

Natural Resources Based Conflicts and Their Gender Impacts in the Selected Farming and Pastoral Communities in Tanzania

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Abstract

In this paper we provide an evidence on how natural resources utilization in the farming and pastoral communities in Tanzania are influencing conflicts that have impacts on gender. We further reveal various types of conflicts that are affecting communities that integrate farming and pastoral societies. Literature has indicated that land conflicts can have disastrous effects on individuals as well as on groups and even entire nation. Many conflicts that are perceived to be clashes between different cultures are actually conflicts over land and related natural resources. Indeed, there are a long historical record of fluctuating conflicts, competition and co-operation between settled farmers and pastoral or transhumant herders. This includes periods of violent herder domination over settled farming production systems and the conversion of former pastoral lands to cultivation. This acknowledgement is not an exception in Tanzania and particularly in Kilosa and Mvomero Districts in Morogoro Region where this case study is concentrated on.

1. Introduction

Agriculture accounts for most land use in the developing countries, and as such it is probably the single most powerful influence on environmental quality (Scherr, 1999). The majority of the population in Sub-Saharan Africa makes their living from rain-fed agriculture and depends to a large extent on small-holder subsistence agriculture for their livelihood security (UNDP/UNSO, 1997). In Tanzania for example the mainstay of the economy is agriculture, which employs around 80% of the population and produces 61% of both the GDP and merchandise export (Shetto 1998). Fifty percent of the land in Tanzania is used for grazing, and conflicts between pastoralists and cultivators are common (ibid). Conflict of interest between sedentary agriculturalists and nomadic pastoralists are observed to be common cause of violent clashes in many places around the world. In Tanzania, various factors are cited as attributing to the prevailing conflicts between farmers and pastoralists including reduced pastoral land due to increased population, change of land use into game reserves, national parks, settlements, agriculture, infrastructures and climate change. In most cases, resources especially natural resources are the major sources of violence. Although today most violent conflicts take place in poor countries, they do not necessarily occur in the poorest of them nor are all poor countries involved in conflicts. In the literature Bretthauer (2014) and Buhaug *et al.* (2010), it is confirmed that conflicts that are related to renewable natural resources occur in mostly relatively poor countries than when compared to their developed counterpart. Indeed, this is what applies for the case of the prevailing conflicts in Kilosa and Mvomero districts in Tanzania and is evidenced by the existing types of conflicts. These conflicts usually have several effects including gender related ones. More often however; these conflicts are viewed in generality, but the fact on the ground is that there are several mini-conflicts as revealed in the study conducted in Kilosa and Mvomero Districts in Tanzania.

The study on “The Contributions and recognition of local institutions in natural resources conflicts related peace building processes: The case of pastoralists- farmers’ conflict in Tanzania” which was conducted in the districts of Kilosa and Mvomero revealed that despite being generally understood that the prevailing conflicts in two districts are farmer-herder conflicts; there exist a couple of other conflicts that are worth documenting and we have linked these conflicts with its impacts to gender.

2. Methodology

2.1 Characteristics of the case study areas

Kilosa District has an area of 14,918 sq.km and covers 20.5% of the total land area of Morogoro Region (Mung’ong’o & Mwamfupe, 2003). The district is characterized by a dry tropical climate of the semi-arid type.

The mean annual temperature of the district is 25° C (Kimaro 1989 in Mung'ong'o & Mwamfupe, 2003). The district is characterized by miombo woodland in the hilly areas and grassland occurs in the alluvial plains. Much of the vegetation however, is under pressure for wood, fuel arable and grazing land (ibid). Kilosa district has a population of 438,175 of which 50.2% are females and 49.8% are males (URT, 2012). The main income generating activities of the Kilosa people are farming, livestock keeping, selling forest produce and petty trading.

Mvomero District has an area of 6,632.9 km². It is located North of Morogoro region and is administratively divided into seventeen wards. It is bordered to the north by Tanga Region, to the northeast by Coast Region, to the east and southeast by Morogoro Rural District and Morogoro Urban District and to the west by Kilosa District. According to Census Data (2012), the District has a population of 312,109 people. Of these 154,843 (49.6%) are males and 157,266 (50.4%) are females. Just like Kilosa, the economic mainstay of Mvomero district is farming, livestock keeping, selling forest produce and petty trading.

2.2 Approaches used in gathering information

This was a qualitative study where data collection entailed a number of methods including focus group discussions; interview with key informants, as well as the desk search method. Under the Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), meetings were conducted in the selected two villages of each district which are mostly affected by the clashes and conflicts. Using this method, the existing local institutions in the villages were identified and their roles in conflict resolutions were provided by the community representatives. During FGDs - effect relationship of the pastoralist-farmers conflicts in the area, the existence of the local institutions and traditional leaders and their roles in the conflicts mediation in the area were identified and documented. The leaders of the identified local institutions and traditional leaders were approached as key informants to provide more details on the studied issues. Under the Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) interviews were held with key informants from the local government (District Councils) and the identified key stakeholders in both the pastoralist and the crop grower communities were interviewed. These interviews generated knowledge on the role of the local institutions entailing traditional leaders in conflict prevention and resolution in the area, the affiliations of the traditional leaders to the local government/institutions in the area and their recognitions were also identified. Various published and unpublished papers and reports were also reviewed in the process of identifying types of conflicts related to natural resources in the case study areas.

3. Types of conflicts existing in the case study districts

3.1 Farmer-Herder Conflicts

Farmer –Herder conflicts are the most dominant in both districts of Kilosa and Mvomero. The conflicts involve two different groups of people with different socio-economic backgrounds. Principally Kilosa and Mvomero districts are endowed with good geographical factors that support both pastoralism and agricultural activities; the existence of fertile soils, rivers that flow throughout the year and presence of grazing areas and valleys that are evergreen throughout the year constitute the reason for the influx of people to take advantage and make use of the exiting opportunities. This has resulted into frequent emergence of conflicts between farmers and pastoralists which often times get fierce resulting into injuries and deaths since the use of firearms during fighting is increasingly becoming common. One of the major factors for clashes in many areas in the districts is struggle for water and pastures. As noted in the literature tensions between pastoralists and peasants are high during dry season as both groups depend on one source for both pastures and water. Moreover, for the peasants the valleys are suitable for irrigation and dry season irrigation competing for these resources therefore results in clashes in many areas in these districts. Similar conflicts are reported to exist in some dryland areas of Ghana, whereby the study by Kusaana & Bukari (2015) has highlighted conflicts between farmers with Fulani herders to be largely linked to crop and water bodies' destruction.

3.2. Farmers – Investors Conflicts

Farmers – investors conflicts is another type of conflict existing in these two districts. Communities in these areas reported that there is an increasing wave of people from outside these districts referred to as investors who own large tracts of land. Quick observations revealed that most of these lands have not been developed and remain unutilized and the community representatives interviewed stated categorically that this situation has been existing for many years and also the trend of more people securing land and fence it without any development is

on increase. This as a result makes large number of local community members remain landless or own very small pieces of land which cannot cater for their needs in terms of producing crops and grazing their cattle. Based on this we observed that in these areas local community who the natives of these areas are restricted to access various resources such as water and other domestic requirements due to this type of land grabbing. This situation has often times translated into conflicts between owners of large tracts and community members as at times the community members opt to invade the unutilized lands in order to cultivate/produce crops. On one hand conflicts arises due to the fact that small-holder farmers strive to produce crops to make ends meet but on the other hand the investors do all that possible to restrict farmers from invading their lands. We observed that in these areas land grabbing has been high due to the fact that communities in these areas lack adequate knowledge on land issues, and also they are not effectively involved in the general process of land allocation to various land users and particularly-large scale farmers both from within and outside the country. This downside has always caused conflicts and created state of antagonism between small-holder farmers and investors and between farmers and livestock keepers. In fact we have observed that if people are not effectively involved in land allocation process they can deliberately opt not to respect the existing boundaries.

3.3. Livestock Keepers – Investors’ Conflicts

Livestock keepers – investors’ conflict is another type of conflict that we have observed to exist in these two districts. Our study revealed that at times investors and livestock keepers fall into conflicts. This is attributed to the fact that livestock keepers feel that they are restricted to graze their cattle and at the same time the owners of large tracts of land feel that the herders graze their cattle into their land without authorization which results into land destruction. Just like the case with other types of conflicts; unclear land boundaries and lack of involvement of community in the process of land allocation attributes to such conflicts between pastoralists and investors. Our study has drawn an example from one village namely Kiduhi in Kilosa district where conflicts recur between farming company that has been allocated with a large chunk of land. The Kiduhi village leaders reported that they were not involved when land was being allocated to the investor and as a result the boundaries between their village and the investor’s farm were not clear to them and they had to seek for clarity whereby meetings were held with the District Government Authority but without any amicable consensus. The issue of lack of primary stakeholders’ involvement is underscored in the literature that concentration of powers into the central government bodies and lack of people’s participation in decision making creates a sense of isolation amongst the people. When people feel excluded on how to manage their resources, they also find a way of expressing their anger. In this regard, reference is made on the major decisions about village boundaries, or sub village demarcations.

3.4 Livestock Keepers - Livestock Keepers Conflicts

Livestock keepers - livestock keepers conflict is another existing conflicts we observed in our case study areas. During the survey it was observed that there also exist conflicts among herders. It was revealed that in both districts there are more than one tribe involved in livestock keeping, but the main ones are the Maasai and the Sukuma. It was reported that there is a tendency of people from one tribe stealing cattle from the other tribe and often times such incidences results into clashes between the respective tribes.

3.5. Farmers to Farmers Conflicts

Farmers to Farmers conflicts have also been reported to exist in these areas. These conflicts are mainly farm boundary related conflicts where often times neighboring villages get into conflicts due to misunderstanding and failing to amicably agree on the exact boundaries of their lands. Farmer to farmer conflicts have also been reported in other studies and a good example that illustrate the conflict is given in Siyum *et al.* (2015) who stated the courses of such conflicts to be scarce farm land, high demand for land, inheritance problem and land grabbing. Most of these have had impact to women and children.

4. Gender Related Impacts

All the above related conflicts that we observed have gender related impacts which include:

Relocation and gender-based violence whereby the escalating conflicts in Kilosa and Mvemoro districts have notable effects on all genders. We were informed by our key informants that when clashes erupt some of the

families are compelled to leave their homes to seek for a refuge elsewhere. Gender- based violence including rape cases and injuries were also reported all along.

Destruction of usual ways of life has been one of the major impacts of these conflicts in the two districts we used as a case study. Traditionally in the farming societies in these districts and in most of the Tanzanian societies women play pivotal role in feeding their families, so with the recurring conflicts in the two districts women find it difficult to play this critical role as there are times when they have to stay home in fear of being ambushed while in their fields. Similarly for men the situation is more or less the same as there are times when they are compelled to spend their time in fighting and this is done at the expense of productive activities notably farming and tending livestock respectively.

Injuries and loss of lives have been reported as one of the impacts of these resource conflicts in our case study areas. An example has been drawn from one village (at Mkindo village) where we met a man with a broken arm the incident he encountered during fighting between the farming and pastoral community. He mentioned that his arm was broken during one of the clashes between members of his village and pastoralists from the neighbouring village of Kambala. He noted that besides being injured during that conflict, there was also an on-going case at the primary court which was filed against him and it had lasted for about eight (8) years. Similar to this, it was reported that during one of the clashes between Mkindo and Kambala villages about six people lost their lives, most of them being males. Such reported incidences have significant effect on the households which immediately turns to be female-headed and hence increasing family-caring burden to women.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

In collecting voices of the farming and pastoral communities in Tanzania, we can conclude that, natural resource conflicts have negative impacts to both societies and all genders. In view of this; it is critical that aspects of land use planning, curbing the escalating land grabbing incidences in various areas of the country are given an utmost attention by the government and peacemaking stakeholders in order to ensure that these conflicts are reduced and the welfare of natural resource dependent communities in this context land, water and grazing areas is ensured. Community involvement in decision making processes especially on land allocation in their respective areas is also advocated for.

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