

Effects of Cattle Rustling on Children Education in Turkana East Sub-County



Fr. Areman L. Paul Phd

Department Of Arts And Social Sciences Turkana University College

ABSTRACT: Conflicts among the Turkana and Pokot, in the form of cattle rustling have a long history such that they have almost become an aspect of their culture. Their conflicts revolve around livestock and related productive assets namely: water, land and pasture. Cattle rustling among the Turkana and Pokot communities have become increasingly destructive and almost less manageable. It is against such background that this study sought to investigate why these conflicts have been endless as well as the effects of cattle rustling in the development of these regions. The specific objective of this study was to find out how cattle rustling has impacted on the education sector of children in schools in Turkana East Sub-County. This study adapted the descriptive survey research design with a sample size of 100 respondents in Kapedo location. The sampling technique used was stratified and purposive sampling. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview guides and Focus group discussions. Data was analysed with the help of SPSS version 23: Quantitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages which were then presented using charts and tables. Qualitative data was analysed thematically. The study concluded that cattle rustling is rampant and quite frequent in Turkana East as given by 58.1% respondents. These raids have led to closure of some schools in Kapedo location as well as poor academic performance of school children in the national examinations. The study recommended that the Government should employ a profound strategy to minimize and bring to end cattle rustling that has led to under-development in Turkana East Sub-County.

KEYWORDS: Cattle rustling; Effects; Children education; Turkana East: Sub-County

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Cattle rustling is used interchangeably with the term “cattle raiding” and both refer to the act of stealing cattle from another community. Turkana and Pokot are both pastoralists who keep livestock (Cattle, sheep and goats). The Turkana and Pokot pastoral communities have different motives for cattle rustling: For the Turkana it is motivated by drought that forces them to look for grazeland in their neighbouring regions while the Pokot are motivated for the need to acquire cattle for wealth accusation and payment and dowry. For a long time, the Turkana and Pokot communities have both experienced cattle rustling, which have affected both communities. In Turkana East Sub-County this cattle rustling has adversely affected education of children among other areas of development. The government has employed strategies to end cattle raiding but with minimum results achieved.

Education is a compulsory good as enshrined in the goals of development as well as the UN-Declaration on Human Rights of 1948, Article 26 which states “... Everyone has the right to free and compulsory elementary education...”. The government of Kenya since 2008 is making efforts towards achieving Compulsory free primary Education and subsidized Secondary education. Despite all these efforts, the concept of Education for All is far from being achieved in Turkana East Sub-County due to the rampant cattle rustling among the pastoral communities of Turkana and Pokot.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between the Turkana and Pokot takes two forms: Conflict or Co-operation. This can also be described as the two paths: conflict path or co-operation path. Conflicts in the form of cattle rustling is due to clashes over resources (Healey, 2010). Resource based conflicts are interpreted by the bargaining school of conflict as a process of mirroring needs and values and effective resolution in the process of sharing the resources failure to which results into turbulent conflicts. The resources they fight for are mainly water and grazeland. In most cases these conflicts affect so much women and children (Williams, 2011). The effect on children is denial to access the most important livelihood resource of education because the schools are closed and other drop out of school. Children as well are affected by being orphaned and thus they do not have guardians to enable them continue schooling for the few that manage to transit to other higher levels of education like transiting from Primary schools to Secondary schools. On the other hand, the relationship can be that of co-operation whereby the two communities co-exist peacefully and share the scarce

Effects of Cattle Rustling on Children Education in Turkana East Sub-County

resources. For a long time, the two communities have chosen the conflict path of taking control of environment that will satisfy their primordial needs of identity, security, recognition and development.

The major cause of cattle raiding is competition of resources. According to Martin (2021), resource constrains sparks civil war and ethnic strife. Cattle raiding is centred on competition for water and grazeland, vital resources for pastoral communities. Water can cause possible conflicts amongst neighbouring communities (Llamas, 2021). The pastoral communities need water for both human and animal consumption and so they tend to fight over use of water points. Ethnic conflicts is a continuous ethnic hatred which conflict parties struggle to redress (Trifunovic, 2012). Cattle rustling among the Turkana and Pokot has taken this shape and this ethnic hatred seem to be handed from generation to generation. No wonder this age-old practice has never been contained. Cattle rustling has also been attributed to the government failure to maintain peace (Greiner, 2013). At times members of one ethnic community identify themselves with the government representatives and hence claim government protection. Hence the government displays tendency of delayed response to any cattle raids and thus escalating animosity between warring communities. In this case the other group “outside government protection” remain vulnerable and thus end up being victims of violence.

Gumba (2020) further notes that other factors contributing to cattle rustling include: militarization of civilians, commercialization of livestock and marginalization. The pastoral communities have for long been marginalized by the government of the day and so they fight for their identity and recognition. In the recent past, cattle raiders are motivated by business of cattle such that they engage in cattle raiding to acquire animals to be sold to businessmen for them to get money.

Avis (2019) noted that cattle rustling has robbed pastoral communities their right to achieving the Millenium Development goals. Cattle rustling has been one great impediment to access and advancement of children education in Turkana East Sub-County. Report by UNESCO of 2017 indicates that millions of children in Africa do not make further advancement in education due to conflicts. This is the situation in Turkana East Sub-County where schools have been closed and hence denying children the opportunity to access education and others to drop from school. There are occasions whereby the raiders destroy schools as well as learning facilities.

Teacher are also affected by these cattle raids. Teachers in Turkana East Sub-County feel insecure and therefore their delivery of service (teaching) ends up being poor coupled with inability to cover syllabus (Abubakari, Yakubu, and Longi, 2014). The consequences of poor content delivery is seen in the poor results of students in the national examinations. Teachers play an important role in curriculum implementation. Enthusiastic teachers influence exceptional and good performance of learners. The hostile environment of cattle rustling in Turkana East prompts teachers to seek transfers to safer working environment thereby leading to under-staffing in schools in the conflict prone regions.

3.0 STUDY FINDINGS

Table 1: Gender of respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|--------|------------------|----------------|
| Male | 21 | 67.7 |
| Female | 10 | 32.3 |
| Total | 31 | 100.0 |

According to Table 1 above 67.7% of the respondents are male and 32.3% are female. This indicates an imbalance in the teaching fraternity which is male dominated as per this research. Another justification for the large number of male teachers in this region is the fact that female teachers may not withstand the shocks and stress associated with insecurity in the region and thus the Ministry of Education posts in most cases male teachers to such conflict-prone areas.

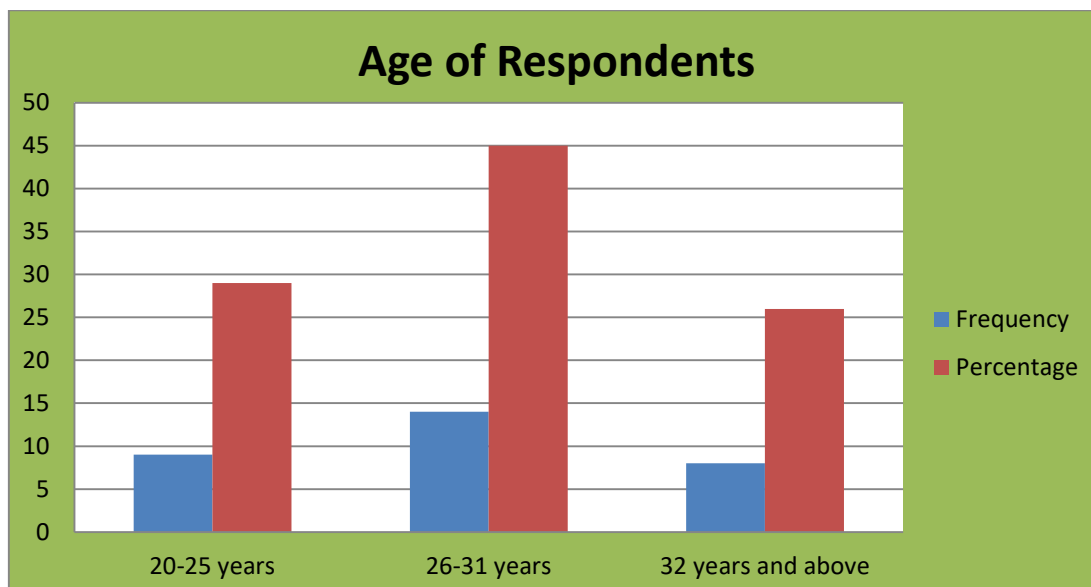


Figure 1: Age of Respondents

Figure 1 above shows that 29% of the teachers were between 20-25 years of age, 45% were between 26-31 years of age and 26% were above 32 years of age. The teachers in these schools are relatively young and exposure to these harsh conditions of raids kills their morale of teaching. Most of these teachers are those that are newly deployed and therefore are forced to remain in these work stations in line with the contractual terms of probation. Otherwise they would all seek transfer for a safe working environment.

Table 2: Religion of Respondents

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-----------|-----------|---------|
| Christian | 29 | 93.5 |
| Islamic | 1 | 3.2 |
| Other | 1 | 3.2 |
| Total | 31 | 100.0 |

Table 2 above shows that majority of the teachers are Christians (93.5%) while the muslims and believers of other religions were minority (3.2% each). Most of the schools in this region are christian sponsored public schools and thus the sponsors are so much concerned about ensuring the availability of teachers in the schools. It also becomes easier to bring up the children in the Christian principle of all being children of one Father (God) who loves all his children equally and that even Pokots belong to the family of God.

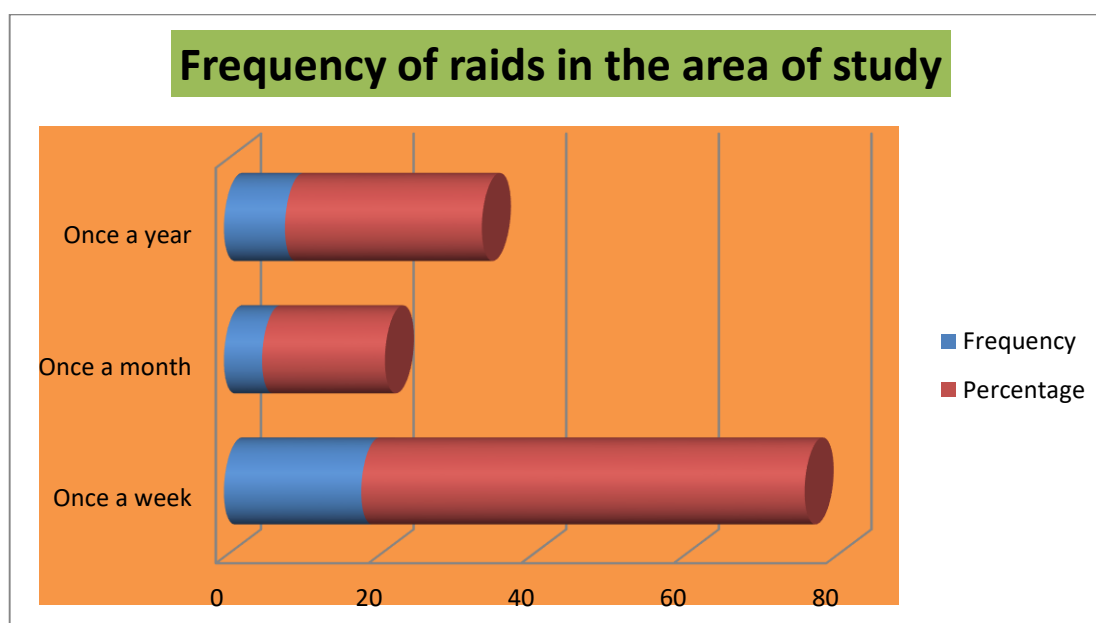


Figure 2: Frequency of raids in the area of study

Effects of Cattle Rustling on Children Education in Turkana East Sub-County

Figure 2 above shows the area is highly prone to raids with raids occurring weekly at the rate of 58.1%, monthly raids at 16.1% and annually at 28.8%. The fact that raids occur in this area on weekly basis indicates that the area is highly prone to raids and also that there is not enough security in the place. The high insecurity in the area is a high contributor to the poor performance of these children in national exams and also accounts to the low enrolment in the schools.

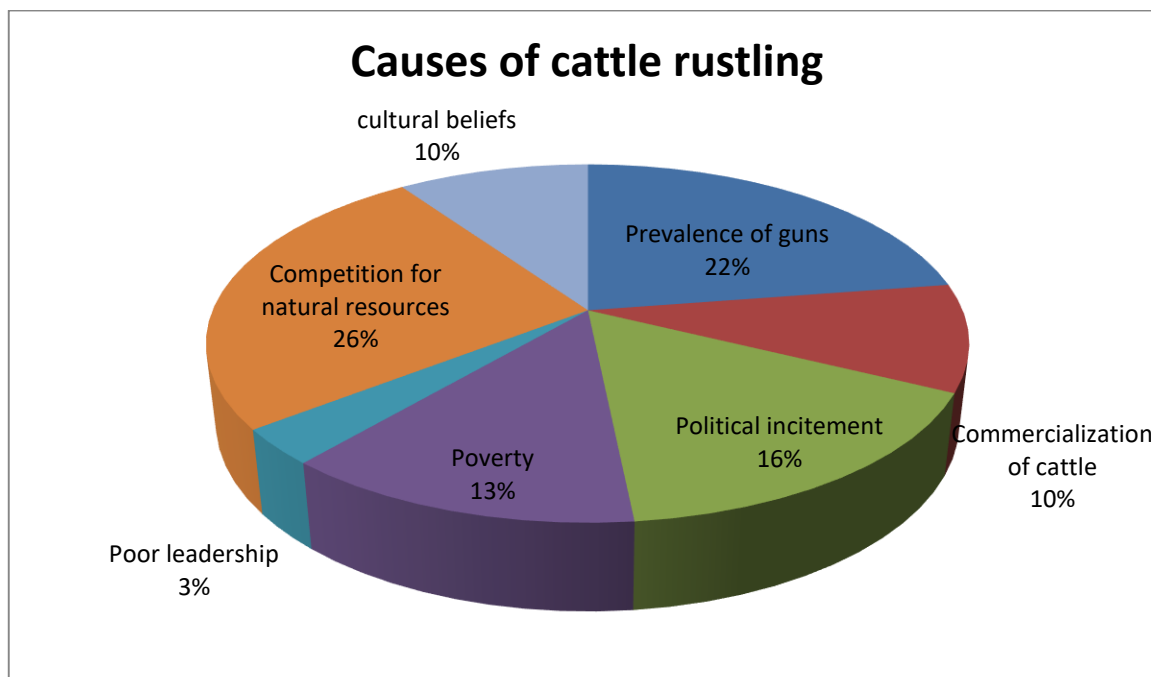


Figure 3: Causes of cattle rustling

Figure 3 above shows that prevalence of guns in the area constitutes 22% as a cause of cattle rustling, Commercialization of cattle 10%, political incitement 16%, poverty 13%, poor leadership 3%, competition for natural resources 26% and cultural beliefs 10%. From these findings, it is clear that cattle raiding is centered on competition over natural resources (Water, land and pasture). These are important resources for pastoral communities and each of them wants to claim over control and thus deny others access and utilization of the resources.

Table 3: Has cattle rustling been addressed?

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| Yes | 15 | 48.4 |
| No | 16 | 51.6 |
| Total | 31 | 100.0 |

Table 3 above shows that majority of the respondents (51.6%) said that cattle rustling has so far not been addressed while 48.4 % agreed that efforts have been made to address the issue of cattle rustling. It is worth noting that the government of Kenya has made attempts to end cattle rustling but still proves to be a project of futility mainly because of militarization of the civilians.

From a Focus Group discussion with the respondents, the following were identified as effects of cattle rustling:

- Reduced number of teachers in schools as most of them runs away for their lives.
- Children disappearing from schools.
- Teachers are not able to cover the syllabus, which consequently affects the children performance in the national exams.
- Displacement of people
- Loss of livestock and property
- Orphaned children

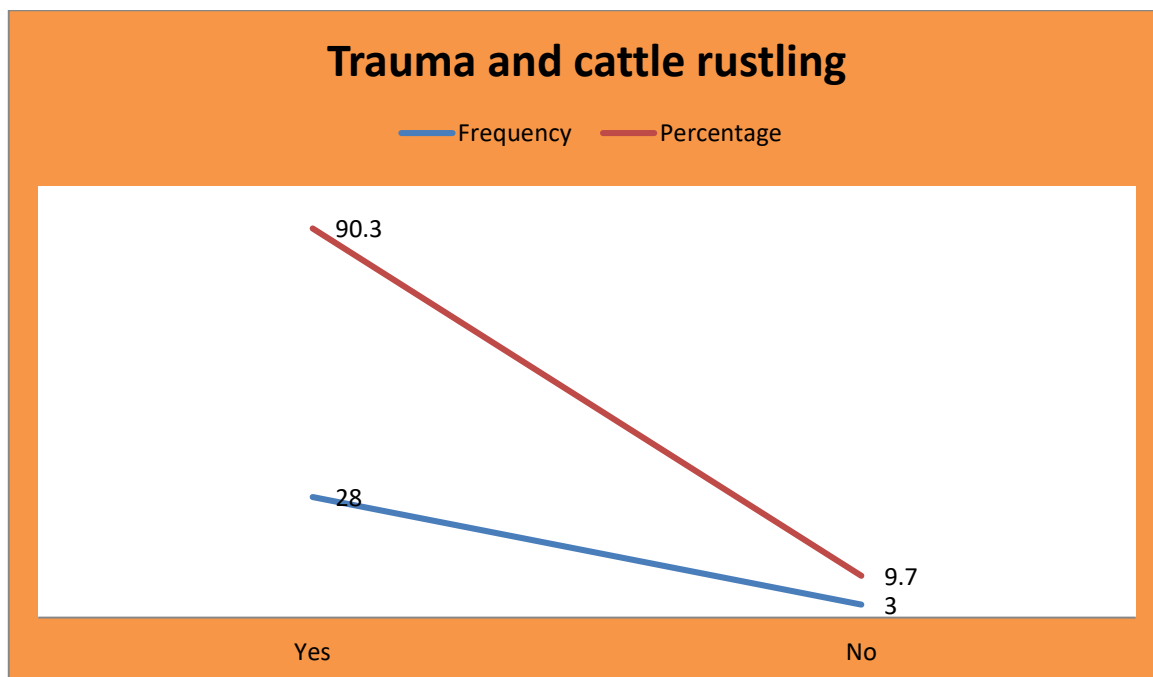


Figure 4: Trauma and cattle rustling

Figure 4 above shows further effects of cattle rustling. When teachers were asked whether pupils suffered from trauma as a result of cattle rustling, 90.3% gave Yes as their answer and 9.7% gave No as their answer. This means that cattle rustling leads to trauma and so these children will later on need to be counseled.

For the traumatized children, teachers have devised the following means to help them come out of their trauma so as to continue with their education: Guidance and counseling services in schools, encouraging the children to be in schools as boarders, involving children in various co-curricular activities and as well as giving them psychological and physiological support.

Table 4: Are there government strategies to address insecurity?

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| Yes | 19 | 61.3 |
| No | 12 | 38.7 |
| Total | 31 | 100.0 |

Table 4 above shows that majority of the respondents (61.3%) agree that there are government strategies in place to address the problem of insecurity in Turkana East Sub-County. Some of the government strategies to address insecurity in the area include:

- Deployment of Police officers in the affected area
- Recruitment of KPR to help in guarding the communities
- Disarmament efforts
- Provision of feeding programme so that children stay in schools as boarders

On the other hand, a few respondents (38.7%) are opposed to this claim and according to them the government has done nothing to address the problem of insecurity. One respondent said

“..... The government has failed to address the issue of insecurity in Turkana East because they (Government) favour so much the Pokot Community due to their political affiliation to the government....”

Table 5 below shows that in spite of insecurity in the area, children are highly interested in learning with a positive response of yes at 96.8% and no at 3.2%. This high interest in receiving education cannot be deterred by the raids.

Table 5: Are the children interested in learning?

| | Frequency | Percent |
|-------|-----------|---------|
| Yes | 30 | 96.8 |
| No | 1 | 3.2 |
| Total | 31 | 100.0 |

Effects of Cattle Rustling on Children Education in Turkana East Sub-County

The children see the need for this compulsory good (education) and like other children in the world, they would like to access education. This explains why the children who are resilient still come to school whenever is possible.

4.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that Cattle rustling has adversely affected education of children in Turkana East Sub-County. This is manifested in poor access to education, closure and destruction of education facilities as well as poor results of students in the national examinations.

The recommendations include: Introduction and support for peace crusades; Introduction of inter-ethnic schools and sports for peace

REFERENCES

- 1) Abubakari, A., Yakubu, F., & Longi, T. (2014). Pastoralism and violence in northern Ghana: Socialization and Professional requirement. *International Journal of research in Social Sciences*. 4(5) 102-111
- 2) Avis, W. (2019). Current trends in violent conflict. K4D Helpdesk Report 565. Brighton, UK: Institute of Development Studies
- 3) Greiner, C (2013). Guns, Land and Votes: Cattle Rustling and the Politics of Boundary Re (making in Northern Kenya. Oxford University Press. *African Affairs* 112/447, 216-237
- 4) Gumba, D.O (2020) Cattle Rustling: from a cultural practice to a deadly organized Crime. *ISIS: ENACT*
- 5) Healy S. (2010) "Seeking peace and security in the Horn of Africa," *International Affairs*, 87:1, pp. 105-20.
- 6) Llamas, C, Sovacool (2021). The Future of hydropower? A systemic review of the driver benefits and governance dynamics of Transboundary dams. *Renew Sustain Energy Rev*.137,110495
- 7) Martin, P., A (2021). Commander-community ties after civil war. *J. Peace. Rev.* 58 (4) 778-793
- 8) Trifunovic, Darko: *Ethnic Conflict and Violence: Genocide Against Roma in Kosovo and Metohija*. Alexandria, Virginia, 2012: International Strategic Studies Association.
- 9) UNESCO (2017). *Education for all by 2015. Will we make it?* Oxford University Press. Oxford.
- 10) Williams, P.D. (2011) *Horn of Africa: Webs of Conflict and Path Ways to Peace*, Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson.



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.