

PROLIFERATION OF SMALL ARMS AND LIGHT WEAPONS IN THE KARAMAJONG CLUSTER

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Abstract

This study explored the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the karamajong cluster by examining the impact of socio-economic and political factors on proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Karamajong Cluster. The study sought to find out how small arms and light weapons move within the study area and their effect. A mixed methods research design was used. The target population was the residents of Karamajong cluster who had information regarding the topic under discourse. Their population was 32378 from which a total of 156 respondents who participated was drawn through stratified random sampling for residents and purposive sampling for administrators. A structured questionnaire was used to obtain information from the residents while interview schedule guides were used to obtain information from the cluster heads of the Karamajong cluster. Hypotheses was tested using Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) at $\alpha = 0.05$ level of significance. The results obtained from the study reveals that economic hardship, socio-economic disparities, and political instability significantly contribute to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Karamajong Cluster. It was determined that 93% of the respondents alluded that there was proliferation of SALW while 7% on the other hand denied this fact. Marginalized communities, driven by poverty and historical conflicts, increasingly turn to arms for protection and power. To address the root causes of SALW proliferation, it is essential to enhance economic stability through development initiatives. Programs should focus on creating job opportunities, reducing poverty, and providing alternative means of income.

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1 Introduction

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) is a global issue with profound implications for security and stability.[1] Globally, the unchecked spread of SALW has been a significant concern, impacting conflict zones and fragile states. For instance, in the United States, the widespread availability of firearms has influenced both crime rates and public safety, demonstrating how the diffusion of small arms can affect national security and societal order.[2] This global context underscores the importance of understanding the dynamics of SALW proliferation and its effects across different regions.[3]

In the African context, the proliferation of SALW presents a particularly acute challenge. Taking Uganda as a case study, the Karamajong region has experienced severe consequences due to the availability and misuse of small arms.[4] In Uganda, the Karamajong region is characterized by a complex interplay of socio-economic and political factors that facilitate the proliferation of these weapons.[5] Historically, the Karamajong Cluster, which includes parts of northeastern Uganda north western Kenya, southeastern Sudan and southwest Ethiopia, has been plagued by inter-communal conflicts and resource-based violence.[6] The availability of SALW has exacerbated these conflicts, leading to an increase in violence and instability. For example, the introduction of small arms into pastoralist communities in the Karamajong cluster has intensified cattle rustling, a traditional practice that has evolved into a more deadly conflict due to the use of firearms. The presence of these weapons has not only escalated the scale of violence but also complicated efforts to achieve peace and security in the region .

In Kenya, particularly in areas where the Karamajong cluster extends across the border, the impact of SALW proliferation is equally significant.[7] The northern part of Kenya, which shares cultural and geographical ties with the Karamajong region in Uganda, has also been affected by the spread of small arms. In this region, the proliferation of SALW has been linked to increased violence, including inter-ethnic clashes and banditry.[8] The local communities, primarily pastoralists who share similar traditions with their counterparts in Uganda, face heightened insecurity as a result of the proliferation. For instance, the Pokot and Turkana communities in Kenya have been involved in frequent and violent confrontations, partly fueled by the easy availability of firearms.[9] This situation has led to a cycle of retaliation and escalating violence, which undermines efforts to promote social cohesion and stability.

The impact of SALW proliferation in Kenya is not limited to violence alone; it also affects broader socio-economic dynamics.[10] The presence of small arms contributes to a climate of fear and insecurity, which disrupts economic activities and hinders development. Livestock, which is a critical asset for many pastoralist communities, becomes a target for theft and raiding, further exacerbating poverty and insecurity.[11] Moreover, the proliferation of SALW complicates the governance landscape, as local authorities struggle to address the security challenges posed by armed groups and individuals. The ease of access to these weapons undermines law enforcement efforts and complicates conflict resolution processes, making it difficult to establish and maintain peace in affected areas.[12]

The complex interplay of regional and local factors in the Karamajong Cluster highlights the need for a nuanced understanding of the SALW proliferation issue.[11] Addressing this challenge requires a comprehensive approach that takes into account the historical, socio-economic, and political dimensions of the problem. Efforts to control the spread of small arms must consider the local contexts and address the root causes of violence and instability.[12] This includes engaging with local communities, strengthening governance structures, and promoting socio-economic development to reduce the reliance on and demand for SALW.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons is a critical issue with far-reaching implications for security and stability. This study seeks to find out the impact of profeliration of small artms and light weapons in the Karamojong cluster. It also sougth to unravel how arms are shipped from place to place. Further it sought to find out the socioeconomic impacts of arms in the region.

2 Purpose and Objectives of the Study

The study aimed to explore the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Karamajong Cluster. The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. To examine the impact of socio-economic factors on proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Karamajong Cluster.
- ii. To determine the impact of political factors on proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Karamajong Cluster.
- iii. To assess the impact of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the security and stability of communities within the Karamajong Cluster.

3 Hypothesis

- i. H₀₁ There is no statistically significant impact of socio-economic factors on proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Karamajong Cluster.
- ii. H₀₂ There is no statistically significant impact of political factors on proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Karamajong Cluster.
- iii. H₀₃ There is no statistically significant impact of proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the security and stability of communities within the Karamajong Cluster.

4 Literature Review

Pastoral areas like the Karamoja cluster are some of the most conflict-ridden parts of Africa. Traditional pastoral mobility is characterized by intermittent conflict because of variations in natural resource endowments. The Turkana's push toward the uplands and wetter parts of Karamojong is a case in point. Turkana is drier than the neighboring regions, with the exception of limited riverine areas. However, it is not mobility per se that is causing conflict, but rather changes in the traditional pattern of pastoral mobility in the region.[13] The first external factor in the nexus between pastoral mobility and conflict is the artificiality of the colonial border, which has dissected the culturally homogeneous Ateker group into four sovereign states. With the exception of the Dassenech in the Lower Omo Valley, all populations in the Karamoja cluster belong to the wider Ateker community, within which critical pastoral resources such as water and dry season grazing lands historically constituted a common good.[12]

Pastoralist groups traditionally rely on interdependent relationships and the symbiotic sharing of knowledge and resources. The fragmentation of the rangeland created by colonization a situation maintained by postcolonial governments has restricted access to pastoral resources. Contested state borders constitute a core link between pastoral mobility and conflict. Most of the border in the Karamoja cluster is not demarcated, in part because ownership is contested by the various states. This is particularly the case in the Ilemi Triangle.

The contested territory covers an area of roughly 14,000 sq. km. It hosts important water points and dry season grazing resources in flood plains and mountain ranges. While the Turkana, Dasanach, Nyangatom, and Toposa use the area for herding, hunting and in the case of Nyangatom cultivation and permanent settlement, only the Turkana are permanent residents of Ilemi today. Over 90% of these communities are pastoralists whose livelihoods depend on their ability to access water and pasture resources across borders.[14] However, their mobility is impaired by restrictive border policies. Ownership of the area has changed hands several times: from Sudan, to Uganda, and presently Kenyanjurisdiction. Ethiopia holds a latent claim over the contested area.

The dispute over the Ilemi Triangle has been compounded by the potential existence of hydrocarbons and other strategic minerals. This prospect is now probable following the discovery of oil in the Turkana basin. This competition has hardened the attitudes of both local and state actors. As Kenya asserted its authority in the area, the Turkana began to exclude other local groups, particularly the Toposa of South Sudan and the Dassenech and Nyangatom of Ethiopia[12][13]. This exclusion has facilitated the rise of new mobility routes that lack an established rule of engagement. The excluded groups have also continued to cross the international border, creating conflict between the Turkana and their neighbors. This is particularly

applicable to the Nyangatom, who are affected by development-induced displacement arising from commercial agriculture in the Lower Omo Valley. Pastoral movement and conflict is also influenced by the spread of SALW and the resulting intensification of large-scale cattle raiding. Traditionally, livestock raiding serves the purpose of redistribution in times of drought and disease. The more precarious communities would raid their relatively better off neighbors for the purpose of restocking their depleted resources. This is true of the Turkana, who often raid their Karamojong neighbors across the border in Uganda in times of hardship[14].

However, in recent years, and in the context of civil wars and the proliferation of SALW, more powerful groups now raid weaker, more vulnerable neighbors for illicit commercial purposes. Unlike the traditional small-scale raiding in which violence was minimal, this predatory form of cattle raiding is brutal. Beyond pastoralists, it has also seen the engagement of local elites and business interests, eager to take their own cut from this lucrative activity.

Commercial cattle raiding is more common among the pastoralist communities on the South Sudanese side of the cluster, where it has been intimately connected to the broader political economy of long-running civil wars. To a limited extent, the Nyangatom and Dassenech raiding of Turkana cattle has a commercial dimension. Conversely, the least affected by disarmament interventions Turkana have preyed upon Karamojong cattle following the effective, albeit coercive, disarmament program in Uganda.

Climate change disproportionately impacts ASAL regions. In the Karamoja cluster it has weakened resilience, exacerbated competition over scarce resources, and led to new patterns of mobility and conflict. Karamoja's average drought cycle has increased from one every eight years to one in every three years.

While climate change threatens peace in the Karamoja borderlands, it could also provide an incentive for peaceful coexistence. Managing climate threats will require the transformation of contested natural resources into shared public goods. Such an arrangement is already in place across the Karamojong and Turkana border. Unfortunately, in many other parts of the Karamoja cluster, such as the Turkana, Topossa, Dassench, Nyangatom border area, there is a rapid deterioration of local institutions and unitary norms. The antagonistic treatment of members of the Dassenech and Nyangatom communities by the Turkana when they sought shelter following a devastating flood in August 2020 is illustrative of the deterioration of traditional norms[13][14].

5 Social Disorganization Theory

Social disorganization theory was a very essential school of thought developed by the Chicago School. It did directly link crime rates that are low to ecological characteristics of the neighborhood where people from disadvantaged or poor neighborhoods were main participants in a subculture that approved of the behavior of delinquency so that criminality or criminal traits were acquired or obtained in cultural and social settings through interaction process.[15] The theory posits a principle that a place such as one's residential location matters in influencing the behavior of an individual. That coupled with individual characteristics like age, gender, race, are likely to shape and direct a person in either becoming involved in an illegal activity or not[14].

According to the Social Disorganization Theory, ecological factors have been in many occasions linked to elevated levels of high crime in most disadvantaged communities. In facts, factors such as single-parent homes, high levels of unemployment, high levels of school dropout, deteriorating infrastructures among others have been the main causatives. It is relevant in understanding criminal activities in urban set ups of Nakuru County where this study is majorly going to be conducted[13].

6 Methodology

This study employed mixed methods research design to investigate the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Karamajong Cluster, focusing on its impact on community security and stability as well as the socio-economic and political factors influencing this proliferation. The target population for the study comprised residents of the Karamajong Cluster who were knowledgeable about the issue. This population totaled 32,378 individuals. Stratified random sampling for residents and purposive sampling for administrators was utilized to select a

sample of 156 respondents from the target population. Purposive ensured that individuals with relevant information and experience concerning SALW proliferation were included in the study. Stratified random sampling ensured that diversity of the population was captured. To gather comprehensive data, a researcher-administered structured questionnaire was employed to collect information from the 146 residents and interview schedules for administrators. The tools were designed to capture detailed insights into the impact of SALW on community security and stability, as well as the socio-economic and political factors contributing to its proliferation. Additionally, semi-structured interview guides were used to conduct interviews with the cluster heads of the Karamajong Cluster. These interviews aimed to gather expert perspectives and in-depth understanding from local leaders who possess a broader view of the SALW situation and its implications for the community. The combination of structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews provided a robust framework for analyzing the proliferation of SALW and its multifaceted impacts on the Karamajong Cluster. validity of the instruments, that is, questionnaires and focus group discussion were given to experts from the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for validation after which corrections were made where necessary. The researcher ensured that the participants were fully informed about the research procedure and give their consent to participate in the research before data collection took place. The collected data was analyzed to identify key themes and patterns related to SALW proliferation, including its effects on security, stability, and socio-economic conditions, as well as the influence of local political dynamics. Qualitative data was analysed using content analysis. This methodological approach enabled a thorough examination of the issue and provided valuable insights into the complex interplay of factors driving SALW proliferation in the Karamajong Cluster.

The pilot testing was conducted using the questionnaire on 5 officials. The pilot group was done through random sampling. The purpose of the pilot testing was to establish the validity and reliability of the research instruments and hence enhance face validity [7]. According to [11] validity as the extent to which the test's sample of items accurately reflects the subject matter it is intended to assess. It demonstrates how well a test measures what it is supposed to measure, as well as how true, accurate, authentic, genuine, or sound it is. It also shows whether the measurement tools are accurate and measuring what they are supposed to measure. By asking respondents for their opinions, the researcher made it easier to make the necessary changes to the research tool, increasing its validity.

A pre-test study was carried out to ascertain the questionnaire's internal consistency and reliability. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to perform a reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for each research objective that was a scale. Cronbach's Alpha is a metric used to quantify internal consistency, or the degree to which a group of items are related to one another. A reliability test was carried out to evaluate the instruments' dependability in order to ascertain how well various scale items measure the concepts that they are intended to measure. Internal consistency is calculated by measuring a statistic known as Cronbach's alpha. When Cronbach's alpha is 0.70 or higher, it is regarded as a reliable indicator in social science research. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient (α) was used to measure this reliability estimate. According to [11], research instruments should have a reliability of 0.70 or higher.

7 RESULTS

7.1 Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

The analysis of gender distribution of the respondents shows that the number of male respondents was 105 which form 67.7 % whilst that of female respondents was 51 which form 32.5% of the total number of respondents. It can therefore be argued that there was high male response rate in the study compared to their female counterparts. This therefore means that the males were more likely to have relevant information on proliferation of arms in the study area.

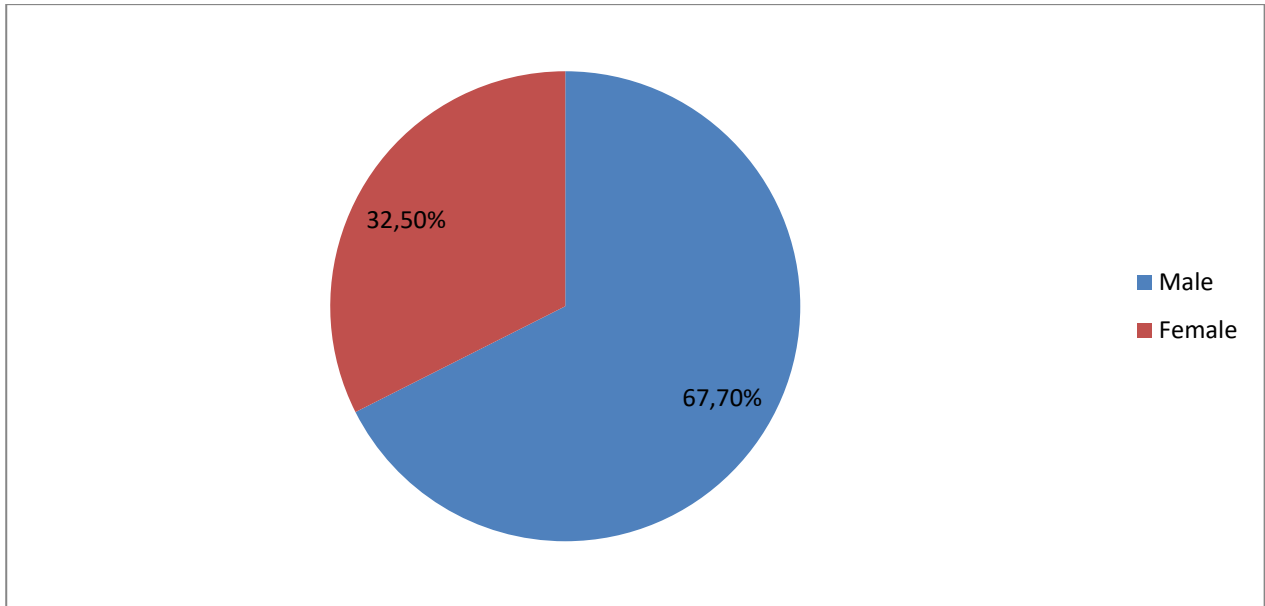


Figure 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

7.2 Distribution of the Respondents by Age

According to Table 1, 37.5% of the respondents were between 41-50 years, 20.8% were above 50 years, 25% were between 31-40 years and 16.7% were between 18-30 years. From the study it can be inferred that majority of the respondents were between 41-60 years followed by above 50 years. This means that the majority who were most affected were between ages 41-50 years thus had more experience on proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the area.

Table 1: Distribution of the Respondents by Age

	Frequency	Percent
41-50	59	37.5
50 and above	32	20.8
31-40	39	25.0
18-30	26	16.7
Total	156	100.0

7.3 Distribution of Respondents by Level of Education

The respondents who had no formal schooling were 22% (33 respondents), those who reached primary school levels were 13.4% (20 respondents), those who had secondary level were 31.4% (48 respondents), those who had post-secondary levels were 17.7% (27 respondents) while those who attained university level were 15.5% (24 respondents). It can be inferred that the majority of the respondents had attained secondary level of education and above. This means they were able to understand and respond to questions concerning small arms and light weapons in the area.

Table 2: Distribution of the Respondents by Level of Education

	Frequency	Percent
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No formal schooling	33	22.0
Primary school	20	13.4
Secondary	48	31.4
Post-secondary	27	17.7
University	24	15.5
Total	156	100.0

The following questions and hypotheses were answered and tested respectively:

The existence of proliferation of small arms and light weapons

It was determined that 93% of the respondents alluded that there was proliferation of SALW while 7% on the other hand denied this fact. This implies that a significant majority (93%) of respondents recognize or believe that there is a proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the area. This indicates that the perception of SALW proliferation is prevalent and accepted among most members of the community. A small minority (7%) of respondents deny the existence of SALW proliferation. This dissent suggests that while the majority view sees proliferation as a significant issue, there are some individuals who either do not perceive it as a problem or have a different understanding of the situation.

Table 3

Showing whether the existence of proliferation of SALW

Relationship exists	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	145	93
No	11	7
Total	156	100

Table 4

There is no statistically significant impact of socio-economic factors on proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Karamajong Cluster

Area of Study	Socio-economic factors	Proliferation of SALW	Pearson Correlation Coefficient Value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Lamu County			.762*	.000

* - Means significant at 5% level

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) of the variables i.e., socio-economic factors and proliferation of SALW is .762 and a significant level of .000 which is less than .05. This means that socio-economic factors have statistically significant impact on proliferation of SALW. The coefficient (r) is a strong positive correlation which means that as socio-economic factors increase so does proliferation of SALW. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

To better understand the views concerning how socio-economic factors impact proliferation of SALW, interviews were done with the heads of communities in the Karamajong Cluster. The following findings were obtained.

In analyzing how socio-economic factors impact the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Karamajong Cluster, the study revealed significant insights through interviews with community heads. The findings underscore the intricate relationship between socio-economic conditions and the spread of SALW, highlighting both direct and indirect effects. A predominant theme that emerged was the role of economic instability in driving the proliferation of SALW. One

community leader noted, "When the local economy struggles and people face poverty, access to small arms becomes a means of protection and power. We see this happening here as resources become scarcer." This sentiment was echoed by another respondent, who explained, "Economic hardship pushes people to acquire weapons, either for protection or to engage in illegal trade. The lack of alternative means for survival makes SALW a viable option for many."

Additionally, the study highlighted how economic opportunities, or the lack thereof, influence the proliferation of SALW. A community head shared, "Limited job opportunities and declining livelihoods have forced many to turn to arms for protection or to engage in illegal activities that bring in money." This observation points to a broader issue where economic deprivation leads to increased reliance on SALW as a means of ensuring personal security and pursuing economic gains.

Another critical factor discussed was the impact of socio-economic inequality within the Karamajong Cluster. One leader remarked, "The disparity between the wealthy and the poor in our region fuels tensions and conflicts. Those who feel marginalized or disenfranchised are more likely to arm themselves." This disparity often exacerbates conflicts and increases the demand for small arms as individuals seek to protect their interests and assert their power. The political instability within the region further complicates the situation. One respondent highlighted, "Political unrest and weak governance create an environment where arms proliferation can thrive. People lose trust in authorities and resort to acquiring weapons for self-defense or to assert control." This instability not only contributes to the proliferation of SALW but also hinders efforts to control and regulate their spread effectively.

In addition, the availability of resources for purchasing SALW plays a significant role. A community head explained, "When individuals or groups have access to money, they often use it to acquire arms, further fueling the proliferation. Economic opportunities that lead to disposable income can inadvertently increase the acquisition of weapons." This observation underscores the need for economic policies that address the root causes of SALW proliferation by providing alternative means of income and reducing the availability of funds for weapon purchases.

The impact of historical conflicts and the legacy of past violence were also significant. One leader shared, "The legacy of past conflicts still lingers, and the continued presence of weapons from those times influences current dynamics. Socio-economic factors such as ongoing poverty and lack of development perpetuate this cycle." This historical context illustrates how past events continue to shape present-day issues related to SALW[9].

Finally, the study uncovered the role of cultural factors intertwined with socio-economic conditions. A respondent noted, "Cultural practices and norms also play a role. In some communities, owning weapons is a symbol of status and power. Economic pressures make it harder for some to uphold these norms, driving them further towards acquiring arms." This cultural dimension highlights how traditional values and socio-economic pressures combine to influence SALW proliferation.

In conclusion, the findings from the Karamajong Cluster reveal that socio-economic factors significantly impact the proliferation of SALW. Economic instability, inequality, political unrest, resource availability, historical legacies, and cultural norms all contribute to the spread of small arms and light weapons. Addressing these factors through targeted economic development, improved governance, and community-based interventions is crucial for mitigating the proliferation of SALW and enhancing security within the region [3].

Table 5

There is no statistically significant impact of political factors on proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Karamajong Cluster.

Area of Study	Political factors	Proliferation of SALW	Pearson Correlation Coefficient Value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Lamu County			.849*	.000

* - Means significant at 5% level

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) of the variables i.e., political factors and proliferation of SALW is .849 and a significant level of .000 which is less than .05. This means that political factors have

statistically significant impact on proliferation of SALW. The coefficient (r) is a strong positive correlation which means that as political factors increase so does proliferation of SALW. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

In exploring how political factors impact the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) within the Karamajong Cluster, the study uncovered a range of insights from community heads that illuminate the complex interplay between politics and arms proliferation. Through thematic analysis, several key themes emerged, highlighting the significant role of political dynamics in shaping the SALW landscape. A central theme identified was the effect of political instability on the proliferation of SALW. One community leader observed, "Political instability is a major driver of arms proliferation. When the government is weak and unable to maintain order, people turn to weapons for protection and power." This sentiment was reinforced by another respondent who added, "In times of political upheaval, there is a surge in the availability of arms. People seek to arm themselves because they don't trust that the state will provide security."

The lack of effective governance and law enforcement also contributes to the spread of SALW. A community head noted, "When local authorities are ineffective or corrupt, arms control measures fail. People get weapons easily because there is no proper system in place to regulate their distribution." This observation underscores the critical role that strong, accountable governance plays in controlling arms proliferation.

The absence of robust law enforcement mechanisms creates a vacuum that allows illegal arms trade to flourish[4]. The influence of political factions and power struggles within the region was another significant factor discussed. One leader remarked, "Political factions often exacerbate the situation by arming their supporters to gain an advantage. This creates an environment where arms are widely available and used to settle political scores." Another respondent elaborated, "Rivalries between different political groups lead to increased *arms proliferation. Each side arms itself to protect its interests and intimidate opponents.*"

Corruption and mismanagement within political structures were frequently cited as contributing factors. A community head stated, "Corruption in political offices leads to the diversion of arms meant for security forces into the hands of criminals or local militias. This mismanagement fuels the spread of small arms." Similarly, another leader mentioned, "When politicians and officials are corrupt, they often facilitate the illegal arms trade for personal gain or to support their political agendas."

Additionally, the influence of external political factors, such as regional conflicts and international arms trade, was highlighted. One respondent noted, "Regional conflicts spill over into our area, bringing in arms from neighboring countries. Political instability in these regions indirectly affects our own security situation." Another leader explained, "International arms dealers exploit political unrest in our area to push their weapons. They find opportunities in our local conflicts and fuel the proliferation of SALW."

The impact of political rhetoric and propaganda on arms proliferation was also evident. A community head observed, "Politicians sometimes use inflammatory rhetoric that encourages people to arm themselves for 'protection' or to fight for a cause. This kind of rhetoric increases the demand for weapons." Another respondent added, "Political leaders might promise security or protection in exchange for support, which can lead to more arms being distributed in the community."

The study also revealed how political neglect and marginalization contribute to the spread of SALW. One leader remarked, "Areas that are politically neglected or marginalized often experience higher arms proliferation. The lack of development and political attention makes these regions more vulnerable to arms trade and violence." Another respondent elaborated, "When communities feel excluded from political processes, they resort to arming themselves to assert their rights and demand attention."

The study also touched on the role of political instability in creating economic conditions that favor arms proliferation. A community head noted, "Political instability disrupts economic activities and increases poverty. In such conditions, people turn to weapons as a means of survival and protection." Another leader added, "Economic instability caused by political crises forces people into illegal arms trade as a way to cope with their financial difficulties."

In conclusion, the findings from the Karamajong Cluster indicate that political factors play a crucial role in the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. Political instability, ineffective governance, power struggles, corruption, external influences, inflammatory rhetoric, political neglect, and economic disruption all contribute to the spread of SALW. Addressing these political issues through improved governance, anti-corruption measures, and international cooperation is essential for controlling arms proliferation and enhancing security within the region. The insights provided by community heads underscore the need for comprehensive political reforms and targeted interventions to mitigate the impact of political factors on SALW proliferation[10][7].

Table 6

There is no statistically significant impact of proliferation of small arms and light weapons on the security and stability of communities within the Karamajong Cluster.

Area of Study	Proliferation of SALW	Security and Stability	Pearson Correlation Coefficient Value	Sig. (2-tailed)
Lamu County			-.723*	.001

* - Means significant at 5% level

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient (r) of the variables i.e., proliferation of SALW and security and stability of SALW is -.723 and a significant level of .001 which is less than .05. This means that proliferation of SALW have statistically significant impact on security and stability of communities withing Karamajong Cluster. The coefficient (r) is a strong negative correlation which means that as proliferation of SALW increase so does p security and stability of communities withing Karamajong Cluster. Thus, the null hypothesis was rejected.

In exploring how the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) impacts the security and stability of communities within the Karamajong Cluster, the study revealed several critical themes through the perspectives of community heads. These themes highlight the profound effects of SALW on both safety and socio-political dynamics in the region.

One prominent theme was the escalation of violence and insecurity resulting from increased availability of SALW. A community leader articulated this concern, saying, "The proliferation of arms has significantly raised the level of violence in our communities. Conflicts that could have been resolved through dialogue are now often settled with guns." This statement underscores how the presence of small arms exacerbates the frequency and severity of violent incidents, disrupting communal harmony and safety.

Another significant impact identified was the destabilization of traditional social structures. One respondent noted, "The widespread availability of weapons has undermined our traditional systems of conflict resolution. Elders used to mediate disputes, but now people are more likely to resort to violence." This observation highlights how SALW disrupts established mechanisms for maintaining order and resolving conflicts, leading to a breakdown in traditional governance and community cohesion[10].

The economic implications of arms proliferation were also evident. A community head shared, "The presence of arms has made our communities less stable, which affects local economic activities. People are afraid to invest or trade freely due to the constant threat of armed raids and violence." This comment reflects how the instability caused by SALW hampers economic development, as fear and insecurity deter investment and disrupt livelihoods.

Furthermore, the proliferation of small arms has contributed to a climate of fear and mistrust among community members. One leader explained, "When everyone is armed, it creates a sense of paranoia. People no longer feel safe even within their own homes, which erodes the trust and cooperation that are vital for a stable community." This sentiment reveals how widespread arms contribute to a pervasive atmosphere of fear, weakening social bonds and reducing collective security.

Finally, the impact on community relations with external actors, including neighboring groups and authorities, was discussed. A respondent remarked, "Arming ourselves has led to increased tensions with neighboring communities and made it difficult for us to work with outside authorities.

It creates a cycle of distrust and conflict that affects regional stability.” This statement highlights how SALW proliferation can strain relationships with external entities, complicating efforts to address security issues and fostering a cycle of conflict.

In summary, the proliferation of small arms and light weapons within the Karamajong Cluster has profound effects on community security and stability[8]. Increased violence, disruption of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, economic instability, pervasive fear, and strained external relations all contribute to a fragile and unstable environment. Addressing these issues requires comprehensive strategies to control arms proliferation and restore security and stability in the region.

8 CONCLUSIONS

The study clearly demonstrates that economic hardship within the Karamajong Cluster significantly contributes to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. As economic instability worsens, individuals turn to arms as a means of protection or economic gain, reflecting a direct link between poverty and increased SALW acquisition.

The research highlights how socio-economic disparities and the lingering effects of historical conflicts intensify the proliferation of SALW. Marginalized communities are more likely to arm themselves due to perceived threats and the need to assert their power, while past violence continues to influence current SALW dynamics.

The study reveals that political instability and ineffective governance are primary factors contributing to the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) in the Karamajong Cluster. Weak government control and corrupt practices create environments where arms proliferation can flourish unchecked, as individuals and groups seek to protect themselves or gain power.

Corruption within political structures and external factors such as regional conflicts and international arms trade significantly exacerbate the SALW issue. Corrupt officials often divert arms for personal gain, while regional instability and external arms dealers contribute to the influx and spread of weapons within the community.

The proliferation of SALW in the Karamajong Cluster has led to heightened violence and instability, undermining traditional conflict resolution methods and disrupting community cohesion. This increased availability of arms has shifted conflict resolution from dialogue to violent means, exacerbating insecurity.

The presence of SALW has negatively impacted local economic activities and fostered a pervasive climate of fear and mistrust. The instability has deterred investment, strained community relations, and eroded trust within the community, further aggravating the region's economic and social challenges.

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the root causes of SALW proliferation, it is essential to enhance economic stability through development initiatives. Programs should focus on creating job opportunities, reducing poverty, and providing alternative means of income. This approach will help mitigate the economic motivations behind arms acquisition and reduce reliance on SALW for security and survival.

Improving governance and community engagement is crucial for controlling SALW proliferation. Efforts should include strengthening local institutions, promoting transparency, and fostering trust between authorities and communities. Additionally, addressing socio-economic inequalities and leveraging cultural practices to promote peace and security can help curb the demand for small arms and light weapons.

To address SALW proliferation, it is crucial to enhance governance and enforce anti-corruption measures. Improving the effectiveness and accountability of local authorities and law enforcement agencies will help control arms distribution and reduce illegal trade.

Foster regional cooperation to address cross-border arms trafficking and mitigate the impact of regional conflicts. Strengthening international collaboration to monitor and control the arms trade can help curb the flow of weapons into the Karamajong Cluster and stabilize the region.

Introduce and enforce strict arms control policies and disarmament programs to reduce the prevalence of SALW. Strengthening legal frameworks and community-based initiatives will help restore traditional conflict resolution mechanisms and improve overall security.

Develop targeted economic development and social support programs to mitigate the negative impacts of SALW proliferation. Focus on rebuilding trust within communities, fostering economic stability, and improving relations with neighboring groups and authorities to promote long-term stability.

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