

Women Participation in Decentralised Local Governance: A Case of Pastoral Women in Kondoa, Tanzania

Haidari Misafi

Lecturer, National Institute of Transport,

&

Mrisho Malipula

Lecturer, Department of Development Policy, Institute of
Development Studies,
Mzumbe University,

Abstract.

The overriding literature on women's participation in governance in Tanzania explain the dynamics of women's participation in decision making quantitatively thus presenting a gap of in-depth qualitative information of the same. The literature also treats women homogeneously while in fact they are heterogeneous, and some like pastoral women, require specific analysis to capture their unique character. These shortcomings intrigued the research that informed this article. The article fundamentally argues that the dynamics of pastoral women's participation in governance are complex as issues such as norms and values, power relations and incentives provide restrictions and/or compel them to participate in governance; and at the same time define how they participate. It is against this backdrop that this article suggests an eclectic approach taking on board substantive and descriptive forces to explain and guarantee pastoral women's participation in decentralised local governance. The article results from a

qualitative study conducted in Kondoa employing interviews, focus group discussions and participatory observation research tools.

Keywords: *Pastoral Women, Participation and Decentralised Local Governance*

1.0. Introduction

In recent decades there has been a growing interest in the study of pastoral women participation in governance. The overriding body of literature concerning pastoralism and gender focuses on the number of pastoral women participation in governance to explain the dynamics¹⁰⁸ of their participation (Bhasin, 2011). However, research evidence suggests that pastoral women's participation in governance can be guaranteed by understanding the dynamics that affect their behaviour or activities during participation both quantitatively and qualitatively (Hodgson, 2011). As such, focusing on forces that determine pastoral women participation in an either quantitative or qualitative fashion would provide misleading conclusions about the dynamics of pastoral women's participation in governance.

The present article attempts to complement the existing quantitative knowledge of the dynamics of pastoral women's participation with qualitative ones. It explores forces that determine pastoral women's participation in decentralised local governance (DLG) beyond numbers by focusing on social

¹⁰⁸ Refers to forces that determine participation in governance

norms, power relations, gender stereotype, incentives, access to information and individual's interest as independent variables. The article begins by discussing what is already known and the existing gap in literature on pastoral women participation in DLG, s followed by a presentation of conceptual and methodological issues related to the same lastly empirical findings, analysis and concluding remarks.

2.0. Conceptual Underpinnings

2.1. Pastoral Women and Governance

Pastoral women are those women who are born and brought up in a society whose main livelihood system depends on livestock keeping. A typical pastoralist society is "nomadic". In such societies, people live in portable tents or temporary structures and move considerable distances in search of pasture. According to the dictates of ecological circumstances and the needs of the beasts, these societies are politically, socially and culturally influenced by pastoral norms and culture despite the fact that that are required to abide by the governments do and don'ts, as it is the case for other citizens.

Varied literature explains the dynamics of pastoral women participation in governance. While some scholars link the dynamics of pastoral women with women's visibility in governance, others relate the same with their actions in representing their interests. For instance, on the one hand scholars such as Hodgson (2011) and Kipuri and Ridgewell (2008) indicate that cultural values and norms determine pastoral women's visibility in governance through imposition of a wide range of restrictions on women like controlling their mobility and assigning them domestic chores. On the other hand,

scholars like Flintan *et al.* (2011) and Bhasin (2011) view social norms as determinants of pastoral women's participation in governance. For example, while young, these women are socialised to accept being their mothers' helpers (mothers who are totally subordinate to their husbands). As such, they graciously maintain their mothers' subservient position in perpetuity when they get married. In the same vein, Maasai pastoral women are socialised not to speak in public without being permitted by men (Flintan, 2008). Importantly, Kipuri and Ridgewell (2008) reveal that females in Maasai community are socialised to have two voices, one for normal conversation and another 'little voice' to demonstrate respect for men. This is not the case for pastoral males in the same community. Such socialisation is a powerful tool in determining and moulding women's deeds in governance (Hodgson, 2011).

Related to socialisation is pastoral women and men's believe that women are the weaker sex and are required to obey, respect and submit themselves to the leadership of men (Flintan, 2008). From such traditions, concepts of power and authority in pastoral societies are male centred thus they dominate decision-making and leadership positions. As such, it can be deduced that pastoral women's participation depends on men's perception or feeling about women's participation.

2.2. Participation

Discussions on participation in governance are broadly linked to either descriptive or substantive involvement of people in governance. The descriptive understanding of participation refers to having a share in or to take part in or be part of an activity, a context, social scene or group (Luyet *et al.*, 2012). This understanding of an individuals' presence in a group,

activity or context is an essential component of participation. However, it is criticised for its overemphasis on individual's presence in decision making avenues. This is because it overlooks the role individuals play in representing their interests, and their ability to change policies that affect their lives (Cornwall, 2008).

The substantive understanding of participation which this study intends to pursue, advocates not only on involving individuals numerically, but giving them a voice or voices to influence their interests in decision-making processes (Celis *et al.*, 2008). As such, substantive analysis of participation entails participants' ability to influence decisions that are favourable to them (Agarwal, 2010). In Tanzania, the word participation implies popular inclusivity (*ushirikishwaji*¹⁰⁹) that target an individual's physical presence or representation in an activity or decision-making (Green, 2010). Advocating participation in governance is meant to make decision-making an inclusive phenomenon. However, popular inclusiveness hardly goes beyond advocating the numerical involvement of the marginalised people like women in governance circles (Beall, 2007). This entails less is known about dynamics of participation beyond numbers.

2.3. The DLG Concept

Decentralisation refers to political and administrative reforms that transfer degrees of function, responsibility, resources and political and fiscal autonomy from central to lower levels of government (Venugopal and Yilmazi, 2010). The methods under which decentralisation takes place differs, so does its classification. However, there are three commonly identified

¹⁰⁹ Is the Swahili word which means "participation".

areas of decentralisation: Political, fiscal and administrative. Political decentralisation stresses distribution of power to lower levels of government. Fiscal decentralisation concerns the shift of responsibility for expenditures and allocation of fiscal resources between tiers of government. Administrative decentralisation entails transfer of public functions to lower levels of government, which may be in the form of de-concentration, delegation, devolution and divestment (Mollel, 2010). Decentralisation is often claimed to result in good governance. This is because it is associated with promotion of cardinal components of governance like efficiency, empowerment and participation (Venugopal and Yilmazi, 2010).

Governance is variedly defined by scholars. According to Melo and Baiochi (2006) governance refers to formal and informal articulations of the relationships between the state and its citizens. To Melo and Baiochi governance is all about the relationship between a state and its citizens. UNDP provides a broader perspective as it perceives governance to be a set of institutions, mechanisms and processes through which citizens and their groups can articulate their interests and needs, mediate their differences and exercise their rights (UNDP, 2004). In this study, we opt to use UNDP's understanding of governance because it is more comprehensive than Melo and Baicho's which cocoons governance into the relationship between a state and its citizens.

Good local governance requires that men and women should have equal voice to influence decisions. Therefore, women participation in decision making has to substantively represent their interests and of the society they are part of (Chaney, 2012). WISP (2007) contends that substantive participation of women

in DLG is guaranteed by legislations that aim at balancing the number of women and men representatives in governance. This has been done in many countries but there is little empirical evidence to support the link between DLG and women's substantive participation (Beall, 2007). Beall insists that there are politics within DLG that determines who takes the best advantages in governance domains. This entails that substantive participation in DLG is open to informal institutions and relations of power that undermine or bypass formal rules and procedure for participation. Inferably, informal institutions have an influence in determining women's substantive participation as they may implicitly or explicitly exclude women from decision-making processes.

Since decentralisation presents decision-making closer to people an avenue for women to participate in local governance is assumed to exist. Localisation of governance has always been regarded ideal to women because it provides opportunity to women to combine their traditional activities and participation in public activities (Beall, 2007). As for traditional societies¹¹⁰ such as pastoral ones, their women's participation in DLG is assumed to be ideal due to the fact that pastoralist tradition confine women to stay at home and perform domestic activities (Kipuri and Ridgewell, 2008). In this context, localising governance may lead to enhancing women's participation in decision making especially for those women crystallised in patriarchal traditions. In Tanzania, one of the goals of DLG is to provide more opportunities for marginalised people including women in decision-making position. However, the policy has

¹¹⁰ Refers to a society in which the roles of women and men adhere to stereotypes of men as heads of the family or "breadwinner" and women as responsible for taking care of the family

not ensured that women can influence policies in DLG; and critics argue that it may take decades before women are in a position to represent women's concerns (Mollel, 2010).

In view of the above, we argue that discussions concerning the link between DLG and women's participation are still contentious. The article buys into the argument that comprehending the dynamics of women's participation in DLG shall go beyond understanding their numerical involvement. It is imperative to understand forces that explain their limited numbers and that determine their limited participation in airing their voice and standing for their interests in DLG.

3.0. Scope and Methodology

This article focuses on social norms, incentives, interests and access to information in determining dynamics of pastoral women's participation within DLG. The study was conducted in Kondoa Local Authority, Tanzania. Kondoa was picked to provide a case due to among other reasons its local authority is one of the first 38 local authorities which started to implement the Local Government Reform Programme (LGRP) geared towards decentralising governance for enhanced participation in decision making. Also, Kondoa is known to be among the most ethnically heterogeneous composed districts in Tanzania (URT, 2008). Likewise, Kondoa is a good representative of pastoral societies found in Tanzania.

This article is basically an ethnography designed to explore dynamics of pastoral women's participation in governance. A multistage sampling procedure was employed to select the sample size studied. The study purposely selected two pastoral

dominated wards namely Gwandi and Mrijo in Kondoa Local Authority. The wards were identified by Council Livestock Officials. From the wards, four pastoral dominant villages were purposely selected, two villages from each ward. The villages selected were Gwandi and Rofati from Gwandi ward, while Magasa and Olboloti represented Mrijo ward. In each village selected 10 respondents engaged in pastoral activities were purposely selected. The study also garnered information from the chairpersons and executives of the four selected villages who were purposely selected. This makes a total sample size of this study 48. Different methods of data collection were used to elicit data; these include participant observation, interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) and key informant interviews (KIIs).

Through participant observation we were able to observe pastoral women's attendance and contributions in meetings. Unstructured interviews and FGD's, obtained data on how and why pastoral women participate or don't participate in local governance. KIIs helped to supplement and cross-check information gathered through interviews, FGDs and participant observation.

4.0. The Dynamics of Pastoral Women's Participation in DLG in Kondoa

4.1. Social Norms and Values

Theoretically, norms and values are understood to explain individual's participation in decision making. This is because norms and values may explicitly state, prohibit or bind individuals to participate in certain activities or behave in a certain way. Therefore, our assumption is that social norms and

values determine pastoral women's participation in governance. Our results reveal that social norms and values determine women's participation in governance. Pastoral traditions provide evidence to this effect as they generally regard women as second class citizens. For instance, pastoral women are forced to put on unique clothes sometimes made of skin and smeared with oil which distinguish them from other women and limits their freedom of interaction with non-pastoralists. This is mainly because the oil smeared on the clothes stinks. Although some men put on similar cloth, they have liberty not to, a luxury that is not enjoyed by pastoral women. Consequently, pastoral women feel inferior and marginalise themselves from other groups of people especially non pastoralists. Such feelings of self-denial are well expressed by one pastoral woman in Gwandi Village in her response to the question whether she would like to contest for a political post: "How can we contest and become leaders while we put on animal skin? They will laugh at us". This signifies inferiority complex the women had associated with their dressing code and inferably stands on their way to actively participate in communal meetings.

Another way in which norms contribute in determining pastoral women's participation is through the practice of payment of bride price as a condition for marriage. Through this practice, suitors assume total ownership of the bride and eventually the married woman become part of the groom's property. In this context, married women's decisions including movements outside their households and contributions during meetings require approval from their husbands. Interviews with women confirmed that they had to obtain permission from their spouses before attending public meetings.

“My husband has been allowing me to attend meetings in the village, but he has always been cautioning me not to let him down by speaking and arguing in the meetings because he will feel ashamed before his fellow men”¹¹¹.

Others revealed that they did not participate in voting because their spouses were away during elections to give them permission to vote.

“I had interest in voting during the recent elections. However, I could not to go to the village and vote because I could not leave children alone. Above all, my husband was not around to give permission to go”¹¹².

Nomadic life¹¹³ practices that subject pastoralists to be mobile for acquiring animal feeds also affect pastoral women’s participation in decision making. This is mainly because these movements mainly make men leave for camping and grazing while women are left behind home and restricted to get outside their households. This restriction plus the requirement to get permission from their spouses, left pastoral women in dilemma in making decisions on various issues including decisions to participate or not to participate in public affairs as the permission givers (husbands) were away. In instances that men moved with their spouses, these movements made information

¹¹¹ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Magasa Village on 12th March 2011

¹¹² Personal Interview with a pastoral woman in Rofati village, on 29 February 2011

¹¹³ This is a tradition of pastoralist movement with their livestock from one place to another in search for pasture.

about meetings hard to get and necessitated travelling to attend meetings in their original villages. Likewise, the movement added responsibilities to women who moved with their spouses because traditionally women are responsible for building houses. This responsibility contributed to limit their time to participate in governance activities. Likewise, interviews revealed that the movements restricted pastoral women to vote in the 2010 elections. This is chiefly because they were far from their original points of registration and lacked unequivocal freedom of movement as indicated above. It is worth noting that electoral laws in Tanzania do not allow electorates to cast their votes for members of Parliament and Councillors in a polling station other than where they were registered. In this regard, the pastoral women were more affected than men by the traditional movements.

Apart from the traditional movement related activities, pastoral women are assigned household chores like cooking, washing, child rearing, milking cows etc. All these activities constrained women to spend most of the time at home thus limiting time to get involved in public activities. This suggest that although an ideal DLG was meant to benefit women by bringing decision making close to home, with the hope that it would enhance women's participation in local governance, too much involvement in domestic activities denied the women from reaping the benefits of DLG.

Maasai pastoral women socialisation also contributes to their limited participation in governance. It was revealed that, pastoral women in the study area are socialised to be shy and fearful before men and the general public. Such kind of socialisation contributes to the women looking most of the time sober and inferior to men. The act of being sober and inferior

affect their participation in governance as they accept lower position in a society and uphold men's idea and decision with less or no challenge. During fieldwork, the researchers managed to observe one pastoral girl who was undergoing informal education through traditional initiation. When the researcher tried to talk to her, she was looking shy with her eyes closed and could not reply but her mother replied instead. The mother revealed that the girl had to stay inside a house most of the time not to interact with men. While inside, the girl was taught manners that insist on being polite, obedient, fearful and shy before elders and potential husbands and other men. In her own words the mother of the girl told the researcher:

“She has to stay inside for a month so that she undergoes informal education about becoming a true woman and a mother and how to care for man and her children. A woman should be subservient to men including her husband, brothers and other men. By the time she comes out of house she will be well trained and looks brown as most of brown girls in pastoral societies attract high bride price”.¹¹⁴

The second class citizenship role taken by pastoral women informed by cultural practises highlighted above pose a challenge to the idea that dynamics of pastoral women's participation can solely be understood through analysing numerical participation. This is essentially because by doing fundamental question related to understanding forces determining the number of women in governance, guarantees provided for pastoral women's substantive participation, as well as the underlying forces informing the way pastoral women

¹¹⁴ Personal Interview with a pastoral woman in Gwandi village, on 10 July 2011

participate in public affairs, are not answered. For instance, interviewees revealed that they are not comfortable speaking in public. The following quotation succinctly summarises this position:

“How can I stand up and ask questions in public? We pastoral women are not confident enough to stand in public meetings especially where there are lots of men. I personally think if I will be demanded to stand up and talk in public, I will fall down.”¹¹⁵

In this context, it is only logical that dynamics of women’s participation in DLG should include understanding forces that determine women’s participation away from numbers.

4.2. Power Relations and Pastoral Women’s Participation

Power relations in this article refer to daily relations in decision making circles among men and women. These relations are assumed to be unequal, whereby men dominate decision making, consequently affecting women’s participation. Our results confirm this supposition as pastoral women are regarded by pastoral men at both household as well as community level as men’s property hence having little influence in decision making unless permitted to participate by men. This is well said by pastoral women in Magasa: “We are not allowed to freely interact with people in public matters. We are tied to them by bride-price and even at home it is the male kids who are leading us even if they are younger and unwise than us”.¹¹⁶ For instance, one pastoral woman in Rofati revealed that “women in our

¹¹⁵ Personal Interview with a pastoral woman in Rofati village, on 29 February 2011

¹¹⁶ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Magasa Village on 12th March 2011

society have to be permitted by their husbands to vote and attend meetings”¹¹⁷. In extreme situations a VEO in Magasa in an interview held in Magasa on 23 November 2011 confided that he had received claims from married pastoral women we directed by their husbands who to vote for. A Widow interviewed in Gwandi on 28 February informed us that she is usually directed by her elderly son or male relatives about who to vote.

It is perhaps imperative to note that pastoral women are even denied to make personal decisions such as choice of a husband to marry. Such choices are normally made by their fathers who agree with a suitor of their choice. In a worse situation, it was reported by a pastoral woman in Magasa that: “women can’t even make a decision on whether to or not to go to hospital in case they fall sick. This had sometimes resulted into some women dying at home without reaching a hospital”¹¹⁸.

Similar trend is applicable to decisions related to selling household property, whereas men sell lucrative properties like livestock or crop products at will, and spend money obtained from the sell without informing their wives. A housewife at Rofati had this to say on the issue: “We are properties just as cows and goats or houses. They do whatever with them without asking us”¹¹⁹. Women are only permitted to sell chicken which is not considered as a property in pastoral societies as well as

¹¹⁷ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Gwandi village on 9 July 2011

¹¹⁸ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Magasa Village on 15th March 2011

¹¹⁹ Personal Interview with a pastoral woman in Rofati village, on 30 February 2011

milk which is traditionally regarded as a women's property. However, it was reported that some men exerted control over the money which their wives obtained from chicken and milk sales. This implies that, pastoral women have limited decisions to make even in those items which are traditionally known to be women's property.

While women had limited power over household milk and chicken management decisions, it was strictly prohibited for women to make or contribute in any public decision making without getting permission from their husband. The restriction about women's involvement in decision making is based on traditional values that regard women as inferior sex which should be confined to kitchen roles. Importantly, it was revealed through an FGD¹²⁰ that pastoral men are of the view that if pastoral women are allowed to participate in governance, they will overthrow men's dominance in traditional leadership. Traditionally, it is considered by pastorals to be dangerous and taboo for women to lead men. This taboo contradicts a DLG idea that emphasis on equality between men and women.

It is imperative to note that a power relation in pastoral setting is unequal as elderly men are the only group responsible for making societal decision. These elders according to views solicited from FGDs¹²¹ are very powerful and command respect in pastoral societies as pastoralists regard them as the wisest people. The perceived wisdom of these elders is expected to be critical for making rational decisions for the good of the entire community. It was observed that even government leaders also

¹²⁰ A male constituted FGD held in Rofati village on 22 January 2011

¹²¹ Female FGDs held in Magasa and Mrijo villages on 7 November and 26 February 2011 respectively

recognise leaders of pastoralist communities especially when they want to mobilise pastoralists to participate in public matters like voting and attending meetings. With such respect placed on elderly men, enhancement of women participation could benefit from support of these traditional leaders. However, these elders wisdom maintain the male chauvinistic norms that undermine the role of pastoral women in governance. The words of a pastoral woman from Gwandi village well summarise this position: “The elders of our community are like semi-Gods! They can do anything to change the nominal role of women in governance but they support male domination”.¹²² As a result the DLG initiatives are not recording the intended goal of enhancing participation of the marginalised in decision making circles. This position seems to augur well with the scepticism of Beal (2007) that decentralisation hardly benefits women.

4.3. Gender Stereotypes and Pastoral Women Participation

In the current study gender stereotype¹²³ was observed to be another contributing factor for limiting pastoral women’s participation in decision making in two main ways. First men regard women as weaker sex who cannot perform duties which men can perform such as becoming leaders, involving in a war, as well as cattle riding. Men believe that, women’s main tasks are reserved in performing domestic activities and have low thinking capacity. Observations indicate that some men are reluctant to have their wives interviewed on grounds that they

¹²² Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Gwandi village on 9 July 2011

¹²³ Gender stereo-type is a belief that men are stronger than women. Therefore, only men, can handle masculine issues. Stereo-type consider strategic political activities as masculine and therefore, are exclusively for men to perform.

have no additional idea to those made by their spouses. Others admit that it is impossible for women to have different from their husband because all they know is what they have been enlighten by their spouses.

Secondly, women themselves accept the belief that men are stronger than them and that participation in activities such as leadership are exclusively men's duty. This was attested during FGDs¹²⁴ when women confirmed that their roles are restricted to staying at home, and not to be elected to leadership positions. This suggests that gender stereotypes determine both women's numerical participation as well as behaviour in governance. In a KII with the Village Executive Officer of Rofati village who happened to be a lady, she complained that villagers, particularly men disliked her simply because she was a woman. In her own words she said:

“They call me ‘indito’¹²⁵” and according to them ‘indito’ cannot rule men. Therefore, they always harass me and mock me whenever I want to deliver information to them. They once locked me out of my house. I am not interested to stay and work in this village any more”.¹²⁶

By implication, gender stereotype limit women's numerical as well as active participation in governance thus creating a syndicate that leadership in pastoral society is exclusively men's preoccupation.

¹²⁴ Female FGDs held in Magasa and Mrijo villages on 7 November and 26 February 2011 respectively

¹²⁵ A Maasai words that refers to a little woman

¹²⁶ Interview with Rofati Village Executive Officer held in Rofati on 7 January 2011

4.4. Access to Information and Pastoral Women's Participation

Access to information is equally an important aspect in enhancing or limiting participation as Flintan *et al* (2011) clearly put that any kind of participation requires information. Our assumption in this study is that pastoral women's participation is determined by women's access to information. This is because information helps women to plan for their domestic activities and set time to participate in public affairs. Our results confirm that pastoral women access information through their spouses as well as government leaders. However, the information has not enhanced their participation in decision making. For instance, it was revealed during FGDs¹²⁷ that most participants agreed that government leaders spread information about voters' registration and voting exercise but their spouses did not allow them to freely participate. Also it was revealed that spouses or males being the source of information presented a problem as they censored the information to suite their traditional chauvinistic interests. The following quote attests: "In the past he used to inform me well in advance about a meeting such as the village assembly and permitted me to attend the meeting. Anyhow, of recent he has not been informing me about the meeting or he informs me two or three days after the meeting has been held. This is because our men are very jealous on women, with a view that once a woman attends meetings, will likely overshadow men in decision making"¹²⁸.

The limited information on public affairs among most of the

¹²⁷ Female FGDs held in Magasa and Gwandi villages on 7 November and 8 July 2011 respectively

¹²⁸ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Gwandi village on 7 July 2011

pastoral women is attributed to pastoral traditions which require females to be confined to stay at home and perform domestic chores as opposed to pastoral men who are free to move around and share information with other colleagues and village leaders. The confinement of women to their households is well summarised in the following quotation.

“... I only go to the village to attend clinic for my child and occasionally when I go to get basic needs like salt. When I am in the village, I normally hear that there was a meeting last week and sometimes I find one going on”.¹²⁹

Apart from the traditional constraints impeding pastoral women participation in governance, there were other information related reasons that impact pastoral women participation in governance. It was revealed that most of pastoral women do not bother reading information posted on the villages' notice boards. This is partly because the information is written in Swahili, a language which majority of pastoral women are not comfortable with. The following words of a pastoral woman from Magasa well summarises this stance: “researcher, meeting notices are put on village government offices were we hardly go. But even if they go, many women do not know how to read and write and some who do not know Swahili well. This language thing is a problem because all letters are in Swahili”¹³⁰. The words of the woman from Magasa are supported by one old female participant in an FGD who lamented that: “How can I participate in government activities? They usually come, speak their Swahili and go, leaving us without understanding what

¹²⁹ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Gwandi village on 9 July 2011

¹³⁰ Personal interview with pastoral woman held in Magasa village on 18 March 2011

brought them here”¹³¹. The quotations presented indicate that language barrier discourages some pastoral women to attend public meetings.

The language question expressed raises questions as Swahili is an official language of government in Tanzania. It is known to many pastoral women although it is their second language. That is why all of our interviews were conducted in Swahili and daily socio-economic transactions in the study area are done in Swahili. For instance we observed pastoral women speaking Swahili for their immediate economic gains (selling beads and milk). In this context, Swahili could hardly present a significant barrier in pastoral women participation. However, it was observed that most aged pastoral women are gullible hence they cannot read information posted on notice boards. A typical example of their gullibility was evidenced by their failure to read and follow voting procedures. As a result, majority of them had to demand literate people to read for them public documents including voters’ registration documents and ballot papers.

4.5. The women’s interest in participation in DLG

The study also assumed that women’s interest in taking part in local governance is also a determining factor for pastoral women’s participation. Women interests in governance in this study are conceptualised as women’s feeling of wanting, having concern, or curious to participate in governance. Results indicate that women interests in aspects of governance is a driving force for pastoral women’s participation in DLG. For instance, during interviews women exhibited willingness to participate in

¹³¹ Views of a pastoral woman during an FGD in Gwandi Village on 15 July 2011

electoral process such as voters' registration, voting campaign meetings as well as vying for leadership positions because of their interest in such matters as follows. *"I am interested in voting. When I went to Rofati I saw people voting. I came back and picked my card and decided to join them"*¹³². *...I contested for a post of ward councillor but my name was dropped at the village level because men said that I would disturb them and would become an irresponsible family caretaker*¹³³”

Likewise, the women indicated that they did not want to take part in public activities such as protest, debates as indicated in the following quotation: *"Traditionally it is immoral for a pastoral woman to debate or protest and that a woman who participates in debates or protest is regarded to have deviant behaviour. In short we don't have such a habit."*¹³⁴ However, a cross examination against why pastoral women lack interests in these activities lies on the fact the activities involve too much talking and taking responsibilities that are not traditionally assigned to pastoral women. It is worth recalling that pastoral women are socialised to be in-charge of household chores and to support men to perform public affairs. This explains why in FGDs¹³⁵ most participants agreed that involving women in political matters was wastage of time that they badly need to perform household chores and uphold traditional pastoral

¹³² Personal interview with pastoral woman held in Magasa village on 18 March 2011

¹³³ Personal interview with pastoral woman held in Magasa village on 17 March 2011

¹³⁴ Personal Interview with a pastoral woman held in Rofati Village on 23rd July 2012

¹³⁵ Female FGDs held in Magasa and Gwandi villages on 7 November and 8 July 2011 respectively

dictates. Likewise, pastoral women in the FGDs revealed that they lose interest to participate in politics because politicians did not satisfactorily deliver their promises as indicated in the following quotation.

“We voted for CCM in the 2000 elections expecting that they would have a dam constructed for cattle as they did promise us. However, since then to date we have not seen them coming to build the dam. I don’t think CCM will get votes from this side”¹³⁶.

To drive the same point home during interviews in Magasa and Rofati villages the pastoral women cited that they were facing a serious problem of water shortage but nothing was being done by the leaders to solve the problem. The following quotation from a pastoral woman in Magasa village summarises women disinterest in politics due to unfulfilled promises:

“... during dry season we get water from Mwailanji, 6 km from the village or sometimes we have to go to Songolo, 10 kms from Magasa to get water for ourselves and cattle. As you can see our dispensary is not complete and we use the village office as an alternative. You are asking us about politics and participation? We are not interested in them. Go and tell the government and their politicians that we want medicine and water; we are not interested in politics at all”¹³⁷.

Nonetheless, during interviews, pastoral women exhibit interest in electoral processes such as voters’ registration, voting and campaign meetings. They put less interest on vying for office. These results concur with those of Kipuri and Rigewell (2008)

¹³⁶ Views of one female participant in a Female FGDs held in Magasa village on 7 November 2012

¹³⁷ Personal interview with pastoral woman held in Magasa village on 17 March 2011

who assert that pastoral women turn up in large numbers in voting. This is essentially because of the nature of pastoral societies' cultural practises which accord male the upper hand in strategic political engagements. The views of Eveyew and Mangistu (2013) that point out that the nature of political system in pastoral societies which are highly patriarchal, grant men political power and control of pastoral women's feelings in participation of public affairs. On the basis of the two authors' views and pastoral women's socialisation argue that there are men's interests behind the so called women's interests. In this regard, what is regarded as women "interests", are nothing but men's interests superimposed upon them by men as the following quotation derived from an interview confirms:

"In pastoral societies a man is everything. He is the one who decide what a woman should do or not do? If he tells you don't go to the meeting for instance, how can you go? It is impossible. We are in actual fact controlled by them as a remote controller changes Television channels"¹³⁸.

The quote as said above implies that what was referred to as women's interests, are in actual sense men's interests. Pastoral women are like robots who do what they are programmed to do or say. They are mouth pieces or amplifiers of men when it comes to participation in governance.

4.6. Incentives and Pastoral Women's Participation

Incentives in this article refer to anything that an individual receives or is promised to receive in exchange of his or her participation in decision making. Our results indicate that

¹³⁸ Personal Interview with a pastoral woman held in Rofati Village on 23rd July 2012

majority of women participate in various public activities without getting or anticipating to get any kind of incentives. However, a critical analysis of the results indicate that incentives determine not only pastoral women's numerical participation but also the women's participation beyond numbers as the following three respondents' reasons for their vote choices which summarises many, suggest: The first respondent expressed the view that: *"I voted CCM because we were told it would improve our lives and provide free livestock medicine"*¹³⁹. The reason put forward by the second respondent does not differ from the first: *"I voted for CCM because the government promised that it would complete our dispensary"*¹⁴⁰. Yet the third respondent also expected something from CCM *"I voted for the ruling party because it promised us water for ourselves and our livestock"*¹⁴¹. These promises attest to the fact that there were some incentives which women expected out of their participation in voting and how they voted.

Likewise, it was also reported that the pastoral women were given money by candidates or their agents so as to cheer and speak in good of the candidates who bribed them, as the following quote derived from an interview confirms:

"I don't see any importance of attending meetings. Sometimes you may go to a meeting and raise your hand to contribute but you will not be picked. The same faces are picked to contribute and they contribute on favour of leaders because they have been

¹³⁹ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Olboloti Village on 10th May 2011

¹⁴⁰ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Magasa Village on 20th November 2010

¹⁴¹ Personal interview with a pastoral woman held in Rofati Village on 23rd July 2012

given “tea”¹⁴². They don’t choose me because they know that I will speak the truth”¹⁴³.

The views presented above suggest that pastoral women participation particularly in elections is motivated by rational economic factors revolving around their strategic interests and needs. However, material incentives offered by male dominated leaders to buy puppets to sway decisions to suite their selfish interests pose an impediment for pastoral women who oppose the leaders signal interests. This concurs with the view that there are informal means that stand in the way of formal structures quest for substantive participation.

5.0. Concluding Remarks

The present study chiefly indicates that dynamics of women’s participation are linked to both women’s presence and women’s deeds in governance. Cognisant of the presence of the two variables influencing pastoral women’s participation in DLG (women’s presence and women’s deeds) explaining their dynamics in an “either/or” type of study intended to eliminate either of the two will spurn the advantage of the richness of the two variables and their relationship on explaining pastoral women participation in DLG. It is in light of this backdrop that this article recommends an eclectic approach to for understanding the forces that determine substantive and descriptive participation in order to guarantee pastoral women’s enhanced participation in DLG. This way, relevant interventions such as provision of formal education to pastoralists,

¹⁴² “Tea” is a term used to mean or synonymous with corruption

¹⁴³ Personal interview with a woman held in Rofati village on 8th August 2011.

deconstructing gender identities that undermine women's inputs in local governance could be adopted to uphold motivators of pastoral women's participation and gag demotivators of the same. This way, relevant interventions such as provision of formal education to pastoralists, deconstructing gender identities that undermine women's inputs in local governance could be adopted to uphold motivators of pastoral women's participation and gag demotivators of the same.

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