

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape, likely in the Blue Nile River Basin. The terrain is hilly and features terraced agricultural fields in various shades of brown and tan. A river or stream flows through the center of the valley. The background shows more hills under a clear sky. The text is overlaid on the image.

Gender, Environment and Sustainable Development: Understanding the Linkages The case of the Blue Nile River Basin

Promoter

Prof.Dr. Pieter van der zaag (UNESCO-IHE)

Supervisors

Dr. Rhodante Ahlers (UNESCO-IHE)

**Dr. Belay Simane and Dr. Mulumebet Zenebe
(Addis Ababa University)**

June, 2010

Case 1-Gendered land and water management in the *Gedeb* Micro-Catchment, Temamagn Kebele

The village

- Hill slope draining to the Gedeb River (2600 masl)
- Around 230 people (60 households) live-7FHHs.
- Land use- cultivated land (80 ha), grazing land (15 ha), irrigated gardens (30ha), steep shrub land (15ha)
- Crops: Triticale, Engedo, Teff, wheat, barley, maize, potato and onions

Land and Water management– Social actors and their interactions

- How women and men farmers are making a living-understand different roles and relations between the actors who influence/ed by soil erosion
- Increasing land scarcity & declining soil fertility have lead to a situation in which landholdings are both intensively farmed & often insufficient for livelihood requirements.
- Crop yields are reported to be lower than (30-100%) the 1974 figures notwithstanding the application of fertilizers.
- All these make farmers' earnings from their lands minimal.

Frictions in the family

- Until recently, individual plots were allocated from parents to son(s) upon marriage, whereupon they would construct a house and plough a *Tegan*, signifying the establishment of their residence.
- Son's and daughter in-law's labour contribution in the parental land & household tasks are expected in return for the use of these plots.
- However, as landholdings have gone down this becomes increasingly difficult.
- Men's parents delay allocating their plots immediately after marriage & want the newly wed brides to spend at least a year in the parental HH - causing out-migration for wage labor & divorces.

- Fierce competition over **sharecropped land** is causing intense disputes between parents and their children.
- Not all parents are always willing to sharecrop out their lands to their sons or grand-sons anymore.
- They fear that the large amounts of time they spend outside the village for trading would affect the harvest.
- Many are afraid of their children will sell their use-rights & migrate to cities.
- Whenever the land is sharecropped out to family members irrigation turns & plot boundaries are often lead to disputes.

Young farmers are not willing to contribute labour in communal activities as they felt betrayed by the government as well as their parents.

‘Walking out of farming’– Trading to sustain livelihoods

- As the small plots do not sufficient food to sustain a family, more & more male farmers are migrate for wage to Teppi, Wollega, G/Kidamen & A.A
- Significant number of them spend 3-5 days per week, walking all the way to distant lowland markets (Gira kidamen [25km], Jiga [...km], Dimbecha [35 km], Fitbeden [..km]) to trade *kenba*, potatoes, onions, and fababean.
- They exchange bamboo baskets, potatoes, and onions for maize, which they sell for cash. With the cash they purchase Engedo for consumption.

- Changes in the roles that women have in the household.
- Women & children are responsible to collect dung and prepare compost, irrigate potatoes & onions, hoeing, weeding, & protecting crops from cattle.
- Women are increasingly involved in trading *kenbas*, fababean, Gesho and local liquor at closer markets like Ammanuel (15 km) & Rob Gebaya (12km)

Marriage practices

Early Marriage

- The ideal marriageable age has been reduced gradually through time
- The marriageable age in the 1960s & before was 20 - 22 for males and 15 - 16 for females.
- However, since early 70s the marriageable age was gradually reduced & now is reaching 15 -18 for males & 7 - 13 for females
- Farmers having started preparing wedding feast for more than one child (*Chefleka*) to reduce wedding costs.
- They also argued that such practice started when land started to be allotted for households in the *Derg* period.

Exchange Marriage:

- The groom marries the sister of his sister's husband as a result of *Chefelka* practice
- This was important to exploit *rist* land and to avoid unnecessary fragmentation by exchanging the land, if both inherited land from their parents.
- The groom may plough the *rist* of his sister by Exchanging with his wife's *rist*.

Planning

- Developing photographs of the participants and conduct interviews based on.
- Finish data collection in Temamagn.
- Land use and administration offices, women's council, local *kebele* civic court, Woreda Court, women lawyer's association, Markets.
- Secondary data sources like archives at woreda and kebele level (courts, office of women's affairs) regarding marriage arrangements and divorce rates over time.