UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

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ROLE AND STATUS OF CHILDREN IN FOREST RELATED CONFLICTS:

A CASE STUDY OF EASTERN MAU FORESTS

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research is my original work and has not been presented for award of any degree in any university

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This research has been submitted for examination with my approval as supervisor of the University.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to the love of my life, my blood and flesh, my heart, the reason for

my existence – my son Levi Njagi. When I felt like giving up, I kept remembering why I

held on for so long in the first place - I did this for you my son.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS   Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome

CRC   Convention on the Rights of the Child

FAO   Food and Agricultural Organization

FGD   Focus Group Discussion

GoK   Government of Kenya

HIV   Human Immuno Deficiency Virus

ICPC   International Centre for Policy and Conflict

IDP   Internally Displaced Persons

KFS   Kenya Forestry Service

NGOs   Non-Governmental Organizations

STAKE   Stabilizing Kenya through Solving Forest Conflicts

UN   United Nations

UNDP   United Nations Development Programmes

UNEP   United Nations Environmental Programme

UNICEF   United Nations Children Fund

ABSTRACT

Conflicts over natural resources are increasing in number and severity. This problem has been compounded with the increasing population and scarcity of natural resources in developing countries. Forest resource conflicts are disagreements and disputes over access to, control over and use of forest resources. Whereas existing literature documents the causes and effects of conflicts among the citizenry, the place of children in forest conflicts remain a grey area that warrants scientific analysis. Children activities in the forest are expected to place them at the centre of conflict between different parties. The main objective of this research was to contribute to the understanding of role and status of children in forest conflicts using Eastern Mau Forests as a case study. The study utilized a mixed methods approach involving Quantitative (data gathered using questionnaires) as well as qualitative data (from Key informant interviews, FGDs and observation). Data analysis from the questionnaires was by way of descriptive statistics involving frequencies and percentages of the different responses given. Qualitative analysis involved content analysis of the different narratives obtained from the key informants.

Results from this study documents children activities that are likely to contribute to natural resource competitions and disputes as fetching fuel wood and pasture. The study has also revealed that children are mainly affected by forest conflicts physically (such as through injury and rape) and psychologically (such as emotional stress). Based on the study findings, this project recommends sensitization of children activities that are likely to expose them to violent conflicts in forest contexts among parents and caregivers. The study also proposes to various stakeholders in forest resources including the government and community on recognition of children rights and how they should be protected during conflicts.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Conflict is a struggle between two or more people over interests, needs, or values of each person; it can be competition for status, power or resources according to the African Network on Prevention and Protection Against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN et al., 1987). Conflict has also been defined as a process in which two or more parties attempt to frustrate the other's goal attainment. The factors underlying conflict are threefold: interdependent, differences in goals and differences in perceptions; conflict will always exist to some degree in every community, but it can often be managed and resolved (Kathline, 2001). Conflicts occur when there is a disagreement in a social situation over issues of substance or wherever emotional antagonism creates frictions between individuals or groups (Schemer, et al., 2012). There are two types of conflicts, namely substantive conflicts and emotional conflicts (John, et al., 2003). Substantive conflict involves fundamental disagreements over ends or goals to be pursued and the means for their accomplishment; whereas emotional conflicts involve interpersonal difficulties that arise over feelings of anger, dislike, fear, resentment among others.

Conflicts can take three levels namely latent, emerging and manifest (Eric, 2003). Latent is the underlying tension that may be felt by one or more parties. Emerging is conflict that is identified and acknowledged but has not been resolved. Manifest conflict is an active and ongoing conflict (violent and or non-violent) where resolution may have been attempted and failed. Latent conflict is usually the first stage of conflict and is invisible, but people involved can feel it. This is because there is presence of fear and intimidation by either party involved in the conflict. Manifest conflict is usually visible, people engage in physical fights. It takes a

physical toll on the victims as opposed to the latent which take a mental toll on the people involved (Folger et al., 2005).

Natural resource conflicts are disagreements and competitions over access to, control and use of resources such as oil, minerals, forests, water, and fertile land that occur in nature and can be exploited for economic gain (Buckles & Ruskan, 2005). These resources form an important source of income and power; land and forests, in particular, are at the heart of livelihoods to millions of people. When different parties perceive that these resources are distributed or controlled in an unequal manner, this can be a major driver of conflict or instability (Buckles & Ruskan, 2005). Natural resource conflict is increasingly viewed as a normal occurrence, unavoidable and part of everyday social processes as it appears in almost all exchanges regardless of time and temporal settings (UN DPA & UNEP, 2015).

Forests, like any other natural resource, can be a cause of conflict (Eeva & Elina, 2001). Nine percent of the world's dense forests, prevalently in tropic worlds, experienced armed conflicts from 1990 to 2004 (Koning, et al., 2007). Forests provide a wide range of economic opportunities and livelihoods for people, directly and indirectly; they are important and valuable sources of livelihood because forests help to resist climate change, sustain biodiversity conservation, supply food and stabilize fuel-wood supply for humans (Phuong, 2012).

Children can be active participants in conflicts, including forest related conflicts as perpetrators and or as victims (Machel, 2002). Forests related conflicts are not different from general conflicts. According to the United Nations Children Fund's Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 2011), a child is any individual who is below the age of 18years.

Conflicts compromise the satisfaction of children needs; child protection mechanisms are not effectively implemented and or observed (Save the Children, 1990). The Constitution of Kenya places children among the vulnerable population and has mandated the government to protect the interests of children. The Kenya Children Act (GOK, 2007) states that a child shall be entitled to protection from physical and psychological abuse, neglect and any other form of exploitation including sale, trafficking or abduction by any person. The early ages (5-15years) are usually critical for any child development and what happens at this age shapes the life of an individual (Machel, 2002).

Children are mostly affected by the conflicts because they are usually caught up in the conflict zones like forests and sometimes participate in activities that are considered to cause/ lead to conflict and thus are considered active participants in conflicts (Save the children 1990). Conflicts affect children's life by disruption of satisfaction of their basic needs (Maslow, 1943), cause death (ANPPCAN et al, 1987), psychological trauma (Save the Children, 1990), access to simple health services (CRC, 2011) and affecting their safety and security (Healy, 1969), as well as social setting (Clark, 2004). Rights of children including right to education, safety, health and nutrition, shelter and social protection are usually violated during conflicts (CRC, 2011).

It has been observed that in many violent conflicts, children are extensively affected and also actively involved. For instance, between 1990 and 2000, it was estimated that 80 per cent of deaths due to violent conflicts around the world involved women and children (Otunnu, 2002). Children are highly likely to be deeply affected by violent conflict considering their vulnerable nature. In conflict situations, not only are the lives of children at risk but they are

also subject to psychological and social harm, which is likely to affect their development into adulthood and can result in a new generation of highly unstable people (Machel, 2001).

Children are mostly affected by the conflicts because they are usually caught up in the conflict zones and sometimes participate in activities that are considered to cause/ lead to conflict. For instance, by being involved in the extraction of forest resources such as honey, pasture, fuel wood and poles, children are at risk of being caught in conflicts over management of forest resources by different parties including different communities and government agencies (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). In such a case, children are considered active participants in forest conflicts. The overall wellbeing of a child is in danger during violent clashes. Boys and girls are recruited to armed groups, either forcefully or voluntarily – meaning that a child does not have any other option (Lorey, 2001). Recovery from the experiences of clashes by the affected children can, in many cases, be a burdensome process. Civilians have always been killed during violent conflicts, but it has been shown that children are being targeted to a greater extent. In Afghanistan, for example, in 2013 between January to June 1,319 died and 2,500 were injured (Aittokoski, 2013).

Violent conflicts are known to always cause civilians to move away from the areas where fighting is taking place. These internal displacements cause different risk factors for populations, and especially for children. Machel (1996) estimated that 80 per cent of the refugees and internally displaced people (IDPs) in conflict zones across the globe are women and children while the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) projected that during the ongoing conflict in Afghanistan, 64 per cent of the IDPs were children (IDMC, 2013). Children are at risk of being separated from their guardians during violent conflicts. This could be because they have lost their families during the fighting and are thus often

exposed to danger (UNICEF & GOK, 2009). They become more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse by strangers.

Schools and other learning centers are being targeted purposely by armed groups and children's education is often put on halt during conflict situations. In some cases, children die due to the poor conditions that an area is facing when conflict breaks out. In violent conflict sometimes the food systems are destroyed. Unavailability of food and its uneven distribution are common during intractable violent conflicts, and are likely to lead to malnutrition among the poorest populations. Children are at risk of dying from severe malnutrition during violent conflicts (Machel, 2001). During violent conflicts, there is likelihood of breakdown of health and social services which is likely to affect the health of children.

The general breakdown of social order during violent conflicts increases the risk of sexual attacks against civilians (Machel, 2001). It has been observed that rape is being used as a weapon in violent conflicts and it poses a continuous threat mostly to women and girls (Machel, 1996). In some cases, men and boys are also reported as victims of sexual violence and for example, forced to rape during armed clashes. Machel (2001) observes that sexual violence can have long-lasting physical, emotional and social effects on the victims. Some of the worst effects include exposure to sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS, which can destroy a child's health and ultimately lead to death. Children exposed to sexual violence are also likely to carry personal humiliation and are at risk of being rejected by their families.

Kenya's recent past has been marred by violent conflicts which escalated during the general elections. The violent ethnic clashes peaked during the 2007/2008 election disputes. The areas that are resource rich and ethnic diverse such as in the forested ecosystems experienced the most violent of the clashes. It was expected that during the 2007/2008 clashes and other

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prior conflicts, children suffered the most from the effects of violence. It is against the above background that this research was planned with an aim of understanding the place of children in forest related conflicts. The two main questions under investigation are; i. what is the contribution of children in forest conflicts and ii. What are the effects of forest conflicts on children? The results are useful in guiding policy on integration of children rights in natural resources management in Kenya and beyond.

By virtue of children being considered active participants of forest conflicts, the research studied the role and status of children in forest conflicts. The study highlighted how children become active participants in forest related conflicts, how they are affected by forest related conflicts and the status of their rights during conflicts. The study also generated information that will be useful in managing factors that affect children during forest related conflicts.

1.2 Problem Statement

Utilization and management of natural resources are characterized by several types of conflict such as social, legal and management, among others. Forests as natural resources stand out as one of the resource that globally is associated with several types of conflict and the global populations have put a lot of efforts in place with the hope of alleviating forest related conflicts.

Forest resources tend to invoke conflicts in many resource-dependent countries. For example, Blundell, et al (2010) illustrate that three-quarters of Asian forests, two-thirds of African forests and one-third of Latin American forests have been affected by violent conflicts. Many countries that have been affected by forest related conflicts include but not limited to Burma, Colombia, Côte D'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), India,

Indonesia, Mexico, Nepal, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, Sudan, Kenya, Uganda and most notably Liberia, where the UN Security Council had to sanction timber in 2003 in order to stop the flow of revenue to the country.

Forest resources in the above mentioned countries have been characterized by some negative trends, which fuel conflicts within those countries or between many countries. For example, the civil wars fueled by timber harvesting in Liberia between 1980-2003 spilled over to Sierra Leone, Guinea, and Côte d'Ivorie. While illustrating how conflicts over resources may begin in a country, Blundell and colleagues (2010) continue to argue that certain negative trends like corruption in forest sector or in a country may allow the perpetrator to "circumvent (avoid) the allocation process, avoid forestry regulations, evade taxes, and elude punishment". Resultantly, there is attendant impunity, loose rational management and economic development and inevitable conflicts. They also points out that revenue from forestry can be used directly to fuel conflict, especially in a situation where a country uses money taxed from forest resources to purchase arms.

In Kenya, the Mau forests complex has been spawn with a lot of conflicts most of which are caused by severe degradation and excision. Illustratively, according to a project concept prepared by the office of the Prime Minster, 33.301 hectares of eastern Mau forest were excised in 2001. This is estimated to represent more than 54.3 % of the eastern Mau forest cover. Thus, a lot of negative trends which act as conflicts drivers have erupted as a result of these degradations. For instance industries have been closed, jobs lost, there has been reduced agricultural production, high food insecurity, loss of livelihoods and loss of revenue due to poor economic performance.

Forest related conflicts affect people regardless of age or sex (Phoung, 2012). Conflict is made complex by existence of multi ethnic groups (Mussen, 1977). Presence of multi ethnic groups brings in group dynamics which made the situation more complex. This is because of the different values and norms that people in a multi ethnic setting have. Values and norms of the people in a multi ethnic group are different and this difference can be seen as a cause of tension, which is in itself conflict (Oucho, 2002). Children are not spared in this group dynamics, as they are part of the community.

The constitution of Kenya Chapter 4 Section 21 (3) states that all state organs and all public officers have the duty to address the needs of vulnerable groups within society, including women, older members of society, persons with disabilities, children, youth, members of minority or marginalized communities, and members of particular ethnic, religious or cultural communities (GOK, 2010). Children have been identified as vulnerable and the government has been mandated to protect them. The activities that children engage in their everyday life could be potential conflict sources (Phoung, 2012). The United Nations Education, Science & Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2004) observes that conflicts affect the lives of children in terms of education, health, nutrition, safety and security, ego and esteem development, realizing full potential and sense of belonging.

Whereas there are several conventions that seek to protect the rights of children in conflicts, during peace and negotiation (for instance in Kenya's 2007/2008 post-election violence dispute resolution), the plight of children is often over looked. Little is brought to the fore by media reviews as well as research analyses on children and conflicts and yet several works have suggested that children are the most vulnerable group of people during violent conflict. It is in light of this limitation in existing knowledge that this study sought to improve our

understanding of the place of children in forest related conflicts by identifying the roles of children in conflicts (as perpetrators or victims), how the lives of children are affected by forest related conflicts and the status of children rights during conflicts.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aimed at understanding:

a) What is the role of children in forest related conflicts?

b) To what extent do forest related conflicts affect children?

c) Are children and parents aware of children rights?

d) Are these rights protected during forest related conflicts?

1.4 Objectives

1.4.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to examine the place of children in forest related conflicts (in terms of their causation of conflicts and effects of conflict on children)

1.4.2 Specific Objectives

a) To examine activities that children engage in that might have the potential to lead to forest related conflicts

b) To establish effects of forest related conflicts on children

c) To examine how children rights are protected during conflicts

d) To establish status of children rights during forest related conflicts

1.5 Significance of the study

Children can be victims or causing elements of forest related conflicts. Children can also be used as peace agents in conflict situations. However, to use children as peace agents, it is

crucial to understand what children perceive to be the cause of the conflict and how they believe they should be involved in conflicts especially during response and recovery.

The study is of great importance as it provides knowledge that will help in understanding children and the activities they indulge in that might lead to forest related conflicts, understand the effects of forest related conflicts on children and understand management of forest related conflicts in a manner that protects children's rights. The findings of the study have revealed that children are active agents in forest related conflict and as such understanding of children's perceptions and attitudes is of great importance to policy makers as it informs forest conflicts mitigation measures.

1.6 Scope and limitation of study

There are different types of conflict such as personal, interpersonal and intergroup to name just but a few. This study addressed itself to intergroup conflicts involving competitions over forest resources. Forest resources include pasture, timber, poles, land and water among others. All the physical resources that are found within the confines of forest reserves and that were a subject of contest were considered. Concerning the dynamics of conflict, two main types were analyzed namely; latent and manifest. In terms of stakeholders to the conflict, the primary focus was on the children that are 18 years of age. Although adults were involved in this study, their role was to act as key informants on their perceptions on the role of children in forest conflicts. The study area was not just restricted to the forest reserve, but transcended the forest boundary, popularly known as the cutline. This is because, although forest conflicts can start within the forest, they in most cases spill over to the areas adjacent to the forest.

The limitation of this study is twofold: first, the study focused on social conflict and thus the results cannot be generalized in other contexts for example economic conflicts. Secondly, the researcher used a second language in interviewing the children which is likely to have compromised the understanding of the questions posed. The second limitation was overcome by triangulating the information provided by the children through key informant interviews involving adults.

1.7 Definition of key terms

Disaster Management: Ability to manage events (in this context forest related conflicts) when disasters occur.

Vulnerable : Level to which people are susceptible to harm during disasters. In this study, the term is used to show how children inability to protect themselves leaves them susceptible to harm and other effects during conflicts; children level of risks during forest related conflicts.

Conflicts Struggle between two or more persons or disagreement over elements that make the society. Conflicts could be latent (not visible but can be felt including tension) or manifest (the flare up is characterized by physical attacks and destruction of people or property) during forest related conflicts. The study put both latent and manifest conflicts in the discussion.

Forest Related Conflicts: It is conflict caused by struggle for the limited resources from forests. Different people have different views and uses for forests. As a result of the difference, sometimes conflict might occur (whether latent or manifest) and populations, including children, caught up.

Protection	Safety or security measures put in place to shield people against harm during conflicts. In this study, it refers to security measures put in place to shield children against forest resources struggles
Mitigation	Measures or efforts put in place to lessen or reduce the effects of something that disrupts the normal functioning of someone or the society. In this study, it involves the efforts or strategies put in place to reduce the effects of forest related conflicts on children.
Recovery	The phase in disaster management after the disaster has occurred and the effects felt by the populace. It seeks to assist the affected pick up and go back to normal life after the disaster situation. In this study, it means the mechanisms put in place to help children move on with life after forest related conflicts especially when they are affected directly.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

Forest related conflicts, like any other conflict, occur when there is a disagreement in a social situation over issues of substance or whenever emotional antagonisms create frictions between individuals or groups (Phuong, 2012). Conflict situations are often characterized on the basis of an analysis of the conflicting actors, differences or incompatibilities among conflict actors, and the process by which the conflict unfolds (Burton, 1990).

Although natural resources form a central object of struggle in forest conflicts, there are other, often intangible, interests tied up in the conflict (Rubin, et al., 1994). These interests often include status (the perception of people that they are treated with respect and dignity and that their traditions and social position are respected) (Landis & Albert, 2012), identity and values (the cultural, social, and political communities to which people feel tied and the ideas of right and wrong that those entities generate) (Burton, 1990), and power (the method of allocating control and participation in political decision making) (Landis & Albert, 2012). But when do those interests conflict? Broad definitions usually stress one or a combination of the following elements: incompatibility of goals and objectives, contradictory positions and asymmetrical and differential rights and powers (Phuong, 2012).

Forest related conflicts like any other conflict severely impacts on an individual enjoyment of economic and social rights, including the rights to food, adequate housing, health, and education are particularly affected as captured by the International Centre for Policy and Conflict (ICPC, 2011). Attacks and destructions of farms are evident in most conflicts (Phoung, 2012). Forced displacement during conflict also mean that fields are not prepared or sown, thereby reducing overall food production in an area where a large part of the

population depend on subsistence farming according to Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO, 2000).

In Conflict theory, Karl Max (1818-1883) argues that conflict is related to class struggle. Different groups within the same society compete with each other due to the negative distribution of resources. He also argued that there are the elite and the working class, the bourgeoisies (owners of capital) and the proletariats (workers). He also noted that economic exploitation leads to oppression. Max Weber (1864-1920) redefined Karl Max theory and argued that more than one conflict over property existed at any given moment in any given time. He also argued that social stratification (the ranking of individuals and groups in any given society) resulted from struggle over scarce resources in the society. He added that status situation rather than class provided the basis for social groupings in certain situations such as ethnic groups.

In the structural functionalism theory, Emile Durkheim (1858-1916) compared the society to an organism, with different parts that functioned to ensure the smooth and orderly operation and evolution of society. He also distinguished the society and its functions. He argued that the society was made up of individuals (and their behaviours, actions and thoughts), and the society had its own structures and existence in as much as the individuals were part of it. Because the forces and structures are not always effective in producing and maintaining social order, and because there is social change as the division of labour and society develop, there can be a disruption in social solidarity and common consciousness. Talcott Parsons (1902-1979) argued that individuals were separate entities pursuing their self-interest and thus there could be no order. He also argued that people act on the basis of their values, and their actions are oriented and constrained by the values and norms of the people around them,

and those norms and values are the basis of social order. He argued that in order to survive and continue, each social system has to adapt, attain goals, integrate and maintain the pattern (latency).

Maslow (1943) developed a hierarchy of human needs that included physiological (food, shelter and clothing), safety and security, love and belonging, esteem and self-actualization. Conflicts, including forest related conflicts, affect the satisfaction of different needs of people; displacement of people is rampant, and the most affected are children and the caregivers mostly women (UNICEF and GoK, 2009). People are not able to engage in life sustaining activities including farming and cattle rearing which is a major source of food in communities that live in the forests; in some instances, crops in farms and stores are burnt down during the conflicts (FAO, 1996). Conflict increases poverty and poverty hinders the ability of the parents to cloth the children, and thus children are exposed to unfavorable climatic conditions which in turn affect their health (UNICEF and GoK, 2009). The basic needs of the children are not met in most instances.

According to the constitution of Kenya, the state is mandated to address the rights and needs of children and to ensure children have the best lives. However, the attainment of the rights of children as stipulated by the children Acts, the Constitution of Kenya and the CRC cannot be realized in a conflict prone/ potential zones (Grych & Fincham, 2001). The different interests, values and beliefs of the different groups also contribute to the forest related conflicts (Phuong, 2012). Although children might not have a voice, they play a big role in conflicts (including forest related conflicts) either as causal elements or as victims (UNICEF, 2012).

Children constitute an important component of any community. Since the contemporary African society, the child has been an integral part in the political social economic activities of such societies. According to the English dictionary (Oxford Online Dictionary, 2010) a child is defined as 'a young human being below the age of puberty or below the legal age of majority: a son or daughter of any age'. In Kenya, the legal age is 18years.

2.2 Activities children undertake that have potential to cause forest conflicts

A society is made up of different people who have different values and beliefs. People's lives are determined by the way they are socialized from an early age; the beliefs and attitudes that they are brought up determines their behavior (Ajzen, 1991; Clifford, 1993; Galtung, 1996). Whereas some people know forests as an income generating source, other communities prefer to conserve the forest for future generations (Phuong, 2012). Children are socialized to behave in a particular way depending on their family setting; they mould their behavior and exhibit that which they see the adults in their everyday life. Children are socialized and adopt the beliefs that their parents or caregivers possess during their upbringing (Mussen, 1977). Their beliefs and perceptions determine the way they behave in conflict situations (Machel, 2002).

Kaimowitz (2002) observes that forest related conflict can result from unfair or unclear land resource ownership rights that render local communities' logging activities illegal. He further suggests that in the past there was little interest in forested areas, which were deemed as remote and inaccessible frontiers. During those times, there was little government involvement, and minority ethnic groups maintained their own systems of management and governance over forests. Under such management regimes, women and children were allowed access to forest products such as pasture, wood fuel and building materials (Kaimowitz, 2002). Children have been observed to be active participants in forest extraction

(and sometimes, forest destruction). In the modern times, forest conflicts revolve around access to forest products and pit the government against the community and or different communities competing over perceived scarce forest products. A study by Collier & Hoeffler (2012) suggests that countries that are largely dependent on natural resources are highly prone to civil violence. Children in Sub-Saharan Africa are engaged in family chores such as fetching water, pasture and fuel wood (Spittler & Bourdillon, 2012). Children in African setting are mainly tasked with grazing roles where they herd livestock from morning till evening (Machel, 2002). In catchment areas, children are likely to fetch these products from the forest. It is thus expected that children are active participants in forest product competitions in case of perceived scarcities. Competition over shared forest resources (like water, pastoral land, vital building materials like timber, firewood and charcoal) between communities is likely to fuel forest conflicts (Machel, 1996).

There are different players in forest related conflicts, just like in any other conflict, ranging from children, men, women, communities, companies and the government; each of the different players has an inherent risk that they pose to forests with their roles ranging from deliberate to non-deliberate risks (Koning, et al., 2007). Forests have been sources of livelihoods for many communities since the cradle of mankind. Many forests are protected reserves where any human activities are totally restricted; however, people occasionally venture into forests in search of better pastures, foodstuff or recreation (Phuong, 2012). In case of forest reserves with regulated or restricted access, children are expected to be at loggerhead with forest guards whenever they engage in illegal access.

Children are forced to tend to farms and graze animals even in areas where there is potential conflict – children have no choice in terms of supporting their families; at times, children are

caught up in conflicts when they are away in the forests and field grazing animals (FAO, 2000).

Children have been used as child soldiers to fight alongside adults in most armed conflicts around the world. Child soldiers have been defined as children under the age of 18 who are recruited by a state or non-state armed group (United Nations, 2007). In the recent past children have been recruited into the army /armed groups in the Central African Republic, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Myanmar, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria and Yemen (UNICEF, 2007). As soldiers, children are used in a different ways, including active fighting as well as support roles. Active fighting may involve laying of land mines, suicide bombing, human shields, messengers, spies while their support roles may include cooking, porting, and for sexual purposes (Mazurana & Carlson, 2006). For a long time Sri Lankan children were at a high risk of being abducted, recruited and used as soldiers by the Government of Sri Lanka (GoSL) , The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP/Karuna) fighters (UNICEF, 2007). According to UNICEF (2007) between 2002 and 2007 a total of 6,248 children were recruited by the LTTE while some 453 were recruited by the TMVP/Karuna. Kaimowitz (2002) suggests that in countries where violent conflicts are the order of the day, forests can serve as battlegrounds and havens for armed groups, providing refuge and food for combatants. In Sierra Leone, for example, Kaimowitz reports that forests assisted the Revolutionary United Front to regroup, recruit, and indoctrinate child soldiers. The recruitment and use of child soldiers violates their rights and has been widely condemned in the international community yet the act continues to be widespread.

2.3 Effects of Forest Related Conflicts on Children

2.3.1 Psychological Effects

Psychological damage caused by displacement and conflict is always difficult to estimate (Save the Children, 1990). Individual trauma often gets overshadowed by mass misery but the damage done to children in conflict is inevitably tragic, and irrevocable in its effects on the way the child views the adult world (Machel, 2002). Children exposed to conflict sometimes get confused on the role of adults because on one hand the adults attack them while on the other hand their parents trying to protect them and keep them safe; the long term effect of exposure to conflict is devastating (Jon, 2002).

Emotional disorders resulting from stress are a temporary adaptation to danger; in such a case, the person is trying to cope with danger even though it is not an effective method (Healy, 1969). The period immediately following a disaster is crucial; non effective behavior during this period may prove very damaging (Folger, et al., 2005). Perhaps more than any other time, effective action during this period will save lives, diminish disability, reduce abnormal behavior and generally cut down confusion; the resumption to normal behavior is very important to individuals and people around especially the community (Landis & Albert, 2012). When limited help is given to the victims in terms of managing people faced by conflict, the effects come out in future and are usually devastating (Jon, 2002).

Due to the psychological effects of conflicts, some individuals develop post-traumatic stress disorders (Machel, 2002). It is difficult to estimate how many people especially children and women suffer from abuse and exploitation in Kenya during conflicts, as too often domestic and familial violence goes unreported and unpunished, and gaps in policies, systems and institutions leave many of the victims of these crimes having to fend for themselves; When

abuse is not reported, children end up with psychological trauma as they are unable to recover on their own (ICPC, 2011).

2.3.2 Safety and Security

Safety and security of all people is vital for human development (Maslow, 1943). Safety and security are conditions and expectations to which every person is entitled to, by virtue of his or her existence as a human being (Healy, 1969). Security is the state of feeling safe, protected and secure for an individual and their property; it provides an enabling environment for people regardless of age or sex and provides an enabling environment for social, economic and political development (Save the Children, 1990). Safety of the populace including children and women is compromised by conflicts; Conflicts do not breed love; it disentangles the community and position people against each other (UNESCO, 2004).

Rape has been widely used as a weapon of war whenever armed conflicts arise between different parties; Rape occurs in all social and ethnic groups (Grych & Fincham, 2001). It is a crime that shocks and traumatizes the victim and reflects the acceptance of discrimination against women in a society; yet it is largely suffered in silence Many women and young girls were raped and gang raped by raiders during the post-election violence in Kenya; some of them were humiliated before their families - However, not all cases were reported, most women and girls suffered in silence infringes the right to someone's body and the effects to individuals is usually traumatizing (ICPC, 2011; TJRC, 2013). Survivors experience life-long emotional distress, mental health problems and poor reproductive health; some of the abused women and children raped during conflicts are infected with HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases; sometimes, children witness abuse or are victims themselves (ANPPCAN, et al., 1987). Some women bear children from the rape ordeals and this leads to

psychological damage especially because these children remain a constant reminder of the ordeals the women went through (UNICEF & GOK, 2009). On the other hand, children bore out of war rape (during conflicts) are at times victims of negligence and hatred from the parents and these sometimes have a negative effect on the children in the long run (Save the Children, 1990).

2.3.3 Effects on Family, Love and Belonging

Whenever there is conflict, children from the different communities, though they interact with each other in other social settings like church and school, tend to be divided along certain ethnic lines (Save the Children, 1990). Children feel safer near their peers in terms of exchanging and discussing different ideas and ideology (Clark, 2004). Children in the world participate in recreational activities like games which relate to their age and peers; however, conflict does not provide for such an environment for children to grow together and in solidarity with one another (Mussen, 1977).

Every individual needs to feel loved and belong to a certain group (Maslow, 1943). Children need love and belonging in their early stages of life, as these determine how they grow up and what they become in terms of socialization in future (UNICEF, 2012). During conflicts, children are unable to establish and maintain friendships that cut across the different groups that they relate with each day in their social setting and that creates an environment that children do not feel loved by others (Machel, 2002).

World over, it is the role of the parents and the government to protect children; children need to be protected from harm whether physical, emotional or psychological harm (North, 1985). During conflicts, children are separated from their parents and thus do not experience the

love and belonging which is crucial in the early stages of a human development (UNICEF, 2012).

During post-election violence in Kenya, women who were married to men of different ethnic communities were forced to separate for the security of their spouses while others were forced by their relatives; this means that there are many broken families and the most affected were children who had to live without either of the parents (ICPC, 2011). Unless there is reintegration programmes once children have been separated from their parents during conflicts, children become demoralized and are unable to take up their different roles in the society (Machel, 2002).

During conflicts, children are separated from their parents and the communities they belong to (ANPPCAN, 1987). Children need to feel loved and belong to a community they can relate to, starting with a family; children need to have friends and peers, whom they can interact and grow with (Machel, 2002). Loss of husbands/ fathers and loss of property during conflicts leave lasting trauma among many people especially women and children (Avigram & Honey, 1982). Stress levels were very high among the victims of post-election conflict, with many parents especially women developing stress related disorders (ICPC, 2011). The effects of conflict boils down to children who become anti-social, live in fear of the unknown and who prefer to keep to themselves for fear of victimization or been attacked again (Machel, 2002).

The society has placed different roles for a man and a woman in catering for their families (which children learn at a very young age), conflicts have changed this; women have been left overburdened – assuming the role of head, provider and security (Clifford, 1993). During the post-election violence in Kenya, women's burdens became heavy as they took

responsibility for household work and obligations after conflicts; women had to assume the role of the head in their families as well as supplement the finances of absent male relatives, whom either were killed, deserted them or went missing during the conflicts (ICPC, 2011).

2.3.4 Effect on Education, Self-Actualization and Esteem

UNICEF (2007) identifies Education, Health, Nutrition, Water and Sanitation, Child Protection (Safety) and Education as a right for every child. According to the Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS, 2010), with a national net enrolment rate of over 90 per cent in 2008, the Government of Kenya has been able to significantly improve children's access to education through the introduction of free primary education in 2003.

Convention on Rights of Children (CRC, 2011) notes that children have the right to education − that the state has the duty to ensure that primary education is made free and compulsory and that measures are put in place to encourage regular school attendance and to minimize drop out. It also noted that adolescents and young people have the right to fulfill their highest potential and contribute meaningfully to society. Conflicts pose a challenge for children to attend school, which is crucial for children development (Machel, 2002).

As conflict persists, economic and social conditions suffer and educational opportunities become more limited or even non-existent (Machel, 2002). The CRC abides the government to the fact that children have the right to education. Following displacement of populations, academic calendars are interrupted thus many childrens education is affected and most of them are forced to repeat classes especially at early ages (UNESCO, 2004).

Children develop confidence and esteem at an early age; children growing up in a safe and stable environment develop a strong sense of confidence which is crucial in the later stages of life (Maslow, 1946). Conflict destabilizes a community and thus affects the way the children relate with themselves, their peers and other people in the society (Grych & Fincham, 2001). Self-actualization means realizing one's full potential - conflicts interfere with children development in the sense that children are forced to grow in unstable areas thus realizing their full potential poses a challenge (Machel, 2002).

2.3.5 Effect on Health, Nutrition and Healthcare access

Limited access to hospital and medical care poses a challenge for promoting children health and well-being, especially when faced by conflict (Save the Children, 1990). Kenya Demographic and Health Survey published in 2009 highlights that Kenya has made important steps to improve the health of its mothers and children. In 2003, infant and child mortality stood at 77 and 115 deaths per 1,000 live births respectively (KDHS, 2010). Armed violence leads directly to heavy casualties; but the indirect toll is far heavier (ANPPCAN, et al., 1987). By disrupting basic social and health services and by diverting very scarce human, material, scientific and technological resources to the development of the machinery of death and destruction every year, millions of people die from preventative causes (UNICEF, 2011).

The children Act (GOK, 2007) obligates the government to protect children and provide basic needs including hospitals and schools. Since the onset of HIV in Kenya, thousands of children have been rendered orphans while tens of thousands of Kenya's children were separated from their families during conflict (UNICEF, 2007). Increasingly more children are becoming separated from their parents due to poverty, food insecurity, family disputes and violence at home (Save the children, 1990). It is estimated that more than 2.4 million children

have lost one or both parents, have a seriously ill parent, or have been separated from their families; providing adequate care and support for orphans is important especially if the separation was caused by a conflict (UNICEF, 2012).

The people who live in forests mainly rely on farming and other economic activities in the forests for sustainable livelihoods; once evicted, there is no source of income to sustain the families (Machel, 1996). Farming allows for parents to feed the families and the community enjoys food security (FAO, 2000). When conflicts occur, food in the farms is spoilt either by the perpetrators (burning or uprooting/cutting down plants) or as a result of farmers deserting their crops while fleeing (FAO, 2000). Lack of food or adequate food rations affects children health and increase mortality rates; nutrition levels are also low thus malnutrition observed especially among younger children (UNICEF, 2011).

2.4 Protection of children rights

Children Act (GOK, 2007) indicates that any child, who becomes the victim of abuse, shall be accorded appropriate treatment and rehabilitation in accordance with such regulations. However, many cases go unreported; few children were offered the required medical attention after sexual abuses (ICPC, 2011).

Kenya Children Act (GOK, 2007) provides that a child shall be entitled to protection from physical and psychological abuse, neglect and any other form of exploitation including sale, trafficking or abduction by any person. It also recognizes that a child shall have a right to live with and to be cared for by his parents; and that every child shall have an inherent right to life and it shall be the responsibility of the Government and the family to ensure the survival and development of the child. Conflict compromises these rights. The Act further recognizes that

a child shall have a right to live with and to be cared for by his parents; and that every child shall have an inherent right to life and it shall be the responsibility of the government and the family to ensure the survival and development of the child. Children have the right to live with their parents unless it is in the child's best interests (UNICEF, 2007). Conflicts lead to broken families, compromising the right of children to live with the parents (ICPC, 2011). Lastly, it states that among the duties of the child is work for the cohesion of the family; and respect his parents, superiors and elders at all times and assist them in case of need. During conflicts, sometimes roles of the child change and the child becomes the caregiver to elders especially their mothers who are affected by conflict and left weak physically (Save the children, 1990).

The CRC notes that children have the right to protection from violence, abuse, neglect and commercial and sexual exploitation; Children have the right to live with their parents unless it is in their best interests. It also noted that adolescents and young people have the right to fulfill their highest potential and contribute meaningfully to society. During conflicts, these rights are compromised and children are left more vulnerable (Machel, 2002).

The Kenya Constitution Chapter 4 section 53(1) states that every child has the right to free and compulsory basic education; to basic nutrition, shelter and health care; and to be protected from abuse, neglect, harmful cultural practices, all forms of violence, inhuman treatment and punishment, and hazardous or exploitative labor; to parental care and protection (GOK, 2010). Conflict situations as observed by IRIN (a humanitarian news and analysis agent, under the United Nations humanitarian affairs – 2011), means that hundreds of children miss out on education as families move from forests following evictions to other areas as they seek refuge elsewhere. This position in Kenyan law is also supported by the

CRC (2011) which asserts that every child has the inherent right to life and access to quality healthcare and health education; every child has the inherent right to life and access to proper nutrition; access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation.

2.5 Theoretical Framework

2.5.1 Conflict Theory

Conflict itself is a part of any society and cannot be avoided; it is through conflict that different interests in society are reconciled (Phoung, 2012). According to UN (2007), in a democratic stable society, these conflicts take non-destructive forms, competition between political parties and interests, public debates and discussion, and the day to day scrutiny and criticism of government. Such conflicts do not undermine the basic structures of the state – the public administration, the legal system or electoral politics. Rather conflicts infuse them with life. However, destructive and violent conflicts are quite different as they undermine the very fabric of a society, eliminate the rule of law and basic security and create a vicious cycle that sucks in more and more combatants to fuel the crisis (Landis & Albert, 2012). This is the crisis the people are subjected to during forest related conflicts.

Several theorists have addressed themselves to the subject matter of conflicts. Conflict work can be traced to early thinkers such as Sellin Thorsten, Karl Marx and Marx weber, among others. The following arguments are relevant to the study of the role of children in forest related conflicts.

Thorsten Sellin (1938) argued that there is existence of culture conflict if there are different people (groups) with different norms (rules and behaviours) living in close proximity with each other. The norms are instilled in the individuals by other members of the community. He

also argues that primary conflicts were conflicts that arose between two different cultures. They could be caused where there are two societies in close proximity that might have boarder conflict. It could also be caused if one group moved to the territory of another group or at least where they use their power to extend their legal norms to cover territory of another culture. Finally, he argued that conflict could occur where members of one culture migrate or move into the territory of another, where they will be made to accept the norms of the host culture. Where forests are encroached for human settlement, it provides for invasion of other people boundaries and or property, which leads to conflicts.

George Simmels (1858-1918) argued that conflict brings positive change in society, and can strengthen social relations (Simmel & Kurt, 1950). He argued that conflict is responsible for development, modification of interest groups and their unification and organization and that it is useful in resolving emergent views and bringing unity through the process of conflict. He argued that threats from conflicts lead to groups integrating in order to protect themselves against the enemy. This can be evident when people from the same community unite to fight the other ethnic communities fighting them during forest related conflicts. However, Simmels ignored the negative aspects of conflict including loss of life and breaking of the community. He also looked at conflict to occur only in small groups but, like seen in the forest related conflicts, conflict can occur in large heterogeneous groups of people.

Glasyl (1999) noted that fuels of dispute are caused by varied reasons including disruptions of stakes; interests; as limitation of benefit sharing; differences of emotion and perception among others. In relation to forest resources, a conflict takes place when a forest dependent inhabitant or organization disrupts or damages the interest and other benefits derived from the

forest of another actor. This conflict is manifested under different behaviors and attitudes toward that resource use and tenure-ship.

Further, recent studies (Humphreys, 2005; Barnett & Adger, 2007; Brunnschweiler & Bulte, 2009; Van der Ploeg, 2011; Le Billon, 2013) note that conflicts in natural resource management occur when two or more forest-based dwellers compete for the same resources. Consequently, there are disputes and disagreements regarding access, control and management, and uses of natural resources. Moreover, access and control are greatly influenced by property relations. Therefore, property rights (PR) can be seen as a main reason of contradictions over natural resources. In addition, the property and access practices are usually conflictive. Property is as "a right in the sense of an enforceable claim" while access is defined as "the ability to benefit from things" (Ribot & Peluso, 2003). Besides, property rights are complex because it often involves in bundles of rights, including user rights, rights to transfer, rights to manage and rights to sell (Schlager & Ostrom, 1992).

2.5.2 Maslow Theory

Abraham Maslow (1943) argued that there are five hierarchical needs of each individual regardless of the race, gender or sex. The lower level need must be satisfied before the upper need is satisfied. He noted that the needs are crucial for human development. The lowest human need, he argued was physiological needs which include food, clothing and shelter, and are also called the basic needs. He argued that if these needs are not met, a human being, including children cannot function normally. Food (including air and water) gives one the energy to undertake different activities in the day, whereas shelter provide a physical place where one can feel safe and secure (although sometimes not in totality), whereas clothing keeps one shielded from physical harm and adverse climatic conditions in some areas. Due to

the low livelihood of the people in forests, it poses a challenge during conflicts for children to have decent housing – as they resettle in camps when fleeing; water- forests which are water catchment areas have been affected by human resettlements and activities like farming; Clothing – the harsh climatic conditions in forests needs warm clothes to protect the children from developing diseases associated with cold and to protect them from harm in their day to day life activities. Conflicts affect children access to the most basic needs.

Once the physiological needs are satisfied, a person can move to the next hierarchy of need which is the safety needs. Safety take precedence in all areas, one needs to feel safe and secure. Conflict prone environment does not provide for safety for children to grow or be catered for. Safety includes physical and emotional safety. Children who do not grow up in safe environments have high chances of developing post-traumatic stress disorders or trauma from the conflict activities. Conflicts and potential conflict situation do not benefit the children as they need security and safety to grow to full adults.

The third level of needs is the love and belonging. Everyone in the world over wants to be loved and to belong to a particular group or community. Maslow argued people need to develop friendships within and outside family. Children too need the friendship especially in schools, churches and other social areas. The fact that children rarely discriminate makes it easier for them to develop friendships beyond the ethnic communities they belong to. Children also want to be loved and have both parents with them in order to have a sense of belonging to a family. However, during conflicts, children are turned against other children especially on ethnic lines; their families are broken as people flee or resettle in camps and they are unable to sustain the earlier formed friendships and other social bonds.

A human being wants to be accepted and valued by others – a sense of esteem. Maslow noted that the desire of people to feel respected is translated to esteem. Depression often associated with post-traumatic stress disorders may affect the esteem of people. Esteem develops at a young age, and should be nurtured to adulthood, so the child can grow feeling important to the society he or she belongs to. During conflicts, children in forests develop a sense of not been valued by the other members of the society and that's why they are subjected to conflicts. They also feel they belong to the wrong ethnic community or group and this in most instances lead to low self-esteem – children consider themselves worthless to other people.

Reaching the highest point of an individual is called the self-actualization. It is the highest level in the hierarchy of human needs according to Abraham Maslow. He noted that it is accomplishing everything one can and be the most one can be. Children need to be nurtured well from a young age to reach the self-actualization level. The environment in areas exposed to or prone to conflicts does not provide for the children to reach the self-actualization stage as they are unable to complete education, they are faced with numerous health problems, and they develop stress disorders and have low self-esteem. This challenges the wellbeing of the children when they develop to adults.

2.6 Conceptual Framework

As reviewed before, the Kenya Children Act (2007) offers several clauses on protection of children. The constitution of Kenya (2010) also has provisions that highlight the protection and rights of children. However, enforcement of this laws and rights needs a stable environment for children to enjoy them. Forest related conflict, just like any other conflict, does not provide the stable environment.

Children like all human beings have the need to grow in the best conducive environment. Conflicts do not offer this environment. Children are subject to events including murder and rape during conflicts that exposes them to sexually transmitted infection and diseases and HIV/AIDS. The education of children during conflicts is affected regardless of age, as many children move with their parents to look for safer locations (mostly camps), which makes them lag behind and thus repeat classes. They are exposed to physical and sexual abuses during conflicts, and at times, some children lose their lives or develop stress disorders which lead to suicide.

Although the government is mandated to protect children as they are categorized as vulnerable by the constitution, the population overwhelms the security forces and therefore not everyone is able to access the services. Medical care is crucial for all children but the access to quality medical services during and after conflicts is a challenge in the forest and therefore some children either develop long term effects of the injuries sustained during conflicts, succumb to the injuries or some live with diseases that could have been prevented if they access the right medical care. Hatred and a sense of not being loved is evident among children affected and exposed to conflicts as they tend to translate conflicts as hatred – they feel like they do not belong to the society that fights among itself. Children are not brought up in the most conducive environment to ensure they reach the self-actualization point. Children are active players in forest related conflicts, both as victims and conflict causing elements.

However, children can play a crucial part in reducing forest conflicts if their roles and status are aligned along conservation of forests. Parental guidance is also a vital tool to ensure that

conflicts are nipped early before they turn into hostilities between households (Landis et al, 2012).

The following framework (Figure 1) helps us to understand the roles of children in conflicts as well as how conflicts usually affect them. The framework draws from the variables in the Maslow (1943) hierarchy of needs and the access theory by Ribot & Peluso (2003)
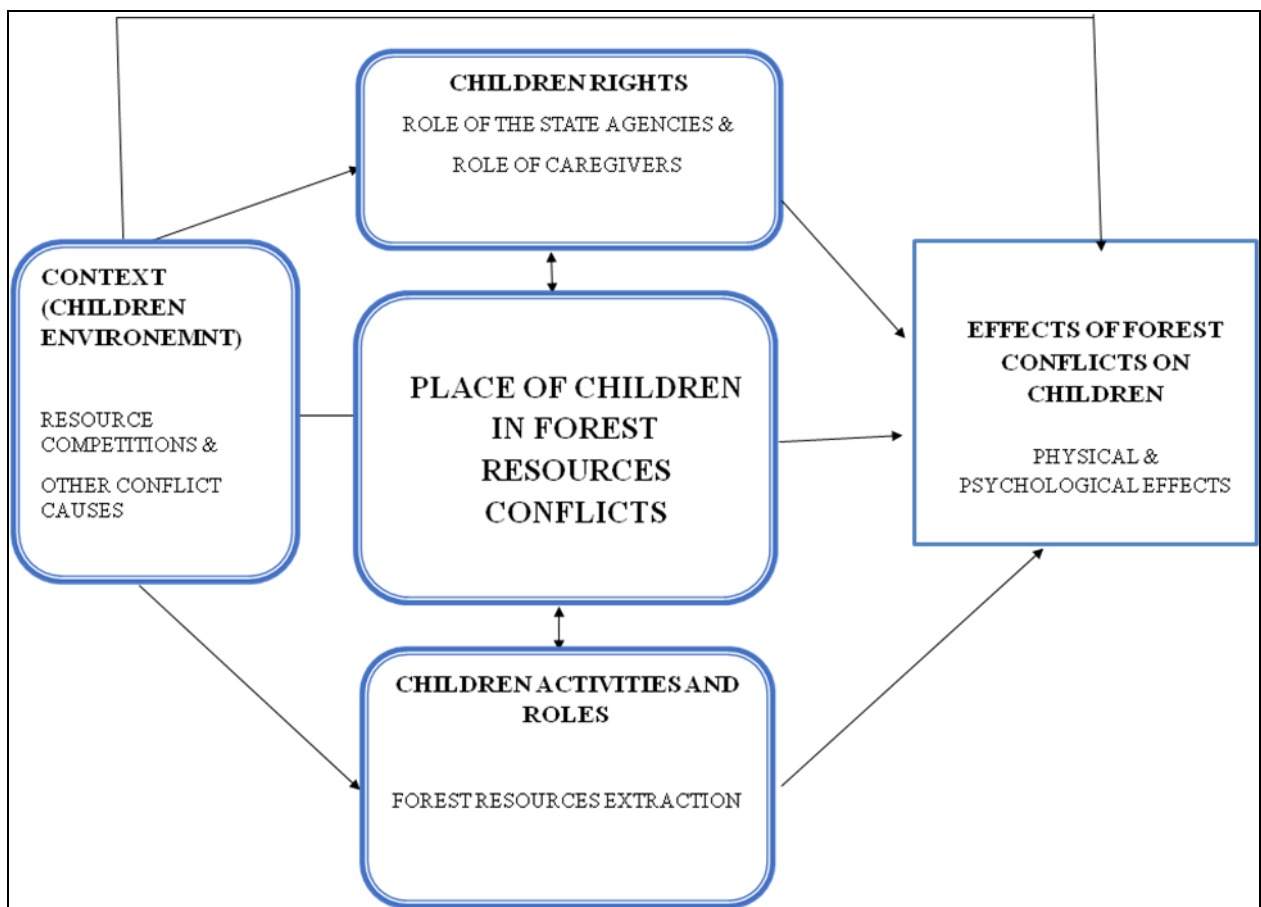
Figure 1: The place of children in forest conflicts

(Author, 2015)

The level of children involvement in conflicts (as causal agents or victims) and the effects past conflicts had on them affects efforts of Prevention, Mitigation, Preparedness, Response

and recovery in Forest related conflicts. Children activities including grazing, lighting fires, friendly games that turn and become violent, trespassing in protected lands and perceptions and belief are key variables that have the possibility of causing forest related conflicts.

After conflicts, effects (usually devastating) are felt by the affected, more so children since they are more vulnerable in times of calamities. Effects range from psychological (usually traumas), compromising safety and security of children, splitting families, broken social relationships, disrupting education thus affecting self-actualization by children and their self-esteem.

Children rights are conditions stipulated by law protecting children and their welfare. However, conflicts affect the protection of children's rights. When children rights are interfered with, children are unable to progress in a safe and enabling environment.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Site Description

Eastern Mau covers around 65.921 hectares   and lies about 30 km south of Nakuru. Stretching westwards, it covers eight forest stations -Sururu, Likia, Teret, Nessuit, Elburgon, Mariashoni, Kiptunga and Bararget. It borders Naivasha on the east, Narok on the south and covers Mauche, Mau-Narok, Njoro, Elburgon, and Kiringet to the west (UNEP, et al., 2008).
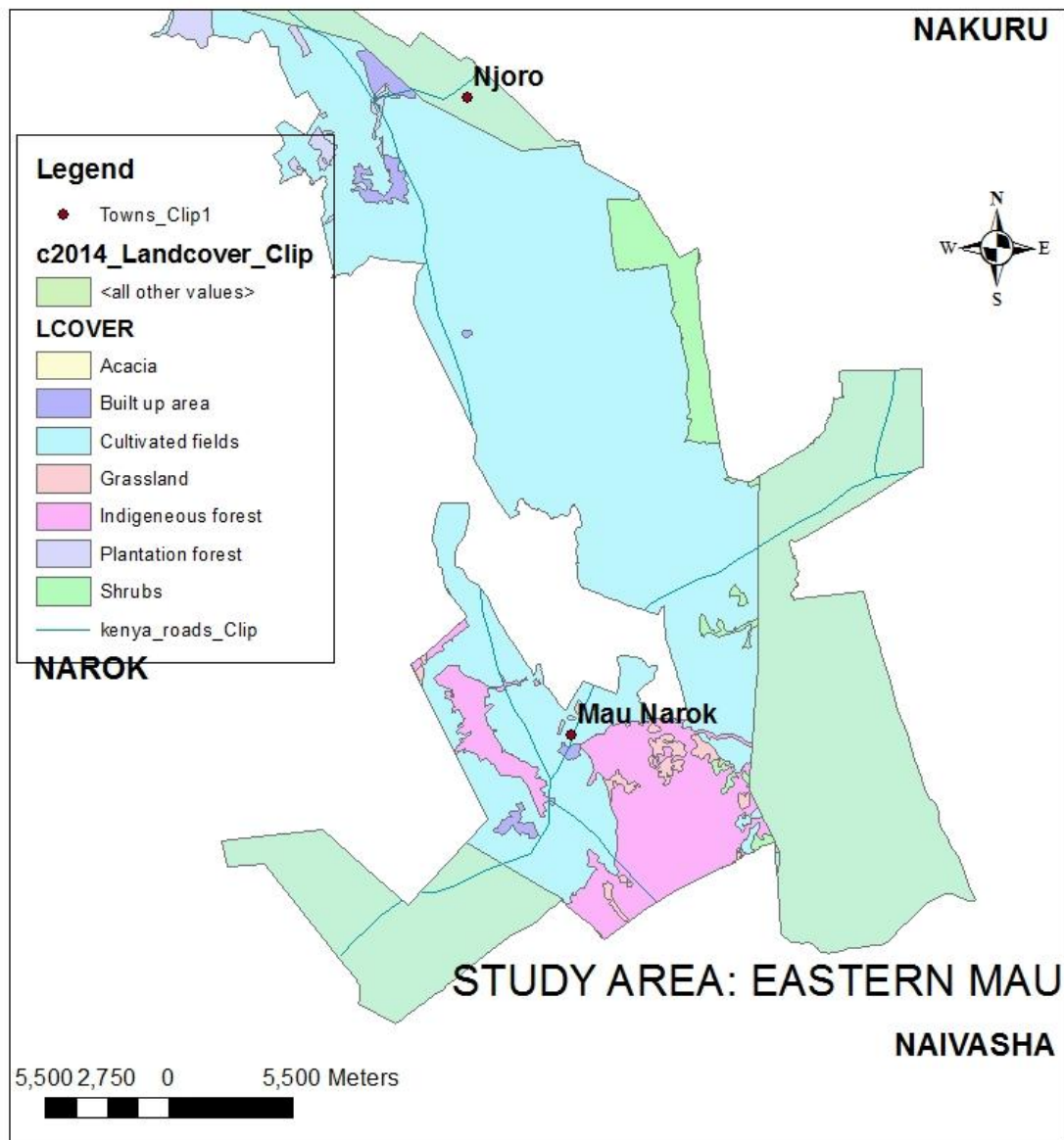
Figure 2: A map of Eastern Mau

(Author, 2015)

The research was conducted in Mathangauta, Taita and Town Maji villages in Likia settlement Mau Forest.

3.1.1 Climatic and Hydrological Characteristics

Eastern Mau lies 1,200–2,600 m above sea level with an annual rainfall of about 2,000 mm spread throughout the year. The forest regulates major water catchment areas and act as a water source of a number of rivers and streams – Njoro River, Nderit River, Makalia River and Naishi River – which drains into Lakes Nakuru, Bogoria, Baringo and Victoria.

3.1.2 Flora and Fauna

The forest also offers habitant to many animals including endangered mammals like the yellow-backed duiker *(Cephalophus sylvicultor)* and the African golden cat (*Felis aurata*). It is also home to animals, like the giant forest hog, gazelle, hyena, antelope, monkey and small animals like the giant African genet, tree hyrax, and honey badger (Sang, 2001). The vegetation cover varies from shrubs, bamboo forest, indigenous forest and plantation forest plantations (UNEP *et al.,* 2008)

3.1.3 Demographic and Socio-economic Aspects

Different communities have settled in or adjacent to the Eastern Mau forest. Those in the forest range from *bona fide* settlers to illegal squatters. The difference mainly derives from the process through which they found their way in the Mau Forests Complex. Most of the settlement took place through the 2001 excisions of forest reserves. Majority of the population are farmers who conduct large as well as small scale farming. Through the ecological services it provides, Easter Mau supports key economic sectors in Rift Valley

including energy, tourism, agriculture-cash crops, subsistence crops, and livestock (UNEP *et al.,* 2008).

3.2 Site Selection

The choice of Mau forests complex was informed by Stabilizing Kenya through solving forest related conflicts (STAKE) Project, which provided funding for this project and focuses on Mau forest complex. The main objective of the STAKE project is to contribute to stability in Kenya by understanding and targeting the underlying factors that lead to conflicts over forest related resources. Understanding the role and status of children in forest related conflict, the stakeholders will understand factors related to children that have potential to lead to forest related conflicts.

The communities have at one time been in conflict with each other over the limited resources and conflicting interest in forest resources. Mau Forest is easily accessible, at approximately 400kms from Nairobi. The ideal research setting is where the observer has easy access, is able to establish immediate rapport with participants and can gather data that is directly related to the research interests (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998). The choice of Likia settlement is based on the fact that Likia area has been plagued by inter-ethnic clashes in the recent past. The settlement is also adjacent to the forest, and there is population movement to and from the settlement to the forest and the population in Likia relies on the forest for various resources.

3.3 Research Design

The research study used survey research design which consisted of a predetermined set of questions that is given to a sample. With a representative sample one can describe the

attitudes of the population from which the sample was drawn. Further, one can compare the attitudes of different populations as well as look for changes in attitudes over time (Kuter & Yilmaz, 2001). As such, survey research was helpful in indicating the trends in the way children lives are affected by the conflicts and enable generalization of the findings of the research study done. This research design was considered appropriate for this study because it saved time, expenses and the amount of quality information collected was valid.

3.4 Selection of respondents and Sampling procedure

The target population for this study included child residents (between 12-18 years) in Likia Settlement of the Mau forests complex. Due to the limited amount of information that can be collected from children, the researcher also conducted ten key informants interviews (Table 1) and two focus group discussions - one for women and another for men (FGD).

Table 1: Profile of key informants

CATEGORY	NUMBER OF RESPONSES		
	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Teachers	1	1	2
Parents	1	1	2
Health givers (Nurse)		1	1
Local administration (police, chief and 2 village elders)	4		4
Forest Authority Representative	1		1
TOTAL	**7**	**3**	**10**

The key informants above were selected based on their level of interaction with children affected directly or indirectly by the forest related conflicts. Participants in each FGD were drawn from different ethnic communities residing in Likia and of different age groups. Thus, for Key informant interviews and FGDs, the study employed purposive sampling to ensure that those selected had more knowledge of forest related conflicts in the village and had interacted closely with children (and or their caregivers) who had been affected by forest related conflicts. They were also selected based on how long they had stayed and/or worked in the area.

For the purposes of sampling the study applied a non-probability sampling, where target population was chosen on assumption that they were representative of the population of interest. Specifically, purposive sampling was undertaken. With the help of a local community member, the researcher was able to identify children who were in the target age group. The children were selected based on the age and sex. Only one child was selected from each homestead. For a homestead with two children in the target age group, the older child was selected because they were assumed to have more information on the said topic compared to the younger ones.

3.4 Sample size

The research aim was to target 40 children from each of the 3 villages where the study was undertaken; however Taita population was low and scattered and thus a sample of 20 was used. The total sample for the study was 100 children. Although the aim was to interview 50% male and 50% females, there was 54% males and 46% females. The researcher selected the 12 – 18 age group as they could easily bring out issues relating to them in regards to

forest related conflicts. This was also because at this age, some of the children who had lived in the forest for more than 10 years had experienced manifest conflict in previous years.

3.5 Methods of Data Collection

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Data for the quantitative part of the study were collected using structured questionnaires. The questionnaires contained both closed and open ended questions. This was to allow for intensity and richness of individual perceptions in respondent responses. Each respondent received the same set of questions (Appendix 1).

3.5.2 Interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

An interview guide (Appendix 2) was prepared and used to collect information from key informants and another for the focus group discussions (Appendix 3). An interview is a data collection technique that involves oral questioning of respondents, either individually or as a group. This was done to complement the questionnaire and for those groups of people who are unable to fill in the questionnaire appropriately. Face to face interview also gave a human face and allowed for the simplification on questions for the respondents especially with the parents, village elders, government authorities and NGOs. Case studies were also analyzed. Case studies shared by the respondents were also used to document the roles and status of children in forest related conflicts. Focus group discussions were also conducted to give room for diverse views and discussions that generated more information from a diverse populace, giving the research a human dimension to impersonal data. It also helped in discovering how different groups think and feel about the topic and why they hold certain opinions. Two focus group discussions were conducted. One was made up of women and another of men.

3.8 Ethical Issues

Prior informed consent to participate in the study was sought from all respondents before administering the research instruments. All respondents were assured of confidentiality. Because children under age of 18 could not give consent, the researcher sought consent from parents of the children. A written consent was part of the questionnaire (Appendix 1) and was signed by the parent/ caregiver before children answered the questionnaire.

3.9 Data Analysis

The data collected by use of questionnaires were edited and checked for completeness and comprehensiveness. Quantitative data were edited, summarized and coded for easy classification in order to facilitate tabulation and interpretation. The data were organized using the Statistical Package for Social sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics such as percentages and frequencies were used to analyze the variables in the study.

Qualitative data were organized in NVIVO package and themes derived after coding the textual data. The themes were derived from the study objectives. However, in the course of coding the data, new unanticipated themes were identified from the narrations and stories told. The texts were further analyzed to understand the content under each theme identified. This procedure is known as content analysis (Gray, 2009).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Profile of respondents

The study involved a total of 100 children drawn from different parts of the study area. Out of the total number of respondents, 54% were male while 46% of the sample was female (Table 2).

Table 2: Distribution of respondents by gender

Gender	Frequency	%
Male	54	54
Female	46	46
Total	100	100

In terms of age variation, 47 respondents (that is 25 boys and 22 girls − 47%) were aged between 12 and 15 years while 53 respondents (that is 29 boys and 24 girls - 53%) of the respondents were aged between 16-18 years (Table 3)

Table 3: Age of the respondents

Sex	12-15 years	16-18 years	%
Male	25	29	54
Female	22	24	46
Total	47	53	100

The length of time people spend in an area is important in determining their level of experience with the phenomena under investigation. In this study, it was observed that half of the respondents (at 50%) had stayed in the village for between thirteen and eighteen years,

31% of the respondents had stayed in Likia area between seven and twelve years, while 19% had only stayed in the Likia villages for less than seven years (Figure 3)
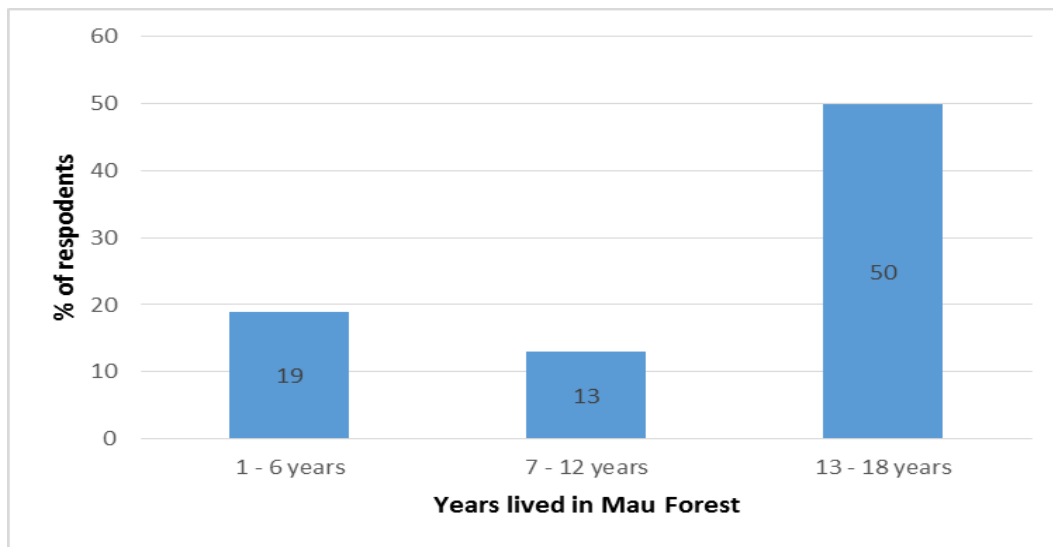
Figure 3: Period of stay in the village

4.2 Experience with forest related conflict

The study sought to establish whether the respondents had experienced forest related conflict in the village (directly and indirectly). The findings reveal that 90% of the respondents had experienced forest related conflict while only 10% were not aware of such conflicts (Figure 4). It was interesting to note that none of the students indicated that they had participated in the conflicts in any way. It was also noted that none of the respondents reported to be part of the cause of the conflicts.
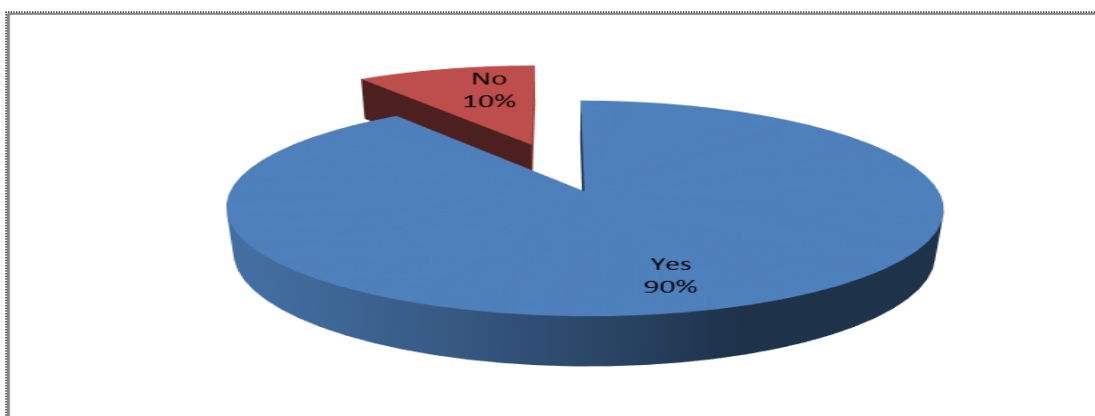
Figure 4: Experience with Forest Conflicts

4.3 Children Activities in Forests

4. 3.1 Activities children undertake in the forest

The study sought to establish some of the activities that children undertake in the forest as well as reasons behind such children ventures in the forests. Out of the 100 children respondents in the study, 38% reported that they entered into the forest mainly to fetch firewood, while 33% of the children reckoned that they entered the forest majorly in search of pasture for livestock. A further 17 % of the respondents contended that they ventured into the forests mainly to graze their animals while 12% of the children go to the forest for other reasons including collecting fruits, honey harvesting and recreation activities such as playing and sitting under the tree shades (Table 4.; Figure 5). It should be noted that children can access the forest for multiple activities at the same time. However, findings reported in this section represent the activities that children prioritized when they entered the forest.

Table 4: Activities children undertake in the forest

Main activity	% of respondents
Grazing	17
Looking for Pasture	33
Collecting firewood	38
Other	12
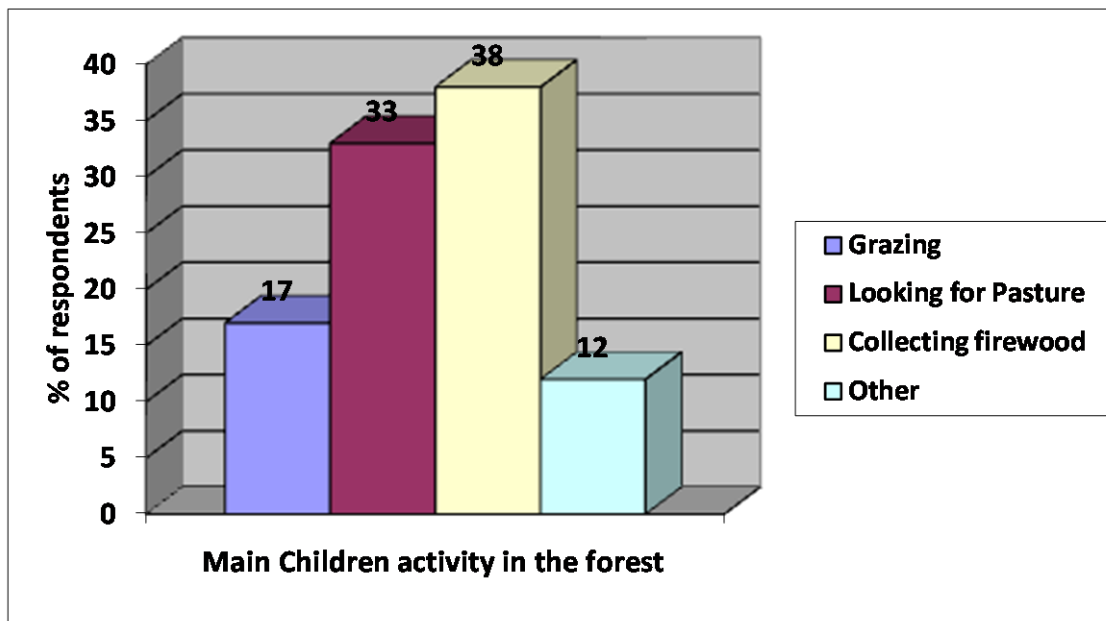
Figure 5: Children's main activities in the forest

These findings were corroborated by observations from the field. It was common to meet with young children (both girls and boys) aged between 10 and 14 years carrying firewood at their backs (Plate 1). Such children would always move in groups.

Plate 1: Young children carrying logs of firewood at their backs in the Likia extension forest

Photo taken on 15-11-2013.

To extract firewood from the forest, one is expected to pay to Kenya Forestry Service (KFS) Ksh 20 per head dead wood. However, when the research team inquired randomly from the children carrying firewood, none seemed to possess the fuel ticket which is provided by KFS upon payment of forest access fee. This situation is considered illegal access of forest products and is likely to put the community (children) in collision course (conflict) with the government (KFS).

It was reported by one of the key informants that children (and to some extent, women) came from villages which were located as far as five kilometres away from the forest to fetch for firewood. The fuel wood was then sold for Ksh 50 per head in market places. One of the fuel markets which involved mainly adults was observed by the research team (Plate 2). This

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shows that children are assigned the roles of extracting fuel wood from the forest while adults (mainly women) sold the fuelwood in the market.

Plate 2: Fire wood market along Njoro-Mau Narok road.

Photo taken on 20-11-2013

It should be observed here that the fuel wood in plate 2 above seems to be cut from live trees. This is against KFS which allows only for collection of dead wood in the forest. It is in fact illegal to enter the forest with a machete or axe for the purposes of cutting down tree logs. These findings seem to suggest that activities of fuel extraction in the forest (in which children are partly involved) in Likia area are flouting the laid down rules and procedures by the government which is likely to lead to forest related conflicts pitting the community on one hand and the government on the other. It should also be noted that if indeed children are entering the forest with such tools as machetes and axes for cutting the wood, then these tools could easily be used as weapons of war in the event that fighting (for example, inter ethnic) erupted inside the forest.

In as far as extracting pasture from the forest was concerned, it is interesting to note that the research team observed that boys mainly stayed in the forest grazing livestock (Plate 3), while girls would cut grass and transport it to their homesteads where the livestock was mainly zero grazed/tethered (Plate 3).

Plate 3: A boy grazing cattle in Likia extension forest.

Photo taken on 15-11-2013.

The differentiation of roles among boys and girls in the forest has implications on children roles in forest related conflicts. When left in the forest to graze, the boys are likely to be exposed to harsh conditions (chilly and windy) and wild animals and hence are prepared to face challenges such as fighting within the forest. Further, when young girls transport grass from the forest to their homesteads without being accompanied by any adult, they are likely to become victims of such ills as rape within the forest in case of lawlessness which characterizes violent conflict events.

Plate 4: A girl transporting grass on a donkey from Likia extension forest.

Photo taken on 15-11-2013

Whereas, some children reported that their main interest in the forest was to enjoy the aesthetic value of trees and forest environment, a further probe revealed that children utilize the forest through recreation as a secondary priority. A child would be sent by their parents and guardians to fetch fuelwood or pasture and then decide to engage in other activities such as playing, honey harvesting or collection of fruits. Playing in the forest by children from different ethnic backgrounds is likely to increase cohesiveness and reduce competitions which often lead to resource conflicts.

4.3.2 Children activities that could lead to forest related conflict

As noted before, as children engage in forest products extraction, they are likely to contribute directly or indirectly to forest related conflicts. When children were asked which of their

activities in the forest were most likely to contribute to forest related conflicts, 88% of the respondents (Table 5) indicated that collecting firewood in forest and thus placing them at loggerheads with authorities (for example, KFS guards) was a major activity that had potential of causing forest related conflict.

Eighty percent (80%) of the respondents were of the opinion that the other community members consider families living in the forest as encroachment and that can cause conflict. Social interests were further revealed to be a major contributor to forest related conflict by the discussants in an FGD conducted during this study. For instance, they mentioned that during one time in the village, members of one ethnic group (Kalenjin) opted to build homes in the forest areas, members of another ethnic group (Kikuyu) felt that that was encroachment to the water catchment areas yet the rest of the Likia forest had already been taken by that community in the 1990's. These differences saw the community that felt the forest was being destroyed move into the forest to destroy the structures that had been brought up and to farm in the left portions. Interestingly another ethnic group (Maasai) decided to take their herds to the Kikuyu farms. The confusion resulted into a big difference between the members of the community. To protect their farms, the Kikuyus decided to poison some of their farm produce (carrots) and placed them to the ground. A Maasai herder while taking his herd to destroy the farms uprooted the poisoned carrot ate it and later died. They further said a politician while attending the funeral of this Maasai boy was noted to have fueled the tension by asking the Maasai community to come out and defend themselves.

Seventy eight percent of the respondents indicated that the forest provide an environment where children can be sexually abused and thereby cause conflict. During a key informant interview with a village elder, he noted that;

'There is a time children went to collect firewood in the forest. A Maasai boy known to catch girls and do whatever he wants with them approached them and started chasing them. They all ran away to different directions. On reaching home, my daughter realized her sister had not reached home. She went looking for her back to the forest. She found the Maasai boy raping her and she was also caught and raped by the same boy'.

Another activity that was predominant among the children activities that can cause conflict was farming where 65% of the respondents indicated that parents in the community together with their children do illegal farming in the forest and thus having potential to cause conflict. 76% felt that children are used by adults (caregivers) to indulge in activities that have potential to cause forest related conflicts like illegal farming. An interview with a key informant revealed that children go to the forests for certain activities such as grazing, collecting of firewood and cutting building poles, activities which all have the potential to cause conflict. In an FGD it was revealed that children have been used by community members who engage in illlegal activities in the forest as a shield from the forest officials. These community members prefer use of children because they believe that the police cannot arrest children. A key informant reported that;

"*children are used to raise alarm in case a forest official is approaching and a community member is engaing in illegal activity, when an alarm is raised (usually a coded language understood by the child in question and the illegal actor) then the illegal actor can evade arrest.*"

In another interview with a parent of an affected child, it was reckoned that;

"children go to the forest for a number of reasons, there was a time my child together with other children went to the forest to fetch firewood and they were approached by some Masai boys, the children ran away leaving my child behind. They later went back searching for my daughter who they found had been sexually abused by the boys who fled from the scene."

An interview with the police confirmed that the rape case was reported, a legal process was started but the case later collapsed for lack of evidence. This case was further mentioned in an FGD with community members who believed that the case was deliberately weakened by the local administration and the collapse was by design for the sake of avoidance of conflict in the community.

Due to the thick forest cover, 68% felt that sometimes children get lost and this creates tension between the community and the forest authorities and sometimes amongst the people venturing in the forests. 13% of children felt they venture into the forest for recreational activities which sometimes lead to forest related conflicts. However, 42% of the respodents felt that during their interaction as peers, conflicts could occur between themselves and these conflicts could spill over to the community level. This was further explained during the focus group discussions when it was noted that because children do not feel safe in forests, they do not venture into forests for recreational activities, thus the low margins of children who felt recreational activities could lead to forest related conflicts (because they do not engage in the recreational activities).

Seventy two (72%) of the respondents felt that their perceptions and beliefs on forests, conflict and resolution influence the way they perceive conflicts and its causes. On a further

probe the respondents were of the view that cultural ties were so tight among the adherents that anything else that is in contradiction of the beliefs could result into conflict. 65% of the respondents felt that what their community beliefs in terms of forests and forest resources guide the way they handle conflicts emanating from forest resources. During the focus group discussion, the women noted that the beliefs and perceptions are passed from one generation to another, and it guides even the way the community associates with other communities.

Whereas it is known world over that children lit fires to roast wild meat and berries, only 10% of the respondents attributed that forest fires that lead to conflicts had been caused by children. In an interview with the chief, he noted that the community members including children have been sensitized on the dangers of forest fires. With these, children have been interestingly keen on fires in forests, especially because they do not have the extra time when they venture in forests to lit fires. Because children rarely lit fires, only 8% of the respondents felt that unattended to fires lit by children led to forest related conflicts.

Table 5: Activities children undertake in the forest that lead to forest related conflicts

Activities	F	Percent
a. Collecting firewood thereby causing conflict with the law enforcers	88	88%
b. Children live in their parents in the forests, which other communities consider encroachment	80	80%
c. Children play in the forests and use the forests as recreational areas together with their parents	13	13%
d. Forests also provide an environment where children can be sexually abused by people they do or do not know.	78	78%
e. Due to the thick forest cover, sometime children get lost in the forest and this create tensions between the people in the forests	68	68%

Activities	F	Percent
f. Perception and beliefs that are passed from older generations determines how we handle conflicts	72	72%
g. One community beliefs on forests and its resources determine how they handle conflicts emanating from forests	65	65%
h. The fires caused by children also can cause major conflicts between conservation groups and human beings living around the forests	10	10%
i. Children Lighting fires in forests and not turning them off has led to conflicts	8	8%
j. Friendly matches sometimes cause injuries that spill over to community level	42	42%
k. Children are used by adults to conduct illegal farming in the forests	76	76%

4.4 Children safety while in the forest

In an attempt to understand the status of children safety in the forest, this study revealed that 55% of children did not feel safe while in the forest while 45% of the children indicated that they felt safe while in the forest (Figure 6). Children who felt safe in the forest said it because nothing had happened to them while in the forest. When probed further, those who reported that they felt safe in the forest also noted that they walked in the forest in groups to act as security for each other, just in case something bad happened to one of them. Children who felt not safe while in the forest explained that this was due to previous incidents in the forest. Fear of the potentially harmful events in the forest when the children were alone was also noted as a reason why children did not feel safe in the forest. The children further noted that based on past experiences of their colleagues from the same village, they did not feel safe accessing the forest in fear of the same things happening to them.
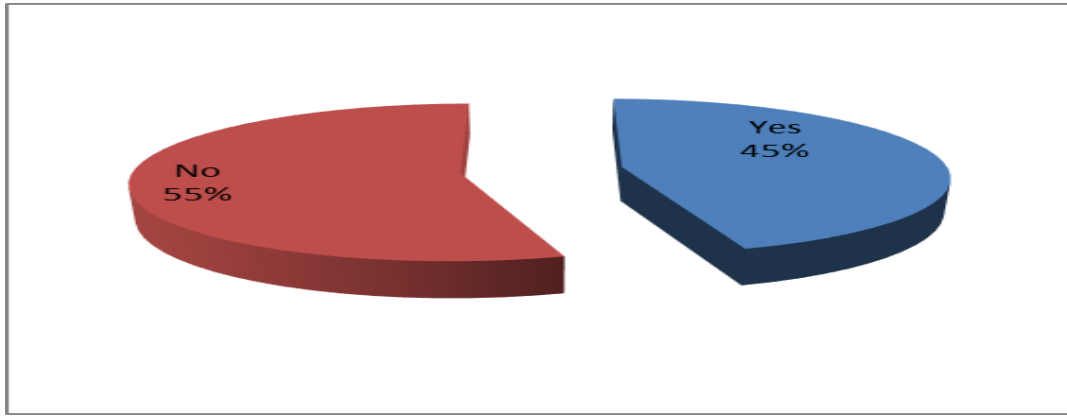
Figure 6: The percentage of responses among children when asked whether they felt safe while in the forest

These findings were corroborated by sentiments from a parent during a key informant interview who reported;

"*After my child was raped in that forest, I never feel that they are safe when they visit the forest.*"

Also an interview with a village elder revealed that;

'*when children venture into forests, they become potential targets by perpetrators as they are vulnerable and have no one at that particular moment to protect them*'.

The same sentiment was noted during an FGD involving male adults who argued that children in Likia are always entering the forest alone and no one was there to ensure their safety. This places children as potential victims of rape among other vices that are likely to occur in the forest.

4.5 Effects of forest related conflicts on children

The findings of the study reveal that among the perceived effects of forest related conflicts observed on children, psychological effects including trauma (90% of the respondents) emotional disturbance (among 82% of the respondents) and stress among (94% of the children) (Table 6). Emotional effects are felt in many ways as noted by one teacher;

'during conflicts, children do not concentrate in class. They keep wondering how their families are doing. In moments of exams, you will notice a drop in the mean grades of the students'.

Security and safety are an essential part of any child. Conflicts interfere with sense of safety and security. Ninety eight percent (98%) of the respondents noted that they didn't feel safe during conflicts whereas 80% of the respondents reported that during conflicts there were rape incidents. Due to sexual assaults and other related incidents, 64% of the respondents felt that children were exposed to HIV and sexually transmitted diseases. An interview with the police revealed that during conflicts, parents often took their children in the custody of the police as they believed that the station was safer than their homesteads. However, the police observed that the number of community members to be protected always outweighed the number of policemen available.

Family and social settings are always disrupted by conflicts. Ninety one (91%) of the respondents noted that during conflicts separation of families happen, whereas 87% said death of parents occur and thus number of orphans increase. Conflicts were noted to cause displacement at 88% saying it leads to homelessness and 70% noted that families are forced to relocate. During the field study, an Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camp was noted in

an area bordering the forest (Plate 5). The camp was housing families who claimed to have been evicted from the forest[1]. In the IDP camp, several children could be seen playing around. It was further observed that conditions within the IDP camp were harsh (cold and wet) and were likely to contribute to respiratory ailments especially among young children.

Plate 5: An IDP camp at Sigaon, an area bordering Longoman-Likia forest reserve. Photo taken on 20-11-2013

Forests related conflicts were also noted to lead to broken friendship among peers at 92%. During a focus group discussion, it was noted that children are unable to make friendship with people from other communities that they previously were in conflict with. A case was 'a boy went to fetch water in a place named NDEFFO[2]. His watch fell in the water dam. When

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[1] between 2010 and 2012, there were some government evictions of people who had supposedly illegally encroached into the Longoman/Likia forest

[2] NDEFFO is an acronym for Nakuru District Ex-Freedom Fighters. It is claimed that inhabitants of NDEFFO location participated (or are related to those who participated) in the MAUMAU war, between Africans and the British colonialists

he went home without the watch, the parents thought that the community around the water dam took the phone from the boy. This led to a conflict. From then, the people from the boy's community stopped going to the water point. Children are also not able to form friendship with children from other community'.

Forest related conflict was revealed to affect children's education and self-esteem. 94% of the respondents noted that conflicts disrupt school terms and activities, whereas 90% felt that conflicts lead to high levels of school drop outs. During conflicts, 86% noted that they are unable to access school. Due to the inability to attend school as is ideally planned, 74% said it lead to low esteem and confidence as they are unable to achieve their potential compared to children in areas with no conflicts. Eighty percent (80%) said because of conflicts, they are unable relate to their peers who they mostly could easily relate with in schools. An interview with the teacher noted that during conflicts, children are affected in more ways than they can say. Some leave class and go join the people fighting, especially the older boys. Because of the shame and guilt associated with being in the frontline in fighting, the children (especially the older boys aged over 15years) do not come back to school. These children are not able to achieve their full potential.

Access healthcare was revealed to be affected by forest related conflict and thus healthcare is always compromised. Ninety one (91%) noted that they are unable to access quality healthcare in hospitals. 86% of the respondents noted that there are a high number of injuries, with 74% noting that children die during conflicts. Interestingly, 42% noted malnutrition is experienced during conflicts with 49% agreeing there is shortage of food during conflicts. A discussion with a village elder noted that food shortage is rarely experienced as the

community major economic activity is food production and thus food shortage is low unless conflicts persist for a long duration.

These findings were further confirmed by the findings from interview guides with key informants. In an interview with a village elder who had lived in the village for 40 years, the elder said;

"whenever there are forest related conflicts, the effect on children is devastating, the dispensaries around don't function resulting in high mortality rate of children who cannot access health facilities at the time, families are forced to move from the violent areas to areas that are considered safer."

An FGD with selected members of the community gave similar revelations, the discussants were of the view that whenever there are forest related conflict, the effect on children is big. They indicated that during these times children stop schooling, that they are psychologically affected and some are even orphaned. Because of the past conflicts children live in fear such that in case of any slight tension, they think that it may build into a bigger conflict. One of the affected key informant reported during an interview that;

"my two daughters were raped in a past conflict, these children have never fully recovered from that incident and they live with fear and hatred. I wonder if seeking the services of a counselor would help them."

Table 6: Perceived effects of forest related conflicts on children

		Effects	Yes (%)	No (%)
a)	Psychological Effects	Trauma	90	10
		Emotional disturbance	82	18
		Stress	94	6
b)	Safety and security	Feeling of being unsafe	98	2
		Rape	80	20
		Exposure to HIV and Sexually transmitted diseases	64	36
c)	Family, Love and Belonging	Separation within families	91	9
		Death of parents and orphaned children	87	13
		Disentanglement within communities	73	27
		Broken friendships among peers	92	8
		Homelessness	88	12
		Relocation	70	30
d)	Education, actualization and Self esteem	Disruption of school terms and activities	94	6
		High school drop out rates	90	10
		Unable to access schools	86	14
		Lack of self esteem and confidence	74	26
		Inability to relate with peers	80	20
e)	Access to healthcare, health and Nutrition	Inability to access hospitals	91	9
		High number of injured people	86	14
		Death among children because they cannot access hospitals	74	26
		Malnutrition among children	42	58
		Food shortage	49	51

4.6 Children's rights during forest conflicts

This research sought to establish in the face of prevailing forest conflicts in the study area if the children were aware of their rights. It was revealed that there was awareness that a child

who becomes a victim of abuse should be accorded appropriate treatment and rehabilitation with a mean of 4.41 (Table 7). The need to live and be cared for by the parents and the government was the most known right among the selected list of rights with a mean of 4.51. An FGD with community members revealed that children knew their rights and that community member also knew these rights. Children were aware of the need to be protected from harm whether physical, emotional or psychological harm this was indicated with a mean of 4.21. The study also revealed that the respondents were aware that children have a right to love and belonging in their early stages of life, as these determine how they grow up and what they become in terms of socialization in future this was shown with a mean of 4.10.

Table 7: Awareness on children Rights

#	Right of a child	Mean
1.	Children who become victims of abuse should be accorded appropriate treatment and rehabilitation	4.41
2.	Children need to live and be cared for by the parents and the government	4.51
3.	Children need to be protected from harm whether physical, emotional or psychological harm	4.25
4.	Children have the right to free and compulsory education	4.01
5.	Children have the right to basic nutrition and shelter	4.01
6.	Children have a right to quality healthcare and health education	4.44
7.	Children need the love and belonging which is crucial in the early stages of human development from both parents.	4.00
8.	Children need love and belonging in their early stages of life, as these determine how they grow up and what they become in terms of socialization in future	4.10

4.7 Summary of Findings

Based on the data analysis, the research has revealed the role and status of children as follows:

i. Children can be causal agents of forest related conflicts (knowingly and unknowingly). Children activities at times position them in situations that have potential to turn to conflict situations.

ii. Children are vulnerable during conflicts. During forests related conflicts, children are affected psychologically, their safety and security are affected; families and friendships are broken; education is affected and thus children are unable to realize their full potential; Children are unable to access quality healthcare and nutrition.

iii. Both caregivers and children understand and recognize children rights. Conflict situation do not provide an environment for the rights to be protected or for children to enjoy their rights.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Summary of the findings

The study sought to understand the role and status of children in forest related conflicts in Mau Forest in terms of activities that children undertake that might lead to or fuel forest related conflicts, the effects of the conflicts on children and status of children rights during forest related conflicts.

From the findings, it is evident that children are part of forest related conflicts as they are part of the population that live in close proximity with forests and rely heavily on forest products in their day to day activities. It was concluded that children engage in activities that might cause forest related conflicts knowingly and unknowingly. Some of the activities that children engage in include firewood collection and looking for animal feeds. Whereas it was noted that children rarely lit up fires inside the forests, it was noted that children understand the effects of forest fires and thus avoid them. Although forest management authorities have sensitized the population on the importance of forest conservation, some parents use children to access the forests for different socio-economic gains, for example collection of building poles. This at times places them in a situation where they are abused (for example raped) in the forests. This is because forest management authorities cannot arrest children. However, there have been several incidents where children are held until the parents come to the management. This leads to conflict between the parents and the forest management authorities. Because children do not feel safe accessing the forest, it was noted that children rarely access the forest for recreational activities.

The study has revealed that there are adverse effects of forest related conflicts on children. These include psychological trauma, relocation, homelessness, and loss of parents, siblings and friends, inability to access medical services, among others. These effects last long in the children and may negatively influence their development. When families are forced out of their homes by members of the community who they know, the trauma that children undergo is unbearable. Instead of a sense of love and belonging, children develop hatred for the perpetrators, whom mostly are people from the same area and people known to them. Children usually love to participate in recreational activities like games which relate to their age and peers but conflict situations do not provide for such. Children sometimes get physical injuries. During conflicts, there is always limited access to medical care and services, and sometimes these children end up with permanent physical injuries – including limping or cut body parts- or marks which in turn interfere with children self- esteem. These study findings are in harmony with existing knowledge (such as Machel, 1996; 2001; Lorey, 2001) on effects of armed conflicts on children which are both physical and psychological. The study further suggests that apart from the role of children as victims, children activities in the forest also position them as participants/stakeholders (indirectly through their activities) in forest conflicts.

It was noted that children and parents are aware of the rights of children especially those that are affected by conflicts. Majority knew and advocated for children to access quality nutrition and healthcare; children to live and be protected by their parents; children to be protected from harm (psychological, emotional, physical); children have a right to quality and free education; right to basic nutrition and shelter; and the right to feel and be loved. Whereas majority of the respondents supported for the protection of children rights, they argued that

these rights cannot be protected as forest related conflicts do not provide an environment for children to enjoy their rights or an environment for the rights to be protected.

5.2 Conclusion

From the findings it can be concluded that forest related conflicts are part of heterogeneous communities that live in close proximity to and depend on the forest. Children can be part of the conflicts either as causing agents or as victims. Whereas conflict could take the flawed up approach, most times conflicts take the latent form which means tension among communities or between communities and the forest management authorities.

Regardless of the form that Forest related conflicts take, causes could be by children directly or indirectly. Children in the world over are sent by their parents to undertake different roles and activities that the society has placed on them. These activities, however, might sometimes put the children in situations that make them part of the forest related conflicts like collection of firewood and building poles. Although parents are aware of such situations, lack of better options in most cases leave them with no choice but involve their children in these activities. From the data collected, some of the reasons why children get caught up in forest related conflict include, but are not limited to, collecting firewood thereby causing conflict with the law enforcers; they live with their parents near or (some) in the forests, which other communities consider encroachment; children play in the forests and use the forests as recreational areas together with their parents; forests also provide an environment where children can be sexually abused by people they do or do not know; and due to the thick forest cover, sometime children get lost in the forest and this creates tensions between the people in the forests .

Children are affected in many ways. Effects are felt during and immediately after the conflicts. These effects have a long term impact on the children. Psychological, emotional, physical and social effect of forest related conflicts impact on the way children perceive their surrounding especially people they live with. While ideally children can be peace agents, in conflict situations, children are used as perpetrators (especially the older male children aged over 16years). These findings are consistent with Machel's (1996) study on effects of conflicts on children. However, whereas Machel (1996) & UNICEF (2009) illustrate that children sometimes participate directly in violent conflicts (that is being used as child soldiers), this study reveals that the role of children in forest conflict is mainly through their activities (that is being used as causal agents).

Protection of children rights provides an environment in which children can grow and become important members of the society. It also provides for a chance for children to realize and achieve their highest potential. Although both parents and children know children rights, conflict situations do not provide for a chance for children to enjoy their rights and for caregivers to protect these rights.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings, the study made the following recommendations which will help reduce effects of conflicts on children:

   i.   Sensitization of parents, caregivers and community in general on activities that expose children to forest related conflicts and activities that children might undertake (knowingly or unknowingly). This reduces chances of children becoming causal elements of forest related conflicts. Also, empower children with relevant information

on how to identify potential conflict situations or activities that they undertake that might have potential to cause conflicts and how to protect themselves against adverse effects of conflicts.

ii. Every child has their own rights that help them grow and achieve full potential. To achieve this it is important to mobilize different stakeholders and players in forests management and community in general to protect children rights including during conflicts. This also includes coming up with strategies/ support systems on how to assist children affected by the conflicts (both short and long term solutions).

iii. Forest management authorities work together with the community and come up with ways the community can effectively utilize forest resources without interfering with forest conservation strategies/ mechanisms and how at the same time the community can contribute to forest conservation efforts. Also, come up with ways and mechanism of protecting people especially the vulnerable (including children) when they access the forests

iv. Develop ways in which children can be used as peace agents and as peer educators. This will direct their energy and time to assisting their peers in case of conflict instead of them being used to cause more harm or indulge in conflict causing situations/ activities.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

    i.   Children as peace agents during conflicts

The proposed research will be to explore how children can be used to bring peace in conflict situation especially as sources of information in resolving conflicts (including forest related conflicts)

    ii.   Place of children in Forest Laws

The proposed research will be to bring out children protection mechanism as a key area to be put into consideration when coming up with laws. The study will look at ways children rights and activities should inform key stakeholders when it comes to forest laws.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Parental consent for children participation in research

TOPIC: ROLE AND STATUS OF CHILDREN IN FOREST RELATED CONFLICTS

Introduction;

I am kindly inviting your child to participate in a Research project that I am conducting in partial fulfillment of a Masters of Arts Degree in Sociology at the University of Nairobi. Your child has been selected because he/she is aged between 12 and 18 years and has necessary information that will be useful in the study. I am kindly requesting you to read carefully through this form and feel free to ask questions incase you need clarification before you allow your child to participate. If you allow your child to participate in this study, you will sign the end of this form, and the form will be kept as a record of your kind agreement.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to identify the roles and status of children in Forest related conflicts. Your child will give only information related to the study which is:

a). Activities that children (not necessarily your child) are involved in that could lead to forest related conflicts

b). Effects that forest related conflicts has on children welfare and life

c). Knowledge on Children rights

d) Status of children rights during forest related conflicts

Description of the study procedure

If you allow your child to participate in this study, I will guide them through a questionnaire. Since its school time, I will take them through the questionnaire in the evening, so I do not interfere with their school. The session will take between 15-20minutes of your child's time.

What are the risks involved in this study

A possible risk is that some of these questions might talk about things that some people find quite personal, or difficult to answer. If any of the questions make your child feel uncomfortable or you don't want to answer them, they do not have to.

What are the possible benefits of this study

Your child will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, the interaction gives an opportunity for your child to participate in a study that will guide the policy makers in designing interventions on child protection mechanisms especially those related to Forest related conflicts.

Confidentiality

This study will not be collecting or retaining any information about your child's identity. However, this consent form will be kept under strictly confidentiality for records purposes

Right to Participate or Refuse/ Withdraw from Participation

Your child's participation in this study is voluntary. Your child can agree or decline to participate or choose to withdraw from participation at any time. Withdrawal or refusing to participate will not affect their relationship with the University of Nairobi in anyway. You can agree to allow your child to be in the study now and change your mind later without any penalty.

Compensation

Neither you nor your child will receive any type of payment for participating in this study.

Right to Ask Questions and Report Concerns

You have the right to ask questions about this research study and to have those questions answered by me prior, during or after your participation you can contact me (the researcher) **Scolastica Kunyiha** on telephone 0721259316 or Email address skunyiha@gmail.com for any questions or if you feel that you have been harmed. This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Nairobi department of Sociology and social work and the study number is C50/63433/2010

Whom to contact with questions concerning your rights as a research participant?

For questions about your rights or any dissatisfaction with any part of this study, you can contact (anonymously if you wish) the University Of Nairobi *254-2-318262 Ext. 28167* by phone or email at dept-sociology@uonbi.ac.ke

Acceptance & signature

I have read the information provided above and all of my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to the participation of my child in this study. I will receive a copy of this consent form for my information.

_____   _____

Name of Child   Age

_____   _____

Name/ Signature of Parent(s) or Legal Guardian   Date

_____   _____

Signature of   Researcher   Date

7.2 Research tools

Appendix 2: Research Questionnaire

Introductory Letter

Dear Respondent,

I am a finalist student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing a Master of Arts Degree in Sociology (Disaster Management). In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree, I am undertaking a research study entitled 'Role and status of Children in Forest related conflicts'. The information is valuable for both planning and scientific research.

Your response is very important and will help and represent children and other parties who will not be in the sample. Your responses will be treated with high level of confidentiality and your name will be in no way associated with the findings of this study. This is to kindly request for your permission to get information from your child in regard to the topic.

The questionnaire will take about 20minutes of your child's precious time and I will guide them through the whole questionnaire.

Thanking you in advance

Scolastica Wanjiku Kunyiha

_____ Parent's Name (Optional)

_____ Parent's Signature

Section A: Demographic Information
a) Gender Male ( ) Female ( )
b) Age 12-15 years (   ) 16-18 years (   )
c) For how long have you been staying in this village:
　　　　　　1-6 years ( ) 7-12years ( )13–18years( )
d) Has there been a conflict related to forest (directly or indirectly): Yes ( ) No ( )
　　　　If yes, who were you in conflict with (whether directly or indirectly):
　　　　　　Peers (   ) Another community ( ) Forest Authorities (   )

Section B: Causes of Forest related Conflicts

1. What are some of the activities that you venture into the forest to undertake:
    a) Grazing
    b) Looking for pastures
    c) Collecting firewood
    d) Playing and other recreational activities
2. When venturing into the forests, do you feel safe? Yes_____ No _____ why? _____
    _____.____

3. The following relate to children Activities that lead to forest related conflict; indicate
    appropriately the ones that you have witnessed in your village;

Activities	(Yes)	(No)
a) Collecting firewood thereby causing conflict with the law enforcers		
b) They live in their parents in the forests, which other communities consider encroachment		
c) Children play in the forests and use the forests as recreational areas together with their parents		
d) Forests also provide an environment where children can be sexually abused by people they do or do not know.		
e) Due to the thick forest cover, sometime children get lost in the forest and this create tensions between the people in the forests		
f) Perception and beliefs that are passed from older generations determines how we handle conflicts		
g) Does one community beliefs on forests and its resources determine how they handle conflicts emanating from forests		
h) The fires caused by children also can cause major conflicts between conservation groups and human beings living around the forests		
i) Forest covered places are ideal and favorite for pastoral communities due to their rich grass that is good for their livestock		
j) Children Lighting fires in forests and not turning them off has led to conflicts		
k) Friendly matches sometimes cause injuries that spill over to community level		
l) Children are used by adults to conduct illegal farming in the forests		

4. Do you believe conflicts cause forest related conflicts in Mau? Yes _____ No ___

SECTION C: Effects of Forest Related Conflicts on Children:

1. Which of the following undesirable effects arising from forest related conflicts have been observed in your village? Tick where appropriate.

	Effects	Yes	No	I do not know
a) Psychological Effects	Trauma			
	Emotional disturbance			
	Stress			
b) Safety and security	Feeling of being unsafe			
	Rape			
	Exposure to HIV and Sexually transmitted diseases			
c) Family, Love and Belonging	Separation within families			
	Death of parents and orphaned children			
	Disentanglement within communities			
	Broken friendships among peers			
	Homelessness			
	Relocation			
d) Education, actualization and Self esteem	Disruption of school terms and activities			
	High school drop out rates			
	Unable to access schools			
	Lack of self esteem and confidence			
	Inability to relate with peers			
e) Access to healthcare, health and Nutrition	Inability to access hospitals			
	High number of injured people			
	Death among children because they cannot access hospitals			
	Malnutrition among children			
	Food shortage			

2. The following include psychological damage caused to children through displacement and conflict. Kindly indicate the one you are well vast with in your community.
   a. Individual trauma ( )
   b. Exploitation including sale ( )
   c. Abduction ( )
   d. Trafficking ( )

SECTION D: Children Rights

The following indicates the right of a child according to the Kenyan constitution. Using a scale of 1-5. Where 1-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-undecided, 4-agree, 5-strongly agree

Right of a child	1	2	3	4	5
Children who becomes a victim of abuse should be accorded appropriate treatment and rehabilitation					
Children need to live and be cared for by the parents and the government					
Children need to be protected from harm whether physical, emotional or psychological harm					
Children have the right to free and compulsory education					
Children have the right to basic nutrition and shelter					
Children have a right to quality healthcare and health education					
Children need the love and belonging which is crucial in the early stages of a human development from both parents.					
Children need love and belonging in their early stages of life, as these determine how they grow up and what they become in terms of socialization in future					

Appendix 3: Key Informant Interview Guide

Introductory Letter

Dear Respondent,

I am a finalist student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing a Masters of Arts Degree in Sociology (Disaster Management). In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree, I am undertaking a research study entitled 'Role and status of Children in Forest related conflicts'. The information is valuable for both planning and scientific research.

Your response is very important and will help and represent children and other parties who will not be in the sample. Your responses will be treated with high level of confidentiality and your name will be in no way associated with the findings of this study.

The discussion will take about 1 hour of your precious time.

Thanking you in advance

Scolastica Wanjiku Kunyiha

(For Parents, Community/ Village leaders, Teachers, Health Care Workers, NGOs, Administrative Authorities, Kenya Forest Conservation)

1. Name ……………………………………………….……………. (Optional)
2. Designation ………………………………………………….. (Optional)
3. How many years have you been working/ living in this community? _____
4. What do you depend on the forests for?
    a. Do children have access to forest resources? Which ones?
    b. Are children involved in any activities? What activities? By whose advice are they involved in the activities?
5. Since you came here, have you heard or been involved in a forest related conflict?
    a. Are there activities undertaken in the forests by yourself or the community near you that has lead to conflicts? Which ones?
    b. Were children involved? If yes, how? And were they affected in any way?
    c. If yes, please share some key scenarios (who was involved– forest authorities, communities, families?
    d. Was it resolved? If yes, how and by who?
    e. Would you know how the children who were involved are at the moment?
6. What were the effects of the conflict on children (those involved directly and indirectly) in terms of:
    a. Psychological effects
    b. Safety and Security
    c. Family, love and belonging
    d. Education, actualization (reaching the highest potential) and self esteem
    e. Access to health care , health and nutrition
7. Children have rights as human beings in Kenya. Which ones are they? Are the children rights protected during conflicts?

Actual	Rate	Unit	Sub Total
Scooping Study (4 days)			

Appendix 4: FGD guide
Introductory Letter

Dear Respondent,

I am a finalist student at the University of Nairobi, pursuing a Masters of Arts Degree in Sociology (Disaster Management). In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of the degree, I am undertaking a research study entitled 'Role and status of Children in Forest related conflicts'. The information is valuable for both planning and scientific research.

Your response is very important and will help and represent children and other parties who will not be in the sample. Your responses will be treated with high level of confidentiality and your name will be in no way associated with the findings of this study.

The discussion will take about 1 hour of your precious time.

Thanking you in advance

Scolastica Wanjiku Kunyiha

1. How many years have you been living in this community? _____
2. What do you depend on the forests for?
    a. Do children have access to forest resources? Which ones?
    b. Are children involved in any activities? What activities? By whose advice are they involved in the activities?
3. Since you came here, have you heard or been involved in a forest related conflict?
    a. Are there activities undertaken in the forests by yourself or the community near you that can lead or have led to conflicts? Which ones?
    b. Were children involved? If yes, how? And were they affected in any way?
    c. If yes, please share some key scenarios (who was involved– forest authorities, communities, families?
    d. Was it resolved? If yes, how and by who?
    e. Would you know how the children who were involved are at the moment?
4. What were the effects of the conflict on children (those involved directly and indirectly) in terms of:
    a. Psychological effects
    b. Safety and Security
    c. Family, love and belonging
    d. Education, actualization (reaching the highest potential) and self esteem
    e. Access to health care , health and nutrition
5. Children have rights as human beings in Kenya. Which ones are they? Are the children rights protected during conflicts?

7.3 Study costs
Appendix 5: Study budget

Preliminary Field visit by the researcher	5,000.00	4	20,000.00
Enumerators Training (2 days)			
Enumerators Training and pretesting questionnaires (1000) - Transport, lunch& stationery (500) (for 2 days)	1,500.00	10	15,000.00
Researcher Per diem	5,000.00	2	10,000.00
Data Collection using Questionnaires (4 days)			
Administering questionnaires (10 people for 4 days)	1,000.00	40	40,000.00
Researcher Per diem	5,000.00	4	20,000.00
Focus Group Discussions (2 days)			
2 groups (8 people each)	500.00	16	8,000.00
Researcher Per diem	5,000.00	2	10,000.00
Rapporteur	2,500.00	3	7,500.00
Key Informant Interview (3 days) - 2 days concurrent with administering questionnaires			
Key Informant Interview - 10 key Informants	1,000.00	10	10,000.00
Researcher Per Diem	5,000.00	1	5,000.00
Other Administrative Costs			
Transport - Public Means and bikes	12,000.00	1	12,000.00
Airtime	2,000.00		2,000.00
Printing, Data Analysis and Presentation			
Data Analysis using SPSS	10,000.00	1	10,000.00
Printing (Questionnaires and Interview Guides)	6.00	10	60.00
Photocopy - Questionnaires (120 copies 4 page each) and Interview guides (10 copies 2 pages each)	560.00	3	1,680.00
Typing, Printing and Binding Report - 4 original copies	10,000.00	1	10,000.00
		Total	181,240.00