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The Review on Pastoral Community's Livelihoods Activities in Ethiopia

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Abstract: Ethiopia is a country with a larger number of households depending on livestock production. They engage to other livelihoods options to supplement the farming activities across the country. The main aim of the paper was to review the pastoral households' livelihood activities in Ethiopia country context. The data were collected through literature review of the studies undertaken from different settings of the country. The paper was greatly concentrated on both the qualitative and quantitative data. The result of several studies found that pastoral households partake the diverse farming, non-farm and off-farm activities differently in the country. Meanwhile, the various socio-economics, demographics and institutional factors determine the participation of pastoral households to livelihood activities from different locations. Similarly, the lack of finance, poor infrastructure facilities and lack of skills threaten the pastoral households' entrance to livelihood activities. The involvement to livelihood activities should boost in pastoral areas thereby; establishing the financial services, promoting the Road and electricity facilities, strengthening the market facilities and expanding the training facilities.

Keywords: Pastoral Households, Livelihood Activities and Ethiopia..

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BACKGROUND

Ethiopia is a country with larger pastoralists depending on livestock production. In the country, the pastoral areas are estimated to comprise 42% of the national total livestock population. It makes a significant contribution to the rural economy in terms of supporting their own households and export earnings. Foreign exchange earnings of Ethiopia's is about 12-17% from livestock related products, among them hides and skins contribute almost 90%. It contributes about 33% to the agricultural GDP and 16% to the national GDP. Thus, the country has appeared as one of the fastest growing economies globally with an average GDP growth of 11% per annum during 2005-2006 to 2009-2010 (MoFED, 2010). Then, the country poverty head count index has declined from 0.45 in 1995/96 to 0.38 in 2004/05 (MoFED, 2009).

Nonetheless, environmental degradation and food insecurity cause vulnerability to the pastoral system in Ethiopia. Variety of problems such as social, natural and economic problems consists of recurrent drought, lack of basic infrastructure, conflict constrain the livelihood of pastoral communities constrained; thereby rural people have low resilience to cope with and retrieval from such vulnerable situations. Pastoralist livelihoods are in tremendous pressure and found in a downward chain of resource scarcity, and diminishing resilience against drought loss of livestock and decreasing rangelands; break up of traditional governance; lack of rural and market, education of rural people, public health of native people, veterinary

resources, and water for human and livestock and rural economy are the least developed (CSA, 2013). Almost, 31 million people are undernourished in Ethiopia and almost 41% of the population lives below the poverty line (FAO, 2010).

As a result, the Ethiopia pastoralists were forced to engage in diversified livelihood activities. The extant of different livelihood activities in the pastoral areas is well recognized (CSA, 2013). The contemporary livelihood diversification contributes to the living standard improvement. Lind *et al.* (2016) noted that the households that combined livestock-based livelihoods with cash income generated in towns had the highest level of well-being and the least vulnerability to drought shocks. Similarly, Little *et al.* (2010) points out that wealthier pastoralist that diversify into urban based businesses are pursuing a risk mitigation strategy to deal with drought impacts.

Conversely, there are limited reviews on the pastoral households' livelihood activities in Ethiopia. So, this paper was undertaken to fill the literature gap with the following objectives:

- To review the existing pastoral households' livelihood activities
- To review the determinants of pastoral households' livelihood activities
- To review the challenges of the pastoral households' livelihood activities

METHODOLOGY

The review was done in the Ethiopia national context; focusing on the pastoral households that are marginalized in the country development activities. In the meantime, the paper was heavily relied on the review of literatures which were assembled from different documents across the Ethiopia contexts. In the same way, the paper has collected the qualitative and quantitative data with respect to the selected issues in the country. These data were collected through reviewing, analyzing and summarizing the related papers on pastoral livelihood activities of the country.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Pastoral Livelihood Activities

Ethiopia's pastoral communities depend primarily on livestock production for their livelihoods. Since long, most of the households undertake the poultry production, piggery production, beekeeping, cow and oxen production, shoats production etc. more dominantly. Still, some of the pastoral households follow diverse livelihood activities in addition to animal rearing. Research suggests that determinants of livelihood diversification in Eastern Tigray reveals that 83.1% of the farmers were competent to expand their livelihoods into off-farm/non-farm or combined income activities (Gebrehiwot *et al.*, 2018). Yilebes (2017) study in lare woreda in Gambella region on the livelihood strategies and diversification advocates that 53.4% households followed three activities as an input to earnings and nourishment. This means that pastoral households involve in different livelihoods activities in the country ranging from farming, non-farm and off-farm activities. These activities have been categories differently by the various scholars. In this review, the livelihood activities of the pastoral households were grouped into farming, non-farm and the off-farm activities across the country.

Farming Based Activities

In Ethiopia, different researchers have come up with some farming activities in pastoral areas. Some of these intellectuals have pointed out the partaking of the households into livestock and crops production across the several areas. Their findings have indicated the limited options available for pastoralists to diversify their economy; thereby relying mainly on crops and livestock production. The livestock based income remains the most important source of livelihoods (Tagesse *et al.*, 2016) and has become as the main assets of pastoralists (Birhanu, 2017) from many areas in Ethiopia. In the same token, crop production is also receiving drive as a means of income diversification among the pastoral communities in Ethiopia (Kejele, 2005). There are some pastoralists who are engaging in crops cultivation as an alternative. Nevertheless, these studies have not had an elucidation on the particular farming activities of crops and livestock production

across the country. The findings had not indicated the kinds of animals and crops produced.

Off-Farm Activities

Pastoral communities involve in numerous off-farm activities in the several settings of the nationwide. These are the activities relating to the natural products and the overall activities which are not connected to the own farming or are mainly the agricultural wage labor. Obviously, the majority of the pastoral households diversified their income sources through undertaking different off-farm activities. To survive in varied challenges; Emily & Firew (2016) result showed that the pastoral households involve and follow different off-farm livelihood activities in the country. The households are usually participating in agricultural daily labor as well as producing and collecting the natural products.

With that connection, Doyo (2018) result confirmed that almost 6.11% of the households receive income from charcoal and firewood sales. The results of this study show that the livelihood of the pastoralists diversified into firewood and charcoal production. As well, Kejele *et al.* (2005) showed that the deprived households supplement their income from sales of forest products and wage. Still, Birhanu (2017) survey indicated that fire wood and charcoal selling is the dominant off farm sector. Yet, these studies had neglected some of the off-farm activities findings from the pastoral societies.

Non-Farm Activities

The pastoral communities are not singly depending on the livestock production in the country. They are also involving in different non-farm activities to strengthen their income base for poverty reduction. The study conducted in Afar region revealed that petty trading and irrigation practices were the main economic activities of pastoral women (Hellen, 2014). Further, Degefa (2005) study showed that rural households have a habit of participating in a variety of grain trading, petty trading, migration, liquor sales and the sale of handicrafts. Moreover, Bekele & Abdi (2013) suggest that the most vital basis for non-farm incomes is sale of homemade, farm implements and drinks and non-farm employments. Still, there are limited findings on other non-farm activities in the country.

DETERMINANTS OF LIVELIHOOD ACTIVITIES

Demographic Determinants

The demographic characteristics of the households influence the livelihood activities in the country. For instant, some finding have found the negative effects of age to pastoralists' decision to pastoral and nonfarm combination (Amare, 2018; & Doyo, 2017). This meant, being old decreases the interest to engage in diversified livelihood activities. Nonetheless, Birhanu (2017) result showed that the age

of household head positively influenced the household's livelihood diversification activities. This disclosed that the increases of the households age increases the involvement to livelihood diversification in pastoral areas.

Besides, the influences of gender of the households to livelihood engagement in pastoral communities have been explored. The result of some studies showed that sex of the household head was positively related with the households' engagement in pastoral, farming and low return NPNF activities choice (Birhanu, 2017; & Doyo, 2018). This implies that being male households head energized the participation to livelihood diversification than female household heads. The reason is that most of the females are being loaded by the home activities in the country.

In addition, the numbers of the households influences the livelihood diversification in the country in general and pastoral communities in particular. Doyo (2017) found that family size has a positive significant effect on the livelihood diversification. The implication of this is that the larger numbers households increase the engagement to livelihood diversification among pastoral households. As soon as the households' members become high, they find diverse livelihood assortment to meet the consumption needs.

Moreover, different researchers have recognized the effects of formal education on livelihood diversification involvement. By that reason, some studies found that education had positively influenced the household choices of the pastoral, farming and high return activities (Adugna, 2012; Doyo, 2017; & Birhanu, 2017). This means that having education allows the engagement to diversified livelihood activities. This shows that the educated households acquire knowledge and skills related with livelihood diversification among the households.

Socio-Economic Determinants

The different socio-economic factors influence the participation of the households to livelihood activities. One after the other, the effect of livestock holding on diversified livelihood activities was studied in pastoral communities. Household's choice of combinations of pastoral, non-farm and off-farm livelihood strategy were positively linked with livestock holding capacity reported by Amare (2018). This implies that the growing number of livestock holding upturn the livelihood diversification. Nevertheless, Adugna (2012) confirmed that livestock holding is negatively correlated with the probability of being in highly diversified/ moderately diversified household. This shows that the handiness of livestock decline the households' partaking into livelihood diversification.

Similarly, dependency ratios of the households determine the livelihood diversification among pastoral

households. Doyo (2017) showed that dependency ratio negatively influence the household choices of diversified livelihood activities. This means that the amplified existents of inactive households' members lessen the participation into livelihood diversification.

In addition, different scholars have acquainted the influence of remittance to expand the incomes bases. Amare (2018) result revealed that remittance has positive influence to households' entry to diversification of livelihood strategies. This satisfies us that when the households collect the currency somewhere, they involve in diverse livelihood activities. This is because; the households have a means to start new schemes activities.

Institutional Determinants

There are many institutional factors that determine the engagement of households to livelihood diversification. More than a few literatures have specified the effect of extension services on livelihood diversification in pastoral areas. Doyo (2017) reported the positive influence of access to extension services to the rural household's choice on livelihood diversification. This suggests that the existent of extension services deepens the households' engagement in diversified livelihood activities. The households acquire huge experiences from the extension that are very basis for diversifying incomes sources.

However, another similar study reported the significant positive contribution of the number of veterinary extension service providers' contact to pastoralists' participation in off-farm and nonfarm livelihood activities (Amare, 2018). This infers that when the households obtain different animals services, they are initiated to involvement livelihood diversification. The households may get realistic ideas that are better for incomes diversification.

Moreover, the association of market distant with pastoral households' involvement to diversified livelihood activities has been accredited by different scholars. Some researchers showed that the distance from the nearby market was negatively linked to livelihood diversification (Adugna, 2012; Doyo, 2017; & Amare, 2018). This shows that the increase of market distant reduces the probability of pastoral households' engagement in different income foundations. This may be due to the poor access to market information and the transaction costs expected by the households.

In the same token, the existent of the financial organization affects the participation of pastoral communities to livelihood diversification. Amare (2018) results showed that the credit access negatively influence the possibility of selecting diversified livelihood strategies. This point out that being at high credit utilization drops the engagement into livelihood diversification. In contrary, some other studies showed

that the credit use was positively affecting the household choices of diversified livelihood activities (Doyo, 2017; & Birhanu, 2017). This also means that the ease of access to the financial services strengthens the involvement of the households to livelihood diversification.

Challenges of Livelihood Activities

Pursuing many livelihood activities in the pastoral areas is an important strategy to survive and accumulate an asset. However, there are several constraints that limit the pastoral and agro-pastoral society to engage in successful livelihood broadening. In similar to other sub Saharan African countries; the pastoralists in Ethiopia are the most deprived areas in terms of access to development opportunities, infrastructure and services (Gebru, et al, 2004; Hailu, 2008).

Lack of Finance

The lacks of startup cash available for venture limit the households' involvements to livelihood activities in the pastoral areas. This result into the poor returns and partake the low income basis livelihood activities. In pastoral areas, there are limited financial organizations established thereof. This constrains the pastoral households' engagement to diversified livelihood activities. According to Kejele *et al.* (2005), the low access to credit services is the well-known challenge in the pastoral areas. Similarly, (Sileshi, 2016) found that lack of access to finance limit the engagement to livelihood diversification. Zigale (2016) result also indicated that the deficiency of financial assets and access to rural credit make the poor households not to engage in range of non-farm activities.

Poor Infrastructure facilities

The infrastructure services are mainly market, road, irrigation, telecommunication, electricity etc. in this context; there are lacks of infrastructure services in pastoral areas of the country. These challenges affect the involvement of pastoral households to diversified incomes sources in the pastoral areas. Kejele *et al.* (2005) result revealed that a limited infrastructure services were the solemn tricky among the pastoral communities. This issue is connected with limited emphasis of the Ethiopia government to the development of the pastoral areas.

In the pastoral areas, there is scanty of market infrastructure that may allow them to exchange their goods and services. Sileshi (2016) assured that the deficiency of market access in the pastoral communities is the focal challenge. This is due to the remoteness and the settlement of the pastoral communities in the country. In the same token, the lack of supplying human and health facilities to pastoral areas is another problem. Kejele *et al.* (2005) reported that the limited provision of livestock and public health services in the pastoral

areas are the great challenges. The main reason for this constrain could be the mobility of the pastoral households.

Lack of Skills

In pastoral areas, many households have limited skills on non-farm and off-farm activities. This holds back the pastoral households' participation to diverse incomes sources. Kejele *et al.* (2005) indicated that the lack of skills for off-farm and non-farm activities is the severe challenges that halt the households' participation to diversified livelihood activities. The Ethiopia government agencies with their development partners fail to provide skills training to pastoral communities. In the same way, Sileshi (2016) reported that the lack of skills and vocational training services was the inseparable delinquent challenges among the pastoral communities. Moreover, lack of awareness and training that challenges the pastoral engagement in better income generating activities (Zigale, 2016). The reason for these is due to the lack of pastoral training centers established in the pastoral areas.

CONCLUSIONS

Many studies revealed that the pastoral households have involved in numerous on farm, non-farm and off-farm activities in the lowland areas of the country. The engagement of the pastoralists to diversified livelihood activities is minimal in the pastoral areas. Moreover, different socio-economics, demographics and institutional factors determined the engagement of the pastoral households to diversified income sources. Furthermore, a number of challenges weaken the pastoral households' participation to various livelihood activities in the country. The main dares of livelihood activities were lack of finance, poor infrastructure facilities and lack of skills. As a result, the government of Ethiopia, Community Development organizations and Non-governmental organizations should work collaboratively to;

- Establish the financial services in the pastoral areas
- Promote the Road and electrical facilities in the pastoral areas
- Strengthen the market facilities in the pastoral areas
- Expand the training facilities in the pastoral areas

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