# Interviews with female teenagers in Kormargefia, Basona Werena wereda, North Shewa

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## Rich female teenager 13

### Personal

The respondent said that she is living with her parents. She has two sisters and three bothers. The total size of the household is 7. As she explained, the household livelihood is mainly based on farming. Non-farming activities such as Areki production, dungcake making and firewood collection for market are considered to be supportive income sources for the household.

The respondent said that the household has medium economic status.

### Opportunities for 13 year old girls

She is about 14 years old and grade 3 student. In the last academic year, she stood 21th out of 50 students. She has never dropped out of school.

The respondent said that she had started to get involved in all kinds of domestic work. She explained, “I prepare food, clean livestock yards and the house, I wash clothes”.

Regarding the farming work, she said, in harvesting season when the rain is untimely, she help her families in harvesting.

In the last 12 months, she had been involved in independent income generating activities such as collection of firewood and making dungcakes which enabled her to earn about 50 birr. With the cash, as she said, she bought shoes, exercise book and pen.

Except the farming and non-farming works mentioned above, she did not engage in other paid work in the last 12 months.

### Combining work and education

The respondent mentioned that her working time does not affect her education. She elaborated that she programmed herself well to balance the work with her schooling. She said that she usually studies in the night at least one to two hours.

She said that the work she has been doing does not cause any health problems till now. As she mentioned, she does not like to engage in the works mentioned but she is doing it because she has no option.

She said that she likes the school program because the shift program will help students to have more time to engage in farming as well as non-farming activities. She feels that it is very difficult to combine work with education but paying attention to what teachers say in the classroom will help students to learn what they need from the lesson without reading at home.

The respondent said that she wants to stay in the community. If there is time that can be categorized as rest time, she said, she prefers to study and do home works. She said that she is not interested in art including music.

She said that she is not active in religion or politics. She is not involved in any sport activities. She does not belong to any youth association, as a matter of fact, the organizations do not exist in the community as a whole.

She mentioned that she has no special time for socializing with friends. However, she meets her friend when she goes to the water point to fetch water and at school. When they meet, as she said, they play hand ball and other kinds of game which are common among girls in the community.

As she said, she has both boyfriends and girlfriends at school. She explained that if she stays at home, she will read her text books.

### Women’s issues

The respondent said that she is circumcised. Had it been not, as she said, she will be ashamed to be with her peers especially with boys. She did not start to see menstruation yet.

She said that she has never been sexually abused or assaulted by a man. She said that she is not married and she has no boyfriend. She described that she wants to settle in the community. She wants to continue her education and look for a job in the community.

She said that she wants to get married to an educated man in the future. She thinks that she will marry when she becomes 20 years old. As she said, she wants her parents to be the ones to choose her partners.

She said that she has never thought about when she should have children. However, she does not think she wants more than four children. She has no role model.

Regarding hopes, as she said, the future will be fine in terms of access to job and other facilities which includes electricity. She elaborated that she is worried about the security problem for girls such as abduction and rape.

The respondent said that the opportunity for young females in the community is in education. The problems they are facing include security issues and no access to paid daily labour jobs in the community.

She mentioned that there is no access to paid work for the young female in the community.

There are drop outs from education but it is not common for young women to return to school.

The respondent said that continuing in education can help young women to establish independent livelihoods. She mentioned that she does not know young females who completed grade 10 and 12 or who graduate from college but cannot find a job.

The respondent mentioned that it is difficult for girls from poor households to combine work with education because of their domestic work burden and economic problems. There are no young females involved in bad habits.

The respondent said that neither she nor her friends have ideas about banning of female circumcision by the government. She did not hear about prosecution of parents of circumcised girls or the circumciser.

As she motioned, there are no facilities in school for those students who are menstruating. The respondent said that she does not know cases of abduction, rape or abortion.

### Establishing an independent livelihood

The respondent said that very few females can get married to a man who has a farmland. She said that most young females do not want to be farmers’ wives. They want to leave the community. She has no older friend/sister who became second wives. In their twenties, young women probably get married and take responsibility in their relative households.

### Getting married

The respondent said that most girls who do not do well in their education get married earlier. Usually they get married at the age of 15 and 16. Those girls who are good in their education will get married when they become 20 and above.

As she said, the girls’ from rich families get married earlier because they have the chance to get land, money and other gifts. According to the respondent, there are people who marry before 18 years old. She thinks that all people could not know about the government legislation to stop marriages of girls under 18.

She thinks that girls have the right to choose their partners. There is no need for permission form the wereda to get married. She said that she did not hear about prosecution related to early marriage. Usually, as she said, girls start to worry that they are too old to marry a good husband starting from their 20s.

The respondent said that there is no advantage attached to being married or unmarried.

### Setting up an independent household

The respondent said that it is difficult for young women to set up an independent household. However, the option that is available for them is education. She said that the main barrier is a lack of ownership of farmland. Regarding dependence on the husband’s parents after marriage, she mentioned it may extend to 6 months, depending on their agreement.

### Migrating

The respondent said that these days young women are migrating to different regions of the country. She elaborated that most of them migrate to Addis Ababa, and Debre Brehan. And, few of them migrate to different parts of the country such as Arsi. They tend to leave the community when they become about 20 and above. The kind of job they usually get in the towns is daily labor and housemaid.

She mentioned that the number of migrants has been increasing. She said that she does not know migrants who returned to the community. She also said that she didn’t know about problems migrants are facing. She has no plan to leave the community.

### Living in the community

She said that she has many things that she likes about the community. What she dislikes is security problems such as abduction and rape. She said that the community has been changing in the past years and she thinks in the next five years it may become a better place to live. According to her response, the community is not a safe place to live. She said that young people in the community do not tend to socialize in groups.

The respondent said that parents worry for their daughters regarding abduction and rape.

The respondent said that she does not know about HIV/AIDs. Similarly, she has no idea about HIV/AIDs cases in the community and how common it is for young people to have sexual relation.

### The economy

The respondent said that people are becoming richer in the community than they were before. As she said, people have started to engage more in fattening and dairy farming.

She said that she has not noticed a change in farming or non-farming opportunities for women. She thinks that there is an increasing trend in migration from the community. As she said, people are becoming more equal in their living standard.

The life of girls of her age from the rich and the poor families has a very visible difference. As she said girls from the richer families are well dressed, well fed, and have a better personal hygiene and health status. As she said, the richer ones are more beautiful than the poor.

She said that the wealth status of young women does not have an impact on education. She also explained that girls from the richer families have work burdens because there is a lot of domestic work in the rich households. Establishing an independent livelihood as well as a household is easier for the girls from the rich families because of access to support.

### Religion

The respondent said that people in the community do not usually go to church or other religious activities. Usually, she mentioned, they go to churches on holidays and yearly celebration of saint days. According to her response, there are few people who are not totally interested in religious activities. She mentioned that young women are not interested in religion.

She mentioned that as she does not like to go to church and she does not know what is going on there. The respondent pointed that belonging to other religion is unacceptable; the individual who changes his religion could be excluded.

### Politics

The respondent said that there is no relation between the young women and the kebele. As she described, there has never been meetings or trainings arranged for young people living in the community. She said that there is no pressure on the young females to join the ruling party. In general, she said that young females are not interested in politics.

### Inter-generational relations

The respondent said that there is no tension between teenagers and parents. However, as she said, elder brothers tend to control their younger sisters which cause disagreement in the household. As she elaborated, sometimes older brothers use to hit their younger sisters for very nonsense reason.

## Middle-wealth female teenager 13

### Personal

The respondent said that she is living with her mother, sisters and brothers in the community. Her father passed away six years ago. The household is comprised of her two elder sisters, one younger sister, one younger brother and her mother. As she explained, the household livelihood is mainly based on farming and supplemented by non-farming activities such as Areki production for market, dung cake and firewood. They have given their farmland for sharecropping.

She mentioned that the household can be categorized as medium and it owns 2 hectares of rain fed farm land.

### Opportunities for 13 year old girls

She is about 13 years old and a grade 4 student. In the last academic year, she stood 10th out of 45 students. She has never dropped out from school.

As she said, she already has started to engage in all kinds of domestic work. She explained, “I make enjera, wot, clean livestock yards and house; I go to market when it is necessary; I wash clothes”.

Regarding the farming work, she said, in harvesting season when the rain is untimely, she helps her family in harvesting. Beside this, the respondent said that the household produces and sells 5 to 8 litre Areki per month.

In the last 12 months, she had involved in independent income generating activities such as collecting of firewood, making dung cake which support her to earn about 30 birr. With the cash, as she said, she bought exercise book and pen.

Except the farming and non-farming works mentioned above, she did not engage in other works in the last 12 months.

### Combining work and education

The respondent mentioned that her working time is affecting her education. For instance, she said that sometimes she may be absent from school to make enjera. Beside this, she has no interest to read in the night because she feels tired.

She said that the work she has been doing does not cause any health problem till now. As she mentioned, she does not like to engage in the works mentioned but she is doing it because she has no option. She believes the works that are common in the community, especially for girls, are very tiresome and take up a lot of time.

She said that she wants to be in the school program full time so that she can get to stay on in her education. She feels that it is very difficult to combine work with education but paying attention for what teachers say in the classroom will help students to have what they should have from the lesson without reading at home.

The respondent said that she would be happy if she could move to town to continue her education. She says, “I can say that it is impossible for me to mix the education with work. So, the option that I have is leaving the community to go to town. In town, I will search for a job, which may have a better return. Keeping working in the day, I will continue my education in the evening program”.

If there is time that can be categorized as rest time, she said, she prefers to study. She said that she is interested in art specially music. She likes to listen to music in the radio programs.

She said that she is not active in religion and politics. As similar to other girls, she does not involve in any sport activities. She does not belong to any youth association, as the matter of fact, the organizations do not exist in the community as a whole.

She mentioned that she has no special time for socializing with friends. However, she meets her friend and peers while she goes to water point to fetch water, field to collect firewood or in school. When they meet, as she said, they play hand ball and other kinds of game which are common among girls in the community.

As she said, she has boyfriends at school. She also said that one of them is her best friend. She explained that if she stays at home, she will engage in domestic works otherwise she will study

### Women’s issues

The respondent said that she was circumcised when she was an infant. Had it been not, as she said, she would marry early. In her opinion, uncircumcised girls marry earlier than circumcised ones. She did not start to see menstruation yet.

As she said, she has never been sexually abused or assaulted by a man. She said that she is not married but she has a boyfriend who is well known by her families. She does not want to settle in the community; she want to go outside for both education and work.

She said that she wants to get married to an educated man in the future. If she leaves the community, she prefers to go to Addis Ababa. As she said, her aunts are living in Addis but she has never been there for a visit. She has no plan to return; she says, “I have nothing to miss about the community”.

She has a plan to continue her education in the evening program while working in the daytime. She thinks that she will marry when she becomes 25 years old. As she said, she wants her parents to give comment on the man who she chooses for marriage. She explained that if they totally refuse to accept him, she will look for another one.

She said that she has never thought about when she should have children. However, she does not think she wants more than two; one boy and one girl. She has a role model who is living in Addis. She explained that she was a clever student and now she got her degree from the university and got a job.

Regarding to hopes, as she said, there is nothing available for the youth to work and improve their lives. The worries mentioned by her mainly emphasize the security problem for young women; there is a threat of forced abduction which involves lobbying.

The respondent said that the opportunity that young females have in the community is education. The problems facing them include security issues and lack of access to generate income. As she said, most of the young females in her age do not work.

She mentioned that there is no access to paid work for young females in the community. Young females in her age, as she said, are all in school except those who dropped out for different reasons.

There are drop outs from education but it is rare to find them returning to school. For instance, she mentioned that last year one of her classmates dropped out and went to Addis Ababa, where her relatives use to live. They made her a housemaid for two months. However, because of health problems, she returned after two months to the kebele. And, she did not return to the school. The problem of returning to school was mentioned to be the lack of interest and commitment by the students.

The respondent said that to establish an independent livelihood, young females should continue their education and search for work, both skilled and unskilled. There are no females with grade 10 and 12 living in the community who cannot find the kind of work they want. However, there is one young male who completed grade 12 and failed to get a job. There are no young women who are graduates of college.

The respondent mentioned that it is very difficult for girls from poor households to combine work with education because of the domestic work burden. In addition, because of poverty, they face an inferiority complex that results from the way of their clothes, personal hygiene and so on. Because of this, as she said, they prefer to go outside and look for any means to generate income.

There are no young females involved in bad habits.

Regarding the banning of female circumcision, she said that her young female friends do not have any idea why the government intervenes in this custom of the community. She mentioned that she has the same position as her friend; she does not know why it is harmful. She did not hear about the prosecution of parents of circumcised girls or the circumciser.

As she motioned, there are no facilities in school for those students who are menstruating.

Regarding abduction, she mentioned that lobbying to abduct is becoming common in the kebele. For instance, she explained, a female of grade 5 was abducted in 2010 by a mechanism of lobbying. A young man from a nearby town, Tebase, contacted the girl and told her that if she is willing to live with him, he will buy a cell phone for her. As the respondent explained, the girl was 16 years old. Because she was underage and it was a voluntary abduction, he was fined 200 birr by the kebele administration.

In addition, in this year, as she said, a woman whose age is about 20 years was abducted. It was not voluntary but forced. She was abducted while she was fetching water at the nearest water point in her village. She was a grade 8 student at ‘Faji’ town. Because of the psychological problems she faced, she refused to return to school and left the community to go to Addis Ababa. The respondent said that the kebele did not punish the man because he belongs to the neighbouring kebele.

The respondent said that she has a friend who became pregnant before being married. She explained that while her friend was a student she became pregnant which caused her to migrate to Debre Brehan. After she stayed there for short period of time, she returned to the community and got married with another man, not the father of the child.

She said that she does not know how common abortion is in the community. Similarly, she has no idea about the access to contraceptives for girls and how many of young women are using it. She mentioned that the youngest age that a girl can get married in the community is 15. The proportion of young women who would like to marry earlier is negligible, as she said.

### Establishing an independent livelihood

The respondent said that very few females can get married to a man who has farmland. But, almost all young men have the chance to get a piece of land from their parents. Those young women who marry men from the richer families have a better chance to access farmland and vice versa.

She said that most young females do not want to be farmers’ wives. They want to leave the community and they do not even want to get married to men who are involved in other work in the community. She has no older friend/sister who became second wives. As she said, among her 7 closer friends, 2 of them want to get married and live in the community, three of them want to drop out from school and leave the community to towns, and the rest want to continue their education settling in towns. Two of them want to go to college and get a formal job. She said that all her friends have a dream about the future. In their twenties, young women probably get married or leave to towns. Those who get married will take care of their children and be involved in domestic as well as farm works. Those who left the community are housemaids, students or daily labourers in towns.

### Getting married

Most girls who are not doing well in their education get married earlier; it is common for them to get married at the age of 15 and 16. Those girls who are good in their educational performance do not have an interest in getting married; they need to continue their education.

As she perceives, the girls from the rich families are in a good position, both economically and socially, to get married earlier. She said that they have a better chance to be richer in a short period of time.

According to the respondent, there are people who marry before 18 years old. Even though, they have the knowledge about the government legislation to stop marriages of girls under 18, they do not take it into consideration as far as the couple and their parents agree.

She thinks that these days girls can say no to the proposal of marriage as well as the recommendation of parents and elders. There is no need of permission from the wereda to get married. She said that she did not hear about prosecutions related to early marriage. Usually, as she said, girls start to worry that they are too old to marry a good husband from 17 and 18 years old. She has one friend who got married after she gave birth.

The respondent said that there is no advantage attached to being unmarried. But, being married will result in giving birth to children at early age, which is bad for the mother.

### Setting up an independent household

The respondent said that it is difficult for young women to set up an independent household. However, the option that is available for the women is marriage. The barriers she mentioned included no access to jobs in the community. Regarding dependence on the husband’s parents after marriage, she mentioned, it differs from couple to couple. What matters, according to her, is the closeness of the woman with his parents, the economic status and the interest of the couple.

### Migrating

The respondent said that these days young women are migrating to different regions of the country. According to her, young women migrated to Addis Ababa, Debre Brehan and Arsi. They tend to leave the community when they become about 18 to 20 years old.

They go to the aforementioned towns and are hired as housemaids in richer households in the towns. Recently, as she mentioned, the number of migrants has increased because of the information chain created by the women who left the community before. She said that she does not know migrants who returned to the community. She also said that she didn’t know about the problems migrants are facing. She has a plan to leave the community after she finishes her education. But, she does not want it to be in group.

### Living in the community

She said that she doesn’t have things that she likes in the community. She explained that she dislikes the kebele because there is a security problem such as abduction, violence among men and against women.

She said that the community has been changing in the past and she thinks in the next five years it may become a better place to live. According to her response, the community is not a safe place to live. She said that young people in the community do not tend to socialize in groups but there are a few young people who regularly go to church and serve the church together as a singer.

The respondent said that her mother always worries about her in relation to abduction. As she explained, her family does not allow her to go outside of the household compound in the evening or to go to market.

The respondent said that she does not know about HIV/AIDs. She also mentioned that she has no idea about HIV/AIDs cases in the community and how common it is for young people to have sexual relations.

### The economy

The respondent said that people are becoming richer in the community than they were two and three years back. As she said, people have started to engage more in fattening and dairy farming. These income generating activities enable them to build a nice tin-roofed house as well as to purchase mobile phones.

She said that she has not noticed a change in farming or non-farming opportunities for women. She thinks that there is an increasing trend in migration from the community. As she said, she could not sense the inequality that is happening among households. And it seems that people are getting more equal.

The life of girls of her age from the rich and the poor families has a very huge disparity, as she said. She mentioned, “for instance, girls from the rich families are well dressed, well fed and happier than the girls from the poor families. The girls’ from the richer families get whatever they want from their families. In contrast, those who belong to the poor families are deprived of their interest because of poverty”.

She said that the wealth status of young women does not have an impact on education. Regarding the difference in work among them, she said that the girls from the rich families have more of a burden of work than the girls from the poor family.

Establishing an independent livelihood as well as household is easier for the girls from the rich families because of access to financial as well as in kind support. Similarly, as she said, it is far better for the richer ones to get married because of the same reasons mentioned.

### Religion

The respondent said that people in the community do not usually go to churches or other religious activities as there is a burden of work for both women and men. Usually, she mentioned, they go to churches on holidays and yearly celebration of saint days. According to her response, there are few people who are not totally interested to go to church but they belong to religious activities like mehaber. There is only one religion i.e. Orthodox Christianity) in the community and she said that young women are not interested in religion.

She mentioned that as she usually does not like to go to church, she has no idea what is going on there regarding the missionaries and other related religious activities. She said that there is not a person left outside for religious education. As she clarified, there is no conflict among the church leaders. Belonging to another religion is unacceptable, as she said. Parents will make the person who changed his religion find other place to live.

The church is not doing anything besides spiritual activities.

### Politics

The respondent said that the kebele administration supports students in the kebele. Besides the material support that the students get through the school administration, there is no structure to create relations between the government and the young women living in the community.

Neither the wereda nor the government, she said, passes a message to the young women recently. There is no pressure to make them become members of the ruling party. The respondent said that there are people who hate the government for reasons she does not know.

### Inter-generational relations

Regarding inter-generational relations, she mentioned that there is no major problem. But, she says there are young men who drink areki and quarrel with their families. In addition, there are young people who are not willing to support their family in domestic as well as farming works.

Concerning her own household, she said that there is no problem and they are very cooperative in every sphere in the household.

## Poor female teenager 13

### Personal

The respondent said that she is living with her parents. She has one elder brother. Totally, the number of household is four. She said that the livelihood of the household mainly depends on farming. In addition, non-farming income generating activities include areki production, dung cake making and collecting firewood.

As she said, the economic status of the household is medium.

She is 13 years old and grade 2 student. When she was grade one, she stood 20 out of 30 students. She has never dropped out of education. She said that in the last year she had been involved in farming and non-farming activities. For instance, she makes enjera and wot, cleans house and livestock yard, kitchen equipment, fetching water. In addition, she does farming activities such as harvesting, weeding, and digging ditches.

She had made dung cakes for income generation; last year she got 15 Birr from the sale of dung cake. She spent the money on consumable goods such as coffee, sugar, and salt. The respondent said that working does affect her education. Sometimes, she may not go to school because she feels tired after engaging in farm and non-farm work. As long as there are no urgent social commitments for her parents, such as mourning, she will not be absent from school. As she mentioned, the work she has been doing does not affect her health status. She said that she feels happy working on the farm as well as in home. She mentioned that she does not feel uncomfortable with working at all.

The respondent mentioned that schooling is far more difficult than working. As she described, she usually faces difficulty to grasp the lessons of the teachers. She says, “Sometimes, when I feel tired I may not do my homework”.

She would like to have a full time school program. She thinks that it may help students to do well in their learning. She said that she wants to continue her education combining it with the work she has been doing for the last years.

In her rest time, as mentioned, she washes her clothes and herds livestock. She said that she dislikes music and she hates to hear students singing in school.

She said that she goes to church once a week with her mother. She is not active in politics and sport activities. She also does not belong to youth associations. She does not spend time socializing in groups. She said that she meets her friends in market, school, and water point and in communal grazing land. She has boyfriends too and there is one young man who is very close to her. As she said, she usually likes to meet him.

As she said, if she stays at home, she will do household works. She said that she is circumcised and she believes there is no problem attached with circumcision. She is not menstruating. She said that she has never been assaulted or sexually harassed. She is not married and she has no boyfriend.

### Opportunities for 13 year old girls

The respondent said that she prefers to stay in the community. As she mentioned, she will finished her education and look for government jobs in the kebele. She wants to continue her education, balancing it with work. She said that she will marry after she finishes her education and she prefers to get married to a farmer. She said that farmers are more disciplined than men living in town. She wants her parents to choose her partner for her. She believes they will choose the best one for her because they love her very much. She has no agreement with a man to marry. She has never thought about the number of children she would like to have. She has no role model. The respondent said that the only hope she has in the community is her parents and education. The worries, as she said, include the inaccessibility of modern life in the community. As she said, there is no access to electricity or enough safe water.

### Combining work and education

The respondent said that young women of her age did not engage in paid work. But, they do both farming and non-farming works to support their families. As she mentioned, young women do household work each day and farming activities in time of harvesting and weeding seasons. Young women prefer to do household works rather than farming.

She said that she knows two young females of her age who are no longer in school. The reason was that they got married early. As she said, there is no means for young females to establish independent livelihoods in the longer run except by completing school and getting a job in the government office. There are no people who completed grade 10 and 12 or college graduates who failed to get a job which they want in the community.

The respondent said that it is easier for young women from rich families to combine work and education because they have access to school facilities and they are well fed and strong to work long hours. There is no young woman involved in bad habit.

### Women’s issues

The respondent said that neither she nor her friend ever heard about the government banning of female circumcision. Similarly, she said that she has never heard about prosecutions of parents of girls circumcised or the circumciser. She does not know whether or not the school provides facilities for girls who are menstruating. She said that she did not know cases of rape and abduction in the community. She does not have a friend who became pregnant before being married. Similarly, she did not know about cases of abortion or access to contraceptives.

She mentioned that the youngest age for marriage is about 15. Young women, she said, who are not in school get married at this age. Those who are doing well in their education get married very late because they give priority to their education. The respondent said that girls from richer families get married earlier but she did not know the reason. She does not know about government legislation on age of marriage for girls.

The respondent said that young women are a little bit free to comment on the choice of their partner. Parents would have a big say in the choice of partner for their daughters. There is no need for permission from the wereda. She said that she has never heard about prosecutions related to early marriage. As she said, girls start to worry that they are too old to get married when they become 18 years old. She has two friends who are married but they are two years older than her. She mentioned that there is no advantage attached to getting married. However, she said, marriage will have a negative impact on education; it leads girls to drop out from school.

### Establishing an independent livelihood

The respondent said that only a few young women can get married to a man who owns farmland. However, depending on the wealth status of their parents, they might get land as a gift. As she said, very few young women want to marry a farmer. She said that there is no one who wants to get married to a man who lives in the community involved in other work. She said that she has no friend who became a second wife. And, she said that there is no reason for young women to get married to older men in the future; as she said, they could marry a man of their age.

She said that her elder sister migrated to the Addis Ababa. As she elaborated, her sister is leading her life by engaging in daily labour. Her sister was a grade 7 student and she decided to migrate to Addis because she dislikes the community. The respondent mentioned that among her friends only a few want to go to college and get a formal job. According to her response, young women in their twenties that she personally knows spend their time in farming and non-farming work. As she described, there are women in their twenties who are engaged in income generating activities such as production of Areki and making of ‘sifet’.

The respondent said that it is harder for young women from poor households to marry husbands with an independent livelihood. Because, rich men prefer to get married to rich women.

### Setting up an independent household

The respondent said that it is impossible to set up an independent household because there are financial problems. She mentioned that except for the production of areki, which has a relatively better price, there is no means for young women to have money and set up their own independent household.

She does not know for how long wives depend on their husband parents after marriage.

### Migrating

The respondent said that many people are migrating to towns. When they become 18, they tend to think about migration as a way of finding opportunities for a better life. As she said, they migrate to Addis Ababa, Debre Brehan, and outside the country. In all places, she said, they work as housemaids. The number of migrants has been increasing for the last year. She does not know anyone who returned but they come for visits. Similarly, as she said, her sister, when she comes for visiting, brings different kitchen utensils. Regarding herself, she does not want to migrate to towns.

### Living in the community

The respondent said that what she likes most about the community is access to education and towns. She has nothing that she dislikes about the community. She said that the community is not changing in any respect.

She said that the community is not a safe place for young women; there is a threat of abduction and rape. Because of this, she said, she goes to market with her parents. She said that young people do not socialize in groups.

The respondent said that her parents worry for her related safety such as abduction and rape. As she said, her parents do not control her because they believe that she is well disciplined and genuine girl. She did not know about HIV/AIDs at all. Similarly, she does not know how common it is for young women and men to have sexual relations.

### The economy

The respondent said that there is no change in the community. Similarly, she said that she does not notice any new farming or non-farming opportunities for women. Regarding migration, there is no change as far as she knows. Concerning to inequality in living standard, she said that the economic status of people in the community is almost equal. For her, girls from rich families are well dressed as compared to the poorer ones. In addition, she said that women from rich families maintain their personal hygiene in a better way than girls from poor families.

Regarding to education, there is no difference that is attached to economic status. Similarly, there is no difference in their engagement in work. She said that young people from the rich families are in a better position to establish an independent livelihood earlier. Being daughter of rich families could support to set up an independent household through marriage.

### Religion

The respondent said that people from the community do not usually spend time on religious activities. And, she said that there are also people who do not go to church but who have religious based organization like mehaber.

The respondent said that young people go to church usually on yearly celebrated days and in the fasting season of august. She mentioned that she has never attended a religious teaching given by missionaries in the churches situated in the kebele. And, she does not know anyone who goes outside to attend religious education. She does not know whether or not religious rules become stricter or not. She said that she has never heard about conflicts that happened among religious leaders. In her perception, it is very unthinkable to change religion and continue to live with her family. As she said, even though she could not mention an incident that had happened before, she believes parents have no tolerance for new religions. She said that except for spiritual activities, there is no other activity which was done by the church.

### Politics

The respondent said that there is no relation between the young women and the kebele administration. As she confirmed, she has never been in the kebele office and she has never received a call for meetings or other purpose from the kebele officials.

In addition, she mentioned that she does not know anything that the wereda does for young women. She pointed out that there is no pressure on young women to join the ruling party. There is no youth association. Generally, as she said, girls are not that much concerned about government politics. She said that she does not notice any interest in opposition politics.

### Inter-generational relations

The respondent said that there are good relations between her brother and her parents. However, she said that there are young men who quarrel with their parents and neighbours when they get drunk. And also there are a few young men as well as women who refuse to support their parents in farm and nonfarm activities.

## Rich female teenager 16

### Personal

She is living with her parents. In the household where she lives, there are another 6 members; her two younger sisters, elder brother, father, mother and a male hired as herder for the household.

The household main livelihood is agriculture; both farming and animal rearing. She said that they have high breed cows for milk, ox, sheep and chickens. They also fatten sheep and ox for market at least twice a year. She described the household as a rich. She is 16 years old. This academic year, she is grade six and she came 25th out of 64 students in the last year i.e. when she was grade five. She had dropped out from school two years ago; when she was grade four. The reason was the health problem that happened to her. As she described, she got ill because of a gastric parasite. She got treatment in Debre Brehan hospital, though it didn’t make her get better within a short period of time. She returned after a year; she dropped out from the school for just a year.

As she said, in the last 12 months, she had been doing domestic work such as making enjera, ‘wot’, cleaning livestock houses, collecting dung for dung cake, cleaning house, going to grain mill, fetching water, and collecting firewood. In addition, she had been preparing fodder for the fattened sheep and ox.

She mentioned that she didn’t engage in on-farm work because she had been replacing the role of her mother in domestic work while she had been working on the farmland such as weeding and harvesting.

In the last 12 months, she did independent income-generating works for herself; she had engaged in skilled production i.e. ‘sifet’, and ‘dantel’ keep chickens for market. She said that she is the one who chooses to generate income by the above mentioned activities. She earned around 1203 Birr in the last year. She said that she bought a sheep, three chickens, clothes, shoes, exercise books, bag, pen, hair oil and other materials which are required to fulfil basic needs. She saved the rest of the income, 300 Birr, in her neighbour.

She says, “My work has affected my learning. Sometimes I become powerless to wake up and go to school in the morning. In most cases, I can’t manage to do my home works and I rarely study. “

As she explained, she has no health problem other than a problem that happened in the last year which actually forced her to drop out from school for one year. She does like what she is doing to generate income as well as things she does to support her parents.

As she described, it is not easy to combine work and school. But, she has tried to allocate time in such a way to manage both. She likes the shift program that the school is applying currently. She says, “had it been full day program, it could be difficult for me to manage work and school. The shift program has prevented us from dropping out from school”.

She said that she want to continue her education. If she faces any difficulty to combine work with school, she will give priority for her education. As she explained, her parents have no problem to finance her basic school expenses.

In her rest time, she usually does ‘sifet’. Rarely, she plays with her friend if she has to go out to herd livestock. She said she loves listening to music. She goes to church twice a month; usually on Sunday. As she said, there is a program at all Orthodox Church which extends from 7:00AM to 9:00 AM.

She is not active in politics and in any sport activities. She doesn’t belong to any youth organization. She spends time socializing with her friends while she fetches water, herding livestock and go to grain mill. She has no idle time for socialization but she just talks to her friends about different issues when she meets them.

As she mentioned, she has boyfriends but few in number as compared to the number of girlfriends. She says, “If I stay at home, I will prepare fodder for cattle as well as chickens.” She has been circumcised. She has a seven year old sister who did not get circumcised. As she said, her elder brother prevented her youngest sister from circumcision. She mentioned that there is no particular problem regarding uncircumcised females.

She didn’t face any problem with menstruation. She says, “When I started to menstruate for the first time, I was at home. I used trousers and under wear. Because I heard about it from my friends who are older than me, it didn’t make me frustrated.” She said that menstruation has never affected her schooling.

She has never been sexually harassed. She said that she controls herself in such a way to avoid any risk related to being a woman. For instance, as she described, she doesn’t go out from home at night and she doesn’t go to the market alone. She is not married and she has no boyfriend.

She says, “I don’t want to stay in the community. I need to leave to Addis Ababa. I have my aunts and uncles living in Addis. I don’t want to return back to the community”. She explained that she has never been thinking about marriage or working in the community. As she said, as far as she is able to cope with the course given in the school, she will stay in school and continue her education. However, as she said, if she fails to understand what the teachers teach at school, she will have no option but to drop out. If she does well in her education, she will be inclined to her education and allocate more time than to work.

As she said, though she didn’t think about when to marry, she will happy if she gets married when she becomes around 22 years old. She doesn’t have an agreement with a man to marry in the future. She thinks the involvement of her parents in deciding with whom to get married will be minimal.

She said that she has never thought about when to give birth.

Regarding role model, she takes her cousin, who was living in Addis Ababa but left to USA recently. As she said, sometimes she feels jealous as her cousin who is the same age as her has succeeded to live in the best place in the whole world.

She said that the hope she has in the community is the potential of the community for fattening livestock. As she said, there is better market for fattened sheep and ox as the kebele is located near to the two towns where there is a market for livestock. Besides this, she has no hope and the worries that she has override the hope. Especially, she mentioned the lower agricultural productivity of the place to be the most serious worry for her to stay in the community.

### Opportunities for 16 year old girls

As she explained, the problem that young females have is related to early marriage as well as marriage without their consent. She said that many left the community because of fear of marriage. Beside this, she believes that young females have better access to education.

### Combining work and education

She mentioned that there is no access to jobs for young women of her age in the community. Most of them, as she explained, engage in works that would benefit their household. In the case of young females, it is an obligation to engage in domestic work if there are no reasons, such as health problem, which prohibit them to do so.

Beyond this, as she described, young females of her age spend time in activities that enable them to generate income for themselves. Among different activities, the most common income generating activities for them are dung cake making for sale and skilled production, such as ‘sifet’. In addition, there are few young females who got jobs at the Amhara region agricultural research institute, Debre Brehan centre in the area named ‘faji’.

She says, “There is no access to paid job for us. Those few young females who got it already are very close to the kebele officials. It is the kebele administration which sends candidate workers for those organizations situated near to the kebele according to their request for labour.”

Regarding to work preference of young women, she said that most of them would like to have a permanent job of any type in any organization. She says, “Those who have monthly salary are considered very lucky and successful in the community”.

She said that there is one young female of her age who is no longer in education. She elaborated, “She dropped out from school when she was grade three. Her reason for dropping out of school was failing to pass to the next grade. Her teacher tried to return her to school but they were not successful because she had no more interest for education”.

As she said, it is not common for young females to drop out of education for a while and return later. She mentioned that fattening of sheep would help young females to establish independent livelihoods in the community in the long-run.

She says, “I know a female who completed grade 10 in the last year and now she got a job in the Amhara Region agricultural research centre as daily labourer”. She doesn’t know any female college graduates living in the community who cannot find the kind of work they want. Actually, she said that she doesn’t know female college graduate in the community.

She elaborated that combining work and education will be harder for girls from poor household because they do not get material or moral support from their families. In addition, girls from poor households have less psychological freedom to concentrate on their education; they are not happy with the kind of clothes they are usually dressed in. There is a problem of feeling inferior among the girls from the poor, as she said.

According to her response, there is no young woman involved in ‘bad habits’.

### Women’s issues

She mentioned that she, including her friends, is a supporter of government’s attempt to stop female circumcision. She said that she has no friends who stand against government attempt on female circumcision. She doesn’t come across any prosecution of parents or circumcisers.

According to her response, the school doesn’t provide any special facilities in school for girls who are menstruating.

Regarding abduction cases which happened in the last year, she said that there has been both ‘voluntary’ as well as abduction by force. She explains, “A young female, aged around 17 was abducted in the last year. She was a grade five student. However, the abduction was voluntary. When elders asked her about the incident she confirmed that she likes what the man did and she told them she wants to live with him. Then, the elders left them alone and now they gave birth to a child and start living together”.

The other case she explained was abduction by force, which has been commonly known in the community for many years. She says, “last year, a grade 8 student was abducted. She was going back home from school which is located in ‘Tease’ town. The group of males, who did the action, were coming from the nearest neighbouring kebele i.e. Anase kebele. The victim, by misinforming them that she wanted to bring her clothes from home, was able to go back to her parents’ home a few days after she was abducted. However, she didn’t return back to them. She left the community to Addis Ababa. I heard that the police have been searching for the suspects of the crime”.

She mentioned that a female in her age got pregnant in the last year. As she explained, she gave birth without anyone to help her and immediately she threw the infant into a water body, a depth pond.

She said that she doesn’t know any case related to abortion. Similarly, she mentioned that she didn’t know a girl looking for contraceptives. The common youngest age that a girl can get married she mentioned to be 15 though most women do not get married at this age. She described that on average girls who are not doing well in education get married when they get to 15 and 16 years otherwise they flee to urban areas.

As she mentioned, girls who are getting good grades in their education rarely get married. They may also migrate to urban areas because they usually do not have the patience to see the fruit of education.

She says, “Poor girls are likely to get married earlier than rich ones. The reason is that the poor take marriage as an alternative to change their livelihood and way of living. They think marriage will bring something new and good in their life. They expect better economic capability to fulfil basic needs such as food and clothes”.

As she said, the government legislation to stop marriage of girls under 18 had an effect in the community; this time it is very uncommon to get married couples whose age is below 18. She also said that currently girls have the right to choose their partners. She mentioned that friends of hers were able to reject their parents’ proposed males because they do not want to marry them; they can say no to any request, whether their parents like it or not.

There is no need to get permission to get married in the community. She has never heard about any prosecutions related to early marriage. She mentioned that girls start to worry that they are too old to marry a good husband around 19. She doesn’t have a friend who got married. She said that she has never thought about the advantages, disadvantages as well as challenges of being married.

### Establishing an independent livelihood

She said that the probability of young females of her age getting married to those males who owned their own farmland is very rare. However, she mentioned that there are males who get land as a gift from their family. And, the kebele administration gives land for a few males. She said that she has one friend who wants to be farmers’ wife; the others want to migrate.

She said that there is no other kind of work besides agriculture in the community so that young women could not wish to marry a man engaged in other activities. She doesn’t have friends or sisters who married old men or become second wife.

As she thinks, no one in her age will marry older men in the future. As mentioned above, almost all her friends want to migrate to urban areas in search of a better life. She said that from her friends no one wants to go to college and get a formal job. She responded that there is no one from her friends who do not really know and plan about the future.

She says, “Young women in their early twenties make a living in almost a similar way. Almost all women in this age group will get married. Some of them will also give a birth, so that, they always spend much time in household works. In addition, they are involved in herding livestock. A few of them also engage in farm activities such as weeding and harvesting crops”.

She believes that it is harder for young women from poor household to marry husbands with an independent livelihood because those males who have an independent livelihood wish to marry a girl from rich family; they want to be richer by owning the wealth which belongs to their wife.

### Setting up an independent household

She mentioned that it is very difficult and possibly unthinkable for young woman to set up an independent household. She says, “There are only two options for young women who live in the community to set up an independent household i.e. marriage and migration to urban areas”.

She said that it is not common to see wives depending too much on their husbands’ parents; usually new couples stay with the husband’s parents for a month depending on their closeness. She mentioned that it is common for new couples to engage in sharecropping on their parents land. But, they share the produce of the land based on what they deserve in this kind of agreement. As she said, there is no difference in the things after marriage based on economic status.

### Migrating

The respondent said that young women mostly migrate to Addis Ababa, Arab countries and Debre Brehan. In most cases, as she said they develop interest to migrate starting from 15 and 16 years old.

Those young women who migrate to Addis Ababa will be hired as domestic servants while those who migrate to Debre Brehan town will hired in cooperatives that produce powder of roasted peas i.e. ‘shiro’. As she elaborated, the kind of the job available in the cooperatives includes roasting peas and beans as well as winnowing.

The respondent said that the number of migrants to the above mentioned places is increasing.

The respondent said that she knows a woman who had come back to the community to visit her parents from an Arab state. In addition, she knows young women who had returned to visit their parents from Addis Ababa.

She mentioned that those young women who had returned to visit their parents had advised them, women of their age, to leave the community to other places. As she described, they told them about the good life that they will enjoy in towns and cities if they decide to leave.

The respondent said that she wants to leave the community alone, not in group. She would be happy if she lives in Addis.

### Living in the community

The respondent said that she does not like living in the community. As she said, she hates the rural way of life. It is mentioned to be very tiresome and uncomfortable. She said her community is changing in economic respect and in the coming five years she expected it to be improved. For instance, as she mentioned, there will be more petty business, cooperatives engaging in fattening and milk processing.

The respondent said that the kebele is not a safe place to live. As she explained, currently the number of young men had increased which makes young women less confident to move freely in the community. She clarified that during the time of reconstruction of the main road many youth had been hired in the project which was the reason for large out-migration. Now, as the project has been finalized, many young men returned to their parents who are residents of the kebele. The respondent said that seeing as young women have no freedom of movement in the night, it is not possible to say the community is safe to live.

The respondent said that young people do not tend to socialize in groups. They form friendships in school or village.

The respondent said that her parents worry about rape. As she said, they do not allow her to go to market alone. As she said, except in exceptional cases, she does not go out of the community. Because of this, she has a fixed program in her day so that her family could easily look after her.

The respondent said that what she knows about HIV/AIDs includes its transmission method. She said that blood contact and sexual relationship are the cause of HIV/AIDs. She also mentioned it as a disease without curative drugs and found in blood.

She said that she does not know cases of HIV/AIDs in the community. Similarly, she also has no idea about the sexual relations that the young men and women usually have. She also says nothing about how common it is for young people having sexual relations to take precautions against contracting HIV/AIDs.

### The economy

The respondent said that the community is richer than it was before three years. The reasons she mentioned include, planting of eucalyptus, fattening and dairy farming. She mentioned that there is no change in farming or non-farming opportunities for women.

The respondent said that there is no change in migration to the community. As she explained, the number of immigrants is very small. According to her, inequality between households is declining in recent years. The reason she mentioned is that the commitment of all people to change their livelihood.

The life of girls from very rich families and from those of poor families differs in many respects. For instance, she said that those girls who belong to the poor household have very poor personal hygiene and nutritional level. In addition, the physical strength for girls from richer family is better than from girls from poor families.

This economic class differentiation, as she said, has nothing to do with the education of the girl; the performance of the girls in their education depends on their natural capability and willingness to work hard. Concerning work, she said that girls from poor families are physically very weak so that they are incapable of performing works that need energy. As she elaborated, girls from poor family are exposed to diseases because they have shortage of balanced diet and proper clothing which again lowers their performance both in farm and non-farm projects.

The respondent said that the rich are in a better position to establish their independent households as they have a chance of getting gifts from their parents. She also says that the girls from poor families usually get married earlier because they took marriage as a solution for poverty; they see it as an option of having a better life.

### Religion

The respondent said that people in the community do not spend much time on religious activities. As she said, most of them go church or religious organization once a month. She also said that there are people who go to church once a year especially on epiphany. However, she said that these people belong to religious organizations like mehaber.

The respondent said that people who came from Debre Brehan Orthodox Church branch office had given education. The education they had delivered is not new; it was about the dos and don’ts of the religion as usual.

There is no individual who has gone to places outside the community to learn about religion.

She mentioned that the religious rules are becoming stricter than before because there is intense religious education provided at the church. There has not been disagreement between religious groups; the only religion in the community is orthodox Christianity. As she said, it is unthinkable for individuals who follow religions other than orthodox Christianity to live with his family or neighbours peacefully. The church has not been teaching anything other than religious doctrine and principles.

### Politics

The respondent said that young women have no direct relation with the government; there is no special structure such as a youth association in the community. She said that through informal clubs in the school, the government had been teaching about HIV/AIDs. As she mentioned, the young women have never accessed training or advice from the wereda.

The wereda has not supported women’s leisure. Generally, she mentioned that the government is doing nothing special for the young women. She said that the government has to work closely to solve people’s problems.

The respondent said that young women can engage in public work to support the community development activities. She said that no body pressures young women to be member of the ruling party. There is no formal youth structure operational in the community. As she described, a few young people complain about inflation which they believe is caused by the government. However, as she said, young people have no interest in politics.

### Inter-generational relations

The respondent said that generally the relations between her parents and teenage members is smooth except the conflicts which may happen in times where teenagers fail to discharge their responsibilities expected by their parents.

She said that conflict may arise when young people get drunk and hesitate to hear the advice of their parents and elders. Beyond this, inter-generational relation is very positive.

## Middle-wealth female teenager 16

### Personal

She is living with her parents. She has one sister and brother living in the same home. The total size of the household is five.

The household livelihood is based on farming. The non-farming activities in which the household is engaged are making and selling of dung cake as well as wood for fuel. The respondent describes the household as poor.

The respondent is 16 years old. She is grade 2. She came 12th out of 19 students in the year, grade 1. She has never dropped out from school. She joined grade one when she was 15 years old. Her parents prohibited her from going to school because they wanted her to do the domestic works. As she described, she was begging them to let her go to school for the last years. At the end of the day, one of the teachers advised and pushed them to send her to school.

She has done household, farm as well as non-farm work in the last 12 months. Among her domestic work, she cleans animal yards, cooks food, collects firewood, fetches water, and cleans the house. Among the farming work, she has done weeding in the rainy seasons. The non-farm business she engaged in the last 12 months is making dung cake for market.

The only income-generating work she has done in the last 12 months is making dung cake. As she said, she sold three pack animals dung cake and bought a skirt and scarf.

She has been absent for few days in the last three semesters from class because of working. As she said, when there is a special social organization for work in the community, such as ‘Debo’ she does not go to school because she has to support her mother in cooking and serving foods. Beyond this, sometimes she becomes late; if she failed to finish the domestic work that she have to do before school. In most cases, when there is mourning in the community as well as in the neighbouring area, where her parents want to attend, she will stay at home, taking the responsibility of doing domestic jobs as well as looking after the livestock.

She said that the work she has been doing in the home as well as in the farm field doesn’t affect her health status.

According to her response, she doesn’t like to engage in domestic works because it is very diversified and bulky. As compared to other works, she prefers to work outside, such as on the farm field.

She thinks that it would be easier to combine work and school by advising parents to give their children at school a break so as to as make them able to follow their education properly. And, she recommended hard working behaviour among students to succeed in their education.

She said that she dislikes the current shift system. She wants it to be a whole day program because she thinks she will get relief from the household burden of work by spending the day in school.

She planned to continue her education by balancing it with the responsibility she should take in the household.

In her rest time, usually break times in school, she plays handball with her friends. She said that she is not interested in art including music. She is a follower of the orthodox Christian church and she does not go to church except for special holy days such as ‘timiket’.

Regarding to politics, she does not have any idea about it and has never been in the kebele office for politics related issues. She does not do any sport activity except sports period in school, which has a permanent class every week. Usually, in sports class, they run and do some additional aerobics. She does not belong to any youth organization, association, league and federation. The only time she spends socializing with friends is while she is in school, fetching water or herding livestock. She does not have a special get together to socialize.

She said that she has both male as well as female friends at school and village. She has a special boyfriend at school.

If she is at home, she will engage in household domestic works.

Her mother told her that she was circumcised while she was an infant. She did not remember it at all. As she explained, if she was not circumcised, she would be exposed to diseases which are caused by lack of sanitation.

She said that she did not start to see menstruation. She has never been harassed or assaulted by a man in her lifetime. She did not get married but she has a boyfriend. He is grade 6 student and her parents do not know about her relation with him. As she explained, he wants to marry her very soon. He is planning to drop out from school believing that he is too old to wait for the fruit of education. As she said, she wants to marry him too but not as early as he plans because she wants to continue her education.

She does not have a plan to leave the community. She wants to marry and live in the community. As she said, she will make a local beer ‘tela’ for sale to generate income. She prefers to marry a hard working farmer who owns land.

She plans to continue her education by working hard and leaving some household works to be done by her mother. She plans to marry after three years. She thinks that her parents will be involved in her decision of who to marry because the elders will directly contact them before she knows who is looking to marry her. However, as she said, she still has a right to say no to elders’ requests. And, she believes she will marry her boyfriend whether they like it or not.

She said that she will have four children. She does not have a role model. She hopes the future will be better than today. She says, ‘I am growing up enough to generate income to cover the cost of basic needs such as hair oil, clothes. In addition, I have started to go to school which gives me a chance to meet friends at school and to be educated’.

### Opportunities for 16 year old girls

As she said, the only opportunity for young women in the community is access to education. The problem for females of her age, according to her response, is mainly related to poverty. She said that young females from poor families are not well fed and dressed which makes them unhappy in their life.

### Combining work and education

She says that young women of her age are students and engaged in domestic work as well as farm work after or before school for their family. However, she mentioned that in harvesting season, there are two young women who work collecting crops and get paid 20 Birr per day. This farm daily labour does not have health problem, according to her perception.

She believes that there is not enough access to jobs for young women in the community.

She said that she does not know a woman of her age who is no longer in education. As she elaborated, young women of her age are even in a higher grade than her. Similarly, she does not know young women who drop out of education for a while and return later.

She said that education will help young women to establish their own independent household in the long run. She also mentioned the skill to do domestic work is necessary for women to establish independent households.

She said that there are no women who graduate from grade 10 and 12 living in the community who failed to find the kind of work they want. There is no unemployed female college graduate living in the community.

She thinks that it is not difficult to combine education and work for young women from poor families. There are no young women involved in bad habit.

### Women’s issues

She said that she has never heard about any government attempt to stop female circumcision. As she says, though she could not be sure about whether her friends have ideas about female circumcision on not, she did not come across it while they are openly discussing for or against a position.

She has never heard about prosecution of anyone because of female circumcision issue. She says that the school does not provide any special facilities for girls who are menstruating. She did not have any information on rape and abductions that had recently happened in the kebele. She did not know a female who became pregnant before marriage.

She said that she had heard about abortion in the community. She explained that pregnant females go to hospital, located in Debre Brehan, to abort. She told me that it is a shame to get pregnant before marriage so they do it secretly. She could not tell how many females do the abortion recently because it is a secret and the information is based on rumours.

She said that she did not know a girl who uses contraceptives. And also, she does not know how it will be accessed and who are eligible to use it.

As she pointed out, females of 16 years old are the youngest to get married in the community. Currently, because of education, as she said, few females may get married at this age. Most females need to continue education. On average, girls who are not doing well in their education will marry around this age. The tendency of those girls who have good performance in their education to marry and live in the community is very low, as most of them are taking education as a way out of the community to other urban areas.

She does not have any information about government legislation to stop marriage of girls under 18 and its effect on the community.

Girls, as she said, have started to influence their parents in choosing their partners. In most cases, the elders, sent by the male family, will give a chance for the female’s family to discuss with the proposed bride. And, if the proposed bride does not like the male who sends elders to get her consent to marry him, she will openly tell her parents to refuse the preposition.

As she explained, rich girls are more likely to marry early than poor ones because they have the economic wealth to establish independent household. As further explained, the richer ones have a family who own a large stock of livestock as well as farmland. This is a good chance for them because the possibility to get gifts is very high.

There is no need to bring permission to get marry in the community. She said that there has never been any prosecution related to early marriage. Girls, according to her response, start to worry that they are too old to marry a good husband starting from 16.

She said that she has two friends who got married. However, they are older than her.

She said that there is no advantage that emanates from marriage. The disadvantage of marriage is that it will result in dropping out of school because of the work burden as well as social responsibilities. The challenge of being married, as she said, may be poverty. She explained that there is no way to improve one’s life after marriage; life will remain the same and stagnant.

### Establishing an independent livelihood

The respondent said that girls are likely to marry men who own a farmland through gift or inheritance. She said that her friends want to leave the community to go to an urban area so that none of them have interest to become a farmer’s wife.

The respondent said that most of her friends do not want to marry a man living in the community. She has no friends or sisters who married older men or became second wives. She thinks that her friends will not marry older men in the future because there are many young men of their age.

She said that almost all her friends want to migrate for work. As she tells, none of her friends wants to go to college and get a formal job. She said that none of her friends really know their future.

As she said, the young women in their twenties make a living in different ways. Those who got married are involved in domestic work for their independent household. The unmarried ones engage in non-farm business such as production of Areki.

In most cases, as she said, marriage between couples is influenced by the wealth status of their family. I.e. males from the rich family prefer to marry females from the rich family. However, as she pointed, there are females from poor households who got married to a man from rich household.

### Setting up an independent household

She said that the possibility of young woman setting up an independent household is very minimal as the chance to generate income in the community is very negligible. In addition, she mentioned that there is no access to land.

She explained that marriage and migration to urban areas are the two best alternatives for young women to set up independent households. The barriers to set up independent households include lack of money and land. In most cases, women dependent on their husband’s parents will stay for a few months. They will have their house in the same compound as his parents’ husband or elsewhere. This is the same for all women, whether they come from rich or poor families.

### Migrating

She said that she did not know young women who migrate for work. She knows a female who left the community to Addis Ababa for education. She did not know anyone who returned after migration.

### Living in the community

She said that what she likes about her community is the relationship she has with her families and neighbours. She explained that she is happy in her life because she has people to share her ideas and future plans. Until now, she did not face anything which makes her dislike the community.

In her opinion, nothing has changed and will change in the community. Regarding the security, she mentioned that there is a problem for women, especially the young females. For instance, young females cannot walk alone from/to the market. Drunken males threaten them.

She said that young people do not tend to socialize in special groups. As she tells, her parents, especially her mother worries about what might happen to her. She mentioned that her mother fears abduction as well as rape.

Her parents try to control her by limiting the time that she has to stay outside the house; she is not allowed to walk in the night. In addition, she is not allowed to go to market alone.

She said that she heard about HIV/AIDs when people talk about it. However, she said that she did not know what it means or the causes. She does not know HIV/AIDs cases in the community.

She said that usually young men have sexual relations with females living inside the community as well as in other near towns such as Tebase and Debre Brehan. She mentioned that most of them have sex in the forests and others will rent rooms in the town. Most of them do not care with whom they have sex; the girls might be their girlfriends or not.

As she explained, it is common for females from poor household to have sexual relations both in the community as well as outside. Usually, females from poor households are free from control so that they have time to meet males and have sex.

She said that she does not know whether or not young people having sexual relations take precautions against contracting HIV/AIDs.

### The economy

She said that there is no change in the community regarding economic status. Similarly, there is also no change in farming as well as non-farming opportunities for women. She mentioned that there is no change in migration as well as inequality among households in the community.

She said that the life of girls from rich households is better in many perspectives than the life girls from poor households. She described, “The girls from rich households keep their personal hygiene, dress well and eat well. There is also a difference in their education; girls from rich households are cleverer than the ones from the poor households because they have no problem in accessing schooling materials.”

Beside this, she mentioned that girls from poor households have work burdens, both domestic as well as on farm work. Those girls from rich households have better opportunities to establish independent livelihoods that the poor ones because they can get land and other wealth in the form of gifts from their families. In relation to this, she mentioned that females from rich families get married earlier as they have the material wealth to establish independent households.

### Religion

She said that people in the community do not tend to spend much time on religious activities. There are few people who do not go to churches or religion socialization events. There is one religion in the community, Orthodox Christian Church.

She said that young women are getting more interested in religion and religious activities for reasons she didn’t know.

There is no missionary service at the churches. Similarly, there are no young people going to other places to learn about religion. Regarding religious rules, she mentioned that people do not want to make it strict.

There is no disagreement between among religious leaders. Similarly, there is no problem for ordinary people to live peacefully in the community. She mentioned that it is not possible for household members to belong to different religions; household heads will not allow the household members who belong to other religions than orthodox Christianity to live in the house.

The Orthodox Church, beside spiritual activities, organizes social occasions. For instance, the church invites all community members to lunch in epiphany. Actually, community members contribute the foods and drinks to be served on the day but the lion’s share of the cost is covered by the church.

### Politics

As she said, the government is not working with young females and she didn’t hear about recent messages passed to the young women. The wereda didn’t provide advice, training or resources to young women for livelihood activities. Similarly as she mentioned, the wereda did not provide resources for women’s leisure.

She says, “The government is not doing anything to women. It should provide women with resources that enable them to change their life. In addition, the government has to provide special leisure facilities at schools for females”.

She didn’t know in what way women are supposed to contribute to the development of the community.

She said that there is no pressure on young women to join the ruling party. She has no idea about youth organizations; associations, league and federation.

She thinks that most girls do not have an interest in politics and do not really know what it is all about. Similarly, there is no interest in opposition politics among young women.

### Inter-generational relations

She said that there is no problem in the relations between teenagers and their parents. As she described, children try to support their parents both in domestic as well as on farm works in their idle time. For instance, no one on the community will sleep in the day or after school. So that, in general there is a good relation between the adult generation and the teenagers’ generation in the community.

## Poor female teenager 16

### Personal

The respondent said that she is living with her father, youngest sister and two older brothers. Recently, in the month of December 2012, her father got married to his second wife. The second wife brought her son whose father is another man. Totally, the size of the household is 7.

The main livelihood activities of the household include farming and fattening. As she said, the economic status of the household is medium.

She is 16 years old and a grade 6 student. When she was grade 5 in the last year, she stood third out of 24 students. She has never dropped out from school. She said that in the last 12 months she has been involved in both farming and non-farming activities. She explained, “I have been taking care of all domestic works in the household. I make enjera every four days, I make wot at least each day, I clean the house each day, I clean livestock house and yard each morning, I fetch water twice a day”.

Regarding to the farming work, she mentioned that she had been working weeding on the farmlands. In addition, she had been cultivating vegetables, such as carrot, cabbage, and beetroot on a piece of land.

The independent income generating works include cultivation of vegetables and keeping chickens. In addition, she made ‘sifet’ for sale. From all these works, she earned about 180 Birr.

She said that she had bought one chicken with the 60 Birr and the rest of the money was spent on the household. She bought consumable goods including salt, sugar, coffee, food oil.

She said that she likes keeping chickens as an income generating activity because it does not take much time and energy. The respondent said that it is not easy to combine work with education. She explained, “Being in the home, as she said, does not mean we have rest. We have a lot to do. We have no time even to do our home works. After the household work burden, we have to go to school without any appetite and commitment to learn”. The respondent said that the shift system is not sufficient to learn what students should know at each school level. She would like to have a full time school program. She says, “We could have time to ask questions on issues which are not clear so that better knowledge will be grasped”.

She said that she will continue her education whatever it costs. As she explained, she is planning to continue small income generating activities as she was doing in the last year at least to get relief from the shortage of materials for school. I.e. to cover school expenses.

In her rest time, idle time from school, farm and household work, she will make ‘sifets’, a kind of handicraft in which different kitchen equipment would be produced. She said that she has no access to music and art which may be the reason for not being interested.

She said that she is not active in her religion, but she goes to church at least twice a month. She is not active in politics and she does not do any sport activities. There is no youth organization in the community. She does not spend time socializing in groups; she meets her friend at school. As she said, in her break time, they will play different games. Her friends are all girls. As she mentioned, she has never been close to a boy. When she stays at home, she will do household works as well as craft works (sifet).

She said that she is circumcised. She explained that being circumcised or not has nothing to do with problems, it is just a culture of the kebele. She said that she did not face problem related to menstruation; it also does not cause problems at school. She said that she has never been sexually harassed or assaulted by a man. She minimizes such kind of risk by going to the market with her father and not walking at night time. She is not married and she has no boyfriend.

### Opportunities for 16 year old girls

She said that she wants to leave the community to go to Debre Brehan town for education. In case, as she said, if she has to stay in the community, she will engage in keeping modern breed chickens for the market. In the future, she thinks she will get to marry a man who is a medical doctor and hired by the government. In debre Brehan town, she knows people who had been living in the kebele and left to the town to continue their schooling. If she leaves the community once, she will not return except to visit her families.

She said that she wants to continue her education by continuing what she has been doing in the last years since she joined school. She mentioned that probably she will get married after she graduates from college. She thinks that her parents will not get involved in choosing whom she marries because she will not marry a man living in the community, rather in the town. She did not agree to a man to marry till now. She said that she has never thought about the number of children she would like to have. She said that she has no role model. Regarding to the hopes and the worries, she mentioned education and keeping chicken to be the hopes for her and the worries mentioned by her include lack of urban living in the community, the traditional way of life (absence of modernization in the living style), work burden on women and absence of paid job.

### Combining work and education

The respondent said that females of her age do not engage in paid work. However, they work in farming and non-farming activities. Most young females prefer to leave the community to go to Addis Ababa and work as housemaids. She said that there are no females of her age who are no longer in school. She explained that if women dropped out from school the chance to go back to school is very minimal; once they dropped out they are not interested to return back because they feel inferior.

The respondent said that it is very difficult for young females to establish independent livelihoods as there is no access to jobs in the community. In the future, as mentioned, fattening will help the young females if they have access to credit with softer terms of interest and repayment time. There is no grade 10, 12 or college graduates who cannot find the kind of work they want.

However, she said that there are two grade 12 graduates, young men, who cannot find a job. Here it should be noted that grade 10, 12 and college graduates, both young men and females, are not hired in jobs in the community but most of them leave the community for jobs. The residents do not know what kind of job they went for. And, there are few grade 10 graduates working in Amhara Agricultural research centre as daily labourers.

The respondent said that it is harder for the girls to combine work with education because of the work burden they have and the absence of special supporting classes for girls. There is no young woman involved in bad habits.

### Women’s issues

The respondent said that the government banning of female circumcision is well accepted among her friends. All her friends, she said, agree with the government position against female circumcision. There hasn’t been any prosecution in the area of parents of girls who have been circumcised or the circumciser.

She said that the school does not provide any facilities for girls who are menstruating.

The respondent said that in the last year there had been cases of voluntary abduction. She explains, “A man had abducted a young woman promising that he will buy her a mobile phone. After the incident, the elders made an arrangement for marriage and now they are legally married according to the custom of the society”. There was no legal intervention in the voluntary abduction.

The respondent said that she has no friend who became pregnant before marriage.

She pointed that there are cases of abortion in the community. She elaborated, “Young women use tradition as well as modern medicines for abortion. Most prefer to go to the neighbouring kebele to get traditional medicines. In cases, when the traditional medicine fails, they will go to debre brehan town”.

The respondent said that there is no access to contraceptives for young women. In her perception, young women do not know how to use and where to find contraceptives.

The youngest age a girl can get married is said to be about 15. These days, she said, the number of young females who get married at 15 has declined. In most cases, young women who are not doing well in their education prefer to get married earlier. Young women who are well doing in their education may not be interested in marriage; they give more attention to education and marriage is secondary for them.

The respondent said that young women from rich families get married earlier than those women from poorer families. The reason she mentioned is the need for property; young women from richer families have a higher probability to get married to a young man from the richer families. They would have an opportunity to share the wealth of the partner.

According to her, the government legislation to stop marriage of girls under 18 has affected the community. Marriage before 18 is reducing from time to time.

The respondent said that the right of women to choose their partner is not uniform; it differs among households. As she described, some households are free to let their daughter choose her partner by herself. But, there are also households who refuse to give the right to the daughter. She elaborated, “In the last year, a young woman was asked by her parents to get married to a man who was chosen by them. She was not willing. Repeatedly, elders were contacting her parents and bringing marriage proposals. The proposals were coming from different elders. Finally, she said no to all proposals. Then, her parents were unhappy with her. Finally, one day, telling her parents that she will go to church, she left her early in the morning. But, she did not return home. She left the community to Addis Ababa. Now, she is a housemaid there.”

Marriage does not need permission from the wereda. There has been no persecution related to early marriage in the kebele. The respondent said that these days girls do not worry about age of marriage. Before, she mentioned, they start worrying that they are too old to marry a husband at 15 and 16.

She has a friend who got married, fulfilling all processes needed by the custom of marriage in the community. She said that marriage does not have advantage. The disadvantage of marriage is work burden and responsibility to give birth and rear children.

### Establishing an independent livelihood

The respondent said that almost all girls have the chance to get married to a man that has his own farm land. She mentioned that almost all young men get land in the form of gift from their families when they get married. In addition, she says, the kebele has been giving land for newly formed households.

### Getting married

She said that one of her friends wants to be the wife of a farmer. Apart from her, as she explained, all want to leave the community and marry a man living in town. She has no friends who want to get married to a man in the community involved in other kinds of work. She has no friend or sister who became a second wife. There could be no one who would marry an older man in the future. As she mentioned, almost all of her friends want to migrate to town for work. There are a few who want to migrate to town and continue their education. She mentioned that including her, about 8 friends want to go to college and get a formal job. She said that there is no one who really does not know about the future.

According to her response, women in their twenties are housewives. They spend more time on farming and non-farming activities; they take care of their children and so on. She said that it is not harder for a young woman from a poor household to marry husbands with an independent livelihood.

### Setting up an independent household

The respondent said that it is very difficult for young women to set up an independent household. As she elaborated, young women do not have access to land before marriage. For her, there is no way that it can be done. The barriers include no access to land before marriage, no access to paid job, credits with softer terms and so on.

The respondent said that after marriage wives may depend on their husbands’ parents for a while. The length of time, she said, differs depending on the intimacy between the wives and her husband’s parents and the economic status that they have. The richer that the parents of the husband are, the more likely the wife will stay with them for a longer time. The respondent said that the economic status of the women may not matter.

### Migrating

The respondent said that migration for young women is becoming common in recent years. In most cases, she said, they tend to migrate at 12 and 13. Most of them migrate to Addis Ababa and become a housemaid. The numbers of migrants have increased as there is free information flow from the cities to the community which is facilitated by the access of mobile phone. There is no change in the places they are going to. Starting from the beginning, migration was common to Addis Ababa and Debre Brehan. She mentioned that this year three young women migrated to Addis Ababa. She wants to migrate to Debre Brehan to continue her education.

### Living in the community

The respondent said that the only thing that she likes about the community is access to education. She dislikes the customs of the community which are the causes of diseases such as female circumcision and cutting of the vulva. The respondent said that the community is not changing but she thinks it will be better for the next five years especially in terms of health and sanitation. As she mentioned, relatively it is a safe place to live but still going to market, either Debre Brehan or Chacha, has no guarantee for young women because there might be a risk of rape and abduction on the way.

There is no tendency for young people to socialize in groups. She said that her father has no worries regarding her because he knows that she is conscious about the problems that happen to young women.

She said that she knows about HIV/AIDs that it is a disease which kills the productive youth labour of the country, it is transmitted from mother to child, and through sexual relationship. She said that she does not know cases of HIV/AIDs in the community. Similarly, she said that she does not know how common it is for young women and men to have sexual relations and take precautions against contracting HIV/AIDs.

### The economy

The respondent said that it is difficult to say that the community is becoming richer. However, she said, there is expansion of watershed management work in the community which will be good to preserve the soil. In addition, she mentioned that the farmers have started to apply more fertilizer on their farmland as compared to the previous time.

The respondent said that the only change that she noticed in farming opportunities for women is the provision of vegetables seedlings. As she described, there is no non-farm opportunity for women beside making of areki, dung cake and collecting of firewood for market.

There is no change in migration into the community. The respondent said that inequality is not a major problem for the community. All people do whatever they can do to fulfil their basic life sustaining needs.

The life of girls from the richer families is far better than the life of girls from the poorer families. She elaborated, “the girl from the rich family have access to husband, she has a better chance to get married to a man who she think is good for her; the girls from the poorer families could not get a proposal from a man for marriage”.

The respondent said that being from rich or poor families has no effect on the education of the girls. What matters, as she said, is the interest of the girls towards their education. She also said that there is no difference regarding work. Both, girls from rich and poor families, engage in farm and non-farm activities.

The respondent said that it is difficult for girls from poor families to establish independent livelihoods because they have no money and could not get support from others. The respondent also mentioned that women from poor households could not marry early and could not marry a man who they like the most. In this line, she said that the richer are better in terms of setting up an independent household as they could receive a gift from their parents as well as gifts from their husbands’ parents.

### Religion

The respondent said that there are people who go to church each Sunday. But, the majority go to church on yearly celebrated saint days which may happen once every three months. As she said, there are people who are not totally interested in going to church.

Young women go to church on weekends as well as on celebration days. Besides this, almost all young women go to church and join congregations for almost three hours in the month of August. In august, there is a fasting season which extends for 16 days and usually young people, both women and men, fast and go to church to attend programs for the whole fasting season. She mentioned that there are no missionaries who come from outside to teach. Similarly, she said that there are no young people who left the community to learn about religion. In her perception, religion rules are becoming stricter over time as the teaching tends to be more strict and conservative. There has never been disagreement between religious leaders. The respondent said that it is not easy for household members to belong to different religions. Culturally, orthodox Christianity is accepted as a perfect religion from God. Beside the spiritual activities, there are no other activities carried out by the church in the community.

### Politics

The respondent said that there is no relation between young women and the government. There has not been a message passed by the kebele and wereda. There is also no leisure facility for young women in the community. The kebele does not have a structure to get the participation of young women in the community development work. There is no pressure on young women to join the ruling party. There is no youth organization in the kebele. From informal communication, it was informed that there was an attempt by the wereda to mobilize the youth and form an organization. But it failed because of lack of interest among the young people. Generally, as she said, most girls like the government for reasons which she doesn’t know. But a few girls complain about lack of access to paid jobs in the community. She said that there are young men who oppose the government but they are not organized or included in opposition parties. They simply want the ruling power to be handed over to other parties.

### Inter-generational relations

The respondent said that there is a good relationship between teenage members and her father. In general, she said that there is good relation between the adult generations and the teenager’s generation. However, sometimes, those young people who are involved in bad habits, mostly Areki drinking, quarrel with their elders. In addition, there are young men who spend the night in Debre Brehan town which may become a point of disagreement.

## Rich female teenager 19

### Personal

The respondent said that she is living with her parents. She has four brothers and four sisters. The household livelihood is dependent on farming which may occasionally be supported by fattening. In addition, she said that her father occasionally engages in trading sheep in a neighbouring wereda.

The respondent said that the economic status of the household is medium. She is 18 years old and 8th grade student. She has never dropped out from school. She mentioned that she had been involved both in farming as well as non-farming business for the last 12 years. She explained, “I was making enjera and wot; I cleaned houses; I washed clothes and so on. Regarding farming, she engaged in harvesting and weeding”.

As for income generating activities, she mentioned, she is involved in production of areki. As she described, she produces areki three times a year. As she said, in one processing, she will produce 10 to 20 litres. The selling price for one litre of Areki ranges from 28 to 35 birr.

She described, “To produce ten litre of areki, she uses 10 kg wheat, 10 kg sorghum, and 10 kg maize. She purchases one kilogram of wheat, sorghum and maize for 7, 6 and 7 birr respectively. She also uses half a quintal of hops, and a small amount of a plant called ‘koso’.

In the last year, she spends 250 birr on her clothes and she saved the rest to purchase grains for the areki production. The respondent said that she is balancing her work with her education. She may be absent from school if and only if she gets ill. In addition, as the school is far from her resident area, she may be absent when she feels tired.

The respondent said that she did not face any health problems which resulted from her works. One thing she likes about her work is that it is a good source of earning more money. In addition, the residual from the areki production will be used for livestock as fodder.

The respondent said that it is not that much difficult for her to combine education with work. In most cases, she uses the weekends to produce areki and she devotes the rest of the time to her education.

Regarding to the school shift system, she said that it is the best way for students to attend school and to be involved in different works. As she said, she wants to continue her education as well as work by balancing the two. If she has rest time, she says, she will spend it on domestic works.

The respondent said that she goes to church once every two weeks and on days which are commonly considered as yearly congregations. She said that she is not interested in politics or sport. She does not belong to any youth organization. She does not start to socialize in groups and did not know young people who already started to do so.

At school, she said, she has both girlfriends and boyfriends with whom she spends time in their break. As she said, when she stays at home, she will do domestic works.

The respondent said that she is circumcised. She explained that being circumcised or not does not cause problems; people do it because it is the custom of the community. She said that she has started menstruating when she was 15 years old. On the first day, she says, she felt worried about it because she did not have information. She hid what happened from her family. Then she used underwear and trousers. Still now, she is using the same material that she had used the first time. However, as she said, she has not faced any problem regarding it. And, she has not been absent from school because of menstruation. She said that she has never been sexually harassed or assaulted by men. She is not married and she has no boyfriend.

### Opportunities for 19 year old girls

She said that she wants to go outside the community. But, as she said, she will go to towns to continue her education. She wants to marry a man who is educated and a government employee. She elaborated that she will be happy if she goes to Debre Brehan town for education. As she mentioned, she has a brother and other relatives who are living in Debre Brehan town. As she said, once she leaves the community, she will not have a reason to return except for visiting.

The respondent said that she has a plan to continue her education further. As she mentioned, if the work she does has a destructive effect on her education, she will reduce the amount of time she spends doing different works.

As she said, she will be happy if she gets married when she is 25 years old. She said that her parents will not get involved in choosing a partner for her. She mentioned that she has no agreement with a man to marry in the future.

The respondent said that she wants to have four children. She mentioned that she has no role model. Regarding the hopes and worries in the community, she said that the community has no hope for the young people except for access to education. The worries, she said, are related to economic, safety and social issues.

### Combining work and education

The respondent said the young people in her age do not have paid jobs but they spend their whole time in education and other farm and non-farm work. As she described, almost all students are living with their families and at least they have a person to depend on for different school expenses.

The respondent said that there are no young women of her age who are no longer in school. And, she mentioned there is a very low level of dropping out from school. However, as she said, once they drop out from school, they might not return because they feel that they are too old to be in the grade level they must join. The only means to establish an independent livelihood for the young women is by joining college and getting a formal job. She said that she does not know a young woman who completed grade 10, 12 or who graduated from college and failed to find a job outside the community.

As she described, it is not hard for poor girls to combine education with work because what matters is working hard, not their economic status. She said that there is no young woman who is involved in bad habits.

### Women’s issues

The respondent said that the young women, including her and her friends, are supporters of the government banning female circumcision. But, as she said, the older women tell the younger one to continue practicing circumcision of their daughters and granddaughters. She said that the reason they give is the absence of any difficulty for circumcised women in giving birth in the last years when circumcision was preserved as a custom for the community.

She said that she does not know any prosecution related to practicing circumcision in the kebele. The respondent said that in her school, which is situated in the neighbouring ‘Tsigereda’ kebele, facilities are provided for girls who are menstruating. She said that there is a club which is responsible for purchasing and distributing sanitary napkins. All young women students, who are menstruating, contribute 50 cents per month. In addition, as a means of generating money, the club organizes a lottery ticket. This club has been working for the last two years.

The respondent said that there has not been a case related to rape and abduction in recent years.

The respondent said that she noticed a case where a young woman got pregnant before marriage. As she described, the woman is a resident of the neighbouring kebele but she attends school in core margefia kebele. The woman got pregnant but kept attending class until the day she gave birth. After the birth, she took two months rest and she returned to school.

The respondent said that two years ago, a young woman had attempted to abort using ‘endod’. People brought her to hospital because it was not successful. The doctors in the hospital advised her to give birth because the health status of the infant was very good. As they said to her, she gave birth in full course. Now, as she said, she dropped out from school and has begun rearing her child.

The respondent said that there is no access to contraceptives for young women in the community. The youngest age for marriage is about 15 years old. These days, as she mentioned, the number of young women who get married at 15 has declined.

### Establishing an independent livelihood

The respondent said that it is unlikely that young females get married to a man who owns farmland. As she explained, most young men may get a piece land from their families. But, she said, the only option for young men without their own land is sharecropping. She said that most of the newly established households depend on sharecropping for their livelihood.

The respondent said that only a few young women who prefer to stay in the community might become the wives of a farmer.

She said that there is no young woman who wants to get married to a man living in the community involved in other kinds of work. She has no friend or sister who became a second wife. As she described, there is no reason for young women to get married to older men and it is uncommon in the community.

The respondent said that most of them want to migrate to towns because the experience of the ex-migrants seems successful. She says, “One of my friends left to Addis and started to live with her uncle. After she stayed for five years in Addis, she migrated to an Arab country. She is illiterate; cannot write and read at all. But, these days, she is getting a better income and sending remittances for her families”.

The respondent is said that a fair number of her friends want to go to college and get a formal job.

Regarding women in their twenties, she said that some of them are students and most of them are housewives. As she described, the housewives spend their time in farm and non-farm activities. Nowadays, she said, it has become common for most of the young women to engage in activities which bring independent income for them such as areki production and handcraft ‘sifet’.

The respondent believes that it is harder for the poor young women to get married to men who have their own independent source of livelihood. Because, she explained, all people would like to add more wealth through any means including marriage.

### Getting married

As she said, young women who are not working well in their education prefer to migrate to urban areas rather than getting married and staying in the community. Similarly, girls who have good grades in their education do not want to marry earlier because they prefer to continue their education before marriage.

The respondent said that rich girls more likely get married earlier than poor ones because they have a chance to choose a husband for them. As she said, the government legislation of marriage has positively affected the community as marriage before 18 is declining from time to time.

The respondent said that girls have the right to deny any proposed husband from elders or parents. There is no need of permission from the wereda for marriage. There has not been any prosecution related to early marriage. As she described, girls start worrying that they are too old to get a husband when they are 25 years old. As she mentioned, she has no friend who has got married. But, she said, she has friend who failed the grade 10 national examination and is involved in supporting her family in farming and non-farm work.

The respondent said that the advantage of being married is sharing the burden. “It is better to be two than one. There is a better chance to tackle challenges”. Marriage becomes disadvantageous, as she said, if the couple or either of the two does not decide the marriage without external influence. The challenge of being married is difficult in setting up an independent livelihood.

### Setting up an independent household

The respondent said that for young women it is not possible to form an independent household because women do not have access to land before marriage. As she mentioned, the different ways in which it can be done include: going to college and finding a formal job, chicken keeping, and production of areki. As she mentioned, production of areki has two benefits at the same time. On the one hand, people can benefit from selling the areki and on the other hand they could have fodder for their livestock which makes dairy farming a source of income.

Most likely, as the respondent said, wives stay dependent on their husband’s parents for 6 months to one year, depending on the willingness of both households.

### Migrating

The respondent said that migration is becoming more common in the community. Two years ago, she said, two young women left for Addis without consulting anybody. The age when young women tend to migrate is 15 to 16. Most of them, she explained, go outside the community to search for a job.

The respondent said that the number of migrants has been constant for the last few years. She said, “Young people tend to migrate when they fail grade 10 national examination. People from the community should leave the community to the nearest town, Tebase, to attend secondary school. If they fail to be successful, they will be ashamed to return home and they simply decide to migrate to other towns and search for a job”.

The respondent said that the places that the migrants prefer to go to have not changed. But, recently international migration has become very common.

The respondent said that she wants to go to outside the community in the next year to join high school.

### Living in the community

The respondent said that there is nothing to like about living in the community. As she said, there is absence of infrastructure which makes life boring. However, she said that the community is changing in many respects. For instance, she said, these days people are applying agricultural technologies such as using improved seeds and rotational cropping. Beside this, fattening has become a common option to generate income. In the coming five years, she expects to see improvements in the livelihood of the majority.

The respondent said that it is a safe place to live. As she mentioned, she is free to go to market and anywhere else. She said that socializing in groups is not common among young people. The respondent said that there is nothing for her parents to worry about her.

The respondent said that what she knows about HIV/AIDs includes that it is a disease which has no medicine, transmitted by unsafe sexual relations, or sharing sharp material with the person living with HIV/AIDs.

The respondent said that she did not know any people with HIV/AIDs in the community. She also said that she has no idea about how common sexual relations are among the young women and men and how much they take precautions against the disease.

### The economy

The respondent said that the community has become richer compared to past years. Regarding changes in women’s opportunities to farming, she mentioned that nothing had been done towards them. Similarly, she said, there is no change in women’s opportunities for non-farm works.

There is also no change in migration to the community. She said that most of the households have shown an improvement in their way of living which leads to low disparity between the rich and the poor.

As she elaborated, girls from rich families are far better than girls from the poor ones. She said that the rich girls have better access to modern clothes, school materials, and cash to purchase basic things such as hair oil, sanitary napkins and so on. Beside this, she said, the psychological makeup of the rich is better and they are very optimistic towards life.

The respondent said that there is more of a work burden on rich girls that the poor ones. As she mentioned, in rich households, there is a lot to be done because they are always progressive. Similarly, she mentioned that establishing an independent livelihood is easier for the rich because they get support from their families. And of course, as she said, it also seems very easy for the rich ones to get married earlier because they receive many marriage proposals at an early age. As it is easier for the rich to establish their independent livelihood and get married, it is also possible for them to establish an independent household.

### Religion

The respondent said that people tend to go to church rarely. As she explained, many would like to be in church when there is a celebration. There are also people who are not totally interested in religion. As she mentioned, the interest towards religion is far better for the young people than the older ones. These days, as she elaborated, young people are becoming more interested and strict in their education.

The respondent said that there are missionaries who come from Addis Ababa and teach in the community. In most cases, they come at least two times per year. As she said, there are no people who left the community to attend a religious school. She said that she has never heard about conflict among the religious leaders. She also mentioned that the church, besides being involved in religious activities, does not have anything more to do for the community.

Regarding religious rules, as she said, it is becoming stricter as there is a conservative teaching.

### Politics

The respondent said that there is no relationship between the young women and the government. As she explained, neither the wereda not the kebele administration does anything for the young women. She says, “we would like to have supportive books for the courses for their grade. But, nobody has asked us what we need for our lessons. They did not come to have discussions with us.”

The respondent said that young women are not interested in government politics. Government politics, as she said, is very secondary for them.

### Inter-generational relations

The respondent said that there is a problem of communication among the teenagers and their parents. As she described, though they speak the same language, there are communication barriers which emanate from the disrespect of teenagers for their parents.

Besides this, she said that there is pressure by the older teenagers on the younger ones. She mentioned that the older ones want the younger ones to do their share of the work. Parents, as she says, try to reconcile them but the older ones are not ready to hear their parents’ advice and propositions. In most cases, as she said, the older ones will physically beat the younger ones if he/she denies accepting his/her command.

Regarding the household she belongs to, she said that all members respected each other and there has not been any major disagreement in the past.

Furthermore, the respondent said that a few young men in the community have disagreements with most of the residents because they are drunk.

## Middle-wealth female teenager 19

### Personal

The respondent said that she lives with her parents. She has four brothers and three sisters. The household size is 10. The household livelihood is based on farming and occasionally they fatten oxen for sale.

As she said, her mother has been seriously ill for the last four years. One day, as she said, while she was doing some domestic work in the house, she collapsed. After that, her right hand and leg were paralyzed. As the respondent explained, she visited hospital in debre Brehan. Furthermore, she said, her mother had been visiting many religious places that were believed to have a blessing holy water. From the time that she collapsed, she has stopped speaking.

The respondent said that the household economic status is medium.

She is about 18 years old and she is a grade 6 student. When she was grade 5 in the last year, she stood 16th out of 68 students. She has never dropped out from school. In the last 12 months, she has engaged in both farm and non-farm activities. For instance, she said, she had been preparing food, cleaning house, taking grain to the grain mill, and fetching water. Regarding to farm work, she has been involved in weeding, harvesting as well as cultivating vegetables. In the last 12 years, she generated 60 Birr independent income from selling dung cake and grasses. With the money she got, she bought shoes, and kept the remaining 20 birr with her neighbours.

She said that she is trying her best to balance her schooling with work. As she mentioned, usually she studies in the night after she is sure that she did all the domestic work which other family members expected her to do. As she said, she attends class regularly but sometimes she may go to school late. Exceptionally, if her parents want her to stay at home, she will be absent from school. She mentioned that when her shift is in the morning, she will wake up before 5:00 AM and start doing domestic jobs such as making enjera and wot. She said that the work she has been doing does not affected her health status.

She said that she likes to be involved in domestic work, but not in farming work. She said that it is very good to combine education with work because it makes people very strong and has benefits such as additional income.

She likes the current shift program of the school. As she explained, the shift program lets students have more time for studying and working. She wants to continue her schooling, combining it with work. As she said, it will not be difficult for her because she is committed.

The respondent said that she has never enjoyed rest time while she has been growing up. As she explained, if there is idle time after being involved in farming, non-farming and schooling, she will clean the compound which requires a lot of energy and time.

The respondent said that she likes music. She mentioned that usually while working in the home or on the farm, she sings. She mentioned that she is not that much active in religion. She usually goes to church once a month. She is not interested in politics and does not belong to any youth organization.

She elaborated, “I just began socializing in a group in the last year. I am a member of a group (mehaber). We are four young women. We meet once a month. The place of meeting will change; all members invite the group once every four months. When we meet, the member who hosts the gathering will prepare food and drink. All of us prepare enjera, tela (local beer), roasted barley (kolo), and bread. Three of us have blood relation. The other one is our neighbour”.

She said that she has both women and men friends. She has one man with whom she likes to be. As she said, when she stays at home, she will do domestic works.

The respondent mentioned that she was circumcised when she was an infant. And, she said that there would have not been any problem if she was not circumcised. As she said, she has not faced any problem related to menstruation. She explained, “I started menstruating when I was 16. The first time, I felt very depressed. I used pieces of cloth. I told my elder sisters what was happening and they advised me to purchase sanitary napkins. Then after, I became comfortable with it.”

She said that she has never missed class because of menstruation. She mentioned that she has never been harassed or assaulted by men. She said that she is not married but she has a boyfriend with whom her parents are not concerned.

### Opportunities for 19 year old girls

The respondent said that she has no plan to stay in the community. She said that she is expecting her aunt, living in USA, to send her visa. As she said, her aunt promised her that she will send a visa and she thinks she will do it one day. As she said, if she does not keep her promise for some reason, she will continue at school and migrate to Debre Brehan to continue her education further. She mentioned, “It would have been better for my schooling if we had someone to take care of my mother. Last year, we brought my cousin from the neighbouring kebele. But, she returned to her home saying that she does not like to stay with us. Had my mother been well, I would have a better chance to study and to get higher scores. This time, we keep looking for a woman who may help us with the domestic work”. She said that once she leaves the community she will not return unless she needs to visit her family.

As she said, she thinks she will not marry until she is 35 years old. She will be late in her marriage because she has to finish her education before marriage. She said that her parents will not get involved in choosing her partner.

Though she has a boyfriend, they have never talked about marriage. She said that she has never thought about when she should have children or how many they should be. She said that she has a role mode; her role model is a government employee in Addis Ababa. She got her BA degree from college.

The respondent said that the only hope in the community is education and she has many worries related to safety. She fears one day she may be abducted or raped.

### Combining work and education

The respondent said that there are no young women of her age got hired for work. She said that there is no access to jobs in the community. There are a few young people working in the Amhara region agricultural research centre. They got the work, as she said, because they are relatives of the kebele officials.

The respondent said that there are women of her age that dropped out from school and are no longer in education. She elaborated, “last year, one of my friends, whose was 19, was deceived by a man and was raped. He misled her saying that he loved her and cannot live without her. She got pregnant. She was in grade 7. When her pregnancy became visible, she dropped out from school. Students were insulting her because it is unacceptable in society. Currently, she is rearing her child and living with her parents. The father denied that he is the natural father of the baby”.

The respondent said that it is not common to drop out and return to school because they feel ashamed of their age compared to their grade level. But, as she said, a few may return to school but once they drop out, the probability of staying in school is less. She says, “One of my relatives returned to school after she dropped out. She decided to drop out from school because she feared she may be abducted or raped on the way to school. She had been in school until grade 4 because she walked to school with her elder brother who is a student in the same school compound. When he decided to drop out of school, she also dropped out. After a year, when he returned to school, she also returned and they attended their education for two consecutive years. While she was in school, she met a guy who was an employee in the Amhara region agricultural research centre. Within a short period of time, she got married and gave birth to a child. Meanwhile, they got divorced and he got married to his second wife.

The respondent said that the only option for young females to establish an independent livelihood is to continue in education. Beside this, they have no other option than being a wife of a farmer. She said that she does not know a young woman who completed grade 10 and 12 or who graduated from college who cannot find a job. The respondent said that it is harder for poor girls to combine education with work. As she explained, girls from the rich families have a better chance to fulfil their basic needs so that they can be effective and have confidence both in work and education. She said that there is no young woman who is involved in bad habits.

### Women’s issues

She said that her friends, including her, feel positive towards the government’s attempt to ban female circumcision. As she said, the young women agree with the government action but the older women are against to it. She mentioned that the older women said that nothing had happened to them while they gave birth to many children without any support from health professionals.

The respondent said that a woman who brought her infant daughter to a man who had been a circumciser in the past was advised to stop circumcising her daughters. She begged the man but he explained to her that the wereda would punish him if he circumcised her. Besides this case, she said, she does not know about any prosecutions.

The respondent said that there is no facility in school for girls who are menstruating.

The respondent said that in the last year, a young woman was raped. She elaborated, “She was raped while she was going to school. She got pregnant. She decided to abort it with traditional medicines. There was no one she consulted with. She took a plant named ‘endod’. She started to bleed. While she was in the forest, she started shouting and people ran to her. The infant was aborted but the placenta remained in the uterus. They took her to Debre Brehan hospital and she got treatment and got well. She was trying to abort for the second time. Before a year, she was raped by her relative and she aborted it, taking ‘endod’. Again, she tried to abort using endod because she thought that it always works fine”.

In addition, she said that she knows two more young women who were raped and had abortions in the last year. As she said, they all use endod. When people who find out ask them why they are doing it, they do not want to give birth from a man who is not ready to marry them. Furthermore she mentioned another rape case. She says, “a woman who was hired as a housemaid in the community was raped. While she was herding livestock, her ‘owners’ from the neighbouring kebele came and took her home. While she was returning, they raped her”.

In all these cases, she said, there had never been any prosecution. She said that she knows two young women who got pregnant before being married. The respondent said that there is no access to contraceptives for young women in the community and she does not know a young woman who has started to use it.

### Getting married

The respondent said that the youngest age for marriage is 16. As she explained, in the past, many were getting married at 16 but now their number has declined. In most cases, young women who are not doing well in their education get married at 16 and 17. Those young women who are doing well in their education do not want to stay in the community. They want to leave the community for education and they are likely to wait for many years before they get married.

The respondent said that the rich ones are more likely to marry earlier than the poor ones. The rich want to get married because they have a better chance to get property from their parents.

The government legislation on marriage age does not have any impact on the community. As she said, if a woman wants to get married earlier, she will deny her real age.

The respondent said that nowadays woman can choose their partners. She described that the custom of marriage has been evolving in the past year, “a man who wants to get married to a woman sends elders to her parents. Her parents, after hearing the elders’ marriage proposal, tell them that they will send a message to them after they talk with their daughter. Then, if she agrees, they will send an individual to inform them that she accepted the proposal. After that, they prepare food and drink and invite the elders to lunch. The man, who proposed the marriage, will come with them. Then, the elders request him to tell the woman that he loves her in front of her parents and elders. Finally, they arrange their wedding day”.

The respondent said that there is no permission needed from the wereda for marriage. She mentioned that there has never been any prosecution related to early marriage.

The respondent said that women when they are 20 start worrying that they are too old to get married and to give birth. She said that she has one friend who got married two years ago. She described that she was forced to get married by her parents when she was 16.

The respondent said that there is no advantage or disadvantage attached with marriage.

The respondent said that the elders will not allow a man to get married unless he has a means to own farmland. As she said, the main question that the parents of the proposed woman would ask the elders is how many ‘Timad’ land does he own? Elders, if they want to be successful in their mission, must first check whether or not the man has land.

She said that she has no friends who want to be wives of farmers. Similarly, she said that there are no young women who want to get married to a man in the community involved in other kinds of work. She said that she has no friend or sister who has become a second wife.

She thinks that no one will be interested to marry older men in the future. The respondent said that in the last year she knows four young people who left the community. As she explained, people from the wereda called a meeting and taught the young people that they should not go outside the community. As she said, they told them that there are a lot of opportunities in the community if they are ready to take them. As she said, among her friends, most of them want to go to college and get formal job.

The respondent said that women in their twenties will give birth to children and become housewives. As she explained, they may get involved in income generating activities which depend on their skill and choice. Some may produce areki, and some may engage in handicrafts like ‘sifet’.

The respondent said that it is not easy for young women from poor families to get married to husbands with an independent livelihood. As she elaborated, those young men who have their independent livelihood do not want to send elders to poorer young women. She thinks that the only reason is interest for property.

### Setting up an independent household

The respondent said that it is not easy for young women to establish an independent household. The different means of supporting young women to set an independent household is joining college and getting a formal job, engaging in dairy farming and fattening.

Usually, she said, newly married wives stay with their husband’s parents for a year. This may not differ for those women who have poor families.

### Migrating

The respondent said that migration among young women is becoming more prevalent in recent years. They tend to migrate starting from age 13. The respondent said that those who prefer to migrate to Debre Brehan town will engage in daily labour. As she described, they will be hired in ‘shiro’ processing enterprises as a winnower. They winnow one quintal five times and they get paid five birr. They rent a house in groups; three to four young women live together.

She said that she does not know anyone who has returned after migration. She is planning to migrate to Debre Brehan town to continue her education further.

### Living in the community

The respondent said that what she likes about the community is the access to school and health post. She doesn’t like the harmful practices such as abduction and rape. The respondent said that there is a little change in some respects; these days people start to build tin-roofed houses. The source of the change is mainly the fattening practice.

The respondent said that it is very difficult to say the community is a peaceful place as there are many threats especially for the young women.

The respondent mentioned that a few young people, especially the women, tend to socialize in groups. She also belongs to such social groups. There has never been conflict among the group members.

The respondent said that her parents worry about abduction and rape. But, they do not tend to control her.

About HIV/AIDs, she said, it is transmitted by blood contact, and sharing sharp materials. She said that she knows one HIV/AIDs case in the community. She elaborated, “there is a woman who has 5 children and is living with HIV/AIDs. She is a 38 year old divorced woman. She was married four times. She got at least one child from each husband. She has started taking the medicine”.

The respondent said that is very common for young women as well as men to have sexual relations. As she elaborated, they usually meet in the forest and she thinks that they do not take precautions against contracting HIV/AIDs.

### The economy

The respondent said that people in the community are relatively becoming richer than before. As she said, there is little change in women’s opportunities for farming. She mentioned that the government has started to give chickens and vegetable seedlings for a few women. Beside this, as she mentioned, there is no change regarding women’s farming and non-farming work.

The respondent said that there is no change in migration to the community. People come to live in the community because of marriage or to live with their relatives. These have been common trends for a long time. As she said, there is no significant inequality among the households.

The respondent said that young women from richer families are better than those who are from poorer families in the way they dress and keep their personal hygiene. But, she said that young women from different economic statuses do not have differences in their education.

Regarding work, she said that young women from poorer families have a burden in their house. As she elaborated, they have to look for income generating activities to generate income for themselves.

Establishing an independent livelihood is much easier for a young woman from richer families that women belonging to a poor one. Regarding to marriage, she said that the young people who belong to richer families get married much earlier because the couple are in a better position to have an independent livelihood.

### Religion

The respondent said that people in the community usually do not spend time on religious activities. As she described, they may attend mehaber once a month. There are also people who are totally uninterested in religious activities. Young women, as she said, go to church rarely and usually young people go to church in the first 15 days of august, which is a fasting season for orthodox Christians.

The respondent said that occasionally people from the wereda Orthodox Church branch come to the community and teach the people. She said that she does not know a person who left the community to attend religious education. She thinks that religion has become stricter than before because there is continues teaching by the leaders. There has never been a disagreement between the religious leaders. She mentioned that it is very impossible for a person who belongs to other religion to live in the community.

### Politics

The respondent said that there are loose relations between young women and government. As she said, the kebele officials called a meeting twice in the last two years. In the last year, they called young women aged 16 and above. The kebele officials want to recruit young women to join the ruling party. The meeting was organized to make the young women aware of the basic government strategies and directions. Then afterwards, the officials planned to register all attendants as party members. By default, they may become ‘ginibar qedem’ i.e. vanguard young women.

In the current year, the kebele administration also called a meeting for those young women who are 18 and above. However, she said that she did not attend all the meetings and, as she heard, the number of those attending was very small in their number.

Besides this, she mentioned that there has not been any government intervention to support the young people in the community. She said that there is no pressure on young women to join the ruling party. Girls, she said, are generally are not interested in politics. However, she said that there are few young women who want to participate in government politics. As she explained, there are young people, especially men, who complain about the government’s inactiveness to change the life of the youth and they tend to be opponents though they do not belong to any opposition party.

### Inter-generational relations

The respondent said that sometimes there are good relations between teenagers and parents. However, sometimes, young people quarrel with their parents in matters of marriage; young men disagree with parents refusing to search for a wife and the young women quarrel with parents saying that they are forcing her to get married to a man with whom she does not like to live.

The respondent said that for instance her brother and father had been in disagreement because her brother decided to get married to a woman who is not accepted by his parents.

Beside this, she mentioned that there are young people who steal money from their parents which may be a cause of disagreement. In addition, a few young men get drunk and nag older people.

## Poor female teenager 19

### Personal

The respondent said that she is living with her parents. She explained that she has two brothers living in the same household, and an elder sister who lives in Debre brehan town. As she said, her mother passed away five years ago. In 2011, she said, her sister migrated to Debre brehan and started production of areki for the market.

The respondent said that the livelihood of the household depends on farming. The economic status of the household is said to be medium. As she mentioned, the household owns 3 hectares of rain fed farmland.

She is 19 years old and she dropped out from school in the last year. As she said, she was she was a grade 9 student in the last academic year. She mentioned, “I had been attending my class by settling in Tebase town. I rent a class room and I was paying 35 birr. I was living with my girlfriend. But, this year I decided to drop out from school because I am the only one available to take care of my brothers and father. In this decision, nobody was involved. I do it by myself because I cannot concentrate on my education knowing that they have nobody to care for them”.

In the last season, she said that, she had been involved in both farming and non-farming activities. She has also been producing areki for sale. As she said, as source of income, she had been keeping chickens for eggs. With the income she gets from selling chickens, she had bought shoes, and scarf.

The respondent said that she decided to drop out from school because she found it impossible to combine work with education. She said, “Had the school been nearer to my resident area, it would not have caused a challenge. In the present situation, I have to walk each day for about four hours if I decide to attend class. And, I found it totally impossible”.

The respondent said that she likes the shift program because at least it lets students have time for other activities. The respondent said that she is planning to return to school in the coming academic year. As she said, however, first she has to get a woman who is willing to be hired as a housemaid for the household. If this becomes possible, as she said, she will rent a room in Tebase town and she will regularly visit at least once every two weeks.

The respondent said that in her rest time, she sells areki to her customers. As she said, as far as she stays at home, she will provide areki for farmers. She pointed out that there is no separate house for this business purpose; she is using the living room for her customers.

The respondent said that she does not usually go to church. In most cases, she said, she goes to church on yearly celebrated days than my happen about 5 times per a year. As she told, occasionally when the government officials call a meeting, she may join them but she is not interested in politics.

About youth association, she said that starting from the last year; young people had met five times. Generally, the agenda of those meetings revolved around development issues. The respondent said that they advise the youths to cultivate vegetables as a means of income generation. The members of the youth association, as said by the kebele officials, are about 15. In the last year, she mentioned that the kebele provided some young women with vegetable seedlings which include carrot and beet root.

She is circumcised, as she said. And, she elaborated, circumcision cannot bring any problems. It is normal and culturally accepted. The respondent said that she has boyfriends as well as girlfriends. As she said, when she was menstruating for the first time, she got frustrated. As she said, she discussed it with her mother as well as older girlfriends. They told her, as she said, to use underwear, piece of cloth and trousers in times of menstruation.

The respondent said that she has never been sexually harassed. As she explained, men, if they want to have sex, ask openly. She is not married and has no boyfriend.

### Opportunities for 19 year old girls

The respondent said that she wants to stay in the community. As she mentioned, she will continue her education. She said that she will open a small shop after she finishes her education. She said that she would be happy if she got married to a man who is well educated and owns farmland.

The respondent said that she would be happy if she marries when she is 25 years old. And, she mentions that she would like to have four children. She said that her role model is her nephew. He graduated from Behar Dar University and he got job in Addis Ababa. Recently, as she said, he bought a house which is said to be very modern.

The respondent said that the hope she has in the community is trading and her worry includes absence of credit facility for youth. Besides trading, she said cultivation of vegetables for market could be supportive source of income for young women.

### Combining work and education

The respondent said that young women of her age either attend school or migrate to search for a job. She mentioned that there are young women who are hired in the food processing enterprise in the nearest town, tebase. The job they do is roasting peas and winnowing. Some of them were students and some of them have never been in school.

There are young women, as she said who migrated to Addis Ababa and Debre Brehan and become a housemaid.

The respondent said that she does not know a young woman who completed grade 12 or college graduate who cannot find a job. But, as she said, she knows a young woman who completed grade 10 in the last year and failed to pass to the next grade, and cannot find a job in the community.

The respondent said that it is very rare for a young woman to return to school after they dropped out for a while. As she described, they feel that they have totally forgotten what they learnt from the last grade.

The respondent said that keeping chickens, cultivating vegetables and trading will help young females to establish independent livelihoods in the community. The respondent said that it is easier for poor young women to combine work with education than for the rich ones because the poor ones know that she has no alternative other than education.

### Women’s issues

The respondent said that almost all young females support the government action of banning female circumcision. As she said, there are few young women who are against to the government action. For them, as she said, female circumcision is a custom of the community as well as it is a mean to keep personal hygiene for women.

The respondent said that she does not know of a case of rape in recent years. But, she mentioned that there is voluntary abduction. She said “last year, a man voluntary abducted a woman. She was 22 years old. Her parents accused the man in the social court but the woman resisted saying that she was abducted voluntarily”.

The respondent said that she knows a woman who got pregnant before marriage. She explained, “One of my friends got pregnant while she was a grade 6 student. When her delivery time came near, she dropped out from school. After she gave birth, she returned to school but she did not stay in school for long. Now, she has got daily labour at the Amhara region agricultural research centre”.

The respondent also said that she knows a case of abortion. She explained, “One of my friends got an abortion in the last year. She got the service in the Debre brehan hospital. No one except me knows about the case”. In addition, she said that there are young women who abort by using different plants such as ‘endod’. Besides this, as she said, a young woman committed suicide by taking insecticide.

The respondent said that there are young women who use contraceptives. But, as she mentioned, they use it secretly. In most cases, they take the contraceptive from Debre Brehan town, not from the health post because they feel ashamed to ask the HEWs.

### Establishing an independent livelihood

The respondent said that most young women have a chance to get married with a man who owns his own farmland. She mentioned that there are only a few young women who want to become wives of farmers. As she said, most of them would prefer to get married to a man who can set up a household outside the community.

The respondent said that she has two girlfriends who migrated to Addis Ababa, and two who migrated to Arab countries. She mentioned that some of them were students and decided to drop out from school because of different problems.

### Getting married

The respondent said that the youngest age for marriage is about 16 and 17. These days, as she mentioned, the number of women who would like to get married at 16 and 17 has declined because young women either prefer to continue their education before marriage or they would like to migrate to the towns and cities to search for a job.

The respondent said that young women from poorer families are most likely to get married earlier than young women from the rich families. The reason she gives was economic; the poor want to be independent as early as possible from their parents.

The respondent said that young women now have full rights to choose their partners. As she said, girls start worrying that they are too old to get married when they become 25 years old.

The respondent said that she has two married friends in the community.

Regarding the advantages of marriage, she said that marriage is important to be independent form parents and to give birth for children. The disadvantage of marriage includes work as well as responsibility burden.

### Setting up an independent household

The respondent said that it is possible to establish an independent household by using different means. For instance, she said that young people can engage in areki production, cultivation of vegetables and so on to generate income.

The respondent said that in most cases wives will stay with their husband’s parents for at least three months. This is not affected by the wealth status of the wife.

### Migrating

The respondent said that migration is becoming very common in recent years. As she described, they tend to think about migration when they become 15 and above. The places they usually migrate to include Addis Ababa, Debre Brehan, Tebase and Arab countries. As she said the number of migrants is increasing from time to time.

The respondent said that she knows three returned migrants who were in Addis Ababa. They did not face any problems but the decided to stay in the community. Two of them had already got married and gave birth.

The respondent said that she does not want to migrate.

### Living in the community

The respondent said that the community is a fairly a good place to live. As she described, the community has been changing in many respects. She said that planting of eucalyptus trees is becoming a major source of income for many households. In the next five years, as she said, she will expect a more economic growth in the kebele.

The respondent said that the community is a safe place to live. As she said, young women who usually go to church have begun to socialize in groups. In most cases, members met once a month and they chat, laugh and discuss different issues.

The respondent said that the worries of her parents regarding her are about the source of livelihood. About HIV/AIDs, she said that she knows that it can be transmitted by blood contact, sharing sharp materials and unsafe sexual relations.

The respondent said that she knows two HIV/AIDs cases in the community. As she described, the carriers are a couple and they have children. They have started to teach the community, exposing that they are living with HIV/AIDs.

The respondent said that it is very common for young women and men to have sexual relations. She pointed out that nobody cares about who he/she has sex with or takes precautions against contracting HIV/AIDs.

### The economy

The respondent said that the community is becoming richer. She also said that there is a change in women’s opportunities for farming. For instance, as she said, the kebele has started to distribute seedlings of vegetables in rainy seasons.

Regarding the inequality among households, she said that people are becoming more equal in their economic status because almost all individuals are trying to generate income beyond farming.

The respondent said that a young woman from a rich household is better than young women from a poor household in terms of clothing and access to better food. Similarly, as she said, the economic status of the girls determines their performance in school; poor girls have no access to schooling materials and basic needs such as food and clothes which make them less confident to come to school.

The respondent said that regarding work, young women from the rich families have more of a work burden because the rich households own a lot of livestock which require labour to take care of them.

### Religion

The respondent said that there are people who go to church each weekend and there are also people who are not totally interested to go to church.

The respondent said that the young women are becoming more interested in their religion. They, as she said, they even started to socialize in a group. Occasionally, missionaries from Debre Brehan and Addis Ababa come and teach at the church. As she said, religious rules are becoming stricter than before.

The respondent said that in the current year those religious leaders in saint Gabreil church were in disagreement. As she described, the cause of the conflict was the question of salary increment. As she said, it is impossible to belong to any other religion than orthodox Christianity and to live in the community.

### Politics

The respondent said that the relations between the young women and the government are very loose. As she explained, the kebele officials are not interested in working closely with the youth. She said that the only thing that the kebele administration does for the young women is the distribution of vegetables seedlings for a few in the last year.

The respondent said that there is no pressure on young women to join the ruling party. There is no interest among young women towards politics.

### Inter-generational relations

The respondent said that there is no problem regarding teenagers and parents’ relations. Sometimes, disagreements may happen as the teenagers refuse to respect the commands of their parents.