# Dinki site-specific topic: gender relations

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## Economic empowerment

### Rights to land

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: The Argoba claim that their Sharia law does not allow women to take a share of the land and the wealth they have with their husband after divorce. If they do they will be considered as Christians.

MEN’S VIEW: According to Muslim respondents though the government is saying that women have equal rights to the land, they are against it; because the Sharia law is against that. They said that this was true for Christian women from earlier times. With Muslims when women are married it is by an arrangement called Nikah. And elders decide the amount of money that women might take if their marriage ends; and this used to be 100 birr but now it might be 1000Birr. This is the money given to the women along with other things that she brings to the marriage.

Now women have equal rights to land, and their photograph is posted on the certificate with their husbands. Those husbands who refuse to bring their wives are not given land certificate.

#### New laws being implemented

WOMEN’S VIEW@The government is forcing them to get the pictures of both the spouses for land certification. Women in neighbouring ‘gots’ had claimed their right and received their share or the men will choose to stay with them (cancel the divorce) not to lose their land. This has not happened in Dinki.

The Amharas are implementing the land rights of women and in neighboring communities Argobas share land after divorce. Divorce is not observed in Dinki. Dinki is a better place to live than neighboring ‘gots’ because of the water availability and the very kind nature of the people. The Amhara women did not have a problem in getting their picture together with their husbands’ for land certification. The Argobas in the community still have the attitude that women do not have any share on land and wealth.

MEN’S VIEW: They hear that this law is being implemented in other areas, but there are no Muslim women who took part of her land after divorce. They heard that it has happened in Chibite and Addis Alem ‘got’.

There are some women in other places who built their houses near the land that they were given from husbands. This shows that the news laws are being implemented. But there was no divorce case in Dinki.

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEW: In Dinki divorce is not obvious. One woman even said, “who can we divorce, our husbands are dying” telling me that she lost her husband. No woman wants to divorce her husband because she will lose many rights as a Muslim woman.

MEN’S VIEW: Men are changing their attitude of treating women, as the women might take part of their land if divorce happens. And any violence against women is enough for women to report to the Wereda. Since men are afraid as the courts are in favour of women, they are now treating their wives better. The husbands give part of their land to children being fathers. When they give half of their land to their wives, they turn to be very desperate. Since they fear this, they are now treating their wives in a better way.

### Farm and off-farm work opportunities

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: ArgobBa women’s main responsibility is working in the house. They work the domestic work. This is because a woman is not expected to expose herself to the heavy sunlight that shines during midday with no shade in the field. The Amharas have almost equal share in works in the field because they have right over their wealth; whereas the Argobas do not have those rights so that they do not work as hard as those of Amhara women on the field.

For working on onion farms on a daily basis both men and women are paid 15 birr with lunch. In the nursery more women are employed than men. In the nursery they are paid 10 birr per day. Before the coming of onion farms, farm work opportunities were available only for men.

MEN’S VIEW: Women usually work in their house and if they work outside the house it is usually on their lands. They help especially in weeding. There are women who come from the Dega Kebeles to work during peak agricultural seasons or on irrigable lands. And Argoba women are involved in outdoor works less than that of the Amharas. Amhara women might be hired and paid for weeding as men. But since Argoba women do not consider themselves as equal as men, they do not go out to work with men and expect equal pay. But now they are starting to work outside their houses.

Some women spin cotton and sell them to get some income. There are also some women who are now engaged in small scale trading. There are women who earn their own income and who buy animals like sheep, goats and the like.

### Attitudes changing?

MEN’S VIEW: Attitudes of Argaba women is changing, and they are now being engaged in works outside of their houses, though their number is small.

## Personal and social empowerment – personal relations with men

### Abduction and rape

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: When a woman is abducted the abductors usually convince her not to go to the police and to say that she loves the man.

MEN’S VIEW: There is no problem of abduction and rape at this time as the government has banned the activities and that they are followed by punishment. If the girl is willing they might go together. There were two or three abductions in the last two years, but this was insignificant as compared with the previous times.

A man whose child was abducted in December said that he took the case to the Kebele, which told him to take the case to the Wereda. And while he was going to the Wereda elders stopped him in Aliyu Amba from going to Ankober. A man living in Gachene abducted her. The elders told him that she might say that she went willingly (as happened in Aygebir ‘got’), and that his effort might be in vain. So he decided to settle the issue. The man agrees that the number of abductions has decreased dramatically.

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’S VIEW: The new law has been introduced with more rigid penalties. If the abducted woman opens a charge the man is going to be penaliSed.

The government had designed laws and is ready to implement them.

Elders come in between to mediate before or after charges are opened. They settle the dispute before the abductor or the rapist is penalised.

There is a woman who received money by opening a charge against a person who raped her. This had created a fear on all the men not to even touch a woman without her will. All girls are not equally vulnerable to abduction and rape. Girls from poor, small and female-headed households are more vulnerable.

MEN’S VIEW: When abduction or rape occurs, the parents of the man involved send elders to the parents of the woman, and elders deal the issue. The parents of the man agree to what the elders say, and this is usually in favour of the woman’s parents. This is so because if the parents take the case to the Wereda, the man involved might be imprisoned and his parents might be expected to pay compensation. But in case of abduction, the girls are made to say that they were willing in the act, and this does not allow courts to punish the boy or his parents.

A girl said that she was raped three years back, when she was pregnant. The boy was imprisoned in the Kebele (Chibite). The case was taken to the elders and the parents of the girl demanded four thousand birr as compensation, the elders decided that they should pay two thousand birr and the issue was dealt this way. If that was taken to the Kebele and the Wereda the fine could be higher and there might be imprisonment.

#### Attitudes changing?

MEN’S VIEW: Men are afraid to these acts as they involve fine and imprisonment. This is evident in the fact that the number of women abducted or raped has declined dramatically. And it can be said that it is almost non-existent. There was only one case of rape in the last few years, but it was said that the women was willingly involved in the relationship. And she said that she was raped when she got pregnant. But elders dealt this successfully.

### Extra-marital pregnancy and abortion

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: Premarital pregnancy and abortion are rare. The introduction and widespread use of contraceptives had almost avoided unwanted pregnancy including premarital pregnancy. Even teenagers (young girls) might be engaged in sexual activities but use contraceptives and protect themselves from premarital pregnancy. Because of this there is almost no abortion. Sometimes when using contraceptives the women might miss the days and get pregnant for this reason abortion is sometimes practised.

Many women take measures before the pregnancy happens. If pregnancy happens very few of them revert to abortion.

There is a great use of contraceptives both in married and unmarried women.

MEN’S VIEW: A woman that did not take pills or other pregnancy prevention techniques might get pregnant. In Alela Ager (one of the neighbourhoods of Dinki) one woman was pregnant three times and she was not married. In Dinki a woman said she was raped when she got pregnant, but there was no other cases for long. And such happenings are rare. And as far as abortion is concerned in some cases it is said that it is miscarriage and not abortion. But this is hid from men, as women are involved in both the act of abortion. But men hear that some women go to Debre Birhan to have an abortion.

Women use contraception when they do not want to give birth. There are those people who use contraception because they want to delay the time to give birth, and there are also those people who do not want to give birth at all, because they already have many children. This is successful when both husbands and wives agree on contraception use. But many women are using contraception now than earlier times.

Young women are not getting pregnant now as they used before marriage not because they are not involved in sexual affairs but because they use contraception. Young women when aroused might not consider HIV or other diseases, as their arousal is very strong (Muslims believe as it is written in their book) while men might be afraid of HIV. The contraception use has covered many people who are in sexual affairs from being known.

Now almost every woman uses contraception. This is because the number of children is already large. The natural resources are limited, especially that of land. Most husbands agree, even when husbands might not agree, the women go to Chibite for a meeting or for market, and get the contraceptives. The main work of the health post in Chibite is to give contraception.

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’S VIEW: There is no much new law that is being enforced.

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEW: In earlier times people used to think that the use of contraceptives will disable women from giving birth in the future.

MEN’S VIEW: Most women fear HIV to engage in sexual affairs and they also use contraceptives to prevent pregnancy.

### Choice of marriage partner

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: The couples getting married do not choose marriage mates. It is rather done by their parents.

MEN’S VIEW: Parents usually arrange marriages. Parents of a boy consider the reputation of a given family and ask them to marry their girl to their boy. This is done via elders, and the parents of the girl are given time to decide on the issue. Most parents do not decline the offer, if the household of the boy is welcome. And it is only recently that young people including women are choosing their own marriage partners. This is also true for Muslim women, which used to be unlikely as compared to Christians. Parents are not happy with these children though, because they are unable to decide for their children.

Most girls do not decline the suggestion of their parents, as their parents’ house is their second house after their marriage. They cannot afford the disapproval of their parents because they know they have to keep the attachment to their parents’ house for the worse or for the better.

Nowadays women might leave their husbands if they were married off without their will. This was not the case in previous times. They used to live with their husbands no matter what.

##### Attitudes changing?

MALE VIEW: a Very few young women are now choosing their own marriage partner. The parents are not happy though.

### Child and early marriage

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: Girls of age 15 and above are given for marriage. Though the law forbids girls to get married before the age of 18, girls are getting married at an early age.

If a girl of age 16-18 is given for marriage her parents say that she is 20.

MEN’S VIEW: Girls are not given to marriage before they are fifteen. Though the governments rule says eighteen, parents give their girls at fifteen. There are also girls that are married off when they are only 14. This depends on the reputation of the family. A family with good reputation is repeatedly asked about girls starting from early age. But there are also women who are not married in later years even if they want to get married. This has to do with the family’s wealth or reputation. In their culture if a woman is not married, it is taken as a big issue. Marriage especially for women is given high value.

If a husband comes to a girl no one takes her age into account. It is assumed to be 15, but during our field visit was married off at the age of 14, and this is in Addis Alem ‘got’.

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’SVIEW: The law did not bring much difference.

MEN’S VIEW: New laws are not being implemented. Parents who do not want to give their daughters to marriage are forced to give them anyway, because of the social expectation. They do not want to take their cases to the court because they say that they are going to live with the people whom they take to the court. So unwilling and unhappy they are forced to give their daughters.

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEW: The people are realizing the effects of child and early marriage. They would choose to keep their young children grow a bit old before giving them for husbands (this could be until 15, 16-18)

MEN’S VIEW: No attitude change is noticed.

### Male violence towards women

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: There is not much male violence towards women neither in the house nor outside. People are becoming modernised and the laws designed had hindered many men from violating women’s rights.

MEN’S VIEW: There is generally low male violence towards women now. This is because the government’s rule prohibits that and measures are taken. Husbands are now respecting their wives, as disagreement and quarrel means that the wife might take her case and that the man might get punished, and he might lose part of his land.

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’S VIEW: Though the women did not bring their cases to the public, they know their right and act accordingly.

MEN’S VIEW: When women face violence in the house, and when they do not want to live with their husbands they take their cases to the Wereda. In this way they are able to get half of their property including land.

#### Attitudes changing?

MEN’S VIEW: Man’s attitude towards violence against women is improving; not because they respect them but because they are afraid not to be fined or lose their land. There are men who live with their wives merely not to lose their lands.

In earlier times men used to see beating their wives as the indication of a masculine figure. But now it is frowned upon. They are respecting women not only fearing the punishment, but also from their change of attitude.

## Political empowerment

### Women’s voice in community decisions

WOMEN’S VIEW: The political participation of women has decreased as compared to earlier times. The number of women who attend meetings is less and they do not make major decisions directly related to the community.

MEN’S VIEW: Women do not have any increasing voice in decisions related to the community. Now more women are represented in the Kebele council, but they are in the council simply to fulfil representation. Men dominate the meetings in which women are present. And women are not given attention, and they do not have the capacity to speak in public. Those women who are educated – teachers and other women DAs are the ones who may talk in meetings. The women in the community go to meetings just for attendance. If someone asks any women after the meeting what the meeting was about, they do not answer a thing. In region 2 (Afar) we hear that women have their own meetings and different trainings are given to them. But in Dinki, women are not like that.

### Exercise of women’s voice

Men’s views: They only take voters’ cards to vote when there are elections. They do not participate in other things to any meaningful degree.