot to be done. For example, women who marry foreigners are still losing their Ethiopian nationality (Meaza 2002).

2.6.1.2 *Beijing Plus Five*: The United Nations Fourth World Conference, held in Beijing, in September 1995 came up with Beijing Declaration and the Platform for Action. The Platform showed a renewed commitment to the goals of equality, development, and peace for all women. It was divided into six chapters and identified 12 critical areas of concern that were thought to be the main barriers to the advancement of women. These were poverty, education and training, health, violence, armed conflict, economic participation, power sharing and decision-making, women focused institutions, human rights, mass media, environment, and the girl child.

In October 1998, the UN Division for the Advancement of Women (UN/DAW) sent out a questionnaire to all United Nations Member States requesting a report on the implementation of the Beijing Platform. The responses showed that, except for a few isolated examples where women's lives have improved, in many cases progress has been slow (Biseswar, 2000).

Hadera (2000) in her report of the implementation of the Beijing Platform states that many of the concerns that were included in the Beijing Platform had been considered and placed at the priority list of the Ethiopian government. After reviewing the various policies, plans and activities, the author concludes that though attempts have been made to implement policies and proclamations aimed at bringing about gender equality not much progress has been observed. She identifies some of the constraints to be high illiteracy rate, deep-rooted gender stereotyped cultural beliefs and practices, and lack of resources including qualified human labour.

In preparation for the Beijing Plus five, countries the world developed ways of measuring their countries' progress for women. The UN held five preparatory meetings and at the meeting of March 2000, 'the outcome document' was produced. The document reaffirms the 12 areas of the Platform for Action, including measures to:

- identify violence against women as a human rights violation;
- address the issue of honor killings;
- monitor trafficking of women and condemn exploitation of women and girls for economic and sexual purposes;
- respond to the impact of HIV/AIDS on the health of women and girls internationally, particularly in Africa;
- expand entrepreneurship and credit availability, including micro-credit;
- emphasize “gender mainstreaming” in all economic policies, institutions, and resource allocations;
- promote women's role in conflict resolutions and peace-building, and the role of men in promoting gender equality.

The outcome document reaffirms human rights of women and the commitment of the international community to implement the Beijing Platform. Ethiopia has committed itself to take the measures included in the document. What needs to be assessed is the progress that the country is making in implementing the provisions outlined in the outcome document.

2.6.1.3 The Millennium Development Goal (MDG): The MDG is another instrument that Ethiopia ratified with the aim of reducing poverty. The goals include, among others, enabling all children, both boys and girls, in the world to complete full course of elementary school and eliminating the gender gap in all levels of education, by the year 2015. Though the goals are highly ambitious for most developing countries including Ethiopia, they would reinforce the implementation of CEDAW, Beijing Plus Five and other national instruments.

2.6.1.4 Labour Law Proclamation: The Civil Service Proclamation of January, 2002, cover issues of employment, salary, promotion, performance evaluation, training, leave and disciplinary measures. Under employment, it states that no discrimination shall be made on the basis of ethnic origin, sex, religion and political affiliation, and other grounds. In addition to this, the proclamation clearly stipulates that in the employment process, if two candidates a man and a woman have the qualification required for the position, preference will be given to the female candidate. There are also provisions given to a female civil servants on maternity related issues. The proclamation states that a pregnant civil servants shall be entitled to paid leave for medical examination before delivery if recommended by a doctor. She will also be entitled for a paid leave of 30 days before delivery and 60 days after delivery. Finally if she does not deliver on the presumed date she can get her annual leave after the 60 days of post-delivery leave.

These provisions are supportive of female civil servants, but issues like training and promotion do not seem to take gender issues into account. The personnel statistics issued by the Civil Service Commission shows that, currently many of the training opportunities are utilized by men. These could be because female civil servants have less GPA at graduation, a problem closely related to the economic, social, and cultural problems a woman encounters in attending and succeeding in education. Therefore, considering the gender relation arrangement in our society, mechanisms need to be created to distribute promotions and training fairly among male and female civil servants. If gender issues are neglected in promotion and training the gender equality of the sexes that we are striving to attain will become a dream rather than reality.

2.6.1.5 Political Participation: In the Ethiopian context, for a woman to hold a key position in politics, economics, and administration is a difficult fulfillment. As a patriarchal society, the attitude of the majority towards women holding a high position, the way society and workplaces are structured, and the gender division of labor all pose a serious challenge. Women have a marginal position in accessing and succeeding in their education. As indicated earlier, the majority of women in the civil service are in clerical and manual jobs. Therefore, it is not surprising that we do not see many women in key positions both in politics and administration.

Female candidates have mentioned problems women face in political participation including: lack of experience in the election process; lack of the consideration of gender issues in the election process; shortage of finance; as well as ignorance and lack of information on the part of

women voters. However, in spite of the difficulties a small number of women have managed to get seats in parliament. For example, currently out of the 547 seats 42 (7.68%) are held by women. Though this is very small, we see a slight improvement from the previous election. In the previous election only 2.38% of the seats were held by women. What these figures suggest is that women's participation is negligible and unless serious efforts are made, to increase women's political participation at all levels, good governance will be beyond reach.

2.6.2 Economic Governance

The economic activities that include policy processes and organizational mechanisms that a society uses to manage the production and distribution of goods are part of economic governance. Such institutions as government owned firms, private business and corporations, the informal sector, local authorities, and many organizations of civil society are some of the institutions that play a good part in economic governance (CRDA 2001). Looking at the women's positions in these different organizations and institutions, we can infer that their voice can't be heard and their influence in the economic governance is minimal. For example, in the civil service 70.9% of the professional positions are held by men while women occupy only 29.1% of these jobs. Among these women, only close 2.0% are in decision-making positions.

2.6.3 Social Governance

Social governance includes social norms, values and beliefs that guide society's decision-making and behavior. These values and beliefs are formulated and promoted by cultures, religions, the family, school, media, arts, advertising, etc. Thus, social governance provides the value base for political and economic governance (CRDA 2001). Ethiopian is a patriarchal society, that has a system which values men's activities and achievements over that of women, reflected in all aspects of life. In most cases the cultural values and practices favour men. In a study carried out to investigate the attitude of Amahara society towards female as leaders, the findings revealed that irrespective of sex, age, and educational level, people had biases towards women leaders. Many of the socialization agents including family, school, the church, and the community perpetuate the unfair gender relationship prevalent in the society. The media is full of stereotypical portrayal of men and women, and the art reflects what is in the culture. As indicated above these gender imbalances form the basis for the unfair political and economic government.

2.6.4 Women and Conflict

Women are affected more than men by conflict because of social and cultural factors. During conflicts, women shoulder the responsibility of caring for the family and keeping it together, while at the same time earning money for its sustenance. This is because during armed conflicts, many men leave for the battlefield. Women are also likely to be victims of intimidation, harassment, beatings, and rape. When conflicts reach villages, combatants from the other side loot the villagers, ask the women the whereabouts of their partners, threaten and in some cases rape them,

which sometimes results in unwanted pregnancy. Forced migration and prostitution could also be the outcome of armed conflict. When women are not able to sustain themselves and their families in their areas of origin, they migrate to the cities, usually along with their children, in search of other opportunities. Hence they are displaced. According to several studies, some of the consequences of displacement in urban areas include lack of shelter and food, unemployment, high cost of living, poor sanitary conditions, lack of clothing, lack of vocational skills, lack of working capital, overcrowding, various social evils such as prostitution, streetism, and poverty in general (MOLSA, 1995). Women face the problems outlined above simply as civilians. Women can also get involved in armed conflicts and experience problems that are peculiar to women.

This was observed during the TPLF's war against the Derge. Women were involved in this war directly by playing a role in the fight and indirectly providing supplies for the combatants, singing heroic songs to motivate the combatants, giving intelligence services, and by serving as messengers between the combatants and the political elite in the city. As combatants women were equally aggressive, violent, and reckless (Tsegaye, 1995). The involvement of women in armed conflicts has impacted their lives in different ways. Due to spending much of their time working for the army, many had their marriages dissolved increasing the number of female-headed households. This makes women highly vulnerable to poverty. After the war and during demobilization, women could not be equal beneficiaries of the 'fruits of victory', due to their poor educational, background and other socio-cultural factors. Many had difficulties adjusting to the patriarchal way of life in the community, after experiencing equality with men during the war and many felt depressed at the realization that their chances of marriage and motherhood were lost.

3. National Policies and Inputs on Promotion of Gender Equality

3.1 Policies

The Transitional Government and the Federal republic of Ethiopia have formulated several policies to rehabilitate the social and economic infrastructure and create an environment for sustainable development. These include The economic Policy along its strategy, the Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI), the National Policy of Ethiopian Women, the National Population Policy, the Education and Training Policy, Health Policy, Developmental Social Welfare Policy, Environmental Policy, Culture Policy, Policy on Natural Resources and Environment, and others.

One of the major policies formulated by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia was the Economic Reform Policy. The main objectives of the policy were:

- Changing the centralized economy to free market economy;
- Increasing the participation of the people to increase the economic activity of the regions by giving ownership;
- Enabling local industries to use local raw materials and supplies to strengthen the economy;
- Creating relationship and interdependence among the various sectors, especially between agriculture and industry, so as to reduce dependency on imported raw materials and supplies;
- Giving special attention to the agricultural sector since it is perceived to be the basis for the economic development.

ADLI as a strategy, is believed to have influence on those engaged in agriculture, who form the majority. It is considered to be the best alternative to revive and further develop the devastated economy. Productivity has to be improved in order for the agricultural sector to become both a supplier of food and raw materials for the industry, while also be a market for the output for the industrial sector. This can be accomplished by applying improved and modern way of farming, through the provision of extension services, agricultural inputs, infrastructure and credit services to small farmers. In this endeavor, emphasis will be given to farmer with small lands holdings and to establishing large-scale farms, especially in the lowland areas. This way, it will be possible to get enough yield from limited farming activities and eventually transfer people from

agriculture to the other sectors. ADLI also delineates the roles to be played by the government, the people, and the private sector in implementing the strategy. It also describes what needs to be done in the various areas such as industry, minerals, population growth and control, science and technology, infrastructure and social services.

One of the eight issues under the investment program is the participation of women. It indicates that women would be provided with credit services and inputs that would enable them to increase their productivity; conditions will be created and improved to enable women to attend schools and to persist in their education, improving their chance of holding decision making positions at various levels; and encouraging women's participation in modern economic activities. Though women are given some provisions in the strategy, the women's issue has not been mainstreamed in all the sectors. It is obvious that the issue of gender is central to all the sectors including education, health, population, food security, and in fact women play an important role in agriculture, which is the main focus of the strategy. Therefore, gender needs to be mainstreamed in all the strategies and programs that will be worked on in order to realize ADLI instead of putting it as one of the issues to be taken up.

The main objectives of the National Policy of Ethiopian Women include, creating and facilitating conditions for equality between men and women, creating conditions to make rural women beneficiaries of social services like education and health, and eliminating stereotypes, and discriminatory perception and practices that constrain the equality of women. A number of strategies have also been designed to achieve the above objectives, two of which are the participation of women in the formulation of policies, laws, rules and regulations, and ensuring the democratic and human right of women. The structures were clearly put delineating the responsibilities of the Women's Affairs Office (WAO) under the Prime Minister Office and the Regional and Zonal Women's Affairs Sectors, and the Women's Affairs Department (WAD) in the various Ministries. However, assessments done over the years show that both the (WAO), and the (WAD) in the sectoral ministries lack capacity: they have problems with resources and qualified personnel. In many cases WADs are marginalized and gender is not mainstreamed in many of the activities in the ministries. The structure has problems reaching the grassroots since it stops at Woreda level, a problem that has limited the implementation of the policy.

The National Population Policy formulated in 1993 was an instrument aimed at harmonizing the rate of population growth with the capacity of the country. The Policy gives serious attention to the issue of gender and describes the important roles women play in controlling population growth. It clearly stipulates that the situation of women has direct bearings on the fertility level of any society and explains how their education, employment and the provisions in the laws given to women are related to their fertility and reproductive health. The goals, objectives and strategies give a central place to the situation and empowerment of women. The goals include raising the economic and social status of women, empowering vulnerable segments of the society such as young children and women, removing all legal and customary practices con-

straining women's economic and social development and the enjoyment of their rights. Many of the strategies revolve around empowering women through education, employment in both government and private sectors and eliminating cultural and legal barriers.

The Ethiopian Education and Training Policy also has some provisions given to women. One of the specific objectives in the Education and Training Policy is to introduce a system of education that would rectify the misconceptions and misunderstandings regarding the roles and benefits of female education. The policy indicates that the design and development of curriculum and books would give special attention to gender issues. It further states that equal attention would be given to female participants when selecting teachers; training them, and advancing their careers. There is also a statement included which indicates that financial support would be given to students with promising potentials. A number of initiatives have been taken to implement the policy. For example, female teachers are selected with less GPA than male teachers and this has increased the number of female teachers in elementary schools. But a lot needs to be done at the high school level. The Women's Affairs Department in the Ministry of Education has prepared a gender policy and undertakes a number of activities to help close the gender gap in education. Five regions, Gambela, Benshangul-Gumuz, SNNPRA, Oromiyaa, and Somalia, are targeted because of the low enrollment and high dropout rates of girls. Capacity building of female teachers, guidance and counseling services for female students, and awareness creation in the community are some of the activities. The office also gives assertiveness training to female students at the various higher education institutes and organize panel discussion on gender issues. Women's focal points in regional bureaus get support from the WAD in the MOE. However, just like other WADs the office is understaffed and encounters shortage of resources.

The Health Policy was one of instruments designed by the Transitional Government of Ethiopia to improve the health status of people and to facilitate the provision of basic health services. Health is an intersectoral matter that it can not be addressed by any one policy or plan of action. A statement in the health policy reflects this fact: *"the government believes that health policy can not be considered in isolation from policies addressing population dynamics, food availability, acceptable living conditions, and other requisites essential for health improvement and shall therefore develop effective intersectorality for a comprehensive betterment of life"*.

The goal of the health policy is to restructure and expand the health care system and to make it responsive to the health needs of the less privileged rural population, which constitute the overwhelming majority of the population, and are the major productive force of the nation. The policy supports the democratization and decentralization of the health service system, and strengthening intersectoral activities. The policy accords special attention to the health needs of the family, particularly women and children, and hitherto most neglected regions, the rural population, and pastoralists, as some of its priority areas.

The implementation of public policy or government plan of action involves the translation of goals and objectives into concrete achievements through various programmes. The Health Sector Development

Programme (HSDP) formulated in 1996, is an implementation strategy for the National Health Policy.

The Cultural Policy formulated in October 1997 views culture as incorporating the different social, economic, political, administrative, moral, religious, material and oral traditions, and practices of the various peoples and nationalities of Ethiopia. It also recognizes that for development efforts to be effective and sustainable, they have to take into considerations the cultures of people, which impact on the thinking and activities. The policy recognizes that the cultural behaviors, practices, and attitudes that support and promote stereotypes and prejudices against women, those that constrain the expansion of family planning services and the promotion of reproductive health should be slowly eliminated. Instead, situations should be created that promote the equality of the sexes. The content of the Policy clearly elaborates the unfavorable situation of women, and articulates the need for a change that ensures women's active participation in all cultural activities and guaranteeing them equal rights to the benefits. However the strategies outlined in the Policy document do not include in what ways the sector could achieve the gender equality indicated in the policy and the means to eliminate harmful practices.

The Development Social Welfare Policy was formulated by the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs in November 1996. The main objectives of the policy is studying the causes of social problems and designing preventive and rehabilitative programs with full participation of all stakeholders including the grassroots. The Policy acknowledges that war, famine, economic crises of the past decades have harmed vulnerable groups, i.e., women, the elderly, children, youth and the disabled, and makes these groups the Policy's central focus. It also explains that women are underrepresented in every sphere including education, employment, politics, and other key decision making positions. It further mentions that one of the major causes of social problems is the economic dependence of women on men. However, talking about the various groups such as children, youth, elderly, and the disabled, it does not say about the special problems females encounter as children, parents, youth, the elderly, and the disabled, nor does it mention the measures that need to be taken to alleviate their problems. For example, such problems as harmful traditional practices that victimize female children, teenage pregnancy and abortion, the vulnerability of disabled women to various types of violence are not given attention.

Community participation, partnership and coordination, capacity building of actors at various levels, advocacy and awareness creation, implementation of international conventions and other social welfare related laws, and establishment of data bank system are outlined to be some of the major strategies. The policy also articulates that the issues of gender will be mainstreamed in all programs, projects, and services in addressing the target groups mentioned in the policy.

The Federal Policy on Natural Resources and the Environment was formulated in April 1996 with the overall goal of improving and enhancing the health and quality of life of Ethiopians and to promote sustainable social and economic development through the sound management and use of natural, human-made and cultural resources and the environ-

ment as a whole to meet the needs of the present generation without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The policy starts with a conceptual framework that contends that human resources are of great value in themselves and as creators and maintainers of natural resources have to be developed and cared for, if natural resources are to be developed and conserved.

The policy gives importance to participatory approach and the feeling of ownership in developing and conserving natural resources and an important place is given to gender. It underlines the importance of the integration of social, cultural, and gender issues in sustainable resource and environmental management. Giving a high priority to raising the status of women by increasing female participation in the education system at all levels is indicated to be one of the strategies in the cross-sectoral issues. Increasing the number of women extension agents in natural resource and environmental management and designing programs that involve and benefit the most disadvantaged groups, particularly women, children, the disabled and the landless are considered important. The policy considers the disaggregation of data related to environment and to natural and man-made resource use and management, addressing gender issues by ensuring that energy plans adequately address fuel-wood requirement as two of the strategies in the development and conservation of biomass energy resources. In mineral resource development one of the strategies is providing support to women in mineral development with special practical training and technical assistance particularly in small-scale and artisan mining.

The policy gives a central place to institutionally supporting and establishing “Women in Development” desks at federal and regional government agencies concerned with natural resources development and environmental management. These desks would scrutinize projects, programs, policies, directives, rules, and regulations to ensure that gender issues are integrated. Capacity building for local communities to enable them to fully enfranchise their women, disables persons and, as appropriate, youth and children, to effectively participate in the planning and implementation of all development activities is also given importance. The policy is gender sensitive and it promotes highly the participation of vulnerable groups including women in conserving, sustaining, and managing the environment.

3.2 National Actors in Gender Equality and Competence Development

In this section, only government machinery for the implementation of the women’s policy will be presented, as other national actors have been covered elsewhere in this document.

3.2.1 The Women’s Affairs Office (WAO)

The Women’s Affairs Office was established in October 1991, headed by a woman with the rank of a minister. It is charged with the responsibility of coordinating, facilitating and monitoring all government gender programmes, particularly the implementation of the National Women’s Policy formulated in 1993. WAO is also responsible for creating a conducive environment for all implementators in the country.

3.2.2 *Women's Affairs Departments*

The establishment of gender focal points in Federal ministries and regional councils is one of the main strategies for the implementation of gender and sectoral policies. It was also one of the initial activities undertaken by WAO, after the formulation of the Ethiopian National Policy on Women. The regional council women's affairs department offices were opened up a little later.

3.2.3 *Centre for Research Training and Information for Women in Development (CERTWID)*

The CERTWID was established in 1991 with the financial assistance of UNFPA and Addis Ababa University. At the time of establishment CERTWID was placed under the Institute of Development Research. Currently, CERTWID has been upgraded and it is accountable to office of the Associate Vice President for Research and Graduate studies.

The centre's main goal is to enable women to empower themselves socially, culturally, economically and politically so as to be active participants as well as equal beneficiaries of the development process. This goal is realized through its research, training, and documentation activities. CERTWID undertakes its own research and sponsors other independent researchers and graduating BA and MA students to do their research on various issues related to gender. It also disseminates its findings through workshops and distribution of its publications for consumption by researchers, practitioners, and policy makers.

In its training component, CERTWID organizes various training workshops including gender sensitization, assertiveness, gender sensitive research methodology, and leadership. The Center's Documentation Unit serves a wide variety of patrons including Addis Ababa University staff, students, and employees of other governmental and non-governmental organizations. It has an adequate collection of books, research reports, journals and other magazines published on gender. It can be said that CERTWID is making a great contribution in raising awareness about gender, providing information on gender issues and equipping researchers with knowledge and skills in gender sensitive research methodology. But the centre lacks human resources capacity.

3.2.4 *Competence Building*

Assessments done over the years show that both the WAO, and the WADs suffer from lack of capacity, mainly human resource. The majority operate with just three people. The few people are marginalized lacking the decision making capacity in managing gender related issues, and as a result, gender is not mainstreamed in many of the activities. Further, the structure does not reach the grassroots, stopping at the Woreda level. This indicates that there is a great capacity gap that must be filled.

3.3 Involvement of Men in Gender Equality Work

The 'outcome document' for the Beijing plus five contains within the 12 areas of the platform "promote... and the role of men in promoting gender equality. Gender is both men and women, but often taken to be

women, because when we deal with gender focus is on women. The reason for this is that up to the present time, it is women who suffer from the existing inequality between the sexes, and as such women have been the main actors to address the issue. This has probably brought about the feeling that gender is women's issue to be handled by themselves. It is also true that, though not at a significant level, men are involved, in some instances showing more concern than some women do. In Addis Ababa, there are many consultancy firms managed by men and working on gender, including gender training, having themselves being trained. Many men make positive contributions in many forums. In some instances, especially in the rural setting, men have been seen to pose less resistance to changes that are introduced to achieve improved women's status. The extent of men's involvement, and to what degree they can contribute to gender equality, and how, is something that needs to be studied.

3.4 I-PRSP and PRSP

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank (WB) made a move in 1999 to encourage governments of low-income and heavily indebted countries to prepare poverty reduction strategies with a broad-based participation of various stakeholders. Ethiopia saw this as relevant, because poverty is deep-rooted and wide-spread, and the country seeks debt relief and plans to continue implementing economic reform programmes in collaboration with IMF and the WB. Further, PRSP offers the opportunity for close dialogue between the government, the people and among the different stakeholders, contributing to improvements of the democratic process. The Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) was drafted in September 2000 and submitted to IMF and WB in November of the same year.

The aim of the interim paper was, to present a broad picture of the poverty reduction strategy, that Ethiopia had pursued in recent years, and intended to refine in its preparation of the PRSP. The adjustment policies that had been made in cooperation with Bretton Wood Institutions had in the mid-1990s triggered Ethiopia to adopt a long-term strategy of Agricultural Development Led Industrialization (ADLI). ADLI envisages a growth process that is inherently poverty reducing, and makes it possible to assess the connection between policies and programmes on the one hand, and poverty reduction on the other. Generally the link between these two was indicated in the interim document by looking at economic performances in the 1990s. The I-PRSP was accepted provisionally and the government offered a period of a year to prepare the PRSP.

The PRSP is a tri-annually revised dynamic national strategy, with the goal of reducing poverty by 50% by 2015. The Ethiopian government invited the public to participate and subsequently launched the consultative process of the PRSP at Woreda and Regional levels in August 2001. The majority of Ethiopians live in rural areas engaged in farming, and ADLI was justified, and since poverty is worse there, its reduction is also focused on rural. It is also understood that prioritization is required since PRSP cannot address each and every poverty issue.

Popular participation was ensured through representation from grass-root administration levels of Peasant Association and Kebele, also encouraging women's participation in the selection. Various consultative forums were organized at Woreda, Regional and Federal levels. Representation of women can be rated as encouraging at Woreda level, but minimal above that. There was not a single woman at the secretariat, as even the Women's Affairs Office was represented by a man. Heads of Planning Departments in all government organizations who were all men were invited.

The federal consultation was conducted at the African Conference Centre on 28–30 March 2002. About 460 people comprising government offices including regions, donor community, NGOs, civil societies, the business community, donors group, and gender concern group participated. Issues common for all regions were basic necessities, water, food, shelter, and health care; environmental degradation; infrastructure; capacity; peace and stability; empowerment; traditional practices that have negative impact; governance and human rights; and macro-economic stability. Interestingly all regions identified harmful tradition as being an impediment to the struggle against poverty. Secondly, good governance and human rights was an issue raised in several regions, and the need to promote and protect democracy and human rights was highlighted. At this stage, the PRSP is being written, and the draft will be presented for final comments by stakeholders.

4. The Role of NGOs Women's Organizations and Civil Societies

The difference between NGOs, civil societies, and women's associations has not been easy to demarcate. In a directory produced by PANOS, titled "Who is Doing What on Gender Issues" all organizations have been grouped as NGOs, as either International or local. Commonly, those organizations registered with DPPC are classified as NGOs, and those registering with the Ministry of Justice as Civil Societies. In some network and/or group formations, organizations have in one instance become civil societies and NGOs in another. Also, the difference between professional associations and civil societies is not very clear, the same applies for women's organizations. Bearing the above in mind the roles of the different groups will be examined.

4.1 Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)

NGOs have worked in Ethiopia for about 40 years, attempting to become partners to the government in addressing the emergency and development needs of the people. They usually work closely with communities and play a vital role in identifying unmet needs, intervening, and sharing experiences. It has been reported that NGOs have been engaged in gender work by default, when working with the poorest of the poor who happen to be women. Many NGOs claim gender sensitivity in their activities, but one can not with full confidence state that gender is mainstreamed in their projects. However, since NGOs work at grass-roots level they can contribute to policy implementation, if an effective working relationship with the government is created. An NGO Gender Working Group composed of EWLA, Women Educationalist Association, CARE, Action Aid, NCA, Oxfam-GB, CRDA, chaired by NCA, has been formed.

4.2 Women's Organizations

Women's organizations in Ethiopia can either take the form of a civil society, or a community based organization. The community based organization comprises of (a) traditional groups idirs, ekubs, and religious associations (mahber and senbete); and (b) cooperatives or production groups. The first groupings entail monthly gathering for common good, meeting emergencies, savings, and celebrations, in all of which some form of financial contributions exist. The money saved cannot however

go beyond serving immediate needs. The groups can nevertheless be transformed into viable groups for development work. Edirs for both men and women, the most universal of all associations are now becoming partners in development, but women's edirs are not that strong. The second category, cooperatives or production groups (not common so far), enable women to obtain credit, share common services, participate in capacity building, securing market outlets and give a greater advantage in buying and selling of commodities, and other benefits.

4.3 Civil Societies

Civil society refers to a space between households and the state which offers possibilities of concerted action and social self-organization. In this space, civil society shares with the government a sense of general good for the public. Thirteen organizations that can loosely be named "civil societies" working on gender have created a network in November 2001, with the aims of facilitating joint efforts; avoiding duplication; and standing together as needed. At this stage, an office is being established, registration with the Ministry of Justice is in process. These groups of organizations and others have made significant contributions to the betterment of women's lives, notably, the Ethiopian Women Lawyers' Association, The National Committee on Traditional Practices in Ethiopia, Tigray Women's and Addis Ababa Women's Associations, and others. These societies are in the forefront of women's advancement.

5. The Role of Bilateral and Multilateral Agencies

5.1 Bilateral Agencies

Bilateral agencies are generally involved in funding gender projects although some are engaged also in implementation. Some of the agencies' activities include:

- Women in Development Project (WIDP), a grassroots Initiative Fund, a joint WB/Italian/Ethiopian funded project on women in development. It is the largest initiative (USD 5 million), for women at the grassroots level, in the country at the moment;
- A course on Gender and Law, a collaborative work of the Faculty of Law in the AAU and the Norwegian Embassy;
- Women in Leadership and Decision Making (Gender and Good Governance) collaboration of the Netherlands Embassy and the International Institute of Rural Reconstruction (IIRR);
- Work on trafficking of women to Arab countries by IOM;
- Round table discussion on Women in Conflict Management, by OAU/ICRC.

5.2 Multilateral Agencies

Following the 1980 Nairobi Conference and with the establishment of UNIFEM, the UN system formally started working on women/gender issues. Currently, all the UN offices in Ethiopia attempt to address the issue of gender in the various programs they support. For example, some of UNDP's partners include the Civil Service College, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Water Resources. Furthermore, each UN agency has a gender focal personal who oversees the mainstreaming of gender in the various programs and assures that gender issues is taken up well. The UN agencies also have an Interagency Working Group on Gender. This group is made up of gender focal points of all the agencies. The Interagency Group serves as an important forum for exchange of information, and organizes brown-bag lunches where speakers come to give speech and deliberate on issues related to gender, and organizes joint workshop on different occasions such as March 8.

With the realization of the necessity of concerted effort for more effective and efficient action, the UN came up with a new initiative called United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), which

will last from 2002 to 2006. This programme is a collaborative and collective effort of all UN agencies aimed at facilitating development in developing countries. Gender is given a central place in UNDAF, and three priority areas have been identified for 2002–2006:

- Strengthening institutional mechanisms through the establishment of regional gender resource and information center,
- Working on the issue of trafficking of women and girls,
- Supporting Women's Affairs Offices in the design and implementation of a National Action Plan based on the Beijing Platform for Action.

The outcome of this initiative in terms of changing women's situation remains to be seen.

Similar to other bodies, the UN encounters problems in addressing gender issues. An evaluation of the UNDP programs in 2000 shows that lack of awareness of both partners, marginalization of gender issues, lack of commitment, and lack of gender disaggregated data are some of the problems. The same problems were mentioned in an interview with one of the Interagency Group members. She pointed out that mainstreaming gender is difficult because of lack of awareness of partners, shortage of gender disaggregated data, and inadequate attention to gender.

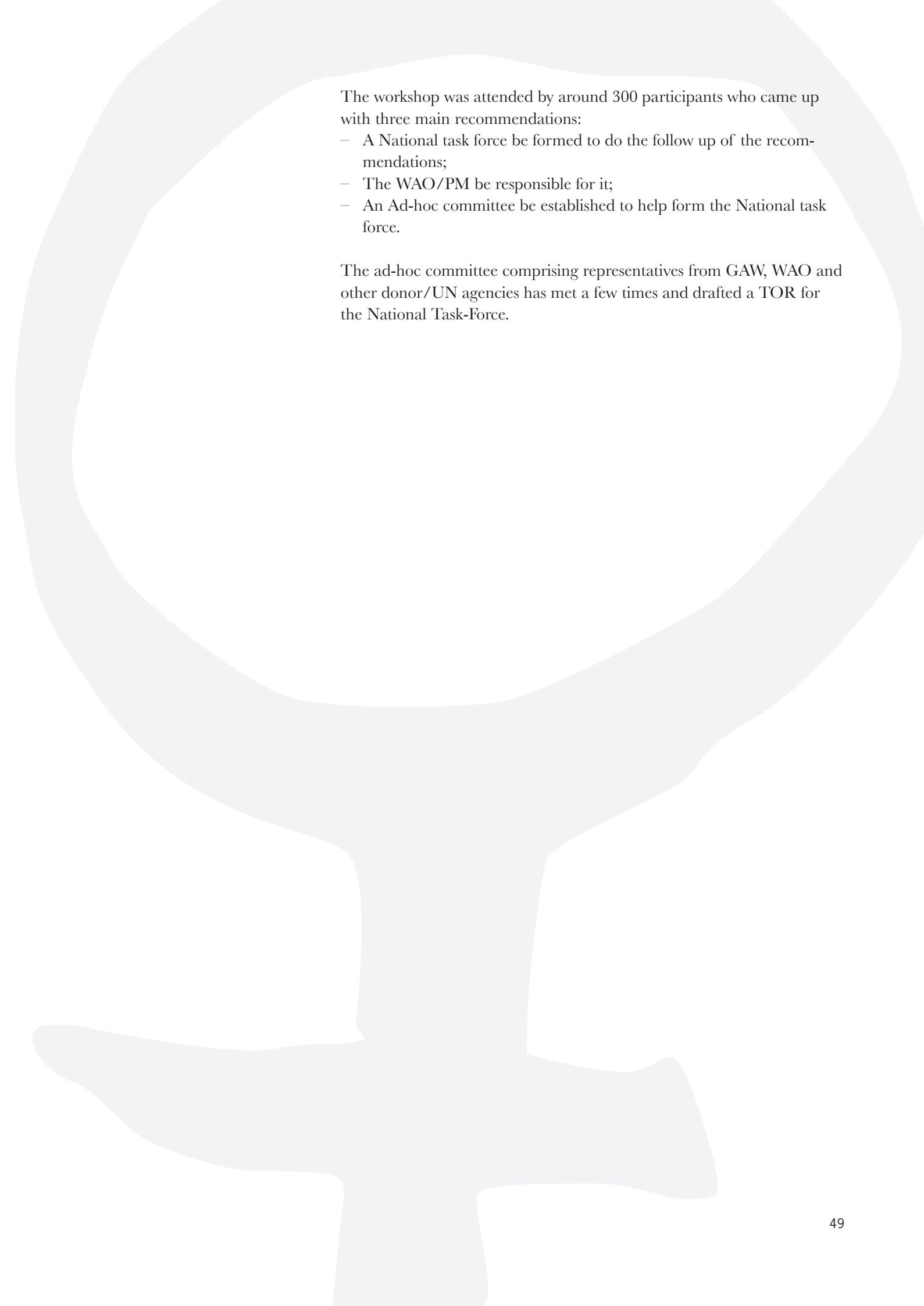
5.3 The Group for the Advancement of Women (GAW)

The UN/donors meeting was initiated before the Beijing conference, to facilitate the participation of representatives from Ethiopia. This was followed up after the conference, to exchange information and discuss issues that needed coordination. The meeting was then named UN/Donor Group on Advancement of Women (GAW), to work towards the general objective of contributing to the advancement of women in Ethiopia, by way of providing support and coordinating efforts around Gender and Development. It has four specific objectives, namely:

- Networking and exchange of information with GAW members as well as concerned government and non-government institutions supporting gender and development activities;
- Develop strategies for the implementation of issues from Beijing as well as for jointly financed activities;
- Coordinate Women in Development and related activities supported by the different UN organizations, bilateral and multilateral agencies as well as donor NGOs;
- Lobbying for better addressing of issues regarding advancement of women.

Membership of GAW comprises of bilateral and UN agencies forming the majority, NGOs, EU, OAU, ILO, and IOM. Currently GAW is involved in macro issues like the PRSP, Five-year Development Plan, Public Expenditure Review (PER), and Sector Development Programmes (SDP), to ensure gender sensitivity.

GAW with the cooperation of CRDA organized a national workshop on Gender Equality in Ethiopia, (25–26 October 2000), intended to be a follow up of the Beijing+5 conference held in New York, in June 2000.



The workshop was attended by around 300 participants who came up with three main recommendations:

- A National task force be formed to do the follow up of the recommendations;
- The WAO/PM be responsible for it;
- An Ad-hoc committee be established to help form the National task force.

The ad-hoc committee comprising representatives from GAW, WAO and other donor/UN agencies has met a few times and drafted a TOR for the National Task-Force.

6. Opportunities for Intervention

In this section problems that donors can consider for assistance are identified, and a listing is presented. The problems Ethiopian women face are enormous that only one organization cannot address them all. Therefore, prioritization should be made to ensure focus and effectiveness. The issues are categorized into eight broad areas:

6.1 Food Security

- Provision of extension services that are responsive to women's productive needs and credit to women farmers;
- As part of the extension program introduce women to modern agricultural technology;
- Creating means of supporting women to enter into the food processing industry by building on their traditional knowledge of food processing;
- Assisting Minimization of storage losses;
- Introduction of appropriate food processing technologies;
- Provision of water supply sources. (This requires investigating the reasons why 40% of the developed water sources, as in indicated in this report, are not functioning);
- Provision of alternative sources of energy for cooking.

6.2 Social Services

(a) Education

- Provision of financial support for needy but competent female students in high schools and higher education institutes;
- Establishing boarding schools for high schools girls in remote areas and construction of more schools in villages; to reduce the attrition rate, resulting from school distance including those caused by abduction;
- Gender awareness creation programmes for school teachers;
- Capacity building for Guidance and Counseling Offices in high schools to enable them support female students to overcome the various social and cultural problems including the rampant harassment;
- Strengthening Girls Clubs in the schools and establishing new ones;
- Provision of special schools for the disabled;

- Assist the expansion of non-formal education to increase participants in basic education, especially female participants.

(b) Health

- Assist reproductive health care provision endeavours including fertility control;
- Improve access to information vital for FP, HIV/AIDS, nutrition of the family, personal growth and confidence;
- Assist efforts to collect and compile sex disaggregated data on health;
- Provide research grants for studies on the health of women;
- Assist the planned establishment of the “Health Professional Women’s Association of Ethiopia”.

6.3 Employment of Women

- Assist the provision of “on the job or in-service training for female employees in the formal employment sector;
- Facilitate increased outreach to women with micro financing schemes for poor women in the informal sector in both the rural and urban areas, and empowering women to have control over their earnings and spending;
- Capacity building of women in the fields of (financial management, community participation, leadership, assertiveness and communication) to enable them perform managerial and technical functions;
- Skills training and financial support for the unemployed youth and female headed households;
- Increase the number and technical competence of women.

6.4 Harmful Traditional Practices

- Sida can support organizations such as EWLA in their effort to create awareness, establish shelters for those abducted girls to continue their education, and revise legislation, to address the problem of abduction, particularly in the SNNPRA.

6.5 HIV/AIDS

- Provision of support for young orphan girls who take care of the family, after the death of both parents due to AIDS;
- Using indigenous organizations and institutions to educate women who do not have access to information about AIDS.

6.6 Good Governance

- Provision of training and resources for women political candidates;
- Voters training to enable women to vote for the party that will take their welfare into consideration;
- Leadership and management skills training for female employees in the various organizations;
- Assist the provision of legal literacy to women;
- Build the capacity of women parliamentarians;
- Assist women groups in their efforts to increase the number of women at the various levels of the decentralized structures of governance.

6.7 Information and Technology

- Increasing women's access to the media, particularly to radio.

6.8 Capacity Building of National Actors

- Capacity building of CERTWID, WAO, WADs, and Women's Organizations in terms of human resources. This support could be in the form of skills training for the existing staff and/or employment of new staff;
- Create awareness in people that gender issues involve both men and women, and the problems of gender inequality can be minimized and eventually eliminated by working hand-in-hand with men.

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