ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Mobility and Conflict: Persistent Challenges in Expanding Access to Education Among Pastoralists of South Omo, Ethiopia

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Abstract

This study explores into mobility patterns and prevalence of conflict as determinants of access to and retention in education. The assessment has been carried out in two educationally underprivileged pastoralist districts of south Omo. Ethnographic visits, key informants interview and focus group discussion were the major tools of data collection. Findings suggest that the area is characterized by regular seasonal mobility, frequent conflicts and conflict induced displacement. For communities in Dasenech and Nyangatom the situation of no war does not necessarily mean that there is peace. Drought and harsh weather are the driving forces of mobility. Competition over water sources and pastureland coupled with internal border dispute and cattle raid were identified as the long standing causes of armed conflict. Inability of schools to continue their regular functions without disruptions in the area under study is recognized as an adverse effect of both mobility and conflict. Encroachment of rangelands due to large scale agricultural investment and mineral exploration found to be the other frontiers of conflict of interest.

Key words: Cattle raid, conflict, education, investment, mobility, pastoralists

INTRODUCTION

Pastoralists' life style is distinct from their agriculturalist counterparts. Farmers are known for their sedentary living while pastoralists become accustomed to mobility. Pastoral mobility, however, is not a matter of choice. Rather it is a necessity in order to ensure survival of both human beings and herds. Inhabiting in the arid and semi-arid areas, pastoralists usually strive to look for coping mechanisms during period of stress. One of such coping mechanisms is mobility. United States Agency for International Development (USAID) (2011) regards pastoral mobility as the most important adaptive strategy. Ikeya and Fratkin (2005) also recognize it as an essential condition of maintaining herd productivity.

As noted by Pastoralist Forum -Ethiopia, International Institute for Rural Reconstruction and Development Fund there are a number of good reasons for which pastoralists keep on seasonally moving from place to place. First, mobility enables pastoralists to make wise use of the limited pasture and other resources in a sustainable manner. Secondly, mobility lets pastoralists to carefully manage and conserve rangelands. Particularly, the Ethiopian pastoralists pursue mobility in search for better grazing, water, and saltlicks as well as averting the risk of animal disease. Besides, there is mobility that may be dictated by emergency situations mainly due to flooding of such rivers as Awash, Wabi-Shabelle, Ganalle and Omo (Pastoralist Forum-Ethiopia, International Institute for Rural Reconstruction and Development Fund, 2010) that calls for unconditional evacuation of pastoralists.

Paradoxical as it may sound, pastoral mobility is known for its two opposing outcomes. It contains desirable effects on the one end of the continuum and devastation on the other. Pastoralist Forum-Ethiopia, International Institute for Rural Reconstruction and Development Fund (2010) noted that exchanging of information, social interaction, animal husbandry, disease prevention and maintaining cross-cultural relations as blessings of mobility. On the contrary, conflict stands as curse of pastoral mobility when it involves violent dispute. The challenge is that "mobility is an indispensable element of pastoralist livelihood" (Pastoralist Forum -Ethiopia, International Institute for Rural Reconstruction and Development Fund, 2010:6).

Pastoral areas are usually branded as areas of adversity. Pastoralists suffer from multifaceted challenges. These challenges can roughly be classified as having natural and manmade dimensions. Natural problems encountered by pastoralists include but not limited to aridity of the areas wherein they reside, scarcity of resources to support their livelihood, as well as recurrence of contrasting natural disasters like drought at one time and flood at another. Manmade aspects of the problem, on the other hand, revolve around conflicts of different nature. Of course conflict is said to be a common place in the lives of the pastoral communities. Kimani (2008), for instance, described the pastoral context as the area characterized by recurring natural disaster and endemic insecurity. Adan and Pkalya (2005) have also identified competition over access and control of scarce natural resources as the underlying causes of conflict in arid and semi-arid settings. Butler and Gates (2010) went on to some distance in establishing cause and effect relationship between drought and pastoral conflict in a way that resource scarcity resulting from drought eventually leads to conflict. It becomes a routinely observable phenomenon that the "combination of more people with more animals competing for the use of ever shrinking pastures and water sources does produce conflict" (USAID, 2011:7) among pastoralist communities.

In a further analysis of the conflict situation prevailing in pastoralist areas, Blench (1997) has come up with a list of conflict categories. As for Blench, conflict over natural resources among pastoralists themselves or between pastoralists and others may take any of the seven forms[1] identified by the author or a combination of multiple categories. It is clear that Blench's assessment put emphasis only on those disputes that arise due to competition over natural resources. Nevertheless, conflicts

temming from traditional practices such as cattle rustling as rite of passage for young warriors, and as a means of regulating the quality of livestock (Mburu, 2001) were overlooked by Blench.

Sharing relatively a similar life style with pastoralists across the globe, the situation with Ethiopian pastoralists is also not an exception. Owing to their settlement in arid and semi-arid areas where water and grazing are scarce, mobility is an inherent life style of pastoral communities that serves as a means of survival. Pastoralists in Ethiopia customarily move from place to place mainly in search for water and pastureland. Erratic rainfall patterns, high temperatures, floods and drought (USAID, 2011) which are attributable to the ever escalating climatic change are identified as significant stress bearers on the lives of the Ethiopian pastoralists. Regarding the situation of pastoralists in Ethiopia USAID (2011:2) went on saying the following.

> Pastoralists in Ethiopia face a number of challenges that threaten the sustainability of their traditional practices. As the country has sought to develop and diversify its economy, land has been allocated by the state for other uses. The combination of diminishing grazing areas and population growth (both human and animal) has contributed to land degradation, competition for pasture and water, and interethnic and intra-ethnic conflict.

Ethiopian pastoralists represent ten million of the total population of the country and occupy 61 percent of the total land mass. They raise about 42 percent of the cattle, 7 percent of the goats, 25 percent of the sheep, 20 percent of the equines and all of the camels (PFE, IIRR and DF, 2010).

However, they live in a severe poverty situation in spite of their significant contribution to the national economy.

Being settled along the international borders, the Ethiopian pastoralists usually affected by recurring conflicts with fellow pastoralists across the borders as this incidence commonly prevails between pastoralists in South Omo and their Kenyan counterparts. Frequent internal disputes with neighboring fellow pastoralists due to cattle rustling, pastureland and water sources put the pastoralist contexts in a constant flux.

It is very difficult for schools to continue their usual operation under such a security threat. Parents become anxious about safety of their children. The question of well-being remains a top priority than thinking of the instructional tasks among the teaching personnel. School supplies may cease to exist due to disruption in transport service. This study was carried out to examine the patterns of mobility and prevalence of conflict in two pastoralist districts of south Omo (Dasenech and Nyangatom) where access to primary education is critically low.

Pastoralists are one of the seriously disadvantaged groups as far as provision of formal education is concerned. Their insignificant participation in education has significantly limited partaking of pastoralists in the labour market as well. Regarding the underrepresentation of pastoralists in education Saverio Krätli's has to say "Educationally, pastoralists appear to be a paradox. From the point of view of official education they are a complete failure: in terms of enrolment, attendance, classroom performance, achievement, continuity to higher education and gender balance they regularly score at the bottom of the ladder" (Krätli, 2001:1)

Barriers that limit pastoral access to and retention in education can take various interdependent forms. Krätli and Dyer (2009) attribute the daunting pastoralists' restricted access to education to incompatibility of the mainstream school-based education delivery. This system, as noted by the authors, lacks responsiveness to the pastoral mobility pattern. Yet, mobility is considered to be an essential condition for endurance of the pastoral production system.

Recognition of mobility as an inherent manifestation of the pastoralist style of life may not necessarily be debatable. It is simply there since the advent of pastoralism itself. However, mobility in most cases does not stand alone. The likelihood of mobility to invite violent conflict is imminent as it is discussed in the preceding section of this study. Mobility and conflict have a role reversal kind of relationship. At times mobility triggers conflict, at another conflict causes mobility. No matter whichever prevails first, both mobility and conflict are serious impediments of expanding educational opportunities in pastoralists' areas while other restraining factors kept constant.

This study focuses on analysis of patterns of pastoral mobility and prevalence of conflict in south Omo zone of Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's regional state. As it is documented by the USAID (2011) pastoralists in the southern part of the country are severely affected by a recurring drought which allows no interval to recover. Though it sounds distressing to learn the bitter fact as it is taking place in southern Ethiopia "pastoralists themselves expressed doubts about the viability and future of the pastoralist livelihood" (USAID, 2011:7). Even then, living in such a fragile state of affairs urges pastoralists to look for a relatively safer destination in order to escape the disaster to come. Nevertheless, their frequent mobility in search for refuge may not be always peaceful. It is common to such migratory moves to face hostile responses from people who have same interest over the resources that the migrants intend to have access to.

The Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region (SNNPR) is home for 56 ethnic groups (SNNPR Nationalities Council, 2009). South Omo zone is one of the administrative units that constitute the region. This zone is again subdivided into eight districts[2]. In Ethiopia there are 29 pastoralist communities (PFE, IIRR and DF, 2010). Sixteen[3] out of the total of 29 pastoralist communities are inhabited in south Omo zone alone.

South Omo zone is known not only for its pastoralist economic activities. It also represents the area that is severely disadvantaged with regard to access to education. Primary education in the area is generally characterized by critically low enrolment and alarmingly

high dropping out rates among the pastoralist communities. For instance, Nyangatom and Dasenech districts had 4.3% and 9.1% of net primary school enrolment rates respectively while the regional average net enrolment rate was set at 85.1% in 2008 (SNNPR-RB, 2008). In addition to this lowest rate in enrolment, most of the districts are characterized by high school dropping out. Though it looks very strange, the primary school dropout rate was 54.1% for Nyangatom, 19.2% for Hamer, and 16.8% for Bena-Tsemay districts while the regional average was 13.7% during the academic year 2010/11 (SNNPR-REB, 2011).

This study was undertaken mainly to seek answer to the following four research questions. First, do pastoralists in Dasenech and Nyangatom districts follow defined routes of seasonal mobility where and when the need is there to do so? Second, do pastoralists in Dasenech and Nyangatom districts enter into conflict with each other and/or with other neighbouring communities? Third, what are the underlying factors that lead pastoralists into conflict in Dasenech and Nyangatom districts? Fourth, what are the consequences of mobility and conflict on children's schooling in Dasenech and Nyangatom districts?

METHODOLOGY

A principal research method adopted to undertake the study was a qualitative inquiry approach. Within the qualitative paradigm particular attention was given to advocacy perspective. The advocacy perspective was chosen for its focus on the needs of marginalized groups in view to bringing about change in the lives of the underprivileged segments of societies (Creswell, 2009).

Data for this study have been collected from residents of the study settings those of who took part in series of focus group discussion sessions. Contents of the FGD emphasize on examining mobility trends and prevalence of conflict as regards to communities under study. Participants were requested to clearly indicate whether they seasonally move from place to place, what make them leave one location and go to the other, whether there are specific seasons that necessitate mobility, whether there are specific mobility routes regularly to take, and prevalence of conflict, consequences of mobility and conflict on children's education. Participants of the focus group

discussion sessions comprised Kebele[4] Education and Training Board (KETB) members, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members, and members of local administration council. These participants were taken into account purposively in consideration of their multiple roles in the community as parents, community representatives and citizens who have stake in education.

Focus group discussion was chosen as an instrument of data collection for it enables to capture the participants' views, opinions and special concerns about what is going on in their surroundings regarding mobility and conflict through making reference to their own experience in a friendly and less formal setup. It also provides opportunity to value participants' emotion while addressing a certain matter and gives possibility of instant cross-checking of contending views. Simple but basic questions related to patterns of mobility and the resultant conflicts have been used to guide the focus group discussion. Participants ranging from 10-12 persons took part in each of the six focus group discussion sessions held at three different kebeles in each of the sample districts with equal representation of the three groups (members of PTA, KETB local administration council). Overall number of participants was sixty pastoralists drawn from six kebeles in the two districts of Dasenech and Nyangatom.

Analysis of data obtained through focus group discussion sessions was carried out by compiling information from audiotapes and field notes into one aggregate format which serves as basis for the analysis. In tape-based analysis audiotapes were listened to carefully, and an abridged transcript was prepared. Note-based analysis was done through reviewing field

notes, the debriefing session, and summary comments. Listening to audiotapes was done in order to verify specific quotes and to transcribe the oral summary from the end of the session. This approach found to be helpful to safely summarize the data, code them by identifying idea clusters, and generate a list of key themes. Identification of themes was followed by determining key data categories or commonalities among comments provided by respondents in order to carry out interpretation.

The qualitative data analysis was generally followed John W. Creswell's six steps framework of qualitative research data analysis (Creswell, 2009, pp. 183-190). The steps are briefly summarized as follows.

Step 1: Organizing and preparing the data for analysis. This step involves transcribing interviews, typing up field notes or arranging the data into different types depending on their sources.

Step 2: Reading through all the data as a first step to obtain a general sense of the information and to reflect on its overall meaning.

Step 3: Begin detailed analysis with a coding process. Coding, according to Creswell, involves taking text data or pictures gathered during the data collection, segmenting sentences, and labelling those categories with a term, often a term based in the actual language of the participant.

Step 4: Use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis. Description involves detailed rendering information about people, places or events in the setting.

Step 5: Advance how the description and themes will be represented in the qualitative narrative. The most popular approach is to use a narrative passage to convey the findings of the analysis.

Step 6: Being the final one this step involves making an interpretation or meaning of the data.

Furthermore, analysis of data obtained through non-participant observation and captured by field notes has involved four stages. First, each episode of observation was transcribed and verified for accuracy. At the second stage data were quantified by counting instances of such particular prevalence. Then, comparison was made to pin point differences and similarities between various observations regarding issues of the research interest. Finally, comparison was made between themes identified through observation and those of which identified through focus group discussions and interviews.

Mainly, the ethnographic observation was considered as a means of triangulation. It was devised to further verify accuracy of data obtained through FGDs and interview sessions. Field observations were guided by an observation checklist. Contents of the checklist include but not limited to the quality of school facility and supplies, student friendliness of the school compound, in-school interaction among students, as well as quality and adequacy of water and toilet services..

RESULTS
Seasonal Mobility Routes of the Dasenech Community and the Enduring Conflict Lines
During rainy season which extends from mid-May through September, the Dasenech community usually settles back around

river Omo bank where the annual agricultural activity takes place. Sorghum[5] sowing is carried out between the end of October to beginning of November each year. The period between January to mid-February marks the harvest season whereby members of each household kept busy in relation to on-farm engagements. Months of February, March and April are said to be very dry during which the Dasenechs with their herds migrate to the downstream of Omo River where water and grass are supposed to be better available.

Dasenech is one of the eight districts that constitute the South Omo Zone of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Regional State. Omorate is a district capital of Dasenech. Dasenech shares border with Hamer district in the North, Kenya in East and South and Nyangatom district in the West. Relatively speaking, the Dasenech people belong to a homogenous ethnic composition. Thus, there is no as such serious conflict between the members of the Dasenech community which goes beyond the traditional mediation of the elderly people in charge of maintaining social cohesion among members of the community.

However, life in the Dasenech community is characterized by inter-ethnic conflicts of different nature. They usually enter into serious confrontations with almost all people sharing boundaries with them. The most commonly prevailing conflict is the one with the Turkana pastoralists of Kenya in south-west of the Dasenech district. Cattle raiding and robbery from either side are the main causes of hostility and unrest between the two neighbouring communities residing under two different flags.

North of the district is also a dispute corner. The cause of conflict in the northern part of the district, unlike the one with the Turkana tribe, is characterized by confrontation over land possession with the Hamer community. Locations called Narama and Fejej are the commonly cited areas of disagreement. Narama kebele is one of hotbeds of such recurring mutual distrust due to the unsettled boundary matters between the two communities (Dasenech and Hamer). Both sides claim ownership right over Narama, a location known for a good deal of grazing. An area called Fejej is another point over which the two communities enter into frequent clashes particularly during the dry season. Alike the case of Narama, Fejej is a pastureland over which the two groups claim for possession. Since there is no clear and acceptable demarcation of boundary between these two communities, the likelihood of reappearance of same kind of disagreement is imminent as the situation on the ground indicates.

Circumstances observed during the data collection period have also witnessed that the standoff was there. Participants of the focus group discussion sessions have ascertained that they are ready to pay any sacrifice until the Hamer people stop to claim their land. To this end, the Dasenechs have pooled women, children and the elderly back into a new settlement area called Fejej II, which is situated about 20 kilometres distance into the mainland Dasenech from what they call "Fejej proper". Meanwhile, the young and the able remained there in Fejej with their herds determined and armed to respond to any kind of provocative acts from the Hamer side, it was learnt.

The Dasenechs also have unresolved grudge with the neighbouring Nyangatom community with whom they share boundary in the West. During the data collection, it was learnt that the two communities are usually at odds with each

other over a grazing land downhill of Kuraz Terara (Mount Kuraz). Though the area is a border point between the two districts (Dasenech and Nyangatom), both parties claim for sole possession of the grazing field there around. The situation looks so fragile to the extent of entailing armed response even with a mere incidence of crossing into the each others' presumed borderline.

South-east of the Dasenech district is another frontier whereby the Dasenech community enters into conflict with Boran tribe of Kenya. Grazing areas called Allia, Derete and Lankaye are the reported causes of hostility. Killings and retaliatory killings coupled with periodic cattle raiding from either side seem to be familiar encounters along with this porous border between Ethiopia and Kenya.

Seasonal Mobility Routes of the Nyangatom Community and the Enduring Conflict Lines

Nyangatom represents both name of the dominant ethnic group settled in the district and the name of the district itself. Kangaten is a district capital of Nyangatom. This district shares international boundary with South Sudan in the west and Kenya in the south-west. Internally the district is bordered with Dasenech in south and east, Hamer in north-east, Salamago in the north and Bench Maji zone in the north western edge.

The Nyangatoms usually live in scattered temporary settlement villages elsewhere across the district under normal circumstances. These normal circumstances refer to the situation where there is no drought and strife. During the dry season that usually extends from end of December to May of each year the Nyangatom people move to the two important places called Tirga and Naita. The former is found in the north western border of the district. The later is in the Western part of the district that is situated along the borderline between Ethiopia and the South Sudan. These two locations are said to be safe havens to the Nyangatom people during the dry season where scarcity of water and grazing reaches its peak. By and large they spend the period between end of December to first half of May around Tirga and Naita.

The Nyangatoms start to leave from Tirga and Naita areas during the second half of the month of May. This time, they make their return to their traditionally well defined land possessions along the Omo river bank, a location they refer to as "our lifeline". Land preparation, sowing of Sorghum, weeding and harvest are the typical farming engagements of the Nyangatom pastoralists during the time that stretches from July to the first half of December.

There are also other two locations that the Nyangatom people very cautiously make arrangements to settle during a dry season. These places are the downhill areas of Mount Kuraz where the Nyangatoms share border with the Dasenech district and the vicinity of Lake Turkana where the Nyangatoms experience unfriendly times with fellow Kenyan pastoralists. Since these locations are very sensitive ones, decisions to move towards the area need a serious scrutiny of situations together with analysis of previous tracks of conflict and their respective ways of settlement. Where there exists any outstanding grievance that is not yet addressed only controlled and cautious movements into the area are allowed. In the case of this kind of limited access to these locations, it is only the able and armed people with their herds are allowed to be stationed there up until the dry season subsides. Women, children and the elderly people made must stay away from such contentious environs.

Conflict tends to be a common place in the lives of the Nyangatom people. Practically, all of the movements made from the centre to peripheries in search for water and grazing during the dry season are characterized by rival acts and counteracts except the case of a movement towards Naita, a porous borderline between Ethiopia and the South Sudan. People in Naita usually welcome the Nyangatoms for the reason that they trace their origin into same ancestors as participants of the study have uncovered it.

The Nyangatom community enters into recurring dispute with Dasenechs due to cattle raiding and competition over water and grass resources. Cattle raiding, also alternatively named as cattle stealing or cattle rustling by Adan and Pkalya (2005), is the act of robbing herds that belong to a different social group other than one's own community. This practice is also frequently cited as a major cause for inter-ethnic conflicts. One of the questions during the focus group discussion sessions was whether the participants of the study recognize cattle raiding as a lawful act. The participants, all at once, nodded and murmured in affirmation of the following statements made by one of the focus group discussion participants during a session held at Kibish kebele.

> Cattle raid is our tradition. Our fathers and fore fathers have done it. What is special with us to consider it as an unlawful practice? Is it not a means through which a poor young man secures heads of cattle to be able to pay for the bride price? If someone has enough number of his own cattle or his relatives are willing to contribute to his dowry payment, there is no need to go for raid. However, we must not forget that cattle raid is one of the options that one would

consider at last. If you perceive cattle raid as wrong doing, we are afraid, your decision may amount to declaring that the poor members of the Nyangatom community remain unmarried, have no children and die without leaving anyone behind. Do you like us to perish?

The above statements made by one member of the focus group and shared among the entire participants is partly in line with Mkutu's (nd) remarks that consider cattle raiding as pastoralist tradition which traces its roots into distant pasts. Mburu (2001: 152) also further elaborates the purposes of cattle raiding as "a strategy for coping with natural disasters, political domination of neighbours through the monopoly of animal wealth, rite of passage for young warriors, and a means of regulating the quality of livestock".

In addition to the commonly prevailing reciprocal act of cattle raiding, the Nyangatoms clash with the Dasenech community over a grazing land downhill of Mount Kuraz particularly during the occurrence of extended dry season. In fact, both parties claim for exclusive possession of the area. Infrequent and small scale dispute is also there between the Nyangatom and Hamer Communities along the north eastern border of the Nyangatom district. Participants of the study have underlined that the main cause of conflict between these two communities are killings and retaliatory killings from both sides related to the act of cattle raiding and competition over water sources and rangeland.

Northern end of the district of Nyangatom is identified as an area of continuous uncertainty. Principally a locality called Kakuta,   the   kebele   administration

bordering with Bench Maji zone, is said to be a place of insecurity as articulated by the community representatives. Men from Surma tribe of Bench Maji zone and the Nyangatoms usually meet while hunting in the territory of the Omo National Park. Most often there happens reportedly unintentional killing which is attributed to a miss target shooting as indicated by the respondents. However, neither side tolerates this kind of none premeditated homicide as so they say. Rather a vicious cycle of retribution killing continues from both sides either promptly or in any convenient time and place afterwards. This state of affairs leaves residents of that particular locality in a constant alert of emergency.

Nyangatoms are also very uncomfortable with the repulsive relationship that they have with the adjacent Kara community in the north eastern part of the district. Lokulan is a fertile farmland administratively demarcated into district of Nyangatom. The Karas, dwellers of Hamer district, however, insist on re-demarcation of the area into their territory and removal of members of the Nyangatom community from the said location. This kind of strained relationship periodically manifests itself through robbery, asset destruction, physical assault and murder at worst as underlined by respondents of the study.

Investment and Conflict: Thinking the other Side of the Coin
Above all, it seems very plausible that the existing conflict situation in Dasenech and Nyangatom districts may follow an increasing trend than declining since the grazing areas continue to shrink. The shrinkage is not only due to an increase in human and animal population. Large scale commercial farms and mineral exploration activities are the emerging threats to the pastoral production system. Petroleum

exploration activity in central Dasenech ultimately narrows down the size of the grazing land and strictly limits pastoral access to the area.

Allocation of large size of land for agricultural investment is another area of unease as long as the issue of conflict of interest is concerned. For instance, Nebremus kebele is one of handful fertile locations in the Dasenech district. Pastoralists usually migrate to this area during the dry season. Ten thousand hectares of land in Nebremus has been leased to a foreign company (lease certificate number EIA-IP 19214/10). The said agreement remains in force for 25 years effective 01/08/2010 through its expiry on 30/07/2035. Shenkora kebele is known as a place of safety for pastoralists in Nyangatom particularly during the dry season. Nevertheless, 5000 hectares of land in Shenkora is leased out to a private investor for the duration of 25 years stretching from 09/04/2003 to 08/04/2028 Ethiopian calendar.

As it has been tried to make it clear in the foregoing discussion, pastoral mobility is neither an act of leisure nor travelling for pleasure. Rather, it is a permanent race with nature to ensure continued existence. The pastoralist production system, therefore, demands for enough space to stretch over during the time of need.

Expanding investment opportunities and undertaking large scale development projects are key indicators of economic success. Petroleum exploration in Dassenech and large scale commercial farm activities in both Desenech and Nyangatom can be taken as an integral part of the national development endeavours. But development initiatives of this kind may come up with the intended and unintended outcomes together. Thus, alternative mechanisms need to be thought

about in mitigating the adverse effects of such an unintended outcome.

The investment activities mentioned above aggravate the problem of shrinkage of rangelands. The projects also put restrictions on pastoralists to have access to their most important and resourceful locations. It is clear that most of pastoral conflicts arise from competition over access and ownership of natural resources. Hence, how can peace be maintained between pastoralists and the investment operations taking place in pastoral settings unless their conflict of interest is constructively addressed?

Job opportunity creation is one of the major benefits of investment. Actually, investment stimulates the local economy for it opens up prospects for employment. But the employment opportunities are not unconditional. To begin with, a minimum level of education or training is required in order to qualify to join the labour market. Literacy, among others, is a decisive factor that determines employability.

In Ethiopia average adult illiteracy rate goes as high as 64% for both sexes. It is 50% among men and escalates to 77% among women (MoE, 2010). Adult illiteracy rate among pastoralists reveals another uncomfortable reality. According to UNESCO (2010) proportion of adults of age 17 to 22 with fewer than two years of education was estimated at 39% and 60% among men and women respectively. The average sharply rises to 85% and 88% among pastoralist men and women correspondingly.

At this point in time, we need to remind ourselves that we are living in a knowledge dependent world. Let alone aspiring to obtain a decent placement in the labour market, our everyday life situation demands attainment of "basic reading,

writing and numeracy skills" (UNESCO, 2010: 95). The question, therefore, is that "can the investment operations offer job opportunities for illiterate pastoralists in order to effectively address a conflict of interest arising between the investors and the indigenous people"?

DISCUSSION

People may have emotional attachments with places they reside in, things they possess, ideals that shape their personality, situations that have big places in their lives and most importantly with the community that they belong to. Departing from such important contexts and social ties usually results in emotional distress. After all, it is not an easy experience to decide about leaving one's domicile and uncertainly thinking of being reinstated at another. The effect becomes strangely devastating when such displacement is induced by violent conflicts. Ferris and Winthrop in their assessment of the conditions of refugees and internally displaced persons have identified ranges of apprehensions of people affected by conflict. These authors noted that losing a loved one, economic hardship and displacement were the three most feared consequences of conflict among refugees and the internally displaced persons. Fear of death was mentioned as the sixth most feared encounter following fear of physical injury and sexual and gender-based violence, (Ferris and Winthrop, 2010).

Adan and Pkalya (2005), on the other hand, have identified the following major consequences of conflict while they examined the socio-economic impacts of conflict on pastoral and semi pastoral economies in Kenya and Uganda. Primarily, conflict claims lives of people and entails displacement. Secondly, it destroys assets, disrupts farm activities and results in food crisis. Thirdly, the already

fragile delivery of social services like education and health turn to be non-existent due to conflict. Fourthly, conflict leaves people vulnerable to HIV/AIDS infection due to rape which is a common evil during the war time and/or when the displaced persons engaged in risky sexual behaviours as a means of survival.

Conflict has immense negative effects on children's development in general and their education in particular. Whenever there is a situation that leads to conflict, schools are the first institutions that are forced to disrupt their operation at best. The worst scenario is that it may become extremely dangerous to go to school or the school itself get destroyed (International Save the Children Alliance, 2010).

Disruption of schooling, on the one hand, means denying children the right to education which shapes their future. Moreover, the situation may contribute to increasing tendency of the youth to be conflict perpetrators. To this end, Jackson (2011) has underscored that the early school leaver Somali pastoral youth especially males migrate from conflict-prone rural locations to urban areas in search for employment opportunity. The fact that the urban centres are home for a large pool of job seeking youth, the migrants remain unemployed and become susceptible to recruitment and inducement to violence.

Lack of proper education has far reaching impacts on human life. According to UNESCO (2010) uneducated or undereducated people remain vulnerable to multiple forms of disadvantage. Their chances of getting decent jobs, enjoying better health and participation in the political processes that have direct bearings on their lives are very much diminished. Despairingly, "restricted opportunity in education is one of the most powerful

mechanisms for transmitting poverty across generations" (UNESCO, 2010: 8).

Despite the unparalleled role of education in promoting individual, social and economic development, millions of children living mainly in conflict affected parts of the world have no access to education. According to UNESCO (2011) 28 million children of primary school age, living in conflict affected countries, which account for 42% of the world's total out of school population were not attending classes.

The tragedy is that parties in conflict usually set aside or wrongly manipulate the delivery of education to be counterproductive to its desired end, which is enhancing peaceful coexistence, tolerance and promoting mutual respect. The essence is that human societies need to acclaim schools as "places for imparting the most vital of skills: tolerance, mutual respect and the ability to live peacefully with others" (UNESCO, 2011:3). UNICEF (2000) also recognizes education as having dual role of deconstructing structures of violence and constructing structures of peace through fostering tolerance and inter-group understanding as well as promoting healing and reconciliation.

However, thinking of a conflict situation from its very beginning threatens education - a transforming agent which can possibly change conflict into cooperation. It is customary that a kind of inverse relationship between conflict and education leads schooling to a complete crisis during a time of violent clash. In sum, conflict seriously and directly affects schooling for it incites displacement of the local community to whom the schools were built to serve, teaching personnel abandonment and school facility closure (Krätli and

Swift, 1999; Omosa, E. K., 2005; and Kimani, 2008).

Accordingly, the study has revealed that pastoralists residing in the study areas are generally living in uncertainty and with a constant alert to respond to any upcoming conflict. Competition over water and pastureland, cattle raiding and retaliatory killings were found to be the three major causes of conflict in the area under study. Drought is a driving force for mobility in search for safer place for both human population and herds. This kind of movement pays lesser attention to restrictive political boundaries. Availability of resources dictates the direction to take. There appears conflict to happen unless a kind of traceable kinship between the migrating group and the host community is well acknowledged such as the case of Naita community in Suoth Sudan and the Nyangatoms from Ethiopia.

Pastoralists in both districts proudly speak of their acts of cattle raiding. To them, it is a normal course of action. Rather what they are much concerned about is the time and the manner of executing a successful operation of cattle raiding. Though it is clear to the actors of raiding that there would be armed responses from pastoralists on the other side, there is no sign of giving it up.

Mobility and conflict affect education in multiple ways. Where there is a shortage of water, parents do not let children to school even before they decide to migrate. When migration tending to be unavoidable option thinking about schooling remains so trivial. By the time local communities within the catchments of a particular school setup decide to move to another location, the formal education system proves its irrelevance to serve the purpose of educating pastoral children. Where there is conflict, older male children abandon

schooling and turned to be combatants either on request from parents or obeying the traditional norm that requires them to play a central role in responding to conflict situations.

Following are some reflections indicating a way forward with regard to addressing the persistent problem of mobility and conflict in the areas under this study.

1.1 Even though mobility and conflict are considered to be the major detractors of delivery of education in pastoral districts of Dasenech and Nyangatom, in most cases participants of the focus group discussion sessions seemed to be cautious in applauding the benefits of education too. This may call for more sensitization about the benefits of education through the use of educated local role models' campaign. The sensitization campaign may have twofold purposes. First, it helps to raise parental awareness of benefits of education. Second, creates opportunity to pastoral children to learn from experiences and achievements of educated local role models. The process of campaigning through the use of educated local role models also helps children to identify themselves with the exemplary figures and get inspired to proceed with their education despite the constraining circumstances.

1.2 Designing a school structure that better responds to the mobility needs of the pastoral communities is another essential consideration. The less flexible school timetable and capital intensive formal school buildings rarely satisfy the learning needs of pastoral communities. Innovative and simple school structures like tent schools which can easily move from place to place while the community migrates may be worthwhile. Since pastoralists in both Dasenech and Nyangatom mostly follow defined

routes of mobility during wet and dry seasons, adoption of mobile school structure would be beneficial to tackle the problem of school abandonment while mobility becomes a necessity.

1.3 Distance mode of delivery being supervised by district education offices may contribute in addressing the problem of schooling disruptions and security concerns. Use of radio instruction as a complementary means would also be an effective way of taking education to each household than always requiring children to fit into a rigid schedule of formal school establishments.

1.4 All efforts made towards individual and societal development may not be successful without security. Conversely, pastoral areas in Dasenech and Nyangatom are stages of recurring conflicts most of which are resulting from mishandling of minor incidences and lack of tolerance between parties in dispute. Clear demarcation of boundaries between neighbouring pastoralists with their consent and on the basis of win-win-approach would be very helpful in arresting conflicts arising from border disputes. In some cases, establishing institutions like veterinary clinic that serves the interests of both sides claiming for sole possession of a disputed over area may calm down the hostility.

1.5 Encouraging peace dialogues between neighbouring pastoralists is instrumental to significantly reduce prevalence of conflict. The peace dialogue can be mediated by government or nongovernment agencies for initial period until mutual trust building matures between communities involved in conflict. The ultimate goal of such mediation, however, needs to be geared towards enabling the local communities to be able to manage matters leading to conflict on their own.

1.6 Schools also need to prove their relevance to the local community in addition to their instructional responsibilities. This can take place through provision of such community services as consulting pastoralists on human and animal health issues and environmental protection mechanisms with due regard to the pastoralists' useful traditional natural resource management and conservation practices. Since pastoralists have keen interest in such practical interventions, this may foster sense recognition of schools as useful institutions which are there to serve interests of pastoralists as well.

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