



TIKVAH-ETHIOPIA

MANAGING INTER-ETHNIC CONFLICT THROUGH INDIGENOUS INSTITUTIONS *Case Study On: Oyda People of Southern Ethiopia:*

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Scope of the study

This study describes and documents on the oyda southern people, this nation have own cultural, political structure, and regions system on their unique life style. there for it is not easy to know overall studies. it needs time, financial, and advisor. However, am tried to using data analysis, interview some people who are live in that area currently, I have read related document in literature review. I have got a lot of knowledge I want to say thank you who is giving these opportunities. My scope of study is Am not there to study their reconciliation system in personally in case of different factors. Am focus on all over in the current reconciliation in Ethiopia.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgment	ii
Scope of the study	ii
1. Introduction	1
1.1. Overview of reconciliation through Ethiopia in my opinion	2
1.2. Description of the Study Area and the People	4
1.3. Causes of Conflict Among the Oyda.....	5
2. Institutions and Mechanisms of Conflict Resolutions	6
2.1. The Bucha Woga indigenous conflict	6
2.2. The Procedures Followed by the Institution (The Bucha Woga).....	7
3. Conclusion	9
4. References	10

1. Introduction

There are scholars who try to define conflict from the basic elements that constitute it and from the direction it can be viewed. The scholar who tries to see conflict in different aspect is Mayer (Mayer, 2010.) He says conflict may be viewed as occurring along cognitive (perception), emotional (feeling), and behavioral (action) dimensions. As a set of perception, conflict is a belief or understanding that one's own needs, interests, wants, or values are incompatible with someone else's. in addition to Conflict is an inherent ingredient in human society. From the distant earlier period to the current, conflict is considered as existing as a natural and integral phenomenon of human society. Thus, different society could experience different nature of conflict depending on their socio-politico economic and cultural context. It occurs everywhere and at every level. Conflict may continue living at the level of inter individual, inter-group, intra-group, inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic, national and intra-continental and intercontinental.

The biggest challenge today confronting human nature is not about occurrence of conflict. but how to these conflicts are fully resolved whenever they occur to prevent them from further escalation (Bokari, 2013). In this regard, (Ahemad, 2011). notes that humans have sought, as long as there has been conflict, to handle conflict effectively, by containing or reducing its negative consequences.

According to Alula and Getachew (Alula Pankhurst and Getachew Assefa., 2008). conflict resolution mechanisms in Ethiopia can be broadly classified as indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms and formal conflict resolution mechanism (state justice system). The formal conflict resolution mechanism (which is provided by the state) in Ethiopia is mainly European origin.

The traditional conflict management and resolution institutions are closely bound with socio-cultural and economic realities and of the lifestyles of the concerned communities. They are rooted in the culture and history of the people and are in one way or another unique to each community.

The traditional mechanisms that govern the overall social interaction vary among the ethnic groups. Such as for instance, Mangima of the Gumuzi people, Gada -System of the Oromo people Madaa is the traditional legal system for the Afar people and yojoka is one of the most important indigenous and traditional institutions of the Gurage etc.

1.1. Overview of reconciliation through Ethiopia in my opinion

As we know that Ethiopia is the home for various ethnic groups. Almost all ethnic groups have developed indigenous mechanisms of conflicts resolution. Different ethnic groups like Oromo, Afar, Amhara, Benishangul- Gumuz, Harari, Somali, Sidama, Wolayita, Gamo, Tigray and others develop their own indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution with certain peculiar features. These features, which comprise social traditions, values, norms, beliefs, rules, and laws, communicated and accepted among the respective communities for peaceful co-existences. Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are not recognized by law and not properly organized Furthermore, in Ethiopia, there is lack of proper attention given to protect, develop, and utilize indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in the development process.

In recent times, there have been a number of conflicts are created in Ethiopia particularly at universities level, most of the people believe that the universities students are responsible to changing their countries. early records tell us when students or teenagers act on behalf of their people. if the government suddenly tries to advance the country and unnecessary political action happened. For example, the people who were at the time of the revolution of the land (Mereti le arashu) during the reign of emperor Haile Selassie. The early teens should be excited to hear about what they have to say about having a great deal of respect for their people their parents and their elders. Cultural reconciliation has played a big role in ensuring that I have found in various reference books that have played an important role in Ethiopia and have played a key role in bringing about equality. However, currently our traditional reconciliation systems are disappearing in Ethiopia and the system is being poisoned for a number of reasons. there are many reasons why this history of our cultures has been lost or rejected but in my opinion I will be primarily divided into three groups, those are: **the government, the parents and teen agers**

A. GOVERNMENT

From the time of the ancient rulers to the present time, many governments have led this country. Even if respected with theirs strengths and weakness, but have not been documented concerning reconciliation for all available in their history, the government must take responsibility for its own keeping country history without poisoning, it would be better if it were to outline the culture and law that would benefit this country rather than reflect it in our textbooks, in general indigenous conflict resolution has been greatly downgraded and weakened in the formal justice system which

makes them to be unrecognized and unknown, as described by this participant, Elders do very important things in resolving conflicts and peace building. However, there is no any encouragement or incentive from the government side. The government did not give adequate recognition for elders and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. And also the court fails to give credit for the contributions of elders.

B. PARENTS

Every parents are known to play an integral role for their children to be clever see their coming dream and vision. in addition to making this country become bright and developed like others of foreign country. and more responsible for their child to grow up in a God- fearing, they have a duty to teach and inform their children one of them is to teach them how to deal with conflict resolution patiently and wisely instead of hurrying to go to the wrong place and to teach parents how to respect and accept the command from their children, but today most of the parents are not take their responsibility for children. in addition, did not much tell the patriotisms of their country. in my opinion the parents not willing to facilitate the opportunity to discuss their idea in freely these is more important to deal about the mechanisms of conflict resolution. so with this in mind I would say that it is best for parents to do a great job with their children

C. TEENAGERS

conflict resolution promotes a sense of local ownership, consensus-building and provides opportunity to interact with the conflicting parties. The system of indigenous conflict resolution is viewed as locally owned since it is based on customs, values, norms and cultures of the local communities. There for teenagers have a lot of opportunity to get the access to know, to learn, to develop their skills through using different mechanism such as social media, by school learning, by participating conference so on. To understand about reconciliation system of nations. Because Teenagers have the right what to keep from doing during youth, however, today these is the opposite most of their time spent with unnecessary place like drug abuse, lack of self-reliance, and not much encourage themselves to study more and read. Finally, I will advise more read and analyze what is going on their life and should have to know all Ethiopian nations reconciliation system. They have opportunity to do researches and earn some value like money, certificate.so on

I have been able to find out our traditional reconciliation system is being rejected by the youth or the community, but I believe it has to do a lot as a country to keep this system from getting lost.

The idea is to:

- ✚ Facilitate such opportunity to develop skills for people by giving such assignment by government, private organization such as THIKVA-ETHIOPIA
- ✚ Facilitate a cultural awareness forum on youth
- ✚ develop a clear legal and policy framework for the utilization of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms by elders and governments
- ✚ Put our cultural custom, norms values such as reconciliation in written document
- ✚ Develop encouragement for elders in each region, federal and the responsible organization
- ✚ Review of our history, geography and others related with reconciliation text book or magazines
- ✚ Designing a cultural architecture for teaching in curriculum education
- ✚ Exercise sharing experience with others countries on their education polices such as Rwanda, japan
- ✚ Community media in Ethiopia should work for all nations reconciliation system
- ✚ Eliminate ethnic –based political systems through Ethiopia

1.2. Description of the Study Area and the People

I have tried to present the geographical location of the study area, the brief history and social organization of the people. It is known that the Gofa people had an independent state ruled by king before they were brought under the modern state of Ethiopia. This shows as they had well organized social organization that could help them to lead sustainable way of life. but am not deal about Gofa people I have choose to study the traditional conflict resolution for OYDA PEOPLE. The Oyda Woreda is part of the Zonal administration of Gamo Gofa, within the Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS) of Ethiopia. Within the Zone, a new Woreda administration known by the name Oyda was established in 2007. Before its establishment,

Oyda was part of the Gofa-Zuria Woreda, by putting the Oyda to the status of administration. The Oyda Woreda is sub-divided in to twenty smaller administrative units known as Keble, each comprising a varying number of villages. Based on the data obtained from literature review, the capital of the district administration is Shefite, a town some 523 km southwest of Addis Ababa, 258 km from Arba Minch town, the capital of Gamo Gofa zone, and 311 km from Hawassa the Woreda is inhabited by three ethnic groups, such as the Oyda, the Ari and the Gofa. The Oyda people make up the majority in terms of population number. The most widely spoken language in the Woreda is Oydigna, but people residing in and around Shefite town also speaks Amharic and Gofigna. based on the census conducted in 2007 more than 45,100 people are estimated to live in the Woreda. Like the other part of Ethiopian people, the economy of the district is based on farming and animal husbandry. Kaati (king) was the highest and supreme administrative office among the society of the Oyda. The principle of Kaati selection is dictated by personality traits such as wisdom, prudence and economic status. Once elected as a Kaati, as further argued by the same source, he is expected to perform different responsibilities. Among the responsibilities of the Kaati were ensuring food taboos (e.g. pig, wild goat, chicken and egg, and cabbage); avoiding impurity (tuna) such as contact with mourners, women during seclusion periods; holding the annual rain sacrifice. (Feyissa., 2011). A Kaati is also responsible for maintaining law and order through the institution called Bucha. Bucha was a sacred place where injustice is redressed and truth is spoken. Under the office of the Kaati, as to the elders, there was an administrative unit called Ogadde. The appointment of this office is not based on clan descent rather it is based on the person's charisma and valor. As put forward by the same source, the Ogadde are usually four to five in number and are appointed by the Kaati.

1.3. Causes of Conflict Among the Oyda

The most frequent conflict issues in the study area are conflict in the ceremony of mourning, theft, abduction, adultery, excessive usage of alcohol, family related conflicts, insulting and conflicts over the violations of agreement, murder and revenge, based on these some of I explain below

- ✚ Murder (Shemppo Wodho) and Revenge (Kushe Maahe)
- ✚ Conflict in the Ceremony of Mourning (Bale Ayth)
- ✚ Family Related Conflicts (Kara Ass Adho)
- ✚ Adultery (Olale) and Abduction (Goche Eke)

2. Institutions and Mechanisms of Conflict Resolutions

The Oyda understanding of conflict, institutions on which the society depends to resolve conflicts like the Kaati (office of the king), Bitan (literally, local chief) and Chomach (literally local chief below Bitan), institutions, the procedures they follow to resolve conflict, selection criteria of the elders and the mechanisms of law enforcement. the violation of societal norms and principles which supposed to bring disaster on the wrongdoer and on the whole community can be resolved by the indigenous institutions of conflict resolution which is known as the Bucha Woga. Those who participate in the Kaati, Chomach, Bitan institutions would often meet to conduct conflict resolution processes under a tree yard or an open place called Bucha. For the Oyda, according to my informants, Bucha is a wide open place or it could be a tree yard where people meet to deal with their differences through peaceful means. Thus, as a place of gathering each institution has its own Bucha and it is believed that it is a place where truth is spoken and differences are settled among the people. (Yemanebrihan, March 2016)

2.1. The Bucha Woga indigenous conflict

Resolution system has its own characteristic features. Its characteristic feature is that the system assumes hierarchies of power where power from one institution differs from the other. Hence, based on the data obtained from elders, this system of conflict resolution has structured in to three hierarchical powers. These are the **Dalcha Bucha** (at the bottom), **the Bagara Bucha** (in the middle) and the **Baltsa Bucha** (the highest). Depending on what form of conflict, the people start the resolution process at Dalcha Bucha, and if they are unable to settle the dispute or if they are unsatisfied with the decision, then they go to the Bagara Bucha in order to find better justice.

If the person once again feels unsatisfied with the decision passed by the Bagara Bucha, he will then go to the last stage of decision making body, the Baltsa Bucha. The Baltsa Bucha is the highest and final authority to resolve the conflict in the study area. As informants underscored, people usually in the study area, goes from the bottom of the power hierarchy to the highest authority until they get solution to their cases. In this time there is a man called Mura that facilitates and coordinates one of the hierarchy with the other serving as a messenger. If an individual opposes the decision and thinks the verdict unfairly decided on him and if he wants to go to the next higher authority, the Mura facilitates the case by bringing the case from the former hierarchies of power that he brought the case to the next According to the belief of the people, those individuals who

are elected as an elder to participate in the Kaati, Bitan and Chomach institution should be acquainted with the knowledge of the customary laws and know the tradition and history of their society, which would help them to resolve conflicts easily. These elders as forwarded by the informants, who are deciding on the matters of conflict in these institutions, are temporary workers where they are called when conflicts occur and dissolve after the resolution processes are completed.

2.2. The Procedures Followed by the Institution (The Bucha Woga)

Step 1: the process of resolving conflict begins with the separation of parties involved in conflict and reporting the case. Reporting the case can be made by the parties themselves, elders, neighbors, relatives of miscreant, an eye witness, friends or any other person. After both parties agreed to come to the Bucha Woga, then the process of conflict resolution begins.

Step 2: The institution normally has its own messenger whose duty is to spread information and call the parties before the Bucha. The man in charge of this duty is called Mura. Mura is appointed by the local traditional chiefs in order to ease or harmonize the relationship between the people and the Bucha elders and to facilitate the verdict of the institution. these bodies will make an effort to stabilize the situation between the conflicting parties.

Step 3: The overall process begins when the leader of the Bucha gives an opening speech for what reason the gathering is called. When the meeting is on, each party in conflict is asked to give his or her account of what reason led them to the conflict before the resolution process takes place. Accordingly, each side gives account of what happened during a conflict based on the order of the elders. In this regard, both parties are requested to give an accurate and precise description of what caused the conflict.

Step 4: After the presentation of the account is finished, the Bucha elders raise important questions to the parties so that it allows them to know and understand correctly about the basic causes of the conflict, the level of damage it resulted and the decision to be made.

Step 5: after the judgment is finished, compensation is decided depending on the cause of conflict and the damage it resulted. According to the tradition of the Oyda, as forwarded from the elders, it is believed that if an individual breaks the oath or makes an oath wrongly, a very serious result will happen on his personal life, family life as well as his property. As explained from same source,

bad consequence is expected to happen on the life and property of the family. According to informants, there are individuals who are sick, become crazy, and finally died due to this factor. In order to conduct the ceremony, as to the informants, there are materials that will be brought to the area where the process is taking place. These are; **a stone, ash, sword, spear, bone and etc.** According to the culture of these people the above mentioned materials have their own attached meanings and symbols based on the custom and tradition of the people. The people who are attending the ceremony are expected to make a line and leap over it after making an oath. The following are some of the words of an individual while making an oath under the guidance of the bucha elder

- Ta turto achiko..... If I conceal the reality;
- Ta itta ocheza achize maqqiko..... If I hide a criminal;
- Ta itta ocheza madiko..... If I help the miscreant;
- Ta wordo wochiko.....If I do wrong;
- Tani itta ochte geleza maqqiko.....If I engage in a quarrel;
- Ta wordo ohiko..... If I lie the Bucha
- Ta bucha wogtipo adhiko..... If I breach this agreement,
- Tani hani shuchtigar mumisse..... Let I be a stone that is not speak
- Hana turta tana mu^o..... Let the spear pierce me
- Hana mashta tana mu^o..... Let the sword slash and kills me
- Tasin ta kochtis eze bazta budo garyo/dhaboLet I, my family's life and my assets be ash and be futile.
- Ta maqatsita melo..... Let I be like a bone that lost its flesh.

Depending on the type of conflict and the degree of destruction, as to the informants, there are ceremonies that will take place after the conflicting parties make an oath. For instance, if the conflict caused the loss of life, goat will be slaughtered and food made from false banana with locally made beer which is called, daana will be delivered. With the end of goat slaughtering ceremony, elders will gather for final blessing. Then the process of conflict resolution will end with elders blessing.

3. Conclusion

From conclusion part I have put my all over view in above overview reconciliation in Ethiopia but in general conflict is considered as existing as a natural and integral phenomenon of human society. Thus, different society could experience different nature of conflict depending on their socio-politico economic and cultural context. It occurs everywhere and at every level. Conflict may continue living at the level of inter individual, inter-group, intra-group, inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic, national and intra-continental and intercontinental. Different institutions are responsible for different types of conflicts and different rituals and procedures are used to bring the conflicting parties to the negotiation table and to give the final resolutions on traditionally acceptable base.

The Oyda of southern Ethiopia has gave due emphasis for the existence of peace and stability and for the maintenance of order thus, they often resolve their differences or the conflict situation by peaceful means. In other words, the people have its own means to resolve disagreements or conflicts when it arises in the society. Thus, they spend plenty of time and effort in conflict resolution and peacemaking among themselves.

the indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms have values that are consistent with the values and principles of restorative justice including inclusion, participation, restitution, and reintegration. Despite the huge importance of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, their reliance is being undermined by lack of proper recognition and integration with the formal (modern) justice system. Integration of these mechanisms with modern court systems would empower the community in enforcing their decisions on conflict. Hence, attention has to be given to develop clear legal and policy frameworks that facilitate the use of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms considering its relevance for the local community. Strategies has to be adopted by the government to promote the use of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms for building social solidarity and strengthening communities in Ethiopia. Besides, there is a need to develop effective enforcement mechanism for indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms by elders so that the decision of elders will be respected and obeyed by parties.

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