



Indigenous conflicts and its resolution mechanisms among pastoralists, the case in Degahbour Woreda, Somali region, Ethiopia

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed at assessing the common causes of the conflict, challenge and weakness of the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms and assessing perspectives of the indigenous conflict resolution mechanism among pastoralists. The cross-sectional design was employed where quantitative and qualitative approaches were implemented. In this study both primary and secondary data were used, primary data was collected using focus group discussion, interview and observation with the sample size of 150 households, the study was analyzed through Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, graphs, tables, mean and standard deviation. The majority informants confirmed that the main causes of the conflict in study area was competition of over natural resources (water, pasture and land related problems) and also historical, political and idles of the youth were another source of conflict, the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are widely applied among pastoralists and high respect in the study area. The pastoralists in the study area used different conflict resolution approaches. Indigenous and modern system approaches, but indigenous conflict resolution was the main conflict resolution method, lack of recognising the role of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, and unfair selection of the elders during training as well as limited financial resources, women and youth are excluded during the decision-making process were the main challenges and weaknesses of indigenous conflict resolution techniques; the study recommended that the indigenous institutions of conflict prevention, management, and resolution should be given their roles towards conflict resolution mechanisms by regional government and strengthened; first, the most important point is to enable them to return to their previous roles towards conflict resolution techniques; second, basic services like water, education, and health facilities that contribute to peaceful coexistence among pastoral communities in the study area should be implemented in order to minimise conflict in pastoral areas.

Key Words: conflict resolution, Indigenous, Mechanisms, Pastoralists

1. Introduction

Pastoralism, as a source of livelihood, is an old practice dating back to approximately 9,000 years in Europe and 6,000 years in Africa. It is practiced across the globe, more so in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, and some parts of Europe. A sizeable proportion of the populations of these continents derives their livelihoods through pastoralism in rural areas, thereby supporting the rural economy (Chelang'a, 2020).

Communities that continued to depend on pastoralism as a livelihood source faced several challenges which varied across continents, regions, and countries. Conflicts over shared resources remain a notable challenge that constantly

disrupts the economies of pastoralists worldwide. In Europe, pastoralist conflicts relate to land use and legislative issues, while in Sub-Saharan Africa, they emanate from differences between pastoral groups in structured ways of utilising natural resources for their livestock. (Chelang'a, 2020)

Most pastoralists in the Horn of Africa have proven effective indigenous mechanisms for preventing, mitigating, managing, and resolving conflicts at the grassroots level. The efficiency and effectiveness of such customary institutions draw the attention of the governments of the Horn of African countries to the mainstream and adopt these indigenous mechanisms to make the region more stable and peaceful. (Mengistu, 2019) Conflict occurs between people in all types of human relationships and in all social settings. Because of the wide range of potential differences among people, the absence of conflict usually signals the absence of meaning full interaction the manner in which conflict is handled determines whether it is constrictive or destructive (Beyen, 2019).

Both intra- and inter-ethnic conflicts over the use and control of natural resources as well as territorial expansionary moves are everyday businesses in the pastoral areas of Ethiopia (Tenaw, 2017). Conflicts are a part of human relations, as individuals and groups have orientations and beliefs that are often contradictory, resulting in disputes. These differences also play a role in the resolution of conflicts and disputes. However, in post-colonial state Africa, the

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state focus, given its origin as a colonial creation and its character that is steeped in violence, has always been fixed on the state when explaining the persistence of conflicts and its resolution in Africa. (Afolabi et al., 2019),

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms manage almost all kinds of conflict, ranging from petty offences and civil cases, such as financial, familial, and contractual disputes, to murder cases and blood feuds. The process of conflict resolution is led by male elders/leaders of the community. Although females do not lead the conflict resolution process, they participate and provide suggestions about the process (Alemie and Mandefro, 2018). Traditionally, Somali pastoral communities are ruled by elders and have structures for conflict mediation, transformation, and resolution through the councils of elders Guurti. In recent years, customary traditional power has been worn partly due to the failure of the national, regional and district administrations to recognize the positive role of the traditional leaders in the resolution of resource based pastoral conflict (Jibril, 2013)

In general, the traditional method of pastoral conflict resolution is a very important tool for solving natural resources-based conflicts in the pastoral areas of the Somali Regional State. The pastoralists in the region have great trust and respect for the traditional methods of conflict resolution. In this case, traditional conflict resolution is less costly, less adversarial, and more conducive to the sustainability of peace and stability in the pastoral areas of the region (Jibril, 2013). According to (Elmi, 2010), Somali customary law is not a written constitution, and is practiced as a convention; most elders are still familiar with it. It is more than a contract, and shapes the basic values, laws, and rules of social behaviour (Bradbury, 2010). In Somali, customary law and practice are passed down orally over generations. Traditionally, laws have defined reciprocal rights and obligations among kins/clans, covering domestic matters, social welfare, political relations, property rights, and the management of natural resources (Bradbury, 2008). Therefore, this study aims to evaluate indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms among pastoralists in the Degahbour Woreda, Somali region, Ethiopia.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Description of the Study Area

Location: Degahbour Woreda is one of the 93 Woredas in the Somali Regional State and is under the Jarar Zone Administrative. The Woreda is located in the eastern part of the agro-pastoral areas of the Somali regional state and shares a border on the North by Ararso, south by Birqod, west by Bileil-Buur, southeast by Gunagado, and east by Yoale and Aware Woredas.

Population: According to the 2007 National Census report of the Central Statistics Agency (CSA, 2007), Woreda has a total population of 115,555, of whom 65,081 were men and 50,474 were women; 74.015% (85,528) were rural and 25.985% (30,027) were urban dwellers. The average family size for the study areas was 6.8, and the size of the

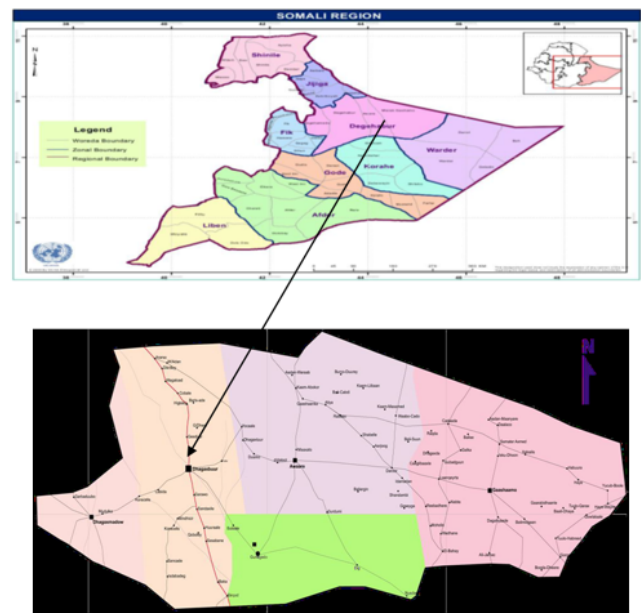


Figure 1: Location Map of Degahabour Woreda

Source: OCHA, 2005, EMU

universe was found to be 16993 for a total of 16 kebeles in the study woreda and the total sample size was calculated; subsequently, by scrutinising the govt (CSA, 2007), the total universe of the four kebeles was found to be 3603 (shown against each kebele) and the calculated sample size of each kebele.

2.2. Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional research design in which a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was employed. A quantitative approach was used to understand the perception and outlook of household respondents about the situation of conflict in their local area using a semi-structured questionnaire. A qualitative approach was employed to grasp the attitudes of respondents regarding the common causes of conflict and the role of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms among pastoralist communities.

2.3. Sampling Techniques and Procedures

This study employed both purposive and simple random sampling techniques to select sample respondents. First Degahbour district was purposively selected since it is one of those areas where conflict frequently occurs based on natural resources among pastoral communities; second, simple random sampling was used to select four kebeles namely degorjir, higlaley, gediari, and garawo from the total of 16 kebeles of the Degahbour district.

2.4. Sample Size Determination

Based on the sampling technique used in this study, the sample size can be determined, which varies for various types of research designs, and there are several approaches

Table 1: List and description of genotypes tested in the experiment

S/N	Kebeles	Total Households	Sample Size	Sample %
1	Garowo	991	33	22.00
2	Falfal	1100	46	30.66
3	Higlaley	841	42	28.00
4	dogarjir	672	29	19.34
Total		3604	150	100.00

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in practice. The sample size depends on the sampling error, population size, and variation in the population with respect to the characteristics of interest. This study was used a simplified formula provided by (Yamane, 1967) to determine the required Sample size at 95% confidence level, and 5% level of precision

$$n = \frac{N}{N(e^2)} = \frac{3603}{3603(0.08^2)} = 150 \text{ HHs} \quad (1)$$

where, n is the sample size, N is the population size (total number of households), and e is the level of precision (sampling error) at the 5% significance level. The number of respondents from each kebele was determined using probability proportional to the sample size, as summarized.

2.5. Data Types and Sources

This study used both primary and secondary data, which were collected through household surveys, focus group discussions, and key informant interviews. whereas secondary data was collected from previous scholars' studies which are where relevant for this research' additionally, documents and reports related to the causes of conflict in the study area and the practice of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms have been quoted.

2.6. Tools and Methods of Data Collection.

The following methods and Tools of data collection were followed in this study

Focus Group Discussion In this study, four focus group discussions were held (one FGD per kebele); the FGD was a gender-inclusive discussion; the participants of each FGD contained 8-12 participants; and the FGD participants were selected based on their knowledge and experience on indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms practices are followed. **Key Informant's Interview** The key informants were interviewed using a structured interview guide. Elderly people and community leaders were used as informants in this study for several reasons. First, on the virtue of their age, elders are considered to be useful in telling the history of the conflict under investigation and by the special position held in the community, and their capacity to figure out the views of other people and speak on their behalf; hence, deep and informal discussions were made with 3 from three well-known and respected elders, Degahbour woreda. **Survey** The household survey was done through a questionnaire. Which were both open and closed-ended forms and the number of respondents were selected sample size households which are 150 respondents. The survey questionnaires contained basic issues like the demographic characteristics of the households

Table 2: Sex and age wise distribution of the respondents.

Sex	Frequency	Percent
Male	107	71.3
Female	43	28.7
Total	150	100.0
Age of the respondents		
Age group	Frequency	Percent
25-40	25	16.7
41-45	65	43.3
46-55	39	26.0
56-65	5	3.3
above 65	16	10.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: (Field Study ,2020)

and related variables on indigenous conflict resolution order to make an easy and smooth for questionnaire filling; the researcher translated the questionnaires into the local language to enable both the researcher as well as the respondents

2.7. Methods of Data Analysis.

The study used both qualitative and quantitative data. The quantitative data enabled the researcher to analyze data, summarize, and then display by using percentages, distribution tables, charts, means, and other measures of central tendencies with the help of Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS). to summarize and present the result on demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of pastoralists. The qualitative data obtained through interviews and focus group discussions were described qualitatively in sentence form. based on the theoretical and methodological principles of interpretation using narrative analysis technique.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Results

The outcomes and analysis of a study are of paramount importance, as they provide readers with insights into the potential of the research. Furthermore, they can assist development agencies and researchers in making informed decisions regarding future studies in this particular field. This section will present and evaluate the key discoveries of the research, utilizing the data gathered through questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions in the designated study area.

3.2. Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Respondents.

Analyzed were the distribution of sample respondents based on their demographic characteristics, which included household head characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, level of education, and family size.

The findings presented in the table above demonstrate that the majority of respondents, comprising 71.3%, are male, while the remaining 28.7% are female. This concludes that the study area is predominantly inhabited by males.

Furthermore, the age distribution of the respondents reveals that the largest proportion, constituting 43.3%, falls within the age group of 41-45 years, 26% of the respondents

Table 3: Education and marital status of the respondents.

Education stat	Frequency	Percent
Literate	17	11.3
Illiterate	133	88.7
Total	150	100.0
Marital status of the respondents		
Marital Status	Frequency	Percent
Married	135	90.0
Unmarried	11	7.3
Divorced	3	2.0
Widowed	1	.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: (Field Study ,2020)

Table 4: Sources of income of the respondents.

Source of income	Frequency	Percentage
Sales of live animal	25	16.7
Livestock product (Milk, meat, skin)	40	26.7
Both livestock and their product sales	79	52.7
Other activities (burning Charcoal and firewoods)	6	4.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: (Field Study ,2020)

are between 46-55 years of age, while only 16.7% fall within the age group of 25-40 years. Meanwhile, the age groups of 56-65 years and above 65 years comprise 3.3% and 10.7%, respectively. Age is a crucial factor in the study of conflict resolution mechanisms, as the informants revealed that different age groups do not participate in conflict resolution actions. However, various age classes play specific roles in conflict resolution, with elderly people being the most influential in setting conflicts, particularly fighting among clans. This is largely due to the fact that, at this age group, elders are well-versed in their cultural surroundings and are more likely to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Table 3 clearly demonstrates that the majority of respondents, 88.7%, were illiterate, while only 11.3% were literate. This finding highlights the prevalence of illiteracy within the study community. Previous research has established a connection between low levels of education and increased conflict involvement (Smith, 2011). Therefore, it is not surprising that the high proportion of illiterate individuals in the study area contributes significantly to conflict participation. On the other hand, education has been shown to reduce conflict involvement and promote peace. In terms of marital status, the majority of respondents, 90%, were married, while only 7.3% were unmarried, 2% were divorced, and 0.7% were widowed. This suggests that marriage is the dominant form of partnership within the study community.

As Table 4 demonstrates, the majority of respondents, accounting for 52.7%, indicated that their primary source of income in the study area is derived from livestock and their product sales. On the other hand, 26.7% of the respondents reported that their income is derived from the sale of as milk, meat, and skin. Only 4% of the respondents indicated that their income comes from other activities, such as burning charcoal and firewoods. According to the informants, the

Table 5: Common causes of conflicts among pastoralists in the study area.

Parameters	Frequency	Percent
Land (farmland and land enclosure)	43	28.7
Using common resources (water, pasture)	89	59.3
Forceful resettlement	18	12.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: (Field Study ,2020)

primary source of income for the pastoral community in the study area is the sale of animals and their products, with some engaging in minor business activities and charcoal and firewood production. This finding aligns with previous studies conducted by (Hirsi et al., 2020), which found that the main source of revenue for pastoralists in the Afdem district is the sale of live animals, animal products, and few engage in off-farm activities.

3.3. Common Causes of Conflict in pastoral community.

Conflict is inherent and cannot be entirely avoided; however, its intensity and type can vary depending on the location, culture, and socio-economic conditions of a given society. The root cause of conflict in one area may differ from that of another, but there are common issues that are the causes of conflict in other areas. These include political, social, and economic issues. The following table (Table 5) illustrates the typical causes of conflict.

The information presented in the table, as shown in the eighth row, demonstrates that the majority of the respondents, accounting for 59.3%, acknowledged that the use of common resources, such as water, pasture, is a significant cause of conflict in the study area. On the other hand, 28.7% of the respondents indicated that competition for land, farming land and land enclosure, is the primary cause of conflict in the area. Furthermore, 12% of the respondents suggested that forceful resettlement is the root of the conflict. Therefore, this study concludes that the main causes of conflict in the study area are competition for natural resources, primarily land and other resources such as water, pasture, and forests.

In Degahbour District, the primary water sources for pastoralists and agro-pastoralists are hand-dug wells, underground rainwater reservoirs (ponds), rivers, and boreholes. Pastoralists migrate to sustain their animals during harsh seasons. Conflicts arise when herders use water sources without prior permission and consent from the individual holders. This finding aligns with (Beyen's ,2019) research, which indicates that conflicts in pastoral communities stem from competition for new land use, access to wet grasslands for pasture, and water resources. According to the interviews conducted with elders in the study area, water and pasture were identified as the most critical and highly rated causes of conflict. This is due to natural factors such as drought, which lead to a competitive struggle for scarce resources, especially during dry seasons when the nutritional circumstances of livestock are generally compromised.

The limitations of water resources often result in violent conflicts between various clans and sub-clans of Degahbour pastoralists in the study area. In times of prolonged dry seasons or drought years, pastoralists move from one place to another in search of water points and pastures. As a result, conflicts over access to water and pasture resources become common in the study area, consistent with previous studies conducted by (Hagmann, 2003) and (Gedi, 2005). Disputes over access rights to water and pasture resources are very common in the Somali Region., and they occur when herders use water sources without prior permission or consent from the individual owner.

The outcomes of the focus group discussion disclosed several factors contributing to land conflicts in the study region. Initially, a scarcity of grazing land hinders individuals from providing suitable pasture for their livestock. Subsequently, competition for grazing land results in disputes among individuals aimed at safeguarding their territory from being encroached upon by others. Moreover, inheritance, land ownership, and boundary conflicts are substantial causes of land conflicts in the study region. Furthermore, the privatization of land is escalating due to land expansion. This study corroborates the claims made by (Bamlak, 2013), who posited that the primary sources of land conflicts are directly linked to the high demand for land, inadequate border demarcation, and disagreements over land inheritance among family members. Additionally, conflicts arise when one clan asserts ownership of land belonging to another clan. (Deschamps and Roe, 2009) argued below in which inheritance is the main cause for the existence of land conflict.

During the focus group discussion, it was established that the forced relocation had a substantial impact on the communal land grazing resources, as well as the pastoral sector and vast expanses of forest resources. These circumstances further contributed to the hardship and poor living conditions faced by the host community, who largely depend on livestock for their livelihoods. The ongoing resettlement has continued to affect communal grazing resources, the pastoral sector, and extensive areas of forest resources. These situations have further exacerbated the destitution and poor living conditions experienced by the host community, who rely heavily on livestock for their subsistence. The continuous expansion of the rangelands by new arrivals has resulted in a reduction of grazing lands and access to communal resources. One elder stated.

We were unceremoniously moved without being consulted, informed, or even convinced of the rationale behind the relocation. The government coerced the displacement of various community groups in the district, including those with land ownership rights and other established communities, which resulted in conflicts among the residents. Additionally, the affected communities in these kebeles did not have access to essential amenities such as education, water, and healthcare facilities. The individuals involved in the study emphasised that historical and political factors,

Table 6: Government involvement to support indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms

Parameters	Frequency	Percent
Conflict resolution supported by the government		
Yes	119	79.3
No	31	20.7
Total	150	100.0
Type of supported provided		
Financial Support	5	3.3
Material support	1	.7
Training for local elder	144	96.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: (Field Study ,2020)

drought, and unemployment among the youth were additional factors contributing to the conflict in the community. This conclusion aligns with the findings of earlier research (Mulken, 2020)(Masfin, 2009) which indicated that historical and political factors, drought, land alienation for investment, and unemployment among the youth were also factors that caused conflicts in the pastoral community. The creation of additional kebeles for each clan, motivated by local politics, was another cause of conflict in the study. Every clan desires to appear as governance-dependent, which relies on having a kebele. As a result, conflicts arise among the clans. Politicians also mobilize their clans to gain positions in the government, which exacerbates the situation. Consequently, these circumstances led to frequent conflicts in the pastoral community of Degahbour woreda.

3.4. Challenges and Weaknesses of Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms can be crucial in restoring and maintaining social harmony, order, and law, but they are currently facing challenges that warrant serious attention from the government and other relevant bodies. Specifically, these mechanisms may be ineffective in handling conflicts where one or more parties refuse to participate in the resolution process. The table below illustrates the involvement of local government in supporting the indigenous conflict resolution system in the study area.

As Table 6 indicates, a significant proportion of 79.3% of the support provided to indigenous conflict resolution by the government. This highlights the crucial role that the indigenous conflict resolution system plays in ensuring access to justice for marginalized and disadvantaged communities. The other challenges that impede the effectiveness of indigenous conflict resolution methods are the absence of clear legal mandates, inadequate financial support from national and international governments, and a scarcity of resources for monitoring system performance, which can jeopardize the ability of these methods to promote access to justice within society. These issues are particularly pronounced in developing countries, as (Michel, 2010) has observed.

The findings of the focus group revealed that the district administration occasionally conducts training sessions for local elders, but the selection process of the individuals

Table 7: Monopoly of decision-making process by local elders.

Parameters	Frequency	Percent
Strongly Agree	2	1.3
Agree	109	72.7
Not sure	2	1.3
Disagree	31	20.7
Strongly Disagree	6	4.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: (Field Study ,2020)

is unfair as government officials tend to choose their relatives. Consequently, the development of the capacity of the local elders to resolve conflicts is hindered. Moreover, the participants highlighted another significant issue where the decisions made by the local elders are not regarded as binding by the government, resulting in the disputants being punished further. This study demonstrates that the government does not provide adequate support to strengthen the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area.

The results presented here align with the findings of (Alemie and Mandefro, 2018), who highlighted the crucial role that elders play in resolving conflicts and promoting peace. Nevertheless, there is a lack of government support or incentives in this regard. The authorities have not provided adequate recognition for the significance of elders and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. Furthermore, the judiciary has not always acknowledged the valuable contributions made by elders in the resolution of disputes.

The results presented in Table 7 above indicate that the majority of respondents, accounting for 72.7%, agreed that the decision-making process in indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms is monopoly controlled by local elders. However, 20.7% of respondents disagreed with this notion, suggesting that local elders do not have a dominant role in settling disputes among or between conflicting parties. This finding is consistent with (Volker, 2007) study, which also highlighted the exclusion of young people and women from decision-making processes. In many developing countries, women are often the victims of indigenous conflict resolution processes because these processes are traditionally dominated by males.

During the focus group discussion and interviews, it was confirmed that in the decision-making process, the influence of local elders is significant and at times, these elders compel the conflicting parties to resort to indigenous conflict resolution methods instead of the formal system or court to settle disputes. Additionally, there are obstacles faced by the elders in convincing the conflicting parties to accept their decision. However, the household respondents view the authority of the local elders in the decision-making process as high. This leads to the conclusion that the local elders dominate the decision-making process, which is in line with (Bamlak, 2013), who stated that during the decision-making process, the local elders force the conflicting parties to come and discuss their problems. This is perceived as the domination of the decision-making process by the elders, and this finding

Table 8: Participation of women during decision making process.

Parameters	Frequency	Percent
Agreed	15	10.0
Strongly agreed	5	3.3
Disagreed	93	62.0
Strongly Disagreed	37	24.7
Total	150	100.0

Source: (Field Study ,2020)

Table 9: Participation of youth during decision making process.

Parameters	Frequency	Percent
Agree	16	10.7
Strongly agree	3	2.0
Disagree	113	75.3
Strongly Disagree	18	12.0
Total	150	100.0

Source: (Field Study ,2020)

reveals that the elders play a significant role in the decision-making process.

The information presented in Table 8 indicates that the majority of respondents, constituting 62%, disagreed with the notion that women participate in the decision-making process. Furthermore, 24.7% of respondents strongly disagreed with the participation of women in decision-making process, while only 10% of respondents agreed with the notion. These findings suggest that women are not actively engaged in the decision-making process.

During the focus group discussion, it was confirmed that women do not have a direct role in the decision-making process, but they indirectly contribute to peace initiatives. The above study aligns with (Beyen, 2019) argument that women do not participate directly in traditional conflict resolution. However, they can indirectly contribute by counseling and begging their husbands, brothers, sons, and other relatives to abandon the conflict. Additionally, women have wise ideas to advise and counsel their husbands. Furthermore, the results are consistent with the study by the international (CHF, 2006), which emphasizes the importance of considering women's role in traditional conflict management mechanisms. In Somali society, given its patriarchal nature and the generally submissive role women play, the role of women in traditional conflict resolution is subtle. Interviewees in most communities visited indicate that women are members of the guurti councils, but the extent of their engagement and influence within those councils is uncertain. It is likely that they have some influence, but important decisions are made by men. Therefore, this result shows that women do not participate in the decision-making process, but it does not mean that women have nothing to contribute to conflict resolution.

Table 9 shows that 75.3% of respondents disagreed with the notion that the youth participate in the decision-making process. On the other hand, 12% of respondents strongly disagreed with this statement, indicating that youth are excluded from the decision-making process. This finding is consistent with the results of the focus group discussions, which revealed that the youth lack experience in resolving

conflicts through indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms and have limited knowledge about these mechanisms. This contradicts (Bamlak, 2013), who indicated that youth are actively involved in the decision-making process, as well as Volker's findings that women and youth are excluded from the decision-making process.

During the focus group discussions, it was noted that the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are under pressure from multiple forces, which is weakening their ability to resolve conflicts. The traditional institutions may not be able to solve conflicts without the recognition of the kebele administrations. Another challenge in conflict resolution is that prosecutors sometimes disregard the decisions of elders and continue their accusations. This is a problem because the Somali customary law, known as Xeer, is unwritten and only memorized by the elders, making it difficult for the younger generation to understand and follow. As (Amin, 2010) noted, the customary institutions of conflict resolution face the challenge that the Xeer is not written down but is passed down orally from one generation of elders to the next. Due to the unwritten nature of Xeer, the knowledge is limited to the elders and not widely understood by the younger generation, who may be more influenced by modern institutions.

One of the major challenges in resolving indigenous conflicts is the absence of enforcement mechanisms. When disagreeing parties refuse peace offers from mediators, there is little that can be done except to send subsequent mediators, as argued by (Amin, 2010). If one of the conflicting parties refuses the peace offer of the mediators, the only option is to send more mediators. However, if this fails, the elders allow the conflicting parties to solve their problems on their own, which can result in violent clashes and the loss of many lives and assets, as illustrated by the following case (Amin, 2010).

4. Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1. Conclusion

Most respondents identified competition for natural resources, including water, pasture, land, and forest, as well as forced relocation as the primary factors leading to conflict in the study area among pastoral communities. Furthermore, historical and political factors, drought, and youth unemployment were cited as additional conflict drivers. Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms continue to play a significant role in addressing disputes in pastoral areas, with communities showing greater respect and trust in these traditional methods compared to modern, state-led approaches. As a result, conflicts are typically resolved through local mediation, which is perceived as more flexible than state-led methods. In the Degahbour district, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are widely used and positively regarded, significantly contributing to community welfare. However, there are concerns regarding government and NGO support for these mechanisms. While the government occasionally provides training for local elders, the selection process is often compromised by dishonest practices, and financial and

material support is insufficient. During decision-making, local elders compel disagreeing parties to discuss their issues, which residents view as a domination of the decision-making process. Youths and women are excluded from the decision-making process, yet women have significantly contributed to peacebuilding. Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms face several challenges. Firstly, government resistance and the unwritten nature of these mechanisms, which are memorized by elders and passed down through generations, hinder their recognition. Secondly, these institutions struggle to resolve conflicts without the endorsement of kebele administrations. Additionally, prosecutors sometimes disregard elders' decisions, continuing their accusations and enforcement actions.

4.2. Recommendations:

1. Government should make suitable policies and programs to mitigate conflicts.
2. Elderly people in the local area should be given more priority to invest their knowledge and experiences in order to bring some change so that conflicts should not be occurred frequently.
3. People in the local area should be more vigilant to avoid pastoral conflicts time to time occurred.
4. Proper rehabilitations and resettlements programs should be made to protect the conflicts victims and their livelihoods sources.

Conflict of Interest

Authors declare that there is no conflict of interests involve in publishing this research paper.

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