

# Participatory Conflict Analysis: The Case of Pastoralist Groups in South Eastern Ethiopia

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## Abstract

Pastoral resource management is based on a complex set of temporary or semi-permanent claims on pasture, water and other resources, as well as on the underlying principles of flexibility and reciprocity. The resource bases of pastoralists-land-is therefore not a fixed individually owned capital, but rather a flexible asset with specific uses and access mechanisms. The pastoral resource use pattern is characterized by risk-spreading and flexible mechanisms. A participatory analysis of pastoral resources management issues thus enables to have a deeper understanding of the issues and search for an alternative and effective ways of pastoral resources management that will contribute to peace and development of pastoral neighborhoods. Therefore, this study is intended to identify the mechanisms and issues of key pastoral resources management among the southern and southeastern pastoral groups. This study was undertaken in southern and southeastern pastoral areas of Borena and Liben zone particularly in Negelle, Moyale, Yabello, Arero and Filtu Woredas. Primary data was collected through focus group discussion and key informant interview. The analysis involved historical narratives focusing on the history and dynamics of pastoral resource management through time, with the aim of identifying causes, effects and dynamics of the pastoral resource management and how these vary among different groups. Restore or ensure access to resources is critical to the livelihoods of pastoralists as well as to their neighboring communities: Resource access rights – to pastures, migratory corridors and water - are often interlinked and are vital to pastoral survival. In a conflicts sensitive manner, restore those ‘common resource pools’ drawn upon by communities in times of scarcity or disaster. Strategies for adapting to drought – the main environmental threat to pastoralists-are numerous. Strengthen the institutional ability to respond to environmental stresses. Relevant approaches for crisis response include contingency funds and planning; emergency water, medical and food supplies and their distribution networks; and effective transportation and communication networks. Market-based solutions are also relevant to tackle emergency situations. It has been found that one important element is building upon ‘local knowledge’ while strengthening formal recognition of pastoral communities’ traditional resource use and access rights. Foster regional approaches and harmonization of treatment across borders. The migratory nature of pastoralism collides with international borders, as rangelands are often frontier lands and herd movements and trade often cross geo-political demarcations.

## INTRODUCTION

Pastoral communities differ from other populations by certain common characteristics. Pastoralists derive a substantial share of their livelihoods from livestock and share communal rangeland resources. Productivity of the rangelands is in turn influenced by erratic rainfall that considerably varies between and within years. The rainfall patterns also have direct implication for livestock mobility. Areas inhabited by pastoralists are mostly difficult environments prone to high risks. The per capita wealth of pastoral households have showed continuous decline over the years. Pastoralists today rank high in terms of poverty levels and score poor when assessed on other social welfare indicators the pastoralists also frequently face basic food security problems, conflicts that often are attributed to competition for access to scarce key pastoral resources and ecological stress. Mobility provides the best strategy to manage low net productivity, unpredictability and risk in pastoral areas due to the marked spatial and temporal variations in livestock-grazing resources. Mobility depends on knowledge of ecosystem productivity potentials and constraints, and capacity to negotiate or enforce access to key range resources, primary pasture, water sources and migratory corridors. Pastoral resource management is based on a complex set of temporary or semi-permanent claims on pasture, water and other resources, as well as on the underlying principles of flexibility and reciprocity. The resource bases of pastoralists-land-is therefore not a fixed individually owned capital, but rather a flexible asset with specific uses and access mechanisms. The pastoral resource use pattern is characterized by risk-spreading and flexible mechanisms. Livestock, rangeland and water resources management are core components of the customary institutional system. Management of these resources are closely bound to the pastoral livelihood and strictly observed local leaders. Every member of the community is required to respect the customary laws. The pastoral indigenous institutions are run by elders with accumulated knowledge of the ecology and experiences. They have structures up to grassroots level that handle different issues.

The literature on key pastoral resources management and the challenge customary authority faces and

the mechanisms of pastoral resources management is either scant or inadequate. The existing practice shows that, the top-down intervention of the regional and federal governments to resolve pastoral resources management issues do not provide long lasting solutions. A participatory analysis of pastoral resources management issues thus enables to have a deeper understanding of the issues and search for an alternative and effective ways of pastoral resources management that will contribute to peace and development of pastoral neighborhoods. Therefore, this study is intended to identify the mechanisms and issues of key pastoral resources management among the pastoral groups in the study area with the specific objectives to:

- To describe the Condition of the Key Pastoral Resources in the study areas
- Analyze the dynamics and trends of conflict related to resources management affecting the pastoralists' groups in the study area

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Description of the Study Area**

The study area is located at the southern edge of Ethiopia, bordering Kenya and Somalia. Administratively the area belongs to Borana and Liben zones of Oromia and Somali regional states, respectively. The mean annual rainfall across the districts varies between 500 and 700 mm, with an overall average of 648 mm. Surface evaporation is high. There are two rainy seasons: the main season, (March–May) and the minor season, (September–October). The ecological conditions favor pastoralism more than farming. The most significant inhabitants (in terms of number) belong to the various Oromo and Somali clans. Among the Oromo clans, the Borana and Gabra reside mainly in the semi-arid lowlands neighboring with Guji and Arsi Oromo clans settled in humid lands at higher altitude. The various Somali clans living in Liben zone of Somali regional state include Garrii, Digodia, Merehan, GarriiMero, and Gurre.

The farming activities that are practiced on the hitherto pastoral lands through encroachment are the potential source of conflict. The Borana Oromo (Boran) is numerically the dominant group inhabiting the Borana zone. The area is endemic to conflicts between these rival pastoral groups over resources. Borana and Liben zones are prone to drought, adjacent areas in neighboring Kenya and Somalia are even more likely to suffer from water scarcity. During times of complete failure of rainy seasons in northern Kenya and south-west Somalia, there are often apparent influxes of pastoralists from those countries into Ethiopia searching for water and pasture. These situations lead to conditions where local people and 'guests', often related by trans-border kinship and sharing common languages and cultures, have to compete for the use of the few perennial water resources.

### **Data Collection and Analysis**

The study began with extensive review of the recent literature on pastoral resource management in pastoral areas of Ethiopia. Such experiences are useful to consolidate information on pastoral resource management in the pastoral areas. Review of the literature was further discussed at the workshop held prior to the data collection phase. As the data collection process was participatory, the data collection and analysis involved the participants from the two study zones of Boran and Liben (Negelle, Moyale, Yabello, Arero, Guji and Filtu). For this study, 23 key informants were drawn from clan leaders of the major clans of Oromo and Somali (Borena, Guji, Garrii, and Digodia and Gebra). Care has been taken to include ordinary key informants and gender has been taken into consideration. An individual in-depth interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was held for data collection. Three lead researchers facilitated the data collection process.

Therefore, various techniques were used in collecting and analyzing data. Checklists of set of guiding questions were prepared to facilitate key informant interview and focus group discussion. In order to permit a smooth flow of information and create a relaxed atmosphere for the discussion, separate focus group discussions were undertaken with the different groups of pastoralists. There were numbers of socio-culturally distinguished pastoral groups in southern and southeastern Ethiopia, where various forms of pastoral resource management are common. In order to have a deeper understanding of the pastoral resource management among multiple groups, participatory analysis, involving the key informants representing each socio-cultural and/or ethnic group, was conducted.

The analysis involved historical narratives focusing on the history and dynamics of pastoral resource management through time, with the aim of identifying causes, effects and dynamics of the pastoral resource management and how these vary among different groups. Aspects of pastoral resource management resolution were also central during the discussion. The analysis of data involved a systematic procedure where the causes were identified; prioritized and how the causes are lined historically. The use of causal chains played a great role to capture the most important elements.

Both researchers and participants were actors in the investigative process, influencing the flow, interpreting the content, and sharing options for action. The result of this kind of activity is living knowledge that may get translated into action.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### The Condition of the Key Pastoral Resources

#### Rangelands

The pastoralist elders indicated that rangelands resources are becoming heterogeneous and dispersed, tied with seasonal patterns (temporary), differing through time (variable) and characterized by overall erratic climatic patterns (unpredictable). The net productivity of dry land ranges is perceived as low and unpredictable, depending on a number of variables, among which rainfall patterns play a major role. Other relevant bio-physical variables affecting the spatial heterogeneity and temporal variability of resource endowment include: soil quality, and vegetation composition. Access to different rangeland resources is vital to ensure continuous productivity for pastoralists. Structures regulating resource access, social organization and governance systems depend to a large extent on the local natural resource endowment. In the drier ecosystem, there is a tendency to manage the natural resource communally, as communal property regimes to share risk and spread the burden and reduce levels of vulnerability are vital.

It has been reported that the rangelands in the study area until four decades ago were considered as one of the good grazing land in east Africa and had good ecological potentials for live stock production and continued to produce livestock with prolific success and a remarkable social organization that have been cited as a model of pastoralism in sub-Saharan Africa (Oba, 2001) cited by Getachew (2006). However, the respondents perceived that today, the condition in the rangelands has been changed, probably caused by rangeland degradation due to a number of factors such as expansion of cultivation into the rangeland, expansion of bush cover, overgrazing and so on.

The respondents have mentioned that the recent phenomenon of the rangelands in the last three decades includes increase in cropland size and shift in land ownership, such as a move from community ownership to either private or accessible only to small subgroups of individuals and households were observed. Elder respondents have the opinion that most of the rangelands, excluding the kallos, are in a poor condition and deteriorating fast. This view of the pastoralists is also supported by Ayanna and Fekadu (2003). Oba (1998) had previously noted that the presence of unpalatable trees and forbs, combined with soil erosion, is a key indicator of the declining range condition in semiarid Borana. However, in the current study, soil erosion was not seen by the respondents as a major threat in the Borana rangelands, but the occurrence of bare ground was mentioned as a prominent feature of degraded areas.

The elder respondents reported with concern that changes in the composition of the herbaceous layer are greater than those of the woody cover. It was also stressed that the dynamics of the herbaceous layer is taken as the first criteria in making rangeland assessments. It is therefore important for ecologists to understand the perceptions of pastoralists when interpreting trends in rangeland.

#### Causes of Rangeland Degradation

##### Crop Cultivation

According to the informants, since the mid 1990s, the pastoralist involvement in farming has increased, especially after the 1999/2000 drought. It has been reported that, the annual rate of expansion of the rangeland cultivation has estimated to reach 15% over the last two decades. The major reason for this expansion was drought induced poverty manifested in loss of basic assets (livestock) and a general deterioration of pastoral livelihoods. The expansion of farming in the study area is also related to the growing importance of cereal supplementation in the pastoral diet, since cultivation is considered as a diversification response of pastoralists to a declining availability of food generated from livestock. This shift in pastoralists' consumption habits is influenced by the rising milk deficit as a result of population growth, recurrent shocks and productivity decline. Even if, crop cultivation among the pastoralists may in some way support livestock-based livelihoods it is limited to good rainy seasons and river bank cultivations. Therefore, agro pastoralism can sustainably support livelihoods where in areas where there is a relatively reliable moisture condition or opportunistically when there is sufficient rain. The expansion of crop production has an effect on the pastoral mode of life and their long established customary institutions. Therefore, in general terms, decisions regarding expansion of crop cultivation should be consulted with local pastoralists and follow the land use plan. With regard to women's work loads, the shift to greatly increases the workload of women as family caretakers. The growing importance of cereals in the family diet also meant that women spend more time to process food and collecting firewood to cook. However, livestock products are not so demanding in these terms.

##### Bush Encroachment

The most serious threat to pastures today seems to come from the ecological processes summed up as bush encroachment. The pastoralists relate the increasing in bush encroachment to a ban on range burning (which used to be commonly practiced) introduced during Derg administration as a development intervention since the late 1970s. The removal of so much forage that there is no dry matter left on the ground to fuel fires, even if regular

fire regimes were reintroduced. Pastoralists consider encroachment of unwanted plant species as a menace to the deterioration and decline of the pastoral rangeland. It has been reported that encroachment of woody bush species was aggravated in the rangeland after the 1960s and worsened following a ban on the use of fire. The rangelands of Arero, Moyale, Filtu and Liben woredas are among the woredas with a relatively higher proportion of bush coverage in the study area.

### **Private Range Enclosure**

Private enclosures have major repercussions on access to communal grazing especially in Borena rangelands. Enclosures led to reduction in communal grazing areas through hindering mobility. Evidences from the local elders underlines that the reasons for the gradual dismantling of grazing land are attributed to the shift in trend of communal to individual landholdings. Results indicated that there are endogenous and exogenous driving forces for range enclosure and change in land use with the advent effect of conflict of interest on resource and unstable property rights characterized by distributional imbalances. Although the unreliable private benefits from enclosure may still continue to be tempting for individual households to practice it, its expansion may not generally increase the welfare of pastoral community in the longer-term unless some measures are introduced. Variation is observed across the case study sites in terms of rule enforcement, benefits from enclosure and the incentives for practicing it. Moreover, signs of customary institution's and lower level administration support for enclosure are evident. In general it has been found that there is an increasing trend in communal rangeland falling under private use.

### **Water Resources**

Water source is the most critical resource that shaped the pastoral society. A variety of water sources are used by pastoralists with varying requirements of labor and time for utilizing the water sources. The water sources have important implications for women's workload and family health, particularly in the dry season. In general terms, there are many different water sources used by pastoralists all of which have different characteristics and conditions of access, which vary depending on season. The pastoral communities' territories are closely associated to their permanent water point. Dry season herds can only access pastures located in a radius of permanent water points. This also means that water access management can regulate the influx of livestock and control the pasture consumption. Concentration of people and livestock in small areas led to competition over limited water resources, creating more insecurity in the previously secure areas.

### **Resource Based Conflict**

In the study area, it has been reported that there is an increasing trend of scarcity in key pastoral resources. As a result, there are often multiple claims mainly over grazing land and water points. Disputes over water points between pastoral herders from Oromia and Somali regions can be easily transformed into violent conflict. Coupled with the gradual deterioration of dispute settlement traditional approaches, the nature of violence often tends to be devastating. For pastoralists, conflict is understood as a clash and contradictions among ethnic groups or within an ethnic group due to overlapping interests. The discussion reveals that the underlying causes are diverse and complex. They can simply be classified as social, economic, institutional and political where all can be mixed.

These factors include pasture, water and scarcity, competition over land as linked to the place of water-point especially between clans and between ethnic groups where there is dispute over the boundary, livestock raids and the effort to get back the rustled animals by force.

### **Causes of Conflicts**

A system that increases the superiority of large and powerful group to small groups where more powerful ones tend to attack or raid the small ones triggers conflicts. On the one hand, organizers of cattle rustling are believed to be those who have a bad manner in a community and then are given inferior position in a society. On the other hand, the discussants pointed out that there are economic incentives and social reasons for a person to commit it which include payment of dowry, slaughtering to feed the community itself and to generate cash. Rustling occurs between clans where a member of a clan takes steals animals from the other clan who belong to the same ethnic group. Raiding is observed between ethnic groups and it is often organized involving collective action resulting in violent forms of conflict.

A culturally embedded practice, where one becomes proud of killing the others and the social appreciation considering the killer as a hero in a village, stands as a social cause. Among close relatives, disputes and at times violence occurs over the sharing of parents' wealth. A rape of a woman by one ethnic group from other groups and an increase in urbanization contribute to emergence of violent conflict. In addition, settlement on grazing lands, settlement out of the traditional way, the need to hold land privately, insufficient infrastructure such as roads or markets which enable interaction with other communities, limited reach of judicial and law



enforcement institutions, unpredictable weather conditions leading to periods necessitating migration for grazing and encroachment of rangelands could be possible causes of conflict.

### **The Dynamics of Conflict**

The nature of land use and administration has becoming the underlying cause of the conflict. Various forms of land use (grazing, farming, enclosing) are dominant in the study area. The discussion reveals that there is a mechanism through which enclosing and farming reduce the area of land available for grazing. When land is internally divided among clan members, there are interclan as well as interethnic conflicts as shrinkage of clans commons could lead to long mobility towards interethnic disputed territories. Enclosed land is used either for private grazing or to contract out for grazing by others. While the practice has been there since the last 30 years, however it has been practiced aggressively over the last ten years. Among the Borana clans, earlier, “Kallos” was started as group enclosure for calves. Still the most popular form of enclosure is used communally by two or more adjacent settlements. However, immigrants from other areas can use the reserve grass according to the rules set by the host community. For example, according to the participants of the FGD, if the community has reserved the grass for calves below the age of one year, then the immigrants are not allowed enter the reserve with other species of animals or calves above the specified age. Not respecting the local rules by the mobile pastoralists is a major cause of conflict between different ethnic groups.

There is another undeclared form of reserved grass ownership. This is by fencing lands surrounding the cultivated land and using them privately. Currently a new form of enclosure has been introduced. This is closely related with the ownership of private water points and cultivable lands. In the process, they enclose large pieces of land and use the pasture privately. Another new development is introduction of cultivation to pastoral areas. The Borana had considered cultivation inferior to pastoralism for a long period of time. The elders say that livestock keeping has been the best production system for the Borana. The trend of land enclosure is increasing in Guji areas. This is related to aspiration of the people to hold the land privately to cultivation. This is out of the traditional way of communal land use. This reduces the range land replaced by cultivation of crops. This change in the land use causes conflict. The intensity of conflict has become closer to the relatives and family unlike the previous which was distant to the relatives.

The competition for the use of grazing land by the pastoralists and those who wanted to cultivate the same land is becoming the main cause of conflict. The shortage of grazing areas for livestock lead the pastoralists to move in to the agricultural areas escalate to conflict. The fertile grazing lands which were used by the pastoralists are turning in to farmlands the pastoralists consider the same land to get high quality grass. Traditionally pastoralist goes for conflict during wet season when there is abundance in resources to revenge the offence during drought however the trends are changing that even in dry season when there is a shortage of water and grazing resources is the usual time for conflict. This process is often intensified by migration of the highland farmers into the pastoralist areas in the rainy season without the discussion with local community which often results in resistance and eventually conflict. Moreover, new settlements on land which certain community already claim ownership create tension between the community and the newly settled. Expansion of the existing settlement without consensus with the community would lead to the tension and conflict. Interclan conflict occurs mostly during the rainy season in connection with livestock raids and during the dry season it occurs at water points due to livestock congestion and possible livestock raids to put a threat to some groups to access the water points. Conflict at water points is common where these resources are situated at the disputed ethnic boundary.

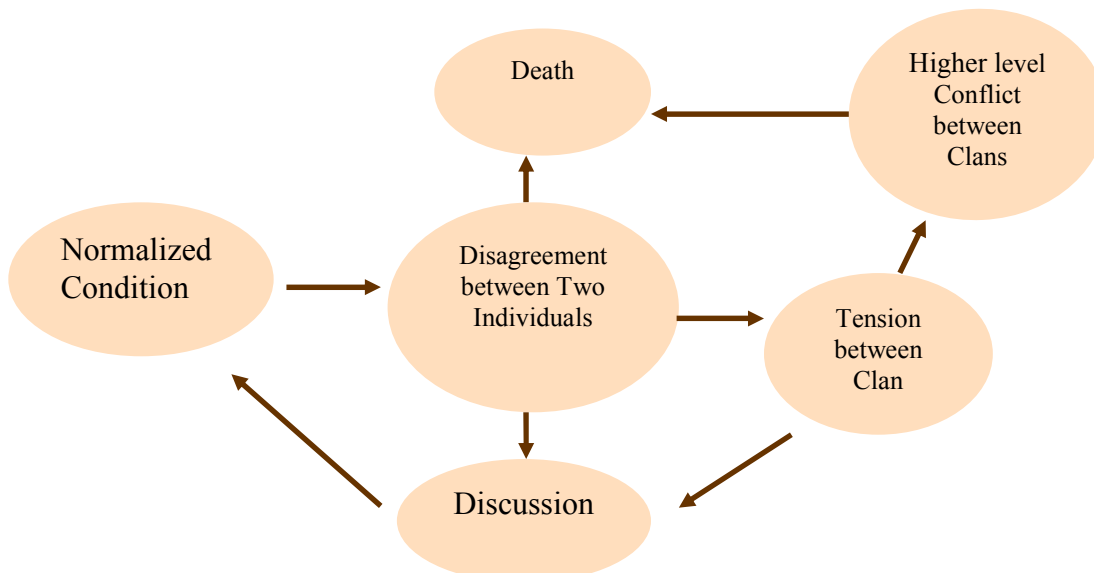
Moreover, insights from the discussion indicate a firmly held view that an increase in human population (taking new village formed and the expansion of existing in to consideration) and a parallel increase in livestock population have increased pressure on the rangeland resources causing scarcity, competition and then violence on access to these resources. This also causes tension as livestock demand more for grazing land which requires more distance travel and encounter another community which led for competition and possible conflict. Factors such as competition for land and claims for private holding of land internally and between neighboring groups are the consequences of an increase in human population. The political interest among clans (within each ethnic group) to have their own kebele and districts and to administer themselves poses a claim to control land, where possession is given priority. This proceeds with the demarcation of an area falling under a particular kebele and district. This internal demand for self-governance expands land related disputes to occur between Oromo and Somali ethnic groups.

### **Levels of Conflict**

According to the key informants the conflict in southern and southeastern groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia has two forms. The first, intra ethnic group conflict, is a kind of conflict in which clans within an ethnic group come into conflict due to overlapping interests. In case of the Oromo pastoralists in southern and southeastern Ethiopia, there are three dominant clans namely: the Borana, Guji and Gabra. Though not frequently, conflict incidences

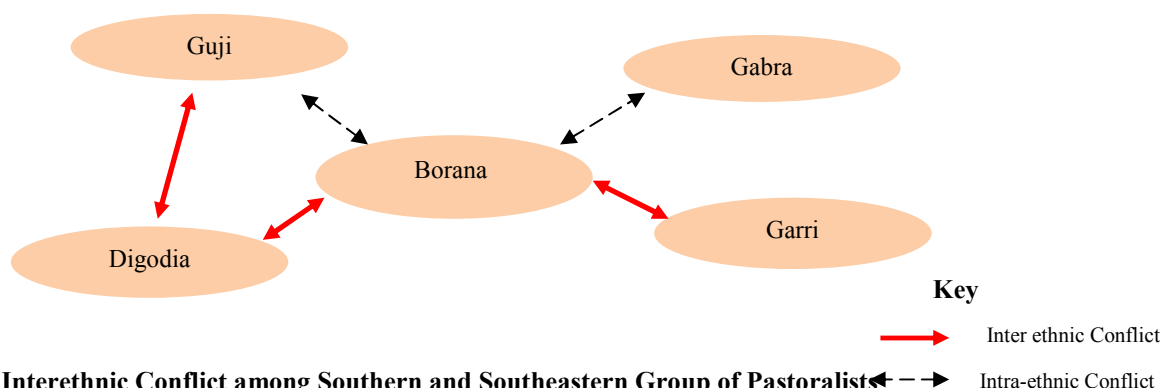
are eminent among these clans. Previously, such conflict was limited to Borana and Guji while the Gabra was somewhat neutral of conflicts. Now a day, the Gabra has sometimes in clash with the surrounding Borana. This is due to the presence of other clans from other ethnic group (the Somali) within the Gabra encampment according to the current administrative structure of the area. The clans from Somali ethnic group are reported to be at the back of the conflict between the Borana and the Gabra.

The following figure illustrates the process of conflict development within the Oromo clan groups that has resulted from the group discussion held in participatory assessment with community leaders.



**Figure 1: The Process of Conflict Development among the Oromo Clans**

The second form of conflict in the study area is interethnic conflict in which different ethnic groups come into conflict due to different interest. This form of conflict arises most often between the Oromo and Somali ethnic groups. There are two major clans of Somali and three Oromo clans in southern and southeastern groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia. The two Somali clans are Digodia and Gari while the three clans of the Oromo are Borana, Guji and Gabra. Both the Somali clans have come into conflict with all the three clans of the Oromo in one way or the other. For example, there is frequent conflict between the Guji on the one hand and the Digodi and Gari clans in Guji zone, Liben district of Walensu village. There is also conflict in Moyale district between the Digodia on the one hand and the Gabra and Borana on the other. There is also conflict between the Digodi and Gari of the Somali and the Borana in Arero district. Interethnic conflict is not seasonal in nature rather it is irregular and sudden. Compared to the intra ethnic conflict, the interethnic conflict is more devastating, most frequent and notorious in nature.



**Figure 2: Interethnic Conflict among Southern and Southeastern Group of Pastoralists**

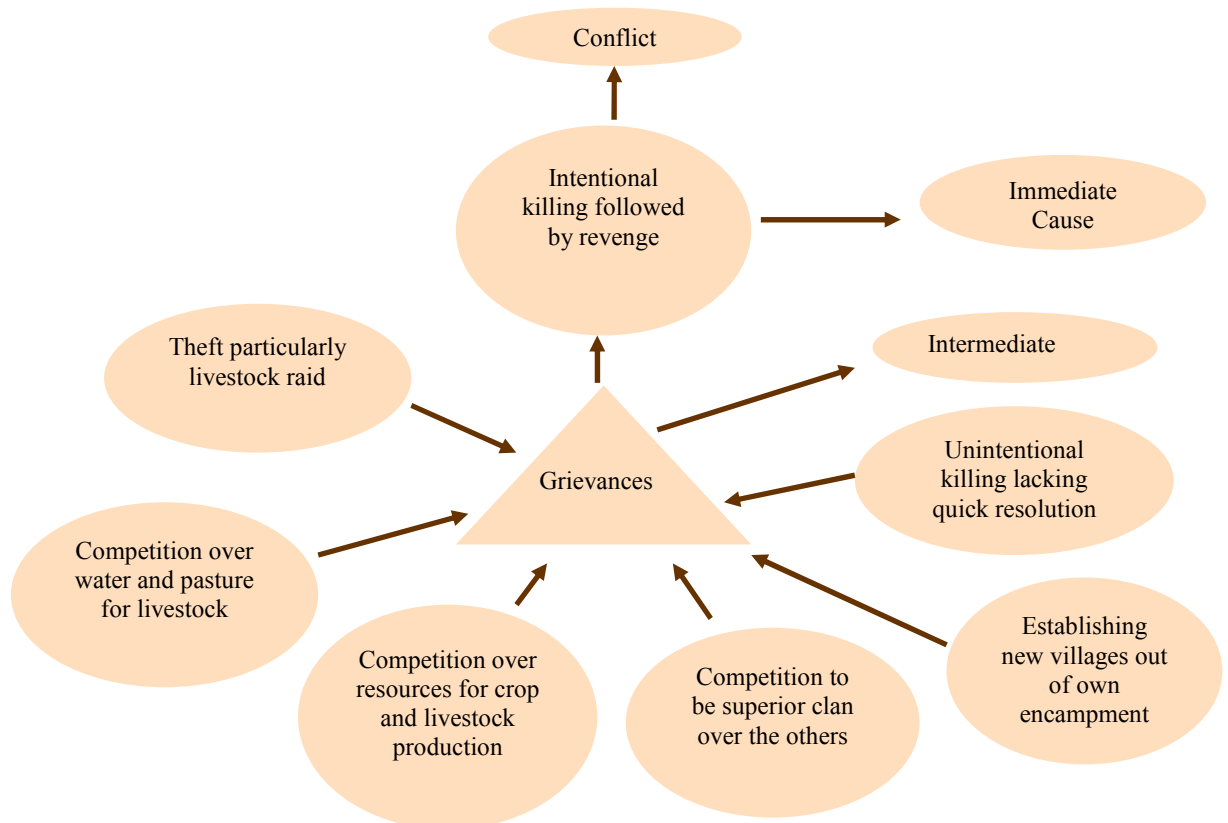
The elders from Oromo and Somali clans have confirmed that the conflict is deep rooted and its history is traced back to the reign of Ziad Bare of Somalia and the reign of Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia. The conflict during this period was between the two countries than between the pastoralist ethnic groups in the southern and southeastern Ethiopia. It had a political mission in which Ziad Bare of Somalia was expanding the territorial extension of the country by bringing together all Somali ethnic groups and to form “Great Somalia”. This legacy remained a root cause for the present conflict between the Oromo and Somali ethnic groups of

southern and southeastern groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia.

**Trends of the Conflict**

As further discussed by the elders, the trend of the conflict over time (over the last twenty years), there has been an increase in the frequency and level of conflict as regionalization and democratization processes under the existing government. A further exploring of views reveals that the process of democratization has created a freedom to speak out to express own concerns and interests which has indirectly contributed to emergence of disputes over regional boundaries as well as within a region over territorial claims among the clans. The tone of the discussion shows that this should not be recognized as a negative effect but rather as part of the challenge in transition to democracy. There are a number of factors attributed to the change in the nature of the conflict including loss of the culture of respect to each other, modern education created a generation gap, strong educated and young people attitude on ethnicity, the region demarcation based on ethnicity, drought and water shortage, population growth, expansion of agriculture/reduction of grazing land and the weakening of the traditional institutions. This suggests that interventions that improve upon factors that transform conflict into a more violent form would contribute to the management of the conflict. While examining the nature of interethnic conflict, it is constantly shaped by external factors that influence local relationships such as the nature of the conflicts has also been shaped by broader political dynamics, most notably, changes in administrative boundaries. The referendum is not been agreed by both parties which they think created a constant tension and taken as treat to loss territory from the Oromo pastoralist side.

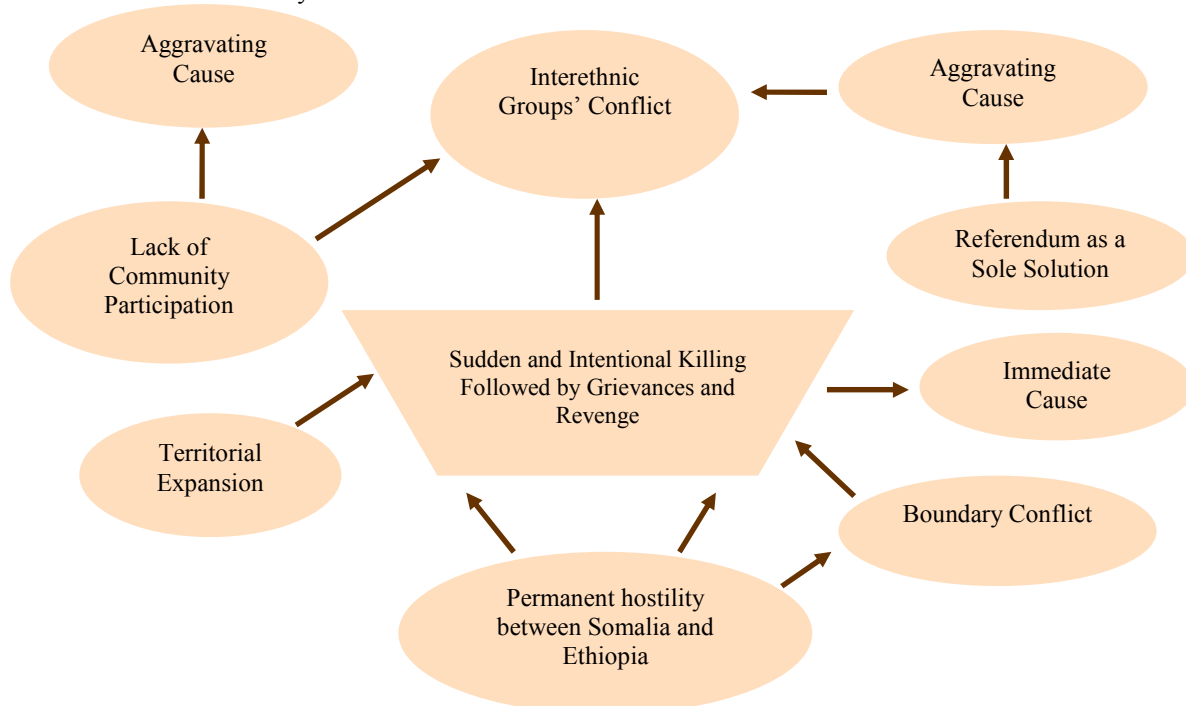
In ranking the causes of interethnic conflict, participants put them in the following order: intentional killing from the other group; revenge, theft particularly ride of livestock; establishing new villages out of own encampment; competition between crop production and livestock rearing; competition over pasture and water and claim for superiority among clans. The causes are interlinked and interrelated. The causes can be categorized as root, intermediate and immediate causes. The following flow chart summarizes the causal relationship.



**Figure 3: Causal Relationship between Causes and Conflict of Inter-ethnic Conflict**

There are three major causes identified for the interethnic groups’ conflict in southern and southeastern groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia. In prioritizing the causes for interethnic conflict, the discussion reveals permanent hostility between the two ethnic groups, territorial expansion and boundary dispute, regionalism entailing the formation of boundary and lack of community participation in inter-regional states conflict resolution as important factors in order. The causes for the interethnic groups in the southern and southeastern

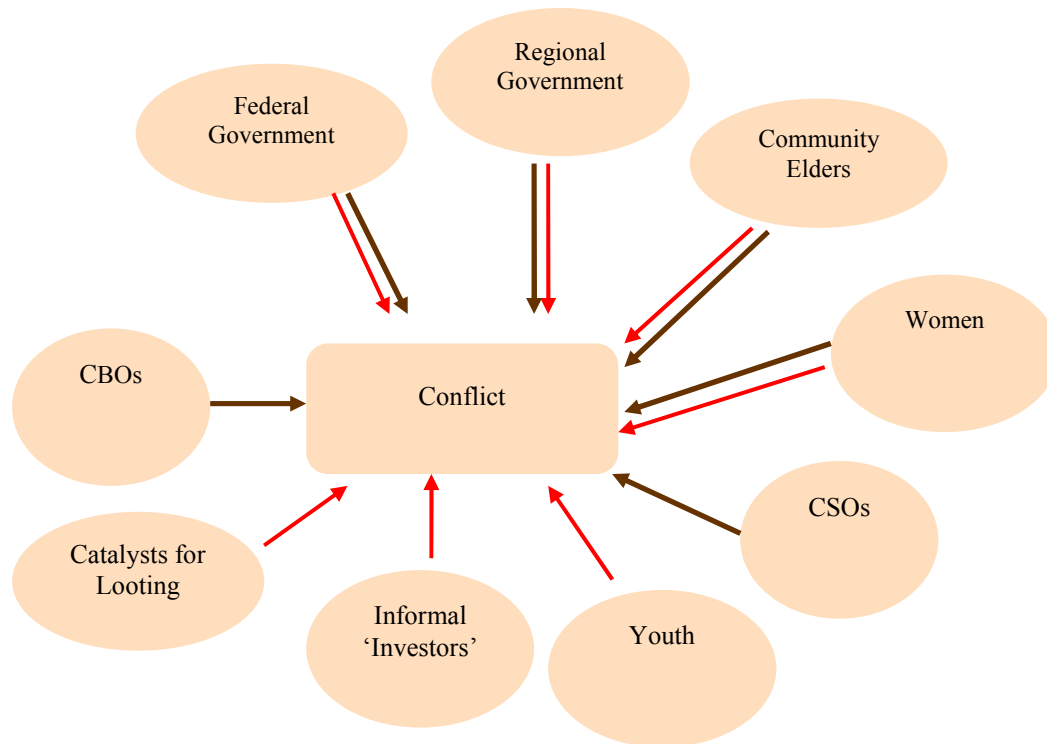
groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia can be categorized into root, aggravating and immediate causes. The following flow chart indicates the way in which the causes are interlinked with the conflict.



**Figure 4: Causal Relationship between Causes and Conflict of the Interethnic Groups**

The root cause for the interethnic groups in southern and southeastern groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia is the permanent hostility between Ethiopia and Somalia that can be traced back to about four decades. The major grounds for the hostility are expressed by territorial expansion and boundary conflict. This legacy remains the root cause for the current conflict in the area. This in turn results in instability of the area followed by intentional killing from the other ethnic group that often followed by grievances and revenge. According to the current administrative system of Ethiopia in which regional states are formed under the Federal Government, some parts of the southern and southeastern groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia were structured under administrative regions of Oromia while the other are under that of the Somali. Nevertheless, there is no clear boundary that demarcates the regions from each other. The mandate to resolve boundary conflict between the regions is vested in the hand of the federal state. With regard to referendum, there is a proclamation that says “land to the people who settled on it by the moment of the referendum”. Basing this proclamation, both groups try to push each other and settle in an area and claim that land through referendum. There are different actors in the conflict of southern and southeastern groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia. Some of them are considered as resolving agents, others as aggravators while still some others play both the roles of aggravating and resolving conflict. The following represents the conflict mapping of actors to conflict in southern and southeastern groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia.





**Figure 5: Conflict Actors Mapping**

**Key:**

- Resolving roles
- Aggravating roles

Among the conflict actors catalysts, informal investors and youth play an aggravating roles. The catalysts in this context are those individuals neutral of the conflict but need to initiate conflicts in order to get benefit from the conflict through looting of the properties of the retreating group. The other actor, the informal investors who have no legal entity and not working in the interest of the community also play aggravating role in the conflict. Community elders and women play an aggravating role being in the side of their respective groups but they also play a mediating role in conflict resolution particularly in the intra ethnic group conflict. Civil Society Organizations and Community Based Organizations in the area on the other hand play a resolving role.

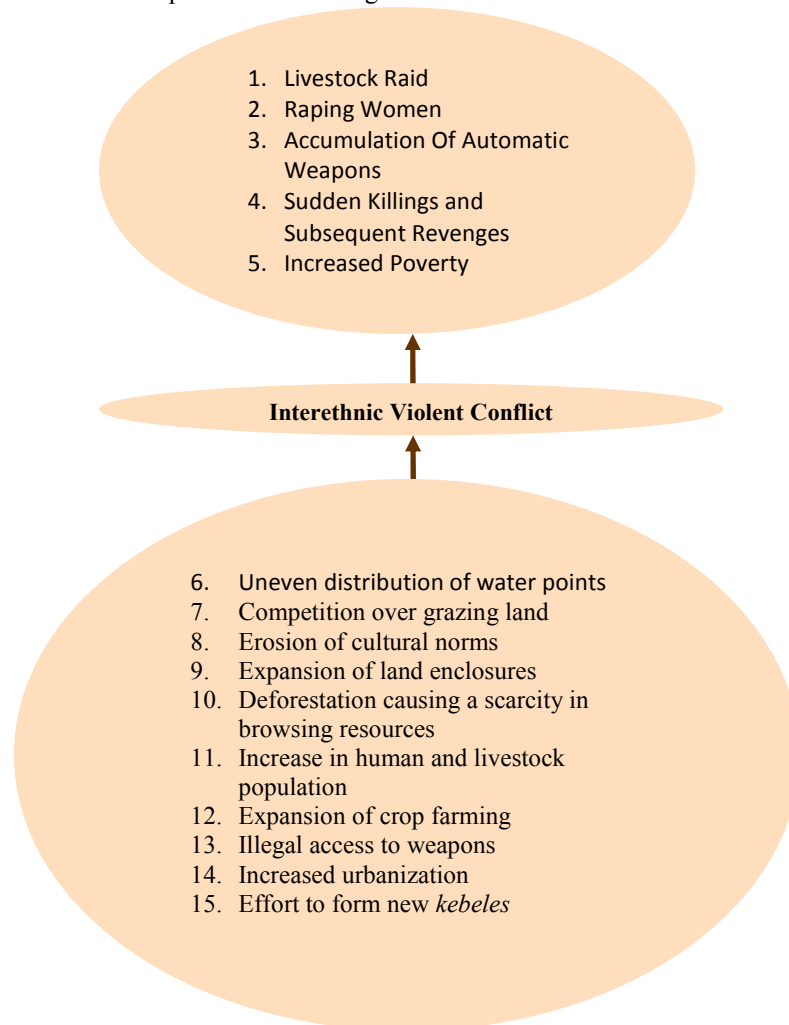
A further detailed analysis of the causes of the conflict, the ranking of the causes and classification of the causes as interclan or interethnic conflict is discussed below. Based on participatory analysis with participants from the Somali ethnic group, a slightly different listing of causes and analysis of relationship was made. The causes of the conflict identified were:

- 1) uneven distribution of water points
- 2) competition over grazing land
- 3) increased drought frequency
- 4) boundary dispute
- 5) livestock raiding
- 6) raping women
- 7) abduction of women
- 8) sudden killings and subsequent revenges
- 9) erosion of cultural norms
- 10) expansion of land enclosures
- 11) deforestation causing a scarcity in browsing resources
- 12) increase in human and livestock population
- 13) expansion of crop farming (causing a reduction in grazing space and increased competition on the remaining resource
- 14) illegal access to and accumulation of automatic weapons)
- 15) increased urbanization (causing importing of culturally unwanted practices
- 16) increased poverty
- 17) Effort to form new *kebeles*.

The result of the discussion shows abduction of women is solely responsible for interclan conflict whereas others (1, 2, 4, 5 and 10) are exclusively causes for interethnic conflict. The majority of the factors (3, 6,

8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 and 17) are considered as the causes for both interclan and interethnic conflicts.

Ranking of the causal factors was carried out through giving each group member three sticks to give a score to a particular set of factors that are perceived to be relatively very important compared to other factors. The outcome of the exercise reveals that unclear boundary (boundary dispute) is found to be the most important cause of the interethnic violence followed by access to illegal automatic weapons. The scores from the ranking exercise shows that uneven distribution of water points, increased frequency of drought and revenges associated with killings are the third important set of factors. The fourth causal factors are erosion of cultural norms, expansion of rangeland enclosures and increased poverty. Important in ranking and scoring exercise is that there are overlaps of a set of factors with equal scores standing as the third and fourth causes of violent conflict.



**Figure 6: Causes and Consequences of Violent Conflict**

The third step in this participatory analysis was explaining the causal chains. One of the benefits of participatory conflict analysis is the active involvement of the participants in describing causal chains in which some of the factors that are perceived to be causes of violent interethnic conflict can also be distinguished as the causes and consequences of the violent conflict. This is linked to ranking result which shows that boundary dispute (as a result of unclear boundary) is transformed into violent conflict. Thus, the remaining task was to identify the causes and effects of interethnic violent conflict.

The fourth step in the participatory conflict analysis is the conflict mapping exercise where the key actors/players were identified and their roles were examined. Accordingly, the participants listed the following factors: 1) Extended Family (father, son and relatives), 2) youngsters (young group), 3) local Leaders (elders, clan heads, Abba-Gadaa, sultan, Ugaz), 4) opportunistic individuals (could be state officials, community members benefiting from violent conflict), 5) traders (who belong to each ethnic group contributing cash to purchase weapons 6) regional states, 7) diasporas (sending remittance), 8) District Administration , 9) Gabayaa (a group of women singing to agitate men to move into violence), an equivalent practice is *Gerarsa* in Afan Oromo, 10) Office of Neighboring Regions' Affairs (Zonal/District Levels), 11) Neighboring Regions Development Office, 12) NGOs 13) Ministry of Federal Affairs, and pastoral development Affairs 14) Pastoral

Affairs Standing Committee (PASC), and 15) House of Federation (HoF).

The analysis did not yield a very concrete description of the actors' role as the issue was somehow sensitive. The principal task of local leaders is to communicate traders and facilitate support from the Diaspora in that they play a key role in the mobilization of resources for violent conflict. For both traders and the Diaspora, contribution is recognized as a social obligation and is not only based on willingness. After collecting the fund, elders will invest the pooled-fund on the purchase of weapons and recruit youngsters. Hence, the relationship is strong. The Woreda and Regional administrators have a weak link with the local leaders and often appear as mediators after violence occurred. The Woreda administration is also reluctant in monitoring opportunistic individuals who are state employees.

Women are engaged in agitating men to fight and take revenge in case of killings by the other ethnic groups and insult men in some ways. Hence, there is strong influence of women on the youngsters. Meanwhile, opportunistic individuals use youngsters to trigger violence. Therefore, youngsters hold ambivalent position as they have connections with elders as well as opportunistic individuals. NGOs, has strong relationship with local leaders while works very closely with the regional offices. At a higher level, the regional state has strong link with the Ministry of Federal and pastoral development Affairs.

### **Conflict Resolution**

One of the basic questions in understanding conflict resolution is to distinguish the types of conflicts that are settled traditionally through elders. Insight from the discussion indicates that both interclan and interethnic conflict can be solved customarily while resolving interethnic violence is linked to boundary dispute which requires state intervention. A further inquiry into the possible role of the state when resolution of conflicts goes beyond the capacity of customary leaders discloses the steps taken by the regional and federal governments in the facilitation of interethnic customary agreement. There are also some mechanisms that are used to prevent incidence of conflict. Elders take measure to prevent conflict through monitoring and punishing individuals who plan to trigger it and through pushing clans to respect interclan agreement in place. Elders from both clans do this.

The intra ethnic groups' conflict is easily resolved by community elders with local conflict management mechanisms without intervention of external organs. All the three Oromo clans have common indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in which 'Gumma' is the known one. Gumma is a conflict resolution technique in resolving conflict related to killing particularly unintentional killing of individual from other or within the same clan. It helps to avoid grievances and revenge that follow the case of killing. The following are some of the remedies. For theft action, a person who has stolen a head of livestock will return 5 heads of equivalent livestock, In an attempt of killing but resulted in wounding will be penalized with 15 heads of cattle; for intentional killing action, regardless of age or sex will be penalized with 30 heads of cattle; for an intentional killing action, the person will be penalized with small amount of small animals.

With respect to cattle raiding, the interethnic agreement indicates that a person or group engaged in cattle rustling is bound to repay (in kind) 5 heads of cattle for every head cattle raided. This agreement is made among the Borana, Garri, Gabra and Gujji pastoral groups. It is comprehensive and encompasses aspects related to gender (such as raping and abduction of women). The agreement indicates that intractable issues linked to violent conflict that are unresolved at local level will be handed over to the regional governments. Customary leaders (Sultan, Ugaz and Abba Gadaa) should be held accountable to all forms of conflicts in the pastoral areas since they are traditionally responsible to manage conflicts at all levels. This has been clearly underlined in the Yabello Agreement. This agreement has been sent to the regional governments of Oromia and Somali for approval, which will be sent further to the federal government for final approval and to get recognition and support.

How was public participation in the crafting of interethnic agreements? This question was discussed to learn how transparent the customary system is in designing institutions for conflict management. Initially, a peace committee was appointed by the Oromia and Somali regional governments as it is presumed to represent the interests of other community members. However, the committee failed to bring sustainable solution to the conflict, which resulted intervention of elders to handle the problem customarily. After recognizing the role of elders, the regional governments actively involved them in the drafting of the written agreement constituting 11 points. Subsequent to a series of meetings, elders enriched the content. Then they received feedback from the communities from both ethnic groups when a meeting was held at Yabello. Finally, they presented the proposal to the regional governments. A further inquiry into "whether such an interethnic agreement was made for the first time or not" indicates that there were similar agreements earlier. But there was no state recognition and support. Insights from the discussion inform as that the new modality of operating with customary institutions in conflict management appears to be a move to secure state recognition of customary law.

Participants were made to compare the existing practice with the previous system. There is strong view that customary agreements worked better in every day since the community conforms to the "Xeer" which is

exercised by the customary leaders. At present, intervention of emerging interest groups (with opportunistic behavior) contributed to the aggravation of the violence. Discussants suggest the need to make a distinction between expansion of the state structure into pastoral areas and the presence of rent-seekers in the perpetuation of violence. These individuals can be associated with the state structure and seek to control a specific territory to become leader of a kebele eventually if more land is acquired through a violent means. In explaining the role of government, participants underlined that the government intervenes by force and stops the violence by force and creates opportunity for the elders of conflicting parties to come together for discussion of peace. However, NGOs and civil society organizations working in pastoralist areas play a mediation role in creating condition for conflicting parties to come together to settle the conflict. Indeed, the role played by these actors depends on the scale of the conflict, if the conflict is in large scale the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms has less role to play as in case between the Gari /Digodia and Borana. The large scale conflicts usually mediated through government intervention.

The traditional rules and regulations of resource use have been losing their importance from time to time. The development interventions that introduced individual ownership of water points and cultivation have a tremendous effect on grazing management. In the Borana system, the main control system is over water points rather than grazing land. People who have developed their own water wells have now more power than others in terms of access to the resources. The clan leaders are also losing their fairness and authenticity.

The wealthy people influence them using their economic power. People complain about the increasing feature of corruption among the local leaders. Clan leaders allow some people to settle at wrong places or use the resource without the agreement of the society.

Discussion among the Oromo elders reveals that there are some steps followed in resolving conflict:

1. The conflicting parties will call for settling the conflict
2. The elders from the conflicting parties call for settling the conflict
3. The elders come together and identify the causes and the problems to mediate
4. The identification of the guilty person/s will be the first to the process
5. Based on the accepted norms there will be compensation
6. Handover of the guilty person/s will be setting agreed up on

Eventually, key informants commented on the need to exploit the role of education in that the role of education of pastoral children has been perceived to be a problem as the curriculum does not emphasize pastoral systems where children could not learn how to improve pastoral production systems in which conflict is often problem.

### **Impacts of the Conflict**

Death of an immediate family member, relative or hired labor had occurred during fighting. Injuries are a cost to households, for they interfere with the flow and allocation of resources for subsistence, and have high chances of initiating new conflicts in the form of revenge. Therefore, an immediate impact of violent conflict is the loss of livestock and lives, destruction of household assets, disturbance of schools and interruption of public services such as health. The impact can manifest itself in terms of reduced access to food; interruptions in education; health care services; and trade. Reduction in the number of livestock through raids; loss of life and property; lack of water; degeneration of social relationships; forced migration of families and livestock; negative psychological and social impact of death; closure of the borehole; and intensified insecurity leading to reduced outdoor activities; among others—these are serious implications to a people already experiencing figures below the national average in health, education and nutrition; the long-term impact being poverty in general. Connection between relatives in different clans and ethnic groups will be interrupted temporarily until peace and stability are restored. The impact of violence should not be viewed from the perspective of a complete loss as there are certain actors benefiting from perpetuation of conflicts.

Question was raised about who benefits from conflict? Conflict benefits a few and causes a loss to others. Some office holders and other individuals from the community deliberately orchestrate violence exhibiting opportunistic behavior taking advantage of livestock raid (for example). It was not possible to explicitly mention who these individuals are as the issue was so sensitive. The impact of violence can be a disruption of the institutional arrangements facilitating the process of resource sharing. This is not a serious problem when it comes to inter-clan relations as the pervasive nature of interclan agreements that can be enforced through the mediation of a third party (clan) where as interruption of interethnic resource arrangements could be disrupted. Within a group experiencing violence, both the rich and the poor are equally affected. Hence, there is a sense of cooperation between the poor and the rich to defend themselves. Impacts resulting from violent conflict and the customary procedures in dealing with such perverse effect are reported to share similar characteristics.

Both intra and interethnic conflict have several consequences that hamper human right on the one hand and development endeavor on the other that in turn result in poverty. In the conflict particularly, in interethnic

conflict there are great number of individuals killed either in the direct front of the conflict or while evacuating from the conflict areas. Women around their vicinity with their children, pregnant women and the old age are primary victims of the conflict. In the conflict, if the enemy force has come across a woman of the other group, the force kills that woman with the idea that “woman gives birth to male child”.

The second impact is loss of assets particularly livestock. Participants observed a reduction in livestock population due to raid during large scale conflict. The conflicts are characterized by livestock raid and attack of other important resource base of the enemy group. As a result, in each conflict a number of livestock could be lost. Besides, a number of livestock died due to the absence of provision of water and pasture during conflict time. Others are also eaten by wild animals while some others are attacked by running gun pounders.

Thirdly, there is loss of public services such as school and health institutions. Conflicts affect physical access to schools and to other learning institutions. Students and teachers are unable to go to school due to insecurity resulting from conflicts. In most cases, schools get closed. Teachers who come from outside the district prefer to return to their home areas. Older students, through requests from parents, or based on socio-cultural and family obligations, join others in the fighting. Children are forced to drop out of school when families decide to migrate to other areas in search of physical security. Once again, disruption of school leads to low levels of education, confining more and more people to pastoralism as the only source of livelihoods. Conflicts interfere with people’s access to health care services and facilities. The providers like NGOs and the private sector are kept away by insecurity. At the same time, people lack income to pay for services due to lack of access to income-generating activities.

The conflicts are also characterized by burning and looting of public services of the enemy group. For example, in Walensu village of Liben district a school and a clinic were burned in the conflict of the 2010. The fourth is under utilization and improper conservation of natural resources. Due to the conflict of interests, some resources are not properly used by both groups. The fourth impact of conflict is on herd mobility. In the last two decades mobility has been reduced and in contrary trends of settlements and partial mobility, expansion of agricultural land and sending children to school has increased. Now a day, the size of herd in southern and southeastern groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia is relatively greater than the size of herds before 20 years. The difference is that before 20 years the heads of herds per individual was greater. Now the heads of herd size per individual is shrinking but the total herd size is increasing.

The fifth impact of conflict is displacement. The conflicts in southern and southeastern groups of pastoralists in Ethiopia result in displacement of the people because of the instability and losing of their properties in the conflict. The sixth impact of conflict is the time and other resources it consumes in terms of resolving and managing. Arising arguments can take days to settle, and sometimes end up developing into physical fights. When there are disagreements over water, most people negotiate, while others resort to fighting. Disagreements are mainly with family members, hired labor, livestock owners and with other clan members. Most of the respondents said that it takes them up to one week; up to two weeks; and up to four weeks to manage a conflict through negotiations. If that fails, it can take another two weeks (on average) of fighting. A total of 2 weeks spent managing a conflict is too high a price for pastoralists, an activity whose success depends on availability of time and labor to cover long distances in search of water, pasture, better markets and physical security. A reduction in labor affects livestock rearing and production cycles. Conflicts affect income generating activities negatively as people experience an increase in the price of products. The contributing factor is that many people feel insecure to leave home and go to market places due to robbery and thefts. Insecurity and fear affect levels of food production at the household level due to a reduction in the quality and quantity of livestock. The livestock get stolen and there are no stable markets to rely on. Reduction in quality and quantity leads to increased poverty. Physical insecurity bars people from moving to marketplaces to buy and sell foodstuff and participate in other income generating commodities. In sum, insecurity sparks a whole new cycle of poverty.

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