

Report on the Implementation of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action (1995)

Introduction

Ethiopia is located in the horn of Africa, bordered by Eritrea and the Sudan in the North, Kenya in the South, Somalia and Djibouti in the East and the Sudan in the West. It has an estimated area of 1.1 million square kilometers, characterized by wide topographic diversity ranging from the Afar Depression, at 110 meters below sea level, to Ras Dashen at 4,550 meters above sea level. (CSA, 2000).

With an estimated population of 73,918,505 (CSA, 2008), of whom 50.5% are female. The country has the second largest population in Sub-Saharan Africa. 85 percent of the population reside in rural areas and are predominantly engaged in subsistence, rain-fed agriculture. While percentage growth rate and total fertility per woman have been declining in the last ten years, the current figures of 2.6 percent and 5.4 per women. (Population and Housing Census, 2008), respectively, are considered high, even by Sub Sahara Africa standard.

Ethiopia is an ancient country with more than 80 ethnic groups, diversified cultures, traditions, customs and religions. The country prides itself in its cultural heritage. However, deep-rooted traditions have manifested themselves in inequality between women & men. Harmful traditional practices such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), early marriage and abduction, are examples that directly violate the rights of Ethiopian girls. Early marriage for instance limits female education opportunities, thereby hampering their employment opportunities and subjecting them to economic dependence.

Part One

Major Overall Achievements of Implementing Platform for Action

Education and Training of Women and Girls

In Ethiopia significant strides have been achieved in school enrolment rate of both female and male students in the formal education system, especially at primary level. Education statistics annual abstract 1998/2005//06 report shows that the percentage of girls at primary level rose from 51.2 in 2001/2008 to 83.9% in 2005/6 whereas enrolment of boys increased from 71.7% to 98.6 during the same year. Despite progress made in the last few years in enrollment of girls in the education system at all levels, gender disparity prevails. The gender gap gets wider as you go up the educational ladder. For instance, at the primary level, the number of female students compared to male students is 44%, whereas, at secondary and tertiary level it is 34% and 23.2% respectively (CSA. 2007, Addis Ababa). Similarly, adult literacy for women was 34% and 49% for men. In the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), out of the total 123,557 students enrolled in the 1998 E.C (2005/6), 62,142(50.3% were women). While this appears to be a positive trend, female students are concentrated in traditional female dominated fields like secretariat, food processing, and dressmaking, perpetuating the gender stereotype for occupational selection and limiting their career options. A lot of factors including socio-cultural, economic, familial, and personal and distance from school constrain girls' education.

Yetneberesh Niguisse 's (2000) paper indicated that 7.5 million disabled persons live in Ethiopia, of which 3.2 million are women. Data show that disabled girls miss out early childhood education. The problems are usually worse for visually impaired.

Reproductive Health & Rights

The Government has put in place far reaching and broad based policies and programmes in the health sector to improve the health situation of the Ethiopian people. These include the 20 years HSDP, the National reproductive health strategy, the Adolescent Youth reproductive health strategy, the National Nutrition Strategy with a multi- sectoral approach, construction, furnishing and equipping of health facilities, and the deployment of a total of 30,000 female health extension workers at the grass root level.

However, barriers including the persistent poverty and under development in the country have made the task of providing universal access to healthcare, especially difficult. Ethiopian Women suffer and die from all causes of ill health as men, in addition to those causes unique to them as women and mothers. For instance, DHS 2005 indicates that the MMR is 673 per 100,000, which is one of the highest in the world. The same report shows that only 6% of Ethiopian women deliver by skilled attendants, only 28% of Ethiopian women get antenatal care and the contraceptive prevalence rate among married women stands at just 14.7%. Women's nutritional status is low; women eat less because in most households, food is generally scarce and bias in favor of men followed by children. This lower intake is aggravated by added demand for calories to balance their workload and multiple pregnancies. According to DHS 2005, 28 % of women in their reproductive age are anemic and 27% are malnourished.

Women and HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS policy was formulated and for its implementation purpose strategic plan was prepared and being followed up by the National Council of HIV/AIDS whose members are drawn from government, non-government, religious and community elders. Office of HIV/AIDS prevent and control the spread of disease the office which was established in each administrative regions is responsible to follow up day to day Activities of the council. Major focuses of the strategic plan are: 1) building the capacity of key sectors such as health, education and civil society organizations in terms of technical knowledge, infrastructure and systems, 2) integrate HIV/AIDS work with health extension program, 3) mobilizing the community, 4) multi-sectoral response, 5) special focus on vulnerable groups (youth, sex-workers, Mobil workers, the army and teachers), 6) Involvements of the leaders in the planning process (June 2006 report page 6).

Violence against girl

Empowering Women in Decision-making

His Excellency Prime Minister Meles Zenawi's in his (September.....) speech said that women need to hold decision making and planning positions, if a society is to progress. While encouraging signs are registered in the political participation of women, they are still under represented at every level of decision making. According to election commission report (1992 E.C) there were only 42 (7.7%) women parliamentarians in the House of People's Representative; House of Federation 6.0%, Regional State Councils 12.9%, Woreda Councils 7.1%, and Kebele Councils 13.9%. Although the number of women in legislative sector has increased slightly, but is still below the expected 30%. The 1998 (EC) increase to 21.2% in the number of parliamentarians in the House of People's Representatives, and similar increase in other elected bodies still remain far below the 30% target. Out of 34.7% of female employees in the Civil Service, in the executive branch of the government (Ministers, State Ministers, etc), women constitute 13%. Among the judges at the Federal and Regional Courts, again 13%; among judges presiding over Supreme, Higher and First Instance Courts in 1995(EC) women were 25.5%. Women occupied only 26% of the higher positions (Directors, Managers, Department & Division Heads, Ambassadors, etc) (FCSA, 2008)

At the household level women have low decision making power even to access health services when they are sick, to use family planning to regulate their fertility and make house hold purchase.

Demographic Health Survey (2005), shows that the role of women in decision making varies with the type of decision. Almost 53% of currently married women reported that they made the final decisions about daily household purchase. However, on large-scale purchases, husbands participate. The survey indicated that 15% of the currently married women make sole decisions on their own health care⁴. In other cases 42 % husbands decide alone and 45 % jointly decide⁵

A total number of decisions in which a woman participates at different levels on different issues, is one of the measurements of empowerment. This shows that women have the right to decide only 13 % of the cases that affect major decisions.(DHS, 2005).

Women and the Environment

At the beginning of the century, reports show that 40% of Ethiopia was covered with forests (where it has currently) The forest cover has diminished to only 2% at present. The degradation of ecosystems, loss of diversity and resource depletion has adverse effects on women, as they are responsible for collecting fuel wood and water.

Women play an essential role in the management of natural resources including soil, water, and forest and have a profound indigenous knowledge of the natural world. They have been custodians of forest resources and responsible for transferring indigenous knowledge from generation to generation by informing communities. Some species of forests are used for medicinal purposes while others are used as fodder or cosmetics.

Even though women's role in the management and preservation of the environment is crucial, their roles are not recognized and they are not able to participate beyond their traditional roles.

Women and Energy

To minimize the problems of women with regards to energy use the government of Ethiopia has undertaken various intervention mechanisms such as:- dissemination of improved household stoves, Lakech improved charcoal stoves (with 25% fuel saving), Mirt improved injera-baking stoves (with 50% fuel saving), and Gonzie improved multi-purpose (cooking and baking) stoves (with 54% fuel saving) are being promoted by the Ethiopian Energy Development & Promotion Center. Besides, other alternative energy technologies are also disseminated to rural areas like Biogas, Solar home systems and wind energy.

On the other hand, provision of electricity to rural areas through the Universal Electrification Access Programme (UEAP) is implemented by the Ministry of Mines and Energy through the Ethiopian Electric Power Corporation (EEPCo), and makes grid electricity accessible to rural villages in complementing with Off-Grid Rural Electrification. This will be used for injera-baking as well as to minimize the women workload for grinding, water pumping, and the like.

Women and Water

The Ethiopian government has put a medium term approach to water sector development programme aimed at improving access to clean water. According to the latest (2006/07) Annual Progress Report on the second year of PASDEP implementation (MOFED, 2007), access to clean water supply at national level increased from 19.1 percent in 1995/96 to 52.5 percent in 2006/07 (i.e., 82.0 percent for urban and 46.4 percent for rural). The target has been to reach coverage of 85 percent by the end of PASDEP period (2010). This will significantly reduce women's workload and release their time for more productive activities.

Women and Agriculture

Article 35 sub article 7 of the Ethiopian constitution states that women have the right to acquire administrate, control, use, and transfer property, and in part and they have equal rights with respect to use, transfer, administer, and control of land.

The Ethiopian government adopted some enabling laws and policies in the area of women's economic empowerment. Among these is Women's access to agricultural extension service and credit facilities have improved the life of rural women and encouraged them to participate in the development endeavors. The joint certification of household land is being implemented in some regions to ensure women's equal access to land use.

For the 1st time rural women, female headed and the married women participated and benefited from agricultural extension service of which 2.6 female headed and 30% married women were given a chance to participate and benefit from the service. Participation of women in agriculture cooperation rose from 13% to 30%. Women who got extension services opportunity are 1,659,717 while who got land use and control rights certificate are 3,085, 815 (MOA 2009). The above-mentioned points in field of agriculture are a big success to bringing women to the forefront in development of their nation.

The Ethiopian Government's Commitment to Address Gender Equality

National instruments

The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia demonstrated its unequivocal commitment to gender issues by creating conducive legal, administrative and policy environment in the country. The most important gender and development measures taken by the government include the issuance of: The National Policy on Women (1993), the Constitution of Ethiopia (1995), the Revised Family Law (2000) and the Revised Criminal Code (2005), Ethiopian Women Development and Change Package (2005) and the National Action Plan (NAP-EG). To curb the economic and social problems of the country, the Ethiopian government has formulated various economic and social policies that served as bases for the formulation of sector development programme and enhance the participation of women in political, economic and social developments of the country.

Over the last decades, the Federal Government of Ethiopia has shown its commitment to address gender inequalities that deter long-lasting change and equitable development. Apart from endorsing the National Policy for Ethiopian Women (NPEW, 1993) ratifying the Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action, the government has created supportive constitutional provisions to establish women's equality with men. Indeed, the Government has incorporated the provisions contained in the United Nations Conventions and Declarations ratified so far, as well as other international legal instruments into the Ethiopian Federal Republic Constitution (EFRC) adopted in 1995. More specifically, Articles 25, 34, 35 and 89/7 of the Constitution affirm gender equality in all spheres and protect the fundamental rights of women and their interest. For instance, Article 35 of the Constitution grants women equal rights with men in the political, social, economic and cultural spheres and provide them with affirmative action to redress the historical inequality suffered by women.

The National Policy on Ethiopian Women (1993) was formulated to ensure that women participate in and benefit from all political, social and economic spheres on equal basis with men, enable them to have access to social services, provide them with the means to decrease their workload, and gradually eradicate traditional practices inflicted on women/girls. In addition to

this, the policy shows the establishment of women's machineries at different levels to coordinate gender activities. Women's Affairs Departments in the different sectors, and Women's Affairs Bureaus in the Regions have been established to mainstream gender in their respective sectors and bureaus.

The Women's Affairs Office, which was setup at the Prime Minister's Office, has now evolved into a full-fledged **Ministry of Women's Affairs** with its own budget, human and material resources. A minister, who is a member of the council of ministers and playing a vital role in promoting gender issues, leads it while the women's machineries are accountable to their respective ministries and regional governments; they have working relationships with the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The women's affairs departments and bureaus share their quarterly and annual progress reports, while the ministry provides capacity support to them. The annual forums are held to share experiences and map out future directions for gender activities in Ethiopia.

The revised Family Law of Ethiopia contains most important women and child rights protection issues. The Law raised the marriage age for girls from 15 to 18, making it equals with that of boys and validates marriages concluded by consent. The Family law also gave women to right to use and control land.

The Penal Code has been revised to ensure safeguards for women and to penalize perpetrators. For the first time harmful traditional practices such as FGM, abduction, early marriage, rape, harassments are punishable by law. However the enforcement of the laws has been very low.

The revised Federal Civil Servants proclamation No. 515/2007 ensured women's constitutional rights to affirmative action concerning recruitment, promotion and deployment and creation of sexual violence free working environment.

Ethiopian Women Development and Change Package (2006) has explicitly shown the government commitment to mobilize women and enhance their participation in and benefit from economic, social and political spheres. The package clearly indicates that the major forces to solve women's problems are women themselves.

National Action Plan for Gender Equality of the Government of Ethiopia (NAP- GE) was prepared to implement the National Policy on Ethiopian Women for the period 2006-2010. The NAP-GE works towards the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and to achieve the objectives of gender equality expressed in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPA).

International Instruments for the advancement of women

The Ethiopian government has shown its commitment to gender equality by being a signatory to most International Instruments, Conventions and Declarations, by adopting international instruments such as: The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women /CEDAW (1979), Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women/DEVAW (1993), the Beijing Platform for Action/BPA (1995) and domesticating the international instruments. These conventions have recognized the importance of gender mainstreaming as the best strategy to achieve gender equality. Among other steps taken, the following two international instruments are most relevant for gender mainstreaming guidelines preparation.

The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) enshrined the special needs-based rights of women. It has the standing of International Human Rights Legislation for women calling for the equality between women and men in all areas of life. It is a formal legal statement of goals and measures for national and international action on a wide range of issues related to women's lives. As an International Bill of Rights for women, CEDAW defines what constitutes discrimination against women and sets up agenda for national action to end such discrimination.

Millennium Development Goals/MDGs/¹¹

The government of Ethiopia adopted Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) that has eight goals to be achieved by 2015 that respond to the world's main development challenges. The MDGs are drawn from the actions and targets contained in the **Millennium Declaration** that was adopted by 189 nations and signed by 147 heads of state and governments during the **UN Millennium Summit** in September 2000. The eight MDGs break down into 21 quantifiable targets that are measured by 60 indicators. Gender equality and poverty alleviation have been important strategies within the United Nations Millennium Declaration (UN MD) since September 2000.

Ethiopia being one of the seven priority countries in Africa for MDGs, is committed and striving to meeting the goals by the year 2015. In reality all the eight goals have a paramount importance in developing gender equality at all spheres. However, Goal Number 3 explicitly narrates the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women.¹

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Part Three

Institutional Development That support Promotion of Gender Equality and Women Empowerment

Women's machineries are had been set up at all levels or the government (from federal up to the kebele levels), in non-governmental organizations and in humanitarian organizations based on national policy on women. At present women departments are established in 32 ministries with the lines hare of duties and responsibilities of the federal ministries to support promotion of gender equality and women empowerment. Even though the budget allocated for empowerment of women for different ministries are not as they expected the government committed itself to support the causes of women in all aspects to participate and benefit women from developments of their countries.

The establishment of women's affairs departments in Ministry of Education and at regional level is contributes a lot to coordinate, facilitate and follow up the implementation of gender mainstreaming and to prevent social and cultural barriers to women's education and to create girls/women friendly environment and to provide curricula text books and teaching materials that are free gender based discrimination.

National gender mainstreaming guidelines with checklists, indicators Monitoring and evaluation is prepared and given to concerned organization for editing before publication to get approval as the editing is finalized the manual will be given for publication and popularization of the document will also take place at different capacities at all levels. This will play decisive roles in mainstreaming gender issues in all sector of advancement and empowerment of women to register equality. With African Development Fund support advocacy and capacity-building programs for line ministries were done on different topics such as on gender mainstreaming, community mobilization, leaderships and participatory approaches.

Part Two

Critical Areas of concern of the Platform For Action

Out of the 12 critical areas of concern of the BPA, Ethiopia has identified seven priority areas that need due attention to ensure gender equitable development. These include:

- 1. Poverty and economic empowerment of women and Girls,**
- 2. Educations and Training of Women and Girls,**
- 3. Reproductive Rights, Health and HIV/AIDS,**
- 4 Human Rights and Violence Against Women and Girls,**
- 5. Empowering Women in Decision Making,**
- 6. Women and the Environment and.**

7. Institutional Mechanisms for the Advancement of Women.

The Ethiopian government considered the above critical areas Plan for accelerated sustainable Development to End Poverty (PASDEP). The issue of gender equality has got emphasis in order to create equal opportunity to women and men to participate and benefit in developments of the country.

Moreover, the government has given more attention to women's issues than ever before to address the needs of women in planned and integrated way by preparing Women's Development and change package. Familiarization of the package to the executive bodies working at Federal, Regional, and Zonal and Worada levels promotional activities have been done. The package was printed and distributed to all partners for use. It was also translated into three languages (Oromifa, Tegringna and English) in order to create better understanding for effective implementation at all levels.

Part Four

Remaining Key Challenges and Constraints

The field study done to prepare Gender Mainstreaming Guidelines in the year 2008 in six of seven sample regions were visited using the accepted instruments to collect data identified the following major gaps that hamper implementation of laws, policies and regulations promulgated to bring gender equality in Ethiopia are:

- The gender persons² below the bureau level in most cases do not have the necessary qualification and experience to execute the gender duties. Gender persons below the bureau level, were neither trained nor experienced on gender.
- The offices, office equipment and furniture are not sufficient, or up to the required standard, because the offices lack modern technologies such as access to telephone, fax, E- mail and other Internet facilities for in formation on gender issues.

- Lack of gender awareness or clear knowledge of the difference between women and gender was absent in most cases.
- In most cases gender is given to HIV/AIDS unit as additional job without additional resources for gender. These staffs have also other full time jobs.
- Gender as a discipline of development has become a fad. At one time everybody is excited and eager to implement gender mainstreaming. Gender becomes a topic of discussion ‘a fashion’. At another time it is neglected. This inconsistency leads to the lack of recognition that results in the under valuation of the gender persons and gender mainstreaming. Gender is not institutionalized. This makes sustainability and gender and development questionable. It is important to note the following points:
 - Lack of formal organization structure for gender persons
 - Lack of clear responsibilities and accountabilities for gender work
 - Gender has no ear - marked budget, code and budget title. Gender in most cases is an add-on’ job, so has no resources. Their personal development and prospect of promotion to higher positions is uncertain.
 - Most of the gender persons are neither members of the cabinets nor management committees within the sectors or councils. This creates a gap in information and prohibits them from participating in relevant decision-making process. Among other things this limits their exposure to leadership and decision-making.
 - Affirmative action (the need for women’s upgrading, exposure visit, training, etc) is not appropriately implemented.
 - Gender mainstreaming activities or anything to do with the women’s questions, are pushed down to gender persons as if gender is only women’s issue. Gender persons have no say in resources usage.
 - At top management level, although it is part of top peoples’ major duty, the responsibility and accountability are not formally and clearly stated. This makes

gender mainstreaming a job to be done with personal commitment and willingness of the bureau bearer. This exposes the gender work as ad-hoc, creating uncertainties.

- Gap or disparity in capability, knowledge and skill of gender between and among gender persons. This adversely affects their performance in discharging their responsibilities.
- Negative attitude such as not accepting women as decision- makers and becoming gender-blind towards gender mainstreaming in some cases.
- Lack of sex disaggregated data and baseline data: Absence of sex-disaggregated data makes gender analysis difficult. Gender analytical information and sex disaggregated data on men's and women's concerns and experiences can inform national or sector-wide policy and planning processes
- Lack of indicators for gender mainstreaming to succeed, there is a need for measures on how gender differentiation affects men and women. Without well - designed gender responsive indicators, it will be difficult to know, what works? And what not? And why?
- Lack of incentive or reward system: There was no reward or incentive system for those who took initiatives and accomplished outstanding performance in mainstreaming gender in an organization.
- Limited implementation capacity of the government.

In general it is accepted that the identified gender gaps such as low gender awareness, lack of definite structure in organizations, widespread existence of GBVs, lack of resources allocated for gender mainstreaming, lack of skilled human resources and the fact that gender is given as add-on duties for staffs who have full time jobs, lack of gender data base and mix-up of the meanings of women specific and gender

mainstreaming in development processes, have undermined the efforts made on gender mainstreaming so far.

Plans for future Actions and initiatives

- In collaboration with different actors the Ministry of Women's Affairs is preparing Core Plan that participates stakeholders at all levels of implementation, reporting, monitoring and evaluation;
- Mobilizing women for their issues to take part in social, economic and political developments of their country to bring gender equity and equality,
- Prepare and Popularize Gender mainstreaming guidelines to support mainstreaming of gender issues in all nation wide development programs to participate and benefit women and men on equal foot.
- Prepare development and change package for pastorals and agro-pastoral women to involve and bring change and development to their lives and others;
- Review national policy on Ethiopian Women to incorporate immerging issue that have not been included when the policy prepared fourteen years back;
- Develop different capacity programs to support institutional development for women machineries to shoulder their duties and responsibilities in order to bring change in their respective organizations to participate and benefit majority of women in the country;
- Work for gender and poverty eradication to bring sustainable development in the country;
- Review and plan gender issues with PASDEP second country program to bring sustainable development that participate and benefits women;
- Coordinate different programs to abandon HTP in general and FGM in particular from the regions where it prevails;
- Encourage implementation of affirmative action in all development programs;
- In collaboration with all stakeholders work on the promotion of Human Rights of Women towards gender equality;
- Establish different Networking strategies like network of university gender units to minimize duplication of effort, encourage proper use of funds that different partners raise from different sources;
- Establish and strengthen the existing non government, government and civil societies network;
- Conduct study on gender and land tenure system and gender and customary lows in order to identify gaps and react up on based on the recommendations achieved from the study findings;

- Strengthen women machineries based on past studies;
- Train all stakeholders on gender mainstreaming, gender budgeting and auditing;
- Conduct TOT on methods of community dialogue;
- Conduct monitoring and evolution to be and take action to improve implementation of planned activities speed up sustainable where women and men equally participate and benefit...etc.

Conclusion

In conclusion this paper refers only to the most relevant issues but not to all activities implemented by all stakeholder due to that information of the partners are needed to be handled by them.