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**Eating from the Same Pie: Co-existence in the Face of Resource
Competition in Pastoral Areas of Ethiopia
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Introduction

Much has been said about resource deprivation and socio-economic changes among pastoral groups in the Awash Valley region. Certainly, the state-sponsored land alienation and the threats for still further encroachments have entailed significant transformations in the traditional pastoral land tenure arrangements. However, the correlation between these two aspects of change has not been adequately treated in previous discussions on the subject. One possible explanation for this is that the studies may have been intended to focus on other dimensions of the transformation process. As a result, little scholarly attention has recently focused on how state actions on land affect the tenure structure and how people respond to this and the manifestation of such a transformation in the land tenure. The Karrayu land is located on the edge of the Upper Valley of the Awash River Basin, central Rangelands of Ethiopia (Ayalew, 2002). Land uses patterns in pastoral areas have been changing particularly with the growth of agriculture and development of enclosures (Little, 1992). Not only have the traditional patterns of settlement changed, but also people's fundamental relationship to and attitude towards land. This has led to a new emphasis on land ownership and territoriality which has its own implications for a wide variety of land-use issues and the traditional pastoral land tenure arrangement.

Material and Methods

Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) methods were used, in this study, to facilitate the collection, presentation and analysis of information with the pastoral people themselves. Rather than answering a stream of questions directed by the values of the researcher, local people present their ideas in a form they can discuss, modify and extend if they are empowered. This allows the reproduction of reality in the way it is perceived by the pastoralists. In this regard, various PRA tools were employed to collect the needed information. Methods used include in-depth interview with key informants, group interviews and focus group discussions

Results and Discussion

A. Transformation of the Tenure System in Karrayu Community

Much has changed over the last twenty-five to thirty years in terms of land use and land tenure in Karrayu territory; this is mainly due to the commercial farms, and the Ittu migrants from West Harrerge. These groups introduced the practice of farming and permanent settlement in the Karrayu territory. This has major consequences to the traditional land tenure arrangements there. There is on-going clearing and enclosing of the previously communal access rangeland areas, calling for enclosed land and use of land for a privatized agricultural use.

B. The Spread of Agro-Pastoralism and Changes in Pastoral Land Tenure

The Karrayu have been practicing irrigated and rain-fed cultivation for the last fifteen to twenty years. The most important reason behind their resort to crop cultivation is the increasing amount of pressure on land which put their pastoral mode of subsistence in crises. No less important, the settling inside the Karrayu territory particularly of the Ittu who migrated from West Harrerge has played a part in the overcrowding and overstocking of the already shrinking resource base. Thus, the resultant competition and confrontation over grazing resources which have themselves become considerably less than they were have caused the Karrayu to turn to cultivation of at least their staple crop, maize.

Moreover, fear and concern that their remaining land would still be expropriated, if uncultivated, has been another factor, as they put it, in the change of their economic adaptation and diversification into farming.

C. The Akake Development Association: the search for Co-existence

Because of escalating competition over land Karrayu pastoral communities created a modality of co-existence through formation of an association and developing a contract. Key items in the terms of contract included: 1) limit the duration of the lease to ten to fifteen years, 2) of the 1,000 hectares (ha) of land to be let lease, the investor will prepare a total of 100 hectares during the terms of the lease (a limited number per year) for maize cultivation by the pastoralists, 3) the investor will pay a rent equivalent to USD 15/ha each year for developing 900 hectares, and 4) irrigation canals should be constructed such that they can permanently be used once the contract is terminated. This illustrates the dynamism of pastoral land tenure arrangements necessitated by constantly changing circumstances. In other words, land tenure changes are manifestations of the overall economic and social transmutations in the pattern of pastoral livelihood and land-use practices. In essence, such adaptations are related to the introduction and expansion of small-scale agriculture by the herdsmen including changes in their settlement patterns, social relationships, and attitudes towards the land itself. Accordingly, agricultural practices have resulted in reduced mobility and permanent occupation of land by the sedentary pastoralists. Among the immediate effects of these changes is the emergence of exclusivity and a new emphasis on land-ownership and territoriality.

Conclusion

Under compelling or changing circumstances, the land tenure system manifests a high degree of flexibility giving way to the introduction and adoption of what could be described as ‘alien’ contractual land-use institutions. And in the course of time, these institutions continue to develop by assuming varied features which might be local in their origin or borrowed from other agricultural areas. As a result, land leases, rentals, inheritances, and sales have become common arrangements under which the Karrayu carry out farm activities on a joint basis with other partners. In the process, an informal land market has emerged in which land is temporarily or permanently transferred between households within the pastoral group or

outside it through sales or mortgages. In sum, the self-adaptation manifests itself in the manner of land exploitation that they see fit in view of their crisis. Besides, the question of continued survival, which is the driving force behind the process of transformation, necessitates that they maximize the returns from their land. The Karrayu have developed a particular mode of pastoralism, which proves to be remarkably adaptive in the face of multiple external challenges that they have had to cope with.

References

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