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Peacebuıldıng For Internal And Cross-Border Resource Based Conflıcts In South Omo Ethıopıa

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Abstract
The study examined the practices of peacebuilding for internal and cross-border resource based conflicts in Hammer, Dassanech and Nyangatom community of south Omo Ethiopia using qualitative research approach. Data are collected through semi structured interview, Focus group discussions, document analysis and non-participant observation. Conflict drivers: The scarcity of water, pasture and concentration of livestock in the available water points and pasture areas often leads to conflict between the different communities over the rights of use of the water and pasture. Raiding of livestock has been culturally practiced among the pastoral communities, and it approved as the sources of conflict. Pastoral groups in Ethiopia living and grazing their livestock along the border areas, often get into conflict with those from neighboring Kenya pastoralist groups. The community described conflict as starvation, and poverty and peace as milk and food. To address the growing conflict in the study area, the government has set up strategies and peace committees which are responsible for ensuring local communities co-exist peacefully and diplomatic discussions are made. The peacebuilding practices are less fruitful because of lack of enforcing the designed strategies for peacebuilding but the peacebuilding initiatives are found there to be a best for peacebuilding. The study also finds out, there is relative peace in the study area and the trends of conflict are going on and the objective of building peace is still not achieved and there is less visible change in the trends of peace because of the absence of peace infrastructures.
Keywords: Peacebuilding, Resource, Conflict, Pastoralism, Agro- Pastoralism, Ethnic groups
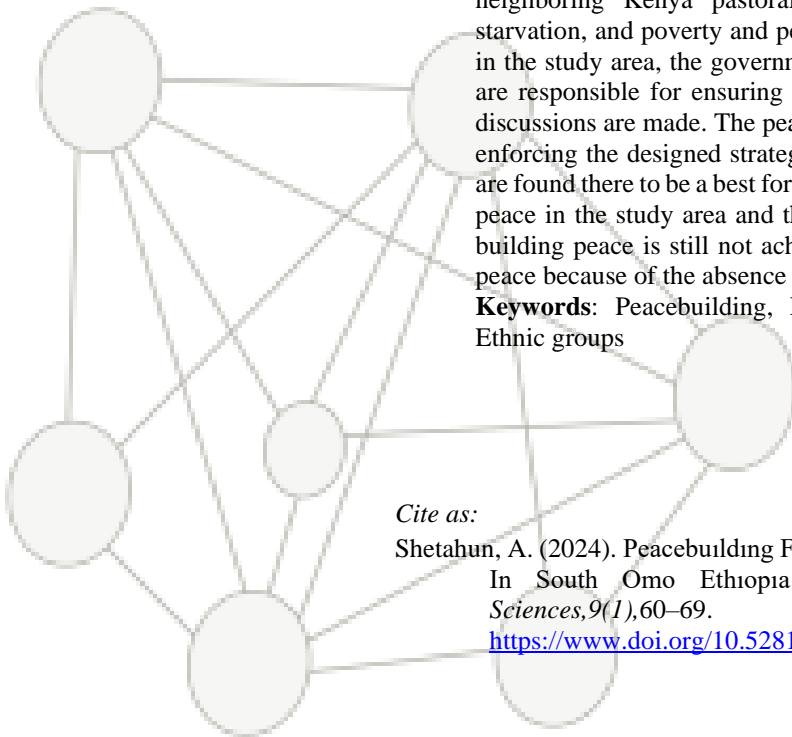
1. INTRODUCTION

Conflicts are the main problem of the study area community. Pastoralism and agro pastoralism is a livelihood mechanism and trans-human activity characterized by livestock herding and movement in the arid and semi-arid lands of east Africa (IGAD, 2022). Nature of cross-border pastoralist natural resource based conflict between Ethiopia and Kenya is resource driven. (Shikuku, et al.2020). The causes of the conflict are multilayered and needs creative approaches to peace. Conflict and peace have an impact on the relationship of the community. Peacebuilding actions could create an environment of positive community relationship (Karbo, 2008). Researchers classify the peacebuilding system in to state based and non-state based traditional systems (Murthi, 2008 and Omeje, 2008). The peacebuilding system needs the role of state, non-state actors with mechanisms to sustain peace in the control and utilization of resource like land, pasture, water points and water bodies (Pavanello and Levine, 2011). This study argued that peacebuilding is the most important mechanism to resolve resource based conflicts. The objectives of this study is examining the practices of peacebuilding and identify the underlying cause of conflict in Hammer, Dassanech and Nyangatom resource based conflicts. Based on researcher information and online information sources, there is no research done to the practices of peacebuilding in resource conflicts of Dassanech, Nyangatom and Hammer Woreda of Ethiopia and the cross-border conflicts. Thus, the research is done to fill this gap and to contribute to the peacebuilding system suitable to the context of the area.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY

Lederach theory of grassroots peace-building is a comprehensive concept that encompasses, generates, and sustains the full array of processes needed to transform conflict toward peaceful relations (Lederach, 1997). In addition, peacebuilding is a long-term, dynamic process, which aims to address relational, structural, attitudinal, and social issues through a vast array of mechanisms that co-create an infrastructure for peace (Ramcharan, 2009). Grassroots peacebuilding is the effective strategy to mitigate conflict (Jeong, 2005, Lederach, 1997, and Zelizer, 2013). In addition to the grass root peacebuilding theory of Lederach, the economic peace theory argued government and civil society should cooperate economically, socially, and culturally on the ground to ensure stability and maintain peace (Lederach, 1997). Beyond the grassroots peacebuilding activities states need to conduct diplomatic negotiations and discussions for the peaceful settlement of disputes (Ghali, 1992). Moreover, peacebuilding initiatives include inclusive relationships, such as people-to-people, business-to business, and institution-to-institution initiatives. Economic

peace theory suggests this economic interdependence promotes peace and prevents conflict (Galtung, 1975). The grass root peacebuilding and economic peace theory of peacebuilding is taken as a theoretical framework because it is important to analyze the peacebuilding practices in internal and cross-border pastoralist and agro pastoralist resources based conflicts.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

This research employed qualitative research methods and case study design. The research was conducted through the analysis of primary and secondary data sources. Purposive sampling was used to identify the informants of government officials, NGOs, CSOs, elders and the peace and militia officers, conflict prevention, early warning and early response experts. Primary and secondary data sources are used to conduct the study. The researcher used 206 individuals to participate in interview and FGD. The information about the Kenyan side was depending on secondary data and based on the primary data taken from Ethiopians. The researcher employed FGD, semi-structured interview, and document analysis. Data are analyzed inductively.

4. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

4.1. The Sources of Conflicts

Resources like livestock, water, grazing land, and flood retreat agricultural land and fish stocks are the main resources for the livelihood of local communities in the study area (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. The informants also added the existence of seasonal migration to other areas to get the needed resources.

Competition over resources is often fierce internally and around borders areas. Conflict over access to land, water and fishing rights is common in the community. The resource scarcity and conflict is severely exacerbated by climate change related drought. In addition, government or state development projects of the Gibe III dam contributed to the existing resources conflicts. Government's projects have displaced communities from their land without compensation and reduced the amount of water an available to 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 for their land is the source of grievance in the community

and creates its own indirect influence in cross-border mobility and conflict. Moreover, the conflicts are triggered by environmental and man-made factors like unpredictable weather conditions, environmental degradation, and drought and resource pressure caused by population increase and 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.

4.2. The Role of Peacebuilding Actors

4.2.1. The State as a Peacebuilding Actor

The governments are worked to mitigate the conflict, to build peace and transformation of conflict among the conflict ridden pastoralists and agro pastoralist communities of the Dassanech, Nyangatom Woreda of Ethiopia and in the side of Kenya for cross-border conflicts. Inter- state diplomacy is done for the reduction of conflict and violence together with other peacebuilding mechanisms in the study area. The two states security system also contributes too for communication and conflict prevention. The Dassanech, hammer and Nyangatom Woreda of Ethiopia administration work to enhance peace through established peace committees from the cattle keeper, elders, police and women. They have played a pivotal role in addressing community conflicts through enhancement of communication understanding. The role of peace committees is primarily focused on conflict prevention and resolution. They try to communicate with the Woreda security offices to reduce conflict and violence. The Woreda governments have direct responsibilities for citizen security, peace and welfare. From the focus group discussion with the district government officials of the two sides, the study identified their roles to include working to share information and resolve conflict with the established peace committee, government bodies, elders and police officers. Even if the security officers are part there, conflicts are resolved based on the culture of the two communities. There is a weak collaboration between Kenya and Ethiopia to engage in cross border peacebuilding program.

4.2.2. Non-Governmental Organizations for Peacebuilding

NGOs are attempting to promote greater resource sharing in an effort to reduce conflict. International organizations have supported various peace efforts such as providing trainings, establishing peace clubs, and peace committees. They help in dissemination of information, providing training and participating in reconciliations. The NGOs play an important role of advocacy to help the Woreda or districts to ensure peace and to reduce conflict. NGOs are at the

cutting edge of people-centered structural peace building diplomacy practices between the two countries communities to prevent cross-border conflicts.

4.2.3. Local Peace Committees in Kebeles or in Small Local Administrative Unites

In Dassanech, Nyangatom and hammer Woreda of Ethiopia, peace committees established for the purposes of strengthening village peace, border area peace. Conflict information sharing for concerned government bodies by cattle keepers and other community members are conducted to prevent violence. The committees meet irregularly to address any conflicts in the community. Conflicts are resolved especially by tribal leaders or elders. Kebele peace committees are more inclusive in establishments. The lack of active joint-Woreda/district and cross-border peace committees hinders timely resolution of conflicts. The peace committees are one of the peacebuilding structures for internal conflicts and cross-border conflicts.

### 4.2.4. The Role of Indigenous Community based Institutions for Internal Cross-Border Peacebuilding

The institution of traditional leadership has its origin from ancient times when communities sharing the same beliefs and kinship were allocated land for occupation and grazing, (Bennet, Murray, 1999). Indigenous institutions are used to address internal and external conflicts in pastoral communities of the study area. In the traditional institutions of the study area, tribal elders are engaged in conflict resolution, and management. These institutions are effective in managing conflicts within their own ethnic groups, and they also sometimes play a role in resolving conflict outside their ethnic group in cross border conflicts. In each Woreda there is a peace and security committee including tribal leaders or elders which is mandated to prevent, and settle conflicts in its area and also can participate in cross border conflict resolution and prevention if they are selected by the community.

Governments

Intergovernmental organizations

Local Peace Commitees

Indigenous institutions

NGOs

Internal and Cross-border peacebuilding

Football sport

International organizations

womens

The above picture shows approaches of peacebuilding in internal cross-border pastoral conflicts and ago pastoralist conflicts of the study area

Source: Adopted from the collected data, 2023

Peacebuilding is multidimensional, the above stated peacebuilding approaches are interconnected and the realization of one peacebuilding approach is dependent on the other to achieve the goal of peacebuilding. One peacebuilding approach can support the other approach to achieve the overall goal of cross border peacebuilding. Reaching to peace requires inclusive participation, and shared responsibility involving state, civil society, and different international and local organizations stakeholders.
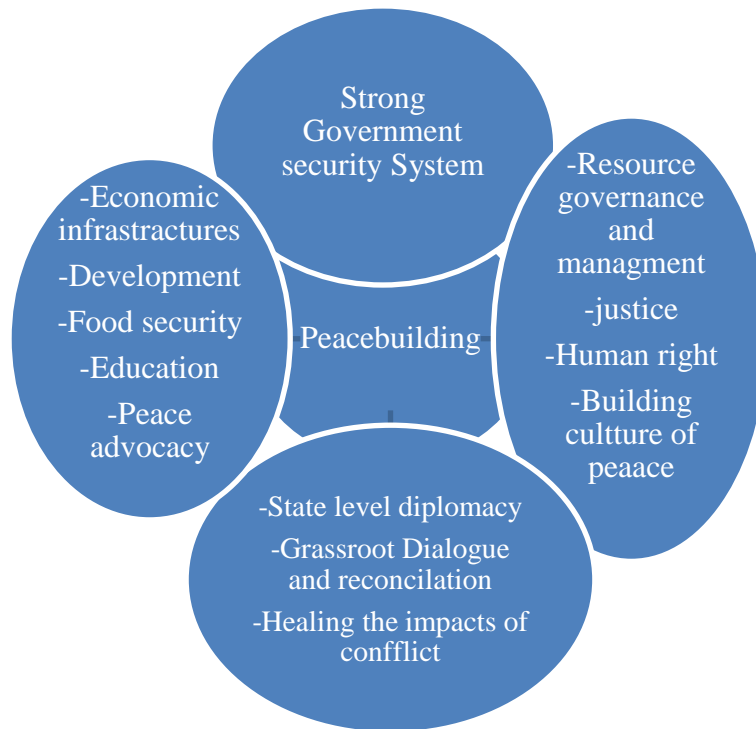
Source: Adopted from the collected data, 2023

Weak resource governance, the economic problems, population growth and environmental degradation also provide drivers of conflict and violence. Shortage of livelihoods and social-economic deprivation, particularly when coupled with a sense of historic marginalization, animate grievances. The study area community specially the Ethiopian side was marginalized from development like education and economic development but now a days there is little improvements in such areas. The Peacebuilding emerge organically from within society, addressing the multiple concerns and aspirations and seeking common ground to share resources. When well managed, natural resources can be a source of development, stability and peace. When mismanaged or misappropriated, they can have severely negative economic, social and environmental effects and constitute conflict and violence led a massive loss for peacebuilding and development. Development is critical to preventing both lapse and relapse into conflict natural resource conflict. Human rights violations like killings of tribal members are also causes of conflict and must be addressed as early as possible so as to not trigger resource conflicts.

4.2.5. Pastoralist and Agro-Pastoralist Women in Peacebuilding

Women are not always the victim of conflict (UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). The enhanced involvement of women in conflict resolution processes is an indication of the significant role women play in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. These have resulted into a worldwide

call to involve women in issues of peace and conflict as active participants (2000). The activity of peace building among the pastoralist communities in the study area is given to the elders but now a day there is an increasing involvement of other groups in the community such as women and youth in promoting peace among the conflicting community. The committee is established to deal with conflict resolution within the community. Women help their male counterparts to see things from a different peace perspective and the need to embrace dialogue in resolving inter and intra ethnic resources based conflicts in the study area.

4.3.6. Football Sport as a Pathway to Peacebuilding

Football sport is one of the types of sport used to create positive relationship in the study area community and it is the mechanism planed by the government to increase communication, and mutual understanding (Interview with Woreda peace and militia office, 2022). Peace building through football sports is practiced in community members to liberate their mind and encourage mutual understanding as sports are not just physical activity but rather, they are understood as a system to bring people together to create sustainable peace in and across borders.

4.3.7. Conflict and Drought Early Warning System for Conflict Prevention

Conflict and drought is a common phenomenon and the main sources of vulnerability in the study area, peoples are reputedly affected by drought and conflict. The conflict and drought early warning and response system is very weak. Having functional drought and conflict early warning and response system will help reduce its negative impacts on the community. Adopting Drought and conflict early warning and response information gathering and rapid response mechanism is useful to pastoralists and agro-pastoralists for conflict transformation. However the system in the study area is not working.

4.3.8. Water Resources Development and Management for Peacebuilding

According to key informants, the study area has rich ground and river waters but the problem is development and management for use. To transform water related conflicts, water resources development and management can play significant role. The Ministry of Water, pastoral affairs, Irrigation and Energy did not do activities for the purpose of conflict transformation. As water is an important and scarce resource in the area, much the conflict and tension within and across borders is on it. At the local level, the presence of development projects such as sugar cane and cotton farms and the Gibe III dam have exacerbated water availability on downstream communities, such as the Dassenech, Erbore and Turkana community but other areas did not have

access to water.   In this context, water management and development needs national and international relations to transform internal and cross border water related conflicts. The states (Ethiopia and Kenya) cooperative interventions help to ensure fair and sustainable access to water sources and strengthen livelihoods and reduce instability and in the long time frame can transform cross border conflicts. But the governments are negligent or maybe did not give attention to it.

5. CONCLUSION

The study pays attention to resource based conflicts and the peacebuilding practices adopted to mitigate the adverse impacts of the conflict in the study area. The study adopts Ledrach's concept of grassroots peacebuilding to assess peacebuilding approaches and the findings demonstrate that despite the adoption of the peace-building practices, sustainable peace is still elusive. A significant argument reason advanced is that governments do not give priority to the impact of resource based conflict and consequent peacebuilding practices. The community is starved by the absence of peace and they are living in condition of insecurity. Multiple approaches of peacebuilding are practiced to reduce conflict and to sustain peace among the community but not effective to create peace. The conflict dynamics are now seasonally increased and there is no peace in the area. The role of the local government, peace committees, international organizations, intergovernmental organizations, NGOs, and tribal leaders as part of the customary institutions are very important to prevent conflict and for peacebuilding. The resource based and use conflict is still continued and it needs a new creative mechanism to reduce the conflict, and violence. The researcher recommended the government and other peace actors should provide emphasis to peacebuilding activates. The area also needs conducting further research on the areas of the impact of climate change on resource based conflicts.

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