



Pastoral Livelihood Implications in Somali Proverbs

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Abstract: *The aim of this study is to analyze the implications of selected Somali Proverbs on Pastoral Livelihood. Accordingly, a qualitative research design was used to conduct the study. The data was collected from purposively selected 24 elders through interviewing and Participant based observation in Somali Region, Ethiopia. From the source population of the study-Somali proverbs, 40 purposively selected proverbs were used for their thematic importance. To analyze the collected data, a thematic-qualitative data analysis was employed. The results indicated that Somali proverbs reveal the Somali pastoral livelihood features: the value of livestock especially Camel, the nature of mobility, and the value of elders and leaders in the pastoral realm.*

Keywords: *folklore; indigenous wisdom; livestock; mobility; elders and leaders role.*

1. Introduction

Folklore is currently a flourishing young discipline that asserts all society or groups “inherit and develop” their economic, social, environmental, legal, philosophical and historical knowledge in the folkloric forms (Abraham, 1980:1). According to Ben-Amos (1971:6), researching in folklore is “the learning of the people”, the search of “the wisdom of the people, the people’s knowledge”, about their material and spiritual world or “more fully, the lore, erudition, knowledge or teaching of a folk”. This indicates that folklore puts the

Most important shared values of group life; in this way, it reveals attitudes that remind us of how life ought to be lived and how the world ought to be viewed. In other words, studying folklores opens the possibility of revealing the deepest feelings and indigenous knowledge of a given group.

More precisely, Ben-Amos (1971: 5) distinguished “three basic conceptions of folklore: a body of knowledge, a mode of thought, and a kind of art” which are inclusive of each other. These conceptions exist in four folklore forms: material culture, social folk custom performing folk arts, and oral literature in the given society (Sims and Stephens, 2005; Mengistu, 2005; Miruka, 1994; Azeze, 2001; Coyle, Garside, Kelsell and Pack, 1991; Finnegan, 1970).

Nandwa and Bukenya (1983:1) define oral literature as “utterances, whether spoken, recited or sung, whose composition and performance exhibit to an appreciable degree of the artistic character of accurate observation, vivid imagination and ingenious expression”. So, it is not ordinary or usual speech rather it is an elevated form of expression which comprises the society’s wisdom about their experience and reaction to the world. Ekanem (2012:54) adds that the oral society “has a wide array of philosophy richly embedded in their culture and tradition in oral forms”; such as myths, legends, folk tales, proverbs, oral poetries-panegyric, elegiac,

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special purpose-and riddles and so on.

As mentioned earlier, a proverb is one form of oral literature. Hagos (2015:184) states proverbs as “condensed or well-known sentences or phrases but memorable saying embodying some important fact of experience that is taken as true by members of some traditions and communities.”. This indicates that proverbs serve as a storehouse of culture and history; so, they help to understand the social values, knowledge and experience of the people, and to preserve the verbal art of the societies. Mieder (2004) and Giddens (2005) also states that a proverb is an instrument in preserving traditional intelligence, recording history, social construction, and reasoning culture for ages in societies. What is more, proverbs are thought to explain the genesis of natural and social phenomena that entails a moral sanction, and inculcates constructed norms and codes of behavior in a society as part of the social harmonization process in conversation practice (Make, Kebede and Alemayehu, 2014 a&b; Gebregziabher, 2010; Finnegan, 1992).

The Somali society could be characterized as a society that employs proverbs to transmit its societal values and indigenous wisdom as a way of pastoral life and social practices. In short, Somali people use proverbs that have tremendous and wide ranging roles in their all rounded activities as sociocultural milieus. Therefore, in general this study aims to study Pastoral Livelihood implications of Somali Proverbs. Specifically, the study tries to answer the following questions:

- i) What are livestock (camel) values’ reflections in Somali Proverbs?
- ii) How do Somali proverbs reveal the Society’s indigenous knowledge of the nature of mobility?
- iii) What are the reflections about elders’ and leaders’ role in Somali Proverbs?

Consequently, this study plays a significant role through documenting Somali oral proverbs, revealing and transferring the Somali society intergenerational wisdom in a written form for the next generation. Moreover, it can be used as a reference material for interested researchers in the subject area.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1 Design of the Study

In this study, a qualitative research design was employed. This is because it is suitable to describe the existing realities of Pastoral Livelihood implications practiced by the Somali

society in Ethiopia. According to Creswell (2009), qualitative research design enables the researchers to collect data about human life realities, experiences, behavior, emotion and feeling, organizational function, social movement, cultural phenomena and their interaction with nature.

For analysis, 40 Proverbs were selected as a sample purposively for their thematic relevance for the study. To collect 40 proverbs, interview and participant based Observation data collection tools were employed. Then, to analyze the collected proverbs, the thematic-qualitative data analysis method was employed.

2.2 Description of the Study Area

The Somali Region is one of nine regions in Ethiopia. The region is well known for pastoral livelihood and its characterization of the lifestyle of the oral literature, proverb. According to the 2007 Population and Housing Census, the *Somali language* has 4,609,274 or 6.25% speakers in Ethiopia; it is the third most spoken language in the country, next to Afan Oromo and Amharic. The region is consists of nine (currently eleven) administrative zones from which Six Zones were purposively selected for the study. The capital city is Jigjiga, 620.5km far from Addis Ababa in East Direction.

2.3 Subject of the Study

The source population for the study is Somali proverbs especially those that reflects pastoral livelihood features. Nevertheless, for the sake of manageability and thematic relevance, the sample 40 Somali proverbs were selected as the total sample to reveal the Somali’s pastoral livelihood implications.

2.4 Sampling Procedure and Data Collection Tools

This study was conducted in purposively selected six zones in Somali Regional State. To mention, Shabelle, Korahe, Jarar, Liben Erer and Sitti zones were purposively selected to maintain dialect variety and avoid cultural contact influence from other languages speaking neighboring Society.

In this study, the purposive sampling procedure was used to select 40 proverbs that reflect Somali people’s pastoral livelihood features. Specifically, 24 proverbs from the total sample were collected through interviewing purposively selected 24 elders from the communities based on their knowledge, skills and experiences of the oral literature. The remaining 16 proverbs from the total sample were collected through participant based observation by the researchers who

reside in Liben and Korahe zones; the data was gathered through visiting the pastoralists at their villages in Somali region, Ethiopia.

To achieve the objectives of the study, interview and observation were employed as data collection instruments.

2.5 Data Analysis

A qualitative data analysis approach is used in which the selected proverbs were subjected to thematic analysis. In the thematic analysis, an emphasis was placed on the implication of the proverbs against the pastoral livelihood valuing system within the context of the Somali Region and their contribution to maintain the psychological, economical, and social bond of the society.

3. Results

Like some parts of some regions in Ethiopia, in the Somali region too, the pastoral way of life is practiced in the major non-urban part of the region. Pastoralism as a concept is developed on the bases of economic and cultural significances of livestock. According to Boto, Edeme and Lopes (2012), a pastoralist society shares distinctive features such as livestock mainly Camel value, the nature of mobility and elders and leaders role in the social realm, and they are manifested in the oral literature form in the society. Accordingly, the Somalis use proverbs to perform, document and transfer indigenous wisdom from one generation to the next generation. In this part, therefore, the interpretation of selected proverbs at a glance with aforementioned implications shall be presented briefly.

3.1 Livestock (Camel) Value

IDS research report (2006) defines Pastoralism from the economic and cultural vantage point. From an economic perspective, pastoralism is a way of livelihood that depends on livestock for subsistence and economic transaction. Another perspective from which livestock could be considered is as the source of cultural identity, means of social value exchange. This reflects the meaning, value and role of livestock in all forms of social relationships and also indicates the intent of livestock influence in the cultural value system. For instance, a camel's role in livelihood is predominantly known across pastoralists in every corner of the world. As a result, a camel is considered to be a symbol for all positive social attributes; such as, self-symbolic, wealth, strength, grace, patience, credibility, trustworthy testimony and so on.

Profoundly, the Somalis use a camel as self-symbol. As a community, Somali people have unique culture, values, and norms which are inherited from ancestors. This is reflected in the proverb "Awrba awrka ka horreeyuu saan-qaadkiisa leeyahay" "A camel has its own pre-camel". The proverb shows that the Somalis have strong bond with their ancestors and their tradition, culture, rituals, marriage systems, law and others which are common in the current generation's daily life practice. In this proverb, both the speaker and ancestors are symbolized with Camel as self-referent.

Also, Somali people give value to Camel as a sign of patience, credibility, and trustworthy testimony. Among the proverbs, the Somalis employ the proverb "Geel soddon qaday, saddex kuma dari waayo" "if a camel can go thirty days without water it won't fail to add three more days" to show patience. In this proverb, camel is used to give a didactic lesson about patience. Accordingly, it gives advise to pastoralists to be patient and wait for matters for a certain period of time. Besides, camel is used in the proverb "Cimrigaagoo dheeraadaa geel dhalayana waa ku tusaa" "If you have a big residence; even a camel can direct you to it" as credible and trustworthy testimony. This means if you stay for a long period of time, you will witness a lot of happenings.

Moreover, the Somalis use a camel to show the value of verification in communicating facts. The proverb "hubsiiino hal baa la siistaa" "verification is worthy of one camel" is worth to mention here. The proverb indicates the relevance of verifying information before accepting it. Otherwise, the punishment cost for failing to verify the obtained information is going to be a Camel that has huge value in the society. To show a camel's value, the Somalis employ the proverb "Geeli waa geel, wixii gooyaana waa geel" which means "A camel is expensive and only exchanged with other camel". Here, the proverb indicates that the value of a camel is not measured with such things as money unless and otherwise it is presented to correct huge social crises or Social affairs like marriage.

In addition to these, the Somalis consider the camel as one of the major issues to battle for. Remarkably, it is very hard to quit the conflict which is caused by camel and women. This is reflected in the proverb as "Col naago ka kacay iyo cadho nirig ka kacday midna sahal kuma qaboobo" which means "No one, who gets angry in concern with a woman and a camel, is easy to comfort". It shows the value of camel and women within the Somali society and, it dictates that a conflict caused over camels and women cannot be easily solved. Thus, in the society, a camel is considered as one of the costly items that could ignite conflict among people. And also, a camel is used to symbolize decisive social, economic, and political

issues that should be handled by elders. This is contented in the proverb “Geel carruuri qaaday ma foga” which means “You cannot think of a camel led by a child to reach a distant place”. The proverb is used by elderly pastoralists against the young pastoralists, and it means that the young pastoralists will not take essential matters that much challenging.

To clinch, pastoralist societies consider social exchange value for livestock and their products. So, it could be argued that the value system regarding the social exchange in pastoralist societies is often associated with their immediate livestock; such as, camels, milk, caw and the like. In Somali proverb, “Dhiil maran iyo dhiil buuxa la iskuma dhufto (Wax aan isu qalmi la isma dhaafsado)” “Do not exchange a container full of milk with empty one” warns to be careful about careless people who owned nothing and wish to corrupt you and your belongings. Again, the proverb, “Doqontu xeerna ma hooyo, xoolana ma hooyo” “Foolishness is neither law nor livestock” measures foolishness in terms of livestock and law. The proverb asserts that a foolish person does not have a law to protect him or a personal belonging that he/she cherishes. Symbolized by livestock, it is about respecting the law and accumulating wealth which is considered not possible by fools.

Therefore, the Somalis use their proverbs to reflect the meaning, value and role of livestock, especially camels in social and economic relationships. In addition to the economic contributions, the proverbs revealed the indigenous wisdom about livestock and its yields influence the cultural value system.

3.2 Nature of Mobility

Pastoralists are also known for their mobility. They move from one place to another area in search of water, grassland, or arable land. Additionally, the causes of their mobility could be draught, conflicts, or any circumstances that affect their livelihood. To reflect such circumstances, the Somalis use the proverb “Col iyo abaar cagahaagaa lagaga baxaa” “War and drought leave you to your feet”. In this context, war and drought are considered as causes of mobility, and individuals are expected to use their foot to search for food and to escape from war. This is about a mesmerizing self-oriented problem-solving capacity, using their hand for sustenance, and escaping from challenges.

Deeply, the causes of mobility such as conflict, drought, or others are conceived as an effect of lack of planning. To avoid or reduce draught and conflict vulnerability, pastoralists have been using indigenous knowledge that is planning practice as

protection as well as resilience mechanism. As a case in point, the proverb “Aqool xumo abaar ka daran (qorsho xumo abaar ka daran)” which is translated “lack of plan is more terrible than severe drought” is used to show the importance of planning by depicting severe drought as insignificant in comparison to lack of plan and its consequences. The above proverb and the like are used by the pastoralists during the scarcity of water, pasture, and food items. As a result, such a proverb provides not only a piece of advice to live with but it also warns the consequences of not living their lives by planning ahead of time.

Most importantly, the Somalis consider the causes of mobility as both terrible experiences and golden opportunities. These are described in the proverbs “Caleen qudhac calool geel ma buuxiso” and “Masiibadu adduunyada iyadaa u macallin ah” which are translated as “A leaf of acacia does not fill a camel's stomach” and “Disaster is a master of the world”. In the first proverb, we are told that scarcity hampers the complete cycle of life. However, in the second proverb we are informed that challenges opt for the betterment of life like that of the English proverb, “problem is a mother of invention”. In addition to explaining the causes and experiences of conflict and/or draught, Somali society expresses the consequence and controlling mechanism of conflict in their proverbs.

To indicate the danger or consequence of conflict, the Somalis employ proverbs; such as “Dagaal wiil kuma dhashee, wiilbaa ku dhinta” “May be you are not born into a war, though you may die” expresses the consequences of conflict. Precisely, it asserts that war has no value at all except for a loss of life. Likewise, the society considers rushing to war as a sign of ignorance about war. This is reflected in the proverb, “Dagaal nin aan aqoon baa ku orda” translated as “Men who don't know about war or conflict are the ones who are likely to rush in to it”. Hence, it could be understood that the Somali society is rich in indigenous wisdom about the consequence of conflict. But also, they articulate the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms that help to control conflicts and to reduce its setbacks in their proverbs.

Hinging on, the Somalis conceive that giving remedies for a cause of conflict at its infant stage is a vital conflict resolution mechanism. This is also reflected in their proverb “Belaayo hor la qabtay leedahay ee dabo la qabto ma leh” which is translated as “A problem addressed in advance will not bring a sever danger to prevent”. The proverb claims that once a crisis took place it is very unlikely to draw on any ideal solution. The real solution should be sought before its occurrence. However, once the problems are realized the Somalis encourage timely action as reflected in the proverb “Gees

lo'aad kulaylkaa lagu gooyaa" "The horn of a cow is cut in the heat". This reveals that the problems and challenges must be halted at the right time. Hence, they declare the indispensable role of time in their conflict resolution mechanism. Equably, they convince to give due attention to the contenders or challengers. This is reflected in the proverb "Col hortii baa hub la samaystaa" translated as "First, the enemy is made up of weapons". The proverb is used to indicate that understating or misunderstanding the enemy is not a winning approach. Accordingly, it argues that recognizing an enemy is pre-preparation for every challenge individuals or society may encounter as a conflict winning strategy.

As a post-conflict, resolution mechanism, the Somalis appreciate discussion over hastening to conflict. Such a tendency has been further expressed by proverbs such as "Dadku hadalkay isku afgartaan xooluhuna urta" and "Aan wada hadalno waa aan heshiinno". In this instance, the first proverb indicates "Humans communicate with languages and animals with smell" and the later signifies "Let's talk is let's agree". In both cases, the proverbs ascertain the relevance of effective communication and discussion among conflicting parties as conflict resolution mechanism for a durable solution. From the above stated proverbs, it could be deduced that society inclines to dialogue and discussion to resolve various types of conflicts. In doing so, once a conflict happens over a certain matter of interest, the elders arrange a meeting to discuss the issue with all/ both involved sides. And, the decision reached by the community elders is considered to be binding no matter what it is. However, failing to obey elders' decisions may result in conflict and drought which are the causes of Mobility.

In pastoral society, indeed, communal life is a common phenomenon both during good and bad days; the challenges like conflict and drought are managed in the collective efforts. Togetherness plays a vital role in solving problems and managing challenges as it is reflected in the Somali proverb "Gacmo wada jirbay wax ku goyn karaan" which means "They can cut hands together". This is used to signify the importance of unity whether in doing work or moving from place to place in search of water or pasture for their camels. Besides, the proverb "Ari jiri xil bay wadaagtaa" "Shepherd shares responsibility" is about the value of a common responsibility which should be carried out by the vast majority of the society within their pastoral environment. The proverb reminds the shepherd about their common responsibility which is to look after and care for their herds. It is motivational and a good reminder for anybody who carries a responsibility to be conscious, responsible and caring about his/her responsibility.

Accordingly, the Somali community appreciates togetherness in the society as conflict, drought or any other problems defense or managing mechanism. This is reflected in the proverb "Ceesaantii arigeeda diidda orgi shisheeyaa saarta (fuula, u baxa ama ka qabsada)" "The clown withholds a goat". The proverb gives advises to pastoralists, not to withdraw from their fellow and relative pastoralists for they may encounter challenges and problems from other nonrelative pastoralists or societies. Otherwise, the deviant from communal responsibility faces punishment as it is reflected in the proverb "Barti-yaqan bari uma kororto" "A shepherd who takes care of only his livestock doesn't grow", for there will be no one to give him hand when he faces problems. So, togetherness is considered as a capital asset beyond the social value.

In general, Somalis' indigenous wisdom about the nature of mobility is reflected in their proverbs. Specifically, the proverbs revealed that conflict and drought as the major causes of mobility. And also, the proverbs indicate some of the conflicts and drought management ways or resolution mechanisms.

3.3 Elders and Leaders Role

The role of elders and leaders is irreplaceable in pastoral society. And, it is passed on from one generation to the other generation in the kinship social structure. As a pastoral society, the Somalis have indicated the role of elders and leaders in their proverbs. To elaborate more, the following proverb indicates to the fact that the place of elders and leaders needs to be maintained through hereditary inheritance. As such, the proverb "Dhaxal gorayo dhabad baa leh" which is translated as "The hereditary inheritance is a reality" asserts that it is not possible to escape from a hereditary inheritance, like culture, power, livestock, any wealth or burden. Besides, the proverb "Inantii hooyadeed hadhuudhka tuntaa, iyana hufkiyo haadiskay barataa" which means "As her mother tramples the grain, she learns how to fly" in its simpler form indicates the fact that in each household girls inherit home economics from their mothers. Yet, it further implies the need to respect their forefather and foremothers for preserving indigenous knowledge for the world.

Correspondingly, the Somali elders' are appreciated for their role as a social leader. By way of illustration, elders' words or sayings are respected in the Somali society as instantiated by the proverb, "Hadal waayeel waa guudmar" "The words of an elder are an abstract". The Somalis use the proverb to assert that elderly individuals' speech is not plain; rather it is elevated and deep in its meaning. This reveals their

recognition for elders' wisdom which is developed in real experience and inherited from ancestors. This could be plausible that elders' words are celebrated due to their wisdom. Hence, the Somali elders' role for passing on the indigenous wisdom from generation to generation is visible. Likewise, the Somalis express the value of knowledge that might be secular or religious in their proverb that is "Aqoon la'aani waa iftiin la'aan" "Ignorance is lack of light. In point, the proverb clearly defines knowledge as equivalent to light that is used to make anything visible in the darkness. Hence, the proverb is employed to educate the importance of knowledge.

Similar to elders, Somali leaders have a strong role in shaping society's way of life. In Somali's traditional political and social system, governance and order that is guided by leaders is given an immense place. The proverb "Boqol sano oo dawlad xumo ah, hal habeen oo dawlad la'aana baa ka xun" "One hundred years of bad government is better than one night without government" manifests the Somalis attitude towards governance and order. Because of the proverb, society prefers living in atrocity and bad shaped government than a power vacuum. But, it doesn't mean bad government or leader is appreciated. On the contrary, however, leaders are required to have qualities of leadership, such as decision making capability, generosity, fairness, bravery, wisdom, etc.

Several proverbs in the Somali society characterize the role of leaders in the society. Concerning what the efficiency and morale of a leader needs to be; for instance, the Somalis put their indigenous wisdom as "Awrba awrka ka horreyya ayuu saanqaadkisa leeyahay" which means "a camel follows the track of the leading camel". The proverb clearly shows a leaders' role that is influencing the overall elements of society. As a result, to maintain virtues and to control vices in the society, the Somalis reflect leadership qualities in their proverbs. One of leadership qualities as reflected in the proverb "Calool adayg waa illaahay wehelkii" "Strong decision making is Allah's support" is decision making capability. The Somalis use the proverb to praise strong and tough decision makers who are conceived that they have the support of supernatural power (Allah). It is also employed to show that leaders are expected to be strong decision-makers; thus, strong decision-maker leaders are highly praised by the society.

Along with this, they use the proverb "arrinxumo abaar ka daran" which means "a wrong decision is worse than a drought" to assert the consequence of the wrong decision in comparison with understating the effect of drought. Another quality of leaders is generosity. The Somalis use the proverb

"Beerka jecli, xaydha jecli" "loved liver, love fat" to reveal the nature of selfish leaders and oppose their exploitative characters. Accordingly, the leaders are expected to be generous in their life; this amplifies that corruption is conceived as a bad leader's character. In a similar way, the proverb "Bililiqo doon waa nabad diid" "a looter is a mischief maker" reflects the concept of corruption by labeling corrupted leaders or individuals as mischief makers and peace destroyers. As result, leaders ought to be free from corruption and maintain peace in the community.

Likewise, concerning employing the right measurement, it is maintained that "Ceel dad liqa, ul baa lagu dayaa" which is translated as "A well is swallowed by a man, a rod is left". It is also indicated in their proverb that leaders have to be impartial and refrain from any kind of favoritism in the decisions they make as, "Gorgortan saaxiib iyo walaal toona ma yaqaan" which means "Negotiation knows neither friend nor brother". In a couple of proverbs indicated above leaders are portrayed as justice's advocators in addition to serving the society fairly and equally with the right kind of justifiable customary procedures.

In addition to these virtues, leaders who have or possess wisdom are appreciated. The proverb "Dal aqoon la'aan waa la habaabaa, dad aqoon la'aana waa la qadaa" which means "A country without knowledge is misguided, and is taken away by ignorant people" reflects the consequence of ignorance in the community. The Somalis use the proverb to show the importance of knowledge and experience in leadership practice, especially when critical problems entangles the society. Furthermore, bravery is highly acclaimed as "Geesi, Alle ma xidho" which means "God loves bravery" by the Somalis. The proverb is used to assert that loving a brave leader is not only a human character, but it is also the desire of the almighty. This represents the fact that bravery is a highly priced virtue in the community.

Finally, the Somalis uphold punishment for deviants from the norm and value of the society. The punishment might be for leaders or individuals who act or behave against the virtues. The Somalis use their proverb "Doofaarka ficil la'aan baa loo cadaabaa" "Pigs are punished for their actions" to appreciate punishment wrongdoings and to maintain virtues.

To sum up, the Somalis reflect elders' and leaders' roles in their proverbs. As a social leader, Somali elders have the role of bridging the young generation with their ancestors by mentoring and guiding the indigenous wisdom in their livelihood. Also, Somali leaders are conceived to contribute their part in governance and keeping order. As reflected in

their proverbs, it is claimed that leaders are expected to have leadership qualities, such as decision making capability, generosity, fairness, bravery, wisdom and other virtues.

4. Discussion

The results have clearly shown that Somali proverbs reflect the pastoral livelihood in brief livestock (Camel) value, the nature of mobility and elders' and leaders' role.

According to IDS research report (2006), Pastoralism has both economic and cultural vantage. The first perspective considers pastoralism as a way of livelihood that depends on livestock for subsistence and economic transaction. And also, the cultural vantage claims livestock as the source of cultural identity, means of social value exchange. The results indicate that the pastoral social values and indigenous knowledge of Somali people are preserved, transferred and performed in their proverb, in a form of oral literature.

The result of the present study is in line with the findings in the literature. It is consistent with Hagos (2015); Make et al (2014 a&b); Mieder (2004); Giddens (2005); Gebregziabher (2010); Ekanem (2012); Sims and Stephens (2005); Mengistu (2005); Miruka (1994); Azeze (2001); Coyle et al (1991) and Finnegan (1970 &1992) by indicating that proverb is instrumental in preserving traditional intelligence, recording history, social construction, and reasoning culture for ages as in the societies. Similarly, the results of this study have shown that the Somalis characterize their indigenous knowledge of pastoral life and social practices in their proverbs.

As stated above, livestock especially camel has meanings, values and roles that could highly influence the social relationships and cultural value system in a pastoral society. This study result has also indicated that the Somali proverbs embody a pastoralism implication which is livestock especially camel value. In the Somali proverbs, a camel is used as self-symbol, a sign of patience, credible and trustworthy testimony, a cause for conflict and other positively accepted practices or values of the society.

According to Boto et al. (2012), Pastoralist communities share distinctive features like mobility and elders' and leaders' role in the pastoral livelihood, which are the concern of the study. Naturally, pastoralists move from one place to the other. However, drought and conflict as a major cause aggravate the mobility (Humanitarian Policy Group (hpg), 2009). Likewise, this study results have indicated that the Somalis' indigenous wisdom about the nature of mobility is reflected in their proverbs. Specifically, the proverbs revealed that conflict and

drought as the major causes of mobility. And also, the proverbs indicated some of the conflicts and drought management ways or resolution mechanisms.

Finally, IDS research report (2006) explains that traditional administration is based on kinship that treats the society in clan patterns in a pastoral society. In this milieu, elders and leaders value in administration, mobility experience, and conflict and hardship management are immense. Similarly, this study results have indicated that the Somalis reflect elders' and leaders' roles in their proverbs. As a social leader, Somali elders have the role of bridging the young generation with their ancestors by mentoring and guiding the indigenous wisdom in their livelihood. Also, Somali leaders are conceived to contribute their part in governance and order aspects. As reflected in their proverbs, it is claimed that leaders are expected to have leadership qualities, such as decision making capability, generosity, fairness, bravery, wisdom and other virtues.

5. Conclusions

In the analysis and discussion of pastoral livelihood implications in Somali proverbs, the following conclusions have been reached:

- Somali proverbs have reflected livestock, mainly camels' value and role in social and economic relationships. A camel is found to be a symbol for all positive social attributes; such as, self-symbolic, wealth, strength, grace, patience, credibility, and trustworthy testimony. Also, it is used to symbolize decisive social, economic, and political issues and it is considered as one of the major issues to battle for.
- Somali proverbs have revealed about the nature of mobility. Specifically, conflict and drought which are the effect of lack of plan are found as the major causes of mobility. These causes of mobility are conceived as both terrible experiences and golden opportunities. Also, the proverbs have implied that understanding the determinant role of time as well as contenders or problems in detail is one of basic conflict winning strategies in the indigenous conflict resolution mechanism. Effective communication or discussion among conflicting parties appeared as a lasting conflict resolution strategy. This strategy, however, fails to serve society; they have developed a defense or managing mechanism that is based on the essence of togetherness and shared responsibility. Accordingly, defending or managing threatening

situations as well as failing to defend the problems may cause mobility.

- Elders and leaders roles have been indicated in Somali proverbs. As a social leader, Somali elders have the role of bridging the young generation with their ancestors by mentoring and guiding the indigenous wisdom in their livelihood. Also, Somali leaders are conceived to contribute their part in governance and order aspects. As reflected in their proverbs, it is claimed that leaders are expected to have leadership qualities, such as decision making capability, generosity, fairness, bravery, wisdom and other virtues.
- Therefore, it is concluded that pastoralism as livelihood and way of life is reflected in the Somali proverbs as indigenous wisdom of the society in Ethiopia. Indeed, the Somalis use their proverbs to perform, document and transfer indigenous wisdom from one generation to the next generation.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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