

Social Identity as the determinant of land use conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Tanzania: A Case of Tunduru District

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Abstract

Land use conflicts between farmers and pastoralist are common phenomena taking place in different parts of Tanzania, Tunduru District being one of the affected places. One of the factors for the endless conflict between the respective groups was the willingness of the members of each group to protect their identities and interests which are directly linked with their key economic activities namely; crop farming and livestock rearing. The paper explores the relative influence of social identity on land use conflict between farmers and pastoralists. To this end, the paper used comparative case study design with farmers, pastoralists and Village Land Council members as respondents. Thus, semi-structured interviews, Focus Group Discussions and Key informants' interview were used to collect data while NviVo software version 14 was used for data analysis. The study revealed that the competing social identities between farmers and pastoralists has developed over the years has become part of their culture. . These conflicts prevailed because none of them is ready to submit its identity for the public interests. This signifies the need for the responsible public authorities to undertake thorough investigation to identify the needs and interests of each group in order to come up with sustainable solutions for the common good.

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1. Introduction

Conflicts are common phenomena in the social world. They prevail because human beings have different interests and perceptions on the empirical and non-empirical realities. Social scientists perceive conflicts as inevitable phenomena which appear for transforming human life and the entire world which accommodates various realities. However, conflicts become destructive when they rest on destroying human beings and their properties whose presence are essential for improving human livelihoods. Conflict can emerge for various reason including competition on the use resources. One of the contentious debates on conflict studies is land use conflict particularly between farmers and pastoralists. The conflict between the two groups has been a common phenomenon in different parts of Sub-Saharan region where crop production and livestock keeping remain to be the essential economic activities supporting the wellbeing of ordinary people in rural and urban areas. One of the factors which leads to conflict is social identity in which the farmers and pastoralists self-categorize themselves (Ngonyani 2019). The social identity defines social structure which is important for understanding how people identify themselves with particular values and finally internalized them within an institution (Lameck 2024). As a process, social identity involves self-categorization among social groups basing on their past experiences in which the individuals align themselves with their counterparts who they share identity, philosophy and values opposing other groups Mohsin (2018). According to Rowley and Moldoveanu (2003), self-categorization does not rest on values only but it surpasses into actions in order to affirm the identity of particular group.

The assumption behind this theory is that social identify influence behavior (Rowley and Moldoveanu 2003). The groups may undertake actions not just to achieve instrumental aims, but also to affirm their identity as group members. The shift in the salience of social identities can lead to differences in attitudes. Therefore, the greater attentiveness to identity processes are needed to understand public perceptions. Further to this, the individual may categorize themselves based on their past experiences by aligning with the group that they share some identification or opposing the other groups (Haslam, 2000).

One of the key social observations which informs the development of this theory is favoritism toward in-groups, and hostility toward out-groups (Hogg and Abrams, 1988). Once social identities have become salient through self-categorization, behaviors and attitudes are exhibited which demonstrate positive attitudes toward in-group, such as sharing and supporting truths, values and beliefs (Haslam, 2000). Similarly, negative behaviors and attitudes are demonstrated toward out-groups where stereotyping leads to de-humanization, mistrust, skepticism of the validity of arguments, and antagonism (Haslam, 2000; Hogg and Abrams, 1988). The empirical literature has reported various land use conflict between farmers and pastoralists with limited attention on the influence of social identity. For example, Massay (2017) reported that some of the popular land based conflicts occurred in Burkina Faso which involved the Mossi (farmers) and Fulani (pastoralists) and in Kenya where the Pokomo (farmers) and Orma (pastoralists) fought for accessing and controlling inadequate productive resources such as land and water. Falanta et al (2018) pointed out that land use conflicts are caused by inadequate access to resources, self-determination and territory protection. Other scholars (Bromwich, 2018; Mbaha et al., 2021;

Benjaminsen and Boubacar, 2021) revealed that endless land based conflicts between farmers and pastoralists occurred due to competition over land resources, ethnicity and revenge.

Overall, the increased land use conflict between farmers and pastoralists in accessing and utilizing land for production has increased the tension between them and thus contributing to endless conflicts in rural communities. Social identity is a process which enables an individual to acknowledge his/her beingness. It is a manifestation of social categorization which leads to differentiation and social comparison. According to Islam (2015), social categorization separate people into groups based on their philosophy, beliefs, cultural values and perceptions. Therefore through categorization, members of a particular group may develop their own identity which can differentiate them from the members of other groups. Members of a particular group can be identified through their philosophy, cultural values, perceptions towards various realities and beliefs.

The presence of social groups with different philosophies, beliefs and cultural values enhances identity and creates tension in the society between the competing groups. Instead of treating each other as counterparts, the spirit of egoism may develop and enhance self-interest in daily operations being undertaken by the members. Salmin (2017) reported that social categorization enhances disunity among social members and accelerate conflicts between the antagonistic groups. Conflicts between the antagonistic groups occur for the sake of protecting the interests of the social group and hence ensuring that its identity is also secured.

Nelson (2021) pointed out that social conflicts between antagonistic groups do not occur because of the competition over resources alone rather they prevail due to several factors; securing social identity being the leading one. In this context, social identity is reflected in socio-economic activities being undertaken; cultural values being protected and prestige that prevail within the particular social group. Ngonyani (2019) reported that similar principles prevail among conflicting parties in Tanzania that engage in clashes for protecting their interests. Such groups can operate in different forms (as tribes, political parties, religious group and working group). In addition, Muhsin (2020) depicted that social identity is attributed with the historical background of the particular social group; implying that the current philosophy, beliefs, political and cultural values prevailing in the particular social group manifest from the previous generation and they all exist as part and parcel of the identity of the respective group.

In West Africa, this conflict is attributed by self-identity factors. For example, in Nigeria and Burkina Faso, social categorization leads conflicting parties to focus more on protecting their identities through fighting against their opponents. Farmers always fight to possess land for undertaking crop production while mobile pastoralists need more land for keeping cattle and access grazing areas with the best forages (Camara 2018 and Ndiaye 2020). In this context, competition over the land resource is not based on economic interests rather it rests on the interests of the conflicting parties for the sake of protecting their identity. Similar arguments from Nigesse (2018) and Ochola (2017) shows that endless conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Ethiopia and Kenya respectively are caused by the tendency of conflicting parties to promote their identity and prestige over their opposing sides. However, Robinson (2015) depicted that self-categorization is not a simple concept that can be studied from one perspective rather it is a complex entity containing several attributes and forces which have the capacity to produce long term changes in the community.

Despite the growth of research, in Tanzania, the farmers and pastoralist has been rampant. Malesa (2020) pointed out that areas that experience land based conflicts between farmers and pastoralists includes:- Kilosa, Mvomero, Ulanga, and Kilombero Districts in Morogoro region; Kilindi and Handeni in Tanga Region; Mbarali District in Mbeya; Rufiji and Mkuranga districts in Pwani region and Hai district in Kilimanjaro region. This conflict has seriously constrain socio-economic development particularly in rural communities. Some of the dominant effects include; lowering of economic productivity, loss of food production, depletion of resources, deaths and destruction of properties. The empirical literature shows that, such endless conflict is a result of inequalities in land distribution among the users, unequal power relations and political dynamics bequeathed from both colonial and post-colonial legacies on land governance (Mwamfupe 2017; Massay, 2017 and Rugaimukamu, 2019). Nevertheless, although self-identity has been reported in other countries to have influence on farmers and pastoralist conflict, in Tanzania, this attribute has not been sufficiently studied. This suggest the need for in-depth research on the influence of this factor on farmers and pastoralist conflict in a country like Tanzania.

2. Research Objectives and Methodology

The article was set to explore the influence of social identity as an attribute of farmers and pastoralists conflict in Tanzania. To this end, Tunduru District found in Ruvuma Region with moderate level of conflict between farmers and pastoralist in the southern Tanzania and Kilosa District found in central Tanzania with high level of conflict between farmers and pastoralist in Morogoro Region were selected as study areas. The choice of the two districts were influenced by their experience in land use conflict between farmers and pastoralists but also in addition, the two districts have social groups with different perceptions on land use management in relation to economic activities. Their social identity categorized them into groups in terms of philosophy, production and means of interpreting socio-economic realities. Such misconceptions have contributed to endless land based conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in the respective Local Government Authorities.

Sampling Procedures

To this end, the study used as sample of 40 respondents who are the farmers of from Muhuwesi and Mischela villages of Kilosa and Tunduru districts and 18 key informants from the two districts which includes the District Executive Directors, the divisional executive officers and the ward executive officers . The Table shows in detail distribution of respondents in the study area:

Respondents		Key Informants from the DED's Office
Mischela Village - 3 Farmers - 3 Pastoralists - 4 Members of VLC	Muhuwesi Village - 3 Farmers - 3 Pastoralists - 4 Members of VLC	- District Land Officer - District Livestock Officer - District Agricultural Officer - District Legal Officer - Chairperson of Farmers' Association - Chairperson of Pastoralists Association
Key informants at the village level		
Mischela Village -Village Chairperson - Village Executive Officer - Village Extension Officer	Muhuwesi Village -Village Chairperson - Village Executive Officer - Village Extension Officer	

Source: Research Survey, 2023

Data Collection Methods

Data collection involved In depth interviews with key officials from the two districts and focus group discussions (FGDs) to collect primary data, allowing for an in-depth understanding of the essence of social identity and its attributes on farmers and pastoralists conflict .

Data Analysis

NVivo software 14 was employed for data analysis, easing coding, identification of important themes, and visualization of data. The analysis included case-by-case and cross-sectional approaches, as recommended by (Ahmad et al., 2019) and (Turner et al., 2017) with an emphasis on exploring the influence of social identity on land based conflicts between the respective working groups.

3. Findings and Discussions

Farmers and Pastoralists conflict in Tunduru District

With regards to this, the interviews conducted revealed that the farmers and pastoralists in Tunduma District have different identities which were based on the economic activities being undertaken for securing their livelihoods. Farmers who participated in the study belonged to various tribes namely; Yao from Tunduru District, Ngoni from Songea District, Ndendeule from Namtumbo District, Mwera from Lindi region and Makonde from Mtwara region. These farmers were united by the nature of economic activity that enabled them to secure their wellbeing. They relied on crop farming for attaining food security and engaging in agro-business with clients in profitable markets. They grew different crops such as cow peas, rice, maize, cassava, vegetables and cashew nut for domestic consumption and commercial purposes. In one of the interviews that was conducted with a farmer living in Misechela village, the study was informed that:-

“In our village there are thousands of farmers from different places within and outside Tunduru District. Despite our cultural and historical differences, but we have the same vision and share similar philosophy of work which encouraged us to increase agricultural productivity and kick out hunger, malnutrition and income poverty” (Interview with a Farmer, Misechela Village – Tunduru DC)

Similar observation was reported by another farmer from Muhuwesi village:

“Identity of farmers is not based on the places where they come from but it is based on the productive roles which bring all farmers together and direct them to speak the same language for the common good” (Interview with a Farmer, Muhuwesi Village – Tunduru DC)

Such findings were supported by the District Agriculture Officer and Local extension workers from the respective villages who pointed out clearly that social identity of social groups in the study area was built on the nature of economic activities that accommodated them. The identity of farmers was built on crop farming which remained the most relevant economic activity for supporting the living standards of people in the district. One of the extension workers said:

“Farmers always unite and speak similar language because they have something in common to share and act for their own good. They always plan to protect their land, access affordable and genuine agricultural inputs, access skillful labor and extension services as well as profitable markets within and outside their areas of jurisdiction.” (Interview with the Extension Officer, Muhuwesi Village – Tunduru DC).

These findings correlate with the results obtained by Kanese (2018) who reported that social identity of farmers does not rely on their tribes but daily agricultural operations which have effect

on improving their livelihoods. However, Mohammed (2019) denied such findings by arguing that social identity cannot be built by the economic variables but by the cultural and historical related variables.

With regards to pastoralists the study shows that pastoralists were divided into two parts namely: agro pastoralists and pure pastoralists. Through face to face interviews with the Members of the Village Land Councils, the study was informed that agro- pastoralists were Sukuma who engaged in both crop farming and livestock rearing while pure pastoralists were Maang'ati who relied on livestock keeping as the only economic activity that could secure their livelihood.

The interview revealed that that the Sukuma lived together with farmers in the respective villages because they shared some of the resources particularly during the rainy season when both groups engaged in crop farming for producing food crops for domestic consumption and business and cash crops for business purposes. The difference between ordinary farmers and Sukuma people was based on the nature of economic activities that were undertaken in the study area; where the former concentrated on crop farming only while the latter focused on both crop farming and livestock rearing. Therefore, through productive roles, Sukuma people managed to form their own identity which differentiated them from ordinary farmers who relied on crop farming as the only IGA for securing their livelihood.

One of the agro-pastoralists from Mischela village who participated in the interview reported: *“Sukuma people are different from Maangati and Maasai because they participate fully in both: crop farming and livestock rearing. Through crop production, we get food to feed household members and the surplus is sold at the market while herds give us milk and meat and the surplus is taken to the market for business purposes in order to generate income”*. (Interview with agro-pastoralist – Mischela village, Tunduru DC).

Similar observations were highlighted by another agro-pastoralist living in Muhuwesi village: *“Agro-pastoralists are so much related with farmers because they share some of the productive resources. This situation encourages them to live together and share some common resources for the betterment of all. Differences that prevail are based on self-interests that each group intends to attain without taking into account the needs of the other”*. (Interview with agro-pastoralist – Muhuwesi village, Tunduru DC).

Ordinary farmers who participated in the study reported that their relationship with agro-pastoralists was enhanced by the interests that they shared towards utilizing the available economic opportunities. Members from the respective groups engaged in crop production which demanded them to access productive land, genuine agricultural inputs, extension services and profitable markets that can guarantee higher returns in business. These attributes have made farmers and agro-pastoralists to match and work together in various places; however differences between them prevails and sometimes contributes to unnecessary tensions for attaining self-interests. One of the farmers from Mischela village reported:-

“Since the arrival of agro-pastoralists, particularly Sukuma people; we have experienced positive and negative situations. The positive aspect of our relationship is based on the willingness to share opportunities and resources that can boost productivity in crop farming. The negative aspect rests on the improper behavior of some individuals from the agro-pastoralists group who engage in undesirable practices which violate our rights and thus create damage to ourselves and our properties as well”. (Interview with ordinary farmer – Mischela village, Tunduru DC).

Through face to face interviews with the Village Chairpersons and Village Executive Officers, the study identified that some members from the Sukuma tribe who lived in Muhuwesi and Mischela villages were involved in various committees that dealt with education, financial, and security. Inclusion of farmers and agro-pastoralists in such committees brought social harmony as community members from the respective groups continued to work together despite differences that prevailed that were caused by some individuals from the agro-pastoralists' group who refused to incorporate the wellbeing of others in their plans and actions. One of the VEOs who participated in the study said:

“In my village there are agro-pastoralists and ordinary farmers who have common goals to be attained. Some of the goals include the willingness of community members from the respective groups to work together as members of different village committees that have the powers to improve provision of social and economic services for the common good”. (Interview with the Village Executive Officer – Muhuwesi village, Tunduru DC).

Such arguments were supported by the Village Chairperson of Mischela village:

“This village accommodates agro-pastoralists and ordinary farmers who cooperate and work for attaining the common good. They engage in various socio-economic issues together because they share similar philosophy in boosting productivity in the agricultural sector and improving their wellbeing”. (Interview with the Village Executive Officer – Mischela village, Tunduru DC).

These findings from the key informants of Mischela and Muhuwesi village correlate with the arguments from Camara (2018) who reported that common interests between the agro-pastoralists and farmers reduce tension and strengthen unity between them despite slightly differences that are based on the individuals. In addition, Ngonyani (2019) reported that socialization between the agro-pastoralists and ordinary farmers enhances oneness and togetherness and hence reduces clashes between the respective groups. However, Gonzalez (2020) revealed that conflicts between farmers and agro-pastoralists cannot be stopped because they have different economic interests which trigger them to forgo common goals that could benefit both groups.

The study identified that the pastoralists (*Maang'ati*) settled temporarily along the River Ruvuma where there is sufficient supply of water and grasses for their herds. The decision to live far from the established villages and formal people's settlements came into being as immediate solutions for avoiding daily clashes with farmers. Also, it was a strategy for them to occupy big plots that could accommodate their cattle, goats and sheep smoothly. However, most of them were living in the respective places illegally since they did not have legal permits from the village governments that allowed them to settle and undertake their respective economic activities. During face to face interviews with the Village Executive Officers, the study was informed that the village councils of Muhuwesi and Mischela did not allow them to settle and operate as legal residents because their villages did not have the capacity to accommodate such a big number of cattle, goats and sheep. However, it became difficult to control them since they operate far from the village headquarters and the local authorities did not have the capacity to intervene and evict them to protect the ecology of Ruvuma basin which is essential for the socio-economic development of the country particularly in the southern part of Tanzania. One of the Village Executive Officers reported that:

“The presence of Maang’ati has been attributed to the availability and accessibility of grasses and water which are essential for the survival of their herds. Their decisions to settle in the isolated places came into being as a means of avoiding clashes with farmers. Unfortunately, most of them operate in forest reserve and protected area which are habitats of various living organisms and vegetations”. (Interview with the Village Executive Officer – Misechela village, Tunduru DC).

Similar views were highlighted by the chairperson of Muhuwesi Village:

“From the historical perspective, the indigenous people of this district have focused on crop production. The arrival of pastoralists has brought some challenges, one of them being destruction of the ecological pattern in the Ruvuma basin and forest reserves that are found within the district’s boundaries. This situation endangers various living organisms inhabited in such protected areas and thus leading to desertification” (Interview with the Village Chairperson of Muhuwesi Village, Tunduru DC).

The findings implied that the leaders of the village councils were aware of the problems that were created by the pastoralists and thus leading to socio-economic and environmental disharmony in the respective district. However, they failed to reveal their institutional powers in resolving the existing problem for the common good. According to Jonathan (2015), environmental problems created by pastoralists in rural communities cannot be resolved without the willingness of the Central Government to support Local Government Authorities in providing capacity building services to the targeted actors and undertaking land use management plans to ensure harmony in socio-economic activities being undertaken by the pastoralists and other related actors.

However, some farmers who participated in the study complained about the irresponsibility among local leaders at the village and ward levels. They argued that their leaders are aware of the problems being created by the evicted pastoralists in Tunduru District, but they refuse to intervene for the public good because of protecting their personal interests. They accused their leaders of associating with corruption for their personal gain. This situation had forced them to be irresponsible and thus allow the immigrants to operate haphazardly without having proper directives from the local authorities. One of the farmers from Misechela village reported:

“Everyone in this village is aware of the challenges being created by the pastoralists’ particularly undesirable environmental practices. But, our leaders have decided to remain quite because they lack moral authority to execute for the common good. This situation has created a room for the pastoralists to continue with their operations without taking into consideration the need of protecting natural resources for the bright future of themselves and the Tanzanian community as well as the mother earth which is the habitat of all living organisms. (Interview with the farmer of Misechela Village, Tunduru DC).

Another farmer from Muhuwesi village said:

“Our friends (pastoralists) have remained violent because they have backup from the local leaders and officials from the Government. Undesirable environmental actions being committed by the pastoralists without punishment imply that the responsible local authorities have violated the principles of good governance because of having illegal associations with the law breakers.” (Interview with the farmer of Muhuwesi Village, Tunduru DC).

These findings had been supported by the Nwanzi (2017) who reported that endless clashes between farmers and pastoralists in rural communities have been caused by corruption and other related illegal acts which create irresponsibility and unfairness among local leaders and thus forcing them to violate principles of good governance for their own good. Similarly, Camara (2018) revealed that inability to resolve problems caused by the pastoralists in rural areas is caused by corruption which makes leaders to be irresponsible in taking appropriate institutional measures for the public good.

Through face to face interviews with the Chairperson of the Pastoralist Association of the Southern Zone, the study was informed about the sufferings that pastoralists in Tunduru District experienced from the local farmers as the host community members and the local authorities. He reported that pastoralists were not the only immigrants from Mbarali, Rufiji and Kilwa Districts. The respective district continued to receive large number of people who came from different regions for crop production and other related economic activities. This situation had increased the demand of land as people competed to access the respective natural asset for undertaking various economic activities.

The decision of farmers to expand farmland affected the wellbeing of the pastoralists because the process involved encroachment of grazing land which are essential for the livestock's operations in the district. Such practices forced majority of pastoralists to move away searching for the suitable grazing land while others remained in their respective villages with less land available for grazing. All these informal operations have caused tensions between farmers and pastoralists as they contributed to endless conflicts between them. In his own words, the chairperson reported:

“Pastoralists have been accused of being uncivilized and violent to their fellow human beings and the environment. But in reality, they are social beings who respect other human beings and who protect nature for the common good. Misconceptions on their behavior and attitude towards farmers have been caused by weak local institutions that have failed to act and take appropriate measures for resolving problems that affect pastoralists as a disadvantaged group or problems that affect both pastoralists and farmers as conflicting parties.” (Interview with the Chairperson of Pastoralist Association, Tunduru DC).

The respondent also pointed out about the low capacity of the members of VLCs which was associated with tribalism, nepotism and egoism. The respective members were accused of being royal to the village councils which involved farmers and indigenous people who had developed negative attitude towards the pastoralists. Such practices limited the possibilities of fairness in their operations and thus created a room for favoritism for farmers' interest without taking into consideration the public interests which could accommodate all community members. He said that:

“Pastoralists are tied with illegal practices being undertaken by the members of the Village Land Councils because they intended to favor farmers and violate the rights of pastoralists. Instead of providing mediation services fairly, they focused on supporting farmers and ensuring that their interests are well protected.” (Interview with the Chairperson of Pastoralist Association, Tunduru DC).

Such arguments were supported by land officers who participated in the study. They agreed that the failure to undertake land use management plans in some villages remained one of the underlying causes of conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in the district. This was also

associated with corruption and incompetency among local leaders which ultimately led to poor performance in management of resources. One of the land officers said:

“Conflicts between pastoralists and farmers prevail because of poor leadership among local leaders. These leaders have failed to provide appropriate directives that could ensure harmony between the land disputants. Instead, they have focused supporting one group because of tribal interests and economic interests. As a result, misunderstandings between the conflicting groups had increased which ultimately triggered endless fighting.” (Interview with one of the Land Officers, Tunduru DC).

These findings from the key informants correlate with the findings of Mohammed (2019) who reported that low capacity of the local institutions remains to be one of the key factors for the endless clashes between farmers and pastoralists. This is associated with their limited capacity to grasp and interpreting the respective policies, rules and regulations that have been formulated to guide them in their daily operations for the common good.

4. Cross Case Analysis

Farmers

The study identified that farmers in both villages (Muhuwesi and Mischela) had negative attitude towards the presence of pastoralists due to their operations which damage their crops in the farm and other related properties. This situation has forced farmers to remain in the poverty circle because of the failure to attain their desired goals from the crop production. In addition, they complained about the capacity of the local institutions to ensure justice for all members. One of the key issues that were pointed out by the respondents was little compensations from the pastoralists who damaged/destroyed their crops. This problem was associated with outdated laws, incompetency and moral gaps among the responsible local officials.

Moreover, they reported on the necessity of the responsible authorities in the government to support Village Land Councils which had been given mandate to mediate land use conflicts between the land disputants. They were confident that the respective local organs had members with integrity and wisdom who had the capacity to deliver and support the marginalized people if supported by the Central Government and local government authorities. Failures of the Village Land Councils to provide quality mediation services and resolve land based conflicts between the land disputants had been caused by inadequate resources to facilitate daily operations, political interferences and insufficient institutional support from the responsible ministries and agencies.

Furthermore, the study identified that some farmers questioned about the integrity of the members of the village councils who have unique role to play in minimizing tension between farmers and pastoralists. They complained that in most cases, conflicts between farmers and pastoralists as conflicting groups had been used as a commercial project by the local leaders as they enable them to generate income and access other related economic opportunities for their own good. This situation had triggered misunderstandings between the conflicting groups because of poor leadership at the village and ward levels.

Moreover, farmers who participated in study from Muhuwesi and Mischela villages complained about the absence of proper land management plans that could ensure harmony between/among land users who engaged in various activities coherently. Inability to undertake land management plans in their respective villages had increased clashes between farmers and between farmers and

pastoralists and thus leading to endless land based conflicts which had negative effects on the welfare of the rural communities.

They also pointed out about the differences between agro-pastoralists and pastoralists whose behavior had impact on social and economic relations in their communities. The respondents pointed out that the agro-pastoralists always fought to stabilize harmony with farmers in order to access common economic opportunities that could enhance productivity in crop farming which enable them to access food and make profit from the reliable agricultural markets within and outside Tunduru District. The situation was absolutely different for the pastoralists because of their outdated views of occupying grazing land and using natural resources haphazardly for their personal interests.

Pastoralists

Pastoralists reported about the dark side of the Village Land Councils which had members who lacked integrity and wisdom because of prioritizing self-interest for the betterment of farmers. This situation had caused most of the VLCs to underperform and thus stimulate clashes between the conflicting parties in the district, particularly Muhuweri and Mischela villages.

Also they reported about the low capacity of village leaders who failed to work for the public interest. They complained about the tendency of the Village Governments to support farmers' welfare and allow illegal practices to be carried out for the sake of frustrating innocent pastoralists. One of the practices include blockage of cattle routes and water points as well as encroachment of grazing land. In addition, leaders of the Village Councils had been accused of establishing corrupt procedures as standard practice which intended to dispossess pastoralists' herds. Such practices focused on destroying the wellbeing of pastoralists and ensure that they became poor.

They also revealed about the repercussions of lacking the land use management plans which create confusions among land users. The land use management plans could enable pastoralists to possess land for grazing and undertaking other related activities for the common good. Similar benefits could have been accrued by other land users including farmers and therefore contribute to the attainment of inclusive socio-economic development.

Respondents remained skeptical with the existing land and livestock policies together with other legal processes which had failed to suit the needs of pastoralists. Instead of creating favorable environment for the pastoralists to operate smoothly and attain their desired goals, the responsible institutions had created difficult conditions for the pastoralists to operate and as a result they ended up falling into the poverty circle.

5. Views of the Key Informants on social identity as the determinant of land use conflicts between Farmers and Pastoralists in Tunduru District

The key informants who participated in the study had their own views on the contribution of social identity in stimulating conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in the respective district. The District Agricultural Officer reported that before the arrival of the pastoralists in Tunduru District, the indigenous people (Yao) and immigrants from Nanyumbu, Masasi and Namtumbo Districts engaged seriously in small scale farming for attaining food security and raising income from the agro-business with their partners at the market. The district was calm since farmers did not focus more on fighting rather they concentrated on expanding their investments for securing their livelihood. Land use conflicts between farmers and pastoralists started to prevail after the arrival

of pastoralists who came with a large number of cattle, sheep and goat and started to move with livestock from one village to another searching for suitable grazing land for their herds. This situation created tension as farmers fought to protect their land, economic interests and ultimately their identity which is prior to all other attributes. Such identity was protected because farmers felt pride to win the war and attain the desired goals. During the conversation he said the following:

“As the main in charge of the agricultural sector in the district, I conform that farmers do not fight with pastoralists because they need to occupy more land for cultivation rather they fight because they need to show others that they need to protect their identity and interests against the immigrants”. (Interview with the District Agricultural Officer, Tunduru DC).

However, the respondent emphasized on the necessity to undertake dialogue between the conflicting parties in order to resolve conflicts and ensure better living conditions for both parties for the common good.

Similar observation was presented by the District Livestock Officer who admitted that the indigenous people of Tunduru District are Yao who rely on subsistence farming as the main source of their livelihood. The arrivals of evicted pastoralists from Mbarali DC has brought tension in the community of farmers due to undesirable cultural practices being undertaken by pastoralists which rested on destroying the wellbeing of farmers and their families. Therefore, farmers and pastoralists fight to protect their interest since each group has got its goals to attain. It is also connected with protecting of their identity because farmers always fight to ensure that their identity and interests are protected accordingly similar to the agro-pastoralists and pastoralists.

The key informant said:

“Land based conflicts between farmers and pastoralists prevails because the conflicting parties have different philosophies and interests that drive them towards attaining socio-economic goals. This situation has forced them to fight for attaining such interests and identity.” (Interview with the District Livestock Officer, Tunduru DC).

During the face to face interview with the District Land Officer and District Legal Officer, the study identified that the District Authorities had failed to undertake land use management plans in all villages in order to ensure harmony among land users. Instead of supporting them in developing appropriate institutions, the responsible authorities had failed to involve local communities in designing specific areas for cultivation, feeding herds, markets and other related socio-economic activities which are essential for securing the wellbeing of human beings. Such arguments were supported by one of the leaders of VLCs who reported:

“Inability to undertake land use management plans in our villages affects the whole community members sine they fail to undertake different economic activities (farming and livestock rearing inclusive) in appropriate places for avoiding confusions and misunderstandings between the land conflicting parties. This shows the need of undertaking inclusive land use management plans in order to ensure harmony among local producers in identifying various livelihood strategies that could enable them to attain proper livelihood outcomes.” (Interview with one of the VLC Leaders, Tunduru DC).

These findings correlate with the ideas of Menes (2003) who emphasized that land use conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in the Sub-Saharan region cannot stop if the responsible local

authorities fail to undertake inclusive land use management plans that can separate local producers in different areas to smoothen production and avoid unnecessary tensions between/among them. The study concurs with Mendes, by emphasizing on the necessity of having accountable institutions in the land sector that can work closely with local communities and ensure better living and working conditions for the public good.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

The study found that farmers and pastoralists have developed their identities based on the nature of economic activities which they performed for the sake of securing their livelihood. However, the agro-pastoralists have also formed their own identity which forced them to cooperate with farmers and pastoralists since their operations were linked with the respective actors. Furthermore, the study found that land based conflicts manifested from the identities of the conflicting parties. Each party has engaged in land based conflicts to protect its interests without taking into consideration the public interests.

The study therefore recommends that the responsible authorities should recognize differences that prevail in the respective groups and thus take appropriate strategies to work with them separately for resolving endless conflicts for public interests. Such strategies should take into consideration their socio-economic interests, historical and cultural background and other unique attributes prevailing in each group. Also the study recommends about the necessity of investing in capacity building programme for capacitating local institutions that have been given mandate to resolve conflicts between farmers and pastoralists. In addition, similar programmes should involve farmers and pastoralists in order to identify their problems and put forward sustainable solutions for the bright future of the country.

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