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Dynamics of Ethnic Conflict Among the Hamar, Nyangatom, and Dassanech in Ethiopia's South Omo Zone: The Struggle Communities for Land

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Abstract:

This study investigates the nature and dynamics of land-related conflicts in the Hamar, Nyangatom, and Dassanech communities of South Omo, Ethiopia, with a specific emphasis on conflict management mechanisms and the growing impact of economic pressure and climate change. Employing a qualitative case study design, the research reveals that land disputes remain a persistent threat to community cohesion, socio-economic development, and intergroup relations. These conflicts are largely driven by competing claims over scarce natural resources—including grazing land, water points, and agricultural land—resources which have become increasingly limited due to prolonged droughts and climate variability. At the core of the disputes lies a tension between exclusive resource control and equitable resource sharing. The transboundary nature of some resource competitions further exacerbates the conflict. Rather than showing signs of resolution, these conflicts have evolved into cyclical and seasonal patterns of violence. The findings suggest that strengthening justice systems, institutional frameworks for conflict resolution, and community-based peacebuilding initiatives—particularly those integrating climate adaptation, early warning systems, and livelihood diversification—are critical to mitigating conflict and fostering long-term stability in the region.

Keywords: Dynamics Conflict, Struggle land, pastureland, Pastoralism, Agro-pastoralism

1. Introduction

People have different have different interests over such resources as forests, water, pastures and land. Resources are increasingly subject to intense competition to control and use. The competition led to conflict (<https://www.fao.org/3/a0032e/a0032e04.htm>) Conflict refers to actual or perceived incompatibility of interests, goals, and actions in relationships between individuals or groups. It is a dynamic process where attitudes, behaviors, contexts and structures are constantly changing and influencing one another (Tim, 2008). Conflict is natural, inevitable and necessary part of human lives (Galtung, 1996). Conflict in pastoral areas has long been linked to the need to gain control of scarce and strategic resources, particularly water and pasture. However, the key issues here are not merely scarcity, which, as highlighted above, has always been a determining feature of life in the rangelands, but also the increased inability to manage scarcity (Levine and Pavanello, 2012). In the horn of Africa, there are common factors contributing to conflict and violence within and between pastoralists. The most common factors are inappropriate government policies, socio-economic and political marginalization, inadequate land tenure policies, insecurity, intensified cattle rustling,

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proliferation of small arms, and light weapons, weakened traditional governance in pastoral areas, vulnerability to climatic variability, and competition with wildlife (IGAD, 2022).

In Ethiopia, the pattern and forms of the recent violent conflicts in pastoral areas indicate that they have involved in resource control and utilization competition (Cross-border analysis and mapping final report, 2016). Conflicts are a common phenomenon in south Omo zone pastoralist and agro-pastoral community due to various causes. The causes of the conflicts are mostly related to resources competition, pasture, land, water points, and negative perception (USAID, 2021). The risks of violent conflicts in the border area are also likely to continue or even increase because, according to one zonal official interviewed, the Kenyan authorities are reluctant or unable to stop the attackers, apprehend criminals, and force perpetrators to return raided animals. It is equally important to recognize the positive developments, such as the growing improvement in surveillance and early warning mechanisms that helped thwart planned attacks and the agreements reached between some communities to share resources (Ibid).

However, conflict by its nature is dynamic, the drivers or causes and its nature are changeable through time due many natural and manmade phenomenon. Accordingly, an in-depth investigation of natural resource based conflict and its dynamics in the study area in focus is found to be important.

2. Literature Review

There are various types of conflict theories. From the conflict theories, the researcher selects Karl Marx's conflict theory which can be best explains the issue under study. Based on this conflict theory there are two basic groups of people within society. These groups of people are the wealthy and the poor. This theory looks at what happens when one group tries to rebel against the other group of people in the society and the various roles a group of people and even one individual has over another group of people or individual. The theory examines the social control that the rich groups of a society or individual have over the masses and over another individual. Marx believed that a society or an organization only functions in order to attempt and better their social situation, which can result in some type of social upheaval in the society. Marx's theory brings out different types of conflicts that include conflict regarding class, race, ethnicity, gender, religion, and conflict regarding regions (Karl, 1971). His conflict theory can be applied to a number of social conflicts as it relates to how one group controls the rest in the society, the struggles within the oppressed, the economically poor group of people, and the way that the controlling group (the wealthy class who control resources and the means of production like land resources) maintains and have power.

According to Marx, the existence of different social classes in the human society is the continuous source of inevitable conflict, struggle and changes on the social structure occur through violent upheavals affecting class composition. He emphasizes the importance of interests over norms and values, and the ways in which the pursuit of interests generates various types of conflict as normal aspects of social life, rather than abnormal occurrences in the society. He sees the human society as a collection of various competing interest groups and individuals each with their own motives, goals and expectations.

Based on this conflict theory, members of the society have various values, interests or expectations. The values, interests or expectations vary according to one's position, privileges, ability, class, and wealth. Agreement tends to exist among those groups of people in society who share similar privileges, values, norms and interests. As a result, this is likely to encourage unequal distribution of the scarce but valuable resources and opportunities in the society and resulting in divisions in society that leads to hostility, opposition and conflict. Marx's theory helps the researcher to explain the nature of relations among pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities living in Hammer, Dassanech, Nyangatom and cross border resources based conflicts in resources like pasture, land, water, animal and fishing areas that they experience in their living and interaction. The conflict characterized by clashes over resources of pasture, water, land, fishing areas and cattle rustling can be viewed as part of the struggle by “the have” pastoralists, and “the have nots”. The theory best clarified and confirmed the community in the study area is in state of resource based protracted conflicts.

3. Research Methods

In this Study the researcher used qualitative research approach with case study research design. According to King, Keohane and Verba (1994) the qualitative research approach enable a researcher to unearth an immense amount of information for a study. This study is conducted in Dassanech, hammer, Nyangatom Woreda, pastoralist community based on empirical primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected through in-depth interview, and FGD. 98 participants were purposively selected and key informants comprised elders, public administrators, experts and community members. This study also used secondary sources of data such as from online sources, books, published

journals, working papers and other unpublished written works. Data were analyzed qualitatively by organizing the data's in to contents.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 The Sources of Conflicts

Conflict is the result of internal resource scarcity, shortage and the competition to use in the study area (Zonal government peace and militia office, 2022). Violent conflicts are caused by conflicts over access to and ownership of land, water or other renewable natural resources. Controlling access to resources, and thereby denying access to others, is often a cause of local conflicts. The context of climate change with shortage and scarcity, access will become more and more valuable and a likely source of contention (Ramsbotham, Et.al., 2011). Recourses are the major causes of internal and cross border conflicts and violence's. The conflicts between Turkana community, Dassanech, hamer and Nyangatom community are principally caused by competition over resources like water and pasture, livestock raiding, disagreement about boundary demarcations, unfair terms of trade in livestock and grain, and small arms smuggling (Cross-border analysis and mapping final report, 2016 and interview with Woreda conflict early warning and response expert, 2022). Cross-border conflicts and domestic (internal conflicts) conflicts have similar causes. The conflicts are most commonly on competition over water and pasture, livestock raiding, territorial claims, lack of development opportunities to improve their life condition, and poor governance of resources (Ibid). The key informants stated the cross border conflict issue in the following way:

As our life is dependent on pasture and water, its scarcity and shortage led us to use the resources of other areas. We do not believe in boundary to get access to pasture land and water for our livestock and for us, even if the government draws a boundary because the nature of our living is strongly attached to livestock (Interview with a young cattle keeper, at Nyangatom 23rd February, 2022).

The implication of these domestic problems (internal conflicts and resource related problems) is to contribute to cross-border problems of conflicts. The cross-border nature of the conflicts and the diversity of conflicts actors involved further complicate efforts to resolve conflicts. Resources are continuously the most important issue in the pastoral and agro pastoral life of the community in the study area.

The internal conflict centers on resources like livestock, water, grazing land, and flood retreat agricultural land. It is very significant for the both of the overall lives of the community (Gebre, 2016). Water and pasture land in particular are the major resource, and the key consideration when it comes to livelihoods of the community. Agro pastoralists' engagement in retreat agriculture and seasonal migration to search for pasture and water with their livestock is one the cause of conflict both internal and cross border conflicts. The respondents or informants also confirms, the existence of seasonal migration to the boundary of Kenya and the Kenyans also migrates to us but most communally the Ethiopians pastoralist's mobility for pasture and water is usual in dry sessions. Internally, the conflicts are inter-ethnic to control and use resources beyond the politically delimited boundaries of their own.

The resource shortage and conflict is severely exacerbated by government or state development projects of the Gibe III dam. The transformation of communal lands into large-scale irrigated cash-crop schemes for sugar cane and cotton (Zonal Government militia and security office, 2023). According to them, projects have displaced communities from their land without compensation and reduced the amount of water an available in the Dassanech, Arbore and Turkana, who are downstream from the Omo and Wiyot rivers. It may causes to conflict in between the upstream and downstream communities. Specially, the absence of compensation from the government of Ethiopia to the Ethiopians pastoralists and agro pastoralists for their land is the source of grievance in the community and creates its own indirect influence in cross-border mobility and conflict.

The conflicts are triggered by environmental change and man-made factors like unpredictable weather conditions, environmental degradation, and drought and resource pressure caused by population large-scale development projects. These issues have an influence on livelihoods and led to conflict and instability between groups competing for access to land, pasture, and water and fishing areas (Gebre Yntiso, 2012 and IGAD, 2022, USAID, 2021).

In addition, the informants explained the conflict in the following manner:

The conflict takes the form of clan conflict in as rival groups compete and fight over scarce resources on pasture land, water points and lake for fishing. Internal conflicts are observed between the Nyangatom and Suri, Dassanech and Nyangatom, Dassanech and Hamer, Dassanech and Turkana, Nyangatom and Turkana, Hamer and Mursi, and Hamer and Erbore. The internal conflicts exacerbate the external or the cross-border

resource based conflicts. When we come to the cross border conflicts, the Hamar also fights with the Gabra community and Turkana over fishing rights and range land. The increasing pressures on resources and pushes the border area community to resort to violence to gain access to resources. The other causes of conflict in the study area are animal raiding as a cultural value and practice. Our culture promotes animal raiding (FGD 3, 1 and interview with south Omo zone peace and militia office).

4.2 Grievances As Threats To Peace In The Community

There are grievances around the absence of compensation for loss of land for government projects, private commercial agricultures and grievances on access to water, and pasture. This grievances poised new drivers of conflict in the study area. The resources competitions often take the form of protecting livelihood security, ethnic conflicts, with groups organized around narratives of land attachment on ethnicity for various purposes.

4.3 Animal Raiding And Conflict

Among East African pastoral communities, livestock raiding has been a common traditional practice (IGAD, 2022). In the study area, the participants of animal raiding are resident member of agro pastoral and pastoral communities and raided animals are sometimes returned to the rightful owners through the help of security forces of the government, and elders through negotiations, and reconciliations. According to FGD participants and Key interview informants in Hammer, Dassanech and Nyangatom Woreda, mobilized non-pastoral individuals from the Kenyan side of the border area engaged in livestock raiding from the Ethiopian pastoralist and agro pastoralists. Livestock raiding is done for economic purposes. People engaged in livestock trade and meat selling.

4.4 Land Claims And Conflict In The Study Area

In the study area various unresolved historical land claims and grievances continued to become the structural cause of violent conflicts between ethnic groups. Territorial land claims are the catalyst of the protracted conflict in the study area. Now days, the conflicts related to land claims are not resolved. The following land claims are the structural driver of conflict in the study area:

4.4.1. Dassanech And Turkana Land Claim:

The Dassanech share borders with the Turkana in Kenya. Key informants and Focus group discussion participants uncover that they lost their land to the Turkana during the government of Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974). The government during that time lacks the commitment to control the area. Peoples still needs their land to be returned but the current government is negligent to deal with the Kenyan government to control their lost land. But starting from June 2021 peace initiatives are started by the local people to create peaceful relation between the two communities. The peace initiative is created for resources sharing of pasture and water in Kibish area. Now also the local government of the two sides involved to strengthen the healthy relationship of the community in utilizing necessary resources together. Moreover, trade relations are also improved; however, the conflict still needs the interventions of the government to settle the land conflict and to engage in development based peacebuilding.

4.4.2. Nyangatom And Turkana Land Claims:

The Nyangatom community shared border with the Turkana, and claim that their traditional home and pasture land on the western side of the Kibish River is now occupied by the Turkana community (Gebre, 2016b). During Key informant interview and focus group discussion, Ethiopians in the study area stated as they have lost their territory from the Kibish River to the east to the Mount Tepes to the west to the Turkana area due to arbitrary colonial demarcation of the border area without the consent of the community and the continued northward expansion of the Turkana area. The local narrative about the northward expansion of the Turkana is consistent with the reports of de Waal (1991) and Mburu (2003) that the boundary of Turkana grazing land areas and the limits of Kenyan administration moved north over the years in it (Cited in USID, 2021). The Nyangatom communities feel that they lost land to the Turkana during the colonial period and in the 1980s. Informants stated that they did not recognize the colonially demarcated boundary.

4.4.3. Nyangatom and Hamar land claims:

The overall relationship between the Hamar and the Nyangatom community is more of conflictual. The root causes of the conflict between the two communities are territorial land disputes and on livestock raiding, they claim over a territory that belonged to the Murle people, who are found in Nyangatom Woreda. According to (USAID, 2021) study the Nyangatom community and the Murle community as an affiliated entity, challenge the Hamar ethnic group's alleged recent land claim over the former Murle territory, especially the fertile Kiso and Kuma land areas, which became attractive to investors and the community. FGD participants exposed that, the land ownership conflict is unresolved and

they need the land for livelihood. The interview informant stated as “There is no life without land for us”. This indicated the community strongly questions ownership of their land.

4.4.4. Dassanech And Nyangatom Land Claim:

The Dassanech and Nyangatom land conflicts are explained as of territorial conflict. There are also conflicts related to it on competition over resources of land for cultivation, pasture and on water points. In this area there are two resourceful or rich areas that are Kare and Kuraz mountain areas found along the border of the two ethnic groups. The Dassanech Key informants stated as that they are the original occupants of the Kare area land with undefined period of years which is now controlled by the Nyangatom ethnic group. The Nyangatom ethnic group controlled the area through in search for pasture land for their livestock. This land and related conflicts are also not settled by the government. The government tries to make discussions with the community to manage the conflicts. Here, the land claim conflict will be exacerbated by environmental change and population increases. The current government ethnic based administration system will also one of the driver of conflict in the area.

4.4.5. Dassanech and Gabra Conflicts

The Dassanech community of Ethiopia shared border with the Gabra community of Kenya and they are pastoralists and agro-pastoralists. The Dassanech communities are predominantly practiced agro-pastoralism for their living. The relationship between the Dassanech community and the Gabra Kenya community are mostly conflictual. The main causes of the conflict between them are land claim. According to Gebre, (2012) the Dassanech on the Gabra side are working in defiance of the international colonially demarcated boundary that divides their ancestral homeland into Ethiopian and Kenyan territories, they continue to use their traditional grazing lands located up to 200 km deep inside the legal territory of Kenya area.

The informants stated, the Gabra are opposed to the Dassanech community access to grazing land in Kenyan territory and conflicts are the common phenomenon in this area. Community based conflict resolution mechanisms are used to reduce conflict violence.

4.4. Fishing Rights And Conflicts

There is conflict in Dassanech-Turkana area over access to fish products from the natural lake. According to Key informants and FGD participants, the fish amount of concentration is high in the northern tip of Lake Turkana lake area. The area is the place where the Omo River enters to the Lake. The existence of fish in the area attracted Kenyan fisherman using modern motorboats armed with machine guns. The Ethiopian fishermen use light motorboats and wooden canoes that are equipped with light weapon for self-protection. The fishermen inter in to conflict to control the fishing area. The triggering cause of the conflict is fishing-net thefts by an identified person. They suspected with each other. The Dassanech Woreda is also facing competition for fisheries in Lake Turkana with Ethiopian individuals who have official business licenses to engage in fishing for a living. In the past, the Dassanech ethnic group depends on both livestock production and crop cultivation sometimes use fishing for food and as a source of income. Due to this there was no competition in fishing. However, the loss of income from livestock production and crop production, the Dassanech engaged in fishing. This increased the competition to fishing business. The Dassanech claims rights to control the area and the fish resources. All in all, the completion is not healthy and mostly conflictual. The power imbalance between fishers of the two counties needs intervention to stop the probability of violence.

4.5 Water Points Conflict

The provision of water supplies in Ethiopia is among the lowest in Africa. The strong bias toward urban development historically means that the provision of water supplies in rural areas is particularly low (Flintan, and Imeru, 2002). Access to water is one of the cause of conflict in south Omo Zone (Yohannes, et al, 2005). The interview respondents and FGD discussants also confirm the continuity of the problem and the completion to use the existing natural water points resulted to conflict among the community. WASH cluster program and various NGOs like the Christian aid Constructed water schemes to reduce the shortage of water (WASH CLUSTER UPDATE Report, 2023). However, the shortage of water for humans and their livestock is still not resolved. People try to gain access and control to water points and led to conflict violence.

4.6 Environmental Degradation and Climate Change

The environmental degradation due to unsustainable environmental usage and effects of climate change like drought results to shortage of resources (USAID, 2021). The climate change in prolonged drought, unreliable and rains resulting in loss of land cover, water resources, death of wildlife and leading to livelihood insecurity. Informants

uncovered environmental degradation have reduced water supply in the study area. The resource shortages have been the cause of conflicts over resources characterized by access to scarce water, land for pasture, and beaches. The agricultural land is taken as a source of conflict particularly in the areas of Dassanech Woreda as most of its community agro-pastoralist. Environmental conservation can eliminate the conflicts over degraded resources and it is one of the drivers of peace in the study area. The climate change and environmental degradation created food stress in the community. These result into food insecurity and drought result into conflict as people struggle to cope up from the problem.

4.7 Socio-Cultural issues as source of conflict

The culture of raiding was deeply entrenched among the study area community. It is done for economic purposes. The community used to raid traditionally as a cultural practice which was either to restock due to culture and poverty. Another cultural aspect attached to conflicts in the area is heroism and which contributed immensely to inter and intra-ethnic clashes. A lot of recognition is accorded to individuals for the killing members of the other communities' members perceived to be their enemies and they were looked upon as heroes in its members.

4.8 Proliferation of small Weapons

The Trade and the spread of Small Arms and Light Weapons are recognized as having impacted negatively the peace among the pastoralist. It has exacerbated commercialization of livestock raiding, and dispute over pasture land rights. Due to this culture of violence has become more prevalent, advanced, and fierce and gravely damaging among the communities of the study area. The other explanation for the acquisition of illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons is driven by the need for security and protection by the community to protect their lives and property.

4.9 The Changing Circumstances of Conflict and Conflict Actors in the Study Area

The pastoral conflict dynamics in the study area community are not reduced (IGAD, 2022). As explained it above resources based driven grievances in the study area are the main sources of violence. The actors of the pastoral conflicts are both internal with the study area actors and external cross border actors includes elders, youths, and the political actors of both countries to protect the interests of their community. Conflict in pastoral and agro pastoral communities can be regarded as a dispute and struggle for inadequate resources of water, and pasture which further will led to violent conflicts and destruction. In the study area the dominant way of livelihood is pastoralism and at some level agro pastoralism way of life characterized by livestock production, crop production and with mobility. The government institutions are ineffective for the governance of the problem. The government did not take actions for sustainable change for the resource based conflict. There is lack taking significant mechanisms for development to resolve the problem of water, pasture land and animal raiding among the community and between the two countries.

There are also problems of drought and environmental degradation in the increased incidences of pastoral and agro pastoral conflicts because the limited amount of resources of water and pastures which go even beyond the states borders. The pastoralists lose their cattle due to drought in the previous years. The destruction of cattle due to lack water and pasture severely affects the continued existence of the pastoralist and agro pastoralists as their livelihood depend on it. The climatic condition and resources degradation make the conflict in the study area protracted. As Galtung, 1996 asserts that conflicts are dynamic and protracted if not dealt with well at the initial stages in which underlying conflict will manifest as it have been in the study area. The pastoral tribal groups become radicalized with hostile attitudes and aggressive behaviors against each other in the competition to resources. This conflict actor hinders peace building activities and becomes an impediment to the action of dealing with the root causes of the initial pastoral conflict including the conflict between the two states. The other forms of conflict among pastoralists are cattle-raiding which is linked to commercial and cultural practices among the community. To get social status, and dowry payments required for marriage often take the cattle of others, and it is becomes another reason for cattle-raiding as a sources of conflict. To end the protracted conflict, the change of the perceptions of the pastoralist and agro pastoralist is critical however; the government did not take any measures to change it.

4.10 Actors of the Conflicts in the Study Area

- a. The Youths are promoted by elders for fighting enemies. The youth in each territorial area community are responsible for the protection of territorial borders grazing land, livestock, and they revenge against external offender enemies.
- b. The other actor of conflict is elders need to continue the legacy of killing for bravery, respect for their ethnicity, leading a life without boundary to pasture land, and other cultural activities like making decision on conflict and peace.

- c. The third actor of conflict is women in the community encourage fearlessness, selflessness, heroism, sacrifice for honor, and restoration of pride. They have role in triggering conflict and violence. They are not only the victims but they are also triggers and part of solutions to conflict.
- d. Magicians: They have role in predicting conflict and war. The communities believe in them in the phenomena of conflict. E.g, in hammer community getting a shoe in public places like roads are taken as indicating the event of conflict in the near future.
- e. Government development agencies and private commercial farm owners: According to informants, these institutions controlled land without compensation for the community. There is grievance in the absence of compensation for the pasture land.

4.11 The Derivers of Conflict in the Study Area

There are different drivers of the conflict in pastoralist community of the study area. They are identified in various categories such as social drivers, economic and the legal drivers of conflict. The social drivers of pastoralist conflict are lack of education on peacebuilding and the absence of peacebuilding activities among the community and across borders, low level of education, killings for heroism and revenge, violation of marriage rules of the pastoralist community by the educated individuals are identified as the social drivers of conflict. It impedes the peaceful social interaction of the people.

The other drivers of conflict are legal issue in related to be taken in conflicts. The local legal and justice system is identified as the driving force of conflict. The weak coordination of the local legal justice system and the traditional justice system provides a playing field for the unresolved conflicts for violence. Weak local government control on cattle raiding within in the community and across borders is taken as the legal drivers of conflict. In addition, the weakly structured conflict early warning and response system leaves the conflict to further escalation and violence. The system in the area did not contain all of the important functional structures of conflict early warning and early response system which important to take pro action measures.

There are also economic drivers in the pastoralist conflicts of the area. Land and land related resources like pasture, and water are the main economic drivers of conflicts in the pastoralist community of the study area. Based on the FDRE social assessment report, pastoralism is the predominant livelihood strategy in the study area. Out of the total community, 70% are riverine pastoralists found along the Omo valley, and the remaining 30% are pure pastoralist. The only exception is the Dassanech community which practiced farming in addition to the livestock production for their living (FDRE social assessment report, 2013).

Land is the most important natural resources of the pastoral and agro-pastoral communities in the study area community. The prevailing land tenure system in the study area is communal land tenure system. Access to communal land is based on ethnic membership, but access to private land is determined by kinship relationship. However, patriarchy is the most cultural system that determines access to private tenure system. Access to land and land based resources among the community and across state borders are identified as the economic drivers of conflict as land and land based recourses like rangelands, pasture, water points, a lake for fishing is the sources of the livelihood of the community.

4.12 Conflict Prevention Mechanisms in the Study Area

The study findings revealed the presence of various conflict prevention mechanisms in the study area. Peace dialogues among the community, awareness creation of on the importance of peaceful relation, taking lawful actions on conflict actors including using conflict early warning and response system of the government. The system is applied using community members as a channel of communication specifically cattle keepers as a sources of information.

3.12.1 Early Warning

a. Early warning Indicators

The preventive mechanism put in place to deal with signs of impending conflict in the study area. The respondents indicated signs as competition for scarce resources of water, pasture and land, when people try to use or control. In addition, livestock raiding or theft is also mentioned as signs of impending conflict. The scarcity of resources like water and pasture during the dry seasons are also a significant sign of looming conflict. The signs of impending conflict are important to take appropriate response.

b. Early Warning Actions in the Study Area

The study indicated the systems of giving sufficient information on impending conflict in the area, the awareness conflict workers on the of the existing systems enabled in preventing conflicts in the area. This finding was in line with the assertion of the conflict prevention theory that early warning mechanism can be useful in identifying and forestalling impending conflicts and handling the drivers of conflict. Conflict information sharing at the grassroots level and awareness creation by various NGOs, presence of frameworks for peace dialogue using tribal leaders and coordination with government security system and the creation of water development plans are identified as the early warning mechanisms present in the area. Sharing information to concerned bodies and creating awareness are found to be the most significant form of conflict early warning mechanism in the area. Cattle keepers, peace committees, women's, government conflict workers play the central role in the implementation of early warning mechanisms because they are within the community. The existing early warning systems are weak in facilitating a peaceful coexistence in the community because of that did not work for trust-building among the communities.

4.13 The Challenges of Early Warning Systems

4.13.1 The Deficiencies in Scenario Building

Conflict in the pastoral areas is common in their day to day life because of the scarcity of natural resources that lead them to unwanted and destructive violence (Bamlaku, 2017). Scenarios are important primarily for planning and decision-making. Scenario planning is normally used to explore possible future conditions given a set of assumptions. Each scenario represents a distinct, plausible picture of a segment of the future. Because it is impossible to know the future precisely, the solution is to create several scenarios. Conflict scenario is important to predict and prevent the future conflicts but such predictions are not done by the local government in the area. Conflict workers fear to assess conflict risks at the local.

4.13.2 Warning and Response Gap

Early warning mechanisms operate on the assumption of a forthright link between warning and response action (Maciej, 2016). In the study area, lack of coordination or synergy between early warning mechanisms, decision makers, and the inability to take action on the collected conflict information is one of the challenges. However, the theoretical assumption that early warning analysis and risk indicators necessarily translate into practical action does not always hold. Generally, successful prevention has been linked to identification of potential conflict situations, proper analysis of risk indicators,

4.13.3 Lack of Commitment

Despite the prevalence of the foregoing in undermining synergy between early warning and response, more importantly the lack of commitment on the part of the decision makers to implement needed responses is observed in the study area. The practical application of early warning mechanisms is pegged on the commitment of decision makers to implement needed responses. Understanding the strong relationship between early warning information reporting and taking appropriate action needs commitment of conflict decision makers

4.13.4 Timeliness

Timeliness of early warnings and response is one of the conditions necessary for preventive action. According to (Zartman, 2010) as he argues that the right preventive action should be accompanied by right timing. Early warning risk assessors and conflict prevention policy decision maker's needs to take actions on the indicators of conflict on time based on the collected data but such types of activities are not done by the government in the study area.

4.13.5. Inability to Transform Warning Information In to Response

The biggest challenge for conflict early warning systems is that they have not yet been effectively transformed into a preventive response (Arnado, 2012, p. 4). In the study area, the collected conflict warning information is not transformed to response based on their plan to preventive responses for resource based conflicts and the taken actions are failed to address the root cause of the conflicts. Preventative conflict intervention is taking to reduce the potential of conflict violence and for peacebuilding even if the root causes of the problem is not resolved.

4.14 Conflict Management

According department head of south Omo zonal peace and militia office and Woreda conflict early warning officer, the land, pasture and related conflicts are managed by the following mechanisms

- a. Using indigenous institutions: In these institution tribe leaders, particularly elders play good role in managing internal and cross border conflicts.
- b. Cattle keepers: They have roles in information sharing for government bodies on conflict happened.
- c. The conflict early warning and response system: The Woreda/local level officers are engaged in collecting information on issues that causes conflict and try to indicate the solution like livelihood diversification, resource sharing and taking legal actions on peace spoilers.
- d. The formed local peace committees: It includes elders, cattle keepers, and women. The committee tries to settle conflicts together with government bodies. The Zonal and Woreda government focused on administering conflict rather than finding lasting solutions because of the protracted nature of conflict in pastoralist and agro-pastoralist communities.

5. Conclusion

The conflict in the study area is very complex and it encompasses social, legal and economic issues. The conflict violence in the study area is continued seasonally when in dry session as the resource scarcity is scarcer than before. Conflicts in pasture, water, animal raiding, killing for heroism, fishing areas, marriage out of the custom of the community by the educated member of the community, land claims, are the major cause of conflict violence in the study area community. The conflict are also exacerbated by factors such as drought, killings of members of ethnic groups, lack of access to justice, proliferation of small arms, food insecurity, and climate change. The conflict dynamics are now not as such reduced and it needs peace driver interventions using conflict management and resolution mechanisms to reach in the condition of relative peace because positive peace is unthinkable in the current conflict conditions. The resource based and use conflict is still continued and it needs a new creative mechanism to reduce the conflict violence, to build peace and to transform it. The land territorial claim needs solution to stop or manage conflict violence among the community and across-borders. Government development agencies, commercial farm owners, magicians, elders, youths, women, fisher men's are identified as the actors of the conflict. The Government and other bodies need to engage in conflict intervention mechanisms to create any forms of peace and to reduce the negative impacts of conflict. Furthermore, the government should realize the formulated policy on peace building, and promoting conflict sensitivity in development projects.

6. Acknowledgement

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