

Poverty Dimensions and People's Perception in Pastoral Areas of Marodijeh Region, Somaliland

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Abstract

Poverty remains one of the most challenging problems in many developing countries particularly Somaliland. 60-65% of Somaliland citizens depend on livestock and its derivatives produced by pastoralists. Their poverty levels are largely unknown due to limited researches on poverty in these areas. A primary data from 161 sample households, 12 key informant interviewees and secondary data as a literature review were used. Poverty line constructed on CBN approach FGTs poverty dimensions revealed 40.9% of sampled households were under poverty line whilst poverty gap and severity were found to be 0.103 and 0.044 respectively. With the threshold \$1.36 per day per AE and \$489.6 per year per AE. At international \$1.9 poverty line poverty head count, gap, and severity stood at 54%, 21%, and 10%. From community perspective, only 22% of sampled households deemed themselves to be poor. Poverty indices are higher compared to the rest of the country and the region in general.

Keywords: Marodijeh, Poverty, Pastoralist, adult equivalent.

Introduction

Poverty has been one of the most challenging global economic and social problems though immense problems were put in place to eradicate it (World Bank, 2013). Historically, poverty prevalence dates back to the existence of human being and it has occupied foremost place on human development agendas of virtually all countries of the world. (Abdelhak, 2011). As to the World Bank (2000) poverty is multi-dimensional phenomenon that involves lack of social, cultural, as well as economic, means necessary to obtain a minimum level of nutrition of daily life.

Most of the developing countries have great percentage of rural population with large number of poor (Afera, 2015). IFAD (2011) reported around 70% of the world's poor people live in rural areas.

Generally, Somali pastoralists in the Horn of Africa share many characteristics with the African pastoralists. They are most popular nomadic pastoralists in the Horn of Africa region, for example, the neighboring Somali Regional State of Ethiopia (Ahmed, 2014) 86% of the population inhabit in rural areas and they are mainly pastoralists. Where pastoralism is defined as a livelihood strategy and a system of mobile livestock that makes wide-ranging use of grazing lands in arid and semi-arid areas and it does not uphold sustainable crop cultivation (Institute of Peace and Security Studies, 2015)

In Somaliland, poverty has been a main challenge throughout the history and its alleviation is in the pillars of the National Development Plan (Ministry of National Planning and Development, 2011). Livestock serve as Somaliland's major source of wealth where they contribute about 30% of the national GDP. 60-65% of citizens directly or indirectly depend on livestock and livestock products (Ministry of National Planning and Development, 2013).

There are limited researches conducted poverty in pastoral areas of Somaliland. Most studies carried out in Somaliland regarding poverty are focused on the sedentary population areas of the country, which may not help obviously much to the sparsely settled and mobile Somaliland pastoralists, even the recent and mostly referred of World Bank's GDP and poverty estimates of Somaliland publicized in 2014 by Ministry of National Planning and Development (2014) did not take nomadic pastoralists into account in their study.

It is obvious that the study results can be applied to Somalis in other areas of the region due to the fact that they are characterized by similar socioeconomic, sociocultural, and agro-climatic setting.

As far as the pastoral life of Somaliland is concerned, the levels of this poverty and pastoralist's perceptions are largely unknown. Finding out the extent of poverty levels, depth, and severity (inequality) in pastoral areas of Somaliland particularly Marodijeh region, and their perception was the motive behind this study. FGT indices (Foster et al, 1984), qualitative data, and comparable literature were used in this study. This research was conducted on 3 pastoral districts in Marodijeh region namely Baligubadle, Salahley, and Farawayne locating along Somaliland-Ethiopian border and extend to the north up to Hargeisa suburban areas.

Results and Discussions

Based on constructed Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) approach poverty line is identified (World Bank, 2015), to find poverty levels of pastoralists about poverty in Marodijeh pastoral districts namely Farawayne, Baligubadle, and Salahley. The consumption bundle of food items consumed by a typical pastoral household were identified to construct poverty line using Cost of Basic Needs (CBN) approach. There are a number of minimum food

requirement per day per person for rural dwellers such as 2200 kcal, 2250 kcal, and sometimes 2400 kcal, and 2100 kcal for urban dwellers (Singh, 2009). Accordingly, the calories intake of 2200 kcal per day per adult equivalent were taken for minimum energy requirement for normal person for his/her normal physical life. Then the cost of obtaining this amount (2200 kcal) was calculated in USD plus the non-food basic needs per AE to be the threshold separating poor from non-poor.

Data on food consumption of last month (at the time of the survey) obtained from the household head was converted into kilocalorie by using standard conversion factors of mean kilocalorie per kilogram or liter and adjusted for household members age and gender composition by using conversion factors for gender and age to get reasonable and standard single index in terms of per adult equivalency.

Table 1

Poverty Line	Value at Market Price USD per AE
Food Poverty Line	0.897
Non-food Poverty Line	0.463
Total Poverty Line	1.36

Source: Own survey data, 2016

Food poverty line and total poverty line of the studied areas were found to be \$322.92/year/AE and \$489.6/year/AE, respectively.

Accordingly, the FGT decomposable poverty indices applied in this study indicates that about 0.409, 0.103 and 0.044 are the incidence (head count ratio), intensity (poverty gap) and poverty severity (inequality) of the study area, respectively, as shown in table 2.

Table 2

Poverty Indices	Index Values
Head Count index (FGT ₀)	0.409
Poverty Gap Index (FGT ₁)	0.103
Poverty Severity Index (FGT ₂)	0.044

Source: Own Survey Data, 2016

The poverty gap (FGT₁), which measures the aggregate consumption shortfall of all the poor relative to the predetermined poverty line across the whole sample population resulted to be 10.3%. this reflects the gap poor households are under the poverty line. Theoretically the poverty eradication policy in pastoral communities of Marodijeh region 10.3% of US Dollar per day per adult equivalent to improve their daily consumption to the poverty line level to enable them buy food of 2200 kcal and non-food basic needs and hence be free from falling into poverty. Additionally, the poverty severity index (FGT₂) which is mathematically the square of the poverty gap (FGT₁) measures the extent of inequality among the poor. As the table 2 shows that poverty depth is 4.4% among the pastoral poor households of Marodijeh region. Comparatively, a late study conducted on Gosam district of East Gojjam Zone of Ethiopia revealed 49%¹ of the sampled households were below the poverty line with 9.5% and 3.1% of poverty gap and severity indices, respectively (Molla *et al*, 2014). Although the poverty proportion is slightly higher in Gojjam of Ethiopia in this study the poverty gap and severity are higher here in Somaliland relatively.

Table 3 Poverty Dimensions by District

Name of the District	Poverty Indices (Dimensions)		
	Head Count Index (FGT ₀)	Poverty Gap index (FGT ₁)	Poverty Severity index (FGT ₂)
Faraweyne	0.377358	0.09512	0.04077253
Salahley	0.339623	0.08432	0.0360515
Baligubadle	0.509091	0.13054	0.05579399
Total	0.409	0.103	0.044

Source; Own Survey Data, 2016

Out of the 161 replied respondents were from the districts of Faraweyne, Sahaley, and Baligubadle with a number of 53, 53, and 55 respondents respectively. Of these, 40.9% poor households live in Faraweyne, Salahley and Baligubadle with 11.18%, 9.94%, and 19.88% respectively. Baligubadle district is found to be the poorest district of the studied area where 50.9% of the sampled population are under poverty line with gap of 13% and higher inequality among the poor of 5.5%. Salahley shows the least number of poor households of 33.9% poverty head count level accompanied by relatively lower poverty gap and severity of 8.4% and 3.6%

¹ The poverty line used in the study was Ethiopian Birr 3650.75 per year per adult equivalent.

respectively as shown in table 3. Salahley district tend to have better grazing areas and hence showed lower poverty indices. Generally, the livelihood across these three districts remains similar although people are more settled in western parts of the studied areas particularly Faraweyne district and practice small scale farming (mainly maize and wheat) along with livestock keeping, nonetheless, for all the studied districts housing made from trees, and charcoal is the sole source for energy (cooking etc.). In this study, land was not given consideration since land is not scarce here as characterized by mobility based on rainfall performance and move to kinship or relative rainy areas accompanied by no tangible agricultural output. However, key informants from the Ministry of Environment and Rural Development showed the future potential threat of increasing private land enclosure in these areas.

Poverty Dimensions Based on International Poverty Line (\$1.9 per day per person)

Table 4 Poverty Indices at \$1.90 Poverty Line

Poverty Indices	Index Values
Head Count Index (FGT ₀)	0.54
Poverty Gap Index (FGT ₁)	0.21
Poverty Severity Index (FGT ₂)	0.10

Source: Own Survey Data, 2016

Apart from the constructed poverty line from typical food consumption of studied areas, the new World Bank poverty line of \$1.9 (Cruz et al, 2015) as a threshold used in this study showed the poverty indices to be more severe. the study revealed 54% of the households were unable to meet the minimum daily expenditure of \$1.90 per AE. These figures are in-line with the claim that rural poverty is deepening in Eastern and Southern Africa, where most of the region's poor people live in rural areas (IFAD, 2014). The poverty gap and severity also increased to 0.21 and 0.10 respectively, which implies that if the government is committed to bring such households from poverty into a decent life (at least \$1.90 per person) then there should be an increment of 21% of their income. Moreover, based on \$1.90 as a poverty line there is higher consumption inequality (FGT₂ = 0.10) among the poor.

Table 5: Subjective Poverty from Households Perspective

Household Poverty Status	Statement of poverty status by the Household		Total
	Yes	No	
Non Poor	16	79	95
Poor	20	46	66
Total	36	125	160

Source: Own Survey Data, 2016

36 (22%) of the respondents assumed themselves to be poor, among those 20 (55%) of them were poor whereas 16 (45%) were non-poor. The study revealed that 70% of the poor household heads in this sample deemed them to be non-poor, whilst only 30% of them conceded to be poor.

These extreme definitions and figures about poverty by the households is rooted in the cultural values of Somaliland pastoralists. Besides the actual living standard of the pastoralists in Marodijeh region they are not willing to let themselves down and admit to be poor.

Accordingly, an elderly man as a key informant in Faraweyne district quoted “*Nin hal leh habeen dherag u laaban*” meaning a person with one camel waits sometime to be better off, which shows the extreme measurement of being poor by Marodijeh pastoralists.

The disparity between poverty measured and the subjective poverty judgment by the households of the study emanates from the perceived unit of measurement. Unlike the Researcher's 2200 kcal/day/AE respondents perceive conceptually lower unit as evidenced by the extreme words and phrases they used to define poverty (e.g. hunger, nothing to eat, no livestock, etc.)

Conclusion

On one hand, pastoralists are the primary source of largest sector of Somaliland's economy-the livestock. On another hand, they are among the poorest segment of the society.

The researched variables of poverty levels in this study showed higher poverty prevalence where 40.9% of the households in pastoral areas of Marodijeh region were unable to earn \$1.36/day/AE to afford necessary food and non-food items and consequently consuming less than minimum necessary required food intake of 2200 Kilocalories. However, Somaliland government policy towards these pastoral communities there is need for at least 10.3% income increment to bring them on the poverty line in order to let them afford food consumption that meets minimum 2200 Kcal per day per adult equivalent and non-food necessary needs. Moreover, compared to the neighboring countries and the rest of the Country there is higher poverty prevalence, wide poverty gap and consumption inequality among the poor in this study particularly in Baligubadle district. However, pastoral households mainly consider themselves not to be poor.

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