# Geblen site-specific topic: gender relations

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## Economic empowerment

### Rights to land

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: Land had been distributed 1983, it was when TPLF came to power that land was distributed. Therefore, there are some women who owned land during that time. Generally, no one can access land in the current time because there is not a policy work on “how to make the citizen land owner”.

MEN’S VIEW: In Geblen, re-distribution of farm land took place in between 1982 and1983 E.C. while the original land distribution, including distribution of the non-cultivable lands, took place long before in 1975 by the *Baitos,* [local councils established by TPLF in the areas that had been under its control]. Respondents reported that the right to land of all women who had been above 18 years old is guaranteed in an equal manner to their male counterpart.

#### New laws being implemented

WOMEN’S VIEW: There is no new implemented law concerning land. Women and young are not given land in the recent time. Except by their own effort, no one is empowering the women.

MEN’S VIEW: According to the kebele chairman, since 1995E.C, there is no new regulation in the kebele with regard to women’s access to land. Before 1995E.C. there had been a rule that caused the entitlement of women, demobilized soldiers and landless youth to access to land ownership. However, the rule could not be effective due to the scarcity of cultivable land in the locality.

#### Attitudes changing?

MEN’S VIEW: The Women's Association leader of the kebele is very happy on the relentless effort made by the kebele chairman to protect rights of women.

Farm and off-farm work opportunities

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: Among the four kushet, only Welaelabur especially the MISHIG (the centre of Geblen) has started off-farm work. The women are very active in this area. The women have controlled the entire business sector in the area. In every house there is tea room (they sell tea and bread) and *tela* (traditional drinking) and also beer. The teenagers and the old men come to the area from the different kushet and drink *tela*, beer and some of the employed workers especially not married men eat their breakfast from these tea room. The area is changing to the small town.

MEN’S VIEW: In Geblen women have less farm work opportunities as compared to their male counterparts. Even, those women household heads who do have their own farm and oxen could not be beneficiaries of their own assets due to the existing customary practices that prevent women from engaging in ploughing. Therefore those women of the locality who do not have access to male labour are forced to lease their land to sharecroppers who one way or the other be more beneficiary than the leaser.Except in ploughing, they participate in some of the farming activities such as in building terracing in the farm land, sowing, weeding, winnowing, husking and harvesting.

A woman in Geblen reported that the recurrent drought occurred in the area has been affected the lives of many people living in the area. Especially women are the main victims of such occurrences. Due to such condition, some women who were able to save up to thousands of birr have lost their financial capacity and became poor. Therefore, if the government does not take proper measure on time, women may face further risk that would threaten their survival.

Coordinator the FFW program in the kebele reported that 100% of women in Geblen are provided the opportunity to participate in the FFW program. Moreover, pregnant women and mothers of children, from birth to 10 month are exempted from contributing labor FFW programs.

Women have a heavy work load in undertaking domestic and field duties such as engaging in various farming activities house cleaning, food preparation and taking care of children etc. In past times women were engaging in handicraft and the products had been used for additional income generation and house decoration. But currently there is no woman engaging in such activity because the heavy work load of field/form activities make it absolutely impossible.

The women have the responsibility in PSNP similar with the men while a woman is taking care of children, and there are conditions of pregnancy and delivery.

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEW: There are an awareness of creating off-farm business and attitude change.

MEN’S VIEW: Women’s motivation to engage in the field activities is increasing from time to time. The introduction of FFW programs has contributing to the development of such phenomena among women in Geblen.

## Personal and social empowerment – personal relations with men

###  Abduction and rape

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: The most common relation is polygamy. One man can have two or more than two wives. There is abduction and rape but not as before. The abduction may be based on the interest of the woman or without the interest of the women. The first one is made with the consent of the two couples without informing to the family. They do this because the women does not have a power of decision in her life that means if she want to marry her own choice the family should accept her choice. Otherwise they plan some body that is their interest. Therefore, not to face this situation on the consent of both part; abduction based on the woman interest take place. The second one is, without the knowledge of the woman.

MEN’S VIEW: Rape frequently occurred in Geblen . So far, though cases are presented to the kebele administration, no legal measure has been taken; rather such cases are settled by the arbitration of traditional arbitrators operating in the community. In some of the cases the kebele chairman participated in the process of arbitration and the chairman reported that in some of the cases the females were found voluntary in negotiating with accused perpetrators in such dealings

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’S VIEW: There is a new law which is implemented when abduction and rape happened. But as some respondent explained, before sending to justice office, custom court will see the case. Accordingly, they try to arbitrate and give a decision. But if the situation goes beyond, the case shall be sent to justice office. According to the respondent, if one accused for rape and abduction the punishment is very serious. One could be put to jail to three years and above three years and also some amount of money.

MEN’S VIEW: Marriage before voluntary counselling and testing HIV/AIDS is forbidden.

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEW: There are attitude changes comparing the prior time. In the prior time, the criminal had been released for free as if he didn’t do anything and the societies were blaming the woman. But now, they fear not to take the risk and the community takes in to consideration and start to understand as it is crime and reject if the situation happened.

MEN’S VIEW: In this regard very no change is being observed. At the beginning of this year, a case of rape was presented to the kebele administration.

### Extra-marital pregnancy and abortion

WOMEN’S VIEW: I didn’t got any information on abortion but there is extra-marital pregnancy.

MEN’S VIEW: Abortion is not a common practice in Geblen. Discussions with the kebele officials and the HEW make it clear that no case of abortion is presented to her since the time she was assigned to work in the locality.

### Choice of marriage partner

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: Mostly, the choice of partner left to the family and to the male. Family arrangement marriage is common in the community. But this time the young and educating women are resisting the culture.

MEN’S VIEW: The former kebele chairman reported that Condition of women’s right is good even before many years ago because the area was freed by TPLF that ensured the applicability of women’s right including to choose their marriage partners.

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’S VIEW: The law just enforces marriage on the agreement of two parties’ i.e. The women and the man should agree to take the action.

### Child and early marriage

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: Early marriage has hold back.

MEN’S VIEW: According to informants, underage marriage is not a common practice in Geblen. But in some cases there is a possibility of early marriage particularly for girls less than 18 years of age whose physical appearance looks matured.

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’S VIEW: For a female 18 and above and for a male 21 and above years old is legal age for marriage according to the Tigray family law. So, this is the law working in the Wereda too.

MEN’S VIEW: None; Informants reported that there is a regulation that forbid early marriage and everybody in the locality is aware of it.

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEW: This is a better time, at least no early marriage

### Male violence towards women

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEW: The male has the dominance power still today. Though better of the previous time, there is still male violence towards women. There are some corrupted male who do not respect their wives.

MEN’S VIEW: A 14 years old girl reported that a man [civil servant] had invited her and her friends to watch a pornography film, a form of sexual violence made by adult man against underage girls.

#### New laws being implemented?

NA

#### Attitudes changing?

MEN’S VIEW: Little change is observed in this respect.

WOMEN’S VIEW: It is because of the attitude change that minimized the male violence towards women.

## Political empowerment

### Women’s voice in community decisions

WOMEN’S VIEW: Though not able to speak about the women having more decision-making power in the current time, it is possible to speak about the increase of their participation in the political sphere. There is a higher number of women participating in the political sphere both at wereda and kebele level.

MEN’S VIEW: 35% of members of the kebele council, the cabinet, TPLF party members are women.

### Exercise of women’s voice

WOMEN’S VIEW: They participate in meetings, evaluating the administrators and suggest any idea which of they think necessary.

MEN’S VIEW: In Geblen women have representation in the kebele cabinet and other committees. They are free to express their ideas, comments and opinions in public meetings.