

# Gender Role and Pastoralist Women's Involvement In Income Generating Activities

*The Case of Women Firewood Sellers in Shinile District, Somali  
Region, Ethiopia.*

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## Abstract

*This study is a qualitative study conducted to identify the impacts of women's engagement in firewood sales to pastoralist gender roles. It is undertaken in Shinile District, Shinile Zone, and Somali Region of Ethiopia. The livelihoods of the research area are severely affected by recurrent droughts for decades. The drought dwindled the live stocks of pastoralists; undermining the traditional role of pastoralist men for food provision. Consequently, more and more pastoralist women started to get engaged in non-pastoral income generating activities, specifically firewood to supply food and nourish their children.*

*Both primary and secondary data are included in this study. A case study is carried out in two peasant associations of Shinile District. The study also employed focus group discussions, interviews and observation as a data collection strategy. In total, 4 focus group discussions on 5 men and women each and interviews (including key informants) were conducted on 14 men and women respondents. As part of the secondary data, literatures on impacts of pastoralist women's engagement in income generating activities are covered in this study in order to back the findings from the case study undertaken.*

*The results of the present study showed that as firewood collection and selling is a laborious and time taking activity, women's burden increased from engaging in such livelihood activity. Also, the activity undermined the social capital of women as they spend a substantial amount of time on collection and sell. However, despite the less involvement of men in reproductive activities, their involvement in domestic tasks such as fetching water or to look after babies has improved commencing up on the women's participation in the selling activity.*

*Further, though the income from the livelihood activity is small, it enabled women to be a co-bread winner and in some instances to be a bread winner expressed through their provision to household necessities. The income also improved their decision making responsibilities in the household, albeit these responsibilities are not always welcomed by men.*

*More over, the chance to get engaged in the income generating activity enhanced women access to independent income from sales. Nonetheless, as the sales from the activity is minimal, it has not contributed to women's as well as household's asset building, as it only suffices to purchase day to day expenditures.*

*Finally, relying up on the case study undertaken in Shinile District and the literatures surveyed, the study emphasized that gender roles are subjected to change with alterations to time and one's livelihood set up for instance.*

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## Definition of Local Terms

*Birr*: refers to Ethiopian Currency Unit equivalent to 100 cents denominations  
*hallol*: refers to mats made for roofing huts  
*Aw*: refers to type of grass mainly used to make mats for roofing huts  
*Khat (catha edulis)*: refers to a mild stimulant commonly chewed in the Horn of Africa  
*Sahan*: refers pasture surveying or assessment  
*Coda*: refers milk container  
*Rereb*: refers to shelf  
*Kurbet* : refers to leather mat used for sleeping  
*Meher*: refers to the animals a woman get while she gets married  
*Fafa* : refers to corn flour

# CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

## 1. 1 Background of the Study

Pastoral areas cover 60% of Ethiopia and include 12-15% of the human population as well as very large numbers of livestock. Residents of pastoral areas have the lowest access in the country to education and human health services, and pastoral areas have the least developed infrastructure displaying their exclusion from mainstream development. Besides, the livelihoods of pastoral communities are severely threatened by animal disease, drought and unfavorable terms of trade (PICP, 2002).

With full cognizant of these realities about pastoralists, the Ethiopian Government included a chapter on pastoral development in the Sustainable Development and Poverty Reduction Program (SDPRP) Paper comprising various designed interventions meant for improving the standard of living of the pastoral communities. In line with this, the government articulated in the paper about interventions that improve pastoralists' livestock production and marketing system, water and pasture development. In addition, it is planned to develop schemes towards diversifying income sources that would help strengthen pastoralists' economic base and there by reduce vulnerability. For this, the government considered the tendency that pastoral communities are not always on the move. Although the frequency and extent of such human movement varies from region to region, there are situations when the people manage to stay in one place for several months. Hence, during seasons when family members tend to stay in one place for a considerable period of time, it is possible to create the opportunities for these people to engage in specially identified development activities and projects (SDPRP, 2002).

The study area, the district of Shinile is located at the centre of the Shinile Zone. Shinile Zone is a pastoralist zone in Somali region, Ethiopia. The pastoralists of the area keep the full range of livestock – sheep, cattle, goats and camels, but cattle and sheep are more predominant. Camels and goats are more dominant in the mountainous/rugged parts of the Zone, mainly around the southern foothills.

Shinile district is one of the poorest districts indicated by the small ownership of livestock by households compared to other Somali pastoralist districts (Devereux 2006). Livestock rearing is the main livelihood strategy of the district as for other pastoralists. Nonetheless, members of many households in this district are presently engaged in selling charcoal or firewood as secondary income source. These activities are traditionally persuaded by the poor for supplementing their minimal income from livestock. However, recently many households are getting engaged in such activities. Hence, overall, the combination of livestock and charcoal or firewood selling is the main livelihood strategy in the district (Devereux 2006).

There is a wide spread perception that rain failures have become more regular, or even continuous during the last two decades. These droughts are blamed for increasing poverty and causing herds and flocks to shrink in size. It is to cope with this livelihood stress that many households in Shinile district engage in collection and selling of fire wood and charcoal to supplement the household income from livestock rearing. These secondary income generating activities undermine the environment. In particular, charcoal burning is often criticized as causing environmental damage, and some

attempts have been made to regulate it, but these regulations are weakly enforced (Oumer, 2007). Hence, this kind of combination might seem the most feasible option to these pastoralists in Shinile district comparing to other combinations made to diversify household income. For instance, as these pastoralists reside in rural parts of the region, they have restricted options to non-farm employment opportunities. Many of the most lucrative sources of income are preferentially or exclusively accessible to urban residents, such as most categories of salaried employment, construction work or carpentry, and renting out property. While considering farming, as only a limited number of pastoralists in the district have access to cultivable land, they have again restricted option to diversify their income by farming. Besides, as agro-pastoralists earn less income compared to pastoralists, pastoralists don't consider inclusion of farming as a viable option. Lastly, Labor migration is one of the main coping strategies in response to drought and limited local livelihood options next to firewood selling, but employment opportunities in neighboring cities (Djibouti and Dire Dawa) are limited to casual labor and informal services (such as portering or running a tea-stall). Since these activities are highly competitive and poorly remunerated, migration does not generate significant flows of income and remittances back into Shinile District.

More pastoralist women in the district are involved in firewood sales. This is due to the fact that such kinds of activities are mostly regarded as women's work. Livestock rearing, charcoal burning, and migration are mainly regarded as men's work, while activities such as firewood selling as women's (Devereux, 2000).

Somali pastoralist women have a marginalized position in the household. The Somali society is highly patriarchal. The women have less decision making power within the home. These women feel undervalued saying them selves as "the half of men": 'If a man is killed, his family has to be compensated with 100 camels. If a woman is killed, she is compensated with only 50 camels. So we are only treated as the half of men.' One respondent highlighted in Devereux (2000).

Further, pastoralist women bear disproportionate tasks and responsibilities compared with pastoralist men. Men tend to migrate with most of the herds. Women are left at home with the entire responsibility of managing the household, as well as children and livestock left behind (particularly young, sick or milking animals). Additionally, women play an important role in animal production. Despite the pastoralist women's contribution to pastoral life, they only have limited access to and control over key productive resources. They might get only negligible income from milk trading. Besides, their access to resources including livestock is mediated by men (Wallace 1991).

Ironically, as household resources have dwindled or livestock herds have become more volatile, women have taken more role for bringing food and income into the home, a role which was previously reserved for men. In the old days, women hardly earned an income – the man was supposed to take care of everything. Recently, however women are more engaged in non-pastoral income generating activities specifically firewood selling to supplement the income from livestock rearing.

Given with this background, this study aimed to look at the impacts of the women's involvement in firewood selling on gender roles. Also, this research will be part of the interdisciplinary pool of researches conducted by the Institute of Pastoral and Agro-pastoral Studies (IPAS), Haramaya University, Ethiopia; an institute where the writer is working for.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

Pastoralists in Shinile district have been affected continuously by drought for the last two decades. These frequent droughts pose a serious challenge on livestock rearing activities: the main livelihoods of the pastoralists and their main source of income. The droughts caused the reduction of herds and flocks which in turn adversely affected the income from livestock rearing. As a result, pastoralist men failed to fulfill their traditional role as a household provider from livestock rearing, while more and more pastoralist women have engaged in firewood collection for sale to provide food and other household commodities for the family.

Even though, women are at the centre of this move towards the increasing involvement in firewood sale in order to earn additional income for the household, it is not clear to what extent the women involvement in such income earning activity affects the gender roles and responsibilities in the pastoralist livelihood system. This aspect of the pastoralist livelihood system has been ignored by researches undertaken in the area. Hence, this study aimed to identify how the involvement of the women in income generating activities specifically firewood sale affects gender roles and responsibilities in Shinile district.

## **1.3 Objective of the study**

The study aims to contribute to gender sensitive knowledge required for the ongoing interventions meant for diversifying income sources that would help strengthen pastoralists' economic base and there by reduce vulnerability as proposed under the SDPRP) in Shinile District. The above objective will be realized through identifying the impacts of pastoralist women's involvement in firewood collection and selling as an income generating activity on gender roles and responsibilities.

## **1.4 Research questions**

In order to address the above study objective, a set of research questions are formulated to guide the research process. The main research question is,

- What are the impacts of women's involvement in firewood sales as an income generating activity on gender roles and responsibilities among pastoralists in Shinile district?

More specifically the research tries to address the following sub-questions. The questions are,

- What effects does pastoralist women's engagement in income generating activities have on gender role?
- What are the tasks and activities of pastoralist men and women in Shinile district? And in what ways does the women's engagement in firewood collection and selling as an income generating activity affected these tasks and activities?
- What are the gendered responsibilities of pastoralists in Shinile district? And in what ways does these responsibilities are influenced by pastoralist women involvement in firewood collection and selling?



- What are the implications of the impacts of women involvement in income generating activities on gender role to the pastoralist men's and women's access to and control over household resources including finance and livestock?

## 1.5 Definition of key concepts

In this research different concepts were adopted. As a result, it is necessary to define these concepts as they are understood and used in the research.

### **Pastoralism**

Pastoralism is literally defined as “ extensive husbandry of herds of different species characterized by some degree of mobility’, however , the commonly used definition in literature is that pastoralist households are those in which at least 50% of household gross revenue ( including income and consumption ) comes from livestock or related activities( Swift,1998).

### **Gender**

Even if there are many definitions given by many authors, this study adopts the following definition of gender.

Gender is how a person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted in to locally accepted ideas of what it is to be a woman or a man. ‘Gender and the hierarchical power relations between women and men based on this are socially constructed, and not derived directly from biology. Gender identities and associated expectations of roles and responsibilities are there for changeable between and within cultures (Banden and Goetz, 1988).

### **Gender roles**

Gender roles are learned behaviors in a given society/community or other social group that condition the gender division of labor i.e. which activities, tasks and responsibilities are perceived as male or female. Gender roles vary considerably across settings and also change over time. Caroline Moser (1999) identifies a ‘triple role’ for low-income women in most societies. The triple role for women consists of reproductive, productive, and community managing activities. In contrast, men primarily undertake productive and community politics activities.

Reproductive work: As defined by Moser , this involves the care and maintenance of the household and its members , including bearing and caring for children, preparing food, collecting water and fuel, shopping , housekeeping and family health-care. In poor communities, reproductive work is, for the most part, labor-intensive and time consuming. It is almost always the responsibility of women and girls.

Productive Work: This involves the production of goods and services for consumption and trade (in employment and self-employment). Both women and men can be involved in productive activities, but their functions and responsibilities often differ. Women's productive work is often less visible and less valued than men's.

Community work: These activities include the collective organization of social events and services-ceremonies and celebrations, activities to improve the community (visiting the

sick neighbor), participation in groups and organizations, local political activities, and so on. This type of work is seldom considered in economic analyses, yet it involves considerable volunteer time and is important for the spiritual and cultural development of communities. It is also a vehicle for community organization and self-determination. Both women and men engage in community activities, although a gender division of labour also prevails here. Moser divides community work in to two different types of work.

*Community managing role:* Activities undertaken primarily women at the community level, as an extension of their reproductive role, to ensure the provision and maintenance of scarce resources of collective consumption such as water, health care and education. This is voluntary unpaid work, undertaken during women's 'free' time.

*Community politics role:* Activities undertaken by men at the community level, organizing at the formal political level, often within the framework of national politics. This are usually paid in cash for this work, or benefit indirectly through improved status or power.

## **Work**

**Gender (sexual division) of labor:** It is all types of work done by women and men. In all societies, men and women are assigned tasks, activities and responsibilities. It varies from one society to another, and with in each culture, also changes with external circumstances and overtime. The gender-based division of labor ascribed in a given socio-economic setting determines the roles that men and women actually perform (March, Smyth, and Mukhopadhyay 2005).

## **Access to, and control over resources**

When considering the way in which resources are allocated between women and men (the 'gendered' allocation of resources), it is important to look at the difference between access to resources and control over them (March, Smyth, and Mukhopadhyay 2005).

**Access:** This is defined as the opportunity to make use of a resource.

**Control:** This is the power to decide how resources are used, and who has access to it.

## **Gender Analysis**

The last concept that demands definition is Gender analysis, as it is the main tool of analysis adopted in this study.

According to a definition given by Miller and Razavi (1998) gender analysis is a systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations in order to identify, understand and redress inequities based on gender. Gender analysis is a valuable descriptive and diagnostic tool for development planners and crucial to gender mainstreaming efforts. The methodology components of gender analysis are shaped by how gender issues are understood in the institution concerned. There are a number of different approaches to gender analysis, including the Gender Roles identification known as Harvard framework, a tool that is espoused in this study.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 Income generating activities among Pastoralists

Today there are many pressures on pastoralists to diversify their livelihoods and get involved in various income generating activities beyond a reliance on livestock as was common in the past. Drought, land loss, population pressure, wars, and economic change resulted in the impoverishment and marginalization of pastoralists. As a result there are generally fewer livestock *per capita* than before. Livelihoods are changing and many can no longer realistically hope for a pastoral future. The changes are not all imposed from the outside; nor is rapid change a new phenomenon. Hence livestock herders of East Africa increasingly pursue non-pastoral income strategies to meet consumption needs to buttress against risky shocks caused by climatic fluctuation, animal disease, market failure, and insecurity. More over, as the above mentioned livelihood stresses undermined pastoralist men's sole traditional roles of bringing income to the household more and more pastoralist women have started engaging in income generating activities to provide for the family –a role which was previously kept for pastoralist men (D. Little et al, 2001)

According to Devereux (2006), Income-generating activities amongst pastoralists in Somali Region of Ethiopia are implicitly stratified into high-status, high-return activities, which are reserved for men (these include livestock rearing and large-scale trading), and low-status, low-return activities, into which women are channeled disproportionately (e.g. petty trading, collecting firewood). As men have access to resources including substantial amount of initial capital such as live stocks, they usually participate in large return activities which are deemed as high-status activities (Rotich, 2005). Whereas, women tend to lack such resources and they mostly subsume low-return income generating activities.

| Pastoralist men move with the livestock and trade live stocks, whereas women sale milk and milk products, firewood, medicine, handicrafts as an income generating activity.  
| Hence, income generation opportunities practiced mostly by women are typically more closely connected to the herding activities: they encompass, for instance, wild product collection (firewood, resins and gum), milk trade, alcohol brewing, petty trade, or production and trade of handicrafts (Rass in Nduma et al. 2001; Brockington 2001; smith 1998).

Under her study conducted about income generation activities amongst Ethiopian pastoralists, Flintan( 2007) asserts that the gender division in income generation might be also explained by pastoralist's roles. Women need to ensure that they have a certain amount of money at hand to feed the family and therefore may be happier to have a small but more secure income. Men however may be able to take more risks and are keen to see larger returns for their input: livestock sales for example (Flintan, 2007).

Brockington in Sikana *et al.*, 1993 also entails as income generating activities are important sources of food in pastoralist communities. Where sufficient milk is not available from the herd; pastoralists sell milk to get food. For instance, as Brockington and Homewood (1999: 525) also describe for Maasai pastoralist families removed from Mkomazi protected area, "for women in these families opportunistic selling had become a daily necessity. The poorer the family, the more likely it became for food to be bought on a hand to mouth, daily basis in exchange for whatever products women could sell.

Most of the women thus relied upon goods sold locally, but some traveled regularly and frequently to towns further a field in Kenya and Tanzania”.

## **2.2. Women Pastoralists’ Participation in Income generating activities and Impacts on Gender Roles**

The gender roles among pastoralist group vary from one culture to another, in different ethnic groups and with in the society according to age, social class and religious affiliation. As the differences in gender roles entail among different societies and places, gender roles are not also static, and change overtime.

Hassen in his study conducted regarding mainstreaming gender in Ethiopian pastoralist organization dictates that married pastoral women in Ethiopia and in other parts of East Africa in general are the household managers, but subordinate to men who serve as the household head and represent the household to the outside world. Pastoral men do play strategic decision making in the livestock production, while women carry on a day to day management and retain primary responsibility for dairy related activities (2007).

As stated outlined above, the increase in income generation activities to cope with the different livelihood shocks, is having an impact on men and women in different ways and on their gender roles. Women’s role as co-breadwinner through income generating activities is new and challenges long held views on the ‘appropriate’ role for women. Women are increasingly moving out beyond the domain of the home, whether by choice or necessity, and trying to establish themselves as business owners. These changes have generated much debate in society particularly between elders and younger people. One elderly man in Somali Region spoke for many of his generation at a workshop when he asserted that women should maintain traditional roles, and cited a Somali proverb: "Hooyadu mar waa dabaakh, mar waa doobi, mar waa daabad, marna waa furaash" (A mother’s function is to cook, launder, nurture and be a wife to her husband). This view is based in part on tradition but also the frustration that many men feel when not being able to support their families as custom prescribes (Sead Oumer et.al 2007).

A study conducted by Brockington and Homewood (1999: 525) in Mkomazi Game Reserve in northeast Tanzania shows the loss of livestock caused by drought affects women in a pastoral group and results a change in women’s livelihoods in response to altered circumstances. It dictates the circumstances of decrease in herds due to drought. This loss of (male-owned) livestock also translates directly into loss of male power, which women can and do exploit. This is mainly because live stocks are largely owned by men and men in pastoralist societies usually acquire prestige and power by accumulating large herds of animals (Rotich, 2005).

Income generation activities during times of emergency (such as drought) not only generate cash, but they can also play an important role in increasing women’s feeling of worth and self-esteem (Flintan in Muhammed 2002: 9).

By earning an income independent of their husbands, women now make many more decisions within the household. A major change in this regard is that in the past a large sum of money would be earned occasionally from the sale of an animal but now there is a small but continuous flow of money from petty trading or other businesses. Due to this, as well as the tendency of women to spend money on necessities rather than ‘luxuries’,

household security has improved in many cases. Additionally those women who have started businesses have gained more confidence, status and self-esteem. This new assurance was expressed by one woman in the following terms: Whatever happens, women will not return to their homes even if normality returns, because we have gained economic independence. Although all of these can be seen as positive changes, business development also has a number of negative impacts on women. It can place an increasing burden on women who are already overworked and under pressure. As a result they may reduce the time spent on childcare and/or put their own health or security at risk in order to raise income (Sead Oumer et al, 2007).

In a similar vein, Robertson in his study in Kenya puts the contradictory views of the impacts of income generating activities by women. He concluded that Kenyan women may well have more independence from the men as a result of earning their own money. However as the income gained by women from milk selling is small, that they were no better off or more food secure. They have only won the 'freedom to be poor' (Robertson, 1995).

Brockington (2001) in his study about the livelihood Strategies of dispossessed Pastoralists near the Mkomazi Game Reserve, Tanzania explains the other negative impact of the income gained from income generating activities due to crisis. He asserts that women may have sold goods before eviction because they needed their own income to achieve some form of financial independence. What the women were complaining about was the fact that the income they would have had for themselves is now required for needs once met by pastoralism. Where men are unable to provide sustenance from their herds, women's freedom to enjoy the fruits of their sales for their own purposes is denied.

On the other hand, Sead Oumer et al (2007), in their research in Somali pastoralist Region, Ethiopia state that as women's status as 'household provider' increases, men may feel that their own status is diminishing. This can cause resentment, conflict between husband and wife and perhaps rejection by the husband of any further responsibilities to contribute to the household, preferring instead to hang out on the streets and/or chew khat (a mild stimulant). In some instances it is noticed that men appear to be unwilling to support their wives, mothers, daughters where they need it, in providing assistance with the businesses and for example, labor. Attitudes have not changed enough to encourage men to help the women and rather, doing so would still be seen as demeaning and highlight their failure in providing for the household. However, in other instances men appear more willing to assist their wives for example husbands help collect palm leaves for handicraft production and fuel wood for sale. Lemlem Aregu et al (2007) suggest that this can be partly attributed to the interventions of development organizations and their promotion of gender equity. However, as Flintan (2007) suggests that this can also be linked to the degree of poverty and commercialization: where households can be considered to be 'very poor' they tend to work in a reciprocal manner battling to fulfill basic needs and ensure household survival. However once a certain level of wealth is reached and commercialization of the household economy is of a greater degree (particularly where based on the income of the wife) then attitudes change to those such as resentment or complacency on the part of the husband.

### **2.3 Implication of Pastoralist women's involvement in income generation to Access to and control over household resources**

In the pastoralist system men and women do have different access to and control over resources. Women do much of the work related to livestock production, while men have the final decision about when to sell or slaughter the animals. As indicated while, women are fully engaged in household chores, yet control over household assets other than milk and its by products is exercised by men in patriarchal fashion. Likewise, men have the final decision over the disposal of livestock -the main factor of production and control the proceeds of their sale. They also control over gifts of animals that women may received from relatives as part of the family herd. On the other hand, the animals women have access to are theirs by virtue of their relationship to the men who control them—their fathers, husbands, and sons. Women have only access to the livestock products through processing and marketing dairy products as their “traditional” role. With regard to the communal assets, pastoral women are responsible for constructing and maintaining water schemes in addition to providing water for family and young animals, whereas men exercise control over the water points.

Where pastoralist women supervise the activities of girls living with them, men have overall control of the labor available within the household. By and large, women sell milk products and control the proceeds, while men control the proceeds from the sale of large stock such as cattle and camels (Hassen 2007)

Pastoralist women are engaged in multiple economic activities that are critical for the livelihood of rural households. Their participation in different income generating activities might have different implications to access and control over resources. Food, for example, would often be distributed unequally and, more precisely, the needs of men and boys took precedence over those of women and girls. Hence, engagement of pastoral women in income generating activities might improve household food supplies.

A study conducted by Fratkin and Smith (1995) on women's sales among settled and nomadic Rendille, Kenya indicated that women convert their earnings directly into food purchases, with the result that settled families' diet involved more starch and greens. Where as, the research indicated that only a few women reported giving some money to their husbands or saving money for expenses such as children's school fees. The same study in Waters-Bayer, 1985, among Nigerian Fulani living closer to large towns, stated that women's earnings from milk sales account for one-third of the total income generated from cattle herds; this income is used mainly for daily household needs( Fratkin and Smith, 1995).

However, income generating activities are not just important for food supplies. Where men control the major sources of income, trading provides an opportunity for women to control their own money (Buhl and Homewood, 2000). They are also a means by which women earn (access) money for themselves. As Little also suggested diversification of household economies may give women more freedom. It might offer women access to more sources of income which they can control (Little, 1987). This was most true where women have direct control over the proceeds of these activities.

As repeatedly mentioned in various literatures, pastoralist women also have less influence (control) and choice in the decisions that have a bearing on their lives and those of their children. These enduring and sometimes widening inequalities affect the ability of women to carry out their critical roles. Changes in the importance of women's earnings for women will need to be seen in terms of the degree of independence and control they have over them compared to men ( Flintan in Huss-Ashmore, 1996). For example, House- Midamba compared women's trading in East and West Africa, and suggests that men in West Africa support their wives' trading activities, but that men in East Africa may withdraw support from a wife if her income allows them to do so (Flintan in House-Midamba, 1995). It should not be assumed that if women are involved in income generation activities that they are able to control income raised: sometimes men will take control. As Brockington (2001: 310-11) describes though Maasai women have control over milk the control over the income may be "continually negotiated and contested." In addition, any new patterns of trade and change are to some extent dependent on the impact on the autonomy and interdependence between men and women. Indeed, once again in relation to milk, some Gabra husbands in Borana are attempting to stop their wives marketing the milk, by moving further away from the towns. The findings of McPeak (2006) suggest that this is because the husbands are not comfortable with their wives gaining control over income.

Ensminger found consequences vary according to the wealth and location of women. Her work on the Galole Orma showed that erosion of some women's powers was juxtaposed with the retention or even extension of others. Richer women were more able to lobby effectively to protect their livestock from being sold (for instance to sell milk as an income generating activity) by husbands because their husbands had more choice about which animals to sell (Ensminger, 1987). Settled women of a previously nomadic population were better able to take advantage of money earning opportunities and control these earnings because their husbands had little control over their businesses. In contrast women far from settlements and markets had less control over the marketing of animals and were less able to influence the sale of stock. They depended on their husbands to sell any dairy products for them and to buy provisions, and they had less direct control over the income generated (Ensminger, 1987)

Control over the proceeds of women's income was contested. The strategy was a matter of considerable negotiation within some households. In one case, the women disliked the extra work, and the head of the household disliked seeing his wives and dependents selling firewood, because it was a sign of poverty. On the other hand, the man resented the expenses of his large household and needed his dependents to earn money (Brockington, 2001).

In general, if the woman is able to keep her earnings, though the income may be small, it may be the only means by which she can obtain cash that she has control over. Indeed, it is said that men are more likely to respect women if they are raising money that form a significant part of the household income (Flintan in ABRDP, 1999).

In conclusion, according to the literatures compiled, income generation activities affected pastoralist men and women's traditionally assigned roles. However, paradoxes still persist amongst the findings of different studies in different societies concerning the impact to gender roles. Hence, this shows how differences entail amongst impacts on gender role resulting from women's income generating activities, in accordance with

variations in places, the nature or type of income generating activities or other related factors.

Moreover, the literatures showed that women involvement in income generation has also various indications for men and women's access and control. Income earned by women will be used to buy nutritious foods that will enhance men, women and the entire family's access to quality food. More over, their involvement also helped pastoral women to access and control their own independent income that they were not used to. However , again , as dictated in the above literatures, the implications to access and control ,vary from place to place and from society to society as expressed in the variations of the control over income by women in various societies for instance. Hence, through the considerations of differences, this study aims to find out what exact impacts that women's involvement in firewood sales results on gender roles and its implications to men and women's access to household resources.



## CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

This part deals with the brief description of the study area and discusses the research strategy as well as the sources and methods of data collection.

### 3.1. Description of the Study Area

#### 3.1.1. Location

The study was conducted in Shinile district of Somali region. Shinile district is one of the six districts of Shinile Zone and located at the centre of Zone. The Zone is uniquely located in the extreme north of Somali Region, wedged between Dire Dawa to the west, Afar Region to the north and Djibouti to the east. Shinile district is located 517 Km east of Addis Ababa and at about 15 Km from Dire-Dawa. The rail way from Addis to Djibouti passes through the district (IPMS, 2006).

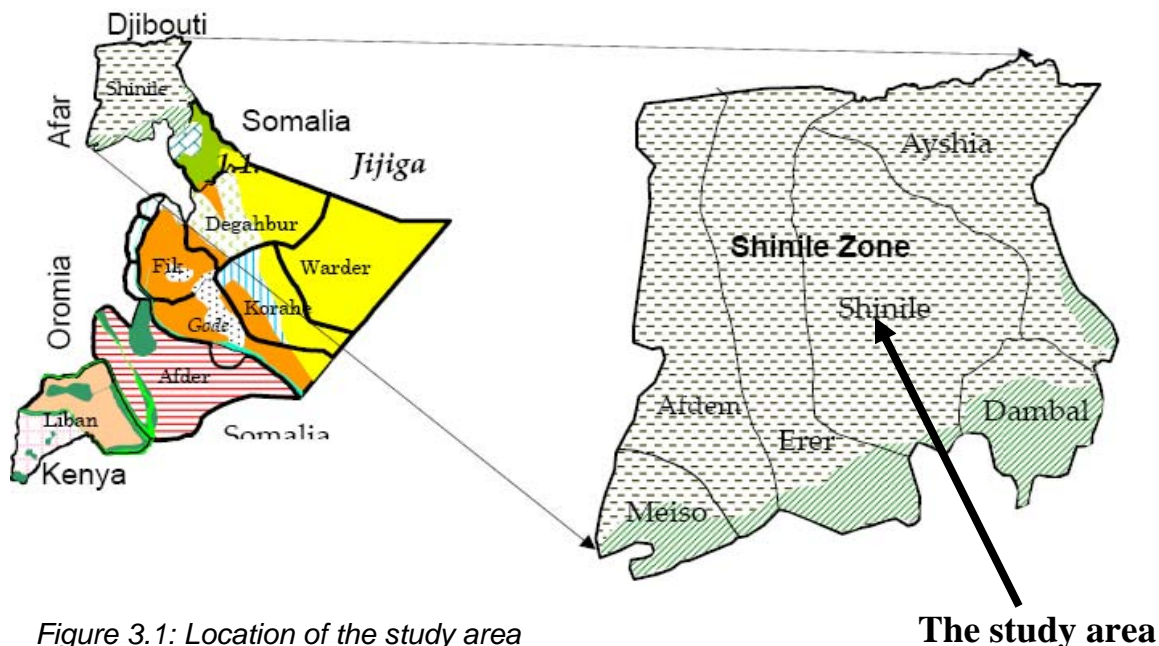


Figure 3.1: Location of the study area

#### 3.1.2. Agro-ecological zone

The district's altitude ranges between 500-900 m.a.s.l. The mean annual temperature varies between 25.1<sup>0</sup>C-27.5<sup>0</sup> C. Moreover, soils in the Shinile Zone are of different types, however the most predominant ones are eutric fluvisols, orthic solonchaks and eutric regosols (IOSNRS, 2000).

Agro ecologically the district is classified as (lowland) and it falls within flat to gently sloping topography. The district receives a mean annual rainfall of 300mm to 500 mm. The main rainy seasons in the area are Dira' (late March-Mid-May) and Karan (July – early September) (IOSNRS, 2000).

### **3.1.3. Vegetation**

About 38 % (73,658 ha) of the total land area is covered by bushes, forests, and grazing land. This is the major feed resources in the district. The vegetation of the area is *Acacia* dominated with some under growth of grasses. From the total land area, 11.5 % is arable land, 9 % is grazing land, 29 % forest and bushes, 24 % is potentially cultivable, 25 % uncultivable land (hills) and 2 % is homestead (IOSNRS, 2000).

### **3.1.4. Demographic structure**

According to the information obtained from Shinile Zone Administration report the population of Shinile district is estimated to be 94,423 in 2003, of whom 52% are male and 48% are female( SZA,2004). 87% of the district populations are pastoralists and 10% are ago-pastoralists. Livestock rearing particularly sheep and goats is the dominant livelihood activity.

The people of Shinile district belong to the Issa clan, which inhabits the territory stretching from Dire Dawa to the Republic of Djibouti, where the Issa dominate. The Issa are mainly pastoralists. The Issa people of Shinile have close linkages with Djibouti. Compared to other districts found in Shinile Zone, Shinile district has the smallest average household size, the lowest polygamy rate (this might be due to the reason that most households in the district are poor families who are not in a position to support extra families) and below average female-headed households (Save the Children UK,2002).

## **3.2 Research strategy**

This study is a qualitative study undertaken through desk study and case study as a method to effectively explore the impacts of pastoralist women's involvement in firewood selling on gender roles. The desk study was used for soliciting theories from various literatures that are used to understand about the effects of pastoralist women's engagement in income generating activities on gender role. Later on, a single case study was conducted on pastoralists who recently engaged in firewood collection for sale. This qualitative study is chosen due to the nature of the research issue and the time limitations allotted for the given study. Also, as it utilizes a variety of data collection techniques for triangulation, it will envisage wholesomeness of data.

## **3.3 Selection of the study area**

The study area is located in Shinile district, in the Shinile Administrative Zone of Somali region of Ethiopia. Pastoralism is the dominant livelihood activity in the district. The district is one of the areas severely affected by continuous drought for a long period of time. Now adays drought and the continuous reduction of stocks has become part of the way of life for a significant number of pastoralists. It is, therefore, clear that a considerable number of pastoral households in the area are engaged in different non-pastoral income earning opportunities to cover their day to day necessities. As a result, the vulnerability of the area to the recurrent droughts and its resultant impact on the lives and livelihoods of the local people is one of the main reasons for the selection of Shinile district, as a case study for this research. Moreover, Shinile district is also one of the research areas that is being covered by IPAS, the research institute that I am working for.

While considering the selections of PAs, Jedene and Marmarsa were chosen in this study. These pastoralist PAs are amongst the 32 peasant associations (of which 8 are agro-pastoralists) found in the district. The PAs also have approximately 600 households with an average household family size of six people (Save the Children UK, 2002).

Jedene and Marmarsa, apart from being severely affected by the drought, most pastoralists from the other remote areas also moved to these PAs after their stock are threatened by the prolonged drought during the last two decades, in order to be close to the near by Shinile town to explore non-pastoral income earning opportunities such as firewood sale.

### **3.4 Data type and source**

Both secondary and primary data were utilized in this study. The primary data were gathered through field work using focus group discussion and interview whereas; secondary data were gathered through reviewing various literatures on the topic. The sources of secondary data were books, journals and other grey literatures. Here, the literature survey entails about pastoralists not only in Ethiopia but also in other East African countries such as Kenya and Tanzania as they altogether share many livelihood characteristics.

Concerning primary data sources, key informant interviews were undertaken with the district Agricultural Officer together with two pastoralist elders to identify male headed households whose wife recently engaged in firewood collection and selling and explore the environmental impact of the income generating activity. Another key informant was made with the district Women Affairs Officer to identify the constraints for pastoralist women with regards to diversifying their income generating activities and to acquire general information pertaining the research problem.

Furthermore, pastoralist men and women respondents were the main data sources, by which information about the impacts of the income generating activity on their tasks, responsibilities and access and control over resources were explored.

### **3.5 Selection of respondents, primary data gathering tools and data analysis**

In the primary data collection phase, data gathering tools such as semi-structured interviews, focused group discussions, and observation were employed. More over, purposive sampling was espoused to select the case study.

After a complete identification of respondents, four focus group sessions were held (one with 5 women and the other with 5 men separately) to conduct gender analysis as a means to identify the impacts of fire wood collection for sale on the tasks, activities, access and control. I carried out the discussion for men and women separately in order to allow women to speak freely, as they tend not to do this in front of men due to religious as well as cultural taboos.

Then, individual semi-structured interview were carried out again, with 5 men and women each as a means to find out the possible effects of the income generating activity on pastoralist responsibilities. Finally, observation were undertaken in order to find out

the daily routines (tasks and activities performed in a day) and triangulate with the finding from the focus group discussion as well as interviews.

The study mainly employed qualitative analytic tools like content analysis was used to examine the interpretations and implications of the information from the documents, observation reports, and interview discussions.

### **3.5 Characteristics of Interview Respondents**

This part of the research provides descriptive characteristics of the interview respondents that were used in the study. The description of respondents' characteristics includes basic background characteristics, like marital status, age, gender composition, religion, and family size.

A total of 10 individuals 5 men and 5 women were used in order to collect the necessary data for the study both through interview and focus group discussion. With regard to gender distribution of respondents equal number of men and women were used in order to get reasonably unbiased data.

Accordingly, 70% of all respondents are found in the active age group ranging from 30 to 45, as this age group is the main group of people actively engaged in all productive as well as reproductive activities to fulfil the livelihoods of the household. Nonetheless, the rest 30% fall under the age category of 55 to 65.

Regarding marital status, the entire interview respondents in the research were married as was in the focus group discussion. On the hand, from all interview respondents, 60% belong to a large family size having 6 to 9 members.

The level of respondents' literacy is another characteristic by which about 10 percent of the respondents have completed primary education only. Moreover, another 10 percent of the respondents have some basic primary education. Among the remaining 80 percent of the respondents only 30 percent can read and write while the 50 percent are illiterate. Women are more disadvantaged in terms of educational attainment. From the women respondents, only 20 percent of them can read and write. There are more than four times as many women as men having no education.

With regard to religion, since the Somali region is a Muslim dominated region especially in the rural areas, all the respondents belongs to the Islam religious group.

### **3.6 Limitations of the study**

There are several methodological limitations associated with this study. First and foremost, the researcher unfamiliarity with the people in the study area including the language spoken has created some limitations in collecting the necessary data on time. However, in an attempt to overcome this problem translators have been used as well as an attempt was made to make my self acquainted with the study area and the respondents before the start of the fieldwork.

The other limitation encountered is associated with the period in which the fieldwork was undertaken. Due to the prolonged effect of drought it is difficult to find most of the family members especially those able bodied members at home as they are working outside

home. Especially for women, contacts at the market place were needed while they are at business of selling their firewood. It was a challenge for me and my translators to convince them to give me their time to do the interview in order to collect the necessary data. To overcome this problem most of the data especially the data from the focus group discussion were collected during late afternoon when they have completed their daily tasks.

The issue of time and resource was also another limitation. The study needs much time to collect all the necessary data. But the fieldwork time allocated for the study was very short. Therefore, due to time shortage and unfamiliarity of the study area, some data needed for the study were missed.

All these limitations pose their own effect on the outcome of the study. However, an attempt has been made to overcome the limitations and tried to present the real picture of the problem.

## CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the results from primary data collection that was done through conducting 4 focus group discussions and 10 semi-structured interviews with pastoralist men and women in two pastoralist peasant associations known as Jedene and Mermersa, in Shinile District. The chapter also, simultaneously, attempts to compare and contrast the results obtained with the different literatures on the study.

### 4.1 Firewood selling as an income generating activity

In Shinile pastoralist, men with the income from livestock sales were used to be sole breadwinners of the household. They provide the family by selling livestock for purchasing grains (millet), rice, sugar or what so ever food items required in the household. However, as droughts persisted causing the death of many livestock and eroding the income from livestock sales, pastoralist men failed to fulfill their responsibility as household provider from sale of livestock. Hence, increasing number of women are engaged in non-pastoral income generating activities in order to supplying food for the household.

In Shinile district, non-pastoral income seems to be almost confined to only to those environmentally un-sustainable activities-charcoal making and firewood collection. As Devereux (2006) stated a drastic number of households in the district are participating in charcoal making and firewood selling. It is also the 3<sup>rd</sup> livelihood activity in Somali region following livestock rearing and crop farming. Earlier, firewood selling and charcoal burning were only adopted as a drought coping strategy, only to be abandoned again when the rains return and livestock herds regenerate. However, as drought became recurrent, many households pursued such activities as their secondary income source. Besides, lack of alternative livelihood options, loss of livestock to drought were a feature shared by the interview respondents and given as a reason for their poverty and their growing dependence on natural resources including charcoal making and firewood collection.

Surprisingly, there is a gender division while pursuing natural resource based livelihood activities in the district. Charcoal making generates better income and is practiced usually by men, while firewood collection for sale is done by women. During my stay in the district, I have experienced households by which the husband is engaged in charcoal burning, while his wife is selling firewood. Lemelem et al (2007) in their research in the Borena Ethiopia pastoralists also reached on similar findings. Stating women have very limited income generating options and those that they can access are generally low return activities such as firewood collection. Men however mainly undertake activities such as charcoal production. Handicraft production usually does not provide high returns, and therefore men tend to leave such 'menial' work to women with other labour intensive low return income generating activities such a firewood collection and sale (Lemlem et al. 2007). Although patterns of segregation run through all societies, exactly which job falls to men, and which to women, has varied enormously. In essence, however, it is still the fact that 'women pick up the work men won't do' (Moser 1993).

Ironically, though charcoal making regarded as men's work, interviewed men emphasized that, skills required for charcoal making and the government's ban on the activity limits the amount of men pastoralists engaging in such activities. While, unlike the ban in charcoal, fuel wood collection for sale is not banned in Shinile district.

According to the district Agricultural Officer whom I had interviewed as a key informant, firewood collectors usually are not cutting trees, rather they collect woods which have already been cut by pastoralists for the purpose of feeding livestock (Key informant interview,6/8/2008). Hence, they are not as such considered degrading the environment as compared to charcoal producers who intensively burn trees. However, experiences in other countries show that women may operate under informal arrangements with local law enforcement officers who allow the collection in return for money, goods or services. Though women may recognize that their activities lead to land degradation, usually it is the case that they have no option to diversify to other income generating activities and therefore will continue using the resource unsustainably (Eskonheimo in Flintan 2006).

*We don't approach firewood sellers and charcoal burners in a homogeneous way. Our office considers charcoal burners as highly damaging the environment. Contrastingly, firewood collectors usually gather woods that have already been cut by pastoralists to feed livestock. We recognize that people are involved in such activities due to lack of livelihood options. Our office had once planned to find alternative income generating activities for pastoralists. We had selected 20 pastoral women to start poultry production. But it has failed as we can't find the desired varieties. Currently, we are planning for 10 pastoral women to participate in vegetable farming. When livestock are large, women's workload also increases simultaneously. However, as now days, drought has diminished the number of animals that pastoralists used to have, women can now better operate if income generating activities such as vegetable farming is designed. In a similar way, we are proposing alternative means of income for about 60 pastoral men. We have already inquired them to form groups (composed of 15 members) and we are planning to train them in farming. The office plans to arrange land, seeds and tractor (on a contract basis) so that they can able to grow maize or millet.<sup>1</sup>*

However, although firewood collection requires great effort and the income from it is unreliable, women still see it as their easiest (if not only) means to earn an independent income that can be used to purchase necessary household goods.

#### **4.1.1 Reasons for women's engagement in firewood sales**

Women are involved in firewood selling rather than other income generating activities due to many reasons. Lack of formal educational qualification might be one reason amongst many, limiting them from engaging in better income generating activities such as skilled employment. The duties that boys and girls (for girls in addition to their domestic duties) perform in livestock production usually interferes their formal education. The limited no of schools in Shinile district also dictate the poor educational qualification of pastoralists in the area. Though there are elementary schools in each peasant association, only one high school (even it is up to 10<sup>th</sup> grade) is available in the district. Hence, many terminate education while reaching 10<sup>th</sup> grade (though the formal high school completion is at 12<sup>th</sup> grade) as they can't afford to continue their education in Jijiga city (Capital of Somali region). With this situation, girl's education is unthinkable and even worse compared to boys. Girls are restricted from schooling due to religious

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<sup>1</sup> Key informant interview with District Agricultural Officer ( 6/8/2008)

and various socio-cultural factors. The maximum number of girls who have graduated from 10<sup>th</sup> grade was last year, by which 2 girls have graduated.

In addition to lack of education, access to initial capital is another restraining factor limiting pastoralist women from engaging in better income earning activities. Few pastoralists have the initial capital to begin commercial enterprises. There are no or limited financial sectors including micro-finance institutions in the district. For women, who have been unable to trade major livestock assets, they are even less likely to have savings. Oumer (2007) also emphasized as in most pastoral settings financial services are often unavailable. In particular women are rarely considered creditworthy in the formal sector because they have no capital to present as collateral. Though pastoral men may also have trouble accessing collateral they can obtain cash through informal clan-based redistribution, but this is only available to men. Also men tend to have greater access to government and non-government credit schemes as they are more often recognized as the household head. Due to this, individual women in particular find it extremely difficult if not impossible to begin any kind of business venture.

More over, there is little or no precedent for business management and development in the area and few have the skills to share with others. Even though, in recent years, the Somali Regional Government has promoted small business development through the Women's Affairs Office and the Cooperative Promotion Bureau, such initiatives have not yet reached Shinile district.

Hence, due to the limited livelihood options, women rely mostly on natural resource based activities such as firewood collection and selling. Very few pastoralist women in the district are involved in petty trading, contrasting to a drastic number of women selling firewood, as even petty trading requires access to credit in order to acquire inventory, or to purchase basic equipment (Ellis&Woldehanna 2005).

## **4.2 Gender Roles of pastoralists and impacts of firewood sales**

### **4.2.1 Impacts on tasks and activities of Shinile pastoralists**

I carried out focus group discussions ( see annex ) with men and women to find out how the gendered tasks have been affected by women's involvement in income generating activities; that in turn aims to answer my second research question. In the first session of the discussion (in the two mornings), the gender division of labor is identified as classified and presented below as productive, reproductive and social and political activities.

#### **4.2.1.1 Task and activity profile of pastoralists**

##### **Productive Activities**

The focus group discussion with men revealed that those activities like migrating with animals look after animals' health and slaughter and sale of animals are the main activities of men. Regarding livestock herding, adult men herd camel, where as boys do herd only cattle (see picture 4.1 below). As one male discussant has said;

*Boys herd shoats and cattle around homestead till they become 15 years old but once they pass this age they will migrate with animals.*





Picture 4.1: Showing a boy herding cattle

Women have also identified many tasks showing their greatest share in livestock production. They have sorted out (as shown in the below table) tasks except herding cattle and camel, watering and milking camel and marketing (except selling cattle and camel). During the discussion, women have informed me that they do not milk camel due to the inconvenience of the camel's height. Besides, almost all women participants argued that culturally it is also a taboo for women to milk camel which is also the case in the Afar pastoral communities of Ethiopia as mentioned in Lemlem et al (2007).

Regarding livestock marketing, Shinile pastoral women are only involved in Shoats<sup>2</sup> selling. Men largely sell all kinds of livestock including camels, cattle and shoats. Even, women only sell shoats after getting their husband's permission for covering household expenses.

It was also indicated by the focus group discussants that women have high burden since they are engaged in different activities for longer hours in a given day while some of the men are not engaged in actual (manual) work other than herding and instructing the rest of the family members. As one respondent underlined *in Somali it is the women who do every thing starting from looking after the children to herding shoats and milking cattle*. Most of the interviewed women argued that this is one reason for women's exclusion from traditional as well as modern community decision making processes as they don't have enough time to deal with issues outside productive activities.

### **Reproductive Activities**

The reproductive tasks identified in the focus group discussion are mostly domestic chores which include food preparation, fetching water and fire wood, house cleaning, care and support for children, elderly, and sick members of the household, construction and maintenances of houses and fences, and procurement of consumables.

According to the information obtained from the focus group discussion, most of these activities have a feminine face, that is, they are naturally regarded as women's activities, as it might be due to the strongest linkage with the sex role of women for child bearing and thus are the main duties of girls and women. In addition, it was also identified that the women also manufacture household goods such as mats (known as *hallof*) for

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<sup>2</sup> Sheep and goats

roofing huts from a type of grass called “aw”. They argued that adult males rarely take part in such activities. It is understood that, women and girls undertake these activities in addition to the productive activities assigned to them further indicating their work burden.

From the prevailing reproductive tasks, construction and maintenance activities are performed by all gender classes. As the participants of the discussion have argued, construction and maintenance of huts is the duty of women and girls, whereas fence making and its maintenance are largely done by men and boys. During my stay in the field work, I have also observed women constructing huts. They make the huts by being in group possibly with friends/neighbors (see picture 4.2 below).



*Picture 4.2: Showing women constructing huts*

In a similar vein, almost all family members involve in purchasing of household items needed for consumption. The overall purchasing load declines from men to women, then girls and boys, indicating that the role of girls in such activities is limited. The above discussion showed that the participation of men and boys in reproductive activities is focused on those activities that are located outside of the home environment and limited to purchasing of food items and maintenance tasks. Here, it can be inferred that the greater attachment of men to purchasing, underlines their access to cash and the decisions on how and where to spend it.

In line with the identified activities, I have also inquired both men and women which task (might be productive or reproductive) that they regard difficult to have a general picture of men and women’s workload. Hence, men participants have identified herding and trekking to water resources as the most difficult one. On the hand, women argued that almost all reproductive tasks including firewood collection and fetching water are tiresome, hectic and continuous. In their study conducted in Afar pastoralist communities, Gemetessa & Eman (2005) also affirmed that reproductive tasks as being the most cumbersome, exhaustive and time consuming. The same study argued that these tasks served as source of women’s inequality and insubordination and low self-esteem. The focus group discussion from the present study also revealed that the reproductive role of women is not recognized as something important and crucial to the wellbeing of a family. This might be due to the fact that those activities might not worth any money or respect from the family. During the discussion most of the women expressed their opinion that, the overburdening of women with different reproductive

activities is limiting their potential in engaging in other income earning activities, which might have implications in determining women's access and control of resources and benefits.

### **Social and Political Activities**

Social and political activities are also another type of activities identified by the participants of the discussion. From the focus group discussion conducted with women it is identified that women and girls are excluded from social and political activities specifically from activities related to community administration. For instance, they pointed out that they are not allowed to take part in traditional clan meetings as these activities are only regarded as men's duties. One participant of the women focus group discussion described it as;

*We women are not allowed to participate in clan meetings. It is the duty of men to do this. Also, we usually tend not to attend formal administration meetings as we lack the time to do so.*

The women argued that their engagement in social or community affairs is thus pretty much restricted to ritual, festive and compassionate events and development works.

Relying on the information provided by the discussants, Shinile men are spending much of their time going around and looking after community activities, which include talking and socializing with friends and giving instructions and controlling the performance of members of the household. They also spend time chewing *Khat (catha edulis)*, which is a mild stimulant commonly chewed in the Horn of Africa.

From the gender analysis conducted using focus group discussion among pastoral men and women, the following gender divisions of labor were identified, as summarized using the following table.

**Table 4.1: Gender division of labor in Shinile Pastoral community**

Activity	Female		Male	
	Child	Adult	Child	Adult
<b>Productive activities</b>				
Herding cattle			X	
Herding camel				X
Herding shoats	X	X	X	
Animals health using traditional and modern veterinary services			X	
Watering cattle	X	X	X	
Watering camel( trekking to water sources )				X
Watering shoats	X	X	X	
Slaughtering				X
Care taking of pregnant and lactating cattle and calves		X		

Milking cattle and shoats	X	X		
Milking camel				X
Churning Butter	X	X		
Building and repairing livestock enclosures				X
Milk marketing	X	X		
Livestock Marketing		X <sup>3</sup>		X
<b>Reproductive activities</b>				
Food preparation	X	X		
Fetching water	X	X		
Purchasing food items	X	X	X	X <sup>4</sup>
Collecting firewood	X	X	X	
Care for children, sick persons, the elderly	X	X		
Washing clothes	X	X		
Cleaning household	X	X		
Constructing house( known as <i>daso</i> )	X	X		
Constructing fences			X	X
Sewing	X	X		
Making mat( hallol) for house roofs	X	X		
<b>Socio-political activities</b>				
Participating in clan meetings				X
Security related activities				X
Traditional leadership				X
Participation in development activities	X	X	X	X
Weddings	X	X	X	X
Funerals				X <sup>5</sup>
Rituals( e.g naming a child)		X		X

Source: Focus group discussion, Shinile District

#### 4.2.1.2 Effect of Women involvement in firewood sale on tasks and activities

After identifying the major tasks and activities undertaken by men and women, a discussion was conducted about how such activities have been affected by the women's involvement in firewood sales.

<sup>3</sup> Women are not involved in sell of cattle and camels

<sup>4</sup> Men are purchasing only large items (such as grain and clothes) that are used for a long period of time

<sup>5</sup> Shinile women, as followers of Muslim religion, are not attending funerals since it is restricted in Muslim religion.

In general, from the discussion it was identified that the first changes that had occurred is women's increased work load. Women argued that firewood collection and selling is a strenuous task for them. This adds more strains on women who have already been burdened by domestic task as noted above.

According to women focus group discussants, the collection of fuel wood also exposes them to injury from falls and the risk of miscarriage, as well as splinters and cuts. The women told me that they woke up early in the morning (around 5 am) to collect firewood. They end up collection usually around lunchtime and will go directly to sell it to the near by town –Shinile town carrying the wood on their back (See picture 4.3 below). As most of them lack access to pack animals they can't sell large amounts of wood to the nearest big town –Dire Dawa.



*Picture 4.3: Showing a woman carrying firewood on her back*

In contrast, women who have access to pack animals sale firewood in Dire-Dawa town (which is located 15 km away from Shinile town) by traveling around 2 hrs by foot. These women use donkeys or camels to carry large amounts of woods to town. However, they sale once in two days interval (they allocate one day for collection of wood and the other for selling), unlike those women who sale every day in Shinile town. There is also greater sales income disparity between those who sale in Shinile and Dire-Dawa. The former sale the wood for a much less price (with a maximum price of birr 10) as compared to latter groups of women who can sell their firewood for about 30 to 40 birr (Focus group discussion 23/07/2008).

In a similar pattern, Mamo(2007), in his research conducted amongst Borena pastoralists, compares the earlier efforts paid by women while collecting firewood with present one. He asserts that now a days the collection of fuel wood takes a much longer time and greater effort than it did 'in the past' due to diminishing forest resources. Similarly from the present discussion that has been conducted, women explained that they used to walk 2 to 4 hours just to reach the forest before wood is even collected compared to 30 minutes to one hour before.

Though the selling schedule for women selling in Shinile and Dire-Dawa town might seem different, both categories of women return home very late (around 6 pm) having a long and tiresome day. Even, up on returning home they are expected to perform their

domestic tasks which include cooking dinner to the family or what so ever household tasks pertaining. I have been informed that girls are the ones who usually give women assistance through performing tasks like cooking and fetching water. Mother in-laws might also assist in taking care of children. As one woman described in focus group discussion whether their lives had improved or got worse in recent years:

*One can simply understand our miseries in life by only looking our bodies. People these days never help each other and one never loves the other. Earlier, people in town were used to help rural pastoral families during drought. But, now as drought become common, every one become exhausted. We , firewood sellers, mostly suffer from diseases of the kidney and elsewhere due to the long distances we used to walk to collect and sell fuel wood.*

Omer (2007) in his research conducted about the privatization of Somali Rangelands has also indicated that the time taken to collect fuel wood has added extra burdens on other tasks performed by women, such as preparing food and health related activities. He also noted that sometimes children may be taken out of school to assist with the extra workloads (Omer, 2007).

The specific impacts of women's involvement in firewood sales to the 3 type's of activities are outlined as below.

### **Impacts on reproductive activities**

The other change that has been observed due to pastoralist women's involvement in firewood sales is the increased involvement of pastoralist men in domestic reproductive work. This has been underscored from both discussions undertaken with men and women groups. It is notable that before the recurrent droughts and the consequent involvement of women in firewood selling, pastoralist men were hardly involved in domestic reproductive work except purchasing grain or consumables. But now due to drought many pastoralist women are working outside and they lack the time for undertaking all domestic reproductive tasks as they used to do before. To cover up women's domestic responsibilities, it is usually a girl child who accomplishes domestic tasks such as looking after babies, while women are engaging themselves in collecting and selling firewood. It is found that with the absence of a girl child in the family, men are get involved in domestic reproduction work despite the inflexible gender division of labor that exist in the pastoralist system. For instance, while women are on selling duty in town, it is common to find men fetching water, collecting firewood, or taking care of small babies. However, men hardly participate in cooking and seriously regard it as female's duty.

Both men and women argued that this change in division of labor occurred after drought forced the wives to work outside looking for additional income specifically through engaging in firewood selling activities. Even, I discovered women respondents saying that men gained lesson from drought, as they are now undertaking different household duties. The women also indicated that they perceive this as a good initiative and wish if such things elongate in future, as it might save their time so that they can spend it more strategically. As one man discussant highlighted:

*“In the past, it is a shame for a man to participate in reproduction works. It is also common among the pastoral men that if a man supported a woman in reproduction works, then his friends would humiliate him but now we have begun to work together”*

Nevertheless, Flintan (2007) describes the assistance of men as linked to the degree of poverty. She argued that very poor households tend to work in a reciprocal manner battling to fulfill basic needs and ensure household survival, but they tend to abandon it once a certain level of wealth is reached. Moreover, as Tefera & Alemu (2007) asserted, the problem of *khat* chewing is becoming prevalent and is an excuse for many men to leave most of the work to the women.

### **Impacts on productive activities**

Moreover, asked whether women involvement in firewood collection and selling have an impact on livestock production activities, the discussants underlined that pastoralist women’s involvement in firewood collection and selling as an income generating activity does not have any influence on livestock production, as drought caused a drastic reduction in the pastoralist’s herds and flocks and made them remain with only few livestock (See picture 4.3 below). However, children became over burdened as they are the one who will look after the remaining animals –sheeps or cattle. Hence, both men and women have less involvement in livestock production, and most of the activities such as herding of the remaining cattle are performed by children. Besides, milk production has also reduced due to drought indicating the women’s reduced role in milk production.



*Picture 4.4: Showing effect of drought on livestock*

### **Impacts on socio-political activities**

From the discussion, it was also indicated that, as firewood selling is a drought induced income generating activity, it over burdens women and also reduces the social capital of adult workforce in the household. Family members, specifically, husband and wife spend their whole day working in selling charcoal or firewood; they will get tired and have little time for chatting ( with other clan members ) or do some social activities. For instance, the women whom I have discussed with said that, because of drought less time is spent on socializing children because much of the time is taken up by non-pastoral income generating activities. Similarly, since most of the cultural activities such as weddings and

dowry payments depend on livestock (animals are slaughtered as part of the celebration or given in case of dowry), the lack of livestock reduces the number of ceremonies and the roles that come with them.

Men discussants also complained that drought denies them the chance to be “men” because they cannot visit friends and discuss issues since most people are too busy trying to make ends meet. Wawire( 2003) in his study in Turkana pastoralists of Kenya also stressed the same issue, stating that family meetings are rarely held during drought since most family members have migrated in search of greener pastures.

In conclusion, relying up on the information from the focus group discussions, one can infer that women are burdened with the three types of identified tasks. This can be taken as one possible reason amongst many for women and girls’ poor access for school or other training (such as on agriculture or other skills) that might help expand their opportunity to engage in better income generating activities.

From the discussion it was understood that pastoralist women’s exclusion from livestock selling activities limits their chance of earning income from sales. As the money from the sale of livestock is solely used to cover most household necessities, women isolation from such sales would undermine their decision making capabilities in the household.

It can be also dictated from the overall task identification, specifically from socio-political activity mapping, that men usually occupy position underlying politics or administration that are deemed to gain respect from the community. Ironically, women’s activities are neither valued in the community comparing to administration tasks of men nor the experiences won’t channel women to acquire employment in the formal government administration for instance.

Finally, from the above discourses it can be said that the involvement of women in firewood sales has added more load to women in terms of adding more tasks. Such burden also indicates the strenuous nature of the income generating activity that too undermined the women’s health. Besides, it can be noted that the women’s burden for firewood collection is attributed by the increased deforestation due to the reliance of pastoralists on forest resources. On the other hand, despite the resultant strains to women from firewood sales, there is a positive signal of improvement pertaining men’s socially assigned gendered tasks. Men have demonstrated their endeavors to help women through handling domestic tasks that will contribute to promote women in terms of managing time.

Based on the information obtained from the discussion, it is also possible to argue that access to resources such as pack animals deters the women’s chance of exploiting businesses effectively. This is also well demonstrated from the prevailed fire wood income differences between those selling in Dire-Dawa using donkey/camel and those women who carry it by their back to sell the wood in Shinile town.

#### **4.2.2 Gendered Responsibilities and impacts of firewood sales**



#### 4.2.2.1 Gendered Responsibilities of Pastoralists

To get an image of how pastoralists' responsibilities look like and identify the impacts of women involvement in firewood sales on these gendered responsibilities, semi-structured interviews were conducted that lasted from 29/ 7/2008 to 6/8/2008( See annex).

As prevailing gendered tasks and activities, the responsibilities in pastoral households are also gendered. The tasks and activities that men and women undertake comprise and define their sphere of responsibilities. For instance, as discussed while identifying pastoralists' activities, men herd and sell mainly large stocks which are of significant value<sup>6</sup> as their assigned duty. The acquaintance of men with such animals possibly makes them responsible for managing including marketing large animals. Similarly, responsibilities comprise decisions required to manage or perform the assigned tasks or activities. As a result, men can make decisions commencing from when and where to migrate with the stocks to selling them.

During the discussion it was outlined that, Shinile pastoral men are the heads of their households and undertake much of the decisions in the household. This is possibly attributed by pastoralists' responsibility of selling animals and the tendency of same money to be used for household provision. According to the information obtained from the interview too, it is the man's responsibility to sell livestock and decide on how and where to spend the money. In some cases a husband consults his wife but ultimately he decides. While interviewing, I asked one pastoralist men about what generally his family was expecting from him before the drought and he remarked that;

*In good times, it is the man who does everything. I will sell livestock usually shoats and buys millet, clothes or what ever items required for my family. It was a shame for women to perform this with the presence of a husband. Even shariha<sup>7</sup> will not allow us to do this.*

Unlike pastoralist men's engagement in livestock selling for household provision, Women interviewed respondents indicated that women are only involved in milk selling, which has been left over from household consumption. However, as milk is a perishable commodity, such selling opportunities are only utilized by women who reside near to market (town) and remain rare for those living far from towns. For instance, all my interview respondents indicated that they were not selling milk as they were far from town, and only moved to Jedene or Mermersa after they have been severely hit by drought. Further, from the interview it was also understood that, being a Muslim community, it is very difficult for women to work outside home as it is the responsibility of the men to fulfill all the financial needs of the household. Hence, such aspects assert the limited participation of women in activities that bring income to the pastoralists' family.

The other kind of responsibilities that men pastoralists highlighted was their supervision responsibilities which involves delegating duties to women and children (who does what tasks); and ensuring discipline in the home by advising and counseling family members (wives and children). Also, they are the ones who organize family meetings to deliberate

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<sup>6</sup> Large stocks worth high price. For instance the average price of one camel is estimated to be Birr 5000.

<sup>7</sup> A rule in Muslim religion

(discuss) on matters relating to the clan and family. Hence, it can be inferred that men can possibly adopt such counseling and family administration experience whilst taking part in community administration or politics.

As affirmed by all interview respondents, in Shinile pastoral society, it is generally expected for women to assume domestic responsibilities. They manage the home, prepare food, care for children and provide other household services. Women also play the initial and crucial role of bringing forth children and nurturing them as they grow. One woman explained that;

*I am a mother of 5 children of which four of them are boys. Before drought, the two elder boys together with my husband were used to go for herding away. I am the one remaining at the hut, I were taking care of my two babies. My girl child is also the one who helps me like by fetching water or firewood<sup>8</sup>*

While inquiring about the specific duties pertaining to livestock production, interviewed men stated that they do long distance herding of larger stock (cattle and camels). They also undertake pasture surveying or assessment (known as *sahan*) that includes gathering information and exploration of good grazing land and water when the drought sets in. They also indicated that, men provide health facilities for the animals in the form of traditional herbs or modern veterinary medicines when available. One respondent highlighted;-

*What I usually do with the animals was all about herding them, building and repairing of their enclosures, and milking camel and sell animals.*

Women respondents however told that they are responsible for herding small stock - shoats. They have also informed that they were expected to milk the stocks and portion it out into different uses for the household. Milk has to be set aside for the calves, for household consumption and for sale (where possible). They also give care for weak animals that are left around the homestead when the men move with the other stock. These include weak and sick cattle, shoats and camels and pregnant livestock that cannot cover the long distance in search for pasture and water. Such tasks are of similar nature and are extensions of reproductive tasks of bearing and nurturing children.

On top of all the above mentioned responsibilities, Shinile pastoralist men and women have tailored socio-political responsibilities in the pastoral community. From the interview it was underscored that women supervise marriage ceremonies, monitor the young adults (girls) when dowry is being paid and later prepare them as brides on their wedding days. They also indicated that women concentrate on guiding and counseling girls into responsible adults who can function effectively in the society. Besides, for those women who have specialized skills such as midwifery, serve the pastoral society by providing their skills. Last but not least, women participate in rituals such as child-naming and weddings as an extension of their domestic reproductive responsibilities such as food preparation.

Pastoral men's socio-political responsibilities are contrary to that of women. According to the information obtained from the men focus group discussion, men are more involved in

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<sup>8</sup> Female interview respondent, Shinile district ( 29.7.2008)

administration or consultation process. They have informed that they consult with older men on various issues and participate in clan meetings and conflict resolution. Men also socialize young boys into adult roles. They teach them skills in herding (how to locate and identify good pasture/water source), social adult skills of being a good husband and father and protecting the herd and family.

The above discussion clearly indicates that, this pattern of gender based labor division is common and all households would adopt it, given a suitable gender composition within the household and sufficient labor. Younger children would help in looking after calves/ shoats and kids. They would also help their parents in various tasks. Older children play the role of the women or men depending on their gender.

#### **4.2.2.2 Impacts of Women involvement in firewood sale on pastoralists'**

##### **Responsibilities**

From the interview it was also made clear that, the recurrent drought and the resultant women involvement in firewood selling has affected responsibilities of pastoralist men and women as dictated in the following paragraphs.

##### **Impact on household food provision**

Pastoralist women's responsibility for household provision has improved by women involvement in firewood sales. Earlier, as cited above, household provision was used to be the responsibility of pastoralist men. However, as droughts persisted causing the death of many livestock and eroding the income from livestock sales, pastoralist men failed their full responsibility of household provision from sale of livestock. Hence, more women started to get engaged in non-pastoral income generating activities –firewood sales- for supplying basic household necessities.

##### **Respondent no3**

*I have been selling firewood for the past 3 years. I just engaged in this business to feed my children; as our family lost all of the livestock due to the consistent droughts .Before starting selling firewood, I was only herding shoats and taking care of my family. Currently, my husband is not working. He doesn't have any work options. He lost all his camels; so what else can he do. I am buying food; with all what I get from selling firewood. My daughter is also working in Jijiga as a house servant, and she supports us with the little amount of money that she gets.*

Regardless of pastoralist men engagement in charcoal selling, the income from it is not sufficient for the household needs that were met earlier using livestock sales. Hence, women's income from sale of firewood is equally desired to fulfill household requirements. This phenomenon enabled women to be co-bread winner expressed through their provision to the family. In some instances, women comprised the full responsibility of household provision and became bread-winner to the family using the small but continuous income from firewood collection when men don't aspire to join low-income return activities such as firewood.

**Respondent no 6**

I am 45 years old. I have 7 children. I was wealthy and used to have many livestock. I had 300 goats, 30 cows, and 15 camels. But, drought has finished every livestock I had. From all livestock, now I am remained with only 3 goats. It has been at least 1 year and 3 months since it has rained. We moved from the place where we were living to be near to the market. I am a now working as a charcoal broker. My wife is selling firewood in Shinile town, and she partly brings income to the family. I will also get 5 birr for every bag of charcoal sold. I'm not interested to sell firewood. It is acceptable for women to engage in such activity. Also, I can't be involved in charcoal making, as it is a very difficult task. You have to spend 15 days in the bush to make it. As I used to be a herder; I don't think that my hands are even stronger to burn charcoal.

In this regard, Devereux (2006) underlined women willingness to pursue low paying livelihood activities and as a result are taking over the roles and responsibilities of men as 'household provider'. As one respondent in my study also stated; *all women, whether they live in the town or in the countryside, are fighting for the survival of their families. This used to be only the responsibility of men.* But this is not favored by men for instance as one man interview respondent highlighted;

*At this time I am completely dependent on my wife, she is now selling firewood. This is all because of drought. Now days, we are depending more on women than they depend on us. And I feel intimated when I think that I am not earning any money. What all I can do is pray to Allah (known as God) that at least we could see rain and this bad time will be over.*

The same is emphasized by Devereux (2006) that men feel irresponsible for failing to provide the family (and chew khat) as their wives are getting involved in low-income return activities such as firewood.

From the above discussion it can be argued that the increasing control of women over income generating activities can have a significant impact on men's responsibilities. They are no longer considered as the 'sole provider' for the household. As a result they 'give up' and leave the responsibilities to their wives. This has been also underscored by Devereux who showed that rather than carryout menial and laborious jobs, perhaps considered to be 'women's work', men would rather prefer to sit with their fellow men and chew *khat* (Devereux 2006).

I have asked women, in general, whether they liked the change in the economic independence and being a co- bread owner. From the women whom I had interviewed, 80% stressed that the independence is good despite the heavy work load associated with the income generating activity. Hence, these women wished if they become economically independent by getting involved in other income generating activities rather than firewood collection such as poultry or small ruminants. Paradoxically, the remaining women indicted their preference in the earlier way of living, by which women solely depend on pastoralist men for food provision. As one respondent stressed;

*What I get now from sale of firewood is so small that it even can't buy grain. I prefer the earlier way of life where my husband used to buy every thing.*

## Impacts on decision making responsibilities

The other aspect of change is with regards to decision making responsibilities. As noted, earlier it is pastoral men who would make many of the household decisions and only in some cases that women will be consulted; how household income should be spent and labor allocation (who does what) for instance. Nevertheless, after women's engagement in the income generating activities (might be as a consequence of women's immense contributions to the household expenditure), according to the interview conducted with women, all of them said the consultation has improved even if still final decisions are made by men.

### **Respondent no 5**

Is a 38 year old woman selling firewood in Dire-Dawa. She has 4 children. She and her husband sell firewood once in two days interval. If she is collecting firewood, her husband will sell it by taking it to town, and if he does the collection she will in turn do the selling. Previously, she said, she and her husband were herding shoats and camels respectively. But, now all of the animals they had have died and only one donkey has remained by which they use it to take firewood to town. Earlier, with the permission of her husband she buys millet and sugar by selling shoats and their lives were better. But, now she says they try to meet all of their needs from firewood sales; which is hardly possible. Nevertheless, she informed that she is proud to be able to contribute to the household equally with her husband (even if the money is little) and she says that her husband consults her better now a days compared to earlier days when they are solely working as herders.

Oumer et. al ( 2007) also suggested in his research conducted about small business development in Somali region Ethiopia, that earning an income independent of their husbands, women now make many more decisions within the household. A major change in this regard is that in the past a large sum of money would be earned occasionally from the sale of an animal but now there is a small but continuous flow of money from petty trading or other businesses.

In general, it can be hinted from the above findings that pastoralist men's responsibilities reside in administration categories, ranging from supervising and ensuring discipline of family members to taking an active role in community administration. Where as, women are solely responsible for undertaking un-paid domestic reproductive duties usually leading to the confinement of women at home, exacerbating their seclusion from community politics or administration. It is also worth noting to remember pastoral men's responsibilities with regard to livestock (that has been a pillar for pastoralists' livelihood), that men usually presumed large stock management responsibilities that cover a substantial amount of decisions including selling or slaughtering animals. With this decision, also, men assumed the role of household provision. This all responsibilities to men used to be night mares for women, who even not allowed selling small animals without the permission of their husbands. This all patterns infer the marginalization of pastoral women that is noted commencing from their lack of say in household decisions.

Nevertheless, relying on the above discussions it can be noted that an alteration has occurred with regards to pastoralist's traditional responsibilities due to women's participation in firewood sales. From such changes, it can also be inferred that women

have liked their altered responsibilities in terms of household provision. Nevertheless, they did not prefer to provide a family from such strenuous livelihood activity. The women's improved decision making also mirrored the relation between the contribution to household provision and one's decision making position in a household. The improvement with regard to decision making is also a bright prospect for women, whose voice was unheard by the traditional way of living. However, this improvement is not welcomed by men, as it threatens their prior decision making power in the household.

### **4.3 Firewood sales and its implication to pastoralists' Access to and Control over resources and benefits**

Gender roles of pastoralists expressed through their tasks, activities, and responsibilities shape their access and control over resources. For example, pastoralist women and men's access to different types of livestock depends on the activities that are socially as well as traditionally designated to them. The same also holds for their responsibilities and the related accesses and controls. The different decision making stance that men and women have in the household dictates their consequent access to and control over household resources. Thus, it is worth noting to identify the implications of the impacts of women's involvement in firewood sales on men and women's access and control over resources.

Consequently, I had arranged another focus group discussion (from 26-27 /7/2008) with men and women to figure out the same aspect. Nevertheless, as there is a need to know the earlier position of women and men on access and control over resources to better understand the underlying implications, I first made gender analysis with the participants using the Harvard access and control profile.

#### **4.3.1 Access and control profile of pastoralists**

##### **4.3.1.1 Pastoralist men and women's access to household resources and benefits**

According to March et al (1999), access is the opportunity to make use of a resource. But, it does not necessarily provide a capacity to make decision over the usage of that particular resource.

From the gender analysis conducted, resources in pastoralist household are sorted as livestock, livestock products, household equipments (mat for roof making (made from 'aw<sup>9</sup>)/ *hallo*, milk container(*coda*), shelf (*rereb*), gas lamp, sleeping leather mat (*kurbet*), cooking utensils, and radio which is important source of formal information. Where as, the identified household benefits include quality food, good clothes, leisure time, income from sales, and respect from the family.

While identifying access to strategic resources, such as livestock, men focus group discussion participants have identified as they have access to all animals. Contrastingly, women access is limited to only small stock i.e shoats. This might be well expressed by their larger involvement in herding small stocks such as goats and sheep. The women

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<sup>9</sup> Grass type used to prepare mat for roofing huts.

participants also emphasized the fact that they only access camel if it is only used as pack animal; showing their strongest detachment from camel since they don't herd it. Women also do have access to other pack animals i.e. donkey for transportation respectively. Hence, though both men and women have access to livestock which is the major source of livelihood, men have large access to all animals, while women's access is at the margin.

More over, while asking men their access to livestock products such as milk and milk products, they have informed that they used to drink during wet seasons as milk was abundant in such seasons. Where as, the women have said that as they are the one who is responsible for milk and milk products, they said they privilege men for consuming such products. In a similar vein, there is proportional access to household equipment. Pastoral men have more access to radio compared to women who very rarely access it, showing their lack of access to formal information system as only few of them listen to radio programs. In contrast, women have more access to kitchen utensils and some household equipment such as shelf (*rereb*), mat (*hallo*) and milk container.

Pertaining access to benefits such as food, women have poor access to quality of food which is critical for physical development and good health. Men and even women themselves stressed that they are the last to eat after rationing all the food to the family members. Here too, women prioritize men while rationing followed by boys and girls.

While discussing about independent income from sales, pastoralist men informed me that they used to get income from livestock sales. Contrastingly, the women expressed that they solely depend on income from men as they were not involved in selling before the drought. Pertaining access to leisure time and respect from family, the focus group discussions revealed that, men enjoy more leisure time compared to women, as women have been burdened with productive and reproductive activities and men also get full respect from family as they were the sole provider.

#### **4.3.1.2 Pastoralist men and women's Control over Resources and benefits**

Control over resources is to have the power to decide how resource is used, and who has access to it. Any one who is in control of a resource is the ultimate decision-maker over the use and allocation of resources and benefits. The capacity of controlling resources and benefits entails the authority of disposing the assets and reaping the benefits generated (March et al 1999; Gemettessa& Emanu 2005)

In Shinile pastoral communities, as outlined from both the focus group discussions, men are in control of the major strategic resources such as livestock, radio/information, and income from sales (livestock sales); while women are left with control of smaller things such as milk, butter, household equipments cooking utensils.

Control over resources is a function of ownership of those resources (March et al 1999). The women whom I had discussion with informed me that they don't have ownership to strategic assets such as livestock. The women only control the animals known as *meher*; *animals* that women get while they get married given by her future husband or his families. The *meher* that a woman gets depends on the wealth of the family of the groom; however the usual *meher* amount is 40 shoats. A woman can make any decisions on these animals including selling when she is in need of money. A Woman is also entitled to take only the *meher* with her incase divorce happens.

Further, according to the key informant interview, women in Shinile pastoral community inherit livestock by virtue of their relationship to their children. Here, there is acute gender based discrimination during inheritance between male and female child. A woman gets only half of the animals that will be given to her male child if she has a female child.

Pertaining control over benefits, it is understood that, income from sales has been controlled by men as they are the one who access it. From the men focus group discussion it was learnt that, Men have the right to decide over the income gained from livestock sales (whether it should be allocated for buying grain, clothes, and medicines so and so forth). Where as, benefits like clothes were described as almost equally accessed and controlled by both men and women. Respect by the family seems to be exclusively the responsibilities of men, while women are playing a role of a facilitator and providing support to the man.

Generally, regardless of the immense contribution of women in all aspects of work (productive, reproductive and social activities), women hold lower position in terms of access and control over resources and benefits.

**Table 4.2: Gender Disaggregated Access to and control over Resources and Benefits in Shinile Pastoral household**

<b>Resources and benefit description</b>	<b>Men</b>	<b>Women</b>
<b>Livestock</b>		
• Camel	<sup>10</sup> A/C	A <sup>11</sup>
• Cattle	A/C	A
• Shoats	A/C	A
• Donkey	A/C	A
<b>Livestock product</b>		
• Milk	A	A/C
• Butter	A	A/C
<b>Household equipment ( such as shelf , sleeping leather mat)</b>	A	A/C
<b>Cooking utensils</b>	-	A/C
<b>Grain</b>	A	A/C
<b>Radio tape (Information)</b>	A/C	-
<b>Benefits</b>		
• Income from sales	A/C	-
• Quality food	A/C	-
• Good clothing	A/C	A/C
• Respect by the family	A/C	
• Leisure time	A/C	-

Source: Focus group discussion in Shinile district (July, 2008)

#### **4.3.2 Implications of women’s involvement in firewood sales to gendered access and control to household resources**

<sup>10</sup> A=Access, C= Control , A/C= Access and Control

<sup>11</sup> Women access camel only if it is used as a pack animal



After completing the access and control profile, I commenced discussing what indications that the pastoralist women's engagement in firewood sales have on gendered access and control over resources.

According to the focus group discussion held with both men and women, it was found that, access to livestock and livestock products is adversely impacted by the drought. However, drought has worsened more women's access to resources compared to pastoralist men. One aspect that reflects the deprivation of women access to resources compared to men is that, almost all men charcoal sellers as well as firewood sellers (though they are few) transport their charcoal or firewood using pack animals, unlike most women who carry firewood by back. Relying on my physical observation, men traders transport their large quantity of sell items using donkey or camel regardless of the distance from their home to the town. One firewood seller woman remarked;

*I can't sell large quantity of woods to Dire-Dawa for a good price. This is only because I don't own camels or donkeys.*

Flintan( 2007) also obtained similar finding, stating that women's little access to cash or other assets, made particularly difficult for them to access resources that would assist the further development of the business for example a donkey to carry goods to market. As a result they have to rely on their own labour, which is already under high demand, whilst risking their physical health by constantly having to carry heavy loads and working long hours (Flintan, 2007)

Not with standing the above impacts of drought to women's access to livestock, women's access to independent income has improved through engaging in firewood sales that has been induced by the drought. According to the information obtained from the women focus group discussion, due to their involvement in the sale of firewood, they have gained access to small but continuous income. They explained that, they were solely dependent on the income from their husband i.e from livestock sales. It was not preferred for women to work outside, it was the man's responsibility to sell livestock and provide income to the family. Only when drought persisted and became difficult to secure food in the household, men allowed their wives to work outside and earn money.

Mamo (2007) also dictates as one area where women's lives have changed is in terms of earning independent income, which has increased in recent decades as a direct response to the crisis of pastoralist livelihoods. ('Until about 20 years ago, women weren't doing any work for cash. Women mainly started working for money because of increasing droughts and the serious losses of animals that most households have suffered.'

Moreover, the women expressed that, though the income from sale of firewood is small, all family members value this small income as its contribution to household is significant in terms of food provision.

During the focus group discussion, the women argued that, in accordance with their culture, they have control over the small income gained from firewood sales. They also expressed that, according to their culture, if a woman earns money herself she retains control over it and does not have to consult her husband over how it is spent. Moreover, if a woman is able to keep her earnings, though the income may be small, it may be the only means by which she can obtain cash that she has control over. Women's control

over the income is expressed through their decision making capabilities. According the focus group discussants, women can make any decisions pertaining income; albeit the smallness of the income as it only covers household food expenditure. They have underlined saying; *'when it comes to our earnings, we are actually the bosses. Men are not allowed to take our money from us'*.

Nevertheless, from the focus group discussion, women said that they consult their husbands especially if their husbands don't earn money and depended only on the women's income. In general, as Brockington (2001) concludes the extent of dependence upon women and the extent of their independence in using their income as they wish is the product of delicate negotiations and power play.

According to the selected discussants, Shinile women's income is mainly spent on purchase of daily food items for the family. The women said they usually buy corn flour( known as *fafa*) and sugar that can be used to feed the family as they are not affording to buy food items that can be used for longtime ( such as grain). As one discussant stated;

*Living on fuel wood is a disaster. What we gain from selling fuel wood is only for our daily consumption, nothing is saved.*

This is in contrary to the study conducted on pastoralists in Nepal as it suggests that money earned was used by women to buy nutritious grains, vegetables and fruits, which in turn improved household nutrition (Bhawana, 2003).

In addition, via accessing and exercising control over the small firewood sale income, women have proved their financial management skill. Both women and men discussants conformed that, women spend the money earned on household expenditures including food and if possible clothing to their children. In contrast, Somali men spend significant amount of money for buying *khat*.

*I am a 35 year old man. I am selling charcoal. It is because all my animals have died because of drought. Besides, these days the living cost is getting higher and higher; the price of every item has soared. Pastoralists become engaged either in charcoal or firewood business due to such reasons. Earlier, I fulfill my family's need from pastoralism. The drought provided opportunities for women to show their saving skills. We won't allow our women to work if there has not been any drought. But women now proved that they are good in managing finances. If they earn money, they directly purchase food. Where as, men spend substantial amount of their money for chewing Chat<sup>12</sup>.*

While discussing with women regarding access to and control over resources, I have inquired focus group participants whether the income from firewood sales improved their access to other productive assets such as livestock, radio, or household labor saving technologies. The women informed me as the income gained from firewood sales is small that they can't invest it in productive assets such as livestock rather than spending it on day to day household food expenditures. Paradoxically, Fulani Women who controlled the milk produced and would use some for the family food, but could convert excess milk into their own wealth (Buhl and Homewood, 2000).

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<sup>12</sup> Male focus group discussant ( 27.07.08)

On the other hand, women argued that they have gained better access to information by having more town interactions, even if the women could not invest in radio. Earlier it is men who have access to information via radio or town exposure- might be while trading livestock. Nonetheless, women now also have gained better access to information while going for sale to town (Shinile or Dire Dawa) compared to earlier days. In a similar vein, women had also gained better access to town food comparing to earlier days i.e before their involvement in selling activity.

The other aspect of change discovered from the focus group discussion, is that of women's better access to household labor. As women get busy due to firewood sales, they resume, for instance, pastoralist men's labor which they were not usually accessing before. Pastoral men might share women's domestic task; which they are not doing it before. However, according to men, this has impacted them adversely as it competes their leisure time.

Finally, according to men who take part in the focus group discussion, women now get better respect in the family as they are sharing men's responsibility of providing household basic necessities.

Generally, from all the above findings of the focus group discussions, one can comprehend that pastoralist women have minimal access as well as control over household resources compared to men. Besides, even if these women had the access to resources, they may not pick the benefits all the time. For instance, regardless of the access women had on food / grain, they put their interest last, by prioritizing that of men and children's, which is the respect and the power imbalance between men and women or showing motherhood for children respectively.

Further, it can also be noted that, women were not obtaining income from livestock sales, which in turn determined their responsibilities in household provision and their lack of opportunities for investments that might have enriched women from different perspectives.

Nonetheless, the above patterns seem to get influenced by women's involvement in firewood sales. Their engagement in the activity allowed them to have independent access to income. Nevertheless, due to the low return nature of the livelihood activity that they pursued, it had not improved their poor ownership of different assets.

# CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

## 5.1 Conclusion

The objective of this study has been to explore the impacts that pastoralist women's involvement in firewood sales has on their gender roles. From the study it was clearly understood that nowadays, pastoralists pursue a more diversified livelihood system expressed through their involvement in various income generating activities. Given the prevailing situations in the study area, surviving on diversified livelihood activities is rather a necessity not an option as it become difficult (due to droughts or other disasters) to depend only on livestock and their products. The study also showed that, the traditional role of pastoralist men to earn enough income from livestock was undermined due to the prevailing drought and related crisis. Pastoralist women are also moving out of the domain of the home to earn cash contributing to satisfying household needs. The study also showed that, women in pastoralist areas mostly involved in low-status activities which have low-return, as high-status, high-return, activities (such as livestock selling) are occupied by men. Generally, based on the data collected from various literatures and the primary data gathered from field work in Shinile district, it is possible to propose the following answers to the research questions of the study.

### ***1. What effects does pastoralist women's engagement in income generating activities have on gender role?***

Women's participation in income generating activities has a profound impact on pastoralists' gender role. Their involvement in these activities not only drives additional cash to the family but also attribute to women's increased self esteem as a result of earning an independent income. Moreover, women's engagement in such activities contribute to fulfilling the household necessities; enabling them to become a bread winner or co-bread winner, though this might be new and deviates from what the pastoral people used to practice previously.

It is also made clear that women have more independence as a result of earning their own money from their engagement in income generating activities. This has contributed significantly in enhancing their decision making power not only on financial matters but also their decision making roles in the general household issues, which was mainly the men's role.

Nevertheless, despite the benefits that women enjoyed resulting from earning an independent income, women's participation in such productive activities also increases their burden who are already loaded down with many tasks.

Eventually, the women's changing role via engaging in income earning activities also entails their access to and control over household resources. For instance, as women mostly spend their incomes on household expenditure, women can buy nutritious foods that will improve the household diet. Their engagement in economic activities will also enable women to access an independent income which they can control. However, it should not be always considered that women will have control over all the incomes earned from economic activities; some times men do overtake control over household

incomes regardless of their source. It is also discussed that, pastoralist women's level of control over the income gained also differ on different contexts including proximity to town and the wealth of a family.

**2. What are the tasks and activities of pastoralist men and women in Shinile district? And in what ways does the women's engagement in firewood collection and selling as income generating activity affected these tasks and activities?**

The study identified pastoralist men and women tasks and activities through focus group discussions. Pastoralist men tasks are largely confined to productive and socio-political activities. From productive activities, men mostly accomplish tasks related with large stock management including herding and marketing large stock such as camel and cattle. Men also do slaughter all animals. Pertaining to socio-political activities, men are responsible for activities and tasks related to community administration/leadership and security. Women engage in all productive, reproductive and socio-political activities, though the sphere their tasks fall in might not be similar with that of men. Herding small stocks, milking and marketing and processing the milk are few amongst all productive tasks undertaken by women. Women do also bear and care children, prepare food and took part in house construction as part of their reproductive duties. With regard to the socio-political activities, on contrary to pastoralist men, women accomplish non-political/leadership tasks mainly involving wedding, rituals or community development activities usually as a prolongation of their reproductive duties.

The focus group discussion also identified that, the gender tailored tasks and activities have been affected by the pastoralist women's participation in firewood sales. One aspect of such influence is indicted through women's increased work load from firewood collection and long walk in search of market that in turn undermined their health. This situation, too, has affected the nature of tasks performed by men, demonstrated through men's greater participation in domestic tasks such as fetching water and fire wood collection. However, as argued by Flintan (2007), such assistance from men in handling domestic tasks might also have emerged from poverty as families tend to work in a reciprocal manner and might be abandoned once a certain level of wealth is reached. It is also figured out from this study that women's engagement in income earning activities also reduced their social capital and participation in community activities, as women spend a substantial amount of time on collection and selling firewood. In general, however, as the study indicated, the women's involvement in firewood sales has a positive alteration to tasks allotted to men if the effort is to be perpetuated by men in future. This is noticed through men's engagement in reproductive activities which will, in turn, reduce women's burden emanated from their triple roles.

**3. What are the gendered (men's and women's) responsibilities of pastoralists in Shinile district? And in what ways does these responsibilities are influenced by pastoralist women involvement in firewood collection and selling?**

With regard to the responsibilities, it is identified as men are responsible for managing large animals. They do undertake any decisions on the animals including slaughter and sale. Especially through exercising decisions on the sale of animals which are the main strategic assets in pastoralist household, men do provide the household needs and

necessities. Women, on the other hand, are responsible to manage small stocks and are solely responsible for milking and processing the milk. Even if women are largely responsible to manage small stock, they are not entitled to make any decisions about the animals be it selling, exchange or slaughter the animals for instance. Women are also expected to bear and nourish children and manage domestic tasks. Hence, women greatest involvement in un-paid domestic reproductive work and their stronger seclusion from decision making process on live stocks (such as selling) undermined their decision making capabilities in the family as well as their fall-back position.

Nonetheless, it is found that as a result of women engagement in firewood sales that has been induced by the recurrence of drought, a change has been observed in the major responsibilities of pastoralist men and women. Pastoralist women are now also responsible to fulfill their duties of meeting household needs from the small income gained from firewood sales. As a result, as opposed to their previous status, women become co-bread winner and bread winner on exceptional cases. Moreover, women's decision making power has also improved as a result of their improved access to cash income through their involvement in income earning activities.

However, the study showed that such changes are not mostly welcome by men as it threatened their previous role as household heads. It has been noted, in some instances that men feel irresponsible and leave up every thing for women and engage in chewing *chat*.

**4. What are the implications of the impacts of women involvement in the income generating activities on gender role to the pastoralist men's and women's access to and control over house hold resources including finance and livestock?**

This is the last research question / issue that this study attempted to identify. Accordingly, the study has showed that pastoralists' access to livestock has been severely impacted by the recurrent droughts. Nevertheless, women have gained an independent income from firewood sales that they can control, albeit the control depends on the extent of man's dependence on women from assistance. The study also indicated as women are mostly spending the income gained on food purchases. However, because the money earned from firewood sales is small, neither did it make women to purchase more nutritious food items nor helped them to make investments such as on livestock or household technologies. Finally, according to the present study, women have gained respect from the family for contributing to household provision from firewood sales, though the same circumstance displayed disrespect for men from the society for their failure on undertaking provision responsibilities

In general, this study portrayed changes in pastoralists roles derived through variations in their livelihood activities. Hence, it can be concluded that gender roles expressed through tasks, activities, and responsibilities are not static rather they change. As these roles are shaped by various factors including socio-economic ones, changes in such aspects will have possible consequent alterations to gendered tasks and activities.

## 5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are forwarded.

- Due to the limited livelihood option, pastoralists engaged in firewood selling as a last resort activity. However income earned through this activity is not big enough to improve the wellbeing of the people involved. Hence, other better income earning interventions focusing on pastoralists should be enriched as outlined by the Ethiopian Government SDPRP.
- Given the resource poorness of Pastoralist women, projects aiming to improve women access to and control over resources should be planned and implemented with the aim of improving the livelihood of pastoralists.
- Since pastoralist women are overburdened due to their engagement in various productive, reproductive and socio-political activities, income generating interventions should take this into account and should be planned with the aim of easing women burden
- Non-pastoral income generating interventions should integrate efforts that would improve women's assets ownership and labor saving technologies in a holistic manner in order to achieve greater gender equality. They should also be designed in a way to address not only the practical needs of men and women but also their strategic needs.
- Given the intra-household power relation of pastoral households, future income generating projects targeting women should have a thorough consideration of this intra-household dynamics. However, as income diversification appears to be a household-level process, care should be taken not to overlook other important aspects of household income diversifications by focusing only on women.
- As women constitute an important aspect of the pastoralist livelihood system, any intervention planned and implemented in pastoralist areas should be analyzed in terms of their gender impacts. Interventions implemented with out undertaking gender analyses may encourage the inclusion the interest of certain groups and the exclusion of others such as women as they don't have the chance to participate in community decisions affecting their lives.
- Finally, since there is a lack of enough empirical research to show the gender dimensions of pastoralist livelihood system, further researches should be undertaken in the area to help policy makes and legislatures made informed decisions while undertaking decisions affecting the lives of pastoralists.

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# Annexes

## Interview questions

### **Interview questions for pastoralist women**

- *How old are you?*
- *Do you have children and if yes, how many?*
- *When did you start selling firewood? And why did you start this activity?*
- *How often do you collect firewood and selling it?*
- *How much time does it take to do this work? And from where are you collecting the firewood and where are you selling it?*
- *Are you doing it on your own, or with others?*
- *Where you able to make money before your engagement in firewood sales?*
- *How much money do you earn with this activity?*
- *For what purpose exactly are you using the money from firewood sales?*
- *Do you use the money to start up the activity (investing money?)*
- *Are you able to decide on the money? If not why?*
- *At what time exactly do you return home? And are you expected to do accomplish some tasks then after?*
- *Who is helping you with domestic tasks while you are on selling duty?*
- *Do you have animals? What are your duties with regards to the animals?*
- *Who is handling tasks pertaining animals while you are collecting or selling firewood?*
- *Do you visit friends or do social activities up on returning home from selling? If not why?*
- *In general, how do you consider your engagement in firewood selling as an income generating activity?*

### **Interview questions for pastoralist men**

- *How old are you?*
- *Do you have children and if yes, how many?*

- *How many animals do you have?*
- *What duties are you expected to accomplish pertaining these animals?*
- *How much of your time do you spend with the animals?*
- *What will you do with the rest of your time?*
- *Do you pursue some other activities rather than livestock keeping? If yes what type of activity? Why did you get involved in such activity?*
- *How do you consider your wife engagement in firewood sales? Why does she get involved in such activity?*
- *Where she involved in another kind of income generating activities before firewood sales? If not, why?*
- *If not who was buying or providing the required household necessities?*
- *What will be done with the income gained from firewood sales?*
- *Who is deciding on the income from the firewood sales? What about other decisions?*
- *Are there any incidences that you overtake women's assigned duties in livestock production or domestic tasks after women's engagement in the income generating?*
- *In general, what changes have you experienced in your livelihood as a result of women's involvement in firewood sales?*

### **Guideline for Focus group session with women pastoralists**

The objective of the Focus group session is to know the gendered tasks, access to resources, control over resources and how these aspects have been influenced by the women's involvement in the income generating activities. Consequently, the focus group session will involve two parts. The first is gender analysis. In this part, the participants will be made to list their tasks and activities in livestock production, domestic reproduction and community work. Besides, in this gender analysis part attendants will also identify to what household resources they have access to and to which of them they exercise control. Here, control indicators will include decisions over usage of resources, sale/rent of resources, exchange of resources, decisions over spending or allocation (for the case of money) etc. The second part of the Focus group session involves discussion, on how such aspects have been influenced by the women's involvement in the income generating activities. The following checklists /questions will also guide the discussion as well as some of the questions might be directly raised amid the discussion.

- *What are the tasks and activities of pastoralists in livestock production, domestic reproduction and community work?*
- *How many hours (approximately) do women spend for charcoal and firewood collection and selling in a day?*
- *How do women manage their selling task and activities in livestock production/domestic reproduction in a given day?*
- *Do pastoralist men share the tasks assigned for women in livestock production/domestic reproduction while the women are on selling duty?*
- *To what intra-household resources (Livestock, land, money etc) those pastoralist men and women have access?*
- *In what ways, do pastoralists' women involvement in the income generating activities have improved /worsened their access to resources (finance, food, livestock, and household technology)?*
- *Do pastoralist women are able to buy livestock using the income gained from charcoal and firewood selling? If not, why?*
- *Do pastoralist women are able to invest their income from the income generating activities in non-livestock household resources (such as food and technology)? If not, why?*
- *To what extent do the women control their income from charcoal and firewood selling?*
- *Does the income helped pastoralist women improve their control over livestock?*
- *In general, what changes have occurred on the earlier gendered tasks/access to and control over resources due to the women's involvement in the income generating activities?*

## Work Plan

S/NO	Activity	Planned	Actual
1	Compiling all available secondary information for Review of literature	July 11, 2008 to July 20, 2008	July 13 -19, 2008.
2	Field work	July 21 ,2008 to August 15, 2008	July 21 ,2008 to August 10, 2008
3	Data processing and analysis	August 17, 2008 to August 29,	August 14 -30 , 2008 ( Data analysis)
4	Report writing,	September 1, 2008 to September 14,2008	September 1, 2008 to September 11,2008
5	Submission of thesis	September 15, 2008	Same