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**Gender Disparities in Adoption of Alternative Livelihood Strategies in the Pastoral
Community of West Pokot County, Kenya**

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Abstract

Purpose: Gender disparities continue to impede adoption of Alternative Livelihood Strategies (ALSs) among pastoralists in West Pokot County. After a period of concerted effort by development agencies to bridge the gender gap, information/data on the extent of the differentials remain scanty, yet, this is critical in the efforts to enhance adoption of ALSs. It is against this backdrop that this study, investigated gender disparities in adoption of ALSs in the community.

Methodology: Whereas both quantitative and qualitative research approaches were applied, the study adopted a cross-sectional survey research design. The target population for the study was adult household members in West Pokot County. Both multi-stage cluster and purposive sampling techniques were employed to sample respondents. Quantitative data was then analyzed using descriptive statistics with the help of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The analyzed data was presented in tables and charts. Thematic analysis was employed for qualitative data which was presented in narrative and verbatim forms.

Findings: The study revealed that majority of the pastoralists had adopted ALSs. However, there were gender disparities in the type, nature and number of ALSs adopted. Gender disparities also existed in the willingness to adopt, duration and general extent to which the ALSs had been adopted. The study, therefore, concludes that there are stark gender disparities in adoption of ALSs in the community that disadvantage the women. As a result, the pace and extent of adoption of ALSs in the community is slow and low.

Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy: This study underlines that equal participation of both gender in adoption of ALSs is critical in the wellbeing of the community. This reinforces the tenets of Structural Functionalism theory and the Capacities and Vulnerabilities Assessment framework that, society is a complex system whose parts (both men and women) should work together to promote solidarity, complementarity and stability. This study provides information to the existing body of knowledge in gender and diversification of livelihoods among pastoralists. More importantly, the findings and recommendations of this study can enable development actors to develop practical gender responsive strategies that may improve adoption of ALSs.

Keywords: *Alternative Livelihood Strategies, Gender Disparities, Kenya, Pastoralists, West Pokot*

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INTRODUCTION

In the face of the rapidly declining pastoral system occasioned by diminishing range lands resource base, pastoralists across the globe have adopted Alternative Livelihood Strategies (ALSs) for survival and adaptation (Dong et al., 2011). Thus, pastoralists have sought ALSs in modern farming practices, agro-pastoralism, trade and commerce, craft production, and formal employment. Development agencies have also taken up the challenge and have initiated various strategies to augment the efforts by the communities (Archambault, 2016). Despite the efforts, available literature reveals that adoption of ALSs among pastoralists is very slow and low (Misganaw et al., 2019). While several factors are responsible for this, gender differentials in the process of adoption comes out very strongly (Flintan, 2011, Kondoltiony, 2022). The gendered adoption of ALSs, do not only weaken the aggregate effort of both men and women, but also narrow down their respective scope of ALSs. The gender differentials that are skewed in favour of men, have been attributed to myriad cultural and socioeconomic factors including patriarchy (Sherman, 2013) and gendered marginalization of pastoralists by governments (Eneyew & Mengistu, 2013).

Whereas gender differentials in adoption of ALSs are common in all pastoral communities across the globe, they are more pronounced in particular communities including those in India where the caste system exacerbates the socioeconomic choices and freedoms of marginalized groups such as the pastoral women (Mayaram, 2014). Others are pastoral communities in Afghanistan, China and Pakistan, where pastoral women had heavier workloads than men. This limited their participation in ALSs (Verma & Khadka, 2016). Among Ethiopian pastoralists, Watson (2010) reported that participation of pastoral women in ALSs was lower than that of men because it was harder for them to access productive resources and decision-making opportunities.

Gender disparities in adoption ALSs, also characterize pastoral communities in Kenya. Watete et al., (2016) found that, among pastoralists in Northern Kenya, male-headed households tended to diversify into more rewarding livelihoods than those headed by the women. Generally, studies on major pastoral groups in Kenya, including, inter alia, the Maasai (Saranta, 2013), Turkana (Miriti et al., 2023; Wawire, 2011), Rendille (Fratkin, 2011), Borana (Aregu et al., 2007) and the Pokot (Lolemtum et al., 2017; Kondoltiony, 2022), show that in terms of the pace, and extent of adoption of ALSs, women lag behind men.

Cognizant of the fact that gender inequalities impede adoption of ALSs and sustainable development in general, both state and non-state development agencies, in Kenya, have made concerted effort to bridge the gender gap. They have, therefore, tried to improve the rural economy, empower the pastoral communities and create an enabling environment. These efforts got a boost following promulgation and implementation of both general (broad) and pastoral-specific policies, legal frameworks and development blueprints aimed at ensuring that both men and women enjoy equal opportunities in all spheres of life. These include, the 2010 Constitution, Vision 2030 Development Strategy for Northern Kenya and other Arid Lands and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Despite the renewed efforts, from around 2008 to close the gender gap in adoption of ALSs, the extent of gender disparities in adoption of ALSs, remains unclear. Notably, detailed gender disaggregated data on adoption of ALSs, is scanty. Yet, this is critical in formulation of policies and interventions that can improve uptake of ALSs in pastoral communities in Kenya. The current study filled this gap by investigating gender disparities in adoption of ALSs in the pastoral community of West Pokot County, Kenya. The community epitomizes pastoral culture

and the attendant problems of patriarchy, gender inequality, impoverishment, and violent conflicts (Kamerback et al., 2015; Kondolitiony et al., 2023; Mutsotso, 2013).

Statement of the Problem

Men and women in the Pastoral Community of West Pokot County, have continued to adopt ALSs differentially. The disparities have not only weakened the aggregate effort of both men and women, but have also narrowed down their respective scope of ALSs. Considering that the differentials impede adoption of ALSs, an undertaking considered to be the panacea for the myriad socio-economic challenges facing the community, state and non-state development agencies have, from around 2008, renewed their efforts to bridge the gender gap. The outcome of over-a-decade long scaled-up and sustained effort remains scanty for lack of gender focused studies in the general area of livelihoods diversification. In particular, there is dearth of gender disaggregated data, a fact that is common in pastoral communities as alluded to by Onyima (2021). He, for example, notes that existing literature on African pastoralism only marginally reported issues on women in pastoral societies. In contrast, men's activities and roles are reported hence portraying women as idle in pastoral societies. In general, WHO (2021) observes that gender data are often lacking or of poor quality because gender is not seen as a priority in most societies. Yet gender disaggregated data are critical in understanding how the realities of life differ between the genders, so that policy and development interventions can be tailored to meet varying needs. This will ensure that women and men, girls and boys have the same chances and opportunities to participate in all spheres of life, such as adoption of ALSs, and access the accrued benefits. This study filled the gap by assessing the status of adoption of ALSs by gender.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study was to investigate gender disparities in adoption of ALSs in the pastoral community of West Pokot County, Kenya. The specific objectives were:

1. Establish the status of adoption of ALSs among men and women in the pastoral community.
2. Assess the extent of adoption of ALSs among men and women in the pastoral community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This section presents empirical review of literature, theoretical framework, summary of reviewed literature and knowledge gap.

Empirical Review

ALSs, are activities through which a pastoralist earns a living other than traditional livestock keeping (pastoralism) (Archambault, 2016; Belay, 2016; Dong et al., 2011). Pastoralists have adopted ALSs for survival and as an adaptation strategy to an environment where pastoralism is increasingly becoming unreliable as a source of livelihood. The ALSs are in farming, agro-pastoralism, mining, sports, trade, craft production, and formal employment (Belay, 2016; Blench, 2001).

Since pastoral culture encourages strict adherence to gender roles and gendered access to productive resources, the ALSs have been adopted along gender lines (Flintan, 2011). In particular, the gender differentials emanate from patriarchal culture, which is strong among pastoralists. According to O'Neil (2011) and Sherman (2013) pastoral communities are extremely male-dominated and patrilineal. Accordingly, wealth is passed down from father to

son and women access resources through men, more so, their husbands. Hence, compared to non-pastoral societies, O'neil and Sherman observe that, the socioeconomic and political power of most pastoralist women is very low. Existing literature reveal that the disparities characterize pastoral communities across the globe and women's lower status in pastoral communities has been amplified by the fact that they operate in the margins of already marginalized communities (Verma & Khadka, 2016). Eneyew and Mengistu (2013) argue that women in these communities face double marginalization; first because they are pastoralists and second, for being women. Rota and Chakrabarti (2010) observe that in many countries, women pastoralists are socially, economically and politically marginalized because of their limited decision-making role and the scarce attention they receive within the national development framework. In this state, the potentials of women are not fully utilized in adoption of ALSs.

Thus, in India, the home to one of the world's largest nomadic populations, Mayaram (2014) reports that compared to other communities, pastoralists are marginalized and are poor. In this condition, Mayaram observes that, it is difficult for them to access employment and educational opportunities. Exacerbated by the effects of caste system, the choices and freedoms of marginalized groups such as the pastoralists and women in this country, are limited. In the range lands of China, Nepal, Afghanistan, Buthan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Myanmar, skewed and unequal gender division of labour characterize pastoral ALSs (Verma & Khadka, 2016). This is a drawback to women who by virtue of their gender roles, have heavier workloads than men. For example, in addition to reproductive roles, 90.5% of women were involved in agriculture as compared to 74.9% of men. Verma and Khadka opine that, such heavy workload negatively impacts women's health and work-life balance and limits their access and participation in ALSs activities. Verma and Khadka, also observe that in comparison to men, women in the Asian pastoral communities are at the margins of development interventions and their voices and needs mostly remain unheard.

In Africa, the home of over 20 million pastoralists, gender differentials in adoption of ALSs also occur as indicated by studies conducted in Burkina Faso (Kima et al., 2015), Mali (Moseley, 2013) and Somalia (Oumer et al., 2007), Ethiopia (Watson, 2010), and East Africa (Little, 2001). These studies established that women pastoralists are victims of social, economic and political marginalization, and as women they suffer inequality in accessing resources, social services and participation in decision-making. Further, despite women's indigenous knowledge, strong capacities and resilience, pastoral women begin life with less human capital than their male counterparts. Therefore, women are not able to make a meaningful contribution in adoption of ALSs. Consequently, the studies conclude that as compared to men, women are poorer.

In Kenya, literature indicate that pastoral women and girls still lack the capacity to meaningfully participate in adoption of ALSs. For instance, in Northern Kenya, a region predominantly inhabited by pastoralists, male-headed households tend to diversify livelihoods more than female-headed households (Watete et al., 2016). The reasons for this according to Watete et al., are cultural barriers that place women in a subordinate position to men. Moreover, key assets and resources, such as land, livestock, water and finances, are generally controlled by men (Dometita, 2017; RoK, 2011). Evidence of this can be found in the major pastoral groups in Kenya such as the Maasai (Saranta, 2013), Turkana (Wawire, 2011), Rendille (Fratkin, 2011), Borana (Aregu et al., 2007) and the Pokot (Lolemum et al., 2017; Kondoltiony, 2022). According to Kondoltiony, though Pokot pastoralists have diversified their livelihoods into off-farm activities which do not depend on climate, more women than men practice activities that have low returns such as the informal milk and charcoal businesses.

On the flip side, there are contexts where women are either equal to or have surpassed men in adoption of ALSs. For example, Farooquee and Rawat (2001) report that Bhotiya women in the Khumaon Himalayas pastoral community command more respect and enjoy greater independence. As a result, they make their own decisions and are deeply involved in ALSs. In Uganda, Stites et al. (2016) note that, in the Karamojong pastoral community, agricultural and commercial activities are mostly done by women because men are engaged more in livestock management. The involvement of women in petty trade, an important source of livelihood in pastoral communities of East Africa, is also higher than that of men (Little, 2001).

The indications that women may be equal to and/or overtaking men in adoption of ALSs in some contexts in the highly patriarchal and misogynistic societies, may be justifiable considering that substantial effort has been made, in the recent past, towards attainment of gender equality, inclusion and women empowerment (de Jones & Flintan, 2020; RoK, 2019). This necessitated the current study in the pastoral community of West Pokot County, where the extent and nature of gender differentials in adoption of ALSs after a decade-long concerted effort by both state and non-state actors to close the gender gap, remains scanty.

Theoretical Framework

This study is underpinned by Structural Functionalism Theory, complemented by Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis Framework (CVA), which is a gender analysis tool.

Structural Functionalism Theory

Structural Functionalism Theory perceives society as a complex system whose parts work together to promote solidarity and stability (Macionis & Gerber, 2011). It addresses society as a whole in terms of the function of its constituent elements. While structural functionalism is associated with several sociologists, the ideas of Herbert Spencer, Emile Durkheim and Structural Marxists had the conclusiveness to guide this study. Herbert Spencer popularized a common analogy, that presents the parts of society as “organs” which work toward the proper functioning of the “body” as a whole (Urry, 2000). Based on the metaphor above of an organism in which many parts function together to sustain the whole, Durkheim argues that complex societies are held together by organic solidarity (social bonds), based on specialization and interdependence, which are strong among members of a society (Macionis & Gerber, 2011). This theory, therefore, emphasizes the contributions that the various parts, structures, and systems of society make towards its social needs and how these structures and systems shape the behaviour of the individuals and groups within them (Muchangi, 2014). Structural Marxists on their part argue that the decisions and actions of individuals and groups are fundamentally constrained by the structures in which they are located, and which exert influence over social, political, and economic processes. Structural Marxist, emphasize that every pattern of activity makes a positive or negative contribution to that society (Alexander & Colomy, 1990; Maryanski & Turner, 1991, as cited in Muchangi 2014, p. 56). The tenets of this theory have been used to explain the pastoral community of West Pokot as a complex structure with various parts (pastoral men and women), structures, and systems (physical and socioeconomic environment) that are interdependent and whose functions and interactions determine adoption of ALSs. Therefore, the roles of pastoral men and women are considered equally important in adoption of ALSs and have been investigated to determine their respective contributions. The community’s prevailing social, economic, cultural, and political structures are also important and have differential impact on men and women in the process of adoption of ALSs. The factors have the capacity to either enable or constraint adoption of ALSs.

Structural Functionalism Theory looks at society as a whole and is, therefore, broad and general in perspective. Whereas it helped in addressing relevant variables in this study, as discussed in the foregoing paragraph, there was a need for a gender analysis framework to clearly bring out gender differentials in adoption of ALSs in the pastoral community. Some relevant tenets of CVA addressed this need as discussed below.

Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis Framework

The CVA framework is a gender analysis tool that critically considers gender and its associated roles, responsibilities, and power dynamics in a particular community (Birks & Hatfield, 2016). The framework was developed by Harvard Institute for International Development to help development agencies to plan interventions in such a way that they meet immediate needs and, at the same time, build on the strengths of people and their efforts to achieve long-term socioeconomic development (March et al., 1999). The framework is based on the central idea that people's existing capacities (strengths) and vulnerabilities (weaknesses) determine the impact that a crisis has on them, as well as the way they respond to it. Therefore, interventions should aim to increase people's capacities and reduce their vulnerabilities. CVA uses an analysis matrix tool to distinguish between three categories of capacities and vulnerabilities that are different for women and for men. These are physical, social, and motivational categories (Birks & Hatfield, 2016). For the purpose of making the CVA matrix reflect reality's complexity, other dimensions including disaggregation of communities by gender, must be added to the analysis. (March et al., 1999). The tenets of CVA were relevant to this study as they facilitated investigation of the gender differentials in adoption of ALSs. In particular, CVA's gender analysis matrix facilitated this study to analyze the status and extent of gender disparities in adoption of ALSs. For example, through the motivational aspect of the matrix, this study was able to establish that women were faster to adopt ALSs than men, because of the women's utter need to survive outside the livestock sector that was dominated by men.

Summary of Reviewed Literature and Knowledge Gap

This section has reviewed related literature on the status of adoption of ALSs among pastoral communities across the globe. In the review, focus has been trained on the experiences of both men and women. It is apparent that the gender dimension has not been addressed adequately in the general area of diversification of livelihoods, yet it exerts considerable impact, considering that pastoral communities are highly patriarchal and with strictly marked gender roles. Most of the authors also treat pastoral communities as homogenous, yet they are diverse in terms of location, culture, economy, and social life. Their views are, therefore, too general and may be misleading. In view of the aforesaid, there is a need to contextualize the gender dimensions of livelihoods among pastoral communities. The current study fills this gap by explaining what is unique among pastoralists in West Pokot County in regard to gender disparities in adoption of ALSs. This has been achieved because the study was focused on what is unique in the pastoral community of West Pokot County including: capacities and vulnerabilities among women and men, and the period, starting in 2008, when state and non-state development agencies renewed their efforts to bridge the gender gap in the County. Effort was also made to surmount cultural barriers, to collect gender disaggregated data, a rare feat in such a highly patriarchal and traditional community.

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted in West Pokot County, Kenya. It was predominantly inhabited by the pastoral Pokots who were known for the love of the cattle and adherence to strict patriarchal culture (Kondoltony, 2022; Lolemtum, et al., 2017; Mutsotso, 2013). The County was rich in

pastoral culture and the associated problems of gender inequality, high poverty incidences, insecurity and conflicts (Kamerback et al., 2015).

Cross-sectional survey research design, and both quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted. The target population of the study was all adult members of the 116,182 households in the County (Kenya Bureau of Statistics [KNBS], 2019). Other research participants were key informants in the County. Considering the vastness of the County and the large target population, multistage sampling was adopted to arrive at 371 respondents who were sampled in a manner that ensured gender balance. Further, this study employed purposive sampling technique to select 12 and nine participants of Key Informants Interviews (KIIs) and Focus Group Discussions (FGDS), respectively. Key factors considered in selection of participants were gender, knowledge and experience in ALSs.

Whereas this study utilized library and e-resources to collect secondary data, primary data was collected using questionnaires, KII schedule and FGD guide. The three research instruments formed a triangulation method that enhanced their validity. To achieve reliability, the instruments were pilot tested in Baringo East Sub-County where pastoralists bore similar attributes and characteristics with the study population in West Pokot County.

After editing and gleaning, quantitative data was coded and entered in the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. This yielded descriptive statistics in form of cross tabulations, frequencies and percentages. The analyzed data was then presented in tables and charts. On the other hand, thematic analysis was applied for qualitative data that has been presented in narrative and verbatim forms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview

In this Section, findings are presented, discussed and interpreted in three sub-sections as follows: response rate, demographic characteristics, and levels of adoption of ALSs among men and women in the pastoral community of West Pokot County. The findings are presented in Tables and Charts and supported by explanations in prose and verbatim quotes.

Response Rate

The study targeted 371 respondents, majority of whom were assisted to fill the questionnaires. However, 292 of these had their completed questionnaires available to the research team, translating to a response rate of 78.7 percent. A higher response rate was not achieved because some of the respondents, who opted to fill the questionnaires by themselves, failed to return them. Some sampled households were also skipped because there were no men and women (the units of observation). However, the response rate of 78.7 percent was still a sufficient representation of the target population and was considered adequate for analysis and statistical reporting.

Demographic Information

The study sought to establish demographic information of the respondents regarding their age, gender, education, household leadership and source of livelihood. This was done in order to establish the levels of gender differentials in adoption of ALSs in the community.

Distribution of Respondents by Age

This study considered age an important characteristic as it indicated the level to which study participants were involved in adoption of ALSs. Thus, it collected data on distribution of respondents by age as portrayed in Figure 1.

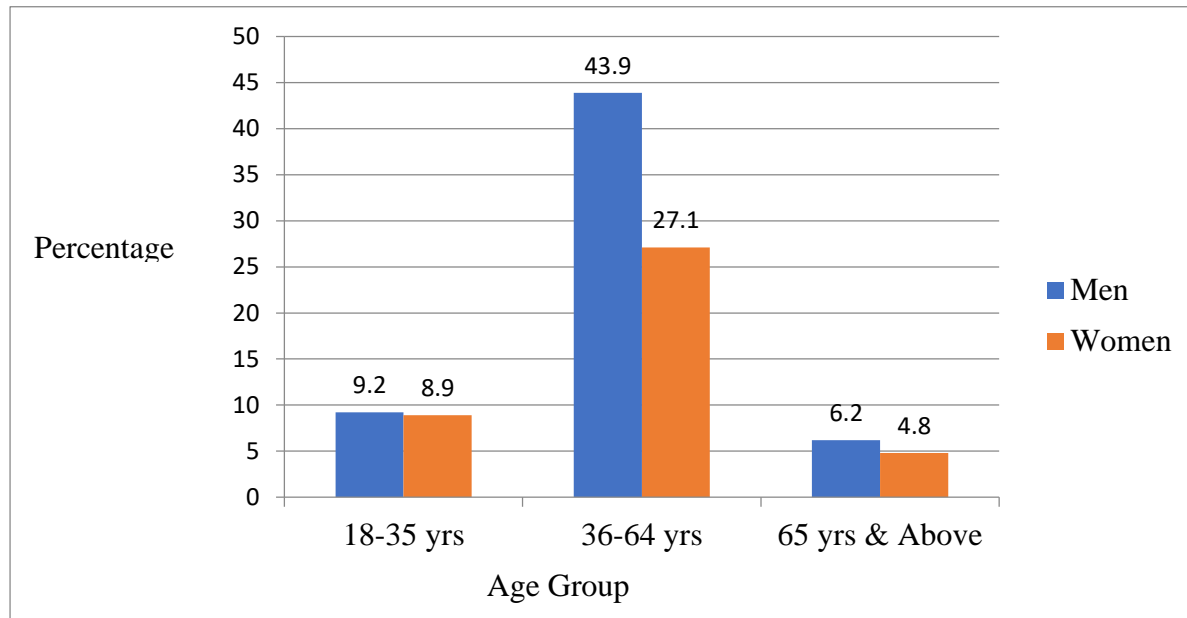


Figure 1: Respondents by Age Groups

Figure 1 shows that: 18.1% (men=9.2% and women=8.9%) were aged between 18 and 35 years; 71% (men=43.9% and women=27.1%) between 36 and 64 years and 11% (men=6.2% and women=4.8%), 65 and above years. Thus, most of the respondents who took part in the study were aged between 36 and 64 years (71%). This, according to the World Bank (2016), is a working age population. They were, therefore, actively involved in livelihood strategies and contributed valuable information to the study. Equally beneficial to the study, were the aging respondents who were above 65 years of age (47%) because of their many years of exposure to pastoralism and ALSs.

Distribution of Respondents by Gender

The study established the gender of the study participants to obtain gender relevant information in adoption of ALSs. The distribution of respondents by gender is presented in Figure 2.

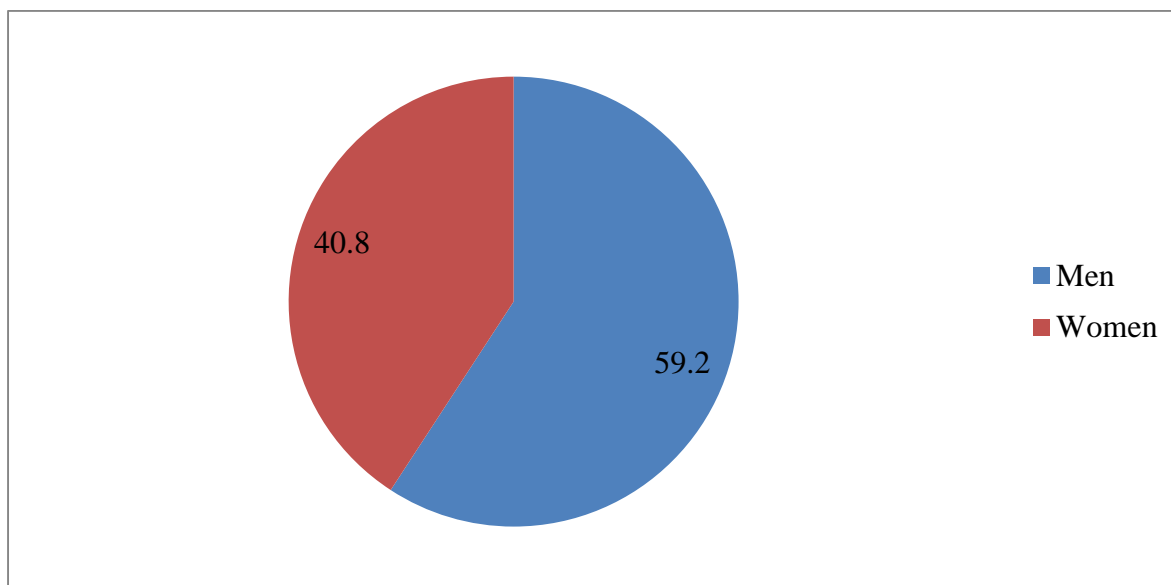


Figure 2: Respondents by Gender

Figure 2 indicates that out of 292 respondents who took part in the study, 173 (59.2%) were men while 119 (40.8%) were women. Despite the study’s attempt to equalize the number of men and women, more men than women took part in the study. In the study area, similar observations have been made by Lolemtum et al. (2017) that men in the community are more willing than women to respond to questionnaires. This is a strong indicator that women’s participation in any endeavour, outside the reproductive domain is still lower than that of men in the pastoral community. This confirms the findings by Nyberg et al. (2015) and Kondoltony (2022) that women’s main tasks in the pastoral community of West Pokot County are domestic such as caring for children, fetching water and firewood.

Distribution of Respondents by Education

The education level of the respondents is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

Level of Education	Men		Women		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
No education	70	24	68	23.3	138	47.7
Dropped before KCPE	33	11.3	13	4.5	46	15.8
Primary Certificate	9	3.1	10	3.4	19	6.5
Secondary Certificate	26	9	13	4.4	39	13.4
Diploma/Certificate	10	3.4	10	3.4	20	6.8
Bachelor’s Degree	15	5.1	5	1.7	20	6.8
Postgraduate Degree	10	3.4	0	0	10	3.4
Total	173	59.3	119	40.7	292	100

Table 1 shows that 47.3% of the respondents had no formal education, 15.8% dropped out of school before KCPE and 6.5% had primary certificate. Further, 3.4% had secondary certificate, 6.8% diploma or college certificate, 6.8% Bachelor’s degree and 3.4% postgraduate degree. The findings show that literacy levels are low in West Pokot County, more so for the women. This has a corresponding implication on adoption of ALSs since there is a positive correlation between education and productivity (Fiske, 2012). Nonetheless, the variations in literacy

among the respondents, benefited this study since their views reflected those of the entire pastoral community where overall literacy stood at 40% with huge gender gap (women=28% and men=12%) (West Pokot County Government, 2013). Literacy levels are also extremely low among other pastoral communities in Kenya such as the Maasai, Rendile, Somali and Samburu, as has been revealed by a survey conducted by UNICEF Kenya and Anti-FGM Board of Kenya (2017), where a majority of surveyed girls, women, boys and men have only attained primary-level education or none at all. Studies by Kipuri and Ridgwell (2008) and Nelson et al. (2016) further indicate that literacy levels among pastoralists in East and Horn of Africa are also generally low, women being the most disadvantaged.

Household Leadership Status

The study sought to establish the leadership of households that were sampled for the study as summarized in Table 2.

Table 2: Head of the Household

Head of Household	Frequency	Percent (%)
Men (married couple)	232	79.5
Women (married couple)	11	3.8
Men (single, widowed, separated, divorced)	27	9.2
Women (single, widowed, separated, divorced)	10	3.4
Male child	11	3.8
Female child	1	0.3
Total	292	100.0

Table 2 shows that in households of married couples, 79.5% were headed by men while 3.8% were headed by women. In households of the respondents who were single/widowed/separated/divorced, 9.2% were headed by men and 3.4% by women. For the households which were child headed, 3.7% were headed by male children, while 0.3% were headed by female children. From the Table, an overwhelming majority of the households were headed by men. This confirms the finding by Kondoltony et al. (2023), Mutsotso (2013) and Ng'ang'a (2013) that women are regarded as social minors and inferior in the Pokot community and are, therefore, rarely entrusted with household leadership. This also common in other pastoral communities (IWGIA, 2012). This means that, adoption of ALSs in the community is skewed in favour of men who as household heads, have more control over decision-making and allocation of resources.

Distribution of Respondents by Source of Livelihood

The distribution of the respondents by the source of livelihood is shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Distribution of Respondents by Source of Livelihood

Source of Livelihood	Men		Women		Total	
	Count	%	Count	%	Count	%
Formal employment	29	9.9	18	6.2	47	16.1
Informal/self-employment	124	42.5	100	34.2	224	76.7
Both (formal and informal)	20	6.9	1	0.3	21	7.2
Total	173	59.3	119	40.7	292	100

Table 3 shows that for livelihoods, few respondents (16.1%) were in formal type of employment while majority (76.7%) were in informal or self-employment. Very few, that is,

7.2% were engaged in both formal and informal types of employment. In terms of gender, 9.9% of the respondents who were in formal employment were men and 6.2% were women. The informal/self-employment sector had 42.5% and 34.2% of the respondents being men and women, respectively. Further, 6.9% of the respondents who had embraced both formal and informal employment were men and only 0.3%, were women. Clearly, there is an overwhelming adoption of informal employment by the members of the pastoral community. Thus, participation of the pastoralists in formal employment, a sector that is more rewarding, is low. Gender variations in employment are also evident in that more men (59.3%) than women (40.7%), are in employment. These findings resonate well with those of the UNDP (2018) that, globally, female participation in the labour market is still lower than that of men. Study findings that 76.7% of the respondents engaged in the informal sector also agree with those of the African Development Bank (AfDB, 2015) that the sector, where agriculture and businesses are the main activities, employs 70% of the population in Africa.

Gender Disparities in Adoption of ALSs in the Pastoral Community of West Pokot County

The general objective of the study was to investigate gender disparities in adoption of ALSs in the pastoral community of West Pokot County. To achieve this objective, the central ideas of Capacities and Vulnerabilities Analysis (CVA) framework were applied in assessing the status of adoption of ALSs by gender. The findings are presented in the subsequent sections under the themes formulated from the study’s specific objectives, thus: status of adoption of ALSs among men and women in the community; and extent of adoption of ALSs.

Status of Adoption of ALSs by Men and Women in the Pastoral Community of West Pokot County

The study sought to establish the status of adoption of ALSs among men and women in the pastoral community. To this end, the respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement on various statements related to adoption of ALSs. The responses were rated on a five-point Likert Scale where: 1- Strongly Disagree; 2-Disagree; 3-Undecided; 4-Agree and 5-Strongly Agree. The SPSS Version 23 was used to generate the Mean and Standard Deviations (SD). A mean score of 3 and above was considered significant since it was under “agree” and “strongly agree”. The findings are presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Respondent Views on Adoption of ALSs by Men and Women

Adoption Status	Mean	SD
Women are faster than men in adopting ALSs	3.65	1.20
Women have adopted more ALSs than men	3.52	1.18
Decision to adopt is mostly done by men	4.01	1.08
It is easier for men to get resources to adopt ALSs than women	4.00	1.10
Men had more access to and control of the benefits of adoption ALSs, than the women	3.86	1.10
Men have adopted more lucrative ALSs than women	3.51	1.04
Mean	3.76	1.12

As illustrated in Table 4, a high mean of 3.65 means that majority of the respondents agreed with the view that women were faster than men in uptake of ALSs. Concurrence with this view during KIIs and FGDs came out very clearly from the following:

With increase in number of children to be fed, clothed and put in school, we feel the pinch more than the men because we are mostly at home. We have, therefore, ventured outside livestock sector to try any idea that solves the problems (FGD 2).

Women are usually the first to embrace any new idea that comes to the village because they don't fear failure, unlike men who have ego problems and would take time to research and benchmark to ensure it succeeds and where there are grey areas, they dare not venture lest they become a laughing stock (KII 3).

The findings indicate that there were gender variations in the pace of adoption of ALSs in the pastoral community where women were faster than men. The reasons given were that, women performed most of the reproductive roles and, therefore, felt pain of not providing for the households more than the men, hence the readiness to embrace any idea which could complement the dwindling livestock resource. Another reason was that, unlike men, women did not have much of ego problems and could try any idea even when failure was imminent. These findings concur with those of Devereux (2014), who notes that women are often agents for change and adaptation within the households. This puts them at the forefront of embracing new ideas. This means that, given the opportunity and support (for example, when their capacities are enhanced and vulnerabilities eliminated), as recommended by the CVA framework, women can help the community to realize development through adoption of ALSs.

Also, the study findings in Table 4 show that women had adopted more ALSs than the men. The KIs were of the same opinion. As proof, they named ALSs dominated by each gender and the list as shown in Table 5 indicates that there were more ALSs adopted by women (17) than men (12).

Table 5: ALSs Dominated by Men and Women

S/NO	ALSs Dominated by Women	ALSs Dominated by Men
1.	Subsistence farming	Commercial farming
2.	Food and groceries shops	Retail stores
3.	Sale of second-hand clothes	Transporting services for a fee
4.	Domestic servanthood	Casual labour in crop cultivation
5.	Drawing and selling of firewood	Waged labour in construction sites
6.	Sale of roast maize by roadsides	Formal employment
7.	Poultry keeping	Beekeeping
8.	Specialized occupations: tailors, hairdressers in salons	Specialized occupations: barbers, carpenters, mechanics, etc.
9.	Craft work for sale e.g. beads	Selling/leasing of assets e.g., land
10.	Waiters/stewards in hotels/shops	Trade in Livestock
11.	Gathering/sale of wild vegetables	Sand mining and sale
12.	Gathering/sale of medicinal herbs	Mining of minerals
13.	Milk sales	
14.	Sale of domestic merchandise	
15.	Kitchen gardening	
16.	Sale of local beer/liquor/brews	
17.	Remittances and gifts	

Reasons were given by the KIs to explain why women had adopted more ALSs than men:

More strategies for adoption of ALSs in the county target women more than men. Additionally, men in the community are socialized to rigidly adhere to traditional ways of doing things and are sort of averse to new ideas (KII 12).

Women adopted ALSs because traditionally, they do not own anything, they are not heirs, cannot inherit property, and do not have right to own. Therefore, access to and control of cattle which are the traditional sources of wealth is limited. This makes them adopt ALSs as men stick to cattle whose numbers dwindle by the day (KII 9).

Women are more contented than men with small or little things which required little capital to start. Consequently, they engage in the simplest of the livelihoods such as buying a maize cob at Ksh. 5 and selling it at Ksh. 10 after roasting. While women are doing these, men think only of big ventures that require a lot of money to start and sustain such as wholesale and retail stores and construction sectors (KII 8).

My view is that, the present-day pastoral men are lazy and have negative attitude towards work. For instance, you find women with babies strapped on their backs, clearing bushes and tilling land in the scorching sun, while men enjoy the breeze under tree shades and only to return home in the evening and demand food (KII 2).

In the statement above, the reasons given to explain why women had adopted more ALSs than men were: more strategies towards adoption of ALSs in the County, targeted women; ALSs pathway was easier for women than livestock production where they were limited by cultural barriers; women were more content with small and simple ventures and did not wait to accumulate large startup capital (hard to attain considering the low socioeconomic status of the community); women were more flexible and willing to embrace new ideas and lastly, women were more industrious and had better work ethics. All these reasons imply that in adoption of ALSs, women faced more environmental and socio-cultural push and pull factors, more than the men. Some researchers have similar findings. For instance, Kondoltony (2022) notes that in West Pokot, most of the livelihood diversification activities are practiced by women as men stick to livestock production. Dometita (2017) adds that, among Rendile and Turkana pastoral communities, there is stronger resistance to shift to new roles among men and that they are very selective about which productive roles to do. Conversely, women in these communities tend to diversify as much as possible and engage in anything just to support the families. This hints at the great potential among the women which can be tapped to promote adoption of ALSs.

The study findings illustrated in Table 4 further show that majority of the respondents were of the view that the decision to adopt ALSs in the households was mostly done by men (mean=4.0). This was further confirmed by participants in FGDs. For example:

In our culture, all decisions including those of adoption of ALSs are made by the household head who is usually the man. In households that are headed by women, particularly widows, the first-born son, brother or the uncle steps in to make important decisions. However, there is an increasing number of educated and exposed women making decisions, sometimes independent of the men (FGD 3).

Based on above data, the study deduces that men in the community, dominated decision-making on adoption of ALSs because they were heads of households where one of their key mandates was exactly this. Writing on decision-making and participation in households' socioeconomic activities, among the Turkana and Rendile pastoralists, Dometita (2017) reports that the man-made decisions in the household because he has the most power/privilege over

the woman/wife within the household. He observes that the women in the community have accepted this position and often remain passive and did not make independent decisions. The data also shows that women were beginning to participate in household decisions and, sometimes, made independent decisions. This is a pointer to an improved socioeconomic status among the women. As noted by the FGD, education and exposure (probably brought by education process and business interactions) are the key factors. This trajectory, when sustained could lead to full participation of women in decision-making and this would give impetus to higher adoption of ALSs in the community.

According to Table 4, men had more access to and control of resources to adopt ALSs than women (mean=4.00). On this, all participants in KIIs and FGDs expressed similar views which were well captured by some of them, such as:

Men are the household heads and decision makers. Therefore, every resource in the household is at their disposal. Therefore, it is easier for them to access resources to start a venture outside pastoralism. For us women, it is generally harder (FGD 2).

In this community, women are regarded as ‘children’ and are, therefore, not trusted with important household resources (KII 14).

Thus, men in the pastoral community of West Pokot County, had more access to and control of resources to adopt ALSs than women. The reasons given by the study participants were that, household leadership and decision-making, gave men leverage to access households’ resources more than other household members. The community did not also believe in the ability of women to control important household resources. Likewise, Eneyew and Mengistu (2013) has found out that, in comparison with men, women lack access and control rights over livestock, land, and income. All these are critical to securing a sustainable livelihood. The finding that women, who are faster than men in embracing change, have limited access to and control of resources, imply that the pace and extent of adoption of ALSs in the community is impeded. Comparatively, adoption of ALSs among the women suffers the most.

Additionally, the study findings in Table 4 indicate that men exercised more access and control to the benefits accrued from adoption of ALSs than the women (mean=3.86). This was also the unanimous view of KIIs and FGD participants. This came out clearly from one FGD:

For those of us who are married, we surrender our earnings to the husbands as traditions demand. While some are kind enough to involve you in deciding what to do with the money, majority, do not do so. So, we are at their mercy. For those not married, their fathers would always demand to be involved yet they do not do this to unmarried men (FGD 8).

From the above, this study deduces that the benefits of all ALSs ventures were accessed and controlled more by men than the women. This was in tandem with the community’s customs and traditions. The unequal access and control of the benefits, in the opinion of this study, denies the community the advantage that could accrue when all the constituent members (men and women) perform optimally as has been espoused by the Theory of Structural Functionalism. According to the theory, the contributions of all the various parts, structures and systems of a society are significant for attainment of its social needs and stability (Macionsis & Gerber, 2011).

Another finding of the study as shown in Table 4 is that men had adopted more lucrative (higher value) ALSs than the women (mean=3.51). Therefore, the few ALSs they have embraced cautiously and reluctantly, as noted earlier in this section, are more profitable than those

undertaken by the women. This view was supported by KIs and FGDs participants. As an example, two KIs articulated how men had dominated the construction sector an important source of livelihoods in Kenya:

Men dominate the construction sector as artisans, labourers, contractors and suppliers in both private and public sector projects. The few women in this sector are employed as unskilled artisans and labourers. Thus, they are paid less than their male counterparts who possess required skills, knowledge and the physical strength (KII 15).

In Government construction contracts and tenders which are usually well paying, women are disadvantaged. When I was CEC Culture and Youth, I was mandated to ensure 30% of contracts go to women, the disabled and the youth, but for the four years (2014-2017), only one woman-owned company won construction contracts. On the side of the youth, eight companies won, but all belonged to male youth (KII 9).

The above statements clearly indicate that men dominated the most rewarding jobs and contracts in both the private and public construction sectors. The gap between men and women was particularly wider in the area of Government construction contracts and tenders, which were usually well paying. This happens against the backdrop of the requirement by the 2010 Constitution of Kenya that 30% of contracts and tenders must be allocated to the marginalized and vulnerable members of the society such as women and people living with disabilities (UNICEF, 2018). Other studies with similar findings that men have adopted more gainful ALSs than women include Okoti et al. (2004) and Schilling et al. (2012). These findings indicate that women in the pastoral community of West Pokot, face barriers in accessing high income ALSs. This study attributes this to women's lack of good education and resources which are prerequisites for securing higher value ALSs in both formal and informal sectors. Adherence to strict gender roles where women are expected to either stay at home or work near it, in order to perform reproductive roles, could be another probable cause for women's marginal participation in well-paying ALSs.

Extent of Adoption of ALSs by Men and Women in in the Pastoral Community of West Pokot County

This study assessed the extent of adoption of ALSs among the pastoral men and women around the level of willingness, duration of adoption, and the overall extent of adoption across socioeconomic sectors.

Willingness to Adopt ALSs. This study sought to determine the level of willingness to adopt ALSs among men and women in the pastoral community. To achieve this, the respondents were asked whether they were willing at any time, given the resources, to adopt ALSs. The findings are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: Willingness to adopt ALSs by Men and Women

Responses	Men		Women	
	Count	%	Count	%
Yes	121	70	107	90
No	52	30	12	10
Total	173	100	119	100

As illustrated in Table 6 above, an overwhelming majority of respondents were willing to adopt ALSs (Men=70%; Women=90%). This, offers a unique opportunity for development actors to accelerate the transition from pastoralism to ALSs. The higher number of women willing to

adopt ALSs than men, explains why women have adopted more ALSs than men as has been noted in the preceding section. It also implies that men in the community are more averse to change since they still love their cattle. In view of this, Dometita (2017) also observes that there is stronger resistance to shift to new roles among men compared with women and that men are very selective about which reproductive roles to do. This explains why 30% of men are not willing to adopt ALSs even when adequate support is promised.

Duration of Adoption of ALSs. The CVA framework considers an analysis of change over time of the variable or phenomenon under consideration as one of the ways through which a true reflection of society’s reality can best be achieved (Urry, 2000). In view of this, and in order to better understand the extent of disparities in adoption of ALSs among men and women in the community, this study considered duration of adoption as an important variable. To achieve this, the respondents were asked to indicate the duration of adoption of their main ALS(s) by choosing from the category of years given: 1-15 years, 16-30 years, 31-45 years, 46-60 years, 61 and above years. Since there were five categories, 2.5 was considered the average mean which translated to between 31 and 45 years of adoption. The findings are shown in Table 7.

Table 7: Mean Duration of adoption of ALSs by Men and Women

ALSs Sector	Mean (Men)	Mean (Women)	Total Mean
Crop farming	2.92	2.40	2.66
Business/Trade	1.36	1.26	1.31
Formal employment	1.43	1.24	1.34
Informal employment	2.76	2.31	2.54
Sports/Art	1.13	1.08	1.11
Poultry farming	2.12	1.71	1.92
Dairy farming	2.96	2.05	2.51
Others	1.01	1.03	1.02
Mean	1.97	1.63	1.80

As illustrated in Table 7 above, except for crop farming (mean=2.66), informal employment (mean=2.54) and dairy farming (mean=2.51), the mean duration of adoption of ALSs by men and women in all sectors was below average. This translated to less than 30 years of adoption by the time this research was conducted early 2019. ALSs in agriculture and informal sectors had been adopted for longer duration as compared to those in the formal, sports and arts sectors. By and large, the findings show that adoption of ALSs in the pastoral community is a recent phenomenon, more so for the women. Except for lack of gender dimension, similar findings are made by Kaprom (2013) and Mutsotso (2013) who singles out crop farming as the oldest ALSs to be adopted by the community. But this has happened as recent as the 1980s. The findings of Chepkangor et al. (2015) also indicate that in majority of households in West Pokot County, adoption of ALSs is between 10 and 20 years. Compared, Chepkangor found that, the pastoral community of West Pokot adopted ALSs later than the Marakwet, their counterparts in Elgeyo Marakwet County. For instance, “while about 59.3% members of the Marakwet community have had alternative sources of livelihood for over 10 years, there were only 25% members of the Pokot community who have had a change of source of livelihood in the same period” (Chepkangor et al., 2015.p.73).

Considering that adoption of ALSs is envisaged to end overreliance on pastoralism and its attendant problems of resource-based conflicts and poverty (Rota & Chakrabarti, 2010; Schrepfer & Caterina, 2014; Archambault, 2016), the implication of this short duration of

adoption of ALSs is that, these problems might persist for a long time. The slow rate of transition from pastoralism to ALSs has been attributed to entrenched retrogressive cultural beliefs, norms, values and practices in the community, including FGM/C, early forced marriages, patriarchy and strong attachment and value for cattle, hence negative attitude towards most of the socioeconomic activities outside the livestock sector (Mutsotso, 2013; Ng'ang'a, 2013). Inadequate infrastructural development in West Pokot County, which is due to many years of neglect and marginalization by the Government, stifles meaningful adoption of ALSs (Nyariki & Amwata, 2019; Otieno, 2014).

Overall Extent of Adoption of ALSs by Men and Women. In order to adequately gauge the extent of adoption of ALSs among both men and women in the community, the respondents were asked to indicate from the choices given on a Likert Scale which were assigned values from one to five (Not at all - 1, in a small way - 2, in a medium way - 3, in a big way - 4 and fully - 5). Choosing “not at all” means that the respondent did not spend any of his or her working time in the ALSs, while “in a small way” implies less than half of the working time. In “a Medium way” insinuates that the respondent spent half of his/her working time doing it and in “a big way”, more than half. Doing it “fully” hints that the respondent spent all her/his working time doing it, meaning it was a full-time job. The SPSS Version 23 was used to generate the mean where a mean score of 3 and above was considered significant. The findings are as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Mean Extent of Adoption of ALSs by Men and Women

ALSs Sector	Mean (Men)	Mean (Women)	Total Mean
Crop farming	2.39	2.04	2.22
Business/Trade	1.43	1.31	1.37
Formal employment	1.68	1.51	1.60
Informal employment	2.36	1.97	2.17
Sports/Art	1.15	1.07	1.11
Poultry farming	1.92	1.58	1.75
Dairy farming	2.31	1.91	2.11
Others	1.03	1.04	1.04
Mean	1.78	1.55	1.67

The study findings illustrated in Table 8 indicate that the average total mean is 1.67, implying that both men and women had adopted ALSs in a small way or not at all in some sectors. The findings also show that the extent of adoption of ALSs in agriculture (crop, poultry and dairy farming) and informal sector was higher than in other sectors. According to KIIs and FGDs, this could be attributed to high poverty and illiteracy levels and the fact that majority of pastoralists were predominantly rural dwellers. These conditions made pursuit of ALSs in other sectors, such as formal employment, business and sports/arts, difficult. This viewpoint is corroborated by World Bank's Report in 2016 that, 80% of the worldwide poor live in rural areas; 64% work in agriculture; and 39% have no formal education (World Bank, 2016). Similarly, Hall (2017) reports that majority of job opportunities available to Kenyans are in the informal sector.

Overall, the extent of adoption of ALSs in the community is low implying that pastoralism remains its mainstay. The findings correlate with those of Mutsotso (2013), Chepkangor et al. (2015) and Lolemtum et al. (2017) that there is a generally slow pace of diversification of livelihoods among Pokot pastoralists. Writing on the plight of pastoralists in general, Little (2001) and IWGIAS (2012) observe that diversification of livelihoods, among all pastoral

communities in East Africa, is low and slow. Clearly, gender variations in the extent of adoption of ALSs are evident in the study findings. In all sectors of ALSs adoption, women are trailing men. These findings are similar with those of Kimani and Kombo (2010), as cited in Mutuma (2017) that the men, being the undisputed heads of the households in traditional African society, mostly engage in productive activities and leave the women in reproductive tasks. The women's low levels of adoption of ALSs, despite being faster than men as noted earlier is indicative of the existence of barriers which affect them, disproportionately.

From the foregoing, this study notes that adoption of ALSs in the pastoral community is slow, a recent phenomenon and characterized by gender differentials. In the gender differentials, women who, despite being more aggressive and willing to adopt ALSs are more disadvantaged and lagged behind men. Livestock production, therefore, remains the major source of livelihoods in the community. Yet it is increasingly becoming unsustainable and unreliable. This study, therefore, postulates that the problems associated with pastoralism such as poverty, resource-based conflicts, patriarchy and marginalization will continue to persist, in as long as gender differentials in adoption of ALSs exist. In the next section, the factors which influence adoption of ALSs by men and women in the pastoral community, will be discussed.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, this study makes the following conclusions and recommendations:

Conclusions

This study concludes that a vast majority of men and women in the pastoral community of West Pokot County have adopted ALSs. However, the ALSs are mostly of low returns and in the informal sector, especially those adopted by women. The rate of adoption is also slow and characterized by gender differentials that are skewed in favour of men. This state of affairs is a result of myriad socioeconomic, cultural, technological, and ecological factors, acting either in isolation or combination to influence the rate at which men and women adopt ALSs. Overall, adoption of ALSs in the community is marked by huge gender differentials. This slows down a process that scholars and development actors generally consider the best pathway out of the socioeconomic challenges which face the community, notably gender inequality, violent inter-communal conflicts over livestock resources, and pervasive poverty.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made for enhanced adoption of ALSs by both men and women in the pastoral community of West Pokot County:

- a. Address the needs of both men and women to participate optimally in adoption of ALSs in all sectors of the economy. Thus, all development stakeholders should ensure gender mainstreaming is undertaken during the formulation and implementation of all their policies, projects, and programmes.
- b. Consider the following gender and stakeholder-specific measures:
 - i. The Gender and Culture Departments at both the County and National levels of Government should ensure the removal of barriers that restrict women from more gainful ALSs despite them being faster and more willing to adopt the ALSs. The measures can include: accelerating women's access to control rights over the means of production and eliminating restrictive patriarchal and cultural ideologies.

- ii. Address the reluctance to adopt ALSs among men. The community elites should, therefore, collaborate with the County Government to educate the men and other community members on the dangers of continued reliance on pastoralism in the face of rapidly declining rangeland resources.

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