

Leadership, Resource Based Conflicts and Its Resolution Practices among the Pastoral Groups in Eastern Ethiopia

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Abstract : Resource-based inter-ethnic conflicts are common in eastern Ethiopia among the Afar, Ittu-Oromo, and Issa-Somali pastoral groups. The qualitative data required for the study were collected from community leaders, ordinary members of the communities, and administrative and political bodies at various levels through one-on-one interviews, focus group discussions and field observations. The quantitative data were also collected through a household survey from the 128 households drawn from the three districts of Meiso-Mullu, Meiso, and Amibara. This research tried to assess the triggering factors of inter-ethnic violent conflicts and tensions observed and other motivating factors that encourage the rival groups to instigate the recent conflicts. The research revealed some of the triggering factors that instigate violent conflicts among the rival groups such as the bad actions of conflict entrepreneurs/rent seekers, the incidence of plunder (banditry), the encroachment of farmers' to pastoral lands/vice versa, the destruction of farmers' crops by pastoralists' livestock, and among others. The roles of conflict entrepreneurs such as low and medium level administrators/leaders, illicit arms traffickers, local level elites, and among others are very much significant in fueling up inter-ethnic conflicts and tensions. Leaders of various levels wrongly agitate the politicization of ethnicity and ethnic identity as well as regional boundaries as they are political boundaries rather than administrative boundaries.

Keywords : eastern ethiopia, resource competition, ethnic conflict, AFAR, ISSA and ITTU.

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