# Yetmen site-specific topic: gender relations

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**Economic empowerment**

### Rights to land

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEWS: Males and females have equal rights to land. Land redistribution was made once in the EPRDF regime. Those who were married couples at that time got land and they have equal rights to share it during divorce. There are many landless youths in Yetmen and most of these are youths. As time goes on the land-holding size of households is shrinking because parents are sharing land with their children when their children get married. Land is a very important livelihood security for older men and women so they are not completely dependent on their children or other relatives because they have at least their land where they can get food.

#### New laws being implemented

WOMEN’S VIEWS: There has been land registration carried out recently and households were given land ownership certificates which consists of pictures of husbands and wives, or if the land is owned by one person it includes the picture of that person. Many people said that the land registration has brought no change to owners but it will help them in the future during divorce.

MEN’SVIEWS: All adult and old male respondents reported that women’s land rights were practically insured. This was in most cases supported by the fact that young girls are considered equal in the *motekeda* land redistribution and married women could easily claim for equal property division at divorce. Many reported that women could practically demand and take their own share of land equally divided either through mutual agreement/mediated by elders or by court decision if their husbands resisted.

It was also indicated that formerly land owning men used to marry women having no land of their own so that wives couldn’t claim any when they were divorced. It was commonly reported that it has become common knowledge that wives are co-owners of all land with husbands and entitled to take their share during divorce. Many respondents insisted that they (men) prefer to marry landless women who would not claim land during a divorce, than taking women having their own land as wives

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEWS: There is no change with regard to rights to land. Men and women know that they have equal rights to land. There were problems during the Haile Selassie regime, it was improved during the Derg and it was good during the EPRDF.

### Farm and off-farm work opportunities

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEWS: Livelihood sources of the community are farming, livestock rearing, trading, irrigation, poultry and beekeeping. Women are engaged in farm activities while their husbands or adult sons plough their land. Whenever land is given for share-cropping they are not usually expected to work on the farm. Every household has a backyard and they usually use it to grow crops that are used until the main harvest comes. Women do weeding, harvesting, carrying harvested crops from the farm to the threshing place and digging.

Women can be employed on others’ farms as daily labourers and they can be paid 15-25 birr per day depending on their capacity. Males are paid better for the same work. Working in irrigation is also an emerging activity for women.

Trading is common to men and women in Yetmen. Women usually buy from wholesalers and sell it in smaller amounts to others. There are also women who bring grains or other agricultural products from other places to sell.

Preparation of an alcoholic drink known by *arake* by distillation method is an important source of income for women, mainly in the rainy season because it gives heat. Women of lower economic status do this activity, they sell the *arake* at market.

There is ironing of clothes at market but this involves only a few women. More women are engaged in this activity than men.

The construction of the health centre created job opportunities for women; there were some women who were working as daily labourers. The attitude of women to work as daily labourers has not changed as they are always willing to work if there is the opportunity.

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEWS: In the past the presence of land was enough as source of living but now newly-formed households do not have enough land to support their expenditures. As a result woman are looking for off-farm activities like trading and employment on others farm.

## Personal and social empowerment – personal relations with men

### Abduction and rape

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEWS: There is no abduction in Yetmen but there have been a few cases of rape happening sometimes and it happens when girls go to collect dungcakes. There is no recent case of rape in Yetmen. Even males of 15 years of age rape girls. Currently the law has become tight and people do not tend to rape.

MEN’SVIEWS: Many agreed that abduction and rape were not problems at all. It was reported that child marriage, giving small girls to similarly small boys in marriage was common- usually both stay with their own parents until they are grown up enough to form their own households. Such cases were reported to have occurred sometimes, but the practice of early marriage was reported to have decreased.

#### New laws being implemented?

MEN’SVIEWS: The requirement to be physically filtered/observed at Wereda court to prevent early marriage challenges the sending of elder siblings

### Extra-marital pregnancy and abortion

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEWS: Extra- marital pregnancy is not that common. Youths who are not married and experience pregnancy are mostly those who go to high school at Bichena and Zebch. This has increased within the last ten years when many female students started to go to towns to learn. One cause is girls are not marrying as early as before. Those who experience pregnancy out of marriage wedlock are 15-20 years old. Girls who experience pregnancy do not have acceptance for marriage.

There were cases where aborted infants were found but the girls could not be traced. Girls get an abortion service at modern health service providers. Girls usually use traditional herbs for abortion and there are very rare cases where girls die while trying to abort.

Contraceptives are widely used in Yetmen. Contraceptives are available in the form of pills and injections. Many women choose the injection because it is easy to take it. Use of contraceptives started during the Derg regime; at that time it was available only in the form of pills. It has been about 12 years since the contraceptives started to be given in the form of injection.

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’S VIEWS: There is no new law that deals with extra marital pregnancy or abortion.

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEWS: The tendency for girls to get pregnant before marriage is increasing because they are going to towns for education and they are not getting married early as was the case in the past. Currently more people understand the benefits of using contraceptives and they are using them.

### Choice of marriage partner

#### Generally

Compared to the past the chance of choosing a marriage partner is increasing. Those who have some kind of job or who WOMEN’S VIEWS: are educated have more chance of choosing their marriage partners than those who are not educated and those who are of a younger age and do not choose their marriage partner. Choice of marriage partner is equal to rich and poor households.

MEN’SVIEWS: It was reported as common that those who have got some education marry whom they choose and parents would agree with this, but the majority still got married through parents initiated/ arranged marriage mostly with the consent of the children.

There was a common perception, among many interviewees, that women well understood the benefit of using contraceptives, and many of them used it when they decided to stop birth at all or to delay it for some time. But it was commonly reported that most of those who used it didn’t continue for the required period of time, some stopped it in the meantime either because husbands or the women themselves wanted to have one or more children. Men commonly reported that in most cases it was husbands who initiated their wives to take contraceptives due to a burden of poverty, but many wives either rejected such ideas and/or purposely stopped it after using it for some time.

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’S VIEWS: There is nothing about choice of marriage partner.

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEWS: There is the tendency to get to know one another before marriage. Some may be getting married without knowing one another and this situation will remain if attitudes continue like this.

### Child and early marriage

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEWS: Early marriage is common in Yetmen but it is decreasing steadily. One reason for this is establishing a household and leading an independent life is becoming difficult in the absence of enough land or with no land. The other reason which is linked with this is children go to school and continue until higher levels made possible by their capacity. There are still cases where female children are forced to marry which stops education. Children from richer households easily and quickly establish their own households because they have better resources.

MEN’SVIEWS: Many agreed that abduction and rape were not problems at all. It was reported that child marriage, giving small girls to similarly small boys in marriage was common- usually both stay with each own parents until they grown up to form their own households. Cases were reported to have occurred sometimes, but the practice of early marriage was reported to have decreased

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’S VIEWS: Recently couples have been asked to take pictures when their age is assessed at Bichena. This was done because parents show an older daughter when they are asked by the Kebele. This was what was done in other Kebeles but the new law applies to all Kebeles.

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEWS: The attitude towards early marriage is still there but parents are forced by the existing situation to delay marriage of their female children.

### Male violence towards women

#### Generally

WOMEN’S VIEWS: The majority maintain peaceful relationship among men and women. There are also some who do not have good behaviour, who have frequently had conflict with their wives and harm them physically and verbally. In the past there was a problem of sharing property but now there is no problem and if women do not want their relationship they ask for divorce and share everything equally.

MEN’SVIEWS: It was indicated that wife beating has been practised, but its frequency has very much decreased and only occurs rarely nowadays.

#### New laws being implemented?

WOMEN’S VIEWS: No

#### Attitudes changing?

WOMEN’S VIEWS: There is tendency in people to respect the rights of women.

## Political empowerment

### Women’s voice in community decisions

WOMEN’S VIEWS: was not successful. It is not common for women to participate in meetings and other issues. The community think that issues of politics and administration are the concern of men. There is a representative of women’s affair in the cabinet but it is not that functional with empowerment of women.

The women affairs representative raises issues of concern to women to be addressed. There are women in the Woreda council from the whole Kebele but they are not from Yetmen sub-Kebele.

### Exercise of women’s voice

MEN’SVIEWS: Many believed women were politically empowered in terms of associations, but only a few of them were involved as cadres and leaders.