

Culture, Peace and Development: The Case Study of West Pokot County, Kenya

Wyclife Ong'eta Mose and Nyambura Salome
Kenyatta University
ongetaw2009@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Violent conflict has been experienced in West Pokot County for decades. This county is the home of pastoral communities whose livelihood entirely depended on a cow for centuries. As such, conflicts in this region rotated around a cow. This study interrogated extent to which cultural practices have contributed to peace and development of the region. The study applied case study design situated within the qualitative tradition. Women, men, youth, NGOs officials, and representative from all levels of governments provided information. The study found that cultural practices such as songs encouraged conflict and peace in the one hand. On the other, some aspects of cultural practices have sustained lives and promoted growth of prosperity of people. The study recommended that the government, nongovernmental organizations and the community to initiate regular dialogue meetings, peace tours, cultural events and sports for peace to create more awareness on peace, benefits of peace, and increase levels of interactions among the warring communities in a bid to spur social-economic development of people.

Key words: Culture, Peace, Development, West Pokot, Kenya

INTRODUCTION

This study focused on how cultural practices such as songs could promote peace, conflicts or spur growth of prosperity. The following sections were covered: the background to the study, theoretical framework, materials and methods, findings and then conclusion and recommendations.

Background to the study

Culture, taken in a broader sense, is the way of life of a people. It includes socially acquired knowledge, beliefs, art, law, morals, customs, and habits. It influences the people's lives, activities and behavior towards others (Nganga, 2012). The idea of culture introduces the notion of shared meanings and values, and diversity between different peoples of the world. It also creates a space for thinking of peace as the province not just of politicians and soldiers but also of ordinary people (Damirchi, Hazrati and Poushaneh, 2013). War is deeply rooted in people's culture; the spirit of war is embedded within literature, poetry, rewritten history, media, language and widescreen movies; all these tend to offer-glorify wars and as a result inflame the imagination of youth (Zamir, 2005). However, some traditions are undoubtedly time-proven and of lasting value, but others have become obsolete and sometimes also ethically objectionable (Malan, 2005).

Werner (2010) has argued that culture can provide peace workers with a context as well as a resource for potential conflict resolution activities. The context informs about values, meanings, as well as community practices and allows one to see and make sense of the world through the eyes of the locals. As a resource, culture guides certain activities and may provide tools for responding to new situations, as it remains fluid and flexible, rather than static. International peacebuilding practitioners and their local counterparts should primarily learn from each other, proposing concepts that take into account the traditions and lives of the local community so they can avoid imposing alien cultural change, no matter how desirable or seemingly natural. Conflicts particularly among the pastoral communities are embedded in people's culture; even local proponents of peace have unconsciously supported structures that sustain conflicts. This is to say, if at all we have to succeed in achieving peace, we should examine those cultural elements that sustain persistent conflict as we replace them with those that promote peace and inclusive prosperity of people, and reinforce those aspects that have propped up the ideals of peace and social cohesion. It is against this backdrop the study interrogated how songs as a cultural practice have contributed to peace and shared prosperity among the Pokot people.

Context and Nature of Conflicts

West Pokot County is among the counties in the North Rift region of Kenya. The region is a vast arid and semi-arid with experiences of frequent droughts. It is settled by pastoralist nomadic people such as Pokot, Turkana, Samburu, Borana, Rendile, and so on. These people move from one area to another in search of water and pasture for their livestock as a way to buffer the impacts of drought such as loss of livestock, malnutrition, rise in the cost of living, high poverty levels and loss of lives. Their movements are not restricted to one area or even country. They move into and out of the neighboring countries such as Somalia, Ethiopia, Sudan and Uganda. These movements are one of the major sources of misunderstanding and conflict between them and their neighbors (Nganga, 2012). The author adds that the vastness and remoteness of the area, inadequate road networks, hilly terrain, and scarcity of resources goes hand in hand with lapses in security occasioning frequent misunderstanding and violent conflicts among these pastoral people.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Lederach Conflict Transformation Model

In 1997, John Paul Lederach offered his seminal work on conflict transformation theory. The theory views peace as centered and rooted in the quality of relationships. This includes both face-to-face interactions and the ways in which we structure our social, political, economic, and cultural relationships. Lederach stated the key dimensions of peace process as the changes in the personal, structural, relational and cultural aspects of conflict, brought about over different time-periods (short-, mid- and long-term) and affecting different system levels at different times (Miall, 2004, Paffenholz, 2009). We found this theory salient to inform this study.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The researcher used the case study design situated within the qualitative research tradition. The choice for this design was appropriate because it enabled the researcher to collect rich and in-depth data on violent conflict and development in Pokot. Focus group discussions, interviews, observation helped to collect data from elders, leaders, men, women and youth from West Pokot County. The data was analyzed applying content analysis technique. This technique, helps researchers to organize material systematically guided by two approaches namely, simple mechanical word counts and broad-gauged interpretations of themes (Druckman, 2005).

FINDINGS

Songs have been very powerful tool of communication in oral literature and in diverse infinite communities of the world. They expressed people's deep emotions and core feelings. People sang when they were happy, in celebrations, while mourning, provoking attention, entertainment, while working or as a source of livelihood. The study revealed that among the Pokot people singing, composing songs and dancing were highly valued cultural activities. Songs were very attractive, enlightening and enhanced people's attention as they received the message. Different songs were sung in different occasions: Songs praising successful warriors; songs ridiculing losers, singing as a way of speaking and songs promoting peace. In other words, one of the women commented that different songs had different content, for example, if it were a raiding song, it gave morale to raid as well as aroused the hearts of men to be aggressive. And so if it were a peace song, it highlighted incalculable benefits of peace or demerits of violent conflict; and if it were song about lazy people, it gave illustrations of remarkable or extraordinary and hardworking people in the community. Thus, the value of the song depended on who was singing? What was the content of the song? Why one was singing and to whom? As one youth puts it succinctly:

Songs plays a central role in any activity...when one is ploughing alone s/he needs an accompaniment, when there is pumper harvest there is a song, when appreciating the beauty of nature there is a song...even in the activity of CR they used songs to praise heroes. From the song you will know who the hero is or who lost...it has been the responsibility of women to sing as they ululate. Songs motivated hardworking people, hardworking leaders who had brought development and so forth. Some songs have also mocked those who had done evil in the society. For example, if the community disliked certain set of behaviours in a person, they pointed that in a song to discourage such behaviours.

An elder made an insightful remark:

Songs can bring conflict, peace and development. If raiders attempted to take your animals and women sang for the strong men to keep them at bay, they will always do so. If peace songs were sang, they brought peace in people's hearts, mind and soul. In short, if a song had a version of hatred, it promoted hatred. If a version of peace, it promoted peace. If a version of development, it promoted development.

As outlined above, singing in Pokot is a way of speaking. Elders passed very important or crucial communications in form of a song without demeaning either part. For instance, one of young

women whom I interviewed provided an illustration of a young man who was arrested. He was being grilled by security officers with regard to some of the cultural practices alleged to have been offensive. One of an elder in that meeting began a song informing the young man not to disclose any information about their community, instead the elder asked the young man to die like a man. The next levels we are going to present the findings on how songs have promoted peace and protracted conflicts among the Pokot people. We shall also interrogate whether songs were related to growth of prosperity among the people.

Songs and Violent Conflict

The results revealed that in Pokot songs were used to inspire and provoke warriors to launch raids. The findings from the questionnaire revealed that songs that have praised owning of animals have profoundly catalyzed the practice of CR. Such songs were commonly sung by women encouraging men to be more courageous as they kept protecting the community. They reminded men that CR was part of their lives; they should be fearless unlike women. Women also remind men that they were like those other men from other communities. As an elder enthused, when the sun rises, it arose with great hope. Women's songs praised the brave men and created the awareness that the community depended entirely on them, "The strong men and boys were told you are the security of the community. Your fathers and mothers are growing old. Where are you boys, where are you men? Why are our cows gone? Where were you? Were you sleeping? Are you cowards? Are you still men or you have turned to be the women of the other community?" These songs were usually sung in the presence of men. Then men could reply, "We have heard you." They could regroup thus, to plan for the raid in order to please their women. In that connection, the women were expected to prepare strong meals rich in protein such as boiled beans and maize plus tobacco for those who smoked in preparation for the long journey. The food was ferried by the young boys who were regarded as store men, they were all well guarded. In every raiding group, some of the skilled warriors were always in front and others behind. Those in the middle were expected to drive the animals or newly acquired wealth.

The research found that some of the songs performed by women were praising the courageous men on one hand, and on the other, humiliating failures. This has activated the culture of violence. For example, *Orwantee kotanyenyee wayee* translated as I sleep in a home where there is a cow. The song meant that even if the cow has made men to die, the woman could only sleep a home where there was a cow. Such songs instilled fear in men that without a cow, they would miss to have women. They provoked men to engage in violent raids to acquire more animals. Moreover, the women could sing while ululating and praising their sons and clans. They smeared their successful sons with oil as a strong sense of family security. One of the women could be heard singing:

<i>Keruwecha chepotupon</i>	we drink sour milk
<i>Kemitecha kalya</i>	we live with peace
<i>Ke sala werpo murren</i>	praise the strong men

This song suggests that if it were not the strong men, the warriors the community could not be at peace. They protected the community from its perceived enemies; and brought cows that were the

source of milk and meat, basic and salient food for pastoralist communities. The song encouraged CR as the surest strategy to earn livelihood. For those men who had unsuccessful to engage in violent raids were condemned and equated as women. This has equally given them impetus to organize scores of raids in a bid to earn respect and fame.

A successful warrior or hero could compose and perform a song demonstrating the challenges experienced in a raid and how they were overcome. He could mention places where he passed: I went to Karimojong, Sabiny and brought a cow. I crossed such and such a river, navigated such and such a mountain, shot down several men and he could mention the strong men who had rendered him an helping hand. A woman commented: "A warrior could compose a song about the person he had killed. Then he could pose: Who is here? I am a bull." The warrior could then praise the bull and demean the person he had killed or stolen his animals. He equated the person with a fly eaten by maggots, to imply that the person was down or disabled or insignificant. Another warrior could sing a scaring song that, "A cow at a place A in Pokot, during the day is looked after by my sisters. If you want to come, come during the day. During the night the cow is guarded by the four armed strong men, facing different directions, if you want to come it's for your own peril." The study also found that the goads to compose and sing a hero song motivated strong men to raid and kill. One of the young men reported in a FGD: "One group was going Turkana for a raid, the attacked failed. One guy in the group who aimed to go and kill cried: Can I sing my song without mentioning the person I had killed. I can't go home. Because of that five of them were compelled to continue to another location in a bid to launch another attack. They found people in a bore hole and killed them."

A famous man, moreover, Lokoumosor could be heard singing: *Lokoumosor keuyono? Oluwan too nowasha, Kichogh nyobo lokonkona kuchogh lo! Lodua!* Translated as warriors where have you slept? Is it in the bush? Doo, the sound of the gun was heard. The song informed that the sound of Lokoumosor's gun was a tough one. Meaning that men earned more respect when they engaged more raids than the others. These songs accelerated men to launch frequent and tough raids.

Some of the songs sang during *sapana* were said to be emotive as well as encouraged the culture of violence. They challenged warriors to defend their people. They encouraged them to fight their perceived enemies. The warriors were seen with weapons to show their prowess as they connected with the rhythm of the song, "It was an international game...when the song mentioned some words you could hear the sound of the gun," commented one of the elders. The men who were singing were observed to be trembling as they expressed their inner feelings. It showed that songs can penetrate deeper into the core of a person than other channels as the message was delivered as it is. One of the MCAs I interviewed revealed that some of *sapana* songs could interrogate to find how warriors fared on economically. They challenging them to regroup and go for raids or to graze in a neighbour's field, "...regroup and go and get something or go to graze the land which does not belong to you." The songs motivated men to show that they were men through raids.

The man with one woman was mocked to add another one. He was asked to go Karimojong and get cows for the dowry. The moment a warrior attempted a raid; women sang ululating as they informed him that he was no longer a puppet. These encouraged others to go for raids as one elder

amplified: “Songs motivated a man to show his manhood...the moment he staged successful raid women sang ululating. The message of the song informed him that now you are not a puppet... you were nobody now you are somebody. This encouraged others to go for raids.” Other songs praised the initiates informing them how great they had made their family, in particular, and the community at large, they provoked men to keep at bay their enemies as aptly put by a young woman, “songs informed him how he made the family and the community to appear.”

As the study had revealed earlier, women were instrumental in raiding process. A Pokot warrior planning to go for a raid can be heard singing the following song to prompt women to wear *lokoty*, the belt with magic powers to protect him:

Oh! Chepomoi ooh! Chepomoi	oh! Lady Chepomoi ooh! Lady Chepomoi
Ohoo! Chepomoi <i>kirir</i>	ohoo! Lady Chepomoi crying
Chepomoi <i>amadawa ahaya</i>	Lady chepomoi wear the safety belt
<i>Ahaya! Kirir</i> Chepomoi	Ahaya! Crying lady Chepomoi
<i>Amadawa haya</i> ×2	assure me that I can go ×2

The warrior praised the lady Chepomoi as a way to motivate her wear the *lokoty*, the belt that had the magical power to protect them while going for violent raids. Other significant findings revealed that before the warriors could go for a raid sometimes some rituals were done. Women could be heard singing:

<i>Chesirani ee! Chesirani</i>	the animal ee! The animal
<i>Ahaa omaneke tikil</i>	aaha eat it all
<i>Chesirani ahaa! Omaneke</i>	the animal ahaa! eat it all
<i>Tukut ahaa!</i> ×2	all now can eat ×2

The above song was sung during a ceremony to bless warriors in preparation to go for a raid. They are motivated and encouraged to be confident. After the warriors had tested meat, the community members were then allowed to eat and celebrate.

A question was posed in a questionnaire wanting to establish the role of songs to perpetuate the culture of violence. A large majority of respondents revealed that some songs have incited the community against the rival communities. Such songs ridiculed warring communities by portraying them as cowards, uncircumcised, with bad habits as well as encouraged their youth to raid and eliminate such communities. Thus, this has expanded narrowly the gap of trust and cohesion among the belligerents. For instance, a nomadic Pokot song that considered Turkana people as enemies was sang by a woman in presence of her sons as follows:

<i>Nyi weru</i>	You my son
<i>Weghenoye koronu</i>	Can you go away from our land
<i>Taghe okumpo</i> Turkana	Go to Turkana land

Pelee motowoikwa kunyoryo

Burn their heads to pieces

This song has provoked young warriors to pursue and obliterate their perceived enemies. The song reminded warriors that it was their responsibilities to protect and defend their communities by all means and with all their abilities. And it was their responsibility to defend their land and animals the invaluable resources that has promoted their prosperity for centuries.

In Pokot, the song was a library of the past, present and future, thus they kept memories of trauma, hatred and protracted violence from one generation to another. This has largely sustained the traces of animosity among the belligerents for decades. One of the sages I interviewed reflected that a song is a pen to write history, mark an event as well as promote culture. It could point historical injustices, for instance, one of the songs has on and on reminded Pokot people that a segment of Trans-Nzoia County was their ancestral land or the Sook (Pokot) grazing field. The community was displaced from the region by the white settlers in 1919. The community has marked these social injustices using a song:

Kampombao korenja

Kampombao is our land

Kaphepkoilei korenja

Kaphepkoilei is our land

Iya oleye laleyo

Rejoicing in new found home

This song was composed when Pokot were hounded from Tran-Nzoia by white settlers. It was sung by an elder conveying the message that they were chased from Kampombao and yet it was their land. The contested land was said to be at Soi in Trans-Nzoia as pointed by one elderly woman, “Pokot doesn’t know to grab...our land has been taken at Soi in Trans-Nzoia...we hope to get it someday.” In the song the elder was wondering where to go, even though they finally settled in Makutano. He encouraged Pokot as a nation to reclaim their great-grandfather land.

This song was unlikely to promote peace and harmonious coexistence among people, considering it provoked Pokot people to repossess their land. One could say that this was likely to be a time ticking bomb that could explode at any slightest provocation. However, one of the elders in FGDs pointed that Pokot were peace loving people, thus they have never retaliated. The elders lamented that after the white settlers left the country, Africans of colonialist relics conspicuously grabbed their land. He hinted that the community was extremely hopeful that sometime to come they would repossess their ancestral land. This could be the surest strategy to attain peace and reconciliation in Pokot, considering the arable land could produce vast food reserves for the community and Kenyans at large. A similar song has been composed to contest grabbing of Pokot land in Kapedo. Here the song goes: *Korenja kapedo koro Pokot, iripchikey tomoelukuchepokonon*, translated as Kapedo is our land, we urge non Pokot people to quit otherwise they would remain as slaves or refugees in our land.

The Pokot people have believed that Kapedo is their land inherited from their great-ancestors. It is evident from the word Kapedo, a Pokot word meaning a hole in a rocky. It needs, however, to be pointed out that according to Kenya’s supreme laws; one was allowed to own a piece of land

anywhere, within and without. This was primarily aimed to foster peace and social cohesion among people who are believed to be one in a one nation.

Some songs were found to be satirical, laughing about issues or happenings in the society. They encouraged warriors to be always alert as they defended community interests. For example, the famous Rolika, the guy who was killed and was put in a song explaining how he was killed. The song asked who told him to leave where he were? That was how he got killed. Moreover, one of the DPC chairs I interviewed observed that such songs challenged warriors: How many bulls you own? Where did you raid? How were you faring on in the community in terms of raiding? What titles do you earn? These songs had largely undermined peace in the sense that they have energized and motivated warriors to regroup and instigate dangerous raids.

The results established that some of the songs have indirectly activated violence. A large majority of respondents in the questionnaire revealed that such songs advised members of the community to be patriotic and not to betray the community at best, thus rendering it vulnerable. A warrior was heard singing: *Kikimuny Apollo kunekegh pikipiki ochech chen yokoria*, translated as beaten Apollo to jump over the motorbike oh! You are a coward man and worth no salt at all. This song was sung to warn Apollo, the chief not to reveal the identity of people thought to have committed heinous crimes in the society to the government security agencies. However, the chief went ahead and uncovered the names of criminals against the norms set by the community, thus betraying the community. Subsequently, the members of the community waylaid the chief and he was thoroughly beaten and compelled to explain why he had betrayed community expanding its vulnerability as well as threatening its resilience against the harsh reality and enemies.

Songs and Growth

The study found that in away peace has interlinked with growth of people. It was found that songs have been used as a strategy to promote peace and development as well as to appreciate the profound goodness of humanity. They have promoted the security of a region, protection of the community as well as life of people and economy. The elders whom I interviewed for this work emphasized that songs promoted peace and prosperity of people. For example, *chepalelayo* and *chepalale* songs, women and men sang as they danced along in traditional gears. The song encouraged unity and social cohesion of people. It promoted social transformation and healthy society; at peace with itself and all that is. Some other songs have encouraged national building, for instance, praised leaders who were development conscious, encouraged parents to take their children to school, praised people who had excelled in different sectors of economy, praised people with desirable behaviours, deemphasized laziness and so forth. Songs has also habituated certain actions aimed to promote equitable and caring society.

A large majority of respondents in the questionnaire revealed that songs condemned laziness in the community, for example, a woman condemning laziness could be heard singing: “You are the lazy, you are lazy, you need to be thrown out of this community.” Moreover harvesting songs have criticized those communities who had harvested sparingly. They disparaged laziness to greediness as well as motivated people who were faring on well in the spheres of life. This kind of songs have increasingly promoted growth and shared prosperity among people. They have motivated people

to strive in achieving their potentiality fully as they were destined by God.

It emerged that songs have promoted peace, unity and harmonious coexistence among the Pokot people and among other pastoralist communities. For example, war songs emphasized on unity and courage among people which has translated to unity of purpose as seen in today's lives of pokot people when undertaking activities such as farming. Another example, Tegla Loroupe Peace Foundation (TLPF) had used songs to unite Pokot, Turkana people of Kenya, and Karimojong people of Uganda. As one of the women hinted, composing and performing transformative songs that injected the message of peace, love and harmony, as a way of inculcating and nurturing peace among the youngsters, it is likely to be a surest strategy to promote sustainable and lasting peace among the belligerents and growth. For example, the song that was earlier stated encouraging young men to go and burn Turkana people to ashes, could be recomposed replacing the lyrics of peace, love, and underlining the oneness of humanity. Moreover, church related songs were central in promoting peace. They spread the gospel of peace and reconciliation among the warring communities. For instance, in the song below, the singer asks God to grant the community peace, love, joy and happiness.

<i>Yesu ikonech kalya kau</i> ×2	Jesus give us peace in our homes ×2
<i>Omba kau Ketumo nyoman</i> ×2	in our home let us sing joyfully ×2
<i>Omba kau ke tasa nyoman</i> ×2	in our home let us praise Lord ×2
<i>Omba kau ke liliyo nyoman</i> ×2	in our home we praise Lord with joy ×2
<i>Yesu ikonech chomyot omba</i> ×2	Jesus give us love in our homes ×2
<i>Omba kau kesaah nyoman</i> ×2	in our home we worship you ×2
<i>Omba kau keliliyeno nyoman</i> ×2	we praise and glorify you ×2
<i>Omba kau kerapaka</i> ×2	in our home we clap as we praise you ×2

This song is commonly sung in churches and events aiming to promote peace and development. As a Christian, whenever I am in church and the choir sings this song, it awakens the inner feelings of people. Young and old sings as they dance along spiced with beautiful gestures. This implies that the song penetrates to the inner core of a person, touching the soul, body and mind. It delivers the message of peace at home, as it is.

Example of songs that enhanced peace in Pokot were,

<i>Mitoni ngolyon nyole akonga,</i>	there is one word,
<i>Nyo mchinecha keyamtena,</i>	that we should preach,
<i>Akenamcha- Kalya,</i>	and maintain- peace,
<i>Akeghan lo owoy,</i>	and admit fully,
<i>Kuperurecha Tororot.</i>	God may bless us.

<i>Karam Kecham key</i> ×3	it's good to love each other ×3
<i>Kapchetulel</i>	people of Cheptulel
<i>Ka Kanyerus</i>	people of Kanyerus
<i>Ka Alale</i>	people of Alale

Karimojong	people of Karimojong
<i>Werpo</i> Kalenjin	people of Kalenjin
<i>Pich lapoy</i>	all people

The study found that there was a dichotomy between songs and work. Work was always accompanied with songs. Songs praised hardworking people, praised astute leaders, and encouraged leaders to be accountable as well as encouraged youngsters to emulate successful men and women in the society. This findings were augmented with that of elders FGD that songs encouraged people who were hardworking, praised astute and transformative leaders as well as were sang during various cultural activities and celebrations appreciating the outcomes of hardworking and success in life. One of the elders whom I interviewed noted that other songs have praised good performing people such as teachers, doctors, nurses, leaders, police, and elders appreciating their good work. Another elder reflected that songs have spurred development in the community by praising result oriented leaders. For instance, there were songs dedicated to leaders who had built schools, hospitals and constructed roads. Some of social institutions were named after such leaders to motivate them as they continue serving people diligently.

From my own observations and experience of the researched area, Pokot people were extremely gifted to sing and dance. This talents and abilities can be tapped to create wealth for the community, in particular, and the country at large. For example, in *lalehyo* song women danced with men guided by a soloist. The song informed a wide array of things about the community, namely; condemned theft, praised pumper harvest, and mentioned quire features in people like a man loved by many women. The findings from the questionnaire corroborated that songs were sources of income as they promoted cultural practices that attracted tourism. Moreover, school children have excelled in singing. They have received accolades for emerging winners in musical festivals. This has helped them to form singing groups such as kaywelank which has in turn generated incomes to the members. This resonates well with the findings that Pokot has extremely rich culture that could be tapped to generate income to the community.

The indigenous songs, for example, could be recorded in albums and tapes in a bid to earn a living as well as build fame. The community could as well establish cultural centres displaying wide-ranging cultural art or social facts in a view to attract more foreign exchange. One of the women interviewed commented, “We sing so much but we have no means and exposure to record the songs to earn a living. Many of these songs have preached peace and encouraged hardworking.” A youth I interviewed added that, “A few educated people have recorded songs in CDs people that has generated incomes. For example, we have young girl artist who has generated a lot of resources out of it. This has promoted the well-being of people.”

Some of the songs performed during *sapana* were development conscious. The songs motivated women, men and children to work extremely hard as a way to generate vast wealth to grow prosperity of people. An elder could be heard singing: *Eliki nyemuru nyekales yaa, aliki nyemuru lokerei yaa* ×2 (this animal known as ostrich is strong like a rock ×2). This song was sung by elders at the start of *sapana* rite of passage according to singing protocol. They could wear jingles on their legs and ostrich feathers on their heads.

The above song informed that Pokot great-grandfathers used ostrich to generate wealth. It was noted that while elders were in the grazing fields, they could find the eggs of an ostrich which they took home and hatched them in the ash near the fire until they produced young chicks. The chicks were cared for, grew to become the adult ostriches. The feathers of this bird were used in two ways. One, exchanged feathers with goats or sheep. Two, used the feathers for the ceremonies like *sapana* to bring beauty and to make it more colourful. This promoted social and economic growth of the community.

The results further revealed that songs have emphasized the importance of peace and development in the community. They have encouraged people to cooperate while dealing with new challenges of peace in a bid to cultivate harmony and human dignity. The post-conflict period people have composed songs hutching others to concentrate in development initiatives. The songs motivated people to farm or to work using their own hands. The findings resonated with that of the questionnaire that songs have encouraged schooling besides educating people on contemporary emerging issues. In schooling, songs encouraged girls and boys to join school considering it has unprecedented benefits. They deemphasized those cultural practices that have undermined schooling of children such as CR, female genital mutilation (FGM) and earlier marriages. In contemporary issues, songs created public awareness on emerging issues such as HIV/Aids, FGM, adult education, information technology, environment, drugs and substance abuse, and so forth. These findings mirrored that of interviewees that songs motivated parents to take their boys and girls to school in one spectrum, and on the other, the school children encouraged parents to take their peers to school as seen in this example:

Opono monunge kusoman toketeka korenyo kumermer
Ompo kama kayelow kusoman toketeka korenyo kumermer

Translation,

Bring children to learn so that we build our community
Those of mama *kaedou* (hill) to build our community

In this song, *mama Kaedou* were those young women who had not gone to school. The song encouraged them to join school in order to get empowered such that they could lend hand in community development. The song amplified the premise by gender revolutionists that if we educate a woman, we educate the whole nation. And if we empower a woman, we empower the whole nation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Cultural practices among the pastoralist communities like Pokots have increasingly fed the vicious cycle of violent conflict that has been experienced in the researched areas. Such practices such as *sapana*, songs, and cattle rustling, if carefully tapped, they are liable to create conditions necessary to foster lasting peace in one eye, and on the other, could be the critical enabler of human growth.

That is to say, the culture of violence could be transformed to the culture of peace and prosperity through the concerted efforts of all peace actors who shall abolish the structures of violence as they develop the resilient structures favouring sustainable peace. This study suggests that:

The county government and the community should establish a number of cultural centres considering the area is very rich in terms of culture and attractive sceneries offering a huge potential for tourism industries to be established which is likely to transform the vicious cycle of violent conflict to lasting peace and shared prosperity; and,

County government to develop peace perks with statures of prominent people who have contributed to global peace. This will always remind the community never again to engage in violent conflicts that has robbed the community prosperous lives for decades.

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