# **Introduction**

In recent years the economic plight of those who live in the desert and semi-arid areas of the earth has been well publicised by the modern media. In particular, those whose pastoral lifestyle has been most disrupted by drought, advancing desertification, population growth and political strife in Africa and Central Asia have caught the attention of news reporters, relief and development organizations and charitable fund raising bodies. The need for relief and some form of rehabilitation has been recognized as an international responsibility. This is a human problem far beyond the resources of respective national governments to address, even if they are willing so to do.

The social disruption and alienation suffered especially by nomadic pastoralists over the last 20 years has provided boundless subject matter for the attention of social anthropologists, third world economists and rural agronomists. In spite of all the expert opinion being offered and the investment plans of some of the major international funding organizations, there is a growing awareness that much of this effort has failed to provide any long-term solutions to the problem.

The magnitude and complexity of the problem has been amplified by the experience of long-term field workers over the last ten or twenty years. Many of these practitioners are realising that their development programmes have not helped to restore the traditional resourcefulness and self- reliance of nomadic or semi-nomadic pastoralists; rather they have produced greater economic dependence on western aid. Within those societies the traditional relationships and mutual interdependence are breaking down.

If secular development efforts have produced little or negative results then this study also hopes to call attention to the minimal impact which the world wide Christian Church has made on these nomadic or semi-nomadic peoples, in terms of effective physical or spiritual transformation. The paucity of results in establishing the Christian Church among them requires serious re-evaluation of current approaches. In contrast to this the reasons will be examined why Islam has apparently been much more acceptable to nomads in general than Christianity as it has usually been presented.

# **Background.**

This study will attempt to take full cognisance of the extensive sociological research on the problems of nomadic pastoralists, particularly during the last 20 years in Africa. It will examine the reasons for the failure of this research to produce any significant positive results from the perspective of a practitioner who has spent most of the last 24 years trying to apply his engineering technology and integrate his spiritual convictions amongst nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples.

Although a broad overview of the plight of pastoral people as observed right across sub-saharan Africa will be considered to give the fullest context for understanding the problem, the particular focus of this study will be taken from some of the most remote and undeveloped areas of East Africa where the writer has worked in Ethiopia, Sudan and Northern Kenya.

It is hoped to be able to concentrate on a pastoral group where a good foundation of previous research has been laid on which fresh thinking on the meaning of appropriate development can be built. It will also be a situation where a wide range of development approaches have been attempted to provide the most comprehensive and adaptable case study.

# **THE AIM**

The aim of this study is to show the meaning of appropriate development for nomadic pastoralists and its value to them in helping to maintain their cultural strengths in the face of external and environmental pressures. It will seek to do this by critical analysis of the following issues:

1. The nature and causes of nomadism; its importance to pastoralists in arid and semi arid lands. The role of nomadic pastoralists in modern African societies. What can we learn from them that will make better use of limited resources of land in a continent with an exploding population?

2. The environmental and external constraints that affect nomadic pastoral societies; ecological, economic and political changes; the residual effect of colonial governments and post-independence policies.

3. The need for and nature of development amongst pastoral nomads; The type of approach and aspects of community development resources which will prove to be most acceptable and appropriate to them.

4. The significance of world view and cultural practices in nomadic societies and the importance of incorporating these into development planning and practice.

5. The relative impact of different religious movements on pastoral nomads. Why have the traditional Christian approaches apparently failed to gain acceptance? What is the most effective way to integrate the Christian message without imposing alien Western values and practices?

The eventual aim for this study deriving from the analysis above will be to design an appropriate, integrated development model which takes into account the external and environmental constraints on nomadic peoples. The internal resource potential of their specialised knowledge and experience, their world view and their value systems will be recognised and built upon.