Conflicts and Household Livelihood among Sabaot Clans in Kopsiro Division, Bungoma County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the extent to which inter-clan conflict among the Sabaot clans has affected households’ socio-economic development in Kopsiro Division. Inter-clan conflict among the Sabaot is scantly documented. Yet, the effect of those conflicts on the people’s livelihood seems to be enormous. However, the extent which inter-clan conflicts among the Sabaot has affected households’ livelihoods is not known. The specific objectives of the study were to establish the causes of inter-clan conflicts in Kopsiro Division, to examine the effects of inter-clan conflicts on the households’ socio-economic status in Kopsiro Division, and to analyze the role of stakeholders in mitigating the inter-clan conflicts in Kopsiro Division. The study was guided by the collective action theory, which argues that when people are confronted with a common problem, they cooperate to pursue a collective action to achieve a solution especially when the solution cannot be gained individually. An exploratory design was used on a target population of 4260 households. A sample size of 351 household heads was selected. Purposive and simple random sampling was employed. An interview schedule, in-depth interview, focus group discussion, and observation were employed for data collection. The researcher used both qualitative and quantitative techniques of data analysis. The study found that land-related issues like boundary disputes were the main cause of the recurrent conflicts in the study area. It was also found that although conflicts in the study area affect both the Soy and Mosop people with both positive and negative effects, they have compromised their sources of livelihood. The study further found that although various stakeholders including the government, NGOs, religious groups and community elders play a major role in mitigating conflicts and managing of post-conflict situations, the government has the ultimate role to provide the long term solution to the conflict situation. It is therefore, the recommendation of the study that there is need for the government to extend its political will and commitment in providing a lasting solution to the persistent conflicts in the area; while involving all the stakeholders in the process. The residents of Kopsiro Division should also be educated on the need for cease-fire because conflicts have largely affected their livelihood opportunities disregarding whether they are from Mosop or Soy clan.
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