# Girar site-specific topic: gender relations

[Economic empowerment 1](#_Toc434304245)

[Rights to land 1](#_Toc434304246)

[Personal and social empowerment – personal relations with men 2](#_Toc434304247)

[Abduction and rape 2](#_Toc434304248)

[Extra-marital pregnancy and abortion 3](#_Toc434304249)

[Choice of marriage partner 3](#_Toc434304250)

[Child and early marriage 3](#_Toc434304251)

[Male violence towards women 4](#_Toc434304252)

[Political empowerment 4](#_Toc434304253)

[Women’s voice in community decisions 4](#_Toc434304254)

[Exercise of women’s voice 4](#_Toc434304255)

Male interviewer only

## Economic empowerment

### Rights to land

#### Generally

In Imdibir and in most of Gurage rural communities, land scarcity is major issue that push the young generation to migrate to other parts of the country. A household could has limited size of land that is expected to be shared with male children who want to marry. When girls are married they will not need land or properties form the family, but when boys are married the parents help the child to construct a hut, and give part of their land to each of their children. This cultural trend causes shortage of land in the house hold.

In the area Enset, Chat, Coffee, cabbage and potato are the common products that do not need large land size, probably this is why the community could be able to sustain with in small size land. When I come to Imdibir with my father to celebrate *Meskel with* grandparents before 15 years, I was wondering why all the vast grazing lands everywhere respectfully kept while being in such shortage of land. But now the agricultural extension program is encouraging households to cultivate part of their grazing land the investment policy is allowing individual investors to take communal lands for commercial farming and flower plantation.

#### New laws being implemented?

The new laws are the land measurement and certifying the land holder, this did not affect possession of one’s land property unless the land is affected by some development programs like road construction. If any farmer has receipt of land tax, that was the evidence of land ownership, now the certificate added on for more assurance. Here on the certificate both the husband and the wife are registered and this gives a chance to the women to get evidences of land property share.

The other law is the investment policy which allowed individuals with huge capital to invest in the communal land of the area; this doesn’t mean that the investment takes all the common lands that the community uses for grazing.

The other new law implementation is that, women can share land if they are divorced, which was not the case before.

#### Attitudes changing?

I see that people’s attitude towards land and productivity is changing. I see that farmers are trying to plant crops, on the part of land left to harvest grass for cattle and left for grazing.

Men are no more dictator on the issue of land management and ownership

Though the migration for trade is still there, it is rate seems decreasing and people tend to send their children to school than before

What I saw is the sense of Equb and saving is getting much more attention than I before, everyone interviewed says , I have Equb, though the amount depends on the status/income of the respondent. Equb started long ago in the area, but I think people are in to it than before.

Cooperatives are the other new program by the government through associations and voluntary groups, this in turn created working environment to cooperative members

### Farm and off-farm work opportunities

#### Generally?

The agricultural extension program is assisting farmers to be introduced with crops and vegetables. They are trying to help farmers by providing selected seeds and fertilisers in credit. The technical support is also helpful to farmers especially who don’t know how to plant crops. However, in my observation, the agricultural extension workers could not reach everyone in villages, they tend to focus on model farmers, and work with limited number of households. The community on the other hand is not taking credit as an advantage and many farmers refrain to be benefited from selected seeds and fertiliser provision. The area is not drought prone because of Enset plant which can stay about 6/7 years without rain/water, this might lead farmers less active to use the advantage of such support, than farmers in other region.

Off farm opportunity is trade in Imdibir town, and in the villages usually food items sale for women, Chat selling to men in the area. There are wood work, metal work, and shop etc.… for people residing in the town, but I didn’t see any off farm work opportunity for those who are living in the villages.

#### Attitudes changing?

Attitude change in farming is mainly lies on producing crops, and working with extension workers for modern/better production

The other thing is some young people are trying to work on farms and other trade in the area than mass migration to towns

## Personal and social empowerment – personal relations with men

### Abduction and rape

#### Generally?

Generally abduction was not a problem to in the many parts of Gurage and Girar too, rape is not common but might have been some in the early days. This time both are not a problem at all. This is because the culture is much more tied with rules that need to be kept and enforced by local elders. There is no approval of marriage after abduction. Every marriage should go through customary ways. (Sending elders for permission, getting approval, marriage arrangement and wedding)

#### New laws being implemented?

The gender law is stronger and there is serious punishment in violation of rights of women, and every woman knows that the law gives better protection than before.

Women have the right for equal rights, for property claim, participation in different meetings and politics, associations, and development works.

#### Attitudes changing?

I saw that women are understanding their right and protection of the law to demand their rights, and men are also afraid of acting like before, since the law is in favor of women’s right.

### Extra-marital pregnancy and abortion

#### Generally?

Unwanted pregnancy happens by chance everywhere, and this happens in Girar and Imdibir town also. According to the health center head, abortions was practiced by old women/traditional birth attendants, but know the law gave it recognition and if the woman signed for it, the health center gives safe abortion service. Now, death during abortion is avoided. When I interview the health center head, he told me that he just came after completing abortion.

#### New laws being implemented?

The new law is as stated above, abortion is legal if the mother decided to do so.

#### Attitudes changing?

The community began to use the new safe abortion service that the health center is offering; this is attitude change from believing on traditional way of aborting a fetus to a modern and safe way.

### Choice of marriage partner

#### Generally?

Arranged marriage was common in most of Gurage and Girar kebele. (*My mother is grown in 2 hours walking from Imdibir and she told me that she is married by arranged marriage too for a man whom she didn’t know him personally, who is my father).* This was the trend for many women married long time ago. But now, this culture is avoided and the couple first get to know each other and propose for marriage.

The other new progress is that every marriage is allowed by family after having HIV testing.

Therefore, partner choice is not affected by anyone except by the two partners.

#### New laws being implemented?

The law doesn’t allow arranged marriage, especially if the girl appeals about the imposition of parents to courts other legal institutions at a lower level.

#### Attitudes changing?

Parents changed their attitude and they don’t need to force their children to marry before their program and interest and to someone whom they don’t need to. They acknowledged that the time is changing.

Young people are also unwilling to be influenced and suppressed by parents’ choice, they know that they can refuse any request comes to their parents.

### Child and early marriage

#### Generally?

In Gurage, Girar, early marriage was not major problem before, and it is not an issue at present,

However, infertility is a great problem in the community. If by chance a woman becomes infertile, this causes lots of crisis on her; the community doesn’t respect her, husband’s family reject her, and husbands usually decide to evict a woman because of this, even there was no property share to the woman, but the law gives her protection at least for property share including land.

#### New laws being implemented?

The rights of women to be given equal property share with men during divorce

#### Attitudes changing?

Though early marriage is not a problem, late marriage is considered as losing values especially for Gurage girl in the villages. I know this before and still this attitude is there.

The other big attitude change is that women are no more considered as people who can be fired anytime from home. Everyone recognises about their rights.

### Male violence towards women

#### Generally?

I already addressed this by answering question above. Women have the right for participation, equal rights and property share. Men know that the condition doesn’t allow them to exploit women as before. I had one respondent saying this equality thing is not good that push women to fight with their husbands.

#### New laws being implemented?

The law was there even before, but I think the enforcement/ implementation is getting better to bring about all these changes. Of course there is new family law which has its own contribution to the better attention given in the village.

#### Attitudes changing?

The society in general changed its attitude about gender relationship, and women’s rights, though there are still some people from the earlier generation who want to keep the earlier trends of much respect to men.

## Political empowerment

The political involvement has no clear face, by which women, youth, farmers, etc.. are being both development partners, and party members. I see change in women participation at kebele level. I saw one political assignee who dictates over other kebele officials when political issue comes.

### Do women have an increasing voice in decisions related to the community?

Yes, they have involvement which was not the case 7 years ago I visited the area.

### How do they exercise it?

They participate in kebele administration/committees,

They participate in meetings for political issues

They form association and fight for their rights etc....