

The Power of Koyta: It's Implication to Other Harmful Cultural Practices; In The Case of Dassanach Ethnic Group

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Abstract

Although it is well known that bride price payment is a harmful cultural practice prevalent in Dassanach ethnic group, yet, there is little understanding of its effects on other harmful cultural practices. To improve this, the study explores the hidden powers of bride price (KOYTA) payment to cause other harmful cultural practices. It also investigates reasons of practicing bride price payment. The study employed qualitative approach. The data were gathered from purposively selected interviewees specifically, using convenience sampling technique. The data obtained via interview has been cross checked and validated using focus group discussion and key informant. Thematic qualitative analysis technique has been employed to analyze the data. The study found that bride price payment, directly or indirectly, caused other harmful cultural practices such as inter-ethnic conflict, polygamy, early and forced marriage, abduction, school dropout, female genital mutilation and others. It also investigated that the participant articulated the causes of practicing bride price as it is a source of income, a sign of prestige and a preservative of family. It was revealed that bride price is a deep-rooted cultural practice with almost all participants supporting its continuity. However, recent commercialization has changed the practice and its cultural relevance is less clear in present time. Although bride price provides protection, respect, and acknowledgement of women within marriages, the paper argues that the practice caused other harmful cultural practices mentioned above. This study highlights the need to intervene on possible mitigation of the negative impacts of bride price so as to mitigate other harmful cultural practices at large. Therefore, intervening on bride price is a "one size fits all" intervention on other cultural practices since other HCPs directly or indirectly caused by it.

Keywords: Bride price•Dassanach•School dropout•Forced marriage

Introduction

The payment of a bride price at the time of marriage is a custom that is widespread throughout sub-Saharan Africa and many parts of Asia today. The practice also has a long history, dating at least as far back as 3000 B.C. having been practiced by the ancient Egyptians, Mesopotamians, Hebrews, Aztecs, and the Incas [1]. Historically and today, the magnitude of the bride price is typically sizeable. It is common for the value of the bride price to be in excess of a year's income [2].

There are different names for the practice of bride price in different countries and regions of Africa [3]. In Dassanach ethnic group, it is often known as KOYTA. The concept of bride-price has been conceptualized by many scholars and writers of marriage payments. It is defined as a payment made in kind, cash or material as demanded by custom of a group by a groom or his family to the

family of the bride who in order to make the union legitimate[4]. Bride price, also known as bride wealth or bride token, is an amount of money or property or wealth paid by the groom or his family to the parents of a woman upon the marriage of their daughter to the groom [5]. According to [6], bride-price consists of a contract where material items (often cattle or other animals) or money are paid by the groom to the bride's family in exchange for the bride, her labor and her capacity to produce children. Fuseini defined bride-price as the amount of money or property or wealth paid by the groom or his family to the parents of the woman upon marriage of their daughter to the groom [5]. The agreed bride price is generally intended to reflect the perceived value of the girl or young woman. In the conception of [7] involves payment in cash or property by husband and his family to the bride's family. It is symbolic of friendship but in actual fact it's the transfer of productive and reproductive service to the man's family. Many cultures practiced bride price prior to existing records.

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In anthropological literature, bride price has often been explained in market terms, as payment made in exchange for the bride's family's loss of her labor and fertility within her kin group. The bride price may be seen as related to present-day customs of maintenance for the wife in the event of the breakup of marriage, and family maintenance in the event of the husband not providing adequately for the wife in his will. Another function performed by the amount was to provide a disincentive for the husband to divorce his wife: he would need to have a certain amount to be able to pay to the wife. Both practices have strong and positive correlation with the social norm, religion and traditional values as well as the persistent poverty with all its ramifications.

In Ethiopia, like other parts of Africa, the practice of paying a bride price at the time of marriage is a custom that is widespread. It also considered a fundamental requirement in Dassanach community. The groom is expected to provide gifts to the bride. The difference here, however, lies in the fact that the gifts are given to the bride in exchange for her hand in marriage and for her personal use while in other cases, the gifts are meant for her extended family members and parents for nurturing her.

A number of factors contribute to the practice of providing high bride price in Ethiopia, among which patriarchal attitudes and the values attached to the girl child and women, the desire to control women's sexuality and decision making power and the socio economic subordination of women are some of the key factors [8].

Commercialization of bride price or high bride wealth is a practice that tends to be common among ethnic groups or cultures of south Omo zone. Socio- economic variables such as level of education of the bride, social status of bride family etc. have become deciding factors in determining bride price. Further, most ethnic groups consider female child to be of highly value commodity, which when invested into properly can guarantee high financial or economic reward. Consequently the groom or his family is required to buy the commodity at the highest price so as to ensure or gain profit.

Statement of the problem

Despite lack of reliable and up to date data on the prevalence of different Harmful Traditional Practices (HTPs) in Ethiopia, the available evidence indicates that bride price related practices constitute the most prevalent forms of violence against women/girls that adversely affect millions of women and girls in the country in general and in dassanach community in particular.

The most common Harmful cultural practice related to marriage in Dassanach ethnic group is expensive bride price as locally called koyta which in turn leads to other harmful traditional practices. Among the Dassanach ethnic group, it ranges from thirty five to forty heads of cattle and goats and other accompanying items like guns. This number is huge. As a consequence, the poor resort to cattle raids to meet the marriage demand

In Dassanach ethnic group, the main source of livelihood is cattle so do the source for the bride price payment. For them, the bride price is getting more expensive. Due to drought (environmental pressure) and population growth cattle possession is diminishing in size. These two contradictory facts (i.e. expensive bride price that needs more cattle and decrease in number of cattle per household)

make it very hard to young male pastoralists to pay the bride price, no bride price means, and no wife. The bride girl families take this expensive bride price as a main source of income, so they want to give their daughter for the one who pay more. Therefore, providing bride –price in Dassanach ethnic group, is a customary obligation that the groom complies to get marriage.

The custom of bride wealth payment is at the heart of the marriage process, deeply rooted in south omo zone cultural values and its payment legitimizes marriage. It is the key factor for understanding the dynamics of the south omo zone tradition. High bride wealth in the form of money and cattle was given to the bride's family, and in exchange, the woman's sexual and reproductive powers were surrendered to the man and his lineage [8]. Because of the tradition of the wife return the bride's wealth to man's family in case of divorce happened, Bride-price serve as marriage insurance and stabilizer of the family. As fear of this, the wife didn't made divorce and forced to keep her marriage even she gets discomfort. Therefore for south omo tradition, the custom of giving bride price was the cornerstone of marriage, which, if tampered with, would weaken the whole institution. Bride-price is also a source of income to the bride's family. The cattle, goods and material gifts are considered as a legitimate source of income for the bride's family. The giving of bride-price is therefore considered a quid pro quo for giving the daughter to the man's family.

The expensive bide price locally called koyta is leading to so many harmful cultural practices directly or indirectly in South Omo. Even though different studies had been conducted on the types and prevalence of harmful traditional practices performed in the area in general, the hidden powers of bride price on other harmful traditional practices had been left neglected. Thus, this research is intended to fill this gap by studying how pride price caused other harmful traditional practices in south Omo zone, Dassanach ethnic group. The findings of this study would be helpful for some practical purposes. Preventing and mitigating bride price implies that preventing and mitigating other harmful traditional practices. Therefore dealing how bride price caused other harmful traditional practices implies that mitigating and stopping other harmful traditional practices performed in the study area.

General objective

The general objective of this study is to examine the contribution of koyta on other harmful cultural practices. In line with this, the specific objectives of the study are intended to:

- Identify the types of harmful cultural practices caused by koyta in Dassanach ethnic group.
- Describe how koyta affects other harmful cultural practices.
- Investigate the causes of practicing koyta in Dassanach ethnic group

Methodology

Using appropriate research approach is a key step to achieve the proposed research objectives. Likewise, for the achievements of this study, the researcher relied on qualitative approach for its most advantage over quantitative approach. In this study, primary and secondary sources of data were utilized. Primary data were collected through in-depth interview, key informant interview and focus group

discussion. A sample of Dassanach ethnic group, were interviewed in-depth on the issue of how bride price affect other harmful cultural practices. The researcher also used secondary data information such as, document analysis.

South Omo Zone consists of five Woredas, namely Dassanach, Gngangatom, Benatsemaye, Hamar, Selamango, Semen ari, Debub ari and Male Woreda. On the basis of its prevalence and magnitudes of bride price in South Omo Zone, Dassanach Woreda (and also the name of the ethnic group) was selected for this study. Conferring on Zonal women and children office data, bride price was most prevalent in Dassanach Woreda.

According to 2007 population census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA) [9], Dassanach Woreda has a total population of 23,986, of whom 13,145 are men and 10,841 women.

Moreover, in order to cross check and validate the data obtained via interviews and to come up with a common understanding about the effects of bride price on other harmful cultural practices, the researcher facilitated focus group discussion with local elders. To this effect, one focus group discussion consisted of 10 participants hold. With regard to sampling technique, the researcher employed nonprobability sampling technique as the research process is one of discovery rather than the testing of hypotheses. From the non-probability sampling technique, the researcher purposively employed convenience (availability) sampling technique. The sample was selected from the target population on the basis of their accessibility or convenience to the researcher.

For the data for FGDs and in-depth interviews, emphasis was placed on the interpretation and description of what was actually said. To do this the tape recordings were transcribed. To interpret the data, thematic qualitative data analysis as an inductive way of data analysis was utilized. The data analysis process began with a researcher's interest in substantive general areas; the researcher gave way to relevant themes to come out from the data (Figure 1).



Figure 1. Woredas in South Omo zone.

Results and Discussion

This part presents the findings of the study. The findings were summarized and grouped in to three major sections. These are types of harmful cultural practices caused by bride-price, how bride price affects other harmful cultural practices and the causes of practicing bride price.

Reasons of practicing bride price in dassanach ethnic group

According to the cultures of Dassanach (both the name of the Woreda and ethnic group), female are regarded as property. Bride wealth (Koyta) is considered as source of income. There is societal understanding that baby girls at their birth are considered as source of wealth. This is to imply that girls through marriage would bring wealth to her family.

The community members expressed that koyta is a compensation for the family of the daughter, as which is stated in the discussion that: They view their female children as investments with value on the market and will lose a good part of their investment if she is not married and not received the payment. In line to this one interviewee explains the situation as follows:

"It is her family who born and care for her, they invest all their time, their money and they encountered all the trouble in the raising of their daughter. But, through marriage she leaves her mother, father, her little sister and brother and will start to live with other family while her natal families are losing support of her, so what are their benefits? Really they need to get compensation!"

The aforementioned discussion substantiated by the community leader interviewee the claim of bride wealth as compensation for the family as follows: "When you have a daughter, you know that she belongs to someone else so the only way of compensating you for training her is via bride price. Anyone who wants to marry her must pay for.

The purpose of bride-price is to compensate the bride's father for the loss of her work, clearly shows a bias. The sons' brides who move in take the place of the household's daughters' who marry out, while the profit from the daughter's bride-price is offset by that paid for the son's wife [10]. Vroklage as cited by Ashraf and Nunn [11] the practice of bride price is a compensation for the expense, the care and trouble spent on the bride's upbringing and for the complete loss of a worker as a bride withdraws from her own kindred and henceforth belongs to her husband's. This is also validated by Nkosi and Buthelezi [12] as a girl left home for marriage; it was obvious that the parents would be deprived of all the contributions she was making in the home. These benefits would definitely be transferred to the home of the bride groom for the many years of her life there. She was like an item "bought and owned". Even upon the death of her husband she was supposed to remain in the home and be inherited by a family member. If she chose to go away, her parents had to return the bride-price. This is not unique to most parents of Dassanach ethnic group who would not let their daughters go until the price they have tagged on her has been paid.

Many activists view bride price as repugnant, akin to the buying and selling of women. There have even been calls to ban bride price. However, the study found that bride price customs with parents in Dassanach community, often viewed as a compensation for investments in their daughters and as a substitute for the old age support that daughters can no longer provide if they leave the household to marry.

Stabilizing family

For Dassanach ethnic group, bride-price is a transaction practiced by virtue of validating marriage and stabilizing family. It provides social approval of the marriage covenant, as distinct from other interpersonal covenants and bonds. In other words, the future stability of the new marriage bond is a matter of concern for the community, and the bride-price testifies, by its size, to the effort invested in preventing a divorce. If for some reason the marriage broke, the girl's parents were obliged to refund the bride price they had received. Because of fear of this, the bride family forced her to keep marriage even with discomfort. In line with this, one interviewee illustrated his experience as follows:

I made sure I paid everything my in laws demanded. For instance I was made to marry my wife from her families. Each had its cost. Doing that meant that I have acquired all of the rights they had over her. She now becomes mine whole and entire, and the family can never take her away because they benefited from the bride price would have to refund what they took. This is usually difficult to do else.

The implication of most of the above assertion is that bride price was considered a stabilizing factor in marriage. Once the bride price was paid the couple now felt that they had a home and became settled. Since they had fulfilled societal expectations, they were bound to gain social recognition and respectability.

Some elders of the community also argued that the bride-price should be maintained as cultural norm and abolishing it would destroy the uniqueness of the culture as imposed from outside. They further argue that many people live happily together too old age in spite of the fact that bride-price was paid to the parents of the wife.

Even though there are objections arise due to the perceived commodification of women through a transaction, potentially leading to ill-treatment and feel that they cannot leave a marriage because it would mean their parents would have to return the bride price; still the practice is going on in Africa. Instead of banning the practice, some governments have attempted to legislate its particular aspects, such as banning refunds upon divorce or putting limits on the amount that can be paid for bride price. For example, Kenya's most recent set of marriage laws stipulates that a token bride price must be counted as sufficient to meet the needs of the custom [11]. The Zambian government has similarly spoken out to discourage families from requesting exorbitant amounts for their daughters, but this is not written into law and neither country defines what may be counted as token or exorbitant [13]. Even though the Ethiopian government identifies the practice of bride price as harmful cultural practice, yet the government not stipulates a law on its types and amounts and it was seen, overwhelmingly, to have negative impacts on women and thus to require reform.

The effects of bride-price on stabilizing family has also been highlighted by Dassanach Woreda women and children affair office officer as it is a major contributing factor for stabilizing the family, especially as women cannot leave an abusive relationship if she cannot afford to refund the bride-price. The practice further strengthens the feeling of the husband that he has purchased his wife and therefore expects perpetual obedience and servitude from her.

Bride wealth as sign of prestige

The payment of bride wealth is also considered as a source of esteem for both couples and their parents. It is claimed to heighten status among peers and the community members. An interpretation from the bride's point of view holds that the higher the price, the greater her value is in her husband's house, it being known that she comes from a good family. The degree of surety for safeguarding her status in the future increases with the proportion that is deposited with her. The bride-price is in honor of the bride, to show how dear she is to her father and brothers. Members of local community who have participated in the FGD shared the view that:

"The bride feels happy when their husband pays a large amount of bride wealth since she thinks that she is valuable and desirable to her husband. Similarly the one who is paying a large amount of bride wealth is perceived as competent in caring and supporting his wife in the future."

In the same vein, the bride's family which receives bride wealth is considered to have a high social recognition or prestige in the community. It is perceived by the community that the family's value and respect is heightened by having decent and good mannered daughter and the amount of bride wealth received by that family." In contrary, if the parents receive no or little bride wealth usually less than amount locally determined, they would receive low social status that even their daughters are ascribed as valueless. This conception makes the community members or family to claim high amount of bride wealth which usually have negative implication on the wellbeing of the community in general and the women in particular.

For women, having been paid for enhances their social status, especially where they favor the relationship. For some men and the majority of women across all ages, bride price payment was viewed as an indication that those who pay it are more likely to sustain the marital relationship. Rich men and those who could afford a high bride price were perceived as more eligible as marital partners, as one respondent put it: many women want to go with older partners who provide material benefits. However, many go for young or main boy friends with whom they maintain a more serious relationship with intention of later marriage, if they can afford it (bride price payment).

From the findings of this study, it is clear that Dassanach ethnic group attach great value to bride price payment. Many think it is a sign of respect and others say it is a sign of love and commitment from the man. Businge [14] revealed that because women in Africa are generally perceived to be weak and powerless, many Africans believe that it is only through the payment of bride price to their parents that women can be made valuable or respected which agrees with the research finds, most respondents said that bride price is a sign of respect for the woman.

The implications of bride price on other harmful cultural practices

The study investigated that most harmful cultural practices are directly and indirectly caused by bride-price. For the sake of clarity and precision the researcher decide to put the HCPs related to bride-price under the following diagram and but discuss them separately.

The following are the most common HCPs that revolve around bride-price as the study findings pinpointed (Figure 2).

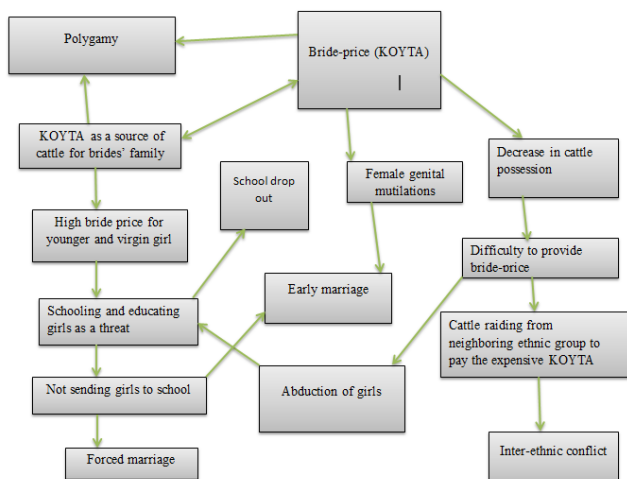


Figure 2. The impacts of koyta on other harmful traditional practices.

Polygamy

Polygamy may be in the form of polygyny or polyandry. The former (polygyny) is the marriage of one man to more than one woman. Polyandry on the other hand connotes a woman having more than one husband at the same time. In the study area only polygyny is persisting. Therefore polygamy in this work refers to polygyny.

Bride wealth and polygyny are traditional patrilineal norms and practices that indicate the value of women's labor and reproductive capacity. The former has been a costly, but virtually universal, transaction among the Dassanach, while the latter has characterized those who could afford the cost.

Even though the practice and perception of polygamy is varied as the cultures in which it occurs, the majority of the practice related to widespread social understanding of bride-price, what it means to the society. From the above diagram, one can understand that most of harmful cultural practices in Dassanach community were directly or indirectly caused by bride-price. Polygamy is one of HCPs performed in relation to bride-price. Bride price is an underlying factor in polygamy if a man believes that women are valued in terms of bride Price. In Dassanach ethnic group, they perceived it as a source of income. As far as a man has capacity to afford the excessive amount of bride wealth asked by the bride's family, more often her parents do not care about their daughter. Parents are willing to give their daughters in marriage at a young age so as to they receive the bride price. In the case, it promotes polygamy.

Female genital mutilation

Economic reasons are important factors that perpetuate the practice of FGM. In Dassanach ethnic group, female genital mutilation is a prerequisite for marriage and payment of the bride price to the parents of the girl. The focus group discussants clarify this point as follows:

An uncircumcised girl is not eligible for marriage and maybe a burden on her parents as no one member of the community will dare to marry her. This enforces parents to have their daughters undergo

the FGM operation. Until they are circumcised, girls are called 'wild animals' or 'men' to tease them, the idea is that their clitoris has to be removed before they act like women. Therefore, bride price holds the key to marriage by enforcing FGM and virginity.

Dassanach girls are circumcised young, at around age 10 or 12. If they are not circumcised, she cannot marry and her father will not receive her bride-price. Once they go through the ritual of circumcision they are given sour milk to drink and a necklace by her mother. From then on, she is allowed to wear a leather skirt to show that she is now considered as women. Marriage follows soon after and her family could receive bride price payment. Therefore, for Dassanach ethnic group, FGM is used as a means of graduating a girl from childhood into woman hood. Immediately after circumcision, the girl is married off no matter the age. Circumcised girls who stay at home for an additional one or two more circumcision seasons without getting married find it difficult to get a husband as men rush in for the new younger girls who have graduated after circumcision. Girls are hardly allowed to get married before undertaking FGM within the Dassanach ethnic group. Based on this premise that parents who want bride price will coerce their daughters into FGM so as to get married off easily.

Early and forced marriage

A persistent problem in many developing countries is early marriage of girls, defined in the United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child as occurring before the bride is 18 years of age [15]. To acquire wealth from bride price, participants noted that girls are forced to marry at a young age, and many are forced to leave school for marriage. Such girls may develop low self-esteem and lack knowledge about sexuality. Despite the culture of early marriage believe as a guarantee of long period of fertility, it is highly connected to the practice of bride price. Bride price is the single most economic motivator for parents in Dassanach community to force girls into marriage and during that secretive haggling and exchange of wealth; it is really the girl's parents benefited. The following is sentiment expressed by one interviewee:

It has lost value women are forced to marry at young age forcefully because the bride family want cattle. Those who cannot afford to pay may not marry. How do you equate a woman to cattle or money?

The above sentiment confirmed that forced marriage comes with benefit to the parents. The tradition of bride price is that it induces parents to arrange for their daughters to be married at a younger age so that they can obtain the bride price payment. This could potentially occur if the parents are credit constrained, and therefore need funds immediately, even if it comes at the cost of their daughter's future welfare.

The payment of a bride price may influence decisions about girls' education if bride prices vary by girls' educational level. The more education a girl has, the lower her bride price, which creates significant opportunity, costs for parents which can foster early marriage because it is when a girl is young that her productive labor and reproductive capacities are seen as 'best buys' in exchange for valued cattle or other goods [16]. Contrary to this [2] proposed that the amount of the bride price is less affected by the family's socioeconomic level than by the characteristics of the bride: parents can demand a higher price for more educated daughters, because

they are entitled to compensation for their investment in their daughter. This, then, may interact with age of marriage, since families may delay marriage for girls in order to increase their education and, thus, the bride price they can negotiate.

However, what is unique of this study from the above literature is that bride price increases in pressure on parents to marry their daughters as early as possible. In Dassanach ethnic group, girls are not allowed to educate since the community believe that if they send to school they would be lost their virginity it in turns decrease the opportunity costs of bride price. The community also is certain of if the girls not marry at early age, their productive labor and reproductive capacities would decrease and which leads to a decrease in the cost of bride price.

In addition, Dassanach girls were forced to marry at an early age in order to get bride wealth for unmarried men in a given family with girls. Their brothers then get what to pay for their wives. Cattle received in bride wealth for a daughter of the house normally used for sons of the house to acquire wife. It is not exceptional of bride price resulted forced and early marriage of the girls in the area.

The family especially poor ones, parents coerce their children to marry for the sake of bride price. Cases arise where children are married off at the age of 13 years for bride price. In a number of cases, girls are forced by their parents and brothers because of failure to pay bride price and thereafter married off to another husband who can pay no matter the age difference between the bride and groom.

Abduction

Although conventional "love marriage" is perceived as the standard type of marriage in modern societies, other types of marriage still play important role in forming families elsewhere. Among marriage types other than love marriage, coercive marriage, including abduction, although illegal and morally unaccepted, occurs frequently in Dassanach ethnic group. Abduction occurs also in other part of the world, as documented by Zhao [17]. In Dassanach community, abduction is a well-known traditional practice whereby girls are abducted and raped to be forcefully married. If the groom unable to pay bride price, he decides to abduct the girl because of he knows that he never get marriage without afford bride price payment. The cost of bride price is underlying the rising popularity of abduction in the area. This is also substantiated by Zhao [17]. He found that abduction decrease the cost of bride price and enable a family allocates its resources to acquire various goods and services, including their daily consumption and investment in children.

One community elder expressed the situation of abduction as: forcibly carrying away of a young girl by a group of young men in most cases comprising of her abductor and his peers with an intent to marry her, with beatings taking place if she resist, and a young girl helplessly crying and seeking for assistance with no one willing to rescue her, as the most common nature of abduction in Dassanach community. This is happened with the intent of escaping from bride price payment. Focus group discussants also recounted this:

Typically abduction involves a man and his friends taking a young woman by force or deception to the home of his parents or a near relative. She is held in a room and his female relatives convince her to put on the marriage scarf. She is kept overnight and is thus

threatened by the shame of no longer being a pure woman. When she agrees, all relatives are notified and a negotiation on the withdrawal of payment of bride price with her family begin. The family decide to give the girl without receive bride price payment since they believe that once she abducted she is valueless.

Consistent with the above discovery, [18] revealed that abduction takes several form at its most grievous it is forcible marriage through rape to avoid the payment of a bride price. It may also take the form of elopement; i.e. when the couples feel that the girl's parents may not agree to a 'normal' marriage or may be at the connivance of the parents. That is to say, whenever the girl herself is unwilling to be married.

The focus group participants also pointed out that abduction happened under consensually. It occurred by mutual agreement of the bride and groom if they loved together and the groom unable to arrange for the payment. This seeks to open a room for negotiation with the bride family to give their girl without bride price paid.

Although abduction is illegal under article 587 of Ethiopian criminal code, stipulates as "whoever with intent to marry a woman abducts her by violence, or commits such an act after having obtained her consent by intimidation, threat, trickery or deceit, is punishable with rigorous imprisonment from three years to ten years", the crime is persisting. Most of the time, the state intervene only if a complaint was filed directly by the victim or relatives. But in many abduction cases, the woman is isolated with in the home of the abductor, and must overcome daunting obstacles to contact her relatives or the police. That is why the crime persisting and never ban. Therefore, the government should initiate legal action themselves without waiting for the victim's lawsuit.

Not sending girls to school

One of the respondents responds that, "A girl child is business, and we all need money" and, "for girl children, you benefit from charging while with boys support comes from them when you are old. Therefore, I never send them to school even though I do so; it is not more than up to grade four.

Ashraf, Ashraf et al. added to this in another dynamic, girls from bride price ethnic groups are more likely to become educated. In all specifications, they estimate a positive relationship between belonging to an ethnic group that practices bride price and female education. If bride price increases with education and parents are aware of this fact, bride price may incentivize parents to invest more in their daughters' education, since there will be higher returns to doing so. Therefore, parents of daughters in ethnic groups with bride price traditions may be more likely to take advantage of the new educational opportunities made available by school construction programs [19].

At the same time, many have argued that bride price is a positive tradition of appreciation for women [20]. The amount of bride price a bride's family receives increases in the parents' educational expenditures on the daughter as parent negotiates bride price; he or she calculates how much was spent on education.

The positive relationship between education and bride price in Zambia is also popularly discussed by Ashraf et al. [21]. They found that bride price increases with female education and parents are very aware of this connection. The study figure out the nexus between bride price

and female education as completing primary education is associated with 22-37% higher bride prices.

However, the reality of nexus between female education and bride price in Dassanach ethnic group is unique from the above literature. Girls were forced to drop out of school to get married for those who are able to pay huge sums in bride price since they regard as mere property.

Inter and intra ethnic conflict

Inter and intra ethnic conflicts among Dassanach ethnic group and between others are triggered by multiple ecological, economic, socio-cultural and political factors rather than single causes. Among those, the custom of bride price took the line share. According to many of the people interviewed, the most frequent conflicts stirred between Dassanach ethnic community and its neighbors are linked to livestock raiding occurred because of fulfilling bride price payment. Discussions held with community elders in the area indicated that:

Cattle raiding are generally considered as an acceptable means to acquire assets for those who were unable to provide bride price payment. It is also occurred whether in times of retaliatory conflicts or under normal circumstances. The need for cattle is very important for young men who have no assets, especially since their inheritance is often small because it is divided among many siblings and unable to fulfill bride price payment. It trigger or exacerbates violent conflicts between inter and intra ethnic groups.

From this bride price is paid during marriage is so high that young men who do not have assets (cattle) can hardly meet such an expense. As a result of these cultural needs, those who lack resources resort to other means, raiding from others. Bride price is thus one of the principal causes of cattle looting amongst pastoral communities of Dassanach ethnic group which lead to inter-ethnic conflict with others. The study has tried to specify losses incurred by the Dassanach and the Hamar ethnic group. The conflict between Dassanach and Hamar in 2008 has resulted in the death of more than sixty people from Dassanach ethnic group side and the loss of 5,000 livestock. The loss on the Hamar side is unknown. Since 2009, the frequency of conflict has been on the increase, but no systematic data is available (Dassanach Woreda communication office).

[3] Discovered that the cultural practice of bride price persist cattle raiding among East African pastoralists. He argue that in attempting to preserve their cultural identity of paying bride price, pastoralists undermine their biological survival since one ethnic group retaliate against the other by killing some people. In a more recent contribution, [22] portrays cattle raiding as a maladaptive cultural institution in which the value of cattle is placed above that of human beings. While in previous decades the stolen livestock was redistributed or used to pay bride prices, rustling has more recently turned into a form of organized crime. This involves the commercialization of stolen animals, and includes actors from outside the pastoralist system.

Moreover, cattle raiding in the Horn and East African regions have existed for many centuries. Traditionally, it was sanctioned by elders and played as a game aimed at replenishing lost herds and for cultural practices including bride price payment and as proof of one's manhood and bravery [23,24].

Conclusion

The tradition of bride price and its negative effect is now less clear to some people due to commercialization of social customs. In Dassanach ethnic group, the practice of paying bride price is seemingly losing meaning, it's overly exaggerated and a ceremony to showcase financial prowess. The practice done as a source of income, systems of commercialization and people see it as part of their life since they earn from the institution.

The study found that respondents perceived a strong connection between bride price payment and other harmful traditional practices in Dassanach ethnic group. Bride price is a cause for other HCPs. It is a cornerstone of harmful traditional practices which caused other HCPs such as, early marriage, polygamy, forced marriage, abduction, inter-ethnic conflict and school dropout and others. It is conclusive that the payment of bride price is a source of problems because once something becomes of commercial value a commercial return is expected.

In addition, the participants were justified the practice of bride price as it serve as symbol of prestige, family stabilizer and a source of income. Above all, perceiving it as source of income is the main cause of the practice.

It's therefore important to note that bride price has lost its former positive functions; it's no longer an efficient method of establishing the validity of a marriage but a mechanism for controlling the distribution of women. It's upon this back ground that the researcher concludes that bride price should not be refunded. It should be looked upon as a gift.

Implications

In light of the aforementioned findings, the following recommendations are forwarded:

The practice should be done according to the original practice; it should be looked upon as a gift than as a source of income for the bride family.

Bride price is one of the crucial social mechanisms by which other harmful cultural practices were exacerbated. Therefore, preventing and mitigating bride price is a one size fits all mechanism; it prevents and softens other cultural practices performed in relation with bride price. Consequently, the government should collaborate with civil society organizations, development partners and other actors and develop and implement comprehensive and well-resourced action plans to end bride price so as to thwart other harmful cultural practices in the area.

Mobilize families and communities as agents of change, by creating awareness of the harmful impact of bride price on other HCPs, and of alternative roles for girls and women, so that families and communities prefer not to engage in the practice and so that they themselves take part in preventing bride price practice to end other HCPs.

Bride price payment, in turn leads to other HCPs, in one way or another practiced related to economic or material needs of the local communities. Therefore women's economic empowerment is must. To do so respective stakeholders should implement different specific

programs economic development of community in general and women in particular to enhance women well-being.

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