

Challenges of Nomadic Pastoralists in Availing Primary Education to their Children, focusing on Hawd Region of Somaliland

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ABSTRACT: Pastoralists in Hawd have been cited by many people in Somaliland as the most desperate people. Denied the right to primary education, these pastoralists feel very frustrated. Their children are destined of dropping out before completing the education cycle. They have always been blamed for their backwardness which is one of the reasons policy directed interventions are blind about extension of educational services as well as the activities of pastoralists in Hawd region. This study, therefore, examines the challenges in access to education that children in pastoralist region are facing. A mixed methods research design was conducted while triangulation methods of data gathering and analysis were applied to evaluate the naked reality of pastoralist education. While pastoralists play a key role in national development as the country exports livestock to trap foreign exchange; collect local taxes from meat sellers and enhance food security as proven in the results, it is not realistic for government to underestimate their educational service needs. Any interventions targeting sustainable development in the whole country could prioritize educational services of pastoralist children as this could make Somaliland a self-help country. Lastly the study has outlined possible policy recommendations that could redress the educational access to schools and completion of primary education of pastoralist children such as the establishment of mobile schools to provide possible alternatives education for pastoralist communities.

KEYWORDS: Nomadic, Nomadism, Pastoralists, Education, Children, Pupils, Hawd, Somaliland

I. INTRODUCTION

Pastoralism has been viewed as a mode of life in many parts of the world. Pastoralists depend on livestock as the major source of food and money but also contribute to national development of the host countries. They usually occupy dry lands. Practiced across many various regions, nomads move from place to place in search of water and pastures for their animals. The mobility of these communities means that education of their children faces a great risk as their children have to be rearing the animals during the time they are supposed to be in school. According to my over 40 years pastoral experience and as a senior veterinary, pastoralists cannot leave their children behind when they migrate to other areas for pastures and water where they stay for longer periods of time, roughly six months or more before they return to their original land.

One international report documented 200 million pastoralist in the whole world listing 180 million pastoralists living in developing countries of Africa, and Central/South America, 19.5 million pastoralists in China and 15.7 million pastoralists in Pakistan (Thornton et al., 2002 in USAID, 2016). Pastoralists are among the globally marginalized groups of people in the world often without basic services such as healthcare and education. Swift and Toulmin (1993) define pastoralists as “people who at least half of their household gross revenue comes from livestock or livestock related activities.” According to (UNESCO, 2015), global pastoralists populations remain among the most underserved by education. Various researchers also state that pastoral groups historical marginalization (Sifuna, 2005; Kaunga, 2005; Bishop, 2007; Dyer, 2010a cited in Raymond, 2012).

On the African continent, it is documented that “pastoral areas occupy 40% of Africa’s land mass with livestock or livestock-related activities amounting 50% of total value of market production and subsistence

production provided by every pastoral household” (African Union (2010). Various scholars have assessed the state of education in pastoral communities of

Uganda, Eritrea, Kenya, Tanzania and Djibouti (Bosch et al. 2006; Carr-Hill et al. 2005; IEC 2002; Leggett 2005 and VerEecke, 1989 cited in Bishop, 2007). Pastoralists have always been blamed as people who shape their own backwardness even when they are less considered for health and educational indicators. On the contrary however, four years of researching education for African pastoralists discovered very little evidence in various secondary sources documenting actual consequences of education programs for these communities ... (Kratli, 2002 in Bishop, 2007). In countries like Kenya whose policy initiative for nomadic communities is one of the most developed government abolished school fees payment in primary schools but largely failed to catalyze enrollment of nomads, to make it pastoralists inclusive (UNESCO, 2015). This sounds the plight of pastoral children is continuously underestimated. The second Millennium Development Goal to ‘achieve universal primary education by 2015’ (MDG, 2015) which was agreed upon by world countries in 2000 was not realized in many developing countries. Pastoral communities are particularly more disadvantaged of the poor whose educational dreams are not likely to be achieved partly due to their mobile way of life but also absence of government interventions on the educational needs of their children. In the World Development Indicators report (2013), many “children start school but drop out before completion, discouraged by cost, distance, physical danger, and failure to progress.” Pastoral communities are ever on seasonal move in search of water and pastures for their animals since they occupy arid/semi-arid areas that receive very little or no rainfall at all and cannot leave their children behind even if they have enrolled in schools. Pastoral children could play a gendered central roles in the rearing of livestock and taking care of livestock products.

According to published evidence, many researchers on education in pastoral areas limited their scope to government policy but “ignored local perceptions and attitudes towards schooling in rural areas. More specifically, it has often neglected the consequences and implications of educational participation for the pastoral way of life” (Sarone 1986 in Bishop, 2007). I concur with (African Union, 2010) which recommends that pastoral issues require supportive policies that go beyond those related to livestock production, marketing and trade. Pastoralists without meaningful education are not likely to sustain quality livelihoods.

Somalia is reported to suffer the highest humanitarian disasters due to recurring severe droughts. In line with education, this is a country with the lowest enrolment rate for “primary school-aged children of which 42% of the children are in school. The number of out of school and at-risk children and youths aged 6-18 years has been estimated at 4.4 million out of a total population of 9.2 million” (UNICEF, 2013). Although one may detect that educational services are insufficient in many Somali communities, there is no doubt pastoral children suffer the gravest consequences with their mobile way of life.

The de-facto republic of Somaliland has been fairly stable for a period of more than 20 years without armed violence and doing very well in the livestock business. In fact, a Pro-poor Livestock Policy Initiative estimated that there were about 120 million pastoralists/agro-pastoralists worldwide of which 50 million reside in Africa with majority hosted in in Sudan and Somalia with 70 million each ... (Rass, 2006). The National Livestock Policy of Somaliland (2006-2016) states that livestock predominantly employs over 70% of the population; contributing 60% of GDP and about 85% of foreign export revenue. However, there are no satisfactory reasons why educational services for pastoral children are underestimated. While the country is still struggling to provide social services to all citizens, pastoral communities especially those of Hawd region are rarely included in the educational decisions and planning. This could be due to the fact that livestock herders depend on their children for herding labour ... which leads to a poor fit between their production system and formal education design (Lanyasunya, 2012 in Ouda et al., 2015).

Hawd region of Somaliland is particularly more disadvantaged in education initiatives for children. Pastoral children are at high risk of being excluded and marginalized. Even when some children attend school, they do not regularly attend or complete a full cycle of primary education. Retention in pastoral primary schools is a major challenge. The sporadic drought aggravates this problem as pastoralists must move far distances in search of water and pasture for their animals. For this matter, they cannot leave their children behind as the latter are responsible for rearing the animals. Whenever they move, schools and teachers of their children are left behind without learners. Government of Somaliland has not made sound efforts to address high levels of child-drop-outs in pastoral primary schools at all. Unlike children from non-pastoral communities in the country, learning needs of pastoral children receive very little attention. Thus, pastoral children maintain limited chances to develop and maintain literacy skills, restricting their future opportunities.

This study is intended to assess the challenges pastoral communities undergo as well as their relationship with national government; and determine the possible alternatives that could minimize retention of primary pastoral

school children and improve literacy levels in Hawd. Specifically, the paper aims to: identify the children activities in the pastoral communities; estimate the everyday distance pastoral children commute between their home and school where they study from; state the reasons why pastoral families prefer school-going children to be in charge of rearing livestock; describe the gendered challenges encountered by school children in pastoral communities and finally to determine possible measures that could be employed to address the education challenges of nomadic pastoral children.

II. METHODOLOGY

This section comprises of the methods and techniques that were used in gathering data from the pastoral communities of Hawd region of Somaliland. It highlights the sampling technique used, sample size estimation, data collection methods, validity and ethical considerations for this research.

Study Area and Why

The pastoral communities are the main source of national revenue of Somaliland. Hawd region hosts over 50% of pastoralists in the country. Yet, they are the most neglected and underserved people in the country for many years from the independence to the present day. The consecutive governments have never extended basic services to these people, including basic education. Where some efforts have been made for improvement of their education, they are associated with the highest levels of drop-outs most of who do not complete primary seven. As a veterinary doctor, I have been touched by the misery and the lost plight of the children and feel that this research should be part of the solution to providing interventional alternatives to restore the educational plight of these pastoral children. If these children are given basic education, they would be future veterinary doctors, peace-makers and educationists.

Study Population

The population of study was divided into in-group and out-group for the purpose of comparing the various experiences of pastoralists for reliable analyses. The in-group was comprised of the pastoral men, women, teachers, clan leaders and school-going-age children from primary 5 to 7. On the other hand, the out-group included other people who are not directly involved in livestock rearing such as Ministry of Education officials. This study assumes that the later have got first-hand experiences obtained from implementation of their various education projects and programs.

Research Context

For many years, the inhabitants of Hawd region have had a good relationship with other Somaliland regions including Hargeisa where the administrative government is located. Hargeisa has been their trade route for their livestock to overseas markets. However, pastoralists relate setbacks to government inconsistent support for social services. Personally, being one of the Hawd inhabitants taking education from a region hosting the government administration, I have been actively involved in advocacy programs calling upon government and non-governmental interventions to improve the plight of pastoral communities. On this note therefore, I am not likely to meet major challenges in data collection in Hawd region. With the critical nature of my research that is directed to improve the plight of pastoral children, the local people may welcome my inquiries on their day-to-day experiences.

Research Design

In this research, mixed methods shall be used to design the study, guide data collection, analysis and interpretation. Creswell and Plano (2011) define mixed methods research as the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or series of studies to provide a better understanding of research problems than either approach alone (see also, Cameron, 2015). The major reason for choosing mixed methods is that one data source may not be enough and needs an alternative design to avoid biased research. During analysis stage, qualitative results simplified the interpretation of quantitative findings.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

Hawd region of Somaliland has an estimated population of 200 pastoralists. This thesis borrowed Baker's second rule of thumb which suggests that a common standard for program evaluation is 95% confidence with sampling error of 5% believing that this 5% is not likely to participate in the study (2012). For the interest of precision, Baker recommends researchers to apply the following formula for calculating sample size: $n=385/(1+(385/N))$ where n is the total sample size and N was the total population ending up with a sample size of 113.

$$n=385/(1+(385/N))$$

$n=385/((1+385/N))$
 $n=385/((1+385/160))$
 $n=385/((1+2.40625))$
 $n=385/(3.341)$
 $n=112.9$
 $n=113$ people

Therefore, Sample size=113 people. This total sample was planned to include 52 school going-age children (boys and girls) from P/5 to P/7 in two randomly selected primary schools, 12 teachers from the two schools, 40 pastoralist (men and women), some 4 clan leaders/chiefs in Hawd region as well as 5 policy makers at the Ministry of Education (MOE) of Somaliland. It was expected that these specific participants would provide reliable and representative information for the study.

However, the ground reality was different in terms of accessing ministry officials, pastoralists and most teachers because they were not all readily available. This challenge made me decide on increasing the number of children up to 59; reduce pastoralists to 21, clan leaders to 2, two MOE officials and 2 teachers who were conveniently sampled, making 86 altogether.

Why select Children from P-5 to P-7

The choice of selection of p-5, p-6 and p-7 was influenced by the assumption that children in these classes could have more of the lived experiences regarding the barriers they or their friends (might have) face (d) in the course of schooling. As shown in figure 7, 36% was the highest number of respondents selected from p-5. The 34% and 31% were obtained from p-6 and p-7 respectively. The other assumption was that children below p-5 may not have more experience due to their presumed young age. This selection choice may not mean that the under 5 cannot have information to share but the p-5 to p7 pupils were anticipated to participate freely in study. Indeed these children shared related nasty experiences regarding what it means to attend their primary education in a nomadic region. All children did not seem to be happy with the longest proximity to schools or living an education that disconnects them from the responsibility of livestock rearing.

Sampling Techniques

Two sampling techniques were used to select research participants which include; random sampling for quantitative and purposive sampling for qualitative data collection. A combination of qualitative and quantitative sampling techniques is also backed by scholarly research (Sandelowski, 2000). Being academic research, a smaller sample was purposively selected to collect qualitative data as recommended by (Hurry, 2014) and a slightly larger but manageable one was illustrated by probability sampling to develop nomothetic knowledge which can be generalizable to everyone in the pastoralist population.

III. DATA COLLECTION METHODS AND TECHNIQUES

In-depth Interviews

In-depth interview was one of the major methods of data collection. Interviews are about asking questions and capturing experiences and stories of study participants. Kajornboon, (2005) acknowledges that interviews are a systematic way of talking and listening to people and are another way to collect data from individuals through conversations. Interviews and observations are two close sisters in that when interviews are going on, observations can be noted at the same time.

Key informants were identified and engaged to provide deeper insight on the matter. They included among other; government officials operating in Hawd region, clan leaders and head teachers of primary schools. This method was selected on the premise that people who hold a special status in the community always have huge information on the topic of research than the rest of community members. However, critics maintain that:

“... the quality and nature of the information they generate remain suspect for a variety of reasons. Key informants are not carefully selected. Interview guides are not prepared in advance. Questions are inaptly worded and clumsily asked. The responses are not properly recorded and systematically analysed. And above all, the findings are not satisfactorily verified” (Kumer, 1989).

I would argue that asking questions awkwardly and improperly is a characteristic of unprepared researchers. At the same time, I must add that there is no method which has a good side that does not have a bad side. Key informants are particularly rich in first-hand data ownership once they are well approached while valuing their anonymity and confidentiality. One remedy for this issue is that I will triangulate data collection to iron out all

the possible readers' biases after data analysis. Various data sources, methods and techniques were combined to address their weaknesses and exploit their strength to propagate reliability and validity of the research findings.

IV. PARTICIPANT OBSERVATION

According to (Dawson, 2001), a researcher using participant observation in capturing field data should become much more involved in the lives of the people being studied. Some researchers have observed some people in various places without them knowing that they are being studied which Dawson calls "covert participant observation." That can be dangerous if the participants discover the intentions of researchers. However, he also demonstrates a friendly observation method (overt participant observation). In this method, the participants know who the researcher is and what he/she is doing, which reduces risks to the researcher as well as the community of study. The later was my preferred method of observation in Hawd region. Fortunately, I have already linked up with some community chiefs and introduced them about my research which they have welcomed so much. As a man of the soil, I anticipated that it was much easier for me to interact with the pastoralists and their gendered children.

V. QUESTIONNAIRES

Questionnaire was the main method for collecting quantitative data. Structured and unstructured questions were designed and administered to all the sampled respondents for quantitative research. In order a questionnaire with its "question-answer sequence is to make sense, the question must be understood by the respondent in the way intended by the researcher" (Hurry, 2014). This research tell us why participants are always selected with similar characteristics such as the pastoralists in Hawd region. This is the reason why researchers must interpret questions in a local language in case of research participants in the study area who may not understand English or any other international language used in report writing. For the sake of this research in Hawd region, I engaged participants in the local language since I was/am from Hawd myself.

Results and Discussion Hawd region, being a region hosting livestock in a semi-desert environment with communities ever on seasonal movements, primary education of their children is badly affected. Completing their education cycle is rare for most children. This chapter focuses on the presentation, discussion and interpretation of primary data from primary five to seven pupils, their teachers, and members of the community, clan leaders and chiefs as well as Ministry of Education Officials. Its analysis was based on mixed methods approach. Where quantitative data were illustrated in figures, qualitative stories and experiences of primary pastoral school children as well as adult pastoral community of Hawd were used to support quantitative findings and make sense of them. All the analysis has been aimed to answer the study objectives that eventually feed policy recommendations outlined in the final chapter, to redress the pastoralist challenges associated to primary education of their children.

Hawd Livestock as a Source of Livelihood

The livelihood survival of Hawd communities depends on livestock rearing. Different animals are kept as a source of food and money that take care of their basic needs. According to figure 2, their pastoral economic activity is dominated by camels, which are equivalent to 60% followed by 20% of the goats. The study revealed that cows and sheep are found to be the least source of their income sharing only 10 % each.

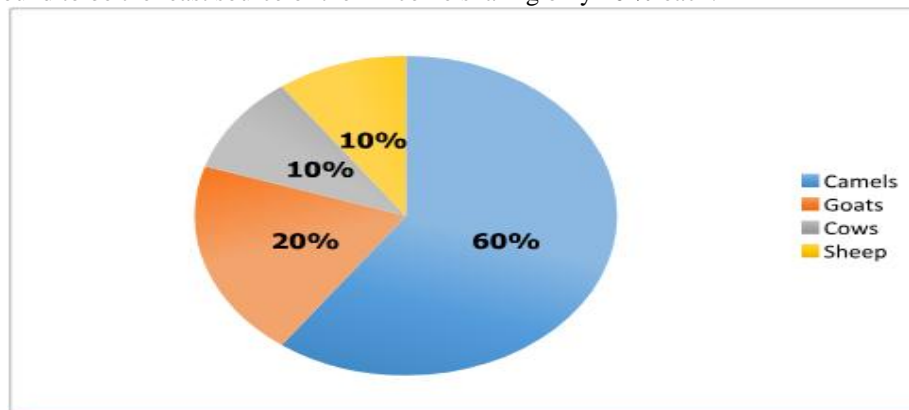


Figure 1: Major Income sources of Pastoralists for Hawd Region

The study unveiled that pastoralists prefer their girls to look after the goats and boys to take care of bigger animals such as camels and cows. It is assumed among pastoralists that boys are not preferred to take care of small animals because they play a lot leaving the goats and sheep at the risk of foxes and other wild animals. In livestock rearing girls are valued with responsibility as they keep an eye on the goats and sheep while grazing. This could explain why more girls than boys drop out of school or are not likely to go through formal schooling like most boys as illustrated in figure 15.

Children Views on Primary Education-friendly Farming Type

Figure 2 illustrates the types of farming hosted in Hawd region. Pastoralism is known to be the predominant one and covers at 90% of livelihood as crop farming was estimated to cover 10%. It appears that children in the pastoral Hawd have seen the value of settled farming as one way of enhancing their education cycle. Although some of the children were worried of attending to schools while leaving their animals dispersed, others continuously pointed at the need for government to establish permanent grazing area for livestock in order to leave behind the nomadic lifestyle. Looking at the current positive perception of children's educational needs, the public leadership mindset that pastoralists are destructive of their natural environment or the Western driven myth of stateless nomad along with a false binary state-nomad opposition could be viewed as a violation pastoralists' educational rights. Such British perpetuated myth was used as a vehicle to establishing a system of divide and rule, which still influences the modern societies in all British colonies. Why should the current leadership stick to the past British stereotypes against the African race, well knowing that it only rapes possibilities of sustainable development? This is a question that requires immediate answers in order to emancipate pastoralists from the chains of poverty. Hawd region could be included in the project initiatives intended to educational freedom.

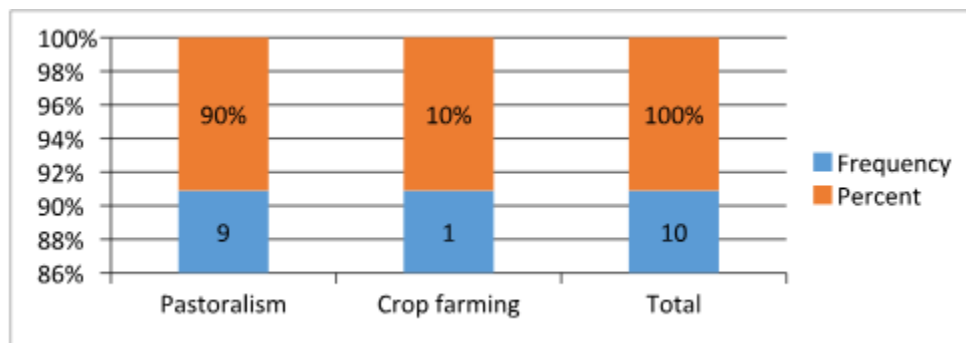


Figure 2: Major Livelihood Activities in Hawd

Research Findings

As the study was going on in Hawd and during literature review time, a number of issues were discovered to be critical findings that need immediate attention. Here below is their outline.

- It is very rare for pastoral children to complete the primary education cycle due to the mobile movement of pastoral communities as they search for pasture and water for their animals. Like any other parents in non-pastoral communities, pastoralists cannot leave their children behind to where ever they are relocating.
- It was also found that more boys (88%) than girls (12%) are enrolled in primary schools in pastoral schools because girls' education is not yet considered as important as that of boys (refer to figure 14).
- The study also disclosed that most girls must be at home to take care of shoat (goats and sheep) when boys go to school. Rearing of small animals is their traditional responsibility.
- Whenever pastoralists move with their animals and children, they leave the schools and teachers behind, which implies that these children stop schooling immediately.
- Teachers for Pastoralist Schools were reported to be insufficient due to underpayments that are incapable of meeting their basic needs.
- The study disclosed that children are worried of risky environment that necessitates them to walk for very long distances to schools.
- At the same time, hunger was pointed out by most children as a threat to constructive learning process.
- It was also revealed that most schools close during the dry season. This closure could be as result of seasonal movements as pastoralists must search for water and pastures for their animals.

- It is very difficult for parents to decide the possibilities of children to continue schooling or move with their parents and animals bearing the fact that children are supposed to take care of animals as their traditional responsibility.
- Primary seven children attend their lessons under trees due to shortage of learning space. They also called for construction of more classrooms to prevent them from strong sunshine and heavy winds that are common in the semi-desert Hawd.

Demographic Information

Children of different ages were selected to participate in the study. The majority of children that participated in the study according to figure 3, were between 13-15 years at (68%). Only 19 pupils were ranging from 16-22 amounting 32%. This enabled the researcher to gather various views on the challenging education services in the pastoral region of Hawd, Somaliland. These ages were selected on the basis that such children could have differently specific challenges that might require individual attention in order to make their primary education brighter.

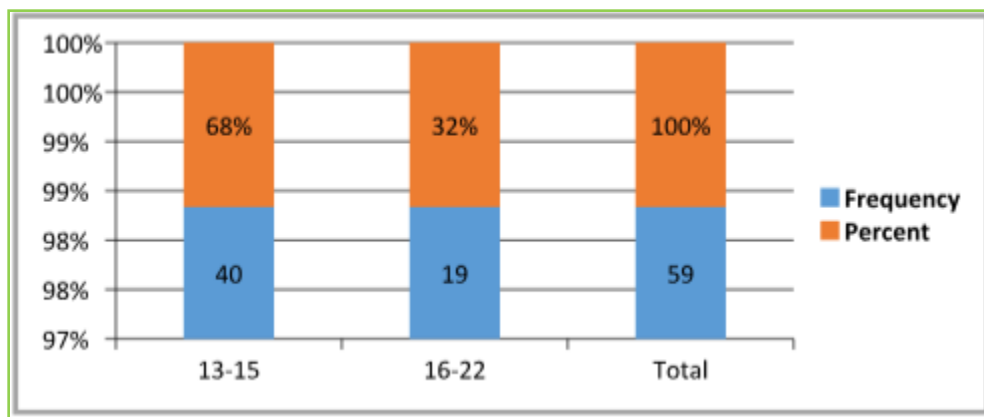


Figure 3. Age Range of Children

In a related sense, pastoralists were categorized by gender and age. Women were interviewed separately from men due to their reserved characteristics that are highly acknowledged in Muslim societies that separate men from women in all aspects of life.

Figures 4 and 5 illustrate differently gendered age brackets of pastoralists. In figure 4, 20% of the women were aged from 41-50; the second category of women were ranging from 20-30 that reached 40% while smallest number of women were aged from 31-41 which was at 10%. Like the children, female respondents of various ages could have gone through related or different experiences. It was very likely that they would share different views in the context of primary education of their children.

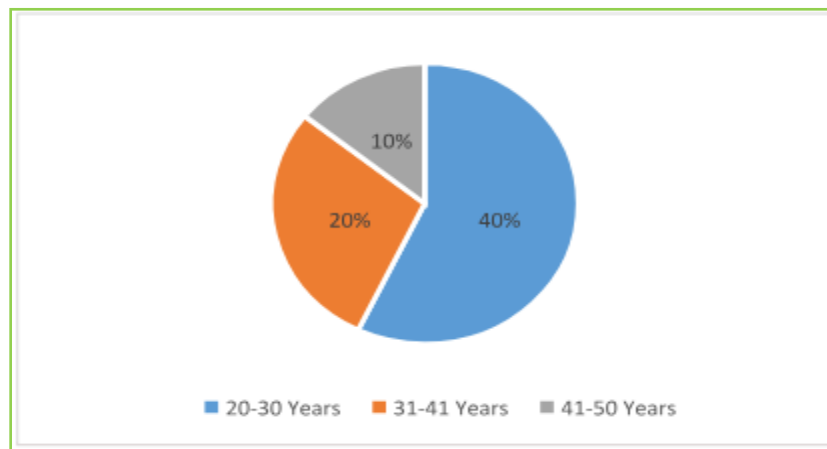


Figure 4: Age of female Adult Pastoralists

Figure 5 below has illustrated the age ranges of male pastoralists that were included in the study. The age ranges were; 20-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-65 and 66-80. The reason for selecting different male categories was not far from the same reasons women participants were selected.

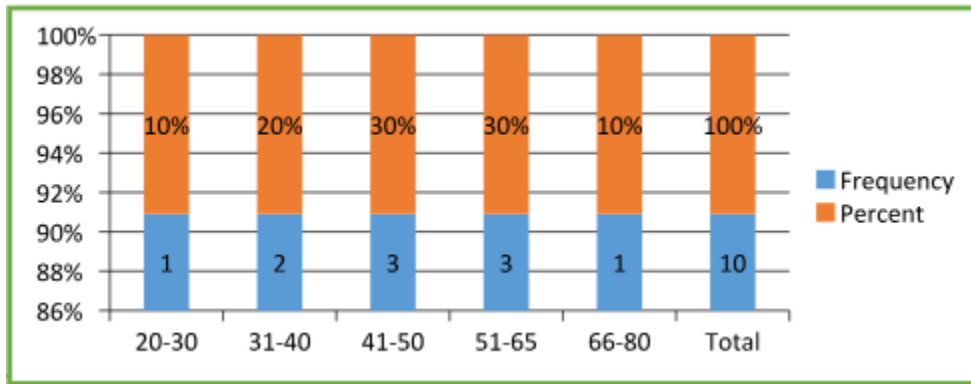


Figure 5. Age Male Pastoralists

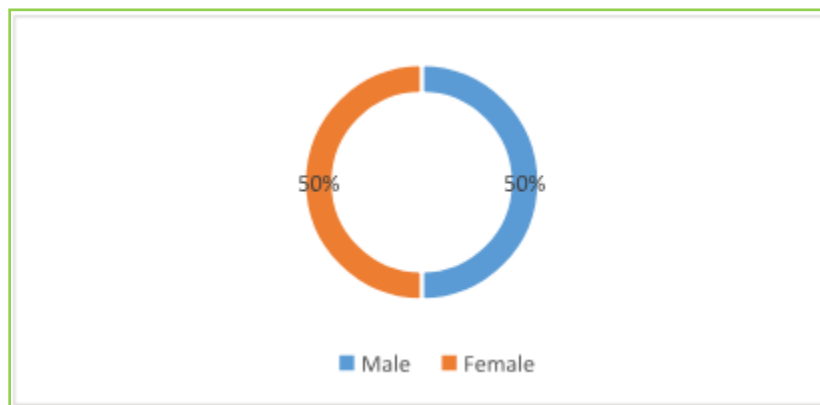


Figure 6. Gender Composition of Pastoralists in Hawd

Figure 6 illustrates the gender of pastoralists as they were engaged in the study for 50% and 50% for men and women respectively. The same numbers were considered in order to balance the responses and avoid any possible biased views.

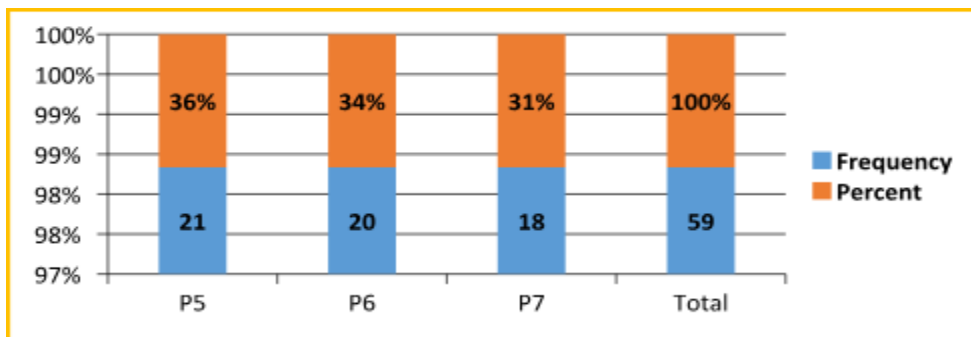


Figure 7. Classes Pupils were selected to participate in the Study

The Educational missing Link in Young Pastoralists

As pastoralist children get exposed to some technology of things such as smart phones and radios, they learn that a society without education is useless or defenseless. Children sensed a dangerous future if their education

is continuously underestimated by people in power. Thus, more children always shifted the blame to their own parents as they were sharing their experiences of being nomadic born children. One of them could speak with emotions saying, "... fathers and mothers should play their roles ... elders and the governor should push the government and make plans to produce an educated generation." Other children who participated in the study blamed government and always thought that the ruling government could solve the educational problems of pastoralists. It should be noted in this regard that children feel greater pain without a meaningful education, and wonder if they will ever get out of this misery in governments which are neither readily nor willing to listen to their concerns or address their immediate needs. The notion of blame-shift to the parents and elders could tell the reader how influential children think elders are. However, elders and parents, most of whom had never seen the blackboard, may not easily project into the fate of the young generation in the near future. This experience puts all primary school children at a greater risk of double vulnerability. The school children are the future leaders and could play a significant role no matter which region they originate. Children who grow up in harsh environments like the one of Hawd could turn up to be democratic future leaders and problem solvers due to their survival experiences in a scarce resource area.

Why should we Care about Alternative Education Services?

Parenthood Status of the Pupils is a matter of concern to academic researchers like me. There is no doubt parents play a major role in the education of their children. This study unveiled the fact that most of the school children in pastoral Hawd are either single or double orphans as illustrated in figure 8

. It was clearly indicated that 14% of the children were double orphans, 26% have only mother while 14% have only father. With high levels of poverty and the absence of universal government intervention in pastoral and non-pastoral schools, orphaned children could find it difficult to enroll or stay in school. In addition non-orphaned children that accounted for 46% need the presence and participation of other children to gain meaningful learning. On a sad note, most of the children who disclosed that they still have both parents alive showed emotional dissatisfaction of the fragile state of education among nomads. Therefore, special attention needs to be put into consideration to address the learning needs of all pupils.

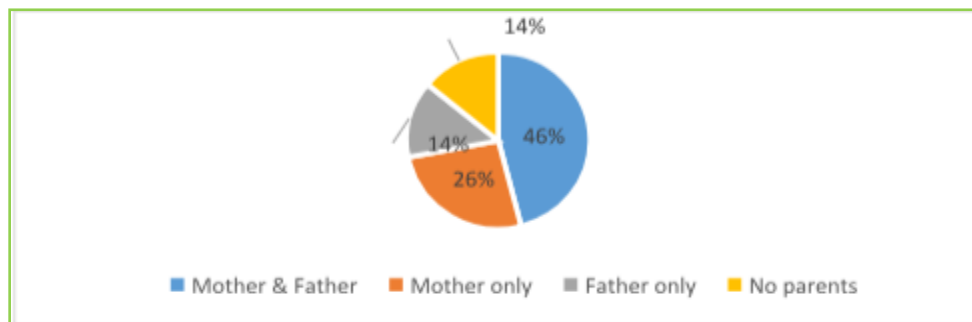


Figure 8: Family Heads in Hawd Absenteeism of Teachers in Primary Schools of Hawd

Absenteeism of teachers was expressed by pupils in all the selected schools but did not give reasons why that was the case. However, the interaction with the accessed teachers provided that they are very underpaid at a monthly salary of \$100. These concerns were shared with facial emotions as I observed, which indicates the exploitative architecture of the employer over the employees. According to Lauwerier, "Somaliland declared free primary public Education in 2011 but has had great difficulty in retaining teachers at the salaries the government can afford to pay" (2016). Indeed, the individual teacher stories that I intently listened to, were full of pain as these teachers expressed worries that they are unable to sustain their families with basic needs. Therefore, when pupils at the schools openly expose the limited class attendance, it is an indication of the fact that these teachers are not motivated to teach the students as required by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. Figure 9, illustrates 58% of the students reported that teachers 'sometimes' teach them; 5% said they are rarely taught while 22 (37%) seemed to be on good terms with teachers as they said that teachers in pastoral Hawd take time to teach them. In places where a mixture of public and private schools exist, parents have opted to take their children to the latter where teachers are paid well to enhance high quality performance. In the case of Hawd, the existence private schools is highly doubted as the owners target densely populated areas like cities and other regions where people seem to settle in one place.

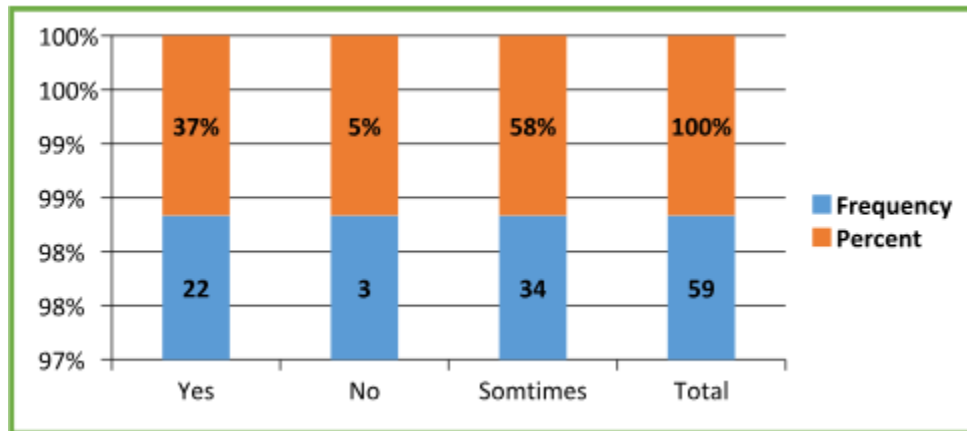


Figure 9. Whether Teachers in Hawd take Time to Teach

Class/School Attendance for Pastoral Children in Hawd

Class or school attendance is key to classroom learning. Children are expected to be engaged in participatory learning. This is however not business as usual in pastoral region of Hawd according to figure 10.

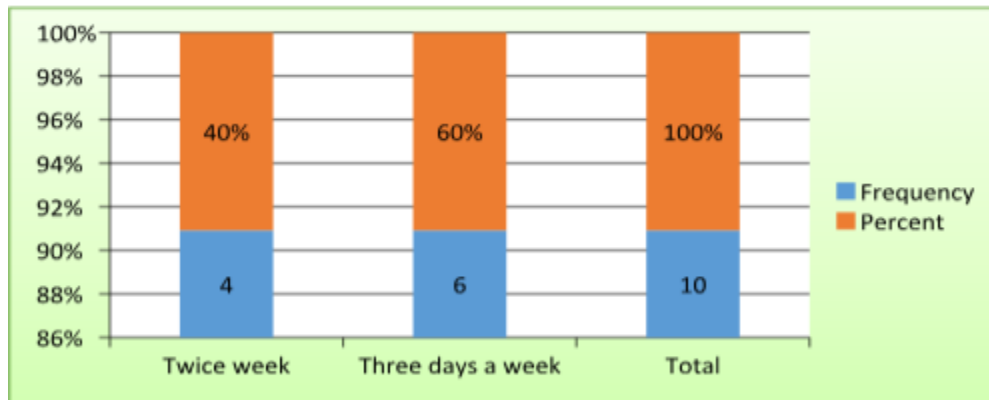


Figure 10. Number of Days Children in Pastoral Hawd attend School

The class attendance of children in Hawd primary Schools is not satisfactory. Children are on and off school. For example, when they were asked how many times they attend school, 60% mentioned they attend school three times while 40% attend it twice. Four of the pupils in two different schools were wondering why they should attend class full time when the teachers are not good examples themselves. While the study did not question on the number of days schools are supposed to be open, the absence of some teachers in some days could demotivate the children from taking their studies serious. As a region that contributes heavily to national development in terms of livestock export or feeding source for most of Somaliland cities and communities, pastoral children require formal education on how to graze or control of livestock diseases and food handling for healthy living.

Poverty and its effect on Primary Education

Teachers in the participating schools showed concern about poverty that hinders primary education in Hawd. A teacher expressed pain that he feels when he sees children unable to have books or pens and uniforms because their parents cannot afford to buy them. It can be absurd when children come to class without books and sit down in the class watching the teacher in front of them as if they are watching a television program. In addition, when the children were asked about their biggest challenges; some of them pointed at the poverty of their parents saying, "... our parents are very poor. They cannot afford our school fees, pens and books ... another thing, we do not have lunch at school and so it is not easy to study when you are hungry." Initiatives aimed at enhancing sustainable development could focus on comprehensive interventions in the lifestyle of pastoralists. Agro-pastoralism, which was cited by most of the children as a possible solution to their specific challenges, could

enhance a settled education system and later on improve retention levels of pastoralists' children in primary schools. More poverty reduction programs need to be put into consideration to enable pastoral communities fight poverty but strategic education would be the best tool in this case.

Children and Pastoralist Worries

A lot of children were worried about their animals. It seemed from their feelings and views that animals are more valuable than education. When they were asked about their challenges faced during the school system, one of them said that "there is a risk when we go to school. The school is far away my home. My role in the family is to keep the animals and that is hard for me to do both school and herding." Another one said, "... sometimes we move to other region and we get hungry." Among them girls pointed against too much work that they are required to do at home. On the other hand, pastoralists (parents and community members) were also worried of absence of primary schools in nearby places that are easily accessible to them. Yet, none of them could appreciate the notion of leaving behind their children to stay schooling as they move with their animals in search of water and pasture. In their own words, a lot of them were quoted saying, "we are worried whether we can leave our children who take them away from school." The experiences of both children and their parents/pastoralists leaves unanswered questions in the face of any institutional intervention because, even if schools were relocated nearby them pastoral communities in accessible distances, how many children would be retained in schools even during the dry seasons? Educational needs of regions like Hawd could be addressed if government could establish mobile schools as they were successfully implemented in Karamoja of Eastern Uganda or Dufur in South Sudan.

Classrooms under Trees without Shades

While the primary schools in many locations of Hargeisa have enough classes, it is not true for primary schools in Hawd region. Most of the children said that they do not have classrooms but attend their lessons under trees. It could have been the major reason why children were complaining of too much sunshine that hindered their learning process. My observations during the study collate with the children's experiences that the trees under which some lessons were being held did not have enough shed due to the dryness of the area. It is most likely that concentration on learning is complicated by the hot environment. If only government of Somaliland could have political will, they could consider budget allocation for extension of educational services and enhance classroom construction to pupils from the hot sunshine during class time.

Distance between home and School

Long distances and shortage of transportation; food provision, introducing boarding schools are the main issues impeding pastoral school children. The educational challenges of pastoralists are continuously becoming issues of concern to many researchers and educationists that value humanity. When you take a mental tour to other regions of Somaliland such as Gabiley, Boroma or in the urban areas of the country, you realize that primary schools are evenly distributed in the nearest proximity to various communities. This fact is not true with pastoral occupied regions like Hawd and others. All children that participated in the study complained of commuting very long distances that make them so tired and affect their learning process. Most of these children looked emotionally tired as I observed during the conversation between us. That was the major reason why they were suggesting that government could provide them with transportation to and from schools or establish boarding primary schools that require these children to stay at school all the time except in holidays. Researchers and educationists could play a decisive role of enhancing empathy in favour of vulnerable children by influencing government interventions that may take care of universal educational needs of primary school children.

Food Insecurity in Hawd

Hungry Children attending Primary Education in Hawd find it a torturing environment to be in schools. Food insecurity was also a major concern of children who study in Hawd region. Starvation is a characteristic of pastoral regions located in semi-desert climates. This is not the first study that has highlighted the risk of food insecurity. According to a Nutrition Assessment report on Hawd of (UNICEF 2006) the major source of food is livestock. However, the severe drought hitting this region cannot go without destroying the pastoralists' livelihoods and their nutritional levels. For example, a Hawd nutritional assessment conducted in August 2003 unveiled a global acute malnutrition of 10% and severe acute malnutrition of 1.3% ... (cited in UNICEF, 2006). With recurring drought seasons like the one of 2017 that resulted into high mortality of livestock and internal displacement, primary education in pastoral Hawd was affected too. Most if not all the teachers are nomads. There is no way they could have concentrated on teaching when their own families were starving.

VI. GENDERED CHALLENGES FACING PASTORAL CHILDREN EDUCATION

Chance of Schooling for Boys and Girls in Hawd

This study revealed that girls have no equal chance of schooling as boys in the pastoralist setting. Figure 11 indicated unequal chance of girls’ against boys specifically in Hawd. Majority of the participants (52%) said that more girls than boys have less chances of accessing school. Fewer pastoralists (48%) that both children have equal chance of accessing school. The Somali Muslim belief that girls’ place must be at home is a value respected nationwide. Therefore, even when educational inequalities harm more girls than boys, it is not largely felt by pastoralists including their regional government representatives. Thus, the preference for taking boys to school at the expense of girls may be perceived by leaders as a normal enterprise. With this technologically advancing world, nomadic pastoralism, which is the mother of livelihoods in all the pastoral communities and the whole country, could be at unprecedented risk of extinction in the near future if inclusive education in pastoral communities is ignorantly underestimated. The intellectual view of some educationist who once stated that “it is only through education that the nomads’ lifestyle can be improved” makes sense (Ezeomah, 1987 in VerEecke, 1989). Somaliland government could embrace this development idea with an understanding that sustainable development is possible only when boys and girls as well as women and men contribute accordingly.

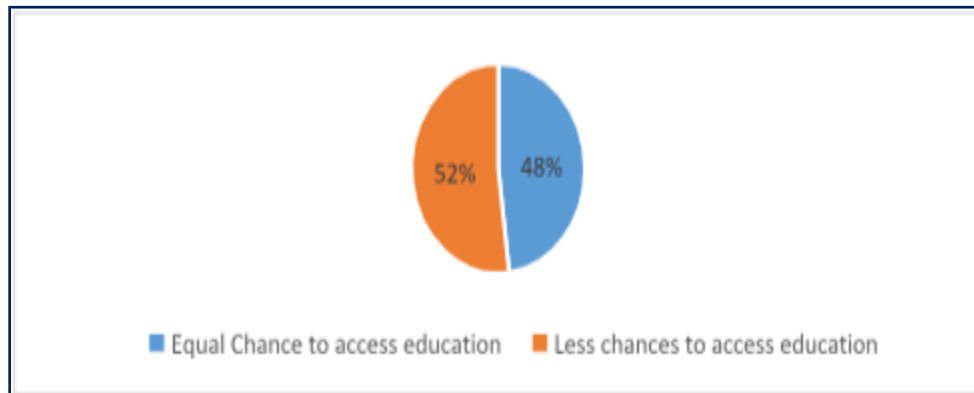


Figure 11. Equality of access to education among boys and girls in Hawd

Hawd Pupils’ Possibility of Joining Secondary Schools

As illustrated in figure 12, the possibility of having children retained in the primary schools located in pastoral region of Hawd is very disappointing. Evidence-based research has proved that 80% of children drop-out before completing primary school but only ten percent may complete or even join secondary education to further their studies.

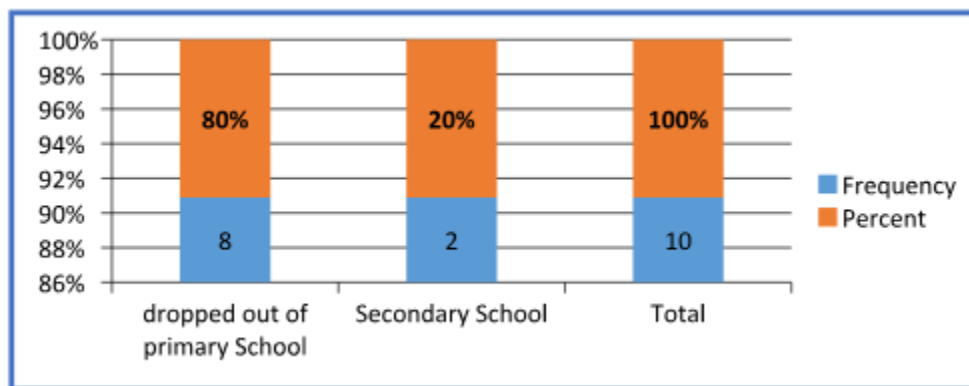


Figure 12. Possibility of attending Secondary Education

Therefore, pupils who qualify to go to secondary school are very minimal due to the pastoral setting that triggers seasonal movements of pastoralists. This background was backed by one of the primary school teachers was quoted saying “the drought seasons reduce enrollment of students and cause pupils’ drop-out.” The experience of most children that participated in the study unveiled that a lot of children especially girls cannot complete primary seven as shown in figure in which 40% of the children fall in the same category. The pastoral education context could be different from other regions of Somaliland such as Hargeisa where girls and boys may be able to complete primary school with minimal drop-outs.

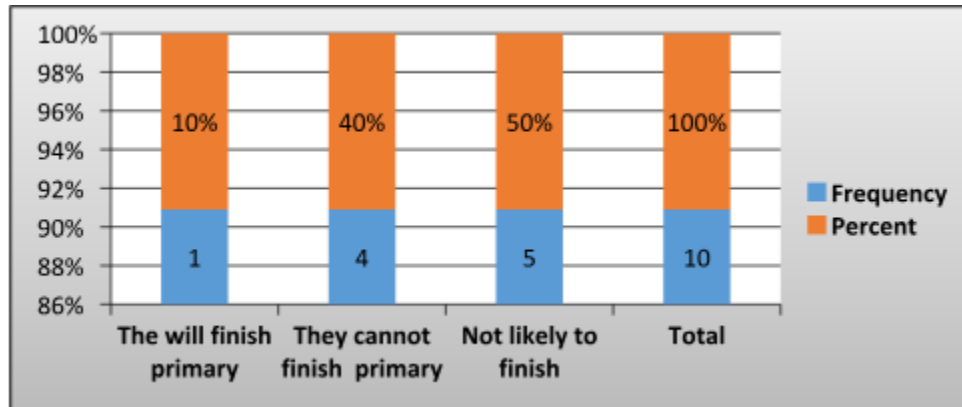


Figure 13. Community Views on completion of Primary Education Cycle

When 50% of the pastoralists interviewed (figure 13) say that children are not likely to complete the primary education cycle, they may be referring to their automatic experiences of seasonal movements since they cannot leave their children behind. That could be part of the reasons why most pastoralists were not comfortable to engage in a discussion regarding school attendance by their children, who are supposed to take care of the livestock every day.

Rape of School-going Children

Like any other region of Somaliland, children in primary schools are greater risk of being raped by boys and girls as well as elderly women and girls. According to (Ainebyona, 2011), some boys are raped by girls or women in rare cases that are by nature are neither revealed nor reported in fear of masculine shame because many people think that only women are vulnerable to rape. During the study, several girls at the selected schools voiced how boys disturb them when they are going to school. This was a very hard topic for girls to talk about freely as they were both emotional and shying out. The interaction with pastoralists in the community most of whom were single parents shared recurring experiences of girls being raped on their way to schools given long distance between home and schools. With households far away from each other, the risk of being raped could be very real where girls’ dignity is destroyed. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) like HIV/AIDS could be rampant in pastoral communities of Hawd yet unreported due to stigma resulting from possibility of being discriminated by the rest of the community. This research calls for immediate attention of pastoral education in line with relocation of schools where pastoralists could easily monitor their children for the betterment of their health.

Drop-Out Rates of Children from Pastoral Primary Schools

Primary education in Hawd is not without drop-out experiences. The study has unveiled in figure that 88% of children drop-out of school before they complete their primary cycle. Only 12% was said to be able to fulfill all their primary education objectives. This quantitative information can be backed by the firsthand experiences of pastoralists, men and women inclusive. They were asked if they had knowledge of children drop-outs from pastoral schools and all of them gave a ‘Yes’ answer-response. Such an answer may not have been mentioned with comfort. But rather, pastoralists were expressing their dissatisfaction with government’s underestimation and discrimination of primary schools.

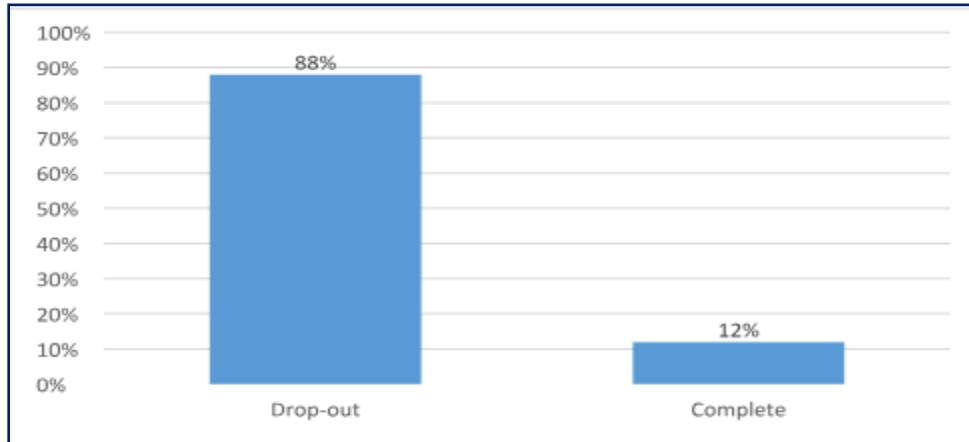


Figure 14: Drop-out Rates of Pupils

Reasons why Pastoral Children Drop-out of School

No authority can address a specific problem without tackling its causes. The state at which children from pastoral regions drop-out is worrying pastoralists whose children claim that schools are very far away from home; their other challenges are not limited to; lack of school fees, bullying at school, beating on the way to school and sexual abuse among others. These causes are very general and affect boys and girls respectively. However, the effect of these challenges can be largely felt among girls. You never know parents disguise themselves as if they are protecting girls from cases like rape which has been talked about below; by keeping them home to perform domestic responsibilities at the expense of their male counter-parts. Figure 15 has illustrated that 2% of children of pastoralist children in Hawd suffer experience sexual violence. This number is likely to be more than this because a discussion on this matter is too sensitive to engage in, by the victims or the victimized for fear of possible discrimination and; or excommunication from the community. It is the reason with the least responses that lead to pastoral children drop-outs. Participants shared other reasons including among others; school being far away (22%), lack of school fees (24%), bullying (4%), beating on the way from school (14%), too much work at home (20%) and hunger (14%). Many people outside the pastoralist life of Hawd may not realize the magnitude of vulnerability hindering the isolated pastoral education. Pastoralist children and mostly girls in Hawd are at high risk of drop-out of school before they complete their primary education cycle.

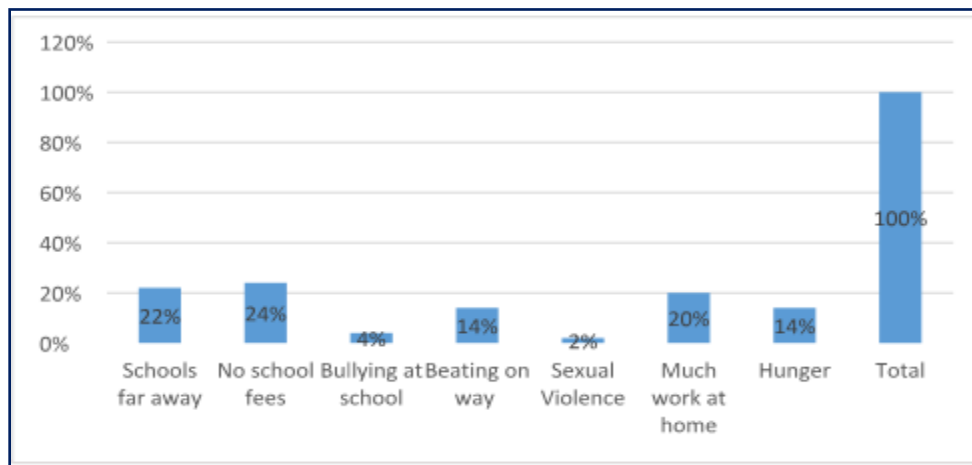


Figure 15. Reasons for drop-outs

Types of Education encouraged for Children in Pastoralist Hawd

Two types of education modalities were cited in Hawd by the pastoralists which included formal and informal education. While informal education is believed to be old-fashioned in cities of Somaliland, it is still very relevant in pastoral communities of Hawd. Although 20% of pastoralists preferred their girls to take on informal

education, the majority of respondents praised the existence of both formal and informal education that ranked 80% for boys and girls as illustrated in figure16. The contextual fact of Somaliland is that informal education does not mean backwardness. Rather, it is an education that is important for both children in the community. Informal education seeks that children must be at home learning the good values and norms of society while formal education necessitates these children to interact with teachers in the classroom. One could argue that formal education may not exist without informal education. They are equally important but formal education could enhance dramatic changes if it is promoted for skills development of both boys and girls in the pastoral regions.

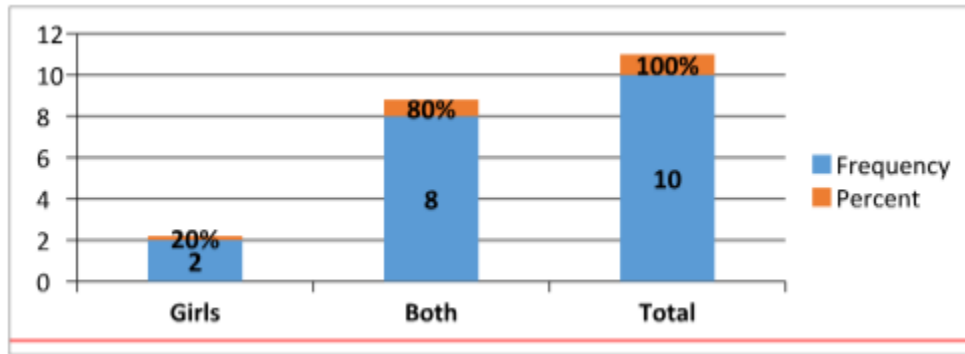


Figure 16. Gender of Pastoralist Children preferred for formal Education

School Accessibility in Pastoral Communities

The Ministry of Education and Higher education was engaged to participate in this study too. Various views were shared on the state of primary education for pastoralists in Hawd and other Somaliland regions. While some ministry officials underlined the inaccessibility of schools in Hawd as indicated in figure17, they did not express concerns for any possible interventions soon. This narrative could be backed by such pastoralists’ encounter with various researchers of all walks whom they blame to have been collecting data for over a decade without influencing any government interventions. “... These strangers may have been collecting and taking our information for their selfish gains, don’t you think so?” some of them asked. Questions like this one demonstrates the amount of distrust that pastoralists feel against their own government in regard to an education gap affecting the plight of their children. If 90% of the schools in Hawd according to study participants from the Somaliland Ministry of Education are not accessible and 10% scattered in the region, it is an indication that the Ministry planners did not project into the possible future repercussions that could undermine a mobile population. In their mind could have been a misconception that pastoral communities may not at one time feel the need for settled farming system. However, this study has challenged Ministry of Education (MOE) perspective whereby learners at the primary schools anticipate the urgent need for agro-nomadic farming system that could enable them complete their education cycle.

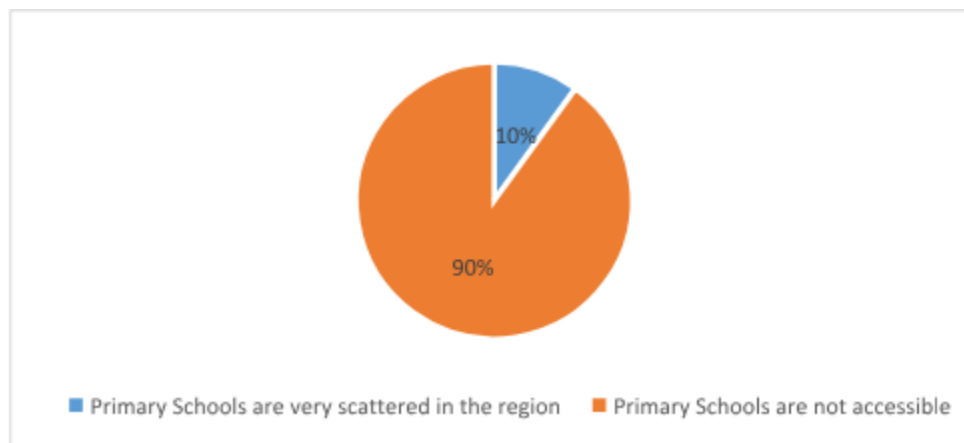


Figure 17. MoE Views on Expansion of Primary Schools in Pastoral Communities

Pastoralists’ thoughts about Government Education Initiatives

Most of the pastoralists (80%) think that government has ignored them as illustrated in figure 18. The 20% who disclosed that government built few schools here may not hold different views from the former. The few available are not even equipped with furniture such as benches and desks according to the firsthand information from the children at the primary schools. A teacher was also worried about absence of co-curricular activities due to lack of playgrounds at pastoralist schools. All these worries from teachers and children are not likely to shape creative minds of children given the current state of the Hawd schools. . There used to be a local jock in most Somaliland regions which said that ‘work without play made Abdirahman a dull boy.’ This saying is still relevant in systematically tangible learning in all countries of the world. In most African governments for example, a school cannot be licensed to operate if it does not have amenities like playground where children could play games at a break times to refresh their minds. Therefore, our leaders could borrow a leaf from neighboring countries to implement suitable and child-friendly learning services.

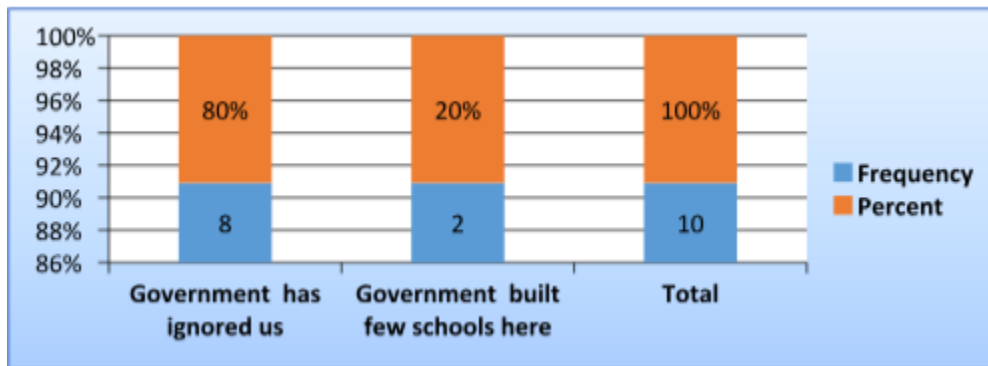


Figure 18. What community thinks about Government on Educational Services.

Pastoralism’s contribution to National Development

The development of Somaliland cannot be possible without pastoralists. Livestock is a major source of this country’s source of income. All markets in all cities of Somaliland are dominated by red meat sellers. Business cannot move as usual if there is no meat in hotels because Somali people feed on meat obtained from livestock farmers. In fact, the study has also revealed that 80% of the livestock are exported through Berbera Main Sea Port to the Arab countries in Middle East (see, figure 19), which means that Somaliland obtains more foreign exchange that is used for covering remuneration of public servants and most of the local development initiatives such as road innovation and construction. Government of Somaliland collects daily taxes from local meat sellers. No reports have been documented on the financial contribution of crop farming that is less existing in the country. This, however, does not mean that the latter is useless because it enhances settled farming system that is treasured by school-loving children of Hawd. Provision of alternative education for pastoralists could accelerate improved animal production capacities in pastoral regions.

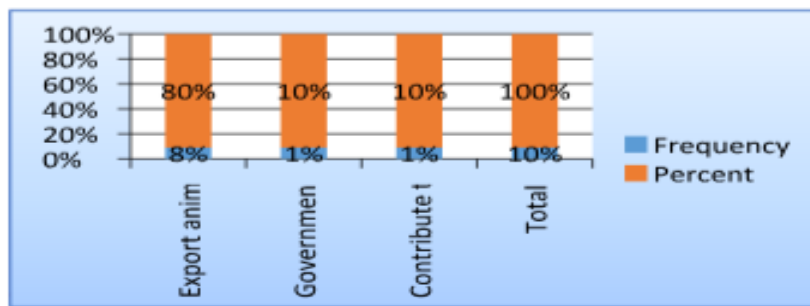


Figure 19: How Hawd Pastoralism contributes to National Development

Negotiating Primary Education continuity of Pastoral Children

Most pastoralists, whether they are teachers or just ordinary community members try to negotiate possibilities of primary education continuity for their children in case of any possible seasonal movements. However, their attempt to negotiate for reforms is not always direct or physically interactive. Thanks to Allah for the

quest for evidence-based knowledge that is sought by academic and project researchers that interact with Pastoralists in Hawd. The latter inform or debate their perspectives with researchers or strangers who they think could use their shared information to influence the host government. During this study, almost all participants engaged in the study expressed their desires that could transform the education of their children for the better. Their suggestions ranged from the need to provide scholarships for children in Hawd pastoral region to government provision of transportation of their children from new locations to the schools left behind. The pastoral minds which think this way is not likely to be ready to educate their children even if education services are evenly distributed. They also suggest the need to establish mobile schools. The Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Somaliland could think of strategic mobile schooling where teachers are hired to follow the pastoral communities to their new relocations. It is a matter of understanding that tradition influences policies of government anywhere in the World. Connecting the fact that pastoral communities value children responsibility of grazing livestock when the parents may be involved in other livelihood activities may be a tiny step towards extending education services. When some pastoralists think of alternatives to problem solving, it is a step ahead in the journey to the enhancement of primary education cycle completion.

Mobile schools have proved successful among the nomadic communities of Western Sudan especially in Darfur and Kordofan States where most parents got proud of their children results (Abdel Rahman, 2011). There is no reason why Somaliland government should not borrow a leaf in order to transform their education. Although it has been that; not everything that works in another country works in one's country, this fact is not always true for every country. Countries that share similar educational characteristics could be addressed by related or similar reforms.

VII. CONCLUSION

A number of lessons were learnt throughout the gestation period of this research. It therefore crucial that I must expose them to my various readers/audiences.

This paper has underscored that gendered activities considered traditionally important by pastoralists affect the education of their own children. Having made girls responsible for small animal rearing due to their valued discipline as good listeners sensitive to the likely harm from wild foxes, it might necessitate that girls minimize or prevent risks of animal losses. With the vulnerable nature of girls, no pastoralist would assume that boys would be fit for this responsibility as girls are doing other domestic responsibilities at home.

It is important to note that worries of children and parents could be greater enemies to their psychological mind. Aware that they must take care of the bigger animals, most boys cannot concentrate during learning processes whenever they attend distant schools. In addition, there is no parent who would love to leave their children behind on planning to migrate to a different location where he would stay more than half a year with the herds.

The study has also highlighted the uncomfortable situation of pastoralist school teachers who are underpaid at a monthly salary of only \$100. That was why the study disclosed that primary schools have insufficient teachers. I suspect that these teachers are also pastoralist who affected by the prolonged droughts and whose livestock suffer the consequences. They may need more money to take care of both their animal health as well as saving their own families from possible starvation.

School closure during dry season is not a surprise to pastoralists, teachers and their children. The fact is that they cannot let their animals die of hunger and thirst since they are the major source of livelihoods. The reduction in numbers of children cited during the study derives an implication that children must help their parents to prevent their livestock mortality which they have annually experienced in Hawd region.

Many people have asked questions why most pastoralist children rarely join secondary education. The major reason could be that they are automatically pushed and twisted by dry seasons which they cannot reverse on their own.

Most children in pastoral Hawd drop-out of school before they can complete their primary education cycle. Such cases affect mostly girls than boys. Girls are by their nature vulnerable to rape due to the longest proximity between home and school. They are prone to various risks caused by boys and elderly men. However, it does not mean that small boys are safe because they may be raped by some women. In fact this experience is true with other regions of Somaliland even among the so called 'non-pastoralist school children.'

Learning under trees without desks and benches for pupils who are expected to join secondary and higher education in the near future does not instil confidence among them. They are likely to suffer from low self-esteem and inferiority complex for a life time.

Food insecurity was cited as one of the dangers hindering primary education in Hawd region. When children complain of hunger at school, they may be forced to run away from school because they may not concentrate during learning after all.

VIII. RECOMMENDATIONS

With many questions unanswered on the miserable education status of pastoral regions and particularly Hawd in Somaliland; this study has outlined several policy recommendations that could be taken seriously in order to reform their education strategies. Children in Hawd could achieve their educational plight if schools are made accessible to them as well as the necessary facilities and services.

- Government of Somaliland needs to establish mobile schools. These schools could be equipped with mobile trained teachers and assigned responsibility to move with pastoralists, their animals and children to teach them from their new relocations.
- Agro-nomadism could be introduced among pastoralists by government of Somaliland to enhance settled life. This could motivate continuity of education cycle for their children during dry seasons. Besides, if pastoralists spare some piece of land for food crop growing, it could ensure that communities are food secure.
- Relocating schools to the nearest proximity between home and schools could help pastoralists easily monitor their children, and especially girls against sexual abuse. This could be the responsibility of government too.
- Ministry of Education and Higher Education of Somaliland could ensure that existing schools are equipped with learning amenities like playgrounds for pupils to engage in co-curricular activities. This could improve their classroom learning as they minds are well refreshed by sports activities.
- Ensure that schools grow trees in and around school compounds to prevent the children/pupils from strong sunshine existing in semi-desert regions like Hawd and others.
- The police institution of Somaliland need to investigate and punish rape criminals. Community policing could be the best measure to registering successful investigations. We must protect the dignity of all children because they are future leaders.
- Increase representation of pastoralists in positions of public decision making. This could guarantee their negotiation capacity to demand the educational and other rights of their children.
- Government could prioritize quality education for pastoralist children since they hold the backbone of the national economy. If we do not do this as government, we would be largely contributing to the destruction of national livelihoods and decline in foreign exchange as well as poor local tax collection. That could also harm salaries of public servants as well as general employment opportunities.
- Government could fairly increase salaries of teachers hired to work in a harsh environment of Hawd. This would not only result into teacher retention but motivation for them to walk an extra-mile in appropriate teaching of pastoralist children. The daily presence of teachers at the schools could minimize absenteeism of children from class attendance.
- Children suggested a need for boarding school in Hawd as it could address the problem of the daily commuted long distance to school.
- There is need to furnish the existing schools so that children stay clean during class/school hours. Whose responsibility should this be? If our government has no ability to do it, the clan leaders could mobilize pastoralists to contribute some money to furnish the classrooms for the common good of their children.

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