

Historicization Of Intra-Ethnic Conflict Among the Sabaot Community of Mt. Elgon Kenya

PRECIOUS JOAN WAPUKHA

Lecturer, St. Paul's University Limuru

Abstract- Intra-ethnic conflict among the Sabaot of Mt. Elgon has been a recurrent issue since colonial period. Colonial land ordinance of 1915 led to the evacuation of the Sabaot from Chepkitale to Mt. Elgon area. The two clans that are identified by their regions of settlement that is the Mossop the upper side while Soy on the lower side of the Mountain. The evacuation and resettlement of the Mosop clan from the upper side to the Chepyuk I, II, III, is point of contention and has sparked conflict that has emerged from allegation of corruption and biasness of land allocation and distribution. This study sought to historicize clan conflict among the Sabaot. This study was theorized by constructivists, which stipulates those colonial authorities influenced patterns of ethnic identity creation in African society. The study employed a historical research design that sought to unravel major issues concerning the trends of intra-ethnic conflict among the Sabaot. The designs provided a deeper insight into the various dimensions of intra-ethnic conflicts among the Sabaot regarding historical trends. This conflict has been experienced since colonial period until the post-colonial period. The conflict in the area is propelled by factors such as boundary disputes, governance as well as negative ethnicity escalated the volatile situations in the county. This study recommends that conflict can be resolved by critically analyzing and unraveling the interlude between conflict and historical trajectory of the Sabaot. The stakeholders should not focus on the superficial unfoldment of conflict instead they unravel dippers issues that have affected the community over the years

Indexed Terms- Intra-ethnic Conflict, Colonial Period, Historical Trends

I. INTRODUCTION

According to Ahmed (1999), the term ethnic comes from the Greek word *ethnikos*, which initially meant

“gentile,” “pagan,” and “heathen,” as well as “non-Christian” and “non-Jewish.” The term ‘ethnicity’ is developed from this point of view. However, its connotation has changed over time despite its original meaning. Fisherman (1977) notes ethnicity is understood in the context of a community’s self-image or self-recognition to the eye of the non-community members. Enormous literature has focused on issues of inter-ethnic conflicts worldwide. However, little has been done on the conflict settings of the historical trend, cause, diverse effect of ethnic conflict on development and national integration, and intervention measures by various groups and other related variables which affect stability and sustainable development.

Ivon Banac (1992) opines that the former Yugoslavia was involved in the hazardous ethnic conflict in the world. The conflict stemmed from the two ethnic communities of Montenegrin and Croatian resisting unification. This led to tensions that escalated into war in the early 1970s. Serbian leaders protested the constitution in 1977. In 1980, the tensions subsided following the death of Tito. Banac (1992) sees this as a signal to the beginning of the unraveling of the Federalist era. Banac argues that with the collapse of communism in Eastern Europe in 1991 and the opposition’s success in 1990 elections in Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and the Yugoslav people’s army became more and more ostracized and driven to promote greater confederation. It is obvious from the preceding study that ethnic conflicts and wars do not occur by chance. Instead, they develop progressively. This was thus important in tackling the historical injustice that led to unending intra-ethnic conflict among the Mosop and Soy.

Kemal Kurspahic (1994) argues that due to religious differences in orientations in Bosnia Herzegovina, the otherwise peaceful coexistence of communities went

for each other in a skirmish that claimed several lives and property. This happened as a result of externally recruited forces as a result of the 'Greater Serbia' idea formed in Belgrade and targeted at the subjugation of other areas via force and violence. This research was beneficial to this study since it broadened the lens through which intra-ethnic violence amongst the Sabao of Mt.Elgon Sub-county transpired.

Nasongo and Murunga (2007) argue that skewed allocation of resources added to ethnicized public service led to hatred among communities which in turn promoted inter-ethnic conflicts. The public service survey released in 2015 indicates that the Agikuyu form 22% of the total government workforce and are slightly over established vis-à-vis the population census aggregate. However, other factors like skills and job competencies of the labor market demand need to be factored in. Their opinions point to the fact that the Mt. Kenya communities took more advantage over others in allocating themselves resources such as land and influential political positions since 1963. In those other communities, only the kingpins who served the system benefitted. Kenyans have been witnessing persistent violent conflicts between and within clans and ethnic groups. Some of the hardest-hit regions include the wider Rift Valley, Coast, Eastern, Northern, and part of the Western regions of Kenya. Conflicts inside and among cultures and nationalities are one of the greatest worldwide challenges confronting humanity today, posing a threat to man's survival (Caser, 2007). Interethnic fighting has erupted between the Luo and Abagusii in the Gucha and Migori districts. Since 1992, the Mijikenda dispute with coastal upcountry people has resulted in terrible outcomes shortly prior to and in the course of General Elections (Kiliku, 1992)

Mazrui (1969) postulated that ethnic relations that lead to conflicts and eventual war are majorly a global affair due to communication barriers or revolution and identity crisis. He cites an example of the Nigerian Biafra war as being so similar to the Scottish-British conflict where the Scots sort autonomy from Britain between the years 1967-1970. According to Mazrui and Tidy (1984), the wars in Nigeria, Rwanda, and Burundi paint a gloomy picture of tribal emotions in Africa. Similarly, the notion of identity is key to this

work. This is a factor considered during research on intra-ethnic strife in the study region.

Suberu (1993) states that the Nigerian ethnic crisis of ethnic cleansing goes far back to 1914-1993. The necessity of uniting the Muslim Hausa-Fulani, the Christian Igbo, the religiously bicomunal Yoruba, and the other ethnic groups into a single entity, it is said, produced numerous ethnic prejudices, pressures, and wars. Suberu, on his side, asserts that the resulting ethnic disparity in post-independence Nigeria resulted in the demise of the first Republic and the advent of military dictatorship in 1960 and the 1967-1970 Biafra War. This research is comprehensive since it covers all ethnic groups in Nigeria. However, this research was focused on Mt. Elgon Sub-County, the western region of Kenya.

Between 2012 and 2013, fatal interethnic battles erupted between the Orma and Pokomo in Tana River County for grazing land and water (Mkutu, 2008). Similarly, tragic inter-ethnic conflicts erupted in the Rift Valley region in 1992 between the Agikuyu and the Kalenjins over land ownership, with Molo being the epicenter of the clashes (Akiwumi, 1999). Over 5000 people were killed, and about 75,000 were displaced during the clashes (Mkutu, 2008). Several ethnically driven confrontations occurred in Bungoma between the Sabao and the Babukusu for land and livestock, which became increasingly serious in the 1970s (Kakai, 2000).

1.1 Historical Trend on Intra-Ethnic Conflict

Mkutu (2005) looks at the conflicts in the horn of Africa ethnic conflicts. He argues that the social strife is internally and externally triggered. He notes that race and religion also trigger the tribal strife, much as ethnic conflicts trigger violence. He also emphasizes that the Sudanese war is the result of religious and ethnic prejudices. Southern Sudanese always argued that the Arabs in the north are not Sudanese or Africans by extension. To them, the northerners were just racists and terrorists whose mandate was to enslave Africans. The Southerners were strongly opposed to attempts by the Arabic government in the north to Arabize and Islamize the South that is more of Christian and traditionalist in religious orientation. Several studies have been done to try and unravel the works on ethnic relations in Somalia. Dualeh (1994)

highlights the history of Somalia's clans that date back to pre-colonial times. He notes that the hostility of clans is as old as the clans themselves. The clans looked at each other as enemies; however, he notes that the former president Siad Barre employed intra-ethnic intrigues to dismember the once Peaceful Somalia, a situation that has ailed Somalia to date without a Central government (Ihonvbere, 1994). According to Peter & Schraeder (1993), attempts to withdraw Barre's government did more harm than good. Instead of propagating democracy and peace in Somalia, it has led to inter-clan conflicts running for more than two decades. The declaration of Ali Mahdi Mohamed as president incensed the feuding factions by clans being a mistake done by Hawiye, who single-handedly appointed Ali Mahdi Mohamed. The SNM decreed former British Somaliland in May 1991 as an autonomous region called the Somaliland Republic. Nonetheless, intra-clan disputes on the land in Southern Somalia persisted in disrupting lasting peace. According to Oyugi (1998), the ethnic cleansing of 1991/92 was instigated by political leaders who manipulated their subjects to gain political expediency either for the political score or economic ends. He also thinks that tribalism in Kenya has its origins in the colonial era when the divide and rule approach was used to ensure easier authority over the people. He cites an example of the eventual settlement of whites in the *white highlands* as the genesis of the massive migration of the indigenous blacks across the country, from their motherland, areas such as Nyandarua, Kiambu, Murang'a, Nyeri, Kericho, Nakuru, Uasin Gishu, Trans-Nzoia, Laikipia, Nandi, Kisumu, Kakamega and Bungoma counties.

This mass movement of populations led to ethnic polarization long after independence, given that the indigenous were not settled back to their lands. So, the ethnic animosity that erupted in 1992 because of the multi-party elections was also fanned by the land question. The Kalenjins, who were the original inhabitants, felt that non-Kalenjins unfairly took over their land, and the political excuse was an opportunity for them to get their land back. This was significant since this study focused on the historical evolution of intra-ethnic disputes inside the Mt.Elgon sub-county. This resulted from the colonial resettlement of the Sabaot from their original land in the Trans-Nzoia in the former district.

As per Were (1967a; 1967b), the Bukusu and Sabaot are essentially the outcome of two historical practices: ethnic schism and ethnic fusion. He proposes that the Bukusu and Sabaot were once the same tribes and that the Bukusu were a Kalenjin sub-tribe. He establishes his case theoretically through geographical names, agricultural activities, and pastoralists. His central thesis is that most of the population in Western Kenya has blood from different ethnicities coursing through their veins. No ethnicity or sub-ethnic group is isolated from interaction with others since they interacted via commerce, marriages, and cultural activities. On the other hand, the author makes no effort to describe why the two communities and Sabaot clans clashed in the past. From this, the current study sought to ascertain the historical evolution of the Sabaot community's intra-ethnic strife between Mosop and Soy.

Additionally, Were (1967) notes that each clan group within the Bukusu or Sabaot has its cultural records in terms of legendary tales, child naming, calamity tales, historical records, how to interact with outsiders, language, and community norms, and beliefs. This is a critical area of interest to the study because it will help the author on the intra-ethnic conflict that has historical reference dated back to the colonial period. This is important because the author assumes that conflicts were deliberately nurtured by the colonial policies that were geared towards creating conflicts between and among communities for self-gain of easy management of communities. The colonial masters employed this path to easily divide the cohesiveness of the communities for them to rule easily. Again, the colonialists wanted to gain favor from the feuding communities by pretending to assist either of the feuding communities. Wolfe (1969) argues that oral traditions between the Sabots and Bukusu account for the numerous quarrels and disputes between the two tribes, the most infamous of which are the "War of Chonge" and "War of Kikai."

Kiliku (1992) asserts that the ethnic and territorial disputes between the Bukusu and Sabaot people were mostly sparked politically. This argument is premised on the Parliamentary Select Committee report, which highlighted the competition over land and power as the main cause of the conflicts. The report stipulates that the conflict between the Sabaot and Bukusu is a power struggle. It does not provide information on the

conflict between Sabaot clans, which is an evident gap that this study tries to bridge.

Kakai (2000) observes that peaceful coexistence between and among the Bukusu, the Sabaot, and the Tachoni communities who share and interact through marriage, trade, and other cultural activities and beliefs is normally affected by political interference and mechanization. He cited cattle rustling and land and livestock ownership as a major contributor to animosities fueled by politicians who wished to make political capital of the situation. He also notes that the political boundaries which disoriented some communities from their ancestral land contribute to the conflicts. He states that fighting between and across groups did not occur only during the colonial and post-independence periods. He observes that conflicts did not pit one ethnic group's (or sub-ethnic group's) whole membership against another (or other) ethnic group (or sub-ethnic group). These are some of the observations that provided pointers for this research.

According to Kiliku (1992), to maintain the perceived Bukusu dominance over the Sabaot in the Mt. Elgon regions, state-armed local guards used firearms against unarmed ethnic communities. Other difficulties include unsolved border disputes, the province administration's and the country's security operatives' political actions in separating the Bukusu from the Mt. Elgon region. The study says the circumstance deteriorated as the two feuding clans created local vigilante organizations to defend their homes; the church's lack of leadership and the government's inaction exacerbated the problem. The report further adds that the influx of the Sebei community from Uganda in support of their Sabaot brothers in Kenya led to cattle rustling leading to more ethnic polarization. Kiliki furthers that the geographical topography of the area contributed to inaccessibility to some areas, especially the district's interior by the police. Thus, this inability to access some locations in Mt Elgon greatly affected the movements of law enforcers. Additionally, the report demonstrates that the Sabots' long-standing desire for their district precipitated the crisis for their voices to be heard.

Kakai (2000) notes that the tribal strife between the two communities is historical. He presented that prominent Bukusu elders were killed in the 19th

century by the Sabots because they had crossed over to Cheptais to acquire property. In this process, the Sabaot drove off many cattle from the Bukusu through raids. Such an occurrence sparks off a fight that came to be referred to as the *War of Chonge*. Chonge was a prophet from the Mamarat clan, Bok (Sabaot), who foretold the 'War of Chonge,' which matched up the Bukusu warriors against the Kony (a sub-group of the Sabaot) and Pokot warriors (Kakai 2000).

Other confrontations occurred in 1946, 1962, 1963, 1968, 1975, and 1991/92, all of which had political and economic implications. These clashes resulted in the evacuation of the Bukusu, who were deemed foreigners at the time for opposing Daniel Moi's choice of Sabaot leaders in the 1992 national elections (Ibid). The year 1968 was marked by allegations of cattle rustling against the Sabaot, while Daniel Moi was accused of inciting the Sabaot in 1975. (Ibid). Therefore, from the above literature, it's evident that several researches have been done on inter-ethnic conflict worldwide. While many in Kenya have discussed the Bukusu and Sabaot, nothing has been said about the Mosop's intra-ethnic war with the Soy of Sabaot. This created a void that this research on intra-ethnic conflict assessment in Mt. Elgon Sub-county sought to fill.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

According to Hosbawnet *al.* (1983), ethnicity was brought to Africa by colonialists who introduced boundary structures that never used to exist. According to constructivists, colonial authorities influenced patterns of ethnic identity creation in African society. According to Terence (1993), the colonial masters invited the ethnic identity with a sole goal in mind. They wanted to use the identity egos to divide the communities; hence, it was easy for them to rule over African society.

Constructivist Theories were deemed applicable to the study due to the influence of colonialism in the intra-ethnic conflict among the Sabaot clans in terms of grabbing the land in Tran Nzoia resettling Sabaot in the Mt. Elgon where the land was scarce the Mosop lived in the moorland and the Soy the lowland hence the conflict emerged; as a result, colonial capitalism, through its agent, favoured a distinct social context for

intra-clan ties. Rodney (1989) rightly identified the imperial presence's rejection of freedom for colonized peoples. Consequently, colonial powers accomplished the abolition of freedom by introducing new authoritarian laws, bureaucratic ideas, and norms, all of which profit colonialists at the expense of the colonized.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a historical research design that sought to unravel major issues concerning the trends of intra-ethnic conflict among the Sabaot. The designs provided a deeper insight into the various dimensions of intra-ethnic conflicts among the Sabaot of Mt. Elgon regarding historical trends. The researcher focused more on textual analysis.

IV. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- Intra ethnic conflict among the Sabaot clans of Mount Elgon

The Mt. Elgon Sub- County is located in the Western region of Kenya in Bungoma County, bordering the neighboring country Uganda. Mt. Elgon is occupied by the Sabaot community, which has many clans divided by geographical regions.

V. COLONIAL PERIOD

It is critical to emphasize at this point that colonization was not forced on Bungoma, and particularly Mt. Elgon, abruptly. Cloaked stratagems were used in these locations. These included what European imperialists erroneously referred to as 'treaties' with indigenous chiefs. For example, in 1889, Frederick Jackson traveled to Mt. Elgon on behalf of the imperial British East Africa Company (IIBEAC). Near February 1890, he signed a 'treaty' in Mt. Elgon with Kirwagindet Kimingichi of Bok. Furthermore, Jackson had a blood brotherhood bond with the same Kirwagindet (Were, 1967). The Sabaot's blood brotherhood ceremony was not unique; it was also done in Gikuyu country between Frederick Lugard and Waiyaki, whom the Europeans mistook for the Agikuyu's supreme chief (Mwanzi, 1990:74). This ritual was arguably the pinnacle of African communities' trust. Nonetheless, we cannot conclude that both Lugard and Jackson were honest in their

attempts to join the fraternity. A ruse was used to convince African chiefs to grant Europeans access to their regions. Additional 'treaties' were struck at Buluyia with other chiefs (Abami). Namachanja Khisa of the Bakhone clan was among the Babukusu in June 1890. Likewise, Carl Peters of German East Africa and Frederick Jackson had signed 'treaties of friendship and protection' with Nabongo Sakwa of Wanga Mukulu (Upper Wanga). In 1913, the colonial administration, with the same constitutional authority, recognized African-occupied lands pejoratively referred to as 'reserves' under the Crown Land Ordinance. The peak occurred in 1915, when the Commissioner of the British East Africa Protectorate, and later the Governor, had complete control over the Crown Land Ordinance. The title of 'Governor' superseded the title of 'Commissioner' in the colonial language. Crown Land was defined so broadly in the 1915 law that it embraced all land in the Protectorate, even that occupied by indigenous people. Individual tenure was provided to European immigrants who were granted sales of such property (Wafula, 1981). The tenure period for alienated land has been increased from 99 to 999 years. This type of tenancy is still in use today. Through similar maneuvers, European immigrants occupied a sizable portion of arable land in Colonial Kenya. Trans Nzoia District was included in the vast territory dubbed 'White Highlands' by colonialists. However, in contrast to its current administrative limits, colonial Trans Nzoia's western frontier on November 29th, 1912 encompassed a large portion of the present-day Bungoma, Lugari, Mt. Elgon, and Uasin Gishu districts. The dividing line ran from where the River Kamukuywa emanates from the forest of Mt. Elgon, through the confluence of the rivers Kibisi and Nzoia, and finally to the confluence of the rivers Kipkaren (or Sosian) opposite Marabusi Uill ((KNA/PC/NZA/3/7/2/2). The Abatachoni, Ababukusu, Sabaot, and portions of Uasin Gishu Maasai were all impacted by the western border at various points in time. The influx of migrants and Europeans into Trans Nzoia had several repercussions. For instance, the entrance of European settlers, particularly in the old Saboti Division, sabotaged the Sabaot's recovery from the earlier Karamojong and Nandi attacks. These invasions forced some Kony to abandon Trans Nzoia, searching for shelter among their Malakisi kinsmen in the old Bungoma District.

However, with the European invasion, the peace restored was lost, as the last Sabaot in Trans Nzoia were stripped of their land, forcing them to live as squatters on the farms of European immigrants. Additionally, with the colonial gazettement of the Mt. Elgon forest region, increased pressure was placed on grazing land. As a result, Kosus and his followers, along with other Sabaot, have crossed the Swam River to reside among their Sebeyi relatives in Uganda since 1930. However, Kosus returned to Trans Nzoia and remained there until his death (Arap Kitembe, 1978:108). The research reviewed above is beneficial in determining the history of settlements and the influence of colonial land tenure on intra-ethnic strife among the Sabaot of Mt Elgon.

VI. POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD

Since independence, intra-ethnic strife amongst the Sabaot clans of Mt Elgon has been a source of worry. Mt. Elgon is located in western Kenya, near the border with Uganda. It is divided into two sub-counties: Mt. Elgon and Cheptais. Kapsakwony and Kaptama wards are located in Mt.Elgon Sub-county, whereas Kopsiro and Cheptais wards are located in Cheptais Sub-county. Kenya's mountainside is divided into three geographical sectors: lowlands, moorlands, and highlands, separated by a government-protected forest (Lynch, 2011). The lowlands are located in a region named Chepyuk. They are the foothills of the mountain. The moorlands consist of Chepkitale, inhabited by the Mosop, who comprise the Ogiek and Ndorobo clans. The lowlands were inhabited by the Soy, who comprises the Bok Kony, Bongomek, and Sapiny clans.

Mosop was the name given to the Sabaot who lived in the moorlands of Mt. Elgon, whereas Soy was the name given to those living in the lowlands of the Mountain (Lynch, 2011). Mosop, or Mosoobiisyeke, refers to those originating from Chepkitale, whereas the Soy categorizes all the other Sabaot (Medard, 2010). The Soy and Mosop are Sabaot who fall under the Kalenjins ethnic group. Sabaot was coined in the late 1940s as a method for the Soy and Mosop to identify themselves as Mt. Elgon's Kalenjins-speaking people (Lynch, 2006).

The Soy and the Mosop are Sabaot divided by their different geographical area. This division was established as part of the colonial land alienation policy to make way for white settler farms. The Sabaot community had lived in the plains of the Trans Nzoia district. The colonial regime took away this land without compensation during the land alienation process in the colonial era. This forced the Sabaot to disperse to the moorlands and lowlands. Those living in the moorlands became the Mosop, and those in the lowlands the Soy. The forest reserve divided the two groupings into moorlands and lowlands. Over time, this separation in a location created differences in their social identities (Simiyu, 2008). Their environmental conditions caused them to adapt new distinct patterns despite their similarities in language and ancestry. This led the Mosop to become hunters and gatherers, looking for food in the forest, whereas the Soy became farmers in the more fertile lowlands during the colonial era. The Mosop and Soy have adapted and adopted various subsistence ways other than farming and hunting and gathering over time. However, agriculture continues to be a significant element of their economy. The Mosop were relocated near the Soy after 1963. Chepkitale was gazetted as a game reserve in 1968. This initial relocation occurred between 1971 and 1974 is known as Chepyuk Phase I. (Simiyu, 2008).

This initial relocation phase (1971–1974), often known as Chepyuk I, which took place in the current Emia and Chepyuk sites of Kopsiro division, did not pass without incident. To begin, the Mosop were relocated to Chepyuk before the forest was officially degazetted, and the process of land allotment and issue of title papers was not hurried. As a result, individuals who were not initially targeted for resettlement, particularly members of the Soy clan who had relocated to the scheme's neighborhood following their displacement from Trans-Nzoia, laid claim to the land on the premises that most of them had either relinquished their land for the establishment of infrastructure and services utilities or stayed landless as a consequence of colonial displacement. Additionally, some stated that due to their tiny population, the Mosop chiefs requested a portion of their Soy counterparts to accompany them in an attempt to successfully hold the large Chepyuk territory and keep out any would-be 'intruders.' This

might suggest that the Mosop saw the Chepyuk region as a domain to which they and their Soy kin were entitled. Thus, their behavior was a kind of rebellion against the government's decision to restrict their property ownership to a narrow region. Other sources assert that the addition of Soy families was critical to reaching the mandated minimum of 600 households needed to make a settlement plan under the then-current resettlement policy.

The Soy who had been denied land in Chepyuk II were incensed by their predicament. Soy leaders petitioned the government for the evictees and other landless Sabaot to be resettled. In 1993, land in Chepukur and Korung'otuny was reserved for Soy settlement. This resulted in Chepyuk Phase III. However, this area had already been taken unlawfully by the Soy. Until 2006, the government was unable to expedite the allocation procedure. By this time, the Soy had unlawfully inhabited the property since 1971. (Medard, 2010). They gradually cleared the forest and converted it to fertile land. Each family settling in Chepyuk III was initially allocated two hectares of land. However, the land allotment was reduced to one hectare per household in 2005. (Simiyu, 2008).

Additionally, the land was to be divided evenly amongst the Mosop. The Soys who already owned land under the plan were adamant about not complying. This required landowners with huge tracts of property to relinquish them for subdivision. In other words, many residents who had lived on the property since 1971 risked eviction to make way for the approaching Mosop. This was too much for the Soy. The Soy were fed up with the Mosop encroaching on 'their' territory (Medard, 2011). They enlisted the aid of young men to protect their homeland. This prompted the foundation of the SLDF, whose objective was to safeguard their territory in Chepyuk III and destroy anyone who attempted to obstruct their mission (Ryanga, 2013). Thus, the Mosop was viewed as an adversary that needed to be exterminated by whatever means possible. In response, the Mosop formed the Political Revenge Movement (hereafter referred to as the PRM) and the Moorland Defense Forces (hereafter referred to as the MDF) and took up arms to defend themselves (Simiyu, 2008).

The Soy dominated the Sabaot Land Defense Forces (SLDF), which Wycliffe Matakwei Komen led. Their objective was to defend their land from being taken over to be used in the Chepyuk settlement scheme. In 2008 the SLDF leader was killed by the Kenyan Army. The violent history has aided the region's militarization, as locals buy weapons for self-defense or conduct their activities. This has been made possible by the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALWS) along the Kenyan-Ugandan border, which have made their way into the Mount Elgon region. The inference was that any conflict scenario in the area might grow since both fighters and weapons of war were easily available, implying that the expansion of SALW was a cause and consequence of the conflict. Within this context, the study will explore the historical evolution of intra-ethnic conflict in Mt. Elgon Sub-County, identifying historical trends, evaluating the causes of conflict, their impact on development and national integration, and the mitigation measures taken by various groups.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it was evident that; conflicts between the Mosop and Soy occur primarily as a result of a clash in the sharing of the scarce natural resources. This conflict has been experienced since colonial period until the post-colonial period. The conflict in the area is propelled by factors such as boundary disputes, governance as well as negative ethnicity escalated the volatile situations in the county

RECOMMENDATION

This study recommends that conflict can be resolved by critically analyzing and unraveling the interlude between conflict and historical trajectory of the Sabaot. The stakeholders should focus not on the superficial unfoldment of conflict instead they unravel dippers issues that have affected the community over the years

REFERENCES

- [1] Ahmed, F. (1999). *Ethnicity and politics in Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.

- [2] Akiwumi, A., (1999). Report of the Judicial Commission Appointed to Inquire into Tribal Clashes in Kenya Nairobi. Government Printer.
- [3] Arap-Kisembe, B. B. C. (1978). The Role of 'Worgondet and Kirwagindet. *the History of the Sabaot People of Mount Elgon during the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*' BA Dissertation. University of Nairobi.
- [4] Banac L. (1992). *Historiography of the Countries of Eastern Europe: Yugoslavia*. CODESRIA Bulletin. Dakar.
- [5] Caser, K. (2007). The Design of the Built Environment and Social Capital. *Sustainability and Communities of Place*, 5, 201
- [6] Dualeh, H.A., (1994). *From Barre to Aideed*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- [7] Fisherman, J.A., (1977). *Languages and Ethnicity*. In "ed. Giles. H. Language Ethnicity and International Relations". Academic press Inc. London
- [8] Hosbawn, E., & Ranger, T., (1983). *The Invention of Traditional*. Cambridge University Press. Cambridge.
- [9] Ihonvbere, J.O., (1994). "Beyond Warlords and clans: The African Crisis and the Somali Situation". *International Third World Studies Journal and Review*, Vol 6
- [10] Kakai P. (2000). "History of Inter-ethnic Relation in Bungoma, Mt Elgon and Trans Nzoia district 1875-1997 History." *Kenyatta University. PhD Thesis*
- [11] Kennedy Agade Mkutu. 2008. Guns and Governance in the Rift Valley: Pastoralist Conflict and Small Arms." *African Studies Quarterly*, vol. 13, no. 3, summer 2012, p. 102.
- [12] Kiliku, J.K., (1992). *Report On The Parliamentary Select Committee To Investigate Ethnic Clashes in Western and Other Parts of Kenya*. Government Press Nairobi.
- [13] KNA/PC/NZA/3/7/2/2 1912 - 1923 - Report on Eastern Boundary, N8th Kavirondo Reserve
- [14] Kurspahić, K. (1994). Bosnia's Beacon of Hope. *Journal of Democracy*, 5(1), 134-139. <https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.1994.0014>
- [15] Lynch, G., (2011). "The Wars of Who Belongs Where: The Unstable Politics of Autochthony on Kenya's Mt. Elgon." *Ethno politics*, Vol. 10, issues 3- 4, 2011, pp.391-410.
- [16] Lynch, G., "Negotiating Ethnicity: Identity Politics in Contemporary Kenya". *Review of African Political Economy*, vol 33, No.107(49-65)
- [17] Mazrui, A.A., (1969a). *Violence and Thought*. Longman. London. (1969 a). *The Imperial Fragmentation: The Legacy of Ethnic and Racial Conflict*. Colorado University of Denver. Denver
- [18] Mazrui A.A., & Tidy, M., (1984). *Nationalism and New states*. Heinemann. Nairobi.
- [19] Medard, C., (2010). Indigenous Land Claims in Kenya: A case Study of Chepyuk, Mt. Elgon District, In Anseeuw, Ward and Alden, Chris (eds.) (2010), *The Struggle Over Land in Africa: Conflicts, Politics, and Change*. Cape Town: Human Science Research Council.
- [20] Mkutu, K. (2008). Disarmament in Karamoja, Northern Uganda: Is this a solution for localised violent inter and intra-communal conflict?. *The Round Table*, 97(394), 99-120.
- [21] Nasongo, S.W. & Murunga, G.P., (2007). *Kenya: The Struggle for Democracy*. Zed Books Ltd London.
- [22] Oyugi Walter. "'Ethnic Politics in Kenya," in Okwudiba Nnoli, (ed.), *Ethnic Conflict in Africa*, CODESRIA Book Series pp. 287-309.". In: Walter B. Stohr, J.S. Edralin and Medyani Mani, (eds.), *Decentralisation, Governance, and New Planning for Local Level Development* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Group). IPPNW; 1998.
- [23] Rodney, W., (1989). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Dar-salaam Publishing House.
- [24] Ryanga H., (2013). "Women and Conflict in Mt Elgon: Assessing Rape as a Weapon in Armed Conflict." *A Master's Thesis*.

- [25] Schraender, P.J. (1993). "US Intervention in the Horn of Africa amidst the End of the Cold War in Africa Today". *The Horn of Africa Vol.40 No 2.2 Quarter*. Washington.
- [26] Simiyu, R., (2008). *Militarization of Resources Conflicts: The Case of Land Based Conflict in the Mount Elgon Region of Western Kenya*. Institute for Security Studies. Netherlands.
- [27] Suberu, R. T., (1993). *The Travails of Federalism in Nigeria* in *Journal of Democracy*. Washington: John Hopkins University Press.
- [28] Terence R. (1993) *The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa*. In: Ranger T., Vaughan O. (eds) *Legitimacy and the State in Twentieth-Century Africa*. St Antony's/Macmillan Series. Palgrave Macmillan, London.
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-349-12342-1_3
- [29] Were, G. S. (1967). *A history of the Abaluhya of Western Kenya: 1500-1980*. Nairobi. Kenya: East Africa publishing house: Report: Government of Kenya.
- [30] Wolfe J.J., (1969). *Bukusu Tales: Collected Around 1936 by Research Assistants of Dr. Gunter*.