

ABSTRACT

Globally it is estimated that pastoralism is practiced by between 200 and 500 million people. In Africa they reside in over 21 countries across the continent. They usually inhabit areas which are hard to carry out other livelihood ventures like farming. Today, pastoralism is being threatened by climate change causing frequent droughts. Pastoral communities in Marsabit County have had to combat the effects of droughts on their livelihoods by adopting livelihood diversification. However, through extensive field experience of working in Marsabit County, it has been noted that the Borana community of FunaanQumbi village continues to pursue pure pastoralism. The discovery prompts the need to carry out a study. The main objective of this study was to investigate the effects of livestock rearing on the livelihood of the Borana pastoralist in FunaanQumbi village, Marsabit County. It was imperative to identify the Socio-cultural and economic benefits the community of FunaanQumbi derive from the livestock. In addition the study tried to investigate factors leading to community resilience in midst of challenges. The guiding theory for this study was the general theory of pastoralism and social stratification by Rada Dyson-Hudson (1980). The study took place in FunaanQumbi village of Uran Ward, Marsabit County. Descriptive research design was used to guide the study. Census methods was used to identify the household respondents. Both qualitative and quantitative data collection techniques were employed. Also questionnaires, observation and key informants interview (KII) techniques were used to collect the relevant data for this study. Findings of both qualitative and quantitative questionnaires were compiled at the end of the fieldwork. The study revealed that there are many socio-cultural and economic benefits that the Borana community derives from livestock rearing. The study also established that cattle are important to Borana community as they are in every member of the community's life from birth to death. Cattle give Borana community their identity and act as their inheritance as well as heritage. Apart from getting meat and milk for food, the Borana community uses their livestock for transport, for ploughing, for decoration of their households, for beddings and as source of fame. Livestock defines wealth in Borana community and ones standing in the community. Also the study identified a number of challenges faced by the community. Despite the challenges experienced in livestock rearing, the Borana community of FunaanQumbi has remained resilient. The study is significant not only for the community of FunaanQumbi but also for Borana in general whom they share cultural identity. Government, humanitarian actors and researchers will greatly benefit from the recommendations of this study. They can design appropriate intervention in the community.