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## **Effects of Farmer-Herder Conflicts on Socio-Economic Development of the Local Communities in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County, Kenya 1963-2013**

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### **Abstract**

Three words, displacement, destitution and death, summarize what is happening in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County. Recurrent farmer-herder conflicts have been a feature of the region since pre-colonial period. The participants have been the Akamba farmers and Somali and/or Orma herders. In the post-independent era their frequency has intensified. As a result, they have undermined efforts to increase food production in the region. As such, the conflicts have negatively impacted on communities' livelihoods as well as national stability and development, as the atmosphere they have created has in the long run lowered the quality of life of the resident communities in the study area. In view of this, Peaceful coexistence must thus be sought after by all means. To achieve this, there is need to integrate resident communities to partner with the government and other stakeholders in order to reverse the status quo to the benefit of the resident communities. The objective of the study was to examine the effect of the farmer-herder conflicts on the socio-economic development of the local communities in Mutitu Sub County. The study was guided by the theory of structural violence by John Galtung it illuminates how structural inequalities lead to conflict which systematically deny some people their basic human needs which in turn undermine their socio-economic development. Simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of 200 respondents. Purposive sampling procedure was then used to select key informants who included; community members, community elders, members of the Area Peace Development committees, state security agents, Non Governmental Organizations and religious leaders.

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The study used Questionnaire, interview schedules, FGDs and archival sources to get Primary data. Document analysis was done to give secondary data related to the study. The data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics. The results were presented in narration form. The study found out that the farmer-herder conflict led to many effects which in turn have led to loss of livelihoods hence, undermining socio-economic development of local communities in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County. It is expected that the outcomes of this study will go a long way into building the historiography on conflicts in Kenya, East Africa and the continent as a whole, inspiring other scholars and researchers and acting as reference resource book for other scholars.

**Keywords:** Conflict; Farmer-Herder; Mutitu Sub County; Socio-Economic Development.

## **1. Introduction**

There is a close relationship between peaceful coexistence of communities and their socio-economic development on one hand, and conflict and socio-economic decline on the other hand. This means that a where there is peace and security local communities will be encouraged to invest in productive economic activities which in turn will give employment and enhance socio-economic development to individuals, communities and the entire nation.. Thus peace and security stimulate socio-economic development. On the contrary, conflict leads to war hence undermining food production, which will further culminate to socio-economic decline [1]. Current research on conflict and development shows that violent conflicts and underdevelopment mutually affect and reinforce one another. For instance [2] have concluded that violent conflict retards development, but conversely, development retards war (conflict). In other words, violent conflict has an impact on the national, local as well as domestic economies of a conflict area [3]. Puts it more succinctly: “violent conflict will affect the levels of poverty in any given economy, as well as the dynamics of poverty along the lifetime of the conflict and in post-conflict context.”Although conflicts in Kenya are of many a different kind [4] classifies them into four main categories: Conflicts among pastoral communities, Conflicts linked to presence of refugees, conflicts between pastoralists and crop farming communities and ethnic clashes. This work focused on the farmer-herder conflict, which is characterized by disputed claims between rival claimants; in this case Akamba farmers and Somali and/or Oromo herder communities over pasture and water. Over the recent past, conflicts involving these two communities have been on the rise. In support of this view [5] observe that conflict over natural resources between farmers and herders is noted to be a chronic problem. In the same vein [6] notes that the need for local communities to resort to such violence is indicative of a lack of policies, or that existing policies are not working to the benefit of these communities as a whole. In Mutitu sub County of Kitui County which is the focus of the study, the most perennial and potentially violent form of conflicts has been between the Akamba farmers on one side and the Somali and Oromo communities on the other side. The most affected areas are Syou, Katumbi, Malalani, Twambui and Makuka [7]. According to the [8] these conflicts have been triggered by competition over water and pasture. The conflicts have been directly responsible for increased deaths, destruction of property, poverty, hunger, starvation, disease, fear, suspicion, mistrust, insecurity and general hopelessness in the Mutitu Sub County. They have thus been detrimental to public peace and security which is pillars to socio-economic development.

### **1.1. Historical Back Ground of Farmer-Herder Conflict in Mutitu Sub County**

According to [8], the farmer-herder conflict in Mutitu Sub County started many years ago. The Somalis used to raid the Kamba for Cattle. The piece of land in contention is historically a community land used by Kamba and Orma communities for grazing their animals. With time, due increase in population and climate change the Akamba turned to farming in the same area which resulted to reduced pasture land [8]. The Somali in search for pasture and water migrated to the area in question from Somali through Moyale, Wajir, Tseikuru along Tana river basin, Kora game reserve and Bangale. The conflict was further worsened by the [9]. During the era of colonialism, the colonial government came up with colonial land and policies which aimed at creating white highland for the white settlers and also cheap labour. This mode of colonial economy necessitated deliberate land alienation from African communities through colonial land policies [10]. Some of the colonial land policies included the Land Regulation Act of 1897 which gave settlers certificates of occupancy for 99 years, The East African Land Order in Council of 1901 defined crown land as all public land that is not private. Private land included land occupied by the Europeans and Africans. The Crown Land Ordinance of 1902 said that all empty land could be at two rupees per acre or rented out at fifteen rupee per 100 acres per to Europeans. In 1904, the first African reserve was created for the Maasai. Consequently, by 1920, land not owned by Europeans eventually became crown land. Africans owned no land according to the European law [11,12]. The Africans were therefore moved to the reserves. The results of that were over population and overcrowding of the Africans in the reserves [12]. Due to the limited land in the African reserves, there was also overgrazing which led to serious soil erosion. To counter that, the colonial government came up with measures to control soil erosion. Here, colonial policies focused on soil erosion control, terracing, protection of riverbanks and other environmental protection measures. Consequently, the colonial government introduced destocking policy in the whole Ukambani region [13,16] describe Akamba protests in 1937 against the government's use of force to destock and confiscate livestock. In 1948, the colonial government decided that the Endau forest should be protected, and evicted all people from the forest in 1948. While the local population and chiefs were unhappy about the eviction, they had little power to protest or voice their concerns against the colonial District Commissioner. The colonial administrators used their own power and discretion to declare forest reserve [14,15] gives an account of a visit by the divisional forest officer and the Forester Machakos and their tour of the entire Kitui district in September, 1948 After this tour, the two officers decided to ask the L.N.C to declare certain hills and ranges as reserves by March 1949. The list of these hills and ranges is given as Mutonguni, Mutito, Matha and Ndhoni. The Endau hills are not on this list. This means that up to 1948, the Endau hills remained unprotected under any administrative or legislative orders. Following the above orders, the Endau hill, the main catchment area in Mutitu Sub County, was gazetted. It was to be owned by the government, and managed by the Forest Department [16] attest to that by emphasizing that the Endau Hilltop Forest is a gazette forest managed by the government as a catchment area and ecologically sensitive ecosystem. These policies had a particularly negative effect on interactions between the farmers and the herders in Mutitu Sub County as they excluded farmers and herders in Mutitu Sub County from important sources of water, forest products and drought grazing areas and limited the area available for cultivation. This played a key role in creating conflict that has been experienced repeatedly in Mutitu Sub County that further impede flexible interactions and socio-economic development in the study area. These policies excluded pastoralists from many of their traditional grazing areas and restricted livestock movement. The colonial laws also excluded pastoral populations from the dairy and livestock markets. As a result, populations were disenfranchised and impoverished. This study established that

the land tenure systems created during colonialism are still present today.

### ***1.2. Mutitu Sub County***

The area lies between the central highlands of Kenya and the coastal forests. The altitude ranges from 500 m above the sea level. In the dry lowlands to 1,400 m above the sea level at the highest peak. It has a total area of 368 square kilometers. It has a population of 88,000 people [18] The Sub County borders Mutomo to the East, Kitui West Sub County to the West, Kitui Rural to the South and Mwingi to the North. It has two major towns which are Mutitu and Zombe. The latter is the head quarter of the Sub County. It is the epicenter of the contact and hostility between the Akamba farmers and the herder communities (Somali and Oromo). It is in this sub county where the Somali and Oromo migrate during the drier seasons. Enziu River which is the source of conflict drains the Sub County under study. The Akamba farmers use the river water to irrigate their farms, while the same river provides water for Somali and Oromo herds. It is semi-arid with the main economic activities being subsistence farming (cultivation and animal keeping). The poverty levels in the sub County are high leading to increased competition for natural resources, hence escalation of conflicts.

### ***1.3. The Peopling of Mutitu Sub County***

During the pre-colonial period, Mutitu Sub County was predominantly inhabited by the Akamba people, but over the years, ethnic diversity was witnessed in the study area as Somali and Oromo herders immigrated from the neighboring Garissa and Tana River counties in search of water and pasture for their animals. In a research done by [19] the population of Akamba community was found to be the highest (67%) in the area followed by Somali with 20 percent and Oromo with 13 percent respectively. The arrival of the herder groups caused resource use conflict in the sub county. The result has been perennial violent conflicts that have led to social and economic transformations among the local communities that are worth investigating.

### ***1.4. Theoretical framework***

The study was guided by the Structural Violence Theory. This theory was advanced by [20] to articulate the link between social structures and human suffering and death. He defines structural violence as avoidable impairment of fundamental human needs or, to put it in more general terms, the impairment of human life, which lowers the actual degree to which someone is able to meet their needs below that which would otherwise be possible. Unequal accesses to resources, to political power, to education, to health care, or to legal standing, are forms of structural violence. In [21] view, Poverty which is a result of structural violence, clearly places individuals at a much higher risk of malnourishment, disease and death. It is clear from these indicators that 'severe poverty cause's massive under fulfillment of social and economic human rights, such as the "right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of oneself and one's family, including food, clothing housing and medical care. Poverty then, is 'the failure of basic capabilities to reach certain minimally acceptable levels', where basic capabilities are understood as basic freedoms 'such as the freedoms to avoid hunger, disease, illiteracy, and so on. According to [22], who is also a strong proponent of the structural violence theory, the right to development is a vector that consists of each of the human rights, and its value is also dependent

upon development of infrastructure. Looking at the water scarcity in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County it's clear that the Sub County has been neglected by the government. There has been very little investment in piped water provision, despite there being several permanent water sources on the hill within only a few kilometers distance from most villages [23]. Note that there are currently three functional or partly functional water pipelines, supplying villages to the west and south of the Endau hill. Several other water projects failed due to corruption among the organizations carrying out the project, poor quality of pipes and poor engineering, as well as lack of maintenance. Notably, the drier areas to the east and north of the Endau hill, including Malalani, have been unable to complete water projects that were started. This has led to the two user groups (Somali and/or Orma herders and Akamba farmers) fighting over the limited resources which in turn has led to loss of livelihoods, reduced access to education and health care and also dependency. The above observation indicate Past government policies have marginalized people in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui which is a dry land, contributing to geographical social inequities, not only by restricting people' livelihoods as described above but also by poor provision of infrastructure. This is also supported by [14] which show that the dry lands have been seen as having low economic potential and being politically unimportant, as a result, government allocations for development in the dry lands have often been low [24]. Point out that the post-colonial government did not seriously focus on problems relating to soil erosion and water development until the 1974-1978 development plan. However as has been frequently pointed out, the notion of structural violence is too broad. It neglects the specific differences in historical variations of forms of injustice, their intersections and the ways in which they are compounded. Slavery, racism, sexism, colonialism and class dominance as well as other disparities, are collapsed into a single category. in the study area for instance, the theory fails to justify the occurrence of conflicts which were there even during the pre-colonial period.

## **2. Methodology**

### **3. Research Design**

The study adopted the descriptive survey design which is appropriate because it does not manipulate variables or arrange for events to happen [25]. It is an appropriate means of collecting information when both quantitative and qualitative data is required. The design is more concerned with description and narration of facts and characteristics of a given situation. The design was also preferred because it facilitates accurate collection of views, suggestions and opinions regarding impacts of farmer-herder conflict on socio-economic development of the local communities in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County.

### **4. Sampling Procedure and Sample Size**

There are 30 County villages units in Mutitu sub County [26]. According to [27,28], at least 30% of the total population is a representative of the whole population. Thus, 30% of the 30 villages gave a total of 9 villages. Purposive sampling was used to select the County village units that had witnessed frequent conflicts. Using this method, ten villages were selected for the study.

## **5. Data collection procedure**

Interviews were held with key respondents to gather expert opinion about conflicts from people with special knowledge. The experts formed the key respondents in the study. This included government security agents, religious leaders and officials of Non-Governmental Organizations. The interviewer probed the respondents through conversation and questions. The interview schedules were ideal to the researcher because information was obtained from the respondents directly. The researcher was therefore able to probe the respondents for clarification in case of ambiguous responses. This allowed the researcher to explain the Subject of discussion clearly and accommodate both literate and illiterate members of the community to respond to questions. According to [27] interviewing allows the researcher to probe the respondent on desired issues. Unlike other methods of gathering information, interviewing gives a chance to the researcher to make inferences from what the respondent says both verbally and non-verbally. This method solely used to find out the knowledge of the government security agents, religious leaders and NGOs officials about the farmer-herder conflicts. In addition to the interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs) were held. They were held with Community members, Members of Area Peace Development committees and Local Community Leaders. The FGDs provided in-depth information that could not be captured by other instruments. They were used to crosscheck some information obtained through questionnaires and also to save on time. Focus Group Discussion (FGD) was used to elicit information from the community members. This is a form of group interview mostly triangulated with more traditional forms of interviewing, questionnaire, and observation [29]. It is good in obtaining several perspectives about the same topic. It facilitates easy conceptualization of the gap between what people say and do.

### **5.1. Data Analysis Procedure**

Qualitative approach was used for data analysis. The qualitative data which was obtained from interview schedule and FGDs and reported in narrative form.

### **5.2. Ethical Considerations**

Prior to the commencement of data collection, the researcher obtained all the necessary documents, including an introduction letter from Kibabii University to seek the research permit from National Commission Of Science and Technology (NACOST). Audience with the sampled respondents in the study area was also sought to clarify the purpose of the study. Upon getting clearance, the researcher in person distributed the questionnaires to the sampled individuals. Assistance from the local administrative offices was also sought. The researcher explained to the respondents about the research. The researcher assured the respondents that the study was for academic purposes only. The role of the research guides (Matoma Mutua and Kalamba Musau) was clearly defined. It was made clear that the participation was voluntary and that the respondents were free to decline or withdraw any time during the research period. Respondents were not coerced into participating in the study. The participants had informed consent to make the choice to participate or not. They were guaranteed of confidentiality of their responses. Permission was also sought from respondents to use their photographs and verbatim captions in this thesis.

**6. Findings of the Study**

The study was conducted in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County with 200 respondents participating in the study. Primary data was collected using a questionnaire, interview schedules and FGDs. Secondary data was obtained from document analysis. The objective was to examine the effects of the farmer-herder conflict on the socio-economic development of the local communities as from 1963-2013

**7. Instrument Return Rate**

The questionnaire return rate was good with respondents returning 180 out of 200 questionnaires. This was 90% response rate. According to [28], the percentage of Subjects who respond to questionnaires is adequate if it is 50%, good at 60% and very good at 70 %. A 90% return rate was thus considered excellent. In addition to the questionnaire, an interview guide consisting of both closed ended and open ended questions was administered to 20 respondents. These included government security agents, religious leaders and NGO officials. Their responses were tape recorded by the researcher. This enabled the researcher get a response rate of 100% from the interview. This allowed the researcher to get a complete and detailed understanding of the issues under research from respondents. The researcher also conducted four FGDs with community members, community leaders and members of peace development committees. FGDs enabled the researcher to gain a larger amount of information in a shorter period of time. Their responses were also recorded by the researcher. This translated to 100% response rate.

**Table 1:** Instrument Return Rate

<b>Category</b>	<b>Instrument</b>	<b>Number Issued</b>	<b>Number Returned</b>	<b>%</b>
Community members, community leaders and members of APDCs	Questionnaire	200	180	90
Community members, community leaders and members of APDCs	FGD guides	4	4	100
Government security agents, religious leaders and NGO officials	Interview schedules	20	20	100

Effects of the Farmer-Herder Conflict on the Socio-Economic Development of Local Communities in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County The study objective was to examine the effects of the farmer-herder conflicts on the socio-economic development of the farmers and herder communities. From the responses it is clear that the conflicts in Mutitu sub County of Kitui County lead to negative impacts on the livelihoods of the communities. The conflicts also s inters good relationships among the local community members and breeds fear and suspicion. This condition is detrimental to popular and progressive societal dynamics and desirable orientations

like “unity in diversity” for socio-economic development as the violence associated with the conflicts has tended to exacerbate hunger and human insecurity [30]. This does not augur well for sustainable development of the local communities. All the effects of farmer-herder conflicts in Mutitu sub County of Kitui County led to reduced socio-economic growth.

Table 4.5 below shows the effects of farmer-herder conflicts on the social development of the local communities.

**Table 2:** Effects of Farmer-Herder Conflicts on socio-economic development of local communities in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County

<b>Impact</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Displacement	162	90
Closure of schools	155	86.11
Reduced crop production	152	84.44
Depletion of livestock	145	80.55
disruption of Commercial activities	141	78.33
Arson and destruction of property	141	78.33
Financial implications in treating injuries and Psychiatric disorders	126	70
Loss of lives	90	50
Abduction and sexual violence	13	7.22

Based on this response, the most common effects of these conflicts is displacement which was mentioned by 162(90%) followed by closure of schools, with 155 (86.11%), reduced crop production came third with 152 (84.44%) while depletion of livestock got 145(80.55). disruption of commercial activities and arson and destruction of property tied as effects number five by registering 141(78.33%). Physical injuries followed with 126(70%), loss of lives 90(50%) abduction and sexual violence was the last with 13(7.22%) mentioning it.

**8. Findings of the Effects of the Conflicts on the Socio-Economic Development of the Local Communities from the Interview and Focus Group Discussion are Discussed Below**

**8.1. Loss of Lives**

During FGD discussions, locals indicated that massive killing was happening to the locals as a result of the conflicts. It was reported that the conflicts often lead to death of the bread winner through injuries. The elderly members of the society play the role of custodians of economic resources, organize labor and direct the use of resource rations at homestead levels. The death of young and energetic members of the society during the farmer-herder conflicts ultimately lead to reduced food endowments for the affected households [31] concluded that armed conflicts resulted in three times as many deaths as inter-state wars between states since World War II. They also observed that armed conflicts are likely to add new forms of vulnerability and exclusion, which in

turn may feed into future outbreaks of violence even after the initial conflict has subsided.

### **8.2. Displacement of People**

The results revealed that a majority of the respondents vacated their house due to conflict in the study area. The result indicated that some people vacated their houses due to conflicts in the study area. During the interviews, CARITAS Kitui officer reported that approximately 400 people both adults and children were hosted by the PEFA church Endau with a lot of hopelessness. And identifying their need for food, water and shelter, the Catholic Church Kitui diocese responded by sending in 169 (90kgs) of maize and 30 (90kgs) of beans. There was additional food from the government which were 58 bags (50kgs) of Beans, 33 bags (50kgs) of Rice, 33 cartons of cooking oil (4x5 liter per carton) and five cartons of corned beef. The governments also send some food rations to other Sub locations namely Malalani, Ililuni, and Makuka on the same day [3] in one research found that conflicts cut off vast numbers of people from economic opportunities and lead to a vicious cycle of displacement and poverty. He further pointed out that during the conflicts; the displaced farmers are effectively cut-off from their livelihoods. This forces them to depend on the government and relatives as it is in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County where people have been forced to depend on government relief food locally known as '*mwo/yo*'. In the long run, this leads to slowed socio-economic growth as people are not self-reliant.

### **8.3. Arson and Destruction of Property**

The report from the FGDs shows that of the respondents in the study, said that farmer-herder conflict has led to arson and destruction of property in the area. According to their report, Loss of property including looting houses and business premises were a frequent occurrence in Endau during the conflicts. They lost personal and household property such as Radios, DVDs, video sets, television sets, sofa sets, academic certificates, marriage certificates, title deeds, bicycles, utensils and clothing. Many of those who had invested in business have incurred heavy losses as most of the shopping centers were burnt during the violence. Some of the displaced businessmen and women were yet to open their businesses again or construct new premises as they were either closed or burnt down by the Somali and Oromo. Food stores and houses were also burnt down. Crops were also burnt to frustrate the Akamba farmers group. As such there was a significant loss of income, leading to escalation of poverty. Some people had to abandon their houses while others sold what was left of them [32] observe that generally, the destruction of assets by armed conflict, in addition to unstable economic, social and political environments, affects the quality of life of households. This is the same case in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County where according to the study findings, loss of assets in the long run impact significantly on the ability of affected households to recover their economic and social position in post-conflict settings, As it pushes the poor the sub County to the fringes of survival and many more people who were hitherto not poor, are pushed into poverty as their savings and income are depleted to as they try to replace the lost property. This to a larger extent undermines their socio-economic development.

### **8.4. Reduced Crop Production**

Many respondents reported that the conflict had a negative effect on crop production in the Sub County.

Subsistence farming is the main economic activity of the Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County residents. Crops for domestic consumption consist of maize, pigeon peas, green grams, beans, and potatoes. Cash crops which grown include are water melons, tomatoes, onions and mangoes. In addition to that Akamba farmers, keep goats and cattle. Perennial conflicts affect the area in several ways; The respondents said that insecurity caused by the violence led to neglect of farms. The atmosphere of fear and suspicion provoked by farmer-herder conflicts means that communities are not engaged in productive economic work. Many farmers avoid going to their farms for the fear of being attacked by the herders. Some farmers also reported that due to fear that they could be killed, abducted or raped, they reported to their farms very late and left very early. This leads to reduced time spent in agricultural production, consequently leading to low farm yields this is due to the fact that land which would have otherwise be used for agricultural production is left to lie idle, so most of them have had to give up farming altogether. This has have left them unemployed [33] in his study of the conflicts in Bwaku East Municipality in Ghana argues that agricultural production is adversely affected because of the dispute over farmlands, disruption of transportation networks, and the inability of most farmers to go to their farms. He further argues that these disruptions of agricultural production have far reaching consequences for household economies in the Municipality because the sector accounts for about 62% of total employment.

#### ***8.5. Depletion of Livestock***

During FGD schedules, majority of the respondents in Mutitu sub County of Kitui County indicated that the farmer-herder conflict in the area led to low milk production through depletion of livestock for the dispossessed communities. Cattle rustlers and raiders focus on killings and stealing of livestock from target communities. From the interview with a community elder, it is evident that criminals take advantage of what initially begins as conflicts over water resource to do criminal activities of cattle rustling and banditry in the area. Studies carried out by [34] in Wajir District support the fact that the effects of resource based inter-ethnic conflicts at household level is felt in terms of reduced access to food and forced migrations of families and livestock.

#### ***8.6. Disruption of Commercial Activities***

According to the businessmen and women, armed conflicts also impacted negatively on commercial activities in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County. Commerce, the third most important economic activity in the Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County has been adversely affected by the farmer-herder conflict. Mostly, whenever conflict occurs, shops are closed as business people are afraid of looters. The respondents from Mwitika shopping Centre, which is found in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County asserted that, commercial activities as a whole is negatively affected by the perennial violence in the area. They complained that looting, robbery and the general lawlessness, which bring businesses to a standstill during violent clashes, scare away the existing and potential businessmen and women. Insecurity also restricts movement of traders for the fear of attacks and on the way. Many people were restricted in leaving their houses as security operations took place. The residents themselves fear leaving homes for work due to attacks along the roads and looting of homes in their absence. It also became evident from the interviews that not only do some people move to other places, but they relocate their businesses and other economic investments to more peaceful parts. Most respondents also held that, the perennial violence has forced people to close down their business due to the uncertainty about the future. Most people were

apprehensive of the security of their investment as they believe that the violence will still recur. Those who still want to continue to do business are left with no option but to relocate to safer areas [35]. Agrees with this by arguing that during the conflicts between the crop cultivators and the transformation of the relationships between the crop cultivators and pastoral Fube spontaneously changed from that of complementarity and trust to hostility, violence and wars, as it is, in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County.

### ***8.7. Reduced Access to Education***

It also became evident from the fieldwork that the conflict negatively affects education in the Sub County as well. As noted during the oral interviews and the FGDs, of the respondents reported that the conflict in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County is one of the critical factors that contributed subsequently to poor performance of schools in the area. One of the respondents who had been a victim of the conflicts as he was displaced during the violence noted that the conflict undoubtedly compromised the quality of education in the area. Children dropped out of school because it became difficult for the parents to discipline their children, for that is best done in the privacy of the home. The violence had destroyed such privacy. Consequently, parents lost hold of their children and most of them became truants. The conflict has also affected recruitment of teaching staff/teachers to Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County. Upon graduation from the Teachers Colleges, most the new teachers refuse to be posted to this area. They often opt to be posted elsewhere because of the perennial conflicts. Similarly, most teachers from other areas refuse to take up posting to the area. The teachers are reluctant to be posted to this place because many teachers have fallen victims of the conflict. During the 2012 violence, a teacher who had rented a house in Endau market lost all his belongings when the house was burnt down. The teacher had to request for transfer. The results of this study are consistent with that of [36] which show that armed conflict had a negative effect on schooling outcomes of children in Tajikistan with exposed children being disadvantaged and therefore recording dismal performance. In Mutitu sub County of Kitui County, just like the findings of the above studies, this adverse effect of the conflict on education in turn leads to high level of household poverty in the Sub County because it prevents the people from acquiring the necessary education which in turn deplete the household of their stock of human capital for future generations. This does not augur well for the socio-economic development of the local communities in the sub County.

### ***8.8. Abduction and Sexual Violence***

Some respondents demonstrated occurrences of sexual harassment during conflicts in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County by conflicting groups and security forces. The rape mostly occurs in hiding places as well as in the IDP camps. In some cases, women who are abducted and taken hostage are raped by their hosts. Although rape is a taboo to every society in the world and in Africa in particular, the young Somali and Oromo herders who are singles, in a bid to satisfy their thirst for females fall into such temptations of raping their Akamba hostages. Women as symbols of community and ethnic identity may also become targets of extensive sexual violence when the men have either been taken hostage or disappeared from the attackers rendering the women prone to attack. A study by [30] indicates that the aftermath of rape during violence is quite tragic as it may involve long and unproductive periods of seeking medical attention, infection with a disease that leads to body waste and permanently eat into one's savings. He concludes that the trauma that follows demoralizes a person to engage in

income generating works with death being the worst and final result. The same was observed in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County as respondents narrated incidences of psychological torture due to rape during violent conflicts, which have significant negative impacts on the long-term performance of individuals because it reduces the quality and quantity of labor, consequently, hindering the socio-economic development of the affected women.

## **9. Financial Implications in Treating Injuries and Psychiatric Disorders**

Responses from interviews showed that the Farmer-herder conflicts in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County mostly result in severe injuries, diseases and mental trauma. Wars affect people's lives long after the fighting has stopped. They do not only kill, but they also cause psychological torture and physical injuries. The physical injuries that are left after the armed conflicts are quite tragic as may leave the victims maimed or incapacitated. Trauma may follow as a result of loss of loved ones, rape, abduction or loss of property, demotivating a person to engage in any productive activity. The affected people may have to use their little savings to pay for medical bills, which will pose severe financial burden on their already strained income. These health problems coupled with the psychosocial consequences of armed conflicts have significant negative impacts on the long-term performance of individuals. The narratives above are in line with the findings of [37] in their study in which they concluded that armed violence conflict leads to severe injuries, spread of infectious disease, and increases in permanent physical disabilities mostly among women and children. This according to them may also result in large decreases in household welfare leading to poverty.

### ***9.1. Escalation of Commodity Prices***

Respondents indicated that when armed conflict erupts in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County, it results to closure of shops, reduced crop production and depletion of livestock. This is largely because conflict leads to reduced supply which in turn leads to increased scarcity of various basic commodities and agricultural and livestock products. [38] observes that as scarcity sets in, the prices of commodities soar up, and the affected population therefore, experiences localized inflation, resulting in high living cost, as was also witnessed in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County. This has aggravated poverty in many households as they strain their little income and savings to catch up with the high cost of living, leading to socio-economic decline.

### ***9.2. Rural –Urban Migration***

Respondents claimed that they at least had one member of the family who had moved to urban centers due to conflicts. The conflict forces many young people to relocate from Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County to other places, leaving farming in the hands of the elderly whose labor can't yield enough to feed the household. For Mr. Nzuki Mulei who was orally interviewed, most young people would rather direct their time, energy and resources on other activities buying and selling of clothes, which allows them to have liquid capital most of the time, than wasting their time and energy on farming which leads to big losses during the time of armed conflict. 11 % (45) reported that some of their immediate family members especially the youth had moved to the urban areas in search of formal employment. Due to the conflicts, they had no hope of meeting their needs from

farming. Others claimed that they have been forced to flee the conflict prone area at least once in the past because of violent clashes. Most respondents also claimed that they know of several people who have fled the perennial violence to settle permanently in nearby towns and in the big cities of Nairobi and Mombasa.

## 10. Conclusions

This study explored the effect of the farmer-herder conflicts on the socio economic development of the farmers and herder communities in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County. While conceding that it is difficult to compute the real value of losses incurred by the victims, it is demonstrated that, there was direct and indirect deaths resulting from violence. The conflict also led to the displacements of farmers which saw them cut-off from their livelihoods. This forced them to depend on the government and relatives for survival. The study has also pointed out that the abuse of human and children's rights at different levels were common. In Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County, the abuse included sexual violence, leading to physical and physiological trauma to individuals, children's welfare concerns which have negative impacts on the children's development, reduced access to education which prevents the people from acquiring the necessary education, and reduced access to health care which sometimes leads to loss of lives. The study revealed that during the farmer-herder conflicts in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County, women and children bore the greatest brunt. It also observed that arson and destruction of property, disruption of agricultural activities, depletion of livestock, disruption of business enterprises, creation of dependency, loss of labor force as well as rural to urban migration has brought huge economic losses to many individuals and families. Moreover, the study demonstrates that the climate of fear, uncertainty and doubt created by the violence have made many potential investors hesitate to invest in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County. Further, it has been shown that the treatment of injuries and psychiatric disorders imposed financial burdens upon the relatives of the victims. Fundamentally, the conflict has destroyed patterns of inter community trade in the area by making the two opposing groups lack market for their farm and livestock products. The result has been to impoverish many families. From the data collected, it was clear that there has been a relocation of investments from Mutitu to areas like Kitui and Mwingi towns which were considered safer by the victims. The researcher therefore confirmed the premise that the farmer-herder conflict in Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County has hindered the socio-economic development of Mutitu Sub County of Kitui County in general and that of the victims in particular.

1. Provision of quality infrastructure would generate employment through access to market by small scale holders and entrepreneurs. Roads should be constructed and communication network restored in the region making it accessible. This will lead to Improved physical infrastructure which in turn will lead to better increasing interaction between the warring communities, link them to the outside world, improve their access to information; mainstream them into the national economy and policy making process.
2. The recently established *Nyumba Kumi* initiative should be encouraged in all villages to identify the criminals who plan and organize raids. With the help of community elders those identified would be advised appropriately and if they do not heed the advice they will be compelled to leave the village.
3. The County government of Kitui should roll out campaigns aimed at influencing the reduction of hostility against neighbors. There is need to strengthen local vigilante groups through legal

infrastructure and civil education regulations for conflict resolution both within and between communities to reduce conflicts.

4. Peace committees are not allocated any money by the County and national government. They only depend on donor funding. This is not enough for their operations thus compromising their effectiveness and independence. They should be funded to help them implement peace measures.

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