

**Education as Adaptive Strategies in the Face of Land Scarcity among the Alla and Nolei Oromo of Lake Haramaya-Tiniqe Watershed, Eastern Ethiopia: Aspiration and Reality, Tilahun Tefera, St. Mary's University, Ethiopia**

**Abstract**

The value for women fertility, the shift from pastoral livelihood to sedentary agriculture and polygamous marriage were historic factors for the population surge of Lake Haramaya-Tiniqe Watershed. Because of population surge, land became the scarcest resources. In the area, household landholdings are the only land sources for the new generations. Accordingly, a father should have a responsibility to allocate land for each son at marriage. For instance, a man who has ten sons, will appropriate his land for all of them during marriage. The same is expected for those sons who get *mirazaa* (one's own land share) when they have their own sons in the future. Hence, the scarcity of land becomes acute. Amidst of this problem, households are looking for different adaptive strategies. In this regard, education has become one of the adaptive strategies to alleviate land scarcity. Thus, the purpose of this article is to examine the role of education as adaptive strategy in the face of land scarcity. It also attempts to explore whether education has served its purpose up to community's expectation or not.

**Keywords:** adaptive, strategy, education, land scarcity, aspiration and reality

**Introduction**

Harmaya Wereda is placed in the Central Highlands of Ethiopia that stretch from the eastern margin of the Rift Valley to the Somali and Afar lowlands (Brooke, 1956: 28). Astronomically, it lies roughly between 9<sup>o</sup>20' - 9<sup>o</sup>35' North latitude and 41<sup>o</sup>51' - 42<sup>o</sup>04' East longitude. According to Chalachew (2004), the area of the Wereda is 550 km<sup>2</sup>. In the Wereda there are four towns (Haramaya, Adele, Bate and Awaday) and 33 rural *kebeles* (CSA, 2007). The capital of the Wereda, Haramaya, is located 505 km from Addis Ababa on the main highway to Harar.

In terms of altitude, Haramaya Wereda is positioned between 1900m and 2450m above sea levels. Thus, it lies between two agro-ecological zones: *dega*<sup>1</sup> and *woina-dega*<sup>2</sup> and its climatic condition is a composite of the two agro-ecological zones. The mean annual rainfall of the Wereda is 784.1mm and the mean annual temperature is 16.9<sup>o</sup>C (Chalachew, 2004: 30).

On the other hand, my research site, Lake Haramaya-Tiniqe Watershed, is roughly situated in the north and northeastern part of Haramaya Wereda, which consists of eleven rural *kebeles*

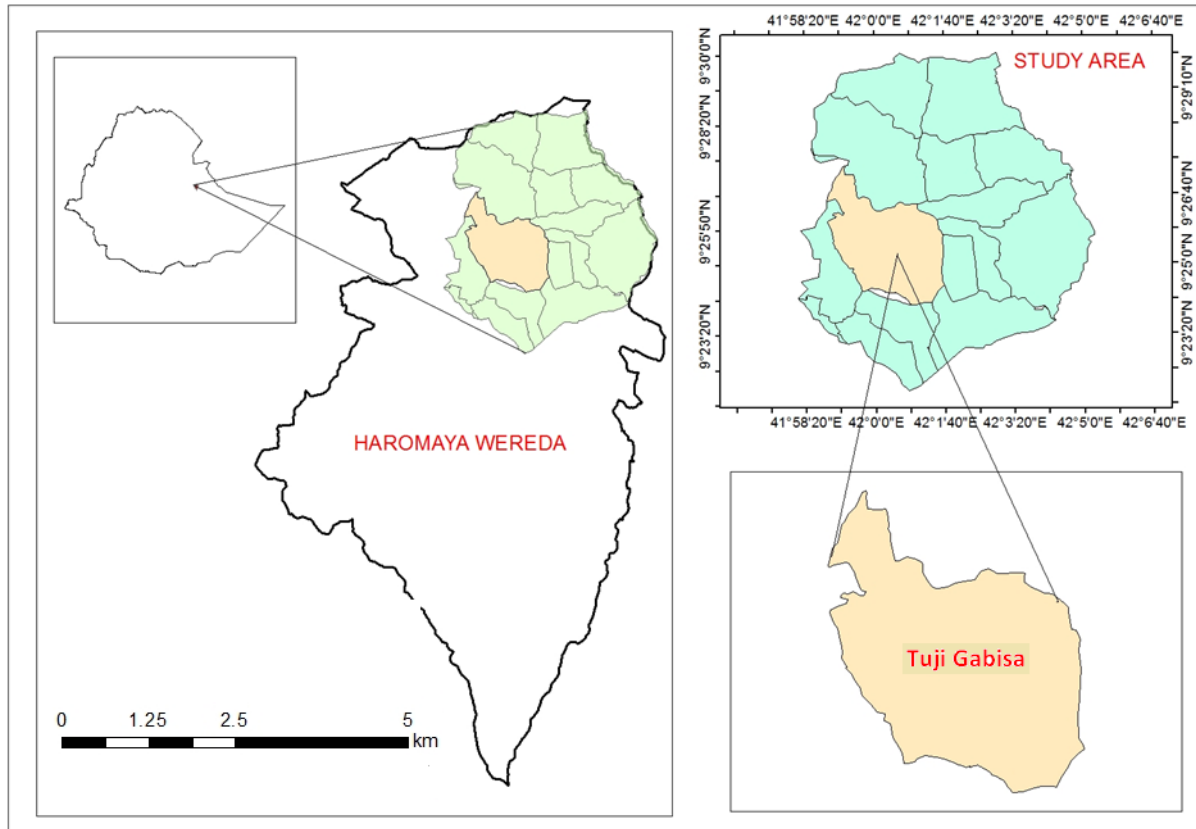
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<sup>1</sup> *Dega*: the traditional agro-ecological zone for areas lying between 2300m and 3300 m above sea level, and

<sup>2</sup> *Woina dega* is the traditional agro-ecological zone areas lying between 1500m and 2300m above sea level (Chalachew, 2004).

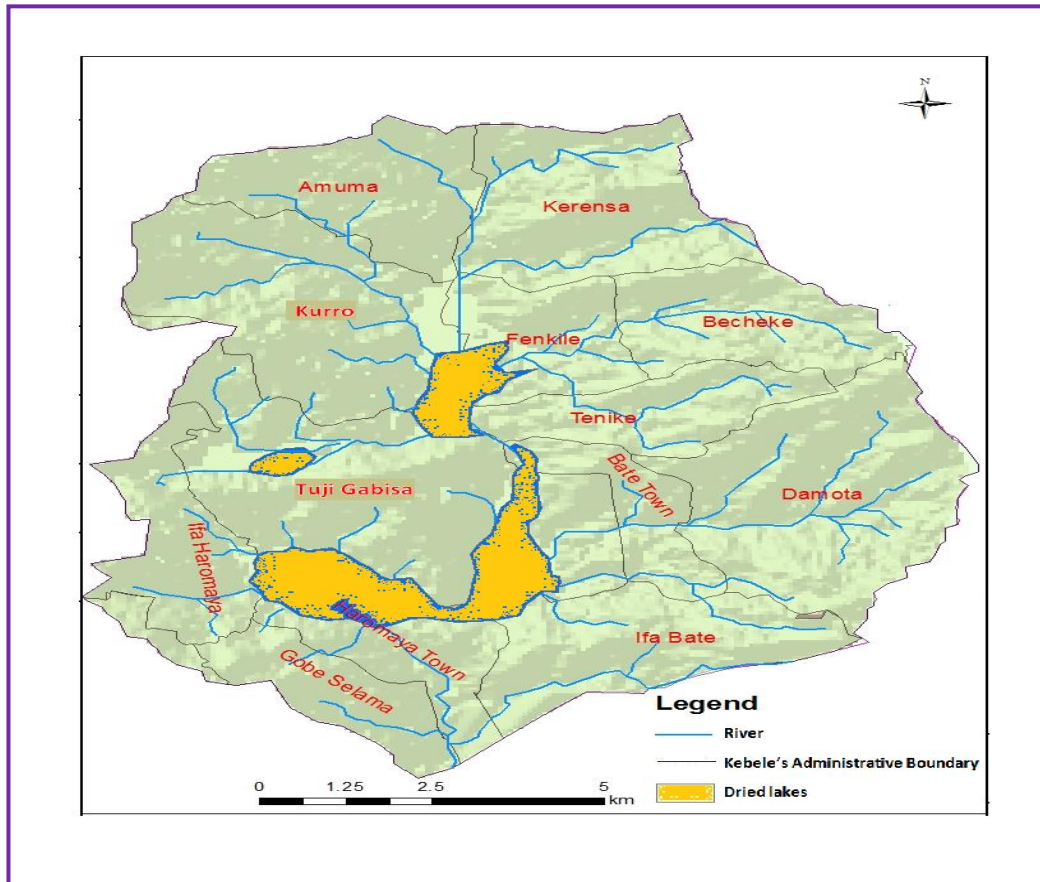
(*araddas*) and three towns (Haramaya, Adele, and Bate). The eleven *araddas* are Finkle, Tiniqe, Damota, Tuji Gabissa, Kurro Jalala, Ammuma, Ifa Bate, Gobe Selama, Ifa Haromaya, Bacheqei, and Kerensa. Astronomically, the Watershed is located between 09° 21' 40" to 09° 30' 00" North latitude and between 41° 56' 20" to 42° 05' 00" East longitude.

Map 1: The Study Area Map/Lake Haramaya-Tiniqe Watershed.



(Source: Landsat ETM/Enhanced Thematic Mapper, DEM/Digital Elevation Model and Topographic Map from EMA/Ethiopian Mapping Agency, 2010)

Map 2: Lake Haramaya-Tiniqe Watershed with Respective Kebeles



(Source: Landsat ETM/Enhanced Thematic Mapper, DEM/Digital Elevation Model and Topographic Map from EMA/Ethiopian Mapping Agency, 2010)

## Population

Ethnically, almost all rural areas of Haramaya Wereda are inhabited by the Oromo, and in terms of religion they are Muslim. The population size of the Wereda has been increasing across periods. In the country, three nationwide censuses were carried out in the year 1984, 1994, and 2007. According to census returns, total population of Haramaya Wereda found to be 127,179, 166,597 and 271,018 respectively (CSA, 1987; CSA, 1996 & CSA, 2008). By the 2007 censuses, the population size of the Wereda showed a 113% increase from that of 1984 to reach 271,018 (CSA, 2008). Of this, 50,032 and 220,986 were urban and rural dwellers respectively. Similarly, the population projection for the year 2014 made the population size of the *Wereda* 351,198, which results in an increase of 176% or nearly two-fold of the 1984 census. The same projection shows an increase of 29.6% from the population size of 2007.

## Historic Reasons for Population Surge

Adult male informants argued that in Haramaya Wereda, there is acute land scarcity emanated from high population growth. Particularly, land scarcity was so serious among Nolei Oromo that it forced significant number of them to move out westwards in search of farmlands. As a

result, there exist pockets of the Nolei Oromo settlements in Dadar, Hirna, Galamso, Chercher and Arsi-Bale areas. It is supposed that scarcity of land has occurred in Lake Haramaya-Tiniqe watershed shortly after the Alla and Nolei have settled as sedentary agriculturalists. Based on the accounts of most adult male informants, there are different possible factors for population growth of the area. One of the main factors is the value given to mothers' fertility among Alla and Nolei Oromo. The community believes children are fed by *Rabbi* and were born with fates which can improve households' living conditions.

The shift in livelihood strategy from pastoralism to sedentary agriculture was another historic factor that contributes for population growth. According to key informants, while they were pastoralists, there were occasions that separate spouses from each other for months, which in turn, minimized the likelihoods of mothers' conception. In contrast, following their conversion to sedentary agriculture, the likelihood of mothers' conception increased as rate of sexual intercourse increased between spouses.

Islamic tradition is the third notable factor for high population density of the region. Based on Islamic ideology, the Oromo used to marry up to four or five wives. The four or five wives in turn gave birth to their maximum capacity of fertility. Several informants contended, on the average each of these four wives delivered 6 to 10 offspring. So, polygamous tradition played its part in population growth although this type of marriage is hardly found at present. However, polygamous marriage is an age-old tradition of the Oromo though Islam gave more impetus to it.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The study area is marked with high population growth. As a result of this population growth, households' land holding size is getting smaller and smaller. Several informants stated that this is because fathers keep on allocating their small holdings as *mirazaa* (one's own land share) lands to their sons upon marriage. Consequently, the land once used by a single household, eventually divided to several households. One can easily understand the population pressure in the study area by observing settlement patterns across the watershed. Amidst of this challenge, households have opted to different endeavors as adaptive strategies for long term and short-term solutions, of which, education, family planning, forming cooperative associations, being daily labourer, land leasing, intercropping, intensive farming, and water well construction are among others. However, the purpose of this article is to explore the role of education as an adaptive strategy in the face of land scarcity that challenges community's principal livelihood strategies. The expectation and the actual reality of education as an adaptive strategy will be investigated.

### **Methodology**

Data for this article were collected while I was engaged in a one year fieldwork for my PhD dissertation on Lake Haramaya-Tiniqe watershed. To understand the issue, I employed survey, interview, observation, and focus group discussion/FGD as data collection techniques.

## **Theoretical Framework**

The very essence of actor-based model is that ecological adaptation occurs at the level of individuals instead of cultures or populations. This model is founded on the notions of individual decision making process and exclusive natural selection at individual organism level which are the concern of both anthropologists and evolutionary biologists respectively. Therefore, based on this philosophy, it is possible to conclude that “any higher levels of organization, whether communities, ecosystems, or human social systems, exist only as the fortuitous outcome of interactions among many individual organisms” (Rambo, 1983: 18).

Actor-based model argues against the views that society’s environmental adaptation is resulted from natural selection of cultural or social system rather it emanated from decisions of thousands of individuals preferences how to deal with the environment. As a coping strategy of environmental pressures, individuals are decision makers on how to make livings from available natural resources (Rambo, 1983: 18). Accordingly, individuals who have made right decisions become prosperous and fit to survive in the existing ecological system; whereas, those who have made wrong decisions become unfit and screened out as against the system. Through time, those adaptations that become successful will be institutionalized and considered as cultural norms.

The actor-based model of human ecology assumes that individuals are always rational decision makers though the assumption seems unacceptable (Rambo, 1983: 21). For instance, though no anthropologist stood against the concept that indigenous communities have their own traditional natural resource management system, but cumulative effects of individual decisions often create environmental hazards as in the case of pastoralists.

## **Discussion and Analysis**

### **Land Scarcity**

As it is mentioned earlier, households’ land holding size is getting smaller and smaller due to population pressure. Several informants stated that this is because fathers keep on allocating their small holdings as *mirazaa* lands to their sons upon marriage. According to the explanation of most informants, a man who fathered ten sons will divide his plots of land for all of them during their marriage. In this regard, each son gets small plots of land which sometimes may not be enough to build a house on it. The problem will get worse after those married sons get their own babies. Ideally, they will do for their sons what their fathers did for them. So, it is very difficult to make a living out of these tiny plots of land. The seriousness of land scarcity was explained by one of my informants as follows:

*...so, fathers have responsibility of allocating mirazaa for their sons during marriage. Regardless of land size at households’ disposal, they allocate mirazaa land for their sons. In so doing, the land size is getting smaller and smaller and has become ada-ra’ee, literally means an area with a size of a goat’s forehead. Nowadays, in our community, fathers are not happy to have sons and they are looking them as threat for their small plots of land. So, as opposed to the past, fathers are not in fond of their sons. On the other hand,*

*brothers are looking at each other with enmity fearing each other as an obstacle for their interest in land (Chala Dawi, 01/05/2013 at Ganda Hulul).*

Table 1 below shows the severity of land scarcity across the watershed. From eleven *araddas* of the watershed, only in Ifa Bate and Finqile the average arable households' land holding size is reached to 1.70 and 1.01 hectares respectively. In the remaining *araddas*, the average arable households' land holding size is below one hectare. The lowest average households' arable land holding size is recorded to be 0.24 and 0.37 hectares in Kuroo and Ifa Haromaya respectively.

Table 1: Average Arable Households' Land Size in Each *Aradda*.

| Name of <i>aradda</i> | Total number of HHs | Total size of arable land in ha. | Average arable land holding size per HHs in ha. |
|-----------------------|---------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Ifa Batee             | 712                 | 1212                             | 1.70  |
| Damota                | 1329                | 1053                             | 0.79  |
| Tiniqe                | 712                 | 710                              | 0.99  |
| Bachaqe               | 944                 | 603                              | 0.64  |
| Finqile               | 855                 | 872                              | 1.01  |
| Qerensa Daraba        | 1610                | 850                              | 0.53  |
| Amumaa                | 1248                | 559                              | 0.45  |
| Kuroo                 | 2039                | 486                              | 0.24  |
| Tuji Gabisaa          | 1780                | 1207                             | 0.68  |
| Ifa Haromaya          | 2663                | 987                              | 0.37  |
| Gobe Salamaa          | 1300                | 740                              | 0.57  |

Source: Compiled and computed by the researcher based on data from Haramaya Wereda Agricultural and Rural Development Office and from CSA, 2007

On the basis of the findings from survey and remote sensing data, *khat/jimaa* cultivation is a prominent livelihood strategy of the Alla and Nolei Oromo on Lake Haramaya-Tiniqe watershed followed by cereal and vegetable cultivation. However, informants described that their main livelihood strategies are challenged by scarcity of water, erratic rainfall distribution, land scarcity and *amadaay*/frost.

Amidst of the above challenges, households have opted to different endeavors as adaptive strategies for long term and short term solutions, of which, education, family planning,

cooperative associations (*kahadhe* and *alaada*), being daily labourer, land leasing, intercropping, intensive farming, water well construction, and owning pack animal are among others. However, the purpose of this article is to explore the role of education as an adaptive strategy in the face of challenges for the community principal livelihood strategies particularly of land scarcity.

In line with the essence of actor-based model of human ecology, each household has made decision to adopt different alternatives as coping mechanism in the face of challenges to basic livelihood strategies.

As it is explained earlier, land scarcity is one of the serious challenges for community's livelihood strategies. Most of households in the watershed own land less than one hectare. In contrast, among Alla and Nolei Oromo of Lake Haramaya-Tiniqe watershed, household size is generally large. This was confirmed through my observation and chains of discussions held with different informants. The same idea was further triangulated via data obtained from survey questionnaire conducted in Aradda Tuji Gabisa and the results are presented in the Table 2 below.

Table 2: Percentage and Frequency Distribution of Total Household Size

| Total household size | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|----------------------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| 2                    | 1         | .4      | .4            | .4                 |
| 3                    | 8         | 3.5     | 3.5           | 3.9                |
| 4                    | 21        | 9.2     | 9.2           | 13.1               |
| 5                    | 35        | 15.3    | 15.3          | 28.4               |
| 6                    | 26        | 11.4    | 11.4          | 39.7               |
| 7                    | 39        | 17.0    | 17.0          | 56.8               |
| 8                    | 35        | 15.3    | 15.3          | 72.1               |
| 9                    | 22        | 9.6     | 9.6           | 81.7               |
| 10                   | 16        | 7.0     | 7.0           | 88.6               |
| 11                   | 9         | 3.9     | 3.9           | 92.6               |
| 12                   | 6         | 2.6     | 2.6           | 95.2               |
| 13                   | 5         | 2.2     | 2.2           | 97.4               |
| 14                   | 1         | .4      | .4            | 97.8               |
| 15                   | 2         | .9      | .9            | 98.7               |
| 16                   | 2         | .9      | .9            | 99.6               |
| 18                   | 1         | .4      | .4            | 100.0              |
| Total                | 229       | 100.0   | 100.0         |                    |

Source: Survey carried out by the researcher during fieldwork in 2014

From the survey conducted on 229 households, the minimum and maximum household size was two and eighteen respectively with a range of sixteen. As presented in the above table, out of 229 households, 17% and 15.3% had a size of seven and eight respectively. Moreover, on the basis of the above data, the mean or average household size was found to be seven.

Key informants asserted that land is scarce and households' land holding reduced to the level of threatening livelihood strategies. There is no extra or free land available for the next generation across the watershed. Plots of households' land are used as sources of lands for newly married sons. My key informants clarified that they are still allocating land measured and distributed by the Arabs for their newly married sons. As households land size is getting tiny, they have been insecure for their livelihood strategies.

Musa Ahmad, one of my key informants, was so sad while he was explaining how scarcity of land challenges their basic livelihood strategies. He stated as there is no solution to land scarcity crisis and explained his feeling metaphorically in his own native language as follows:

*'Namnii cittoon itti buute yoo qeessaa qabaate ni hooqa, yoo qeessaa qabaatuu baate ifumaa riga malee waan ishiin hooqu qaba'. Literally, a person who suffer from itch can get relative relief if he has claws for itching his skin. However, if he does not have claws, he is just brushing his skins and no temporal relief from itching. Similarly, we do not have any solution for the scarcity of land. We are living with our problems (Mussa Ahmad, 18/3/2013 at Ganda Bubba).*

Added to land scarcity, effects of *amadaay* on *jimaa*, vegetables and cereal crops is another challenge for households' livelihood strategy. Productivity of crops from small plots land at households' disposal is affected by effects of *amadaay*.

### **Education as an Adaptive Strategy**

In one of FGDs that held with males at Ganda Hulul, discussants revealed that though the first primary school which runs up to grade six was established during the reign of Emperor Haile Sellassie, access to education in Haramaya Wereda expanded following the downfall of his regime. During the *Derg* period, more primary schools including one high school at Haramaya town were built. Discussants further enriched that parallel to the expansion of formal education, the *Derg* made remarkable endeavor to eliminate illiteracy through literacy campaign. Informants clarified that with the existing regime, access to formal education has expanded more than the *Derg* period. In this regard, my field observation also confirmed the presence of lots of newly constructed primary schools across the research site.

Based on survey data and discussion with informants, land scarcity is so severe among my research subjects. During my field stay, I was able to notice small fragmented households' farmlands across Lake Haramaya-Tiniqe watershed. Male FGD discussants at Ganda Buba also marked that they have no extra lands to be distributed to the new generation. Thus, fathers have allocated plots of land for their sons at the age of marriage from households' holding. For instance, if a father has ten sons, he would apportion his land to eleven households including him. As a result, land owned by a single household will be allocated for eleven households. Regarding land scarcity, one of my key informants illustrated his own experience as follows:



*Ismael, a sixty-five years old man, explained that he had ten brothers and six sisters. Culturally, females were/are not legible for land inheritance and our father allocated his land for ten of us. Before distributing land for us, my father had a land size of nusaa.<sup>3</sup> I got two harshii (a land that can be plowed with two pairs of oxen within a day) as my mirazaa<sup>4</sup>. On my turn, I had allocated land for my two sons with a size of half harshii for each. Now, my two sons have nine sons together and still they will have more. In their turn, they will be expected to allocate land for their sons (Ismael Adam, 26/05/13 at Haji Din).*

Ismael believed that it will be impossible for his grandsons to get *mirazaa* lands so as to make a living out of it. So, schooling is taken as one of the community's coping strategies to ease land scarcity. Most of the informants explained that the number of children attending primary and secondary school has increased through time. In line with this, male FGD discussants at Ganda Ali stated that they send boys and girls to school indiscriminately. While I was in field, I often encountered large student population to and from school. Households send children to school with the intention of making them to look future livelihood from their educational career.

Large number of informants clarified that the current government has made them wakeful about benefits of education irrespective of children's sex though households are still in doubt to send girls to school. The rationale behind is that girls leave their parents at marriage and investment on them is seen as wastage. In the area, marriage is patrilocal and households believed that it has no use for parents to invest on girls' education.

Table 3: Statistics for Educational Status of Male and Female HHs Members at School

| <b>Educational Status of M/F HH Members at School</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Minimum</b> | <b>Maximum</b> | <b>Sum</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|---|----------|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Male primary 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle                    | 104      | 1              | 4              | 154        | 1.48        | .696                  |
| Female primary 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle                  | 85       | 1              | 4              | 125        | 1.47        | .717                  |
| Male primary 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle                    | 61       | 1              | 4              | 83         | 1.36        | .753                  |
| Female primary 2 <sup>nd</sup> cycle                  | 40       | 1              | 2              | 49         | 1.23        | .423                  |
| Male secondary 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle                  | 39       | 1              | 2              | 46         | 1.18        | .389                  |
| Female secondary 1 <sup>st</sup> cycle                | 9        | 1              | 1              | 9          | 1.00        | .000                  |

Source: Survey carried out by the researcher during fieldwork in 2014

<sup>3</sup> *Nusaa* is land tenure system which its size roughly estimated from two to three hectares.

<sup>4</sup> *Mirazaa* is a share of land allocated by fathers to sons from households' land at disposal.

The above Table 3 indicated that as grade level increased, the number of students attending education decreased due to dropouts for various reasons. From survey held on 229 households, 104 of them had male students and 85 of them had female students attending school at primary first cycle (grade 1 to 4). The total number of male and female students at this level was 154 and 125 respectively. The mean of male and female students who attended primary first cycle per household was 1.5; whereas, the standard deviations were 0.69 and 0.72 respectively, showing minor variation among households on children who attends primary first cycle. The number of students decreased to 83 male and 49 female in primary second cycle (grade 5 to 8) and it further decreased to 46 male and 9 female students at secondary first cycle (grade 9 to 10).

Similarly, data obtained from Haramaya Wereda Education Office, which is presented in the table below showed large number of students enrolled at primary first cycle. Yet, the number decreased at primary second cycle because of dropouts and reduced further at secondary first cycle. For instance, the total number of students in 2011 in primary first cycle was 40,224; whereas, at primary second cycle it was 10,049. The number of students in the same year at secondary first cycle was 1,022.

Table 4: The Annual school enrolment data of Haramaya Wereda

| Year | Grade Levels |        |       |       |      |       |      |     |       |
|------|--------------|--------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|-----|-------|
|      | 1-4          |        |       | 5-8   |      |       | 9-10 |     |       |
|      | M            | F      | Total | M     | F    | Total | M    | F   | Total |
| 2004 | 14173        | 8024   | 22197 | 6,643 | 2079 | 8722  | 333  | 244 | 577   |
| 2005 | 14905        | 9654   | 24559 | 6008  | 2036 | 8044  | 1382 | 432 | 1814  |
| 2006 | 13912        | 8378   | 22290 | 4238  | 1501 | 5739  | 241  | 48  | 289   |
| 2007 | 14320        | 8946   | 23266 | 4579  | 1634 | 6213  | 435  | 93  | 528   |
| 2008 | 15737        | 10400  | 26137 | 5154  | 1999 | 7153  | 495  | 80  | 575   |
| 2009 | 15001        | 10697  | 25698 | 5383  | 2490 | 7873  | 708  | 189 | 897   |
| 2010 | 14809        | 12883  | 27692 | 5999  | 3068 | 9067  | 766  | 213 | 979   |
| 2011 | 22514        | 17710  | 40224 | 6474  | 3575 | 10049 | 784  | 238 | 1022  |
| 2012 | 20,913       | 16,050 | 36963 | 6022  | 3644 | 9666  | 744  | 250 | 994   |
| 2013 | 20669        | 15249  | 35918 | 5161  | 2732 | 7893  | 661  | 205 | 866   |

Source: data from Harmaya Wereda Education Bureau, compiled by the researcher in June, 2013

Despite high enrollment rate in primary first cycle, education as a coping strategy does not seem to serve its purpose and promise since most of the students return to their families as dropouts and failed. Male students who return to their parents look for *mirazaa* from small plots of land at households' disposal. There are also graduates of higher education who remain unemployed. I met some of them who are in quest of *mirazaa* lands from their fathers. One of my female key informants, Asha Ahmad, accused the government bitterly for its failure to provide job opportunities for new graduates. In this regard, investments made in children education through all the years could not create ultimate returns.

Informants from Ganda Hulul, Ganda Buba and Ganda Ali asserted that households invest scarce resources in their children's education considering it as coping strategy to overcome scarcity of land. However, after all investment in education, children will largely return home as dropouts, failed or unemployed. Male FGD discussants at Haji Din noted this condition as setbacks of their strategy because after investment made in boys' education, they returned home to claim *mirazaa* lands. It is double loss: the expense of education, and the claim for land. If fathers refuse to give *mirazaa* to their boys, conflict will ignite that culminates to *meenca*<sup>5</sup> confrontation.

Table 5: Statistics for Male and Female School Dropouts at Different Education Cycles

| <b>M/F Dropouts at Different Education cycles</b> | <b>N</b> | <b>Minimum</b> | <b>Maximum</b> | <b>Sum</b> | <b>Mean</b> | <b>Std. Deviation</b> |
|---|----------|----------------|----------------|------------|-------------|-----------------------|
| Male dropouts at primary 1st cycle                | 35       | 1              | 1              | 35         | 1.00        | .000                  |
| Female dropouts at primary 1st cycle              | 23       | 1              | 1              | 23         | 1.00        | .000                  |
| Male dropouts at primary 2nd cycle                | 40       | 1              | 2              | 42         | 1.05        | .221                  |
| Female dropouts at primary 2nd cycle              | 21       | 1              | 1              | 21         | 1.00        | .000                  |
| Male dropouts at secondary 1st cycle              | 18       | 1              | 1              | 18         | 1.00        | .000                  |
| Female dropouts at secondary 1st cycle            | 8        | 1              | 1              | 8          | 1.00        | .000                  |

Source: Survey carried out by the researcher during fieldwork in 2014

As per the survey conducted on 229 households, Table 5 indicated the number of male and female dropouts in households at different educational cycles. In the above table, 35 male and 23 female students were identified as dropouts at primary first cycle level. The average (mean) dropout for both sexes per household was 1, and standard deviation was 0, showing absence of variation in dropouts among households. Similarly, at primary second cycle, 42 male and 21 female students quitted their education. The mean dropouts per household for both sexes

<sup>5</sup> Large hand sickle used for cutting trees and shrubs. It was also used as instrument to defend oneself from any possible attack

at this cycle was 1. But, the standard deviation of male and female dropouts at this level was 0.2 and 0 respectively, showing negligible and absence of variations among households in dropouts. The number of male and female dropouts at secondary first cycle was 18 and 8 respectively.

Male FGD discussants at Ganda Migno explained that though not up to their expectations, there are some graduates who managed to make livings from their educational careers. Abdella who was 78, illustrated the conditions he observed as follows:

*There are some graduates in my village, Ganda Migno, who are employed as civil servants in government sector offices. Of course, there are dropouts, failed students, and graduates who do not have jobs that claim mirazaa lands from their fathers. Thus, education as a coping strategy is too far to be solution for existing land scarcity (Abdella Mume 2/06/13 at Ganda Migno).*

On the other hand, there are graduates who have been employed but claim *mirazaa* land from their fathers since their salary is generally too small to live with it. This demand triggers conflict between fathers and uneducated sons on the one hand, and graduates who have jobs on the other hand. Naturally, fathers respond to those graduates as they have already collected their *mirazaa* through the investment made in their education. This kind of response often ensues in *meenca* confrontation. Thus, though the community believes education as major way out to overcome land scarcity, its impact is far behind to solve this problem.

Table 6: Percentage and Frequency Distribution of Educational Qualification of Employed HHs Members

| Educational qualification of employed HHs members | Frequency | Percent | Valid Percent | Cumulative Percent |
|---|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------------|
| Undergraduate degree holder                       | 4         | 1.7     | 28.6          | 28.6               |
| Diploma holder                                    | 7         | 3.1     | 50.0          | 78.6               |
| Degree & Diploma                                  | 3         | 1.3     | 21.4          | 100.0              |
| Total   | 14        | 6.1     | 100.0         |                    |
| Missing System                                    | 215       | 93.9    |               |                    |
| Total   | 229       | 100.0   |               |                    |

Source: Survey carried out by the researcher in 2014

In the survey conducted on 229 households, only few of them had members who were employed through their educational career. As it was indicated in Table 6 above, from total respondents, only 14 households responded as they had employed members through educational career. Out of which, four households responded that the educational qualification of employed members was undergraduate degree and seven of them replied that employed

members had diploma. Three households responded they had employed members who had diploma and undergraduate degree qualifications.

In general, the investment that has been made in children's education is premature to be solution for land scarcity. Households' investments in education have been less effective in solving the problem of land scarcity since dropouts, failed students, and both employed and unemployed graduates continued to claim *mirazaa* lands.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Households consider education as a basic solution to ease the problem of land scarcity. Though they have some reservation on girls, they send their children to school irrespective of sex. Sons are sent to schools so as to make future livings from their educational career. Despite this motive, education is hardly serving its purpose since most students return to their parents as dropouts and failed. These students are looking for *mirazaa* lands from their fathers at the age of marriage. On the other hand, there are graduates who remain unemployed but look for *mirazaa* lands. Employees at different government's sector offices are also claiming land from their fathers' holdings.

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