



Children's Participation in Schooling and Education in Pastoralist Woredas of Afar Region: Prospects, Challenges and Policy Implications

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ABSTRACT: Pastoralists are among the marginalized groups of society who live in a marginalized environment and whose livelihood is exposed to the vagaries of climate and harsh environmental conditions. This study explores into impediments of pastoral children's participation into schooling and education with particular emphasis on the primary school of selected Woreda, Afar Zone. To achieve this purpose, a qualitative research method was employed. Participants of the study were selected by employing purposive sampling mainly on the basis of their roles related to schooling. Seven members of parent teacher associations, 20 teachers, 4 school principals, 14 education experts and officials, a total of 45 respondents took part in the study. Data were collected through the use of different instruments: Strutted interview, focus group discussion, and document review and observation checklist. The data obtained through these data collection instruments were analysed thematically. The steps involved were organizing and preparing data for analysis, reading through all data, coding, generating a description of the settings and people and identifying categories or themes for analysis, representing descriptions and themes in the qualitative narrative and interpretation. The study identified several cultural and economic barriers such as early marriage, lack of interest for modern education, parental level of education, mobility, child labor, poverty and finance. The results also showed that existence of both supply and demand side constraints. Problem of funding, inability to attract and retain qualified teaching staff, poorly equipped schools and community perception of modern education as a threat to pastoralist way of life were the major supply related shortcomings. The demand side limitations were identified as dispersed settlement patterns, demand for child labour, bride-price and peer pressure. Mandatory seasonal mobility, frequent conflicts and conflict induced displacement were cited as the most pronounced disenabling features. Drought and harsh weather were the driving forces of mobility. Competition over water sources and pastureland coupled with border dispute and cattle raid were identified as the long standing causes of armed conflict which in turn result in school activity disruption. Thus, based on the findings, recommendation is made to planners and policymakers so as to alleviate the observed shortcomings. Improving quality of school facilities, sensitization campaign on the benefits of education, blended mode of delivery, peace dialogue to arrest recurring conflicts, self-proof of schools about their worthiness to the local community and rethinking of teacher incentive mechanisms are some of the important propositions made in view to avert the long standing legacy of educational under representation of the Afar pastoralist communities in Ethiopia.

Keywords: Access, Afar, educationally underprivileged, equity, gender, investment, mobility, primary education, pastoralists, quality

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the study

Education plays a decisive role in improving the living standards of citizens so that nations without basic knowledge and skills might not fulfill the survival criteria in an increasingly knowledge driven world (Liu, 2004). Moreover, the provision of education to all citizens has become not only a national issue but also an international agenda linked to humanity. Primary education is assumed to be the basic tool for welfare of the nations through improvement of productivity and reduction of poverty (Debebe, 2014; Kadzamura & Rose, 2003). Thus, primary education started to be seen not only as part and parcel of major human rights but also as one of the leading political and social agendas of many countries (UNICEF, 2007). Provision of quality and equitable primary education fills not only socioeconomic but also political gaps, which, in turn, fosters local, regional and national development and integrity. Any individual irrespective of age, gender, social

status has the right to education as it is stipulated in the provisions of the human rights (Palmer, Wedgwood, Hayman, King, & Thin, 2007). This right is also enshrined in the constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. Good quality education is indispensable to this end. Where children obtain education that progressively maintains their physical, mental and social developments, their likelihood of leading a better life as successful adults is highly anticipated. Aggregate of individual level success, on the other hand, is believed to result in positive impacts on social and economic advancement at national level as well. Education, civilization and development are interwoven to each other and characterized by mutual reinforcement. Education is about human development. Development is the function of education which entails civilization (MoE, 2009; USAID, 2010).

The Ethiopian education system has been taking a new path following the promulgation of the 1994 Education and Training Policy. Various programs and strategies are being introduced into the education system taking access, quality, equity and relevance as main areas of intervention since the last two decades. The Education Sector Development Program (ESDP) is one of such interventions with remarkable achievements. The ESDP implementation has begun in 1997/8. Consequently, ESDP I has been implemented from (1997/8-2002), followed by ESDP II (2002/3-2004/5). ESDP III has spanned from (2005-2011) and paved the way to ESDP IV which is currently underway facing 2015 as timeframe for accomplishment. General Education Quality Improvement Package (GEQIP) is another notable initiative adopted in 2008 to remedy the severe problem of quality lingering around primary and secondary education in the country. The initiative comprises such four principal areas of deliberation as Teacher Development; Curriculum Improvement; Management and Leadership; and School Improvement along with Civics and Ethical Education, and Information Communication Technology as cross cutting matters. It also adopted like adult education strategy, pastoralist area education strategy, technical vocational education and training strategy, and girls' education strategy are among the major documents that guide practices across the education sector of the country. Equity in education is about how fairly the opportunity to learn is made available for all eligible children. In this regard, the Ethiopian education system is the one which is characterized by both intra and inter regional disparities in participation. Gender disparity is not yet fully conquered. The national average gender parity index (GPI) for primary school participation shows 0.9 in favour of boys. Though progresses with regards to bridging the gaps in access, retention and completion between male and female students are underway, the current trend indicates that things are all in favour of the male especially when we go up the ladder of education.

The progressively increasing number of school going children is self evident which testifies access to primary education is expanding. But quality of education is not growing in an equal footing with that of the rise in enrolment. This current situation of low quality education seems to be consistent with findings of Palmer, Wedgwood, Hayman, King and Thin (2007) that revealed inverse relationship between rapid expansion, inequity and diminished rate of return to primary education. Given this profile, thus, the Ethiopian primary education system needs to go for a long distance in order to be able to ensure quality of learning. The pastoralist areas had suffered a long period of neglect and marginalization under past governments. The lack of service delivery to pastoralists is widely acknowledged to be one of the most evident processes of marginalization and exclusion by governments and policy makers (Ahmed, 2011). Consequently, basic development infrastructures and social services, including education and training in these areas are very meager. Various research findings illustrate that the salient problems of pastoralists are closely associated with the socio-economic and natural environment they are found in. These include drought, poverty, school distance, harmful traditional practices, etc... During the last five years, the government of Ethiopia has given special attention and support to the development of education in pastoralist areas. Accordingly, on the basis of the Education and Training Policy, the third Education Sector Development Program has given due consideration to mainstream pastoralist education in all the sub-sectors of the education system.

“For many decades, governments regarded pastoralism as ‘backward’, economically inefficient and environmentally destructive, leading to policies that have served to marginalise and undermine pastoralist systems. More recently, pastoralism has come to be regarded by many as a viable and economically effective livestock production system, but the policies needed to reverse its historical marginalisation and address the chronic levels of poverty and vulnerability faced by many pastoralist communities have yet to be put in place.” (Chinogwenya & Hobson, 2009)

1.2. Statement of the problem

Five out of six individuals or even a greater proportion of the Ethiopian population lives in rural areas. The urban dwellers account for only close to 15%. The massive rural population again could roughly be classified into pastoralist and agro-pastoralist groups. Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) estimates that the horn of Africa is a home of largest aggregation of traditional stockbreeders in the world. The region accounts for

about 20 million people whose livelihood mainly depends on pastoral activities (FAO, 2006). Ethiopia, being situated in this part of the African continent, is also a home for close to 10 million pastoral population (Beruk, 2008) distributed over six of the nine administrative regions and one of the two city administration councils (this refers to the rural outskirts of the city of Dire Dawa). Accordingly, pastoral communities are elsewhere in the country except in dominantly agro-pastoral highland regional states of Amhara and Tigray, and the metropolitan Addis and mainly urban regional state of Harari.

Although the federal and regional governments of the pastoralist regions as well the community at large is collaborate making significant endeavors to provide pastoralists with access, equity and quality education, national and regional studies indicate that what remains to be done is by far greater than what has been accomplished. Moreover, discussions held with experts and officials of education bureau of pastoralist regions in various consultative meetings have revealed the prevalence of numerous bottlenecks that hinder the expansion of quality education in pastoralist areas. The major ones are long period of marginalization, down-trodden economic status of pastoralists, deterrent impact of mobility and low density of population, inequitable distribution of educational services, vulnerability of pastoralist areas and the like. Pastoralists occupy 60% (625,000 square kilo meter) of the total land mass of the country. Pastoral communities consist of 10 million population (13.53% of the total population of the country) distributed across six regional states and one city administration council. Economically speaking, pastoral areas contribute 35-45% of livestock. Over 75% of the total area (5.5 million hectare or 5% of the entire area of the country) demarcated for wildlife reserve including national parks and sanctuaries is found in pastoral regions of Afar, Oromia, SNNPR, Somali and Gambella. Six of the country's eight river basins namely, Abay, Omo-Gibe, Baro-Akobo, Genale-Dawa, Wabishebbelle and Awash cross the pastoral range lands. The pastoral areas are known for bio-diversity, minerals, energy, and cultural heritages valuable for anthropological, archaeological, geological and tourism purposes (Beruk, 2008; Eshetu, 2008). Most pastoralist areas are endowed with less utilized natural resources and products of domestic animals that would help national growth (Chinogwenya & Hobson, 2009; USAID, 2010). In addition to this, because of their low educational participation and shortage of related knowledge and skills, pastoralists are deprived not only economically but also politically, which made them less represented in the major decision-making posts of their countries (Ismail, 2002). However, there is a lack of research on the provision of primary education in pastoralist regions in Ethiopia, and this significantly affected developing delivery strategies and the adoption of alternative programs as remedial solutions ultimately contributing to achieving the goals of EFA.

This study, therefore, has examined into the impediments of primary education participation and persistence among pastoralist children of Afar Region due to the prevailing lowest participation and highest attrition rates in primary education. The study has the following specific objectives:

1. To explore the main factors that interferes with pastoral children's access to equity and quality primary education in Amibara and Gewane Woredas of Afar Regional State.
2. To examine compatibility of the existing approaches to educational service delivery to the needs and contexts of the pastoral communities.
3. To scrutinize how equitable is the practice of primary education participation in terms of ensuring gender equality with particular emphasis on the pastoralist Woredas .
4. To identify the innovative approach or measures should be taken to curb the challenges.

1.3. Research Questions

The study is guided by and determined to seek answers to the following four major research questions.

1. What the main factors affect the expansion, provision and participation to access, equity and quality primary education in pastoralist area of Amibara and Gewane Woredas of Afar Regional State?
2. What are the compatibility of the existing approaches to educational service delivery to the needs and contexts of the pastoral communities?
3. What community perceptions underlie the practice of quality and equal opportunity provision in education between male and female children?
4. What innovative approach or measures should be taken to curb the challenges?

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study has practical, policy and research significances. The practical significance of the study is related to supporting efforts of practitioners by bridging the identified gaps in their practices. Policy significances are those significances that alert policymakers to look for a better course of action and alternative strategies regarding ensuring pastoral children's access to primary education. Identification of future areas of research undertakings is another significance that prompts further inquiry with regard to the case in point. In particular, the results of this study may serve:

1. the education administration bureaus at primary schools, woredas, zonal and regional levels, in particular of Afar zone, to show the main factors that interferes with pastoral children's access to equity and quality primary education;
2. those NGOs involved in the intervention may know an unfamiliar problem or reconsider an existing or familiar problem from different directions and change their ways or approaches toward the solution.
3. the teachers, parents and school administrations of Afar Regional State may benefit from the study in that it may help them in revising the school situation of their children learning;
4. he study may contribute to the formulation of alternative strategies in the expansion of primary education in the context of pastoralist communities; and
5. The study may also serve as source for further related studies.

1.5. Delimitation of the Study

The issue of primary education is very broad and can be studied from different aspects such as quality, equity, accessibility, etc. However, this study was delimited to investigating the school related and non- school related challenges that affect the primary education expansion in the pastoralist Woredas (Amibara & Gewane) of Afar Regional State. Hence, the dependent variable of this study was the primary education expansion of Afar Regional State and the independent variables were four primary school related factors such as: availability of resources, pupils' enrolments, policy issues and conditions of interventions whereas the non-school related factors were economic factors, cultural factors, natural factors and views of the society.

1.6. Limitation of the Study

Different challenges were faced to collect the data at the time of data collection. The unwillingness of some of the government and educational officers for interviews for unknown reasons at one Woreda and the inconvenience to get PTA members at one school made the data collected less than the amount proposed even though it doesn't significantly affect the overall finding. Collection of secondary data took more time than planned because of the shabby condition and poor documentation at sample primary schools and the two woredas.

II. RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

2.1 Research Design

The main purpose of this study was to closely examining into the problems that prohibit access to quality and equitable primary education in pastoralist area of Amibara and Gewane Woredas of Afar Regional State. Ranges of socio-cultural aspects that have direct or indirect implication on pastoral children's schooling were areas of interest as far as the scope of this study was concerned. Principal research design adopted to undertake the study was a qualitative inquiry approach. Among the various qualitative approaches case study was selected as an appropriate tool with which to seek answers to the preset research questions of this study that required an extensive and in-depth description of the phenomenon. This is because this approach is deemed appropriate to gather detailed data from participants' perspectives (Creswell, 2012; Keith, 2009). Moreover, a qualitative approach is an appropriate design in order to interpret ideas that respondents evince on the factual realities behind the prevailing educational provision, like detailed explanations for low involvement in primary education and factors influencing the educational provisions for the children of pastoral societies (Creswell, 2012; Keith, 2009).

2.2 Study Site

Afar national regional state is located in the northeastern part of Ethiopia, which is inhabited mainly by Afar accounting for 1.7% of the total population of Ethiopia (CSA, 2007). The predominant economic activity of the Afar is animal husbandry, mainly cattle, camels, goats and sheep. The great majority of Afar people migrate seasonally in search of grazing and water for their animals. However the overarching vision of the federal government is the transformation of this pastoral society into settled agro-pastoralists along the banks of rivers (FDRE, 2008). As a result, some of the Afar people have settled along the parks of the Awash River and begun to adopt a sedentary life. This study was conducted in government primary schools of Afar national regional state. The region consists of hot, dry and semi desert climates. It has the lowest lying land in Ethiopia known as the Dallol depression, which is about 116 meters below sea level (Fekadu, 2000). The Afar regional state has five zones and 32 woredas. The region is surrounded by the rift valley in the north, the escarpment of the central highland mass of the Amhara and Tigray regions in the west and north-west, and the escarpment of the eastern highland mass of the Oromiya and Somali regions in the south and south-east. It also shares borders with Eritrea in the north and with Djibouti in the south-west (CSA, 2007). The population of the study comprises school-based supervisors (i.e. Principals, unit leaders & heads of department) and teachers of the four

sampled primary schools, two woredas education office experts and zonal supervision coordinators. Accordingly, 7 members of parent teacher associations, 20 teachers, 4 school principals, 14 education experts and officials working at woreda and zone levels were the population of the study.

2.3 Sources of data

In order to strengthen the findings of the research the relevant data for the study were generated from both primary and secondary sources. The major sources of primary data were teachers, school-based supervisors (principals, unit leaders and heads of department) of government primary schools, and the zonal education office coordinator and woredas education office supervision coordinators of Afar Region. The secondary sources of data were the schools' documented records of supervision. These files that observed to strengthen the data obtained through structured interviews, focus group discussion and observation.

2.4 Sampling technique and sample population

In order to obtain reliable data for the study, available, convent and purposive sampling techniques were employed. Accordingly, due to their responsibility to provide supervision activities for teachers and a direct and close relationship within the four primary schools 7 members of parent teacher associations, 20 teachers, 4 school principals, 14 education experts and officials working at two woredas and zone levels; in total of 45 respondents took part in the study. Since school-based supervisors are responsible to carry out supervisory activities in their school, all school-based supervisors of the three primary schools were taken through purposive and availability sampling technique. Woreda education officials, school principals, and incumbent teachers from each sample primary schools were selected pursuant to their held position in the understanding that these groups have better information about factors that affect children's participation and persistence in education in their respective areas of responsibility. Decision to include these groups was also carried out on the basis of the respondents' experience in teaching and/or educational management; and their gender in order to be able to capture any possible difference in views which may result from longer years of service as well as difference in gender.

2.5 Data Collection Instruments

Varieties of instruments were employed in the attempt to approaching different participants according to their convenience and the way the instrument better suits to their situation. Structured interviews, focus group discussion, document review and observation checklist were the major instruments used for data collection. Interviews were conducted to gather data from supervisors, principals, teachers, heads of education at regional, zonal and woredas level experts. Focus group discussions were used to gather data from school teachers and members of parent teacher associations. Observation and document review were also used to gather data from schools and documents respectively.

2.6 Validation of Data Collection Instruments

Checking the validity and reliability of data collecting instruments before providing to the actual study subject is the core to assure the quality of the data (Creswell, 2012). To ensure validity of instruments, initially the instrument was prepared by the researcher. To enhance the validity of the items included in each data collection instrument, five teachers from the college of education and behavioral sciences at Arsi university were given all the tools to rate the items as "essential", "not essential" and "useful but not essential". The items rated as "essential" were taken as they were. Items rated as "useful but not essential" were reformulated. Some of the items rated as "not essential" were omitted and some of them were replaced by other items. Hence due attention was paid to their constructive comments and necessary changes were made to improve the validity of the data collection instruments.

2.7 Method of data analysis

The data were analyzed through qualitatively. There is no single and universally accepted way to analyse qualitative data because qualitative research in education and other areas focuses on human behaviour and social life in natural settings. According to Creswell (2012):

"...there is no single right way to do qualitative analysis -no single methodological frame work. Much depends on the purpose of the research.....there are different ways of analyzing social life and therefore multiple perspectives and practices in the analysis of qualitative data. There is variety in techniques because there are different questions to be addressed and different versions of social reality that can be elaborated. The different techniques are often interconnected, overlapping and complementary and sometimes mutually exclusive (p. 170-71).

This study mainly used thematic analysis and followed Creswell's six steps of qualitative research data analysis (Creswell, 2009: 83-90). First, I began by organizing and preparing the data for analysis. This step involved transcribing interviews, typing up field notes and arranging the data into different types depending on their sources. Secondly, I listened to the recorded data and read the notes carefully and intensively to obtain a general sense of the information and selectively avoided information which did not help to achieve the objective of the study (Creswell, 2012), in keeping with the suggestion of Keith (2009), "...the objective of data reduction is to reduce the data without significant loss of information" (P.174). In the third step I began coding.

According to Creswell (2012), coding involves segmenting sentences into categories, and labelling those categories with a term. I began to use the coding process to generate a description of the setting as well as categories or themes for analysis. Description involves giving information about people, places and events in the setting. In the fifth step I explored how the description and themes would be represented in the analysis to convey the findings. The final step involved making an interpretation or meaning of the data. In general, all the data gathered were transcribed carefully into Amharic (the official language of Ethiopia) and then translated into English. The data obtained through all data collection instruments were systematically organized using structuring into major and sub -themes. The themes were derived from both data obtained through interviews and FGDs and from the literature. To sum up, the data analysis process included transcribing, translating, coding (the process of putting tags, names or labels against pieces of data), categorizing (identifying themes), analysing and reporting.

2.8 Ethical Considerations

In the process of conducting any research, a researcher has the responsibility to be ethical to her/his profession as well as to the participants. To make the research process professional, ethical consideration were made. I assured the participants that the information gathered would never be used for other purposes rather than for this particular study. I also obtained permission from all participants and maintained consensus with them. Hence, consent was obtained from respondents prior to each of the focus group and interview sessions. Participants were informed about the purpose and possible outcome of the study, assured of anonymity and given the option to decline to answer any or all of the questions presented to them. The researcher informed the respondents about the purpose of the study i.e. purely for academic; the purpose of the study was also introduced in the introduction part of the instrument guide to the respondents: and confirm that subject's confidentiality was protected. In addition to this, they were informed that their participation in the study was based on their consent.

The research has not personalized any of the respondent's response during data presentations analysis and interpretation. Based on the consent and agreement that I achieved with all interviewees and FGD participants, tape recording and photos were used to maintain the originality of the data. In order to maintain confidentiality in using direct quotations, participants were addressed using abbreviation and numbers. Furthermore, all the materials used for this research have been acknowledged.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

a. Factors Limiting Pastoralist Children's Participation in Primary Education

3.1.1 Socio cultural factors

This part of the study is concerned with seeking answers to the first objective of the study that is devoted to exploring the underlying factors that interfere with pastoral children's access to equity and quality primary education in the area under study. When the interviewees were asked whether there were problems related to the culture of the society that hinder primary education expansion in the pastoralist woredas, they agreed that the problem may still exist in some places especially in very remote rural areas for different reasons but has reduced to very large scale because much community awareness training programs have taken place towards bad culture and the values of education in the last few years. For instance, one of the respondents said:

Mootummaan yeroo ammaa uummatti aadaa isaa isa gaarii ta'e qabatee gabbifachaa akka deemuu aadaa isa balaa qabu immoo akka inni gatee irra darbu barsiisee jira waan taheef ilaalcha gadhe tahe gateera. FKN dur shamarran hin barattu. Kanaaf sirna barnootaa kana irratti gammadaa guddaa qaba(Principal-1).

That is to say that because the current government has taught the community to identify the good and bad cultures and develops the good ones, the community has dropped the bad cultures like not sending girls to school and well appreciates the education system. The focus group discussion with the teachers and the PTA members also support the idea that the problem of early marriage as a reason for not going to school is minimized compared to the previous years. In sample of the primary schools where the researcher has made focus group discussion with the teachers, it was observed that 16 in one and 4 in the other school coupled

themselves for marriage and dropped the school. They also didn't return to school after the semester break. The main reason for this inter-semester dropout as a result of early marriage as all interviewees agree is that it is the time of drought and their parents have to travel for search of water and grass for their cattle and camels but the children do not like to move with their parents and escape through school. For the family what they see as important is only their short time benefit or the number of camels and cows and not the importance of education which does not come overnight.

The other reason that leads to dropout from school is lack of finances to support educational materials and inability to buy shoes, clothes and cosmetics, regardless of the advices and counsels of the government officials to tolerate all the obstacles and challenges that stand on the way of their learning. When the drought comes there will be a great loss of wealth unless they move the cattle. The schools cannot move but to keep a herd needs up to five persons and the family needs support from every member of the house and is hard to send all children to school. It is also not possible to force the parents to send their children to school because that is their means of subsistence. They don't want to minimize the number of their cows. They don't believe in selling and keep the money in the bank or trade with it.

On the other hand, the children compare themselves with their peer groups and once they are married they also don't come back to school since there is lack of mutual understanding among the family members. However, from the parents' side, marriage has an advantage for the parents of the girl in that they get a marriage prize from the parents of the boy equivalent to at least the price of one camel or cow even though this has been forbidden officially as one of the bad cultures. The students also added that those parents who are illiterate want their children marry and even don't want to feed them if they go to school or don't move with them and their herds during drought.

With regard to the factor belittling girls' education, according to interview results, the number of enrolment of girls at the primary school as compared to the situation before two decades (the time during which educating girls is not accepted) is not that bad. But students share the idea that there are parts of the society who see educating girls as not important for the reasons such as fear of learning bad habits or "ilmaan dubraa yoo baratte ni garaachofti" (PTA3) which means if a girl is sent to school she will become pregnant. Another reason they ascribe it to be lack of educated girl models and hence think that the girls though educated reach nowhere. This problem is very serious in the very remote rural areas. However, the enrolment of girls has been made to increase since the last five years by giving incentives for the parent who send their children to school, oil per head for every girl enrolled and school feeding. Of course, the boys also get some feeding at school.

The extent lack of interest for modern education is also confirmed by the students and the main reason for lack of interest for formal or modern education is that the parents themselves are not educated and do not know the importance of education and do not want to spend money for their educational expenses; they by far prefer their children get married than go to school. Lack of education or low awareness of the families about education is the one repeatedly mentioned problem in the interview and focus group discussion question for the expansion of primary education in the pastoralist areas. It is also indicated that the reason for this lack of interest is related to their unstable mode of life which depends on the climate.

The degrees of effects of the socio cultural factors as compared to that of the early marriage, belittling girls' education and lack of interest towards formal education is not very high and hence these three: early marriage, belittling girls' education and lack of interest towards formal education are among the major socio cultural factors that hinder the primary education expansion in the pastoralist Woredas of Afar Region.

3.1.2 Socio Economic Factors

The majority of the responses from the interviews and the focus group discussion with the teachers, woredas experts, and parent teachers association have shown that the parents' lack of education and its awareness is a great obstacle for the children to go to school. When the parents are asked whether their students sometimes make them to remain home and tend herds, the group shares the idea:

"kan gari maatiin ofii dur baratan man barumsaa ijoollee isaanii ergu barbaadan. Ka garuu dur ofii hin baratin akkuma warraa akka manatti hafanii deebi'anii gala ykn loon tiksanii yookiin immoo heerumani bulan barbaadan"(PTA.6)

Meaning those of parents who are literate want to send us to school while, those who are illiterate wanted us stay at home and rear camel, cows or get married just like them. Moreover, if by chance, only of the parents is educated, the one educated wants that their children learn while the other one does not and there is always disagreement. The effect of nomadic pastoral way of life on expansion of primary education in the pastoralist Woredas of Afar Region is paramount. The interview and focus group discussion results showed that the effect of unstable condition of the lives of the pastoralists is also one among the many risk factors mentioned more frequently. Those children who were learning are forced to leave with them when the parents move and

cannot stay at home because otherwise they will not be offered food and will not have support or get any protection. Mobility by itself is not a problem. It is rather, a strategy to cope up with the natural calamity that encounters them. What is problem is its consequence on the educational services to be provided to the mobile community.

The results also showered that among the proposed school related risk factors, only six of them: turn-over of school officials, sexual harassment, students' class repetition, teachers' turn-over, lack of qualified teachers and teachers' strangeness are rated by the respondents to be below average and the rest Water source, finance, training for teachers, dropout, assistance to girls, distance a problem, stationeries and the like are challenges to the primary education expansion in the pastoralist Woredas of Afar Region. The interviewees have also mentioned that food supply alone is not enough in the vicinity where water is not available and is still difficult to keep the students in the school. They also believe that this problem is beyond the capacity of the government. The students on their part raise shortage of school facilities and especially about lack of water in the school with resentment, for even if there is one it is not enough for all.

The interviewees clearly put that the Woreda and zonal officials do not go down to schools to visit, supervise or discuss problems with the students, teachers or communities to find solution because of lack of transportation means and hence supervision, counseling and guidance and support from the government officers is minimal. All shortages of school facility like library, books and first aid, teachers' lack of job satisfaction as a result of low salaries, lack of incentives and trainings for the teachers, absence of teachers' residences around the school, and absence of especial assistance to girls which are rated above average as constraints that hinder the primary education expansion in the pastoralist Woredas directly or indirectly ascribe their base problem to finance. Poverty is one of the major challenges faced in the expansion of primary education. This finding agrees with Auma et al (2013) who state that financial difficulties due to low economic level of nomads are a hindrance to access to education. This makes it difficult for families to afford basic needs such as food, clothing including school uniforms and other educational costs.

b. Status of provision of and participation

In this study provision and participation of education has been investigated by analysing data gathered related to the four pillars of education; access, equity, quality and efficiency. These pillars of education are mutually reinforcing. They indicate a balanced view on the status of the provision and participation of education in achieving EFA. For example, achieving access to education without ensuring quality is a sign of strategically or unknowingly reproducing the present illiteracy rates and related socioeconomic gaps, in the name of literacy (UNESCO, 2014). Similarly, planning and practising to maintain access and quality without setting and achieving strategic targets related to educational equity and efficiency is tantamount to walk towards a deviant community and sowing a seed for a weed respectively. Hence, in this study, the provision of and participation in education in Afar and Somali regions were analysed on the basis of international measures and indices of the pillars of education.

3.2.1. Access to primary education

It is true that, to talk about EFA in 2015 at last time, in an absolute sense, might be an illusion. In support of this UNESCO (2014) projected that the poorest young women in low and middle income countries will only achieve universal literacy by 2086 in Sub Saharan Africa and in 2072 in other nations. From the different measures that can potentially be used to envisage the status of access to primary education, this study used the four most prominent educational indicators (apparent intake rate (AIR), net intake rates (NIR), gross enrolment ratio (GER), and net enrolment ratio (NER)) to depict the existing realities related to the provision of primary education to the pastoralists.

One of the experts described the root causes of such variation between regional states as follows: Even though there are some similarities between the newly emerging regions such as harsh climate, lifestyle and socio-economic system, their performance in making education accessible vary from region to region. Gambela and Benishangul are walking equally with other relatively developed regions in the country. Somali has shown a dramatic change recently and it was awarded! But the least achieving region is Afar. In the case of Afar, it is possible to categorize the causes into administrative inefficiency and deep-rooted poverty. The current administration system of Ethiopia is federalism. Federalism allows decentralization so the central government has to do nothing in the internal affairs of each region. For example, thirty-two woredas of the education bureau of Afar have been led by less qualified personnel. Even in such a serious case the federal government has no right to assign skilled experts and leaders. The woreda officials, who assumed the schools are situated in every corner of their woredas, perceived it is not a serious challenge. But, during the focus group discussion, parents explained that there is a school in every village but they are not functional. Therefore, their children obliged to go far areas of which the schools are in operation. During the interview with the regional education bureau experts said that:

“School distance is not considered as a challenge for primary first cycle level. But perfectly it is for primary second cycle.”

Jackson (2011) found that in some communities, school buildings have been constructed but the school is not functioning because of a lack of teachers. When schools are far from children's homes, it does not only affect their initial access to school but it also creates barriers to their retention, completion and transition to higher levels of schooling (UNICEF, 2011). One of the studies conducted on the pastoralist region of Afar assured. However, corrective actions were recently taken in seven woredas in Afar, by appointing graduates as education office heads. The other constraint is lack of collaboration. In order to bring change, regional officials need to collaboratively work with zonal and Woreda officials in supervising the schools, sensitizing and mobilizing the community towards the value of education. Such synergy seems less in Afar region. Even at this moment, I have information that more than 20 schools are closed. This is an age-old phenomenon in emerging regions. There are other emerging regions which overcome these challenges. So, Afar has to take lesson from their experience. The focus group discussants of teachers in Afar also stated that a shortage of skilled manpower in leading the education sector, political leaders' lack of commitment and frequent change of government appointees in the educational sector, including woreda education officers, are the main reasons for the low AIR in the region. School principals were disappointed and frustrated because of the situation in the region.

Things in Afar make you mad. You see here [in the school] the situation is so difficult. There is no support and incentives from our masters! No capacity building! No supervision! It is hard to mention all the challenges we face here. All these things make us feel unhappy. If teachers are not happy, how they can make students learn with interest? There are too many problems that I can mention, but in short I can confidently tell you that education is both the forgotten and affected social service in the region. Why do you ask me about the reason for lower educational participation? Why do you not take some time, take more data from students and teachers and observing the school where we work? (Principals)

There are so many reasons behind the low NIR of children at age seven. At this age children need some treatment, like provision of consistent school feeding. However, the school feeding programme was not consistent. Children coming from far-off places cannot enthusiastically learn with what they have eaten at home. Some even come to school without having breakfast at home. Because of this, what is common among most Afar children is to stay with domestic animals in the field and drink their milk as breakfast and lunch. The options in the school should have included provision of consistent school feeding programmes. On the contrary, older children can resist these challenges and get education. That is why we have more AIR than NIR (Supervisors). The other issue investigated in relation to the provision of primary education in pastoralist areas was the enrolment rate. The enrolment rate shows the average proportion of participation of pupils within the indicated range of grades. This indicator is important to examine the status of the involvement of children within some limited level in the structure of formal schooling. The achievement of the goals of UPE is best seen using this index. Since the achievement of universal educational provision gets harder and harder as one move along the structure of education, results at lower grades of primary education may not enable us to know those in the upper grades.

A school principal from the Afar region was also asked about this and responded that: The problem of education in Afar is uncountable. First of all, there is corruption and nepotism in the region. This is a boarding school for girls built to reach the unreached and to support poor families who lack the financial ability to support the education of their children. But if you [the researcher] see the composition of students, the majority of them are from relatively well-to-do families and from the families of the top political leaders of the region. Except for some very few, all students come from relatively rich families and these families come frequently to visit their daughters. If this school was established to provide access to education for disadvantaged female students, which contributes to achieving the EFA goals, why do they do such a 'shameful' practice? This affects the morale of many parents.

Therefore, for me, the root cause of low performance towards enrolment and the achievement of EFA goals are the absence of good governance and the prevalence of corruption. I think that if good governance is possibly maintained in the region, there will be a high enrolment rate and the achievement of EFA goals will become so easy. For this to happen, we are trying to influence the officials to exercise fair and valid screening admission criteria for pupils to this school (Principals).

Afar is lagging behind even compared to other regions that have similar climatic conditions and socio-cultural and economic environment in Ethiopia? Is this because we are unable to learn because we are dull? Or is this because we are cursed by our ancestors? I do not think that all these are the right and real reasons. I think the main reason for the poor provision of education and low enrolment rate in our region is lack of good governance. A few years ago we [Afar] were on the same level as other pastoralist regions such as Benishangul, Gambela and Somali. These regions have made very good progress in improving provision of education. (Supervisor)

Generally, the above data showed that educational provision in the Afar regions is lower than in the Somali region and also lower than the national average. Based on this finding one can argue that the ineffective performance of educational provision in the Afar region is one of the pulling factors to achieve the EFA at national level.

3.2.2 Equity in education

The main intention of the ratification and enforcement of free primary education policies in Ethiopia as of 1994 was to avoid high direct costs of education, which was the main barrier for children from poor families not to gaining access to primary education and also for early dropout. This helped to ensure that no child would be excluded from school because of inability to pay. Although financing primary education in one way or another provides an opportunity for marginalized children, including those from pastoralist regions, to have access to education, it was estimated that millions of children were not attending primary school in the pastoral regions. Since education is a basic human right giving opportunities to citizens deprived of primary education, devising and applying some affirmative programmes would be important for the healthy survival and development of the country. To this end, educational parity should be maintained between males and females, rural and urban as well as agrarian and pastoral communities. Accordingly, in this particular study, data were gathered on the extent and effects of educational disparity. By doing so, the existing status of educational equity in the regions is analysed based on the data obtained on gender parity, and urban versus rural provision of primary education compared with those of the national average as indicated below.

3.2.3 Supply side determinants

In reference to Krätli and Dyer (2009), the supply side determinants are sub-divided into four. The first one is problem of allocation of adequate financial resource. Staffing and training challenges are in the second place. Poorly equipped schools are other manifestations that determine pastoralist children schooling. Unfriendly perception of modern education by pastoralist communities is another perspective of the challenge in promoting pastoralist children's participation in primary education. In the effort to identify commonly prevailing supply side determinants, educational professionals and officials were asked to rate the degree of their agreement or disagreement regarding intensity of supply side determinants in hindering children's access to education. The inquiry into supply side factors as determinants of educational participation of children from pastoralist communities under study was not concluded only by obtaining views of the professionals alone. More data were collected through the use of observation checklist, key informants interview, statistical records and illustrative pictures where appropriate.

Funding: According to Krätli and Dyer (2009), refers to the cost that is required to construction and maintenance of schools in difficult to reach areas. School construction and maintenance in remote areas primarily face problem of compromised quality mainly for scarce supply of the required industrial materials. Secondly, soaring transport costs due to undeveloped road access and long distance from centres of distribution sometimes dictates to resort to locally available resources. Despite the observable realities out there, however, quality school infrastructure has its own part to play in carrying out effective educational operations. Problems pertaining to low quality of school facilities are well noted by the Ethiopian ministry of education too. To this end, the ministry describes the situation as it was given less attention than it deserves. Beyond acknowledgement of the drawbacks in this regard, the MoE hints the direction to be pursued thereafter as saying the following. One issue which needs more attention than in previous years is the low quality of school infrastructure, due to a strong reliance on low-cost constructions (mainly through community support). This may be one of the factors that explain the low completion rates and the low achievement. More attention will be given to the quality of facilities under ESDP IV (MoE, 2010:10-11)

Staffing and training: Krätli and Dyer (2009) state that it is inherent to remote rural areas to secure and retain teachers at the teaching post. Trained teachers either refuse to accept the job offer to work in those far away hardship locations or resign shortly after employment. Even though trainings are provided and their capacity being built, according to these authors, teachers in pastoral areas do not hesitate to quit their job upon the first opportunity of securing job elsewhere. In the past, teachers for Ethiopian schools were trained at three different institutional arrangements. Teacher training institutes (TTIs) provide one year post secondary school certificate training. Teachers' colleges offer two-year courses that lead to diploma in teaching. It was the responsibility of universities to train teachers with Bachelor's degree and above. Teachers with certificate level of training were in charge of taking care of lower primary school instruction. Diploma holding teachers are supposed to teach in upper primary level whilst teachers with Bachelor's degree assigned to teach in secondary schools. This classification, however, was not strictly applicable for the main reason of shortage in qualified teaching personnel. Very often, teachers with lower level of qualification assume instructional responsibility at higher levels where their pre-service trainings did not equip them well with both knowledge of the subject matter they teach and method of teaching as well. People with no formal

teacher training courses also hold teaching posts although their proportion is diminishing at present. Nonetheless, Teacher Training Institutes those prepare teachers for primary schools are currently nonexistent. But large number of teachers with certificate level of qualification is still serving in the system.

IV. FINDINGS

In this study the following findings are obtained:

- The structured interview questions and the focus group discussion confirm that water resource is one of the reasons for the dropout of students.
- The focus group discussion with teachers has identified that there were students who quitted schools for lack of money to buy cosmetics and clothing and were also contacted and observed by the researcher.
- The study found that there is pastoral education strategy enacted at national level. However, the participants did not realize the existence of pastoralist specific education policy/strategies at regional level.
- The discussion with the parents also confirmed that in some places the community constructed schools, libraries and latrines but couldn't furnish them and most of the libraries are without books and the latrines are also unfinished and not separated for teachers and students.
- Regular refreshing training was one among the problems that are identified: that special training could meet double advantage in that it will be an incentive for the teachers and at the same time fill the gap where special training for teachers in pastoralist areas is needed.
- This study explored different opportunities in the region to address primary education for Afar pastoralist children and based on their influence for promote access of primary education for pastoralist, the participants ranked as follows: Special support program, integrated functional adult education, pastoral community development program and fast expansion of infrastructure and international and local NGO financial support had contribute for the region education sector development.
- The students drop out of school during drought when they travel with their parents in search of green land and water for their camel and cattle. This occurs in the months of December, January and February. However, the problem is latent in that the reports that are regularly given on the number of these dropouts to the higher educational officials at different levels and to the NGOs are not genuine and the right image of the students on the regular attendance roll is hidden and this is also a challenge to take corrective measure.
- The interviews indicated that teachers are not comfortable because of lack of facilities (for instance, some have to travel up to 156 km to collect their salaries) in the remote rural villages and often quit their job and go for higher education and urbanized places.
- Early Marriage of students. The students quitting school and getting married to each other is one among major problems for the number of dropouts to increase.
- Few years back before community awareness is done, the culture kept the girls at home because the society didn't believe that educating the girls is of no importance. This has many reasons: the girls would be raped and becomes pregnant; the girls were the source of indirect income through marriage.
- The study disclosed that poor/ absence of supervision and follow up resulted high absenteeism of teachers, shortage of qualified teachers: which aggravated by poor administrative support from woredas, poor quality of data also mislead the country as well as the region to wrong conclusion on the provision of primary education for pastoralist.
- The finding of the presented study confirmed that poor capacity of woreda experts aggravate the administration problem of the education system and leaded to be challenges to address education for pastoralist Afar region children.
- The finding of this study revealed that inflexibility of school calendar hangs the pastoralist children to participate in education and lead them to drop out from school.
- The study found that the educational data at regional and at national level different on their GER, NER and other indicators.
- Nomadic pastoral way of life. The percentage of administrators and teachers who rated the nomadic pastoral way of life as a factor that hinders primary education expansion.
- Low level of parents' education was indicated by the majority of respondents, students also asserted that because their parents are not educated they compare the importance of education with money and hence don't want to send them to school for use of their labour.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Conclusion

The objective of the study was to assess to what extent the current education policies influencing the pastoralist communities to access quality and equitable primary education in pastoralist Woreda of Afar region; to explore the main factors/challenges that hinder progress of the primary education for

pastoral communities; to assess the possible strategies on how the challenges can be best addressed in as far as education for pastoralists concerned.

Nomadic and pastoralist groups are amongst the most marginalized people with little or no access to education in the country. Providing education to nomadic and pastoralist communities is one of the most challenging and urgent issues currently facing education policy-makers, practitioners and other actors within the field, since it is at the final years of EFA and MDG goals. This study showed that there are many challenging factors contributing to the primary education expansion in the pastoralist woreda of Afar zone. Some of the challenges are the challenges that hinder the students from enrolling to school and the others are the challenges that affect their livelihood not to stay in the school. Thus, the research identified non-school related factors which are in turn categorized into socio cultural and socioeconomic factors and school related factors. Early marriage, belittling the value of girls' education, lack of educated role model and the parents' lack of interest for formal education are the major challenges outside the school related to cultural practices of the pastoralist community. Whereas, the other major threats and hindering factors to the primary education expansion in the pastoralist woredas of Afar region are nomadic pastoral way of life, demand for child labor, poverty and parents' level of education which are factors outside the school related to socio economy of the community. It was established that factors such as inadequacy of infrastructural and teaching-learning facilities like classrooms, toilets, playgrounds and libraries, Parents' income level (poverty of parents) and parents' education level (ignorance of parents) posed a real challenges of access, quality and equitable primary education in pastoralist area woredas of Afar region.

Consequently, despite education being recognized as a fundamental basic human right, not all children especially those in the study areas had equitable access to it. However, if appropriate strategies of improving access, retention, equity and achievement in primary schools in the informal settlement were put in place, the EFA objective can be achieved. The strategies must also address the issue of quality of education offered to children in the informal areas. As stated earlier in the background of the study, all the lofty goals of EFA, UPE and MDGS on education cannot be realized unless and until concerted efforts were put in place to enhance access, equity, retention, transition rate, completion, equality and achievement in education. It can be also concluded that shortage of these resources compromised the access of children to education. In some primary schools, there were no physical classrooms in place but rather learning took part in open-air classes. This negated the intentions of the Free Primary Education program by the government of Ethiopia in her bid to enhance accessible and qualitative universal education in the country. The study also revealed that the government gave limited support to the instructions in terms of finance and instructional materials. This affected participation and enrollment hence led to dismal enrollment rate as sufficiency of school facilities are a vital consideration to take into account when principals are admitting pupil. It was also at variance with the provisions of the national policy on education for an equitable distribution of educational facilities to primary schools by the government.

This study concluded that there are also supply side challenges that impeding Afar pastoralist children accessing quality primary education. This challenges are mainly emanated due to lack of attention to the implementation of pastoral education strategy; mainly primary education program. The primary education program lacks consistent and supportive supervision there are poor educational administration, challenges on teachers supply, qualification, attendance and school facilities aggravate the low enrollment and low internal efficiency of the education system in the region. On the other hand, within the school, the absence of water source, the increasing number of dropouts, absence of training for teachers and finance are found to be the major challenges to adversely affect the primary education expansion in the pastoralist woredas of Afar zone. It is also the impression of the researcher as observed from the interviews and focus group discussion that in the study area much politics is done than on education and the study indicates that what remains to be done is by far greater than what has been accomplished. Never the less, educational service rendered to a society is not something which can be done by few or only part of the salaried individuals in the sector. It calls for the joint collaboration and active participation of all groups of the society that are concerned and are placed at different levels of responsibility. Changes in policy and practice are essential if education is to reduce poverty and support pastoralism as a sustainable livelihood.

This study also explored opportunities in the Afar regional state to promote primary education for pastoralist community. As the above demand side challenges indicated that the pastoralist communities are vulnerable to food security and this lead to move from place to place. Toward this end, the government plan to settle the pastoralist community around the basin area is a major opportunity for promoting primary education for those pastoralist communities. In addition to this, as the above supply side challenge, the capacity of education officials was an impending factor. But the government strategy to equate the developmental status of the regions in the country it is established and on operation of special support program to those emerging regions, this program alleviate the capacity gap of the

region, woreda and school. In general, there are also pastoral community development programs, international and local nongovernmental organization and fast expansion of infrastructure in the region are a good opportunity to pay back the accumulated challenges on the education center in the region. Finally, it was concluded that pupils' access to education in Afar pastoralist children was influenced by parents' level of education, family's income level and physical teaching /learning facilities as socio-economic factors.

Recommendation

Since the national driven policy and strategies to improve access, equity and quality of primary education for pastoralist community are insufficient and not yet fully implemented, In order to implement the strategies, a multi faced effort should have to be taken to alleviate the existing challenges impeding pastoralist community to access primary education. On top of findings, this study forwarded the following recommendation to all the stakeholders who participate in the course of expansion and provision of primary education for the pastoralist community.

1. The policy makers have to consider the nomadic and pastoralist regional cultural, economic and geographical differences and barriers when educational policy is formulated and implemented if goals of EFA, UPE and MDGS is to be fully realized in pastoralist communities.
2. The regional education bureau of Afar region should have to enact suitable pastoralist education strategies which adapted from the national level and make harmonization based on the context of the region and mobilize different stakeholders including NGOs to implement different educational provision approach suitable for pastoralist community. The concerned body also invites NGOs for some of the problems related to like constructing road, preparing water resource sufficient for herds and people and hostels for students, and introduction of science and technology, etc.
3. It is clear that the pastoralist community have less capacity to support the education system financially and materially because of their poverty. The government has to involve NGOs and create favorable condition under which mobile schools and mobile teachers can function such as provision of transportation service say a bicycle, mobile account allowance for communication, first aid kit, etc.
4. The researcher recommends that programs of adult education and alternative basic education programs should be rolled out by the region, government and other stakeholders in pastoralist woredas of Afar region. For this will aide in enhancing attitudinal change among illiterate and ignorant parents in favor of child education. The schools in this area should also immediately initiate income generating projects to subsidize parents' fees in the running of the schools.
5. The education officials should work to assist teachers to relate the contents learned to the reality existing in the pastoralist areas to demonstrate to the community and the children the practical advantages of education increase and arouse their motivation and interest for modern education.
6. The Woreda education offices should go down to the school level in order to identify and discuss the problems with the community; and give different trainings and conferences for parents' specially working through PTAs and students at the same time and place by educated people from other places by demonstrating the practical outcomes of education by preparing educational festivals and make them appreciate modern education and thereby closing the understanding or awareness gaps between parents and the students.
7. The concerning body has to consider incentives such as special salary allotment, hardship allowance, additional benefits like scholarships for the teachers in the pastoralist areas considering the hardships the teachers have to bear when they decide to work in the pastoralist area.
8. The zonal education office has to work out to strengthen the supporting of students at the school with food and other incentives so that the number of dropouts is decreased and also those who remained at home would come.
9. The study has identified opportunity cost as an important constraint to sending children to school. Families in these areas should be empowered to have sustainable means of dealing with their poverty through credit facilities that would enable them to engage in some form of income generating activities at household levels. For this will enable them enroll their children to schools and schooling will eventually redeem them from their poor plight.
10. The following recommendations for further research are presented: The study did not exhaust all the access to quality and equitable primary education in pastoralist woredas of Afar region, Ethiopia, other factors like parents ignorance of education matters and delayed wages emanated from the study that require further investigation. More comprehensive studies should be undertaken to include a large population and a variety of areas in order to ascertain whether or not the problem of low pupil access to quality and equitable primary education as a result of many factors.

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