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Integrating the intensive and extensive rangeland management systems : the ideal choice for the Marsabit pastoralists , Kenya

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Introduction Arising from the differences between the two management systems , there exist an overt antagonism between the traditional pastoral resource management systems and the conventional or mainstream range management systems . The conventional range management dismisses traditional resource management as primitive , self-destructive , and thus too unproductive . The conventional range management has since imposed its authority in matters pertaining to pastoral development and production . The result has been general failure of most such pastoral development , with the two camps accusing each other for the failures . Amidst these accusations , pastoralists' livelihood activities and projects tend to be dysfunctional , resulting to pastoralists vulnerability to poverty and other socioeconomic ills (Tadingar and Farah , 1996 ; Aboud , *et al* , 1997) . This study set to investigate pastoralists' awareness , willingness and possibility of integrating the traditional **extensive** management systems and the conventional **intensive** systems , for adoption by the pastoralists in Marsabit district of Kenya , to benefit the herders and the national economy .

Materials and methods A socio-ecological multi-design approach was adopted for the study , involving primarily a household survey . A sample of 108 households was randomly selected amongst the Rendille and the Samburu herders in Marsabit district , with the unit of analysis was the household , with the head of the household , or a representative answering to the questionnaire . The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) programme was used for data analysis .

Results and discussion A large proportion of the pastoralists is aware of the existence of types of resource conservation programmes in their area , and a significant proportion (44 .5%) of the households believe that the programmes are doing well and are effective or very effective in promoting and accomplishing their resource conservation objectives .

Community willingness to be involved in the integrated range resource management is influenced by their awareness of , agreement with , and practising of some type of rangeland resources management activities and teachings . A consensus was reached among the Marsabit herders that a merger between the **extensive** traditional range management systems and the *intensive* modern conventional systems is possible , so as to guide future efforts in range management and resources conservation .

Conclusions This study has determined that pastoral communities in Marsabit are aware of the existence of environmental conservation programmes and organizations , which could be used as range management entities in integrating the modern conventional rangeland management systems and the traditional systems , for effective and sustainable use , management and conservation of rangeland resources . The integration and indeed any other system that will guide future efforts in range management and resources conservation will be respected and supported by the communities , given the overall economic value placed on the resources in Marsabit rangelands by the communities . Community awareness , willingness and positive attitude are vital variables in influencing the integration of the two systems .

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