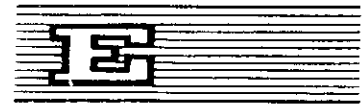




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**DATA AND INFORMATION ON WOMEN AND  
DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW  
(CASE OF ETHIOPIA)**

By

Tesfa Mariam Tekie

**DATA AND INFORMATION ON WOMEN AND  
DEVELOPMENT: AN OVERVIEW AND PROSPECTS**

**BY  
TESFA MARIAM TEKIE\***

**A PAPER PRESENTED TO THE EXPERT GROUP MEETING  
ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DATA BANK ON WOMEN AND DEVELOPMENT  
IN AFRICA: 15-19 MAY 1989**

**\*The views and opinions expressed in this  
paper are those of the author and do not  
necessarily reflect the views and position of the  
ONCCP or that of the Government of the PDRE**

## I. Introduction

1. Like any developing country of African, Asia, and Latin America, the economic participation of women in Ethiopia has for centuries been undermined by socio-cultural, political and economic factors. Additionally, the lack of awareness about what women do in Ethiopia has as in elsewhere influenced national planning and projects. Clear example of such situation would be in the agricultural sector where extension workers approach the peasant community with information and ideas almost exclusively for men. This is true despite the fact that in many peasant households and particularly in the informal sector of the urban poor, women contribute a large portion of the family income.
2. Nevertheless, since the eruption of the Ethiopian popular Revolution, a decade and half years ago, concrete measures have been taken to restore the dignity of the Ethiopian women in the political, economic and legal spheres. A wide range of activities have been undertaken at the national level, including declaration of policy, legislative change and practical measures to eliminate discrimination based on gender. There has been genuine attempts to introduce affirmative action to enhance the status and promote the full integration of women in the political and economic system.
3. Some of such genuine efforts targeted towards the improvement of the position of women include:
  - 3.1 The Constitution of the People's Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (PDRE) which clearly and unequivocally states the equality of women with

that of men in all areas of social and economic development;

- 3.2 The Labour Law Proclamation which states that there will be no discrimination on gender basis with regards to employment and which also states women's rights and duties with regards to maternity leave, sickness, minimum wage, etc.;
- 3.3 The establishment of the Revolutionary Ethiopian Women's Association (REWA) whose objectives, among other things, are to: "safeguard the right of women as mothers" and to "raise the level of consciousness of women" and make them ready for "active participation in socialist production activities";
- 3.4 Other institutions such as the Rural Women's Affairs Division of the Ministry of Agriculture, the Women's Division at the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Health Programmes in training Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs) and community Health Assistants (CHAs) and the Literacy Programme and the Community Skills Training Centers (CSTCs) of the Ministry of Education.
- 3.5 Last, but not least, is the establishment of the Women's Unit at the ONCCP which is mandated to see that women's dimensions are adequately reflected in the medium and short-term plans and to follow-up the implementation of WID programmes by sectors, line ministries and popular association.

These are but few examples that could be cited to herald the efforts being made by the Government to promote the welfare of the Ethiopian Women.

4. The sine-qua-non of any development plan is the availability of an adequate and reliable data base and information system in order to prepare, implement and follow-up the broad plan guidelines. This is equally true concerning women dimensions in the national plans as well as implement and monitor specific programmes and projects by sectors and line ministries and other para-statal and NGO's efforts.
5. In light of the above this paper attempts to highlight:
  - a. the existing situation of women in Ethiopia;
  - b. the need for data and information vis-a-viz the plan requirement;
  - c. existing data and information on WID and priority areas for future course of action; and
  - d. the potential information resources on WID.

## II. An Overview of the Prevailing Situation of the Ethiopian Women.

6. In Ethiopia, data and information that adequately and reliably reflect the socio-economic, political and cultural conditions of women are scarce, unreliable and haphazardly documented. However, existing and known sources reveal that of the total Ethiopian population 50 percent live in the rural areas. Of the total productive population of the country women account for about 35 percent. Yet it is estimated that women account for about 60 percent of the total agricultural output even though they comprise only 1-2 percent and 7

percent of the membership of the Peasant Association and Agricultural Producers' Cooperatives respectively. The Ethiopian rural women on average works about 12-14 hours daily in agricultural activity, fetching water and fire wood and going to market. All these contributions are not included in the national accounts nor are they shown in any other statistical documents. The failure to do so, inter alia, results in ignoring the contribution of women to economic development, the underestimation of the national accounts, the irrational utilization and allocation of production resources, and consequently in the marginalization of women. In other words, this situation has lead to the sustainance of age-old cultural habits, values and attitudes which inhibit the introduction of appropriate technology to alleviate the plight of rural women. Early marriage, repeated pregnancy and low level of literacy are also factors that have exacerbated the situation.

7. Similar scenarios prevail in the urban areas. Of the 11 percent urbanites about 53.5 percent are women. One of the reason for this high proportion of urban women is the high rate of divorce in the rural areas which induces divorcees to migrate to the urban areas and engage themselves either in very low income non-formal activities or prostitution. Despite this high ratio, however, it is widely believed that urban women's contribution to economic development is consequently low. Lack of basic skills and education forces most of them to engaged in low-skill and low income jobs. The opportunities they have to secure modern sector jobs is limited as they find it increasingly difficult to compete with their men counterparts. Some past research findings attest to the fact that urban women's

unemployment rate is about 31 percent while that of men is about 12 percent.

8. Of the labour force gainfully employed in the modern sector of the economy women comprise not more than 21 percent. Most of these are engaged in the secretarial and service sectors with few engaged in production sectors. For example, women comprise about 24.4 percent, 10.6 percent and 9.4 percent of the teaching force in the primary, junior secondary and senior secondary levels of schooling respectively. The figure for administrators and professionals is a dismaying 2 percent only.
9. In a country such as Ethiopia, where the overall health status of the population is very low, both genders are equally negatively affected as they share the consequences of ill health. Nevertheless, women suffer most due to their natural reproductive roles. The maternal mortality is 20 for every 1000 child bearing mother and the infant and child mortality is 139 and 247 per 1000 live births respectively. These rates are among the highest in the world. Some of the factors that could explain this phenomenon are: poor environmental sanitation, low nutritional status of both women and children, too frequent pregnancies and child birth without a trained person's assistance, short birth intervals, low level coverage of maternal and child health services (43%) early age at marriage and other harmful traditional practices.
10. The participation of the female population in the education area has improved since the onset of the Revolution. Since education enhances the individual's knowledge, cognitive skills and competencies and thus

participation in productive activities of society, a lot remains to be accomplished with regards to extending educational opportunities for women. Presently enrollment for girls students stands at 37.3 percent, 38.5 percent and 37.5 percent respectively at the primary; junior secondary and senior secondary levels of schooling. Girls comprise only about 9 percent of the total enrollment in higher education institutions. This has inter alia, hampered the participation of women in policy matters. A multitude of socio-cultural impediments are factors that explain the low participation of women in educational opportunities. The situation with regards to literacy is quite encouraging. Of those who have participated in literacy programmes about 51.8 percent are women of whom about 80.7 percent have passed their tests and are therefore certified as literate. This clearly demonstrates the fact that women can equally compete with their male counter parts if circumstances allow them.

11. In summary, the contribution of the Ethiopian women to economic development, though unaccounted, is very substantial.

Within the broad political, socio-economic and cultural context of the Ethiopian society, the actions taken to-date at the macro level (mainly legislative and policy) are very encouraging. Yet, more remains to be done to reduce the marginalization of women especially in the areas of health, education and the productive sectors. In a country where there is unequivocal political and legal backing for the women's cause and where there is a strong and well structured national women's



association (REWA) with over 5.2 million members the conditions are conducive to start serious jobs.

III. The Need for Data and Information in Order to Plan for WID in Ethiopia.

12. As mentioned above in para. 3.5 the Government has established a Women's Unit at the ONCCP. Thus in the First Five Year Plan (1990 - 1994), preparations are underway to incorporate women's dimension in the Plan. Already, broad objectives, programme components and major policy issues have been identified to be incorporated in the Five Year Plan. One of the major bottlenecks singled out by the draft plan is the lack of substantive data and information with regards to women and development. In order to alleviate the problem national indicators of a socio-economic nature should be identified and specified during the plan period. Additionally, all concerned sectors should disaggregate their existing data on gender basis and also collect, aggregate and analyze their future data on the same.
13. Recognizing that an adequate data base is required to pursue a gender-responsive portfolio of projects as well as to track and measure the plan's intended targets, documentation throughout the plan cycle should include gender - disaggregated information on project participants and beneficiary groups.
14. Within the project feedback system, reporting requirements should also include gender-disaggregated data. Specifically, it is highly essential to know women's participation level (from the stage of project prioritization, to the design, implementation and

follow-up) as compared to men; the type of inputs they receive, the amount of inputs they receive, the amount of output they are expected to yield, and the income they will derive, as compared to men; in the light of the prevailing division of labour in targeted project activities.

15. During the plan period, many efforts should be made to improve the existing concepts, methods and techniques of compiling and tabulating data on the advancement of women at the national, regional and grass-root levels. The move towards an adequate framework of analysis which would reflect the role, position and status of women in society requires the concerted action of the Government, external donor agencies and the community. Data collection and information gathering in this area of inquiry needs to be distinguished from other subject areas as social perceptions evolve and as the economic contribution of women is quantified. This means that a wide variety of economic and social indicators will need to be established, analyzed and monitored to take into account of the multi-dimensional nature of socio-economic development and the position of the women as an individual in this process.
16. New concepts and indicators will have to be developed to underline the existing important roles of women and development, most of which are not reflected at all, or adequately, in existing statistics, indicators and policy considerations. An integrated approach is essential towards this endeavours because the field of statistics which concern women covers an ever wider range of specialties. At the grass-root level, particularly, care should be taken to base such endeavours on community participation so that the entire

exercise becomes affordable, replicable and sustainable.

17. It must be stressed that an integrated approach to data and information collection and dissemination, etc. concerning women can have at least three elements:

- 17.1 Co-ordination of work on concepts and methods, to ensure consistency in national recommendations, and related technical documentation on data and information. This will help to ensure development in all socio-economic fields of concepts and methods appropriate to the prevailing situation of women in Ethiopia.

- 17.2 Maximum exchange of programme information and experience to ensure the effective dissemination and utilization / rationalization of research findings and to prevent programme overlap and duplication.

- 17.3 coordination/integration of national data and information collection and dissemination activities, to promote the national collection and dissemination activities, to promote the national collection and dissemination and use of data and information and indicators concerning women, to ensure consistency in national activities in the use of information and data standards and in the series collected and disseminated, thus preventing any overlapping and duplication of requests to users for data and information.

18. Support for research and training in this area should concentrate on:

- 18.1 the building up of conceptual framework, classifications and definitions related to information and data on women and;
  - 18.2 the contribution to better compilation and analysis of national indicators on the situation of women from existing sources.
19. These actions are complex processes requiring uninterrupted dialogue between producers and users of such information, analyzing and testing of concepts and definitions in concerted/integrated manner at the national, regional and local levels of the administrative set-up. The support of international efforts in this regard should be an integral part of the national effort.

#### IV. Data and Information on WID

20. In Ethiopia, sectoral ministries, agencies, NGOs, UN organs and other evaluation units produce data and information on economic and social conditions along gender lines. For example, the Central Statistical Authority produces sex dis-aggregated readily available data and information on demographic conditions, health and educational status, home-economics agents of the Ministry of agriculture and law and order only. Besides, scanty and irregular data and information on gender lines can be secured from various sectors and line ministries and agencies, which are beyond the competence of this paper to treat. After all, very few

attempts were made, to-date, to list existing sources as well as to compile available data and information \*.

21. Taking the objective conditions in Ethiopia today, i.e., the low level of development of the productive forces, low income and thereby low level of living conditions, it would be most plausible to advocate a programme of action which would alleviate the plight of women and there-by integrate them in main stream development. There is critical time constraint, however, and in the short-run, information and data on women should concentrate to fill the gap in the following areas:

- a. Women and health,
- b. " " water and sanitation,
- c. " " education
- d. " " food production,
- e. " " technology
- f. " " credit and finance
- g. " " forestry and energy,
- h. " " appropriate technology and work,
- i. " " trade and commercial services,
- j. " " communication,
- k. " " housing, settlement, community development and transport,
- l. " " environment,
- m. " " other social services,

22. The three day workshop on Gender Responsive Development Planning held at Debre-Zeit from December 16-18, 1988,

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\* Refer to Alasebu Gebre Selassie's, "Current Machinery for the Integration of Women in Development in Ethiopia," March 1987, Addis Ababa - for such kind of efforts.

and attended by Ministers, Vice Ministers, Commissioners, Senior Government Officials and Representatives of several UN organs reiterated in their resolution that "for the purpose of gender responsive development planning, gender responsive data base information system is required (author's emphasis). A special working group was set up to discuss and come out with specific recommendations regarding "appropriate information and data system for gender responsive development planning".

21. The group identified the main areas of activities that should be focussed during the Five Year Plan period which would, one hopes, incorporate the deficiencies in currently available data and information needed for adequate consideration of specific needs for women. These main areas are:

- a. Activity profile - who does what work in household and non-household activities, i.e. productive and reproductive activities.
- b. Access and Control to Key Economic Resources - in agricultural and non-agricultural sectors land, animals, etc.
- c. Access and Control on Economic and Social Benefits - decision on allocation of expenditure, shares of household income, use of services, etc.
- d. Influencing Factors - the activity profile together with the access to and control of resources and benefits as influenced by socio-cultural and demographic factors.

24. After identifying the major trust for developing information and data base systems, the group further tried to focus on key economic indicators. These are:-
- a) Labour time allocation by activity
  - b) Employment situation
  - c) Level of income
  - d) Education and training
  - e) Utilization of basic services, and
  - f) Credit facilities.
25. Finally, based on the working group's proposals, the workshop adopted the following set of recommendations which highlight the fact that national capacity must be enhanced in order to develop appropriate data, information and documentation system in the country to promote women's welfare in a planned manner. It is believed that with the implementation of this recommendation, the major deficiencies in the current available data and information will be redressed at least temporarily. The salient features of the recommendations are presented below:
- a. Existing statistical data series should be reviewed and consolidated with a view to reflect gender responsiveness.
  - b. Available materials and studies undertaken by UN and other organizations or countries should be explored and relevant recommendations should be made use of.
  - c. Time budget study within available and appropriate methodologies should be initiated so that action could be taken within the next Five Year Plan.

- d. All Sectoral Ministries and Research institutes should generate gender responsive information in the area of their responsibilities with the methodological plan and guidance of the Central Statistical Authority (CSA).
- e. With the understanding that most gender responsive information could not be available immediately, pilot studies on key socio-economic indicators should be conducted.
- f) Raising consciousness and awareness of society, at all levels, on gender responsiveness information should continue.

V. Potential Information Resources on WID

- 26. Having recognized the central role that data and information play as an instrument of management and as a prerequisite to decision-making process, particularly for the application of science and technology, the Ten Year Perspective Plan (1985/86 - 1995/96) provided for the establishment of a national information center under the auspices of the Ethiopian Science and Technology Commission (ESTC). This center which is known as The National Scientific and Technological Information and Documentation Center (NSTIDC) serves as a focal point for the establishment of a Scientific and Technological Information Network (STIN) linking the scientific and technical information systems of various organizations in Ethiopia.
- 27. NSTIDC's objectives are: first, to provide library documentation and information in areas that are of immediate use for policy, data, information, etc. to



the ESTC or to interested Government institutions and individual researchers; and secondly, to develop a national information net work and act as a focal point for international data base service.

28. NSTIDC is linked, but not yet electronically, to a number of regional and international networks, including: PADIS, ILCA, UNIDO and to Frascati - Rome of the European Space Agency for information retrieval system.
29. The Center provides the following services:
  - a) reading services
  - b) loan
  - c) photocopy services
  - d) referral system
  - e) computerized bibliographic literature search service
  - f) current awareness service
  - g) SDI service (Selective Dissemination Information)
  - h) inter-library loan service
  - i) enquiry service
  - j) indexing service
  - k) non-bibliographic search service
  - l) professional services - to provide advisory services including systematization and automation of library, information and documentation services to institution and organizations involved in the same.
30. The NSTIDC is semi-autonomous and is headed by a director. It has five divisions: Central Library, Information Services Division, Sectoral Information System Coordination Division, and the Special Projects and Programmes Division (see the Organizational Chart-

Annex.1). It has a core staff of seven information scientists with MSC, three BA level personnel in different disciplines, three college diploma level librarians and one economist and lawyer with MSC and LLM with Computer orientation. Thus, the Center is well placed to facilitate data and information flow both at the national and international level (see the organizational chart in Annex 2.).

31. At the national level, the sectoral Information Systems and Networks Coordination Division plays the pivotal role of securing and disseminating data, documents and other information. There are seven participating nodes which provide data and information and also seek the service of the Center to procure the same for analysis *and* to facilitate policy and management decision making process. From the chart on Annex 2, one can judge that almost all economic and social sectors are represented through their respective mother/academic institutions. Information flow is well systematized as demonstrated in the chart Annex 3). This means that with appropriate national guidelines, gender dis-aggregated data and information could very well be secured from the center .
32. Despite the fact that the NSTIDC has only two years of existence, \*\* it has a computerized information and documentation system. It has quite a large collection of books, periodicals, magazines, and audio-visual aids. The Center has consolidated and strengthened its computerized data base by preparing 49000 recordings of various information in the areas of science and technology. Unfortunately, few of the collected data

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\*\* NSTIDC was established in 1987.

and information pertain to women in Ethiopia or elsewhere, but the Center is in the position, through its SDI and non-bibliographic search services to provide data and information on WID and related issues.

33. PDRE's present administrative arrangements are conducive to social and economic development. In particular, the ONCCP's organizational structure which goes down to the grass-root through the development councils at the Peasant Associations levels greatly helps to widen and strengthen the participation of the working people in plan preparation and implementation. The councils are composed of members of local party organs, representatives of sector ministries branch offices, local administration, trade unions and popular associations like REWA, REYA and PAs. REWA has similar organizational set-up and a small documentation and information center which has been recently established at its Headquarters in Addis Ababa. All these efforts imply that proper mechanisms exist for data and information collection, compilation, dissemination and analysis of data and information regarding women in an integrated or coordinated manner.
34. Therefore, It will be fair to assume that with the development of plausible data flow system, it is feasible to establish the proposed data bank on women and development. It would be most convenient if this data bank was to be established within the NSTIDC. However, a workable data and information flow system ought to be adapted, centrally, before such a decision is taken. Such flow system can take the structure as presented in <sup>annex</sup> 4. The main feature of such flow system should be that it allows enough lea-way for community participation as indicated by the bottom-up

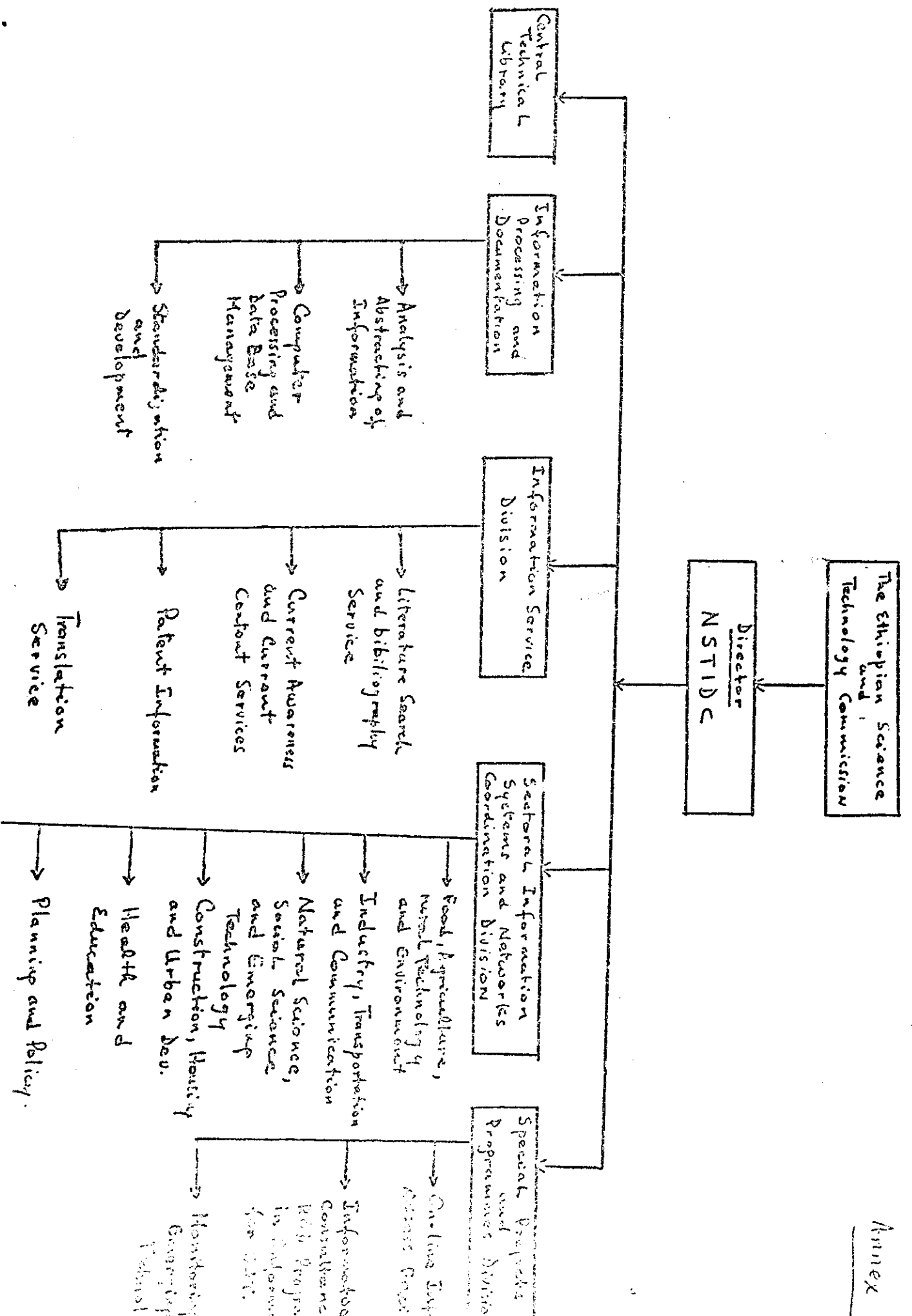
and top-down process of data and information collection, analysis and dissemination. Be as it may, one thing is certain: the adoption and application of such flow system, or something near to it, will contribute a lot to the rationalization or to bringing into conformity the information and data requirements for planning, implementing and monitoring of women focused programmes and projects.

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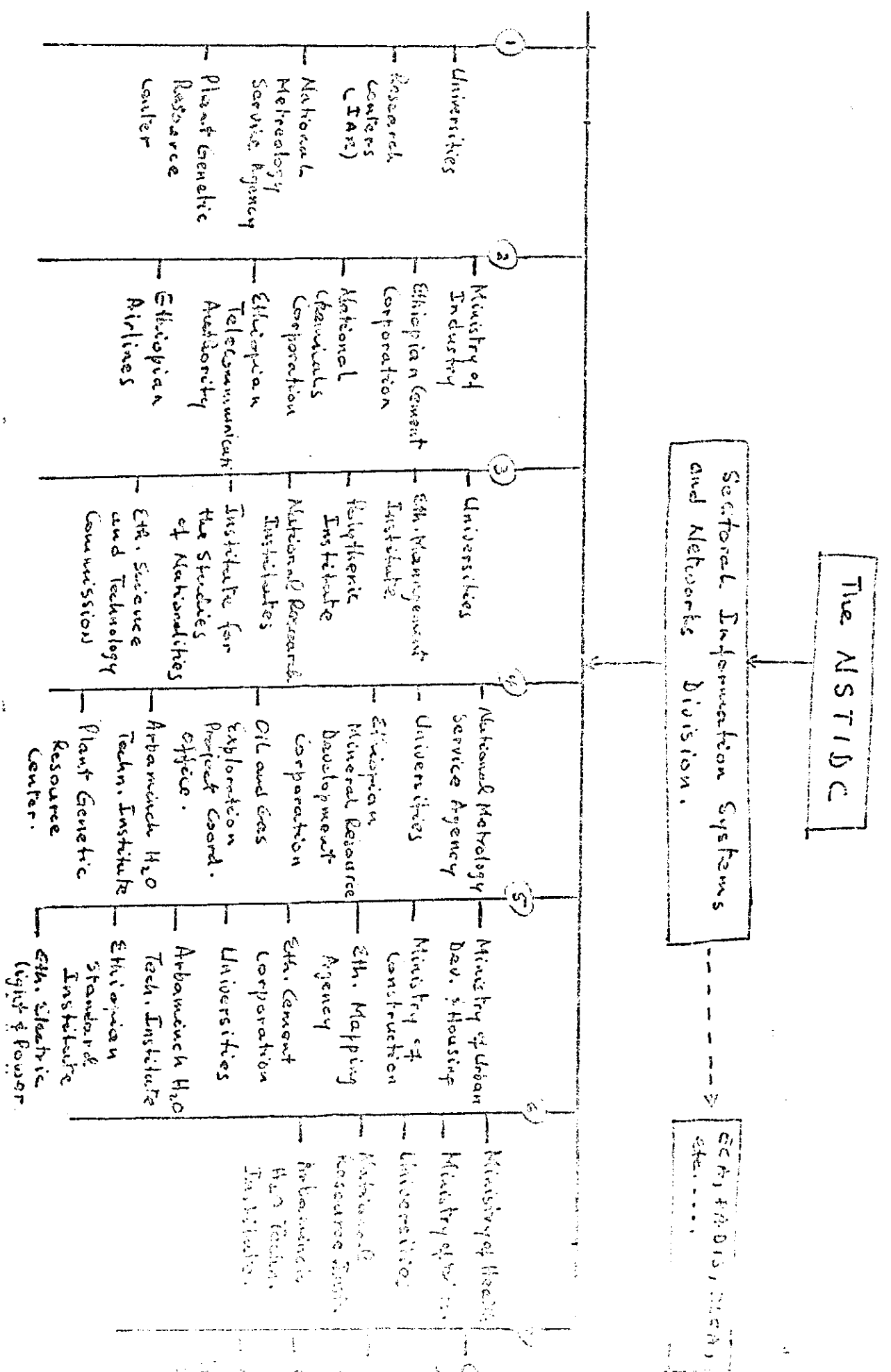
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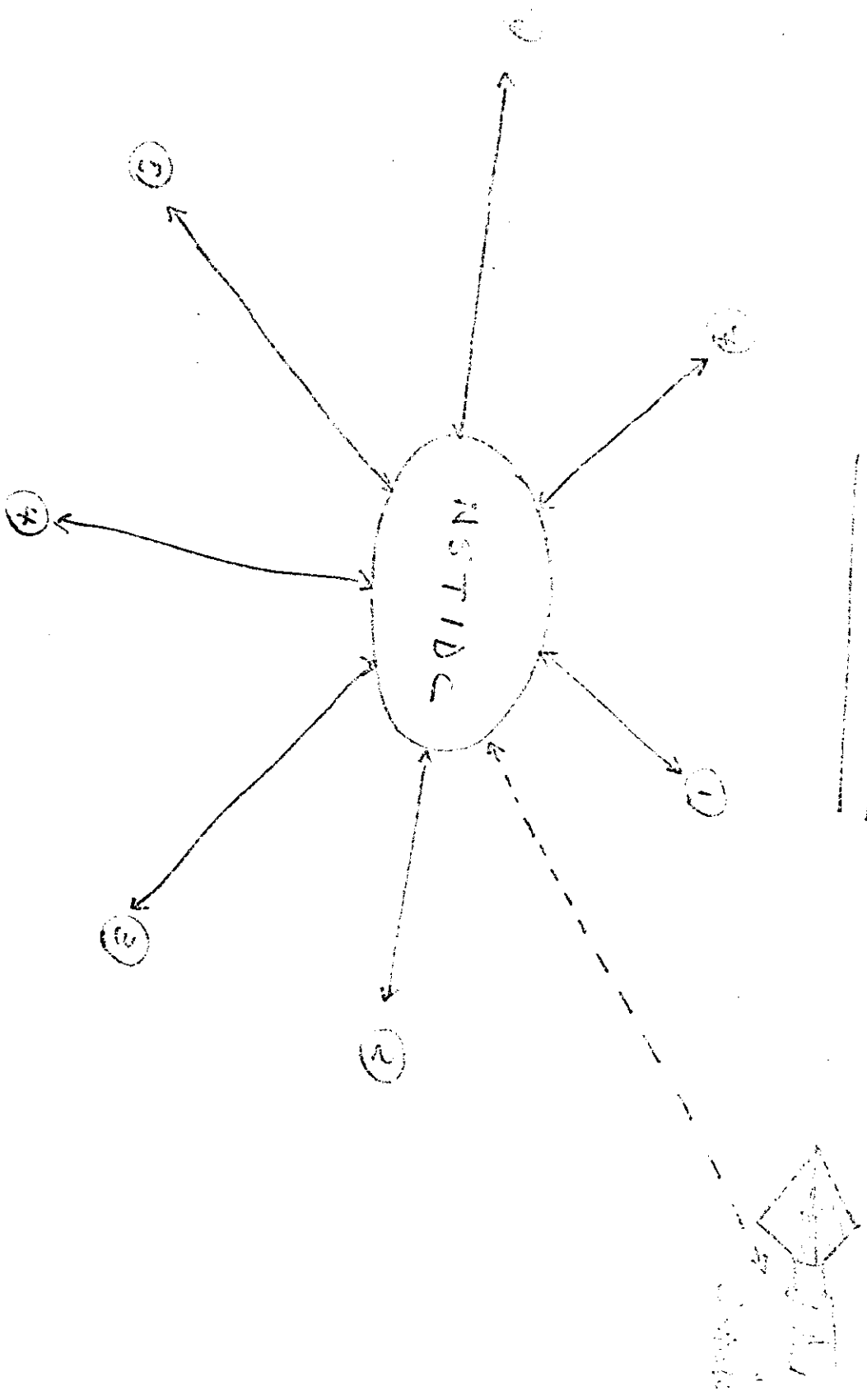
# Potential Participating Nodes in the National Information Network

Annex 2.





Data and Information Flow  
of the NSTIDC



# Data and Information System Flow Chart on WID

