Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms: in case of Ameya Woreda

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Abstract
Conflict is a struggle between two or more people over interests, needs, or values of each person. Conflict is a normal part of everyday life and it is as old as human history. According to the community elders of the Ameya Woreda, conflicts raised due to farm lands, land borders, grazing lands, thieveness and female abduction are frequently occurred. Indeed, the conflicts in the study area have very rare political nature and at the same time the conflicts among the clans are also very rare. In general the conflicts happened in the area have commonly socio- economical nature especially in competing over scarce resources. Even though it is not a strong as others there is also religious incompatibility. Community elders, religious fathers, clan leaders/gula, board committee and women were common actors in resolving conflicts traditionally. There are different kind of compensation for each crime like loss of life, injuring body parts, robbing, female abduction etc that the defendants pay for the plaintiff according to the rule set by Gula upon the decision of the actors. Moreover, the procedures the actors follow during the conflict resolution are different for different cases of conflicts. In general, a traditional conflict resolution mechanism in Ameya woreda plays a significant role in terms of providing and prevailing peace and stability between and among the communities when comparing with the modern legal system.

Key words: tradition, conflict, resolution, mechanism, actors
INTRODUCTION

The conflict concept has no single clear meaning as it is being studied by scholars in different disciplines such as sociology, psychology, anthropology and political science (Ozanna, et al., 2012). 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. Conflict is a normal part of everyday life and most conflicts have several causes. Some causes of conflict can be attributed to poor communication, lack of information, lack of resources, and/or perceived or actual incompatible needs (Jones, 2007).

The history of conflict is as old as human history. From the dawn of human history, communities have been competing for control of resources and for dominance. These competitions inevitably led individuals as well as social, political, economic, and religious groups to conflicts. It is true that conflict has devastating effects and it is unwanted. It is also true that conflict is unavoidable and it continuous to occur (Assefa, 2000). From a traditional point of view, conflict is perceived as an unwelcome disturbance of the relationships within the community (Faure, 2000).

Historically, individuals, social groups and societies have disputed and competed against one another over scarce commodities and resources - land, money, political power, and ideology. They have even fought one another and bitterly sought the elimination and/or subjugation of rivals, in order to control these resources and commodities. But at the same time, human societies and groups have found their own ways and means for averting and/or resolving conflicts. The existing body of literature confirms that the nature and causes of conflicts and the mechanisms for resolving them are deeply rooted in the culture and history of every society; they are in many important ways unique to them (Aliwardak, 2004).

Conflict destroys the very bases of development: environmental resource, economic infrastructure, and the social and civic ties that permit and sustain development. Understanding the nature, causes and consequences of conflict through scientific inquiry is indispensable to conflict prevention and management endeavors.
Conflict leads, among other things, of economic activities, humanitarian crises (e.g. displacement of people, including vulnerable groups such as women and children) and a state of uncertainty that deter long run investment efforts and stability (Ethiopian National workshop report, 2000).

Unmanaged conflict has the potential to cause several negative consequences in workplaces, communities, and homes. Many times these costs are “hidden,” that is, they are not readily apparent. At the same time, these costs are very detrimental to individuals, groups, and organizations. The Dana Mediation Institute, Inc. has determined a number of cost factors associated with conflict in organization. These are like wasted time, opportunity cost of wasted time, lowered job motivation and productivity, lost performance due to conflict-related absenteeism, loss of investment in skilled employees, conflict-incited theft, sabotage, vandalism, & damage, restructuring around the problem, Health costs and degraded decision quality. A lot of these conflicts are very subtle within an organization, yet still have the power to negatively affect an organization’s bottom line (Jones, 2007).

Human existence is characterized by struggle. In fact, it is said that life itself is a struggle. As we struggle in life for our needs, there are bound to be consequences arising out of such struggles. Sometimes, the struggles in life results into conflicts and to get out of this quagmire we need to put an end to, or resolve such conflicts. Conflicts may arise out of the family, such as between husband and wife, parents and children, between communities, nations, and in labour relations, etc. When they arise, we try to resolve them. There are many ways to resolve these conflicts. For example, by surrendering, running away, overpowering your opponent through the use of violence or filing a lawsuit (Shipi M Gowok, 2008).

Conflict may be resolved in a variety of ways. These methods may include violence, a judicial decision, an administrative decision, avoidance, or informal discussion and problem solving. While all of these solutions may resolve the conflict, only informal discussion and problem solving
(with and without assistance) has the opportunity for the parties to control the decision and reduce the costs associated with conflict (Jones, 2007). Since the causes of conflict are different, it would be better to use different mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts. By avoiding conflict, we avoid not only one of the hindrances of economic development but also foreign powers' intervention, which may exacerbate the domestic conflicts. Therefore, more than anybody else governments, whose main duty is maintenance of peace and security, are responsible for providing their respective peoples with alternative conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms, popular and widely used among these are the indigenous mechanisms (Assefa, 2000).

Traditional approaches vary considerably from society to society, from region to region, from community to community. There is no one single general concept of “traditional conflict transformation”. Rather, traditional approaches are always context specific. This contextual embeddedness in itself is a decisive feature of traditional approaches. In principle, traditional approaches are specific, not universally applicable unlike modern approach which is universal.

Today, the terms Alternative Dispute Resolution and conflict resolution are used somewhat interchangeably and refer to a wide range of processes that involve non-violent dispute resolution outside of the traditional court system (Shipi M Gowok, 2008).

Oromo people have four developed, widely used and effective indigenous mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts (Assefa, 2000). These are:

- IlafiIlamee mechanism (negotiation or compromising mechanisms);
- Jarsumma mechanism (reconciliation administered by the community elders);
- Gada system mechanisms (judicial, administrative and political mechanisms); and
- Waqefanna system mechanism (religious adjudication).

Generally, Alternative Dispute Resolution is generally classified into at least three major sub-types, namely, negotiation, mediation, and arbitration. A fourth category, conciliation is also usually included here.
Under the Ethiopian legal system, it might not be wrong to include the Ombudsman as an Alternative Dispute Resolution institution (Shipi M Gowok, 2008).

Traditional approaches cannot be compartmentalized into “political” or “juridical” or other, rather they are holistic, comprising also social, economic, cultural and religious-spiritual dimensions. This is in accordance with the entirety of traditional lifestyles and world views in which the different spheres of societal life are hardly separated. The conflict parties can directly engage in negotiations on conflict termination and in the search for a solution, or a third party can be invited to mediate; in any case the process is public, and the participation in the process and the approval of results is voluntary. It is carried out by social groups in the interest of social groups (extended families, clans, village communities, tribes, brotherhoods, etc.); individuals are perceived as members of a (kin-)group, they are accountable to that group, and the group is accountable for (the deeds of) each of its members (Boege, 2006).

Traditional conflict transformation aims at the restoration of order and harmony of the community. Cooperation between conflict parties in the future has to be guaranteed. The aim is not to punish, an action which would be viewed as harming the group a second time. Re-establishing harmony implies reintegrating the deviant members … The ultimate matter is … restoring good relations (Faure, 2000). This is why traditional approaches in general follow the line of restorative justice instead of (modern, western-style) punitive justice. Restorative justice has to be understood as a compensation for loss, not as a retribution for offense (Zartman, 2000).

The primary advantage of conflict resolution is that it is cheaper and faster to terminate disputes. In a society where the majority of the populace is poor with widespread illiteracy culminating in lack of access to justice and the high cost and scarcity of lawyers, ADR stands out as the best method of conflict resolution. Economic factors play a great role in the denial of access to justice in Ethiopia. In some societies where there is high incidence of corruption and also high cost of hiring lawyers, phobia of the unknown makes it extremely hard for any poor person to embark upon law suits. It is a common saying that the bench and bar is a society of men brought up in the art of changing black into white and white into
black according as they are paid. Therefore the fear of how the law turns against a litigant is an obstacle to seeking justice (Shipi M Gowok, 2008).

When compared with the non-indigenous ones, indigenous mechanisms for the prevention and resolution of conflicts are less complex, save time, and give a chance to parties in conflict to actively participate to solve their own problems and to handle their affairs in a relatively more acceptable way to them (Assefa, 2000). The field of conflict resolution has broadened recently to include efforts in schools, work places and communities to reduce violence and help young people develop communication and problem solving skills. Alternative Dispute Resolution, believed by some to be outside the traditional mainstream of state jurisprudence, have gained acceptance among both the general public and the legal profession. With the ceaselessly growing caseload, and with the attendant effect of placing great strain on conventional courts, many judges have come to see dispute resolution as an acceptable means of decreasing caseloads, while settling disputes in a fair and equitable way. This line of reasoning is rejected by others who insist that it is not all alternative methods that are always fair and equitable (Shipi M Gowok, 2008).

Africa is a continent burdened by conflict. In the 1990s, it accounted for more than 40 percent of the conflicts around the world, the most on any continent. Much of Africa’s contemporary conflict is intrastate, exacerbated by ethnic and religious tensions but with generic economic and political underpinnings. The growing interconnectivity of the global arena also means that conflicts in Africa can have international as well as domestic dimensions (Onyinya, 2009).

In general, the conflict in the Ethiopia and the Horn Africa can be racial, ethnic and religious superiority, and autocratic rules as the main sources of conflict that breed from hankering for economic and political power. In addition to the above, conflicts may also be triggered by demand for justice and access to social and physical infrastructures. Demand for justice also involves crave for civil, political, cultural and religious rights. It may also include the quest for secession and independence. The manifold social, economic and political repercussions of conflicts consecrate collective security as
the best means to end the recurrence of wars (Kinfe, 2000).

Culture and religion have long been the source of conflict and war in the Horn. Conflicts and wars waged based on culture and religion were highly pronounced in Ethiopia and Sudan among the countries of the Horn. The religious wars fought by Gragn and Yohanest in Ethiopia and the religious and cultural wars fought for hundreds of years by the Kingdoms of Dongola and Alwa against the southward moving Arabs had claimed more lives than any other war. Regarding trans-boundary Rivers of the Horn, the principle of equitable water utilization by both upper and lower riparian states, along with international law, is in order. When one considers both the principle of equity and international law, practical difficulties arise (Astatke, 2000).

Most conflicts in Ethiopia and thehorn were caused by boundary demarcation and power struggle between the leaders and the regional lords. In the same way, conflict also occurred in Oromia regional state. Economics, land ownership, border lines, inheritance of property, political factors and breaking of public peace were the main manifestation of conflict in Oromia regional state (Giday, 2000).

**STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**

Indeed, conflicts are inevitable and part and partial of human nature. The long standing conflicts in Africa have been solved using the formal justice systems that have not resulted in sustainable resolution of conflict and peace. Furthermore, the formal justice system is far away from the people, very time consuming, costly and highly formalistic, with confusing procedures and unpredictable outcomes, focused on individual capability and on the punishment of the individual.

The socio-economic conflicts like farm land boundaries, robbing/thieveness, grass lands for live stocks and etc, and female abduction conflicts are the most prevalent in the district in which the modern legal system or court could not control it. So that is why this research is going to be done in order to assess the role of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in solving the socio-economic and political conflicts among South West Shewa, Ameya Woreda communities.
OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

General objective

• To assess Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Ameya Woreda Oromia Regional State

Specific objectives

• To identify the root cause of conflict in the district

• To understand the dynamics of traditional conflict resolution process in the district

• To know the processes or procedures taken in resolving conflicts in the district

• To know the main actors involved in the conflict resolution in the district

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the source/ causes/ of conflict in Ameyaworeda?

2. What are the dynamics of conflict resolution processin Ameyaworeda?

3. Who are the main actors of traditional conflict resolutionin Ameyaworeda?

4. What do you think are the advantages of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in comparison with the modern one?

5. To what extent the conflict would get permanent solutions whenever it is addressedin Ameyaworeda?

METHODOLOGY AND METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Methodology

The paper employed a qualitative approach to conduct the study. The study was undertaken qualitatively because qualitative approach would describe phenomenon in qualitative analysis not based on statically tools and quantification.

Method of data collection

Both primary and secondary data were used in this study.

Primary sources

The primary data were collected via interview and FGD was also conducted with different target groups like Ambo town women Affairs office, and Ambo town women’s association others who do their task for the improvement of women are/ is to be targeted for this study.
Interview

Is an instrument of data collection which has the advantage to assess large information. It can provide detail data that is not possible through questionnaire. It used to attain honest response as the interviewer can explain and clarify both purpose of the research and the prepared question. It is appropriate for situations in which the researchers wants to ask open and closed ended questions that illicit in depth-information and allow to deeply exploring the respondents feeling. It is also use the researchers to treating equally both literate and illiterate respondent and its quick and Inexpensive way of collecting data.

Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

This was a form of structured group discussion involving people who are knowledgeable about the issue under study. The study was conducted three focus group discussions having average of five individuals within each. Thus, it helps the researchers to compare the result obtained from those group discussions.

Secondary Sources

The secondary source of data were gathered from both published and unpublished materials such as books, documents, newspaper, articles, journals, internet etc…

SAMPLING TECHNIQUE AND SAMPLE SIZE

Sampling technique

For this particular study, a non-probability convenience sampling techniques were used because this technique allows respondents to be selected based on their knowledge, convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. In addition to this, the researcher prefers convenience sampling because it is fast, inexpensive, easy and responds readily available. On the other hand, purposive sampling was used in this study to select informants for in-depth interview and focus group discussion. This was because the selected informants supposed to be more experienced and knowledgeable about the problem under study. For such purpose, elder were given priority.

Sample size

Ten different elders from different kebele were interviewed. And also three focal group discussions with average of five community elders to each group were held. The researcher limits the sample sizes of the respondents to this study because the coverage of the woreda is very wide and got
that the saturation of information beyond this number for the selected kebele.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

We have noticed that negotiation, mediation, conciliation, arbitration and Ombudsman do remain as the primary sources of conflict resolution processes in Ethiopia. The big question is, are these processes given legal recognition to? After observation of the practice and facts on the ground it is to be concluded that they do have legal effect. But the irony is that they have not been recognized, institutionalized or professionalized to complement court processes as is the obtainable practice in some western countries and the United States of America.

Thus the main aim of the study is to motivate the community of Ameya Woreda to participate and preserve their indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, and by emphasizing the importance of these indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms from different angles, to enhance its recognition and application as an alternative dispute resolution by the community itself. And can be used as sources of information for policy makers and for those researchers want to undertake further research in the area.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study is delaminated to the South west Shewa zone particularly Ameya woreda and it is more confined to traditional conflict resolution mechanisms.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Description of the study area

Ameya Woreda is located in south west Shewa of Oromia regional state and 144 km far away from the Addis Ababa (Finfine), capital city of the region and the country. The study was conducted in Ameya district, South West Shewa zone, Ethiopia from October, 2014 to November, 2014 GC. Gindo is the administrative town of the district.

Demographic characteristics

Ameya Woreda contains 39 kebeles, and of total population of 122,056, of whom 61,578 were men and 60,478 were women; 6,257 or 5.13% of its population were urban dwellers according to third National Population and Housing Census in May, 2007 and November 2007. Most of the population was
engaged in agricultural activities. The majority of the inhabitants said they practiced Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, with 55.4% of the population reporting they observed this belief, while 26.33% of the population were Protestant, and 17.66% were Muslim.

The three largest ethnic groups reported in Amaya were the Oromo (85.4%), the Amhara (12.71%), and the Sebat Bet Gurage (0.93%); all other ethnic groups made up 0.96% of the population. Oromiffa was spoken as a first language by 87.56%, 11.37% spoke Amharic, and 0.59% Sebat Bet Gurage; the remaining 0.48% spoke all other primary languages reported.

Socio-economic condition

The topography of the areas is mainly plain and thoroughly cultivated. Mixed livestock and crop farming is the dominant form of production where rain-fed agriculture is the common production system. The district consists of midland and lowland situated in Gibe watershed, one of main rivers of Gibe-Omo River system. The district has 39 kebeles (peasant associations (PAs)), of which 19 (47%), 10 (36%) and 7 (17%) PAs are lowland, midland and highland, respectively.

Hence majority of the people within the Woreda lead their life by agriculture while some others are traders and government of employee of government.

Sources (Causes) of Conflict in Ameya Woreda

According to the data obtained from interviews the major local conflicts in the Oromo society in south west Shewa zone particularly in Ameya woreda are conflicts on land borders, grasslands, female’s abduction, low income especially between spouses (wife and husband), double marriage, water bodies, thieveness/robbing and religious difference intoxication. These all are common phenomena in the study area. They are characterized by competition over grazing land, farm lands, water bodies (resources); and livestock riding and lootings. Such kinds of conflicts were further intensified with the increasing the scarcity of available natural resources (water points, farming land and grazing lands). Thus it is increasing levels of violent competition and tension between local communities (Alemayehu Tesfaye, Nov.10, 2014; Ameya).

Conflicts happened due to rumors, false testament against others, insulting others,
cutting trees from other land borders, killing animals of other own and also breaking community peace by shouting deliberately especially at the mid night are the cause of conflicts that are usually happened in the area (AleMayehu Gadisa, Nov.7, 2014; Ameya).

**Dynamics of Conflicts in Ameya Woreda**

According to the community elders of the study area, conflicts raised due to farm lands, land borders, grazing lands, thieveness and female abduction are frequently occurred. Indeed, the conflicts in the study area have very rare political nature and at the same time the conflicts among the clans are also very rare. In general the conflicts happened in the area have commonly socio-economical nature especially in competing over scarce resources. Even though it is not a strong as others there is also religious incompatibility(FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; Ameya)

**Actors Involved in Conflict Resolution in Ameya Woreda**

Based on the data obtained from the interviews, when disputes raised over matters such as land border, grazing land, water resource, female abduction and stealing/robbing, they are solved through the council of elders. The council deals with relations between groups in conflict time and peace time and lays down the laws and principles by which members of conflicting parts act. All adult males’ elders are entitled to participate and heard disputants’ cases (AleMayehu Tesfaye, Nov.10, 2014; Ameya).

Reaching at an agreement was usually delegated to the elders who are drawn from all levels of the society. Elders were usually a man who has an acceptance in the community by their truthfulness, loyalty, impartiality, compansionality, norms; and those gains religious knowledge and power of oratory(Abebe Mulatu, Nov.10, 2014; Ameya).

The council of elders emphasizes the active participation of conflicting parties in their decision making process. Elders monitor and influence grass root opinions of the disputants and they act as mediators.
operating in open assembly not secretary. They work on the basis of enlightening conflicting parties’ interest to produce necessary and crucial results through their collective institution (FGD2, Nov.11, 2014; Ameya).

Generally, at least five male elders are selected from each village and they are delegated by the community to resolve and manage the conflicts, and to maintain the peace and order of the community through the active participation of all the concerned body (FGD3, Nov.12, 2014; Ameya).

Religious leaders (Fathers)

According to the information obtained from focus groups discussion, religious leaders are visible as other actors in resolving conflict. The society considers religions leaders as those who can act on behalf of the will of God and they could argue for truth. No one expects them to speak false because they are God envoys who are respected, trusted and have got high position by the society. Leaders of each religious institution thought the society about the disadvantage of conflict. That means they thought their followers as conflict was bad, killing or wishing to kill a person and take the property of that persons was strictly forbidden in the eyes of God and as this isolates them from Heaven. Finally, such leaders bring the conflicting parties in to agreement to reconcile their antagonistic idea. They also play a great role in preventing and resolving religious incompatibilities among the community (FGD 3, Nov.12, 2014; Ameya).

Gula/Clan leaders

According to the information obtained from interviewees’ clan leaders/Gula are other actors that involved in resolving conflict mainly through active mediation and arbitration. Gula are composed of clan representatives of each clan. They are the great descendents of the king line or clan elders. Thus, they are highly respected and feared by the community. They participate as a mediator and arbitrator for the high level of conflict cases like life losses or killing a person, loss of eyes, loss of teeths etc. The Gula’s main activity is to set a rules, norms and regulations regarding everything regarding the social life of the community to maintain peace and order; and to implement it when required (Alemayehu Tesfaye, Abebe Mulatu, Nov.10, 2014; Ameya).

Board committee/koreekoordii
According to the information obtained from interviewees, board committee is selected nine known male individuals from each village elders. The main activities of this board committee are to disclose the crime that have no any evidence or any crime that happened out of the sight of the community. They are disclosing it by testifying the suspected individuals or all the communities around (Alemayehu Gadisa, Nov.7, 2014; Ameya).

The role of women
According the information obtained from focus group discussion, women have an indirect but important role in conflict resolution process. In the early stages of a conflict they act as peace envoys for their districts and are sometimes used as the first messengers sent between the disputing districts or families. Women plays a great role in prevention of the conflicts by advising and monitoring the social life of her family especially children not to commit a crime (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; Ameya).

But there is a time when females can resolve the conflicts directly, like conflicts in some social institution such as idir, ikub etc. They are also solving the disagreements of their girlfriends (hiriyee) with her family or husband (Alemayehu Tesfaye, Nov.10, 2014; Ameya).

The informant said that, women’s must respected and could exert influence over their traditional conflict resolution, and they should involve in peace promotion and peacemaking in their community. Therefore, women should be empowered in order to be the fore front of any peace efforts in Ameya woreda. They should be allowed to participate in future peace and reconciliation conferences and decision making process (Addisu Chameda, Nov.10, 2014; Ameya).

Process/Procedures in Conflict Resolution in Ameya Woreda
Based on the information gathered from the respondents there was a tradition of choosing and sending a group of people or elders as peace envoys to the rival groups for negotiation towards peace agreement. Its basic mission is to promote and strengthen societal stability and cohesion. Those elder to be appointed and sent as a peace envoys should fulfill some qualities and competencies including a sense of responsibility, patience, good personality, oratory abilities and decency (Sheleme Terefe, Nov. 12, 2014).
The well-known and experienced community elders who never lie, cheat others and are therefore trusted by their community are chosen as peace envoys. Their age, knowledge and wisdom was also considered to be selected as peace envoys. They are expected to be well versed in traditional law and are required to know exactly what the problem is and provide the appropriate and truth full trial to each community (society) (FGD 3, Nov.12, 2014; Ameya).

Based on the result from the finding, for a conflict cases four up to six elders are meet for adjudication. The judges have a secretary who was chosen from those elders as the one with the best skill of memorizing and recording all the cases that are presented orally by the conflicting groups or parties. First the plaintiff will narrate /express/ his/her case in front of the elders. Then the defendant will respond to the charge against him. Then the elders asked the disputants one by one in turn and then the two parties are ordered to present their case for the second time in front of the judges/elders. The judges listen to them carefully to determine whether there are differences between their first and second presentation (Abebe Mulatu, Nov.10, 2014; Ameya).

However, if there are different ideas and points in their presentations, the judges are cross check their case one by one and examined it to identify the truth. After a thorough examination of both presentations, the judges also called abbaseera will finalize their decision. The accused will deliver compensation decided up on in front of judges with two or three days. Audiences are allowed to participate in this procedure, the judges also have the responsibility to settle dispute cases related to injuries to some parts of the human body. After this, the disputants make an oath not to enter into conflict again and they become friends (Abebe Mulatu, Addisu Chameda, Nov.10, 2014; Ameya).

Generally the procedures the actors stated above follow during the conflict resolution are different for different cases of conflicts.

Death/Loss of life

The informants said that death could be resulted when the conflict is changed into violation. The main causes of death in the study area are: conflicts on farm land or land borders, grazing lands, water bodies, female abduction; and crime like stealing/robbing and lootings. According to information gathered from the interviewees and focal
group discussion death can be classified into two. They are deliberate killing and undeliberate/unconscious killing.

I) Deliberate killing

The council of the elders/council of wise and clan leaders/Gula play a great role in resolving the conflicts that cause the loss of life. The elders are selected out of the two families’ clan (i.e. the killed and killer family) to resolve their disputes impartially from its origin. The selected council of elders/wise is called for Gula. Then Gula with council of elders’ starts the process of guma based on the rule and regulation drafted by Gula. The process of guma is started by the killer family or clan, up on the order of Gula, by praying for nine days for forgiveness by moving towards the proximity of the killed family or clan. But before they starts to pray, the killer should beg nine different market by expressing his/her crimes, as a confession to a community, for collecting 90.99 birr that would be given as a compensation for losted life (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014, Hirko Kusa, Nov.12, 2014).

Up on the end of nine praying days the killer family reach the proximity of the killed family. It is where the Gula starts to reconcile the killed family for forgiveness and they obey the Gula. Eventually both parties starts to communicate and forgive each other for what happened by sloughing the sheep and washing their hands with blood of the sheep for never take any revenge in the future and also to continue their normal peaceful life with each other. However, any one of them cannot eat the sloughed sheep; they simply throw it. At the same time the killer family/clan pay around 50,000 /fifty thousand/ birr for the compensation like transportation, investigation of the case, for burial ceremony and also as insurance for the killed family etc. However, the cost for lost life is only 90.99 birr, which not included in 50 thousand, as per the rule and regulation of Gula (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; Alemayehu Gadisa, Nov.7, 2014; Ameya).

II) Undelibrate/unconscious killing

According to the information gathered from focus group discussion, this type of killing would be appeared during playing together especially among children, unconscious body contact and any other unconscious activity that could lead to death. The procedures followed to resolve this is the same as that of deliberate killing, but the
amount of the money paid as a compensation for every expenditure is 25 thousands to 30 thousand birr (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; Ameya).

Stealing/robbing

According to the informants, thieveness/robbing could be of two types (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; Ameya).

I) Secret robbing

It is a crime committed out of the sight of the community, thus there is no evidence against the suspected individuals or groups. Thus the council of elders or board committee follows the process of testimony for all the community around or for the suspected individuals or groups to disclose it. The board committee call for the suspected individuals’ or groups’ close relatives especially four close relatives from his/her/their mother and three from his/her/their father; or his/her/their family if they have no close relatives from the village or kebele. Before these seven close relatives or their families will going to testify for or against, they will clarify the suspected individuals or groups whether they were committed the crime or not by having immense discussion with them (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; Alemayehu Gadisa, Nov.7, 2014; Ameya).

So based on the results of discussion with the suspected individual or groups, their family or close relatives are going to testify for or against them. If the suspected individual or groups did not commit robbing of public or individuals property they will testify for them. But if they robbed public or individuals’ property they will testify against them. If these suspected individual or groups committed the stated crime he/she/they will pay for it up on the decision of the boardcommittee and they will starts their normal social life with their community by having an oath not to commit it again in the future. However, if the board committee favors or discourage the suspected individuals or groups irrationally in its decision/measures taken, the council of the elders will see the case again and modify the board committees’ decision and implement the corrected measures (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; Alemayehu Gadisa, Nov.7, 2014; Ameya).

II) Explicit robbing

Because this type crime has evidence, the one who commit it will be sent to the court, or can also be seen by the council of elders. So he/she/they will pay for it or giving it
back based on the decision of the council of elders (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; Ameya).

**Miscellaneous Conflicts/Crime in Ameya Woreda**

These could be the conflicts that are raised due to rumors, female abduction, false testament against others, insulting others, killing animals, cutting trees, injuries/loss of body parts, conflicts among families and breaking social order and peace, but those that did not lead to violent like death or loss of life. And these type conflicts are mainly resolved through council of the elders and/or religious fathers. The elders are selected and send as a peace envoys to the rival groups for negotiation and reconciliation towards peace agreement. Thus up on negotiating the two rival groups, they will choose the well-known and experienced community elders, who never lie, cheat others, and impartial. And they take the due date for reconciliation at a place where both parties are interested in. The place could be under the tree/Oda or at their impartial friend’s house. Eventually they undergoing the process of adjudication and by digging out the truth they give the verdict. The verdict can be a compensation for the plaintiff if his/her cases are found true (FGD 3, Nov.12, 2014; Ameya).

**Compensation**

Based on the information obtained from the respondents, there was a tradition of blood money as compensation for different kinds of offence as it was drafted by Gula. The type and amount of the compensation are different for different conflict cases. For instance for killing of a person deliberately, it approaches from 50 to 60 thousand birr, and 25 to 30 thousand for undeliberate killing. In each case some amount of the compensation is given to the family of the deceased while the rest are distributed to the elders involved in conflict resolution. It is considered as their insurance. For female abduction it costs around 30 thousand birr (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; Ameya).

If some parts of a human body were broken/injured during conflict especially for teeth and eye, the amount of compensation was high because it considered as disappearing the beauty of a person. For killing of animals also have its own amounts of compensation (Alemayehu Tesfaye, Nov.10, 2014; Hirko Kusa, Nov. 12, 2014, Ameya).

**Advantages of Traditional Indigenous Conflict Resolution**
Mechanism over the Modern Legal System.

Based on the information obtained from the respondents the traditional indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms have many advantages over the modern legal system. It is less time consuming, it is not punitive rather restorative, it provides comprehensive inclusion and participation of all the concerned body, it is more economical, it guarantees peaceful cooperation and relationship between the conflicting parties in the future and it is flexible than modern one. And also its procedure is acceptable because the conflicting parties are adjudicated by their own norms, rules and regulation (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; FGD 3, Nov.12, 2014; ShelemeTerefe, Nov. 12, 2014, Ameya).

The Mechanism The Elders Follow To Establish Permanent Solution After Resolving The Conflict Not To Occur Again.

If someone did not implement the decision or measures of the elders/ Gula or any other actors in traditional conflict resolution, he/she will be cursed not to have child, love, property, health and etc. And at the same time they take a social sanction not to give him/her the fire, not to have burial ceremony, not to rescue him/her in any of the danger he/she suffered from and etc. Generally he/she will isolate from any social life, thus the decision of the elders/Gula or board committee or other is respected and implemented since no one can live independent of the others (Alemayehu Tesfaye, Nov.10, 2014; Hirko Kusa, Nov 12, 2014, Ameya).

Prospects

According to the respondents perspectives conflicts are raised frequently than ever, especially over the scarce resource because the rate of population growth is increasing from time to time over the limited and depleting resource. There is also an increment in jobless youths in the study area that complete grade ten and twelve but did not have a point for further education. And these individuals or groups are also the cause of many conflicts in their family and/or in community at large especially by robbing the older on the dark night (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014).

Additionally, globalization will highly influence the youths not to respect the norms, rule and regulation of the local
community especially that of Gula. If these types of problem are not resolved there may be no one who can preserve these indigenous traditional conflict resolution mechanisms (Alemayehu Tesfaye, Nov.10, 2014; Ameya).

However, these kinds of challenges to the community elders, board committee, Gula or others made them to strength their institution and structure to cope up with the raising conflicts. Indeed, this indigenous traditional conflict resolution mechanism has got government acceptance in which both institution are working together in decreasing the occurrence of conflicts and in managing it. However, the government support should have to be enhanced than ever since the situation is becoming intensified with conflicts. And also Gula are updating its strong rule and regulation including strong measures for any activities of the community (FGD1, Nov.6, 2014; Alemayehu Tesfaye, Nov.10, 2014; Alemayehu Gadisa, Nov.7, 2014; Ameya).

CONCLUSION

As the information gathered from the respondents, cause of the conflicts in the study area are mainly conflicts raised due to the competition over the scarce resource like farm lands, grazing lands and water bodies. Female abduction, robbing and religious incompatibilities are also the common cause of conflicts in the region. The conflict in the study area have socio-economical and religious nature, but have rare inter or intra clan and political nature. The community elders, clan leaders/Gula, board committee and religious fathers are the main actors that play a great role in resolving the conflicts through their indigenous traditional procedures. The respondents also stated that the traditional way of conflict resolution have many advantages over modern legal system, like that of its less time consuming, its economical, its restorative rather than punitive, it guarantees the future relationship of the conflicting parties, it is participatory, the decision of the actors involved is highly respected and implemented, thus it maintains strong peace, order and norms within their local community. The elders also put a social sanction over the individual/s if they did not implement the decision/measures imposed up on them.

In general, a traditional conflict resolution mechanism in Ameya woreda plays a significant role in terms of providing and prevailing peace and stability between and among the communities.
RECOMMENDATION

According to the data obtained, clan leaders/Gula, religious leaders and local elders point out that the presence of elders by itself is not enough to resolve conflict. Thus, in the future, the effort of community elders, clan leaders/Gula, board committee and religious leaders need to be further supported by modern conflict resolution mechanism. Finally, based on the informants and religious fathers general response about the role and gap of their traditional conflict resolution mechanism among South west Shewa zone, Ameya woreda we tried to give some suggestions or recommendations which have an alternative solution to narrow the gap. Such recommendations are summarized as follows.

- Traditional mechanisms for conflict resolution should get support from the government through giving recognition and equal treatment as the modern court.
- Unwritten system of law which is transmitted orally from generation to generation should be flexible (open) to concern the modern one.
- The dynamic nature of conflict may affect or led to prejudice the decision making process. So, it is better to recommend local leaders and clan leaders that they need to upgrade their efforts accordingly.
- Unfair distribution of resource among the society is the one which leaders to conflict. So, the government should give equal resources utilizing opportunity for them.
- Conflict resolution mechanism and procedures must be investigated in depth for the well-being of the society.
- The clan leaders/Gula should update its rule and regulation based on changing nature of the time and social life of the community, and the government should support it especially in capacity building without affecting the nature of its indigeneusity.
- The government should improve the skill, ability and knowledge of elders in order to bring relative peace in South west Shewa zone, Ameya woreda.

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