



**Pastoral Nomads are veritable managers not armatures.**

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Many scientists have often not differentiated settled subsistence husbandry systems or profit making pastoral systems from pastoralisms as a form of livelihoods. Pastoralism as a form of livelihood is unsettled and intended to be a way of resisting shocks and stresses imposed by climate, vegetation etc constrains on the communities that practice them (Bonte et al, 1981).

Historically, man started domestication of animals about 10, 000 years ago (Zenner, 1963) and has evolved with time and science to different forms of efficient domestication techniques today. So too has pastoral nomadism as a livelihood option. To consider therefore why pastoral nomads can be considered evolved local managers the following points are important:

- They are not a sporadic bunch or merely reactive but proactive people who plan, pre-empt climatic and other fall-outs and then move their herds or families dependent on these animals so as to sustain their livelihoods choices (Floret et al., 1982). Some of these fall outs include factors like the annual rainfall in a given area and time which has been noted to impact on primary production (Lomasson, 1947), soil fertility for grazing, vegetation cover, topography or drought.
- They choose the animals they keep to suit their natural terrains. Studies have also shown that these choices also constitute a major reason for the variances in pastoralisms across Africa for instance where it is possible to differentiate practice among Tuaregs, Teda, Fulani, Hamitic or Nilotic (Dyson-Hudson, 1966; Diallo and Wagenaar, 1981).
- Some pastoral communities also plant drought resistant edible trees as a way of resisting drought while others like in Northern Africa have witnessed a growing use of concentrate feeds as supplemental to natural feeds (Le Houerou, 1980a).
- Many pastoralists have also realised that over grazing for long periods affects the productivity of land and hence animal populations (Lamprey, 1983). These managerial realisations have led to a switch to other animal types in certain areas. An example of such a switch is among the Saburu pastoralists who are now raising camels and small live stocks like goats away from their traditional cattle unsustainable for their now over-grazed land in Northern Kenya.

However Pastoralism as a form of livelihoods is facing great threats. The threats include;

The increase in animal productions following efficient vaccination campaigns of 1950s with a corresponding reduction of range land (Bernus, 1981) due to increase human activity like urbanisation, climate change etc which have impacted negatively on pastoral livelihoods as man and animals are competing over the same spaces.

More over, cereal production has also doubled in Sahelian Africa at the detriment of pastoral rangeland. This situation is also seen to occur among East African pastoral communities (ILCA, 1978).

Also, pastoral livelihoods are caught up in the divide of whether they should engineer their animals with modern scientific methods for more births or just to continue with traditional science of pastoral nomadism. This is particularly serious as birth rates for pastoral cattle are very low and hardly reach 60% (Diallo and Wagenaar 1981; Wilson et al, 1981).

More so, studies of these livelihoods as entry points to development management may only just be receiving some stimulus recently, with academic recognition of a paradigm shift from classical projects (Shepherd, 1998) to learning processes like livelihoods (Bond, 1999).

Adding holism to studies about pastoral livelihoods via various livelihood frameworks and more research might just be the necessary input to put pastoral managers on the development stage as effective managers. Despite the time needed for such a processual approach, it is clear and safe to say pastoral nomads are effective managers, not blind and not armatures.

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