

Analysis of the Division of Labour and Decision-making for Selected Crop Farming Activities among Maasai Agro-pastoralists of Narok North District, Kenya

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Abstract

The Maasai have traditionally been pastoralists, but in recent years, they have been forced to diversify their livelihoods due to increasing pressures on pastoralism. Agro-pastoralism is one of the livelihood diversification strategies being adopted, whereby crop farming is being incorporated into pastoralism. The traditional division of labour has been based on a pastoralist economy, and, the cultivation of crops has introduced new activities and decision-making patterns into the Maasai communities. Few studies have been done to investigate how crop farming activities are distributed in the Maasai households and who makes decisions for crop farming activities, specifically in Narok North District. This is the gap that this study sought to fill. The purpose of the study was to find out who carried out the major crop farming activities of land preparation, planting, weeding, harvesting and marketing in the Maasai households and who made decisions about these activities. A cross-sectional survey research design was used, and data collected through personal interviews. The gender based study was carried out in three divisions, among 153 male household heads and 87 female household heads. The data were analysed through the computer based Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). The study found that more female respondents were involved in planting, weeding and harvesting as compared to male respondents while more male respondents were involved in marketing of the crop produce compared to the female respondents. Most of the decisions about the crop farming activities were made by men. The study concluded that the division of labour and decision-making among the Maasai was not very different from that in other agricultural communities, and inequity between men and women was clearly evident. The study recommended that more equitable distribution of labour and decision-making should be done.

Key words: Maasai, Livelihood diversification, Agro-pastoralism, Crop cultivation, Division of labour, Decision-making