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Rural Woman with a Thousand Arms in the North-Ubangi Province in DRC

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Abstract

This article presents the results of a study on the activities of women in rural areas in the province of North-Ubangi in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It mainly involves pinning some national and international legal instruments related to the protection of women; inequality between women and men in the province of North-Ubangi to achieve the activities of Ubangian women in rural areas. In the light of the above, 80, 70, 65, 60 and 90% of respondents respectively confirmed that rural women are subject to field work, water transport and distribution, an early endowment and too low a level of study, a high-risk delivery and a variety of diseases. Finally, this feminization of poverty is due to discrimination in all areas of development: education, health, law, access to resources, governance, decision-making, employment, environment, etc.

Keywords

Women, Rural, Area, North-Ubangi, Province, DRC

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1. Introduction

Over the past decade, understanding and commitment to the gender approach has increased significantly within the United Nations. Gender equality policies and strategies for applying the gender approach have been developed.

Important institutional measures have been taken to increase the interest, knowledge and professional capacity of leaders in the application of the gender approach.

Some argue that sex refers to biological and physiological characteristics defining women and men, while gender refers to roles, socially constructed behaviors and activities as well as attributes considered by a given society to be appropriate for women and men. [1]

On March 8 of each year, humanity celebrates International Women's Day while this day is not known by rural women in the North Ubangi province. Since the independence of the Democratic Republic of Congo, efforts have been made to provide legal opportunities for both men and women, but rural women remain as they are. However, much remains to be done to ensure that women have sufficient access to decision-making bodies in the province.

Inequalities of rights, chance and sex continue to persist between men and women in the province of Nord-Ubangi. This persistent disparity between men and women is evident in almost all areas of provincial life, particularly in the political, economic, social and cultural fields. These inequalities inevitably lead to discrimination in the proper implementation of gender parity.

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However, despite these efforts, the issue of the promotion of women's rights and the inclusion of gender issues in development policies and programs remains mixed. In the province of Nord-Ubangi, for example, women constitute the numerical majority, 52%, but they are unable to play a decisive role in the evolution and transformation of the North-Ubangian society.

The results of recent studies and surveys show that the situation of women in several areas of provincial life remains worrisome compared to that of men.

In view of this situation, the Constitution of 18 February 2006, as amended and supplemented to date, enshrines in its Articles 12 and 14 the principle of equal rights, opportunities and sex. The Democratic Republic of Congo has had to adjust several international, regional and sub-regional human rights legal instruments to adapt to the new situation. [2]

In 1970, Esther Boserup published a landmark work, which shows that women are the great losers of the development model linked to the theory of modernization. This book and others that have followed reveal the many disadvantages suffered by women, resulting from development projects, and criticize the absence of women in the planning of development projects and programs. [3]

The low commitment of the authorities of the North Ubangi Province to the promotion of gender equity is mainly reflected in the lack of application of the already existing laws in favor of women, the slow revision of discriminatory laws against women in accordance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) signed and ratified by the DRC, added to this is the lack of awareness by women of their rights.

In North-Ubangi Province, 79% of the population, especially in rural areas, do not have access to drinking water and 99% to hygienic latrines .87% of children under 5 are not registered at the Civil Status and 32% of women begin their fertile lives or enter into a union from the age of 15.[4]

Despite these legal instruments, women and girls continue to experience various forms of violence in the province. The overall objective of this study is to raise awareness among local, national and international communities (decision-makers) about gender inequality in North Ubangi province.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- i. Change the behavior and nature of relationships between men and women in North Ubangi;
- ii. Ensure compliance with international, national and provincial legal instruments on gender discrimination;
- iii. Identify the activities of the North-Ubangian woman during the week and the day.

2. Methodology and Techniques Used

We had developed a survey questionnaire which we used to visit and question 15 villages in the province, in four territories and the city of Gbado-Lite respectively, with a view to achieving the expected result of this article. The mass of data thus collected during our scientific investigations on the activities of women in rural areas in the province of Nord-Ubangi have been systematically analysed and described with a view to clarifying how North Ubangian women are marginalized.

For this study, we used several techniques including: the documentary technique which is a means or process based on documents. It was the first step in our work. It is based on the search for written materials related to our topic (linear documents and tool documents produced before us); direct observation and field questionnaire surveys to interview women.

Data was collected as the study progressed. The first phase of collection focused on the documentation related to the discrimination of women and the presentation of the province of North-Ubangi. The second phase, which is a questionnaire survey or interview guide, facilitated us to collect data on the opinions of rural women.

2.1. Collection of Some Documentary Data Related to Women

2.1.1. Various International Legal Instruments of Evidence

Since 1945, the Charter of the United Nations has become the first international instrument to establish the principle of equality between men and women. These rights began in 1945 with women being given the opportunity to vote and be elected. In addition, we have:

- 1960: Convention on Combating Discrimination in Education. (UNESCO General Conference) sets the stage for equality of opportunity for women and girls in education;
- ii. 1974: Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergencies and Armed Conflict;
- iii. 1975: Proclamation of the 1st International Year of Women by the General Assembly of the United Nations in Mexico City; holding of the First World Conference on Women in Mexico City; in the same year, there has been the proclamation of the first decade of the United Nations for Women:
- iv. 1979: Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the

enforceability of which is to claim the equality of women both in legislation and in practice;

- v. 1985: World Conference on Population and Development (IPCD): (Evaluation of the First Decade of Women); The Guiding Principles of the IPCD and Beijing focus on (i) gender equality and equity, (ii) the promotion of women, (iii) the elimination of all forms of violence against women, (iv) women's control of fertility, and (v) women's access to health services, particularly reproductive services;
- vi. 1992: The United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) took into account the differences between men and women. A new dimension has been highlighted: one that recognizes that women are most often the victims of inequality but also that they are the effective agents of environmental management (Agenda 21), of sustainable development;
- vii. 1993: World Conference on Human Rights which integrated women's issues into other areas of life;
- viii. 1995: World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen, which recognized that the future of society and social progress are linked to the status of women;
- ix. Beijing 2nd Decade Evaluation Conference: Development of the Action Plan in 12 Priority Areas;
- x. 2000: Millennium Summit, which set out an action plan with 8 objectives, the third of which is aimed at promoting gender equality;
- xi. United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325;
- xii. United Nations Council Resolution 1325 incorporates a gender-based approach into all peacekeeping operations and provides for the participation of women in key institutions and decision-making bodies;
- xiii. 2003: Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on Women's Rights (prohibits all forms of discrimination based on race, ethnicity, color, religion, political opinion, etc.);
- xiv. 2004: Solemn Declaration on Equality between Men and Women in Africa (Art .4 of the Constitution of the African Union).

In North Ubangi, prejudices, negative and retrograde customs, the inferiority complex and ignorance of human rights lead to the marginalization of women, young girls and children. The woman of the village remained attached to the tradition, which has a quite traditional conception of marriage, of life which always takes care of domestic work, of cultures and the care of children and who has little or no involvement in the social life of the village.

In a number of areas, women are significantly disadvantaged

compared to men. Before the law, or even custom, the woman depends almost entirely on the man. According to the family code the husband is the head of the household. He owes protection to his wife. The wife owes obedience to the husband.[5]

Indeed, inequality and gender disparity have been identified in several areas of social life, resulting in the economic exploitation of North-Ubangian women.

2.1.2. Inequality Between Women and Men

It is important to note that gender relationships and identities are not universal, but vary across cultures and sometimes provinces. They are dynamic and change over time. 'Gender has a cultural basis; it is defined by the society which determines its activities, status, psychological, cultural and demographic characteristics, the starting point of which is sexual difference, but that cannot be summarized or justified by this sexual difference alone. [6]

Violence against women in the province of Nord-Ubangi translates in other words, inequality between women and men. Women experience various forms of violence: physical, moral, psychological and economic. We note that there is an underestimation of the extent of violence due to lack of statistical data and a lack of information on violence against women as a result of the fear of victims and their families to denounce perpetrators of these abuses.

A society in which women and men are equal would not rely on arbitrary sexual difference to determine the possibilities and restrictions of individuals' economic activity. [7] Politically, the province of Nord-Ubangi is a province where women are represented at 3%. in provincial and local

The North-Ubangian woman has a sense of economy, she also has a sense of gain not only by emulation, but she always has at heart, the desire to leave a legacy to her children.

2.1.3. Women's Activities in North-Ubangian Villages [8]

a) Work in the field.

institutions.

Choice of terrain: it is made by the couple or by the woman alone.

Clearing: Using a cutter or machete, the woman clears the land as well.

Felling of trees: it is done by man in February and March (the widow praises the services of men for this operation).

Burning: the woman burns all the cut and dried grass, she turns the earth to prepare the ground to receive the seed.

Seed: late March and early April is the rainy season; the

woman sows cassava, peanuts, maize, eggplant, etc. These vegetables occupy the slopes of the plot. The banana is planted at the bottom of the valley.

Weeding and weaving: the woman weeds the field and performs the technical hoeing which consists in consolidating and furnishing the base of the cassava, which aerates the soil and facilitates the absorption of nitrogen and at this time, the peanut has already bloomed (Month of May and June).

Beginning of harvest: at the beginning of July, the woman harvests peanuts, maize and picks cassava leaves for the preparation of dédé ngunza or sakasaka (in Ngbandi language), dish based on fresh manioc leaves crushed and cooked in palm oil.

From one year to the next, the cycle repeats itself. The daily work of the woman in the field begins with weeding and weeding. Depending on the period, the woman harvests cassava, peanuts, maize and vegetables. For cassava, it pulls the tubers out of the ground, forms piles that it peels and transports itself in a hood or basin to the spinning pond. She can make this trip several times a day. At the end of the day, she cuts the wood and brings it back to the hut. These transports of cassava and wood are reserved for the woman.



Figure 1. Women's business activity.

Source: KONGA WANGUWA. D. page 131.

b) Water transport and distribution

In the fifteen villages visited in North Ubangi, the water springs are far from the village. As the terrain is uneven, the spring is usually in the valley. The woman must, therefore, at each transport, drag up the bucket or the pot of water on her head. The sources that were visited are not developed and it is not known if they are potable. The villagers wash their linens in the water sources and according to the nurses contacted in these villages, the water from these sources (rivers) is believed to be the cause of certain diseases.

c) Work at the shelter

In Nord-Ubangi, every day, the woman has to take care of

her children and her husband, do housework, and prepare the meal. This work constitutes essential basic data.

d) The woman and the business

In Nord-Ubangi there are three types of traders: permanent, casual and foreigners in the village.

- i. There are few permanent traders. They are either divorced or public servants. They resell products they buy in town and are present all day at the market from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm. But this trade only flourishes on the day of the deal.
- ii. Occasional traders are women working in the fields, who come to sell mainly on the day of the market but also from time to time depending on their availability.
- iii. The foreign traders in the village are women who come from the city to sell their products on the day of the market: children's and women's clothing, fancy jeweler and some canned goods.

e) Women and education

The majority of women in some villages are illiterate. There are functional literacy courses in some villages, but very few women attend. Perhaps, because of a lack of will for young women but, mainly because of a lack of free time. Women are too absorbed in daily work in the fields and to square.



Figure 2. Woman returns from field.

Source: KONGA WANGUWA, D., page 129.

f) The dowry of the woman

The problem of the endowment of a woman presents itself differe, ntly according to the territories and according to the ethnicities and sometimes according to the families. If the dowry is high, some think that the woman is sold, others think that on the contrary, the woman who was married was given a great deal of importance. On the other hand, if the endowment is low, some will say that the woman is ordinary with all the risks that this entails. In any case, when the husband wants to fire his wife, he does not hesitate to do so.

Activities Days Hours Monday From 7am to 5 pm Field work or planting Tuesday From 7am to 5 pm Field work or planting Day of the market and care of children at the dispensary, sale of agricultural products, processed cassava, taro, vegetables, meat, fish, bananas, palm oil etc., purchase of products brought from the city: oil, soap, sugar, Wednesday From 7am to 6 pm clothing... In the afternoons, the woman works cassava, doing housework according to her needs. Cleaning the Church for Protestants, the other women leather the cassava or transform it, bring wood or do Thursday From 7am to 6 pm housework. Friday From 7am to 5 pm Field work Saturday Field work From 7am to 3 pm Sunday From 7am to 6 pm In the morning, worship practice and in the afternoon, work in the box.

Table 1. Activities of women during the week.

Source: KONGA WANGUWA, D., page 126.

Table 2. Activities of women during the day.

| Hours | Activities |
|-------------|---|
| 5 am | Alarm clock |
| 5 am-7 pm | Personal and children's toilets; preparation of meals; housework; search and transport of water. |
| 7 am | Departure for the field, if the woman has many children (more than eight) she does not leave until 9am. |
| 7 am-5 pm | Work in the field. |
| 17 am-18 pm | Return from the field, loaded with a bundle of wood, a banana or vegetable diet depending on the season. |
| 18 am-20 pm | Personal and children's toilets, preparation of meals, housework. |
| 20 22 | Dinner is the end of the day; for the one who brings back cassava, she has to work to transform it the next day, this work can take two |
| 20 am-22 pm | hours, she does not sleep then about 22 hours. |

Source: KONGA WANGUWA, D., page 127.

2.2. Collection of some documentary data related to the presentation of North-Ubangi

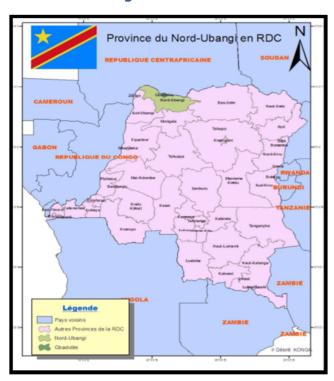


Figure 3. North-Ubangi province.

Source: KONGA WANGUWA. D, page 23.

The Province of North Ubangi is located between 5° North latitude and 2° South latitude and between 16° and 25° East

longitude. It occupies the northwest part of the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is bounded to the North by the Central African Republic and the Ubangi River; to the South by the Province of Mongala from the territories of Lisala and Bumba. To the East by the Province of Bas-Uele (Eastern Province) and the river Uele. To the West by the Province of South Ubangi through the Territory of Libenge.

a) Its density, and its surface area

The Province of North Ubangi has a density of 17 hab./km², with an area of 56,632, 5 Km²).

b) Hydrography and demography

The Province of Nord-Ubangi has a river system that runs throughout the Province. The main rivers are the Ubangi River and the Mongala River, border respectively with the CAR to the North and the Provinces of Mongala and South Ubangi to the South. There are also several waterways across the territories.

According to the result of the administrative census of population for the fiscal year 2011, the population of the Province of Nord-Ubangi is estimated at 1,633,856 people.

c) Administrative Subdivision

Politically, the Province of Nord-Ubangi is subdivided into a city; 4 territories; 11 sectors; 3 communes and 127 groupings. The territory of Yakoma has 3 sectors and 33 groupings; the territory of Mobayi-Mbongo has 2 sectors, 30 groupings; the territory of Bosobolo has 3 sectors, 23 groupings and the territory of Businga has 3 sectors and 41 groupings. The city

of Gbado-lite has 3 urban communes.

3. Results

This research focuses on women who are mostly illiterate and who have been under male domination for a long time. To make participants feel more comfortable during data collection, we used open techniques such as "unsupervised or semi-directed interviews". [9]

Fifteen villages were the subject of our visits and meetings with women including: five villages in the Businga territory; two villages in the Bosobolo territory; three villages in the Mobayi-Mbongo territory; three villages in the territory of Yakoma and two urban-rural villages in the city of Gbado-lite were surveyed. We would like to remind you that, given the size of the population we met, we applied a sampling step in proportion to that size.

The questionnaires submitted to women were formulated in such a way as to require women to express themselves on

their daily activities, if they are familiar with national and international legal instruments on women's rights and list some consequences due to daily activities on their health. For example: malaria, venereal diseases (Stds), acute rheumatism (RAA), low back pain, schistosomiasis, stomach pain, blood pressure, etc. are the diseases that women experience.

The pregnant woman works in the field until she is finished. She does not go to the clinic until the first contractions. Sometimes the woman gives birth on the road, by going to the dispensary; this is common in some villages where the dispensary is non-existent. These women must walk a distance of 5 to 10 kilometers to reach the nearest clinic.

The results show that 80 out of 20% of respondents confirm that rural women in the province of Nord-Ubangi are subject to field work, water transport and distribution, 70 out of 30% to an early allowance, 65 out of 35% at too low a level of education, 60 out of 40% at high-risk delivery, and 90 out of 10% at various diseases.

Table 3. Distribution of women by age group.

| Variable | Modality | Frequency | 0/0 | |
|----------|--------------------|-----------|-----|--|
| | 10 -15 years | 23 | 23 | |
| Ages | 16 - 21 years | 33 | 33 | |
| | 22 - 45 years | 37 | 37 | |
| | 45 years and older | 07 | 07 | |
| Total | - | 100 | 100 | |

Source: Our research, 2019.

The figures in the table 3 show that out of 100 women surveyed, 37 people (37%) are in the 22 to 45 age group, 33% in the 16 to 21 age group and 23% in the age group. age of 10 to 15 years. There was a small percentage (07%) of surveyed women aged 45 years and older.

Table 4. Distribution of women by their marital status.

| Variable | Modality | Frequency | % | |
|----------------|----------|-----------|-----|--|
| | Married | 70 | 70 | |
| Marital Status | Widows | 00 | 00 | |
| Maritai Status | Singles | 27 | 27 | |
| | Divorced | 03 | 03 | |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | |

Source: Our research, 2019.

The figures in Table 4 show that out of 100 women surveyed, 70% are brides followed by 27% single, 03% divorced and 00% widowed.

Table 5. Distribution of women by level of education.

| Variable | Modality | Frequency | % | |
|--------------------|------------|-----------|-----|--|
| | Illiterate | 65 | 65 | |
| I1 -f - dti | Primary | 30 | 30 | |
| Level of education | Secondary | 05 | 05 | |
| | University | 00 | 00 | |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | |

Source: Our research, 2019.

The figures given in Table 5 show that out of 100 women surveyed, 65 or 65% do not have a level of education followed by 30 or 30% of women at primary level, 05 or 05% have a level of education Secondary study and 00 or 00%.

Table 6. Distribution of women in relation to childbirth.

| Variable | Modality | Frequency | % | |
|------------|--------------|-----------|-----|--|
| | Without risk | 00 | 00 | |
| Childbirth | Minor risk | 40 | 40 | |
| | Major risk | 60 | 60 | |
| Total | | 100 | 100 | |

Source: Our research, 2019.

With regard to the delivery of the women surveyed in Table 6, the major risk represents a higher opinion of 60 or 60%, followed by 40 or 40% of minor risk and the safe delivery represents 00 or 00%.

Table 7. Distribution of women in relation to the work.

| Variable | Modality | Frequency | % |
|----------|--|-----------|-----|
| Th | State Service | 20 | 20 |
| The work | Field work, water transport and distribution | 80 | 80 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 |

Source: Our research, 2019.

The figures in Table 7 show that out of 100 women surveyed, 80% who are in fieldwork, water transport and distribution and 20% are engaged in primary education.

Table 8. Distribution of women in relation to diseases.

| Variable | Modality | Frequency | % |
|----------|--|-----------|-----|
| Digagaga | Good health | 10 | 10 |
| Diseases | Malaria, urinogenital infections, Tuberculosis, dermatosis, verminosis and gastroenteritis | 90 | 90 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 |

Source: Our research, 2019.

The figures in Table 08 show that out of 100 women surveyed, 90% who suffer from various diseases and 10% are in good health.

Table 9. Distribution of women in relation to early dowry.

| Variable | Modality | Frequency | % |
|-------------|----------|-----------|-----|
| Forly down | Yes | 70 | 70 |
| Early dowry | No | 30 | 30 |
| Total | | 100 | 100 |

Source: Our research, 2019.

The figures in Table 9 show that out of 100 women surveyed, 70% who are victims of the early dowry and 30% are engaged in marriage at the age of marriage.

The results of the survey show that the situation of women in several areas of provincial and local life in the province of Nord-Ubangi remains worrying compared to that of men. It has even worsened in recent years as a result of the province's isolation, the crisis of state authority and persistent insecurity.

Women play the main role; they carry most of the weight of households. The informal economy has taken the first place by far. Many changes, at various levels, will be necessary to promote the achievement of equality between women and men.

4. Discussion

The discussion of the results consists of link in them to the

earlier parts of the study. Their interpretation is to make them speak so that they can answer the research question. In this study, the discussions and interpretations will be done essentially around five points: the activities of the woman of North-Ubangi on the work of fields, transport and distribution of water; the early dowry; the level of study too low; childbirth of high-risk woman and various rural women's disease. [10]

Regarding the age of the women surveyed, our surveys show that out of a sample of 100 women surveyed, 37 or 37% represent an age range between 22 to 45 years followed by 33% of age groups between 16 to 21 years old. On the other hand, 23% of age groups between 10 to 15 years old and the age group between 45 and over represent only 7%.

This low proportion is justified by the fact that girls are not empowered and the oldest are not numerous in the villages visited. Our results also indicate that 70% of married women

versus 27% of single women and 3% of divorced women. This high rate of marriage is justified by early marriage in the village.

Our respondents prove that 65% of women are illiterate do not know the texts and laws (family code and the protection of women), by cons 30% have completed primary education and 5% have completed secondary education, it that is, who can read and write. Our survey of the girl's education in North-Ubangi Province showed that parents in difficult circumstances prefer to send boys to school rather than girls, especially in rural areas. This situation is different from one territory to another.

The failures of the development actions are generally attributed either to the developed ones or to the developers. [11]

With regard to childbirth, 60% of women give birth with major risk, followed by 40% of women giving birth with a minor risk. We found that all women give birth with risk and without proper care. Our results confirm the results of SIDIKI B. GUINDO and those of DRAMANE COULIBALY on the complication of women giving birth and the rate of women who underwent cesarean section. [12, 13]

Of all the women's work, 80% of women focus on fieldwork, water transport and distribution, compared to 20% who are teachers at the village primary school. The majority of women (90%) suffer from malaria, gastroenteritis, urinogenital infections, tuberculosis, dermatosis and verminosis against 10% of healthy women.

In general, 90% of women enter marriage early and 30% of women enter marriage at the age of marriage. Early and forced marriage has serious consequences for a girl's life, but also for her community and her country as a whole. [14]

Since women are not taking into consideration in the villages, they are subjected to intense work and without taking into account the gender approach or respect for human rights.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

At the end of this study on women with a thousand arms in rural areas in the province of Nord-Ubangi, it should be remembered that our hypotheses were verified on the basis of a survey initiated in the form of a questionnaire distributed to the respondents (Women and Men) playing an important role in rural areas.

Throughout this study, we examined the problem of women in a number of ways, including:

i. Education;

- ii. Health;
- iii. Right;
- iv. Access to resources;
- v. Governance;
- vi. Decision making;
- vii. Employment;
- viii. Environment, etc.

Despite the existence of the above legal instruments, women and girls continue to experience various forms of violence. However, by making the best use of talent, we can ensure that women and men have the same opportunities to contribute to the building of the family and to work, which contributes to be of each other and more generally of society. [15]

Today, even when girls begin school in North Ubangi, many do not succeed because of poverty; and they must return home to play the role traditionally assigned to them, namely the field, the performance of domestic tasks (cleaning, cooking care and schooling of children, etc.).

In light of these results, we suggest the following:

- 1. To politico-administration authorities
- i. Take effective measures to reduce the frequency of obstetric emergencies, in particular by equipping the health facilities with materials needed for the obstetric service;
- ii. Popularize and sensitize the population of North-Ubangi on the laws relating to the protection of women.
- 2. To the health authorities of North-Ubangi

Reinvigorate the awareness of women about the importance of pre-natal consultation services and involve women in the actions of this awareness.

- 3. To women
- i. To consult the pre-natal services from conception until delivery;
- ii. To avoid home births and induced abortions;
- iii. To avoid self-medication during pregnancy and to consult health services in case of any abnormal situation during pregnancy.
- 4. To the population

To report or report any cases of home birth and any induced abortion.

5. To researchers

To carry out an analytical study by trying to verify if really the under-development of the woman is caused by the nonrespect of the gender approach in Nord-Ubangi by constituting a databank for this purpose;

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