# Personal stories of female transitions to adulthood in Gelcha, Fentale wereda, East Shewa

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## Rich young woman 30s

### Your household

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Relation to the household | Sex | Age |
| Wife | F | 32 |
| Head | M | 60 |
| Daughter | F | 14 |
| Daughter | F | 12 |
| Son | M | 7 |
| Daughter | F | 4 |
| Daughter | F | 3 |
| Daughter | F | 1 |

### Youth in the community

She said that the current adolescent girls and boys are lucky in the accessibility of education and are able to choose their marriage partner. There is still a difference between children attending school and those not attending school in implementing their rights. For instance, students are able to choose or refuse marriage, but illiterate ones couldn’t do so.

Females help mothers only in household chores; they don’t want to herd cattle as before. Males are also not as much willing to herd, so herding and all livestock activities are done by women. Some adolescent boys are going to other places where irrigation work is available. They engage there as daily labourers or in crop sharing, etc.

Girls have been getting pregnant before marriage, but parents make them marry before giving birth. Adolescent boys and girls couldn’t form independent households before marriage. They have no participation on community issues and they are careless to involve in religious activities.

### Your life story

She was born in the area and her parents were one of the richest among the community. She grew up well with family care. She was ten years old when her father died, however the household didn’t face economic problems because of his death. The reason was because there was excess livestock to sell for the livelihood of the household.

There is no major illness which affected her in her life. She got married at age 14 with the family decision. She married the current husband as she was to be the second wife. Her husband has three wives including his dead brother’s wife (through inheritance). And he has 14 children.

She never enrolled in school. But she has educated brothers, one of them is a doctor at Adama Hospital and another one is an employed worker at Fentalle wereda.

From seven years old she was involved in animal herding until she got married. She married before taking the interest in boys as she was affected by early marriage. She was circumcised and she has planned to circumcise her daughter.

Her brother is important to her life in giving advice and moral support.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

She was not affected by government interventions as she was growing up. The household did not face economic problems. On the other hand the government interventions were not known and people didn’t participate frequently in kebele meetings. She said: I aware of government interventions and interactions in the last ten years. Yes, I have seen and used them. But she was not affected and most of them are related to agricultural extension packages. Almost all government interventions have started to affect the community in the last ten years. All infrastructure and services are constructed and provided since then.

Because of the availability of school in the area, her children are able to attend school, except the last two small babies. One of her daughter is benefiting from FCFDA support. She benefited from the health post in antenatal and postnatal care. She also gets malaria tablets and sometimes water purification fluid from there. Some of her children get vaccination at the health post.

The first husband’s wife is a PSNP beneficiary and when she receives the aid they share it equally. She doesn’t have participation in community issues. All things are done by her husband as she is busy in household chores and livestock works. She never pays a government contribution in the kebele. Her husband pays land tax and other contributions.

In the community, for women having active or notable husbands, almost all the community participations are done by their husbands. For this reason women’s participation becomes low or not at all.

Similarly, she has not engaged in community participation, so I can say her participation in community issues is null.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She has planned to engage more in livestock activities and to care and support her children morally and materially to attend their education well. She wants her children to be doctors like her brother. With on regard to livestock activities, she wants to engage in shoat fattening. She also feels strong to do this. She regrets that she did not get opportunities for education, because the school was not available here. Now she is committed to care well for her children to achieve her goal.

## Middle wealth young woman 30s

### Your household

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Relation to household head | Sex | Age |
| Wife | F | 31 |
| Head | M | 40 |
| Daughter | F | 12 |
| Son | M | 9 |
| Daughter | F | 7 |

### Youth in the community

Education and finding a marriage partner are good opportunities for both boys and girls. Before there was no availability of school in the nearest area, and even if it was available, parents were not willing to send children to school. Because for the sake of child labour, both males and females could involve in herding if the household had a lot of livestock.

To get married boys need to have money and livestock for the spouse’s gift and his livelihood, unless they make girls pregnant to help to reduce the payments. The cultural customs also affect the female’s family as they need to provide house equipment and for this need more money. Now modern house equipment are very expensive, even the bridegroom’s parents pay a lot of money, and they expect more from the female’s parents.

Both boys and girls couldn’t form independent households before marriage. Except, if girls get pregnant they couldn’t give birth in their parents’ house. Now adolescent boys and girls are reluctant to participate in household work out of school time. Unlike before, girls do not involve in herding, only collecting sugar cane residue. Even boys also are not willing to participate in herding; now livestock work lies on the shoulders of the women (mothers).

Adolescent girls and boys are careless with their religious activities and they have no role on community issues. According to the respondent’s responses, the adolescent girls’ and young men’s experiences are similar on problems and opportunities that they faced.

### Your life story

She was born in another kebele (Elalla) of the wereda to a wealthy family. She grew well by drinking camel’s milk and was fed butter. She is the second child of the household. When she was eleven years old, her mother died after suffering a serious illness. She was sick about six years. And again within three years after her mother’s death, her father also died at Adama Hospital during surgical treatment. Since then things have become bad in her and her sibling’s life. Her major duty was herding livestock of the step-parents without accessing enough food to eat. She couldn’t get education access.

She got married at eighteen years old at Ajo-tere zone in Gelcha. Unfortunately the step-father (dead father’s brother) gave her to a disabled person. Because of that he had stayed about thirty years without marriage. Her husband’s disability makes it difficult for her life as she is the only person to have responsibility for household livelihood. He can’t hear or speak to discuss their life. He is only involving in herding animals. He didn’t have anything when he got married, because of her hard work and effort the household could build assets, such as three cattle and eight goats. She is busy with household chores, livestock activities and selling firewood every three days.

She seriously suffered with illness when she was pregnant with the third child. She went to Adama Hospital for treatment and doctors ordered a blood donation. But she could not find a person to give it. Then she went home and was in bed about three months at home. Gradually the illness showed improvement and finally she recovered from the illness. Now she worries about being pregnant because of her illness and moreover her husband couldn’t understand her concern and it is difficult to make him have awareness.

She didn’t have any contact with boys before marriage.

She is an Islamic religion follower but she is not active to participate in religious activities. She has no interaction with preachers (shekas) and also has no religious background knowledge. For such reasons she doesn’t give attention to it.

The only important person was her brother, who supported her in all kinds of help either in cash, kind or moral support. But now he has stopped his support in kind and cash as she has become better off.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

She was not affected by government interventions when she was growing up. She didn’t know the situations of government interventions.

Because of her husband’s disability, the household has not more participation in community issues. She assumed that it was negatively affecting the household. She is a beneficiary of PSNP since in the last two years by asking/begging officials. She wasn’t able to involve in one of the women’s co-operative associations as she didn’t get information that came from the wereda. Since last year she decided to participate in kebele meetings by her own initiation to get information.

She pays all the government contributions of land tax, party membership, residence and for drinking water. She involves in PSNP works. She is a beneficiary of PSNP, her children are attending school, HEWs give education and advice about the health conditions of the household and environment.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She wants to engage in market activities, if she can get credit access from government, because selling firewood is becoming difficult and tiring in relation to her health problems. She has planned to care for and support her children in their education as well.

## Poor young woman 30s

### Your household

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Relation to household head | Sex | Age |
| Wife | F | 30 |
| Head | M | 46 |
| Daughter | F | 3 |
| Step-son | M | 8 |

### Youth in the community

Now young males and females do not give attention to their education. They simply spend their time with going here and there with friends. At the time when she was young, girls didn’t go with boys. But now some young males and females have the right of taking decisions on their life. If they want, they attend school or if not, they drop it; consequently they are very weak in academic performance.

Currently girls couldn’t get a good marriage, most of the young males are developing bad habits like drinking and chewing chat, and stealing, and they like to go frequently to the town. They have no work interest, after they marry their wives are seriously affected either with work load or by shortage of income for household consumption food.

Adolescent girls have only responsibility to help their mothers and participate in livestock activities and in collecting cane residue; especially during the dry season they are very busy on such activities. Males have engaged only in herding, collecting livestock at night and monitoring them.

Young girls and boys didn’t live independently before marriage, except that males live in a separate hut for study and to pass the night.

### Your life story

She was born in the site, she is the first child of the household; her parents have ten children and she grew up with her family members. The weather condition was good for livestock pasture and the availability of dairy products was good for food. So she was well in getting milk and butter up to five years. But with regard to health service and keeping cleanness or sanitation, this was less compared to now. Currently, children need more than one set of clothes and to have shoes, at night they should wash their hands, legs and face before going to bed.

Four of her siblings died at different times in different cases, specifically the death of her younger sister seriously shocked her and the household members. She died during a complicated delivery. In the past parents were among the middle wealth in the community, because of her father’s illness the number of livestock has deteriorated and the household are getting poor.

She suffered with a sore on her groin for about three years. She couldn’t get health service treatment as it was not treated by health services. She has used different traditional medicines, still it didn’t show an improvement, finally the sore was burnt with a hot iron and gradually she could recover from the illness.

She dropped her education from grade four because of marriage. She married at fourteen years old by her parents’ decision. She enrolled at the age of ten in Metehara and attended her education, commuting from home to school. She did well in her academic performance, but unfortunately she dropped it and she much regrets that. But now she becomes hopeless as she gets older. Her brother is an employed worker at the wereda and her sister will graduate from Government College.

She married her first husband at fourteen years old and after three years she went back to her parents’ house. He didn’t have trust in her, he liked to go with her anywhere such as tot the river, to forest for collecting firewood, and to market, etc. If she went somewhere alone, she was beaten. Finally she went to her parents’ house and has started to live there. She gave birth to her first child in her parents’ house. After three years of separation he was dead and she has got a second marriage by her own choice. He is Aba-Geda (Aba-Boku) of the current Geda system. He was never married before and does not have a child other than the daughter.

She is not in active Islamic religious follower.

Her mother is an important person for her. She shares ideas and what she has; they help each other.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

Even though the school was not found in the area she was able to attend school up to grade four. As the result she attempts to read and write. No government interventions affected her life while she was living with her parents.

Her son is attending Gelcha kindergarten school and gets help from FCFDA in educational materials. She is a member of the women’s co-operative association, participating in sheep fattening which is the main livelihood of the household. She could get credit access to run her own work. She uses contraception from the health post that is by injection. She also could get malaria tablets from it and vaccinated her second child here.

Her husband has great responsibility in community issues as he is Geda leader, orator and has knowledge about community issues. Therefore he involves at kebele, wereda and zone frequently. Which reduces her participation on community issues? She didn’t participate in kebele meetings, etc.

He pays land tax, and other contributions are paid.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She has planned to take credit to involve more in sheep fattening to improve the life of the household. She will be caring for her children to be clever in their education. If the irrigation scheme and pure drinking water will be established, it will change the life of the community people.

## Rich young woman mid-20s

### Your household

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Relation to household | Sex | Age |
| Second wife | F | 26 |
| Head | M | 60 |
| Wife’s sister | F | 15 |
| Daughter | F | 3 |
| Son | M | 3 months |

### Youth in the community

Parents were reluctant to send girls to school when she was growing up. Both adolescent girls and boys were willing to accept all their parents’ decisions. But now they want to go their own way including choosing marriage partner, attending school and finding a job, etc.

No problem in getting married for both girls and boys. No work opportunity to help with getting income of their own. The only duty of girls is household chores and livestock works and the same for boys. engaged only on livestock work.

Both girls and boys couldn’t form independent households before marriage. Girls are getting pregnant before marriage unlike before but don’t give birth in their parents’ home. Adolescent boys and girls didn’t have participation on community affairs and they didn’t actively participate in religious issues or go to mosque for praying. Girls didn’t go to mosque for religious activities, except covering their hair. As respondent said, the girls and boys experiences are similar on the problems and opportunities that face them.

### Your life story

She was born in Arsi in the adjacent wereda of Aseko. She grew up with her parents and siblings. She is the sixth child of the household. Her parents were among the middle wealth status in the community, whilst she was growing up like other community children.

Her father died when she was at the age of eight; her mother was inherited by her dead husband’s brother. As he was too old, he couldn’t participate in agricultural work. When her mother faced difficulty with labour shortage, she gave farm lands and oxen for crop sharing. She was enrolled [in school] at seven years old. However she wasn’t successful in her education. Because of evil eye she disliked going to school, though she learnt up to grade three. Her step-father was a traditional healer (kebira) and he said that “education is not important for her life” and then she dropped it permanently.

She started to work by fetching water, collecting firewood, herding small cattle, sweeping the floor, caring for small siblings and washing clothes. She engaged more both in household chores and agricultural work as she grew older.

At the age of eighteen she got married to her current husband, six years ago. She didn’t choose her husband, who came to her step-father (uncle) for traditional treatment in the case of his first two wives’ deaths. Then her uncle did him something with chewing chat overnight and he decided to give him a wife, that was the respondent. And then her husband also agreed with the idea and came again to take her to his home. Now she is the mother of two, a daughter and a son.

She got a severe sickness related to complicated delivery. It lasted about a week and finally she gave birth with the assistance of the health service at Metehara Hospital. She spent about 500 birr for the service and related expenditure.

She is circumcised; but she has planned not to circumcise her daughter. Doctors told her that the circumcision caused her complicated delivery and then she decided to not to do that. She is an Islamic religion follower but she isn’t active in participating because she is busy in household chores and livestock works.

The important person for her is mother who shares ideas and gives moral support and her sister also helps her in caring for small babies and household chores.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

She couldn’t attend school because of illness or it was not appropriate for her circumstance as the Kebira explained. No government intervention that affected her life when she was at her parents’ home.

Her husband is an active kebele participant and he pays all government contributions including land tax. She doesn’t have participation in community issues in the kebele. She never involves in kebele meetings and she said, “you are the first person who contacted me to talk about community issues and my life in the site”.

She vaccinated her children at health post.

Currently, no government intervention affects her life.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She has planned to teach her children well. If the new irrigation scheme is established, she is ready to engage in farming work. She said, “I have good experience in farming, learning from my parents. This also will help for all community members if it will be realised by government.”

## Middle wealth young woman mid-20s

### Your household

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Relation to household | Sex | Age |
| Grand daughter | F | 23 |
| Head | M | 60 |
| Wife | F | 50 |
| Wife | F | 40 |
| Son | M | 25 |
| Son | M | 15 |
| Daughter | F | 12 |
| Daughter | F | 11 |
| Son | M | 7 |
| Daughter | F | 5 |

### Youth in the community

Good things for both adolescent girls and boys are the availability of schools in the area. And girls are able to refuse forced marriage at an early age and to be a second wife, etc. No problem for girls to have get married, but the economic background of their parents is affecting boys’ marriage, because the bridegroom needs to pay more in cash and kind to his spouse’s parents. In the past the bride’s gosa contributed in cash and kind (livestock) to support the bride’s contribution, but now such practices have stopped. Gosas help in contributions for murder cases, such that the murderer’s gosa contributes cash and livestock to the dead family as compensation, it is called blood payment, locally known as ‘Gumma’.

Land is not an issue for engaging in agricultural work rather than shortage of water sources. During the dry season girls are very busy in collecting cane residue, fetching water, collecting firewood and so on. Specifically the difficulty is more for orphan girls in work load and without enough food to eat, consequently they might drop their education or they might not get a good marriage, being a second wife or marrying a person not having good behaviour or being economically weak as he is not doing well, etc.

Both girls and boys are not forming independent households before marriage as they aren’t able to be independent economically. They do not have children before marriage, but girls could get pregnant before that. When parents are aware of it they immediately forced the man through elders and the gosa to marry her, and even if her former lover isn’t available in the area she should marry another before giving birth in her parents’ house. She mentioned four cases that she knows, those of girls who have got pregnant, one of them gave birth on the wedding eve and then he took her younger sister, some others gave birth within a week of the wedding.

Girls are better in following the Islamic religion, starting from respecting sharia law and rules. They cover their hair and wear long dresses. Moreover, unlike boys they don’t drink alcohol and do not do other evil things.

Youths, both girls and boys, don’t have participation or voice in community issues.

### Your life story

She was born at Dire-redi zone in Gelcha kebele in 1980 EC. She didn’t get as much care as other children because her parents were poor. She didn’t have enough clothes and couldn’t get health service when she got illness. Her mother died when she was eight and in the following two years her father also died. Since then she has started to live in her grandmother’s house with her brother. Her parents had two children, a son and a daughter. Unfortunately her brother died when he was taken by the Awash River when he washed clothes in the river.

She was enrolled at Metehara primary school at the age of ten. She was attending school commuting from house to school that is closer to home. When she was learning in grade six she has got a serious sickness caused by evil spirit. She was treated at Merti Hospital, but she couldn’t recover from the illness. Then she got traditional healer’s (Kebira) treatment and she recovered from the illness with such medicine. At that time she dropped her education from grade seven.

She started work after her mother’s death, at the age of eight. She was herding cattle, engaging in all household chores and collecting cane residue for animals’ food. She worked for other houses of the family, but they didn’t give anything to her. She feels sorry when she remembers her life three/four years ago. Related to workload and not having enough food, she couldn’t attend her education in the class. She had no time to study and participate in school work at home, consequently she was weak in academic performance and then she recorded a low ESCLCE result last year.

She has planned to take one more grade ten exam and she is waiting for it. If it is not good she will be married her current boyfriend. He is a DA worker in the adjacent kebele but he lives in town (Metehara) and she has started live with him informally or in secret, because they didn’t make their families aware. She does not have children yet and she had her first boyfriend in the last three years. She is circumcised.

She is not an active Islamic religion follower. Her grandmother is a very important person for her.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

Even school was not available in the site when she was a child; she could access education from the nearby town. During the drought years in 1994 EC and 1997/8 EC the government provided grain like maize and wheat, oil and animal fodder.

She got financial support from GTF of about 900 birr every six months from grade seven to last year (end of grade ten). She got health service exemption from the Hospital when she has seriously sick. In 1999 EC she participated on the youth producer co-operative and she got about 500 birr from the association when it ceased because of failure.

The household is paying land tax contributions and also all other government contributions. Her grandmother is a PSNP beneficiary, the aid is very important for household consumption. She doesn’t have contact with kebele or sub-kebele officials or other community organisations to help parts of her life.

Currently no government intervention affects her life.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She is ready to take the grade ten exam privately. If the result is good, she will continue preparatory education. If not, she will marry her boyfriend and will engage in market activities.

The community’s life may improve if the new irrigation scheme is established by government.

## Poor young woman mid-20s

### Your household

At the moment she lives with her daughter and son as her husband was joining Rift Valley College at Adama in the last two months.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Relation to household | sex | age |
| Wife | F | 26 |
| Husband/head | M | 29 |
| Daughter | F | 8 |
| Son | M | 2 |

### Youth in the community

Girls are free to attend education at any place. Parents are aware about the importance of education so they give equal opportunity to both males and females for education. Girls are free to go and play/talk with boys unlike in the previous time. No problem for girls to get married at any age. Girls could not have or form an independent household before marriage. Girls still don’t give birth in their parents’ house before marriage, even if they have become pregnant before that. Parents and relatives force the person who caused the pregnancy to marry her. For example there was a girl who gave birth the day following her wedding.

Commonly girls involve in household chores and herding (if there is no male in the household), going to market and the grain mill. Adolescent girls don’t have community participation before marriage. Currently they are more active Islamic religion followers than boys. They have started to cover their hair according to sharia laws and rules, they also pray at home, even if they couldn’t go to mosque.

Accessing educational opportunities is a good thing for girls but connected with that they are easily exposed to various problems like unwanted pregnancy, and may get sexually transmitted diseases and they fail in school performance. Thus a lot of girls sit idle after completing grade ten education.

In the same way, boys are also benefiting from the opportunities of education and unlike girls some of them have got jobs in their profession. Such as: they become DAs, teachers, and wereda officials, and are found in higher positions, some of them have even gone abroad. In the area there are no problems in accessing land other than water shortage. Some of young males have started to engage in irrigation work as daily labourers/wage earners or in crop sharing in other places/kebeles which have access to it. Some others participate in daily work in towns, and others in the sugar factory. Adolescent boys are not facing as many problems in finding a wife, even though they are expected to pay a marriage contribution of money and cattle. If he has good behaviour and is motivated to work, it is possible for him to get in with less cost and his gosa may support him .

Young men simply live in separate houses during the night or for studying, but they have not totally become independent economically before marriage. Just the same as with girls, they may cause girls to conceive before marriage, but they are forced to marry them. They have no participation in community issues before marriage and they are not active followers of the Islamic religion. Some of them have even changed their religion and other are careless about it so that they drink, chew chat and involve in other practices like stealing.

### Your life story

She was born in Gelcha kebele at Gelcha zone nearest to the town in 1979 EC. She grew by drinking milk and boiled butter until she was five years old and then she started to eat porridge and cooked meat. She was living with her parents and siblings until she got married in same place. She is the sixth child of her parents. Unfortunately when she was aged seven her father was killed by the EPRDF army at the beginning when they came to power. Consequently the oldest brother went away and the youngest one dropped education and her mother started to sell livestock for the livelihood of the household. With the frequent sale of livestock the wealth became deteriorated and her mother started to sell firewood and grass.

Consequently, she dropped her education from grade six and got married. She married her uncle’s son (mother’s brother’s son) and she didn’t get much bride gift from husband and relatives as she was poor and he also had been in similar wealth status.

She had started work in keeping small livestock, sweeping the floor, and sending messages, etc. Then after the age of twelve she started to involve in all household chores out of school time. At the age of seventeen she got married and formed her household. Since then she participates both in household chores and in income generating activities for the livelihood of the household. From 1997 – 2001 EC she was involved in wage earning work at the GTF green area compound. She was engaged in preparing land, planting, weeding and watering trees. It also bought four goats other than her wage to improve her life organising all the daily labourers. They involved in goat fattening for about a year, then it ceased, however she involves in shoat fattening for the household livelihood. It is the only household means of livelihood.

She had her first boyfriend at grade six at sixteen years old who became her husband. They learnt together and lived in the same village and also they are relatives of each other. When they decided to marry, he sent elders to her mother and she accepted that. Then she married and has got two children, a boy and daughter. She is still married to him. This year he has got private college education opportunities with half college cost. A person at Adama Rift valley college has given them to forty grade ten completed students, fortunately he was one of them.

During her first pregnancy she was seriously sick for about six months with anaemia. She did not have money to go to the health centre on time; finally with the help of her brother she got health service treatment.

She and her husband are Islamic religion followers; she couldn’t participate at mosque as she is busy on her daily business. Her brother is an important person who gives her financial and moral support. He is a job employer at the wereda pastoralist and rural development office.

With the help of a person from Care-Ethiopia project, he (her brother) had been able to continue his education up to completing higher education from University. He is the only person who helps his family (mother and siblings). One of her youngest sisters is living with problems because of low economic background, while she was a clever student before marriage. Because of economic problems she dropped her education from grade four and got married.

The respondent hopes to continue her education after her husband completes his college education and will get a job.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

There were not as many government interventions which affected her life during her childhood. Sometimes when the area was affected by rainfall shortage, the government provided food grains like maize and wheat, and oil, etc.

She is benefiting today as she was learning before. Her education helps her to read and write; she said that when she goes to the grain mill she checks whether it is correct or not as they say. And she is interested to continue because it makes her aware of the importance of education. She takes great attention for her child’s education.

Her mother had got different grain support from government or NGOs during drought or harsh climatic conditions. For example she had got maize, oil and packed grass for animals in 1994 EC.

She pays 45 birr for land tax and 12 birr for residence. She couldn’t pay 80 birr for drinking water as her husband joined college. She participates only in kebele meetings; she doesn’t have a role in community issues. She has never benefited from government interventions other than NGOs, as she is a member of the women’s cooperative association initiated by GTF, other than the one which ceased. It helps the livelihood of the household. She is actively involving in shoat fattening by taking credit from it.

Her daughter is getting support from FCFDA in educational materials and food in the school. It also covers the health service cost for her daughter. No government intervention affects her life now.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

Until her husband has completed his college education she will involve more in fattening activities by taking credit from the association. After two years he will have completed and she has planned to continue her education and involving with fattening practice.

## Rich young woman 16-17

### Your household

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Relation to household head | sex | Age |
| Daughter | F | 17 |
| Head | M | 60 |
| Wife | F | 40 |
| Daughter | F | 16 |
| Daughter | F | 14 |
| Son | M | 10 |
| Daughter | F | 8 |
| Son | M | 4 |
| Son | M | 2 |

### Youth in the community

Now the availability of schools in the area could help both girls and boys to attend. Because of the distance, factory girls couldn’t learn. Parents also gave priority to sons rather than daughter, fearing that girls might face problems on their journey or in the town. Currently it is difficult to select a marriage partner for adolescent girls, because young males are not honest to their girlfriends. On the other hand they are not satisfied with their parents’ choice.

Girls couldn’t live alone before marriage, if and only if she is attending secondary education in the town, she lives with her friends in a rented house. Girls might become pregnant before marriage but do not give birth in their parents’ house. When parents become aware of it they beat her to make her tell by whom she became pregnant and then they send elders to his parents to take her. Then he is forced by his family and gosa to marry her, even if he is not responsible. Such cases occur widely among girls both attending school and not attending. But communities blame girls who attend school, the reverse is true. She knew of two cases when girls became pregnant before marriage.

Girls have not work opportunity for improving their life. The only duties for them are involving in household chores and some others might engage in herding. Girls have no role in community issues and don’t participate in them. Adolescent girls are involving more on in religion than boys. They attempt to keep sharia laws and rules which keep them from bad behaviour and evil things.

But boys are accustomed to bad habits like chewing chat, drinking alcohol, stealing, and having more sexual partners. Related with this case they might not get married if they make girls pregnant. They don’t have community participation. They might help the in household in herding and monitoring livestock. Only a few young males involve in wage labour and income generating activities.

### Your life story

She was born at Dire-redi zone in Gelcha kebele; since then she has been living there with her parents and siblings. She is the first child of her mother who had more. She still lives with them even though she completed grade ten education. She consumed milk and butter as well when there was good availability of milk and its products.

The notable shocks happened in 1998/9 when the household lost a lot of livestock because of severe drought. The household couldn’t get milk for small children.

She was seriously sick with her back, when she was absent for about twenty days from class. She got health service at Merti Hospital as her father is working there.

She attended school at Metehara from 1-2 grades, for 3-4 she moved to Kobo first cycle primary school (adjacent kebele) because of distance. Again back to Metehara and then she completed grade ten there. She is waiting to take re-exam of it privately as her result was not good. Currently she doesn’t do anything except helping her mother in household chores.

She started work as she got older, at age of twelve, in making coffee, sweeping floor, etc. She didn’t involve as much in household works.

She seemed to cheat with her boyfriend from her explanation and feeling about that but she didn’t want to tell the researcher. She repeatedly said “that is difficult to trust boys and how to know who is good” and felt bad. (Researcher observation): In the last three months (Sep – Nov in 2004 EC) she was in the town as she is attending preparatory school. On the first field work she was one of the interviewees on the youth cooperative association when she came from town and told the researcher that she was that.

She is Islamic religion follower but not active. She didn’t go to mosque and is not bowing .Her parents are important persons for her and she expects everything from them.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

Even though the school was not found in the site she was able to participate in school. In 1997 EC her mother got five goats which helped for income to the household. The respondent was a member of the producer youth association in 1999 EC and the association got 24,000 birr credit for the process, unfortunately the crops failed repeatedly. Finally she received 500 birr when the money was distributed among them. She bought a bull by increasing it with some money from her mother.

Parents pay land tax contribution yearly, but they couldn’t use it as they live at the centre of the kebele where there is no water access. Her father is an active participant in kebele work including meetings as he is a gere leader. Her mother graduated from the health extension package last year as she implemented the sanitation well, and involving in disease prevention and control.

As mentioned above, her bull is becoming fat and she wants to sell it to buy more shoats for further profit.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She has two alternative plans: one, to retake the exam to improve her result. If it is so she will continue her preparatory education. If it fails she may be married or she may engage in market activities.

As government promised to the community, an irrigation scheme and drinking water will be set up and the community’s livelihood may be changed, otherwise their life will become deteriorated.

## Middle wealth young woman 16-17

### Your household

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Relation to household | sex | Age |
| Daughter | F | 17 |
| Father/head | M | 45 |
| Wife | F | 35 |
| Son | M | 16 |
| Daughter | F | 15 |
| Daughter | F | 12 |
| Son | M | 8 |
| Daughter | F | 2 |

### Youth in the community

Though adolescent girls could get education access, parents made them marry. If the government forbids such practice and teachers control it, they started to marry during the summer. Because of workload females couldn’t participate in class like males. Consequently she became weak and demoralised with her school performance. Boys are not facing as much difficulty to attend school; their parents’ low economic background may affect their education and school performance. The effect is more on girls in their school activities.

Good opportunities for young females: some of them are able to choose their marriage partner unlike before. They are free to go and talk with boys and able to get education access equally with boys. Both young males and females couldn’t form independent household before marriage and don’t have participation in community affairs because they are economically dependent on their parents.

They get pregnant before marriage and families feel bad and hate them while they force them to marry. It may not be a good household. There is work opportunity for girls other than household works. The same for boys, if they go other places for daily work at irrigation sites. Accessing of land is not a problem in the area, rather it is lack of water sources. Girls are more active than boys in religious activities, even if they couldn’t go to mosque they pray at home and attempt to implement sharia law. Adolescent boys are careless in practicing religious activities.

### Your life story

She was born at Dire-redi zone in Gelcha kebele in 1986 EC. Since then she has lived with her parents and siblings in her life. She is the second child of the household and parents are keen for her to live well as their eldest daughter died accidentally. She got special foods and was dressed well compared to other community children when she was a child. Specifically her father gave more attention to her education so she will become an educated person and will be an employed worker.

In her life the household didn’t face major shocks. But when mother was pregnant her eldest daughter died, falling from the hands of mother when she heard of her father’s death. Unfortunately father’s and daughter’s burial ceremonies occurred on the same day. That was a sensitive bad memory for her parents, specifically her mother.

When she was a grade five student, accidentally she fell down in the class because of illness. She couldn’t remember falling at that time. She said that that might be an evil spirit when her face became swollen. Since then she didn’t feel comfortable in the class, because of that reason she dropped her education last year from grade nine. Because of her father’s encouragement and pressure she rejoined at school in same grade as she was last year. Now she has been absent for about fifteen days from school because of feeling bad when she was in the class room.

She has no contact with a boyfriend, is not yet married and doesn’t have a child.

She is an Islamic religion follower and covers her hair with scarves. She doesn’t go to mosque for religious practices and doesn’t do the prayers.

Her father is important in her life; she has more intimacy with father and he is keen on her education. He cares for her more and she feels sorry she couldn’t be as her father wishes.

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

Her father is on the PTA at Gelcha primary school as the result all of school age children being sent to school. When she was a child, the school was not even available in the area, she was able to enrol at Metehara primary school, since then she has been attending there.

She participated in the youth producer cooperative association in 1999 EC when the government provided about 24,000 birr to the association. A little bit they attempted to engage in that and finally it failed. It has not had an impact on her life.

The household contributes the land tax payments annually and also they participate in all other government contributions in kind, cash and labour. Her father is PTA leader and a 1-5 network group leader so he involves more in kebele work.

The respondent is attending her education and she is an active participant in community issues. She was selected as a volunteer health promoter in representing youth in last year. Since then FCFDA gives training and refreshes what they learnt.

She is member of Fentalle band since last year. She takes training once a week at the wereda and participates in the activities when there is a programme at the wereda.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She will take the grade ten exam next year; if the result is good she will continue preparatory education to join higher education. If not, she said ‘I will make a decision with my parents what I shall do’. She is not sure that she can complete grade ten because of illness.

## Poor young woman 16-17

### Your household

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Relation to household | Sex | Age |
| Daughter | F | 16 |
| Head | M | 40 |
| Wife | F | 32 |
| Daughter | F | 13 |
| Daughter | F | 10 |
| Son | M | 9 |
| Daughter | M | 5 |

### Youth in the community

The accessibility of education in the site is very good and it is important for girls to attend, but girls are busy with household chores and livestock work. This is very much for girls who haven’t a mother and live in others’ house. Consequently they become weak in academic performance. Unlike girls, boys have not faced many problems affecting their academic performance, except economic problems.

Girls can choose their own marriage partner. No problem to get married, even if they couldn’t marry by their own choice. Before marriage both males and females don’t form independent households, some boys may have a small hut to use for studying and to pass the night.

Girls don’t have children before marriage other than getting pregnant. Parents force her to marry the person who caused her to be pregnant, if he is not at his place, they make her marry another; so she may not get a good marriage.

Both girls and boys haven’t voice or participation in community issues. Girls have more participation than boys in religion. They cover their hair with scarves and attempt to keep religious rules and laws.

### Your life story

She was born in Ajo-tere zone in Gelcha kebele. She remembers her life when she was a child like this: I didn’t enough clothes to wear and played with dust all the day, and then she slept as she was in the night. She went to Wolenchit to her father’s friend’s house to attend education at the age of six. Unlike her father’s wishes she was very busy with the household chores as his wife [her father’s friend] gave birth, she fetched water, swept the floor, washed clothes, made coffee, collected animals at night, etc. Because of the workload she couldn’t enrol in school in the whole year. In the following year father took her and enrolled her in the GTF School in Debiti; since then she was attending her education from grade 1-3. She was living there all the time in a dormitory. All school costs including her livelihood were covered by GTF.

When she was in grade two her mother got a serious illness and went to Addis Ababa for medical treatment; she was forced to drop her education to serve the household as she was the first child of the household. Her mother stayed there about a year and her illness was related to her pregnancy. In the following year she again enrolled in grade two and then she passed grade three and came to a Metehara relative’s house to learn grade four there. Similarly she was busy with household chores in fetching water, cooking food, sending messages and grain mill, washing clothes and cleaning the home.

In 2002 EC she came back to her parents’ house and enrolled in grade six in Gelcha primary school and currently she is attending grade eight.

She has no contact with a boyfriend and has not taken a boy’s interest. She has not yet married and does not have a child. She is not an active Islamic religion follower. When she was at GTF camp she shifted to Protestant religion under the pressure of the environment there.

Her mother is the important person for her as she understands her interest and treated her well .

### Government interventions which have played a part in your life

There was no government intervention which affected her life. She lived in others’ houses and GTF camp in another kebele in the wereda until grade six.

Her father pays land tax annually and she thinks that he pays all government contributions. The household is not affected by government interventions. They are excluded from PSNP aid, even though it is for the poor. Parents have participation in kebele issues; however it doesn’t help their life.

### Aspirations and plans for the future

She has planned to improve more in her educational performance to record a good result in the ECSLCE exam for the next two years. She is well doing in academic performance. The community’s life may change, if and only if the new irrigation scheme will be established or if the weather condition of the area may change for more rainfall availability.

## Research Officer comments

It is difficult to investigate the information about government interventions which were affecting their life as they grew up and which play current roles in their lives. Specifically the respondents couldn’t remember what happened in the past, however, I attempted to investigate such information by using each and every probe, but still their response was no. Indeed the government interventions in the area are recent phenomena according to information from the wereda and other knowledgeable people in the locality. In fact most of the interventions were attempted to be implemented by NGOs rather than government since the Derg regime to recent time. For example, almost all women co-operative associations are implemented by different NGOs and trainings and education are provided by them with little government involvement.

On the other hand the respondents didn’t give attention to each and every information about what happened in the past (they reply no or I couldn’t remember about it, linked with past information). This might be that the respondents forget the past event or they didn’t want to say that because the intervention links with their benefit they feared that government may ask them to repay it as their previous experience. The PSNP beneficiaries are in trouble who have got OFSP support, initially they were not told that the support should be repaid and in this year the government asked them to repay.

In addition to these points, wives are not as active as their husbands are active participants in community issues, or women are busy engaging in the household works, taking most parts of the responsibility, because their husbands are busy with community work like involving in conflict resolution, participating in kebele and wereda meetings as well. And also all the household contributions are paid by him (land tax, residence contribution, party membership and others).