



Education of children of nomadic pastoralists in Somalia: Comparing attitudes and behaviour



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ABSTRACT

The paper reports on the choices nomadic pastoralists in Somalia have made and might make for the education of their children, based on a large scale household survey. Households were asked about their own and their children's education and the educational possibilities open to them; and, at the end, they were asked how they would use an unexpected remittance from a friend or relative abroad.

The findings on their use of and expenditure on education for their children are briefly summarised and then compared with the findings on their priorities for using the unexpected remittance. A surprisingly high proportion (26%) said that they would use some of the at least some of the money to pay school fees, whilst less than half that (12%) said that they would keep the money for emergencies (including health care), even though households actually spent more than twice as much on health care than on education.

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1. Introduction: aim and background

1.1. Aims

The purpose of the paper is first to describe the education of children of nomadic pastoralists in Somalia, and second to compare the choices that they have made and might make if they were to receive an unexpected windfall.

The data is taken from a recent (2011) survey carried out of pastoralist communities in locations representative of four of the main livelihood zones of Somalia: camel, cattle, goat and sheep; as well as mixed and agro-pastoral. Findings are presented on the education of their children, and broad patterns of income and expenditure, before comparing expenditure on education in the context of overall expenditure with expressed priorities for spending an unexpected remittance; and how the drought in the Spring of 2011 affected those relative expenditures and priorities in different livelihood zones of the former Republic of Somalia.

1.2. Background

1.2.1. Civil war in Somalia

The protracted, complex humanitarian and livelihoods crises have resulted in increasing socio-economic vulnerability and

worsening poverty, with almost 50% of its people in need of urgent external assistance and at least 16% of Somalia's 7.5 million¹ people internally displaced.

An estimated 65% of the Somali population are pastoralists² whose non-sedentary way of life gives rise to a unique set of development needs and vulnerabilities to environmental changes and conflict. The cycle of drought in the last four to five rainy seasons has led to a significant loss of livestock, severely affecting the livelihoods of pastoral communities.

1.2.2. Pastoralism

Camel herding dominates in the north of the region, camels being ideal milk producers in the drylands of Puntland where they are mainly reared for their milk. There is an increasing market for milk in cities and trading systems have developed in Puntland managed by women intermediaries. The system also stimulates livestock mobility, enabling recovery of the natural vegetation. Somali women are credited as critical agents of change and the commoditisation and integration of camel milk – and ultimately the pastoral way of life – has served to foster a new market and the reshaping of range resource management patterns, together with the social and environmental relations governing this (Nori, 2010).

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¹ UNDP population figures, 2005, pp. 10–13.

² UNOCHA (2006).

Sites	Sites and Sub-Sites					
	Maroodi Jeex (W. Galbeed)	Togdheer	S Mudug	Sanaag	Gedo	Galgaduud
Livelihoods	Agro-Pastoralist	Agro-Pastoralist			Camel	
Subsites	Wajaleh	Burco	Budbud	Badhan	Belet Hawa	Cadaado
	Baligubadle	Aynaba	Wisil	Hingalool	Doloooh	Caabudwaaq
	Darasalaam	Oodwayne	Bitaaale	Erigavo	Luuq	Dhusamarreeb
			Bandiiradley			
Fieldwork Dates	14 th -30 th April	14 th -30 th April	14 th -30 th April	14 th -30 th April	6 th -23 rd June	6 th -23 rd June
Expected	800	800	800	800	800	800
Achieved	1,057	883	1,196	1,146	1,495	1031

Fig. 1. Sites and sub-sites.

1.2.3. Education situation in Somalia and specifically for nomadic pastoralists

Education is viewed as a fundamental right, a means of empowerment and generally a social good. However, in terms of enrolment, attendance, achievement and transition to higher levels, this is not the case for nomadic populations. The Camel Caravan, a limited scope survey, found that 86% of pastoralists' children in Sanaag Region had not been to school (Horn Relief, 2010).

The rationale and ideology of service providers and nomads rarely agree, with mistrust between pastoralists and government officials, primarily over land loss. Rights are considered from an individual standpoint, whilst the basic productive unit of the pastoral economy is the household or group of households (Commonwealth Secretariat, 2007; Kratli with Dyer, 2006). Ministries of education need to change the way they include pastoralists in their education systems (Kratli and Dyer, 2009) and to help pastoralists become modern livestock producers.

The civil war exacerbated an already poor situation with widespread destruction of basic infrastructure. Two 'lost generations' have resulted, who, lacking skills and education, have been drawn into criminal activity. Primary school enrolment for 2003/4 was recorded as being only 20% and a later report by the World Bank/UN (2008) gives an estimated gross enrolment rate as 15% for girls and 27% for boys. The 2006 UNICEF Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (UNICEF, 2007), reported that school attendance was low and only 43% of children of primary school age (6–13 years) are attending primary school.

Koranic education reaches an estimated 50% of youth for two years (World Bank, 2006); and pastoralist groups have traditionally travelled with a Koranic teacher. Reasons for drop-out from 'Western' schooling are seen as failing to recognise the needs and lifestyle of pastoralists, promotion of an authoritarian system, insufficient schools with those existing being ill-equipped, the yearly and daily timetable incompatible with the pastoralists' life, the curriculum irrelevant, teachers rarely having a pastoralist background and having little respect for them.

Studies highlight a number of problems impacting on pastoralists in formal education programmes. Chores and income generation are more important to household functioning than education and school is seen as having no immediate economic return, i.e., no income generating skills are taught, learners develop a dislike of manual work and children are alienated from family life (Horn Relief, 2010; Syong'oh, 2002). Both graduates and school drop outs were reported to be more dependent on their families than those that never enrolled and formal education was not seen to produce high enough returns to the family. This makes it particularly interesting to examine attitudes towards and practices with the education of their children.

1.2.4. Behaviour (revealed preferences) and attitudes (expressed preferences)

Educationalists and sociologists tend to assume that, empirically, eliciting both attitudes and self-reports of actual behaviour in a survey reflect what people want and aspire to, although there are many circumstances, where that is not the case. Many economists also rely on actual behaviour ('revealed preferences') – whether observed or self-reported – as the most practicable source of information on intentions and individual utility. But actual behaviour will be constrained by income distribution among many other confounding factors, so that some economists (e.g., Mourato et al., 2005), have developed a variety of techniques (e.g., choice experiments, contingent valuations, etc.) for eliciting 'pure' ('expressed' or 'stated') preferences. Others (e.g., Kahneman and Tversky, 2000; Hastie and Dawes, 2010) pronounce a plague on both houses but that appears to be more of an academic sideshow relevant for developed countries. The comparison between the information provided by the two approaches to measuring preferences is the second main focus of the paper.

2. Materials and methods

2.1. Survey coverage, instruments and sample design

2.1.1. Survey coverage and training of enumerators

After consultation with the Food Security and Nutrition Analysis Unit (FSNAU), eleven regional sites were chosen in March 2011 so as to be representative of the 4 main livelihood zones (5 including the mixed zone). Of the 3 shoaat sites, South Mudug with the largest population has been selected. Five of the other sites were judged insecure and in particular all 3 of the agro-pastoral sites were seen as insecure. For this reason two more sites were added. Information about the security status received during April made it clear that Lower Juba was no longer a possible site, but that parts of Galgadud and Gedo would be accessible. The final choice of sites is shown in Fig. 1: Maroodi Jeex,³ Togdheer, South Mudug, Sanaag, Gedo and Galgaduud.

2.1.2. Survey instruments

The main instrument was a Household Questionnaire with mostly closed questions.⁴ These covered the key areas of

³ Previously called Wooqoyi Galbeed and that name is still used; but here we use only Maroodi Jeex.

⁴ In addition, interviews with key informants were conducted. Focus group discussions were held with men, young women, older women and a few with children. All survey tools (questionnaires, observation forms and guideline questions for focussed group discussions (FGD)) were developed in English, then translated into Somali and back-translated into English. The full questionnaire is available from the author on request in either language.

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