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DEPARTMENT OF GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

**THE ROLE OF YEJOKA INDIGENOUS CONFLICT RESOLUTION METHOD IN
RESOLVING CONFLICT: CASE STUDY IN CHEHA WOREDA OF GURAGHE ZONE,
ETHIOPIA**

**A Senior Essay Submitted to the Department of Governance and
Development Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Bachelor of arts in Governance and Development *Studies***

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JUNE, 2019

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

First and for most we would like to thanks our GOD who gives us courage and initiative work through out of this study. We also register our profound and heartfelt gratitude to our research advisor Mr. Tano Geter His pieces of advice, corrections and encouragement contributed momentarily to the success of this work. Thanks and thanks again. Thirdly we would like to thanks our class mates who help us by giving different suggestion regarding to our study. And finally we would like to thanks our family who help us by financial and non-financial contribution

Table of Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgment | II |
| Abstract | VI |
| Acronyms | VII |
| CHAPTER ONE | 1 |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 1.1. Back Ground Of The Study | 1 |
| 1.2. Statement of the Problem | 2 |
| 1.3. Research Questions | 3 |
| 1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY | 4 |
| 1.5. Scope of the study | 4 |
| 1.6. Significance of the Study | 4 |
| 1.7. Organization of the study | 4 |
| CHAPTER TWO | 6 |
| 2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LETRATURE | 6 |
| 2.1. Conceptualization of terms..... | 6 |
| 2.2. Indigenous conflict resolution systems in Ethiopia..... | 7 |
| 2.3. Common Types of Conflict..... | 8 |
| 2.4. Theoretical Framework | 9 |
| 2.5. Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms | 12 |
| 2.6. Socio-Economic Role of Indigenous Conflict Resolution Systems..... | 14 |
| 2.7. The role of Yejoka in resolving family marital dispute | 15 |
| 2.8. The role of YejokaKitcha in resolving Land dispute. | 16 |
| CHAPTER THREE | 18 |
| 3. RESEARCH Methodology..... | 18 |
| 3.1. Introduction | 18 |
| 3.2. Description of the Study Area | 18 |
| 3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH..... | 18 |
| 3.4. Research design..... | 18 |
| 3.5. Data Sources and data collection tools..... | 18 |

| | |
|--|----|
| 3.6. Sample and sampling technique..... | 20 |
| 3.7. Method of Data presentation and discussion..... | 20 |
| 3.8. Ethical Consideration | 21 |
| CHAPTER FOUR..... | 22 |
| 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION..... | 22 |
| 4.1. Background of the Respondents..... | 22 |
| 4.2. Data Gathered from the Interview Questions..... | 25 |
| 4.3. Data gathered from observation | 28 |
| CHAPTER FIVE | 29 |
| 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION | 29 |
| 5.1. Conclusion..... | 29 |
| 5.2. Recommendation..... | 30 |
| REFERENCES | 32 |
| Appendixes | 34 |

List of Table

Table 4-1 Sex distribution of the respondents 22

Table 4-2 Age Distribution of the Respondents 23

Table 4-3 Religion of the respondents 23

Table 4-4 marital statuses of the respondents 24

Table 4-5 Educational status of the respondents..... 24

ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is assessing the role of yejoka indigenous conflict resolution mechanism in case of cheha woreda. Unless conflict is managed properly, it results in political, social and economic destruction of human beings. The cost of conflict depends on the type of conflict resolution system that individuals used to settle disagreements. This study was employed both primary and secondary data, in this study the researchers were employed only non-probability sampling technique. The tool of which this study was employed is interview, and observation. The major finding of this study is according to the responses of the key informant interview, yejoka kitcha have a great role in resolving marital and land dispute. In resolving marital dispute, it follows rule and procedure for example (yankitkitcha) this method of marital dispute resolution bound the women not to marry other men before the dissolution made by her or wife. According to yankitkitcha in the time of marital dispute the dispute is arised with the fault of men the women administer the property. If the fault is on women her family will be called and punished near her family by ordering her not to commit further wrong.

ACRONYMS

| | |
|------|---------------------------------------|
| NGO | None governmental organization |
| ICRS | Indigenous conflict resolution system |
| ILO | International labor organization |

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. BACK GROUND OF THE STUDY

The origin of the term *Yejoka* is believed to have been derived from the *zegba* (*Podocarpus*) tree that serves as the venue of the assembly. The term expresses the special feature of the tree, whose branch (*yaj*, hand) is buried in the ground (*yoka*) only to sprout again. Accordingly, the place is found in Cheha woreda, *Yejoka* kebele. i.e. a place where this study would be conducted (Worku, 1983).

Conflict is a Situation in which two or more parties try hard to acquire the same scarce resources at the same time (Michael and Swanstrom, 2005). Similar with the above idea, Helvard also (2011) described that conflicts were part of everyday life; they form in our close relations, at a group level and on global level. It has manifested in diverse patterns for a long period of time (Slabbert, 2004). Though it is almost impossible to avoid conflict in human relations and to reduce its negative consequences, people tend to solve conflicts, which we called it conflict resolution.

Resolutions of conflict were crucial for day to day coexistence as human societies were in constant search of resolution mechanism of conflicts (Pankhurst and Getachew, 2008). Hence, different societies of the world have developed their own mechanisms to resolve conflict. Like in other part of the world, in Africa, people with different backgrounds, culture, class, age and other come into conflict. The conflicting parties' might be individuals, groups, families, clans or ethnic group. To manage their conflict, Africans have developed their own indigenous institutions. In other words, those indigenous conflict resolving institutions helped them to settle their conflicts. However, the mechanisms were different from a given society to the other because of the different ways of life including gurage people our research conducting area specifically yejoka. Moreover, Annette (2009) elaborates that indigenous conflict resolution was important by solving the issue while keeping the peaceful interaction and minimizes revenge killings, in most areas of Ethiopia. This is very important particularly for poor women and other marginalized people who have no capacity to cover the cost of justice system through court (Ibid). The process, method and

applicability and roles of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are varying from one society to another and differ from place to place (Volker, 2007). This indigenous conflict resolution plays a very significant role in the day-to-day lives of many ethnic groups and tribes particularly for the poor and marginalized societies of developing countries like Ethiopia (Meron, 2010). Alula and Getachew (2008) also argued that resolution of conflict is crucial for day-to-day co-existence as human and societies are in constant search of resolution mechanisms of conflicts. According to Alula and Getachew (2008), conflict resolution mechanisms in Ethiopia can be broadly classified as formal conflict resolution mechanism (state justice system) and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. The same to the other peoples of Ethiopia; in Gurage Zone, Yejoka have been practiced method of indigenous conflict resolution, which many people used to settle their conflict and maintain peace among each other. The Yejoka assemblies seem to combine legislative and judiciary functions. Representatives of the constituent units of the Sabat Bet Guragewere assembled to agree on the fundamental rules governing their community. Periodic meetings were also held to revise the laws when such revisions were deemed necessary. At the same time the assemblies served as courts of final recourse (Bahru, 2002). After years of investigation and discussion under the auspices of the Gurage Self-Help Development Association, the Sabat Bet published in 1998 the product of their labors under the title of *Ä gurageQicha* (translated as “KITCHA: The Guraghe Customary Law”). The code, which had been reviewed by Gurage experts in various fields (law, education, health, economic development, and administration) not only evaluated and revised as necessary the customary law but also legislated additional rules. Special efforts were apparently made to make it as gender-sensitive as possible. This is particularly evident in the section dealing with marriage, which has provisions for mutual consent of the parties, the woman’s right to divorce, and penalties for adultery and kidnapping. The attempts made to make such institutions as Yajoka and Gordan adaptable to contemporary reality by trying to tackle a range of issues from rural development to substance abuse and AIDS are truly impressive (ibid).

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Ethiopia is one of the developing countries where indigenous conflict resolution mechanism has been used to solve conflicts; and traditional customs and practices are seriously respected and carefully practiced. The inhabitants of rural areas still trust the advice of elders in resolving

conflicts for two obvious reasons (Chandra, 2008). First, their advices are politically neutral with social sensitivity and second they are less expensive in nature and can provide direct decision. In the countries Ethiopia, several conflict management activities carried out at the indigenous level are based on values and customs, which play a crucial role in binding people together for collective action and holding wrong doer accountable to their actions. Currently, Yejoka indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms have been weakened partly because of promotional and infrastructure problems as well as the failure of the members of the community to strengthen their role of resolution of conflicts at the community level. Therefore, the undermined and eroded status and functions of the elders give rise to the absence of well performing institutions which is a sufficient condition for violent conflicts to arise.

There are some researches which were done on several indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in Ethiopia among nations, nationalities and ethnic groups' level. For instance, YemisirachTadesse (2018) at Jimma University she was conducted on the role of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in case of Dawuro. Also AbdubaMuda (2018) he was studied research on indigenous conflict resolution mechanism among pastoral community in case BoranaGaada institution at Wolkite University. MiftaBedewi (2004) at Jimma University he was conducted on the challenges of traditional conflict resolution method of Gurage people in case of Yejoka. From those above researchers Yemisirach focused on Dawuro case. Abduba focused on the case of BoranaGaada institution and Mifta was focused on challenges of traditional conflict resolution method of Gurage people in case of Yejoka. However, all of them were not emphasized on the role Yejoka as indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms.

Therefore, this study would focus on the role of Yejoka as indigenous conflict resolution mechanism which is not focused by the previous researchers.

1.3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.3.1. The General Question of the Study

- What is the role of Yejoka as an indigenous conflict resolution method (ICRM) in resolving conflict in Cheha woreda of Gurage zone?

1.3.2. The Specific Questions of the Study

- What is the role of Yejokakitcha in resolving marital dispute in ChehaWoreda?

- What is the role of Yejokakitcha in resolving land dispute in the Cheha woreda?

1.4. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1. General Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to assess the role of Yejoka as an indigenous conflict resolution system (ICRS) in Cheha woreda of Gurage zone.

1.4.2. Specific Objectives

- ✚ To assess the role of Yejokakitcha in resolving marital dispute in the Cheha woreda.
- ✚ To investigate the role of Yejokakitcha in resolving land dispute in the Cheha woreda.

1.5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study was delimiting Southern Nation Nationality and Peoples Regional state of Ethiopia, particularly focus on analyzing role of Yejoka as indigenous conflict resolution method only in the Cheha Woreda of Gurage zone. Accordingly, any of the analysis and the findings of the study are specific to the study area.

1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The researchers were believing that, the findings and the outcomes of this study was significantly important in terms of introducing better perspectives about the role of Yejoka indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms for the society and also it inspire further research activities over crucial factors would focused on the study in relation to Yejoka indigenous conflict resolution in other areas. Moreover, the findings/outcomes of this research may inform and assist the various government agencies and NGOs that are presently working to promote development activities and projects in rural areas and enable them to consider the advantage of indigenous conflict resolution methods.

1.7. ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

This study would be organized in to five chapters. The first chapter contains background of the study, statement of problem, objective of the study, research questions, and scope of the study and significance of the study. The second chapter contains the general literature review regarding

to the study which contains both theoretical and empirical literature of the study. The third chapter contains all about the methodology of the study. The fourth chapter contains the data presentations and interpretations. And the final chapter contains the conclusion and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. REVIEW OF THE RELATED LECTRATURE

The main purpose of this study was to assess the role of indigenous conflict resolution systems and practices and its implication for socio-economic development particularly in the case of yejoka in cheha woreda of Gurage zone Therefore, to strength this, the researcher would have discussed related theoretical frame work as well as literatures as follows

2.1. CONCEPTUALIZATION OF TERMS

2.1.1. The Concept of Conflict

There were different ways of explaining the concept of conflict in the academic literature of Conflict. The word conflict was itself derived from the Latin word „*confligere*“, which literally means, to „strike together“ or „to clash, engage in a fight“ (Schmid, 2002). Accordingly, conflict happens when different opposing groups compete with each other to achieve their intended goals. In other words, it refers to a confrontation between individuals or a group resulting from opposite or incompatible ends or means.

According to NURC (2008), conflict means an inverse relationship or a disagreement between two or more persons between groups, regions or even nation originating from different insights and interests. Conflict is not a new social phenomenon in the history of human being. Across nations, Conflict always exists as long as human beings live together and it is an inherently human practice.

According to Imobighe (2003), conflict could be defined as a condition of disagreement in an interaction process and usually occurs because of clash of interest between the parties involved. Clash of interest could occur because either they are pursuing their incompatible goals to pursue their chosen goal. On the other hand, conflict could be understood as engagement in a fight or confrontation between two or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends (University for Peace, 2005). Similar with the above ideas, conflict is a situation in which two or more parties try hard to acquire the same scarce resources at the same time (Michael and Swanstrom, 2005).

Conflict is not a new phenomenon in the history of human beings. It always exists as long as Human beings live together and it is an inevitable part of human experience or existence

(Francis, 2006). Conflict is not a new phenomenon in the history of human beings. It always exists as long as Human beings live together and it is an inevitable part of human experience or existence (Francis, 2006).

Assefa (2001) also notes that, as long as there is the concept of society and the very existence of peoples, there is undoubtedly conflict no matter the extent as well as the source of it. In fact; it is very difficult to separate conflict from humankind. It is impossible to see them independently; they are always together making two faces of the same coin. It is unconceivable to think a society without conflict. In the various literatures, conflict is basically, understood as the pursuit of incompatible goals between two or more parties. Accordingly, the incompatibility of goals will lead to contradiction where the party with unrealized goals feels frustrated and cause aggression against the other (Galtung, 2004).

Therefore, conflict is a common phenomenon manifested in the form of disagreement or difference of opinion in the course of human interaction. Thus, it can be considered as an intrinsic and an inevitable part of functioning society (Ali, 2006).

2.2. INDIGENOUS CONFLICT RESOLUTION SYSTEMS IN ETHIOPIA

Adhering constitutional values is becoming a standard to determine the stage of development of a certain nation. Constitution legalizes most important activities of the state. One of the pillar rights of citizens which are recognized by Ethiopian constitution, as it happens in all the constitutions of other nations of the world, is access to justice. Article 37 of the FDRE constitution says: Everyone has the right to bring a justifiable matter to and to obtain a decision or judgment by, a court of law or any other competent body with judicial power (Eshetu and Getu, 2009).

Article 78(5) of the FDRE constitution allows the House of Peoples Representative or as the case may be State Councils might establish or obliged to give recognition to the established customary and religious courts. Similarly, the House of Peoples Representative can establish other institutions with judicial power or give recognition if they have been established by private individuals (Eshetu and Getu, 2009).

Giving due cognizance for arbitration and conciliation proceeding specifically and compromise in general is start but not an end by itself. Moreover, by recognizing instructions which serves as a forum for arbitration and conciliation, like the Addis Chamber and Ethiopian Arbitration and

Conciliation Center (EACC), the state is promoting the ideal constitutional access to justice principle.

2.3. COMMON TYPES OF CONFLICT

Disputes between individuals or groups about the distribution of scarce resources, about values, or about the access to power that allows influence over the two, are both inevitable and necessary. They are inevitable, because human beings are interdependent creatures and because it is impossible to meet the needs and desires of all people at the same time. There are different types of conflict in different areas and it depends on the economic, socio-cultural and political activity of a given society. Those are

A. Blood Revenge/ Feud

Blood revenge is a very serious act that involves killing of the former killer and his kin by the family of the victim. It is primarily a tradition for many people in the world, and its connection to honor is illustrated by the fact that failure to respond is deemed a sign of moral weakness, and may imply whole kinship groups being seen as lacking in moral character. If the victim side negotiating for financial compensation with the perpetrator's family, it can be interpreted as weakness and as indicating that the group is not strong enough to defend its honor (Country of Origin Information Center, 2011).

Blood revenge closely linked to honor. A killing that provokes revenge has in one way or another dishonored the kin group/clan/tribe. Within the victim's kin group there is a limited, collective responsibility to take revenge and contribute to restoring honor. The person taking revenge should be a close relative of the victim. Killings connected to political conflicts/battles do not legitimize blood revenge, nor do killings and attacks against family members by political opponents or in connection with a political or military conflict constitute a collective responsibility within the kin group to avenge these acts. The revenge will therefore be directed at the perpetrator, and the conflict is concluded when the perpetrator is killed (Strand, 2007).

A decision in the governmental judicial system does not necessarily exclude the risk of violent retaliation. The victim's family can still be expected to kill the murderer when he is released (unless there is a settlement to end the feud indigenously). An indigenous community will not consider a revenge killing legitimized by tradition to be a criminal act. If the death is the result of

an accident and is involuntary, the victim's family may be entitled to compensation, but not blood revenge (ibid).

B. Theft

Theft is the dishonest taking of property belonging to another person with the intention of depriving the owner permanently of it. In other word, the crime of theft is the taking of the property of another person without their consent. In order for theft to occur, the thief must have the intent to permanently deprive the owner of the property taken. There are different levels of theft, such as grand theft or petty theft, which usually are linked to the value of the property stolen (International Legal Foundation, 2004).

C. Land

Disagreement over the inheritance of land among members of family leads conflict and sometimes members were killed each other. The importance of land issues is found in cases brought to the courts as well, and in many developing countries more than sixty percent of the cases in court are the issue of land and land related problem (Noah, 2010).

2.4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theory, according to Kurten's and Silverman (1999) as cited in (Kawulich 2009: 37) is encompassed of an explanatory statement which used to help explicate and understand relations. Among variables, how they operate and the processes involved. They further argue that the importance of theory lies in its ability to assist the researcher to identify and organize the connections among various phenomena that may seem unrelated. This section of the study describes the theories that provide the theoretical framework for analyzing the sources of conflict from different theoretical perspectives.

2.4.1. Sources of Conflict

To develop the nexus between conflict and its resolution mechanism, understanding the various A cause of conflict is essential. Effective understanding of causal factors initiating conflict is also paramount to adopt and develop a mechanism to resolve the conflict. It is often believed that understanding the problem is half way to resolve the conflict. Resolution, in this context, start with understanding the causal factors of conflict.

The various social conflict theories are attempted by scholars to provide frameworks for the understanding of conflict, especially sources of conflict, the condition under which conflicts occur, and sometimes the condition for their resolution. The following are among the different theories of conflict that describe the sources of conflict.

The structural functional theory is one of the major theoretical approaches to study the sources of conflict. The structural functionalist theory asserted that individuals will adjust to a given structure in an organization, institution or society. Any change in the structure of the organization or institution causes conflict and it destabilizes the organization. The theory reflects a system approach where each part has one or more functions to perform. It focuses on things that will maintain the state of equilibrium and collaboration in the organization (Durojaye et. al, 2013.).

Moreover, structural functionalism according to Nader (1968) emphasizes both the structural sources and the structural functions of conflict. Structural functionalists view society as an equilibrium system whose component parts play a role in the maintenance of the whole. Hence, as part of social life, conflicts too work towards the maintenance of the ongoing social structure (Llewellyn, 1983).

The other theory explaining the sources of conflict is interaction. Interaction is the main sources of conflict within a given society. For instance, Cohen (1974) states that, the very process of organizations would increase interaction and hence conflict. When the society organized itself at one place scarce resources and power may not be distributed equally to all members and this led to conflict. Cohen also explains that “a larger population aggregate meant more disputes for mediation by the leaders”. Besides, Eitzen and Zinn (1991:430) states that, “the probability of disagreement, irritation and the violations of privacy increased” when there is high contact or relations between different members of the society.

Opposing interaction as a source of conflict, innateness theory argues that the causes of conflict exist within us but not “within the social dynamics of human interaction” (Jacoby, 2008:6777). From the scholars, Schellen berg (1996) explains that aggressive behavior is inherited by all human beings naturally and hence conflict is caused by innate behavior. Proposing against this theory, the social learning theorists explained that aggressive behavior is not inherited biologically, rather learned through socialization. Moreover, they underlined that competition

over resources, ecological and cultural factors are the causes of conflict (Eitzen and Zinn, 1991). Human needs theory is the other theoretical school in describing the sources of conflict. Human Needs theory attributed the source of conflict to the fulfillment of personal or group objectives. This theory is based on the hypothesis that, in order to maintain stable society, basic human needs have to be met.

In support, Burton (1990) believes that the human participants in conflict situations are compulsively struggling in their respective institutional environments at all social levels to satisfy primordial and universal needs such as security, identity, recognition and development. They strive increasingly to gain the control of their environment that is necessary to ensure the satisfaction of these needs.

This struggle cannot be restricted: it is primordial. This approach shows that violation of basic human rights including socio-political and economic interests can be the fundamental source of conflict. Cohen (1974: 94) who articulates, when men do fight; they fight over some fundamental issues concerning the distribution and exercise of Power, whether economic, political, or social, further strengthening this argument. This reveals that scarcity can be a cause of conflict. The materialistic conception of the source of conflict is the other theoretical approach. The materialistic conception underlines that decisive factors in all conflicts are economic motives.

Collier (2000) argues that lack of opportunities to external economic resources, low level of income and inadequate resources can be sources of conflict. It is important to mention here the works of Marx and Marxian perspective in this case. Originally the works of Marx is based on the assumption that society is a stage on which struggles for power and dominance are acted out. The struggles were largely between social classes competing for scarce resources, such as control over the means of production (land, factories, natural resources), and for a better distribution of all resources (money, food, material goods).

Capitalism thrives on a class based system that consolidates power in the hands of a few men of the ruling class (*bourgeoisie*), who own the farms and factories that workers (*proletariat*) depend on for their survival. The interest of the dominant class is to maintain its position of power over the subordinate class by extracting as much profit as possible from their work. Only when the workers recognize their common oppression and form a class consciousness can they unite and

amass the resources necessary to seriously challenge the inequitable system in which they find themselves (Allan, 2007).

In other words, Marxists argued that more unequal is the distribution of scarce resources in a society, the greater is the violent conflict of interest between its dominant and subordinate segments and the greater the changes that may be caused in the pattern of social organization, especially in the redistribution of scarce resources. Also, the more subordinate segments become aware of their true collective interests or inequality, the more likely they are to question the legitimacy of the existing pattern of distribution of valued resources and join evident conflict against dominant segments of the social system (Marx and Engels, 1964; Marx, 1967 cited in Lindsey, 2011). This research is, therefore, an effort to assess the role of yejoka as indigenous conflict resolution method in the case of Gurage zone cheha woreda.

2.5. INDIGENOUS CONFLICT RESOLUTION MECHANISMS

Volker (2007) defined the term indigenous as a practice that have developed separately in the context of traditional societal structures in particular place and have been practiced in that context over a substantial period of time. Having this definition indigenous conflict resolution means indigenous communities settle disputes in the absence of state or formal justice system. It depends on a common cultural and ethical code that produces binding rules on its members (Barfield et al, 2004). Communities use this system to resolve disputes, evaluate actions for admire or blame, and to impose sanctions against violators of indigenously accepted norms and values. Addressing the deep rooted structural causes of violent conflict in a comprehensive manner is considered to be the key approach to peace construction (UN, 2010). As long as people live in the form of group or society, there are conflicts arising from differences of interests, prejudice, needs and ambitions.

Therefore, indigenous conflict resolution approach adopted to prevent or resolve such difference of interests determines its resolution. In other words, when a conflict happens, the crucial point should be the effective adoption of the necessary principle of the resolution. Indigenous mechanisms are grass root approaches to solve conflicts by the society. The most important elements involving in this mechanism include the tradition of forgiveness, respect for elders because of their symbolic authority to enforce decisions and transfer of resource as compensation (Zartman, 2000).

Indigenous conflict resolution typically incorporates consensus-building based on open discussions to exchange information and to simplify concerns. Individuals or groups who are involved to the conflict become more likely to accept guidance from these mediators than from other sources because an elder 's decision does not entail any loss of face and the decision also highly supported by the society (USAID, 2005). Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms use indigenous actors and traditional community-based judicial and legal decision-making mechanisms to manage and resolve conflicts among individuals and within or between societies. Indigenous conflict resolution system implies that indigenous instruments that aim to resolve conflicts without resorting to state-run judicial systems, police, or other external structures.

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms can lead to ad hoc practical agreements which keep broader societal relations constructive, creating conducive environments where nomads be able to graze together, peoples whether in rural or urban area live together, and individuals who are involved in trade activity can deal together even if military men remain un-reconciled.

Indigenous conflict resolution is one of the most prominent methods of conflict resolution in many countries especially in developing nations. A study conducted by Eshetu and Getu (2009) describes that indigenous conflict resolution process is qualitatively distinct from judicial process. It is a process where conflicts are managed with the assistance of a neutral third party and the neutral third party is depending generally on parties own choice. After choosing the neutral third parties based on the willingness of the conflicting parties, conflict parties have starting to discuss on the issue that leads them to involved in to conflict (Volker, 2007). After discussing on different issues, facts have to be established and the truth has to be exposed. Once a consensus regarding the facts and the truth has been achieved, perpetrators can declare their illegal behaviors say sorry and ask for forgiveness, and victims can understand and accept the apologies and forgive.

Over and over this processes lead to the exchange of material and goods as compensation, be it blood money (paid in compensation to the family of someone who has been killed) or other payments; depending on the culture and norms of particular society and these might be cattle, goats, pigs etc. The advantage of this exchange lies in the makeover of exchanging things with others for mutual benefit. Compensation obtains the place of violence or violence is replaced by compensation, conflicts are settled by compensation of a symbolically comparable amount,

which then is acknowledged to have restored order to the community. That acknowledgment has two-pronged acceptance by the distressed party depends on acceptance that is punishment by the attacker (Zartman, 2000).

The conflicting parties frankly engage in discussions on conflict extinction and in the search for a solution that would bring mutual benefit. During the process to solve the conflict, a third party can be invited to lead the process; in any case the process to solve the dispute is public, and the participation of individuals or groups in the process and the approval of its results is voluntary.

Since conflict solution is depending up on voluntary consent and agreement, everybody has to be in agreement to a solution, including god and the spirits of the ancestors to say in other words, indigenous conflict transformation is consensus-based (Zartman,2000). When conflict resolved and results have been attaining, they are preserved in highly ritual forms. Celebrating ceremonies are of great symbolic and practical importance to strengthen the social the relationship of the community (Eshetu and Getu, 2009).

There are different types of activities that included under the celebrating of the ceremony such as exchanging of assets, prayers and sacrificing to god of the spirits of their ancestors and habitual activities such as breaking spear and arrows, drinking and eating jointly, playing and dancing mutually or consuming certain drugs (Volker, 2007).

2.6. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ROLE OF INDIGENOUS CONFLICT RESOLUTION SYSTEMS

The main purpose of using indigenous conflict resolution mechanism is to restore peace and social stability within the community by make sure that disputants and their respective followers are reconciled (Elechi,2004). Birgit (2001) similarly elaborates that indigenous conflict resolution is important to ensure the full incorporation of parties into their societies again, and to take on the atmosphere of working cooperatively.

2.6.1. The role of restoring social relation ship

Indigenous conflict resolution system cultivates the relationship of conflicting parties towards the future. This conflict resolution method is very crucial for the re-establishment of social relationship or bringing together of the society in general and conflicting parties in particular (Volker, 2007). The main objective that many people use indigenous mechanism of conflict

resolution is not to punish the wrong doer or crime taker rather it helps to restore good relationship of the conflicting parties or the ultimate aim of indigenous conflict resolution is creating harmonious relationship between the disputants, (Volker, 2007).

Indigenous conflict resolution system allows conflicting parties to work cooperatively by minimizing their gap in productive way that does not demolish their relationship. But solving conflicts or disagreements through formal process by using courts disputants rarely want to work together and cooperatively. In indigenous conflict resolution process, the conflicting parties could rather help to learn information that will permit them to work more efficiently to their future life. Indigenous conflict resolution can provide us procedures that can resolve disagreements successfully without harm-fuelling relationships. The method used for a conflict at hand can make available a frame work to deal with predictable conflicts. Additionally, this conflict resolution method could help to take benefit of the resolution in the past and to learn from experience or skill (ibid).

2.7. THE ROLE OF YEJOKA IN RESOLVING FAMILY MARITAL DISPUTE

Before the emergence of modern legal system there were many customary law existed to govern the relation of people. Now a day those customary laws are recognized by modern legal system. Cultural laws are respected by concerned society because this respecting those cultural laws entails punishment. Many people today governed by cultural law because they can settle problem by lower cost and to settle dispute by easy manner. The modern legal system of Ethiopia gives recognition to cultural law to be governed case related to personal and family matter. For instance, the 1948 and 1987 Ethiopian constitution gave recognition to customary law.

Gurage society has their own customary law to govern interrelation of the inhabitant in accordance with FDRE constitution. This customary law uses to administer and judge the society by traditional law of Ye GurageKitcha. This law is reduced to written form and amended in relation to societal change. For our case the researchers see the role of yejokakitcha in resolving family marital dispute. In gurage society there is law which governs those matters like marriage, dissolution of marriage and others as follows:

Yanqitkitcha (marriage and related issues)

Yankitkitcha provides the condition of spouse before marriage wedding ceremony and manner of resolution of marriage. Under article four of yejokakitcha marriage shall be made after both parties are consented and the wedding ceremony need not be too costly. Under article five of the Yejokakitcha the marriage between person related by consanguinity in the direct line between ascendant and descendant is prohibited. The marriage disregarding this article can be dissolved by initiating of the spouse tribe.

Also YeGurageKitcha states about dissolution of marriage. In this cause of dissolution and division of property are briefly stated. The arbitrator shall see the case before the dissolution is made. When the dissolution of marriage is needed the right of both parties shall be protected equally. After the decision made by family arbitrator the property acquired by spouse during marriage shall be divided equally. At that time one of the spouse causes for dissolution of marriage shall pay compensation for the other spouse. Therefore, the Gurage customary law (YeGurageKitcha) resolve marital and family dispute equally for spouse without gender difference (Gurage Customary Law, 2000).

2.8. THE ROLE OF YEJOKAKITCHA IN RESOLVING LAND DISPUTE.

The Gurage society have been long aged land dispute resolution mechanism those dispute like individually owned land to other individual owned land and public way(Jeffores). Under article 33 of amended YeGurageKitcha states about Jeffores or public way it is wider in size and mota or Public Street to resolve those dispute gurage society use different mechanism among them some are listed below Kitcha (Gurage Customary Law, 2000).

A) Yekiyekitcha

This cultural law is used to resolve boarder conflict among the two parties by placing a stone to separate the boarder by electing elder from both side of the party by making oath (gurda) (Gurage customary Law,2002).

B) Kiye

This boundary separates the public way (Jeffores) from other land owned by private person. This stone which separate boundary is very respected by gurage culture. When any person displaced the stone either in night or day will be punished 500 (five hundred Ethiopian birr) and replaced at the proper place (Gurage customary Law, 2002).

C) Ye Jefforeskitcha (public way)

Jeffores is the way which is found between two and more local peoples it is used for road purpose rather than agricultural purpose. Therefore, there is a covenant which makes Jeffores for those above purpose. In gurage culture there is law which protects public way however this law is disintegrate by some people like some build house and other use public way for plantation and for other purposes all those are against cultural law shall be punished (Gurage customary Law,2002).

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter would focus to the research methodology employed in the study. Thus, it deals about description of the study area, research approach, research methodology, research design, sample and sampling techniques, source of data, data collection instruments and data analysis

3.2. DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA

The study would be conducted in Cheha woreda of Gurage zone, South Nation Nationalities and Peoples Region at 182km distance from the capital city Addis Ababa and 31km from Wolkite, which have the total population of 137,348 (Male, 67,175 and Female, 70,262) (Gurage zone Finance and economic Development Office, 2009EC).

Geographically Cheha woreda was found in the Guraghe zone, sharing boundaries with Gibe River in the south, Ezha woreda in the west, Gumer woreda in the north, and Enemore woreda in the east. The woreda is found at 2400 altitude; 08.14794N & 037.91896E with average annual rainfall of 1,436.8 mm and also the 28.37 and 14.2 °c of annual temperature respectively.

3.3. RESEARCH APPROACH

The researchers would use qualitative approach. Based on this, qualitative research approach would be typically used to answer questions about the complex nature of a phenomenon from the participant's point of view concerning to the issue of indigenous conflict resolution. Hence, the researchers would use a qualitative research approach to better describe and asses the local conflict resolution mechanisms as well as to obtain objectives and an accurate data about the indigenous conflict resolution methods.

3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN

The researchers would use ethnographic research design because this method is important to investigate culture related issue. Here the intention of researchers would be to investigate the role of Yejoka as conflict resolution mechanisms in the Cheha Woreda of Gurage Zone.

3.5. DATA SOURCES AND DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

3.5.1. Data Sources

For this study both primary and secondary sources of data would be used to gather information related with the role of Yejoka as indigenous conflict resolution systems in the study area and the social-economic advantage of local conflict resolution systems and practices.

3.5.1.1. Primary Data Sources

In this researchers basically, primary data source would be employed to gather first-hand information to achieve the objectives of the research. The sources of primary data would be gathered from household heads, local elders, and major stakeholders/partners.

3.5.1.2. Secondary Data Sources

Especially emphasis would be given to documents in which conflicts settled through local conflict resolution system and accepted as a binding rule by Woreda court in the study area. Additionally, the practice of indigenous conflict resolution system which was available from Kebele social court would be also reviewed as secondary sources.

3.5.2. Data collecting Tools

In order to get the required data for successful completion of this study the following methods of data collection would be used

Key Informant Interview

Key informant interview would be conducted to collect qualitative data. The purpose of key informant interview is to learn about people's view on the topic of interest, to learn their terminology, and judgments and to understand their perceptions and experiences. Key informant interview helps the researchers to gather sufficient information about the issue under study and in sharing the experiences of the people. The key informants would be chosen on the basis of their knowledge of the culture and their experiences in indigenous conflict resolution mechanism.

Observation

The other tool which researchers would use in this research is observation in order to get reliable data for the successful accomplishment of the research; observation was another major tool of data gathering system to get valuable information. Because what peoples say and do may sometimes contradict with each other. Thus, direct observation was the best solution.

3.6. SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

3.6.1. Sampling Technique

In this study the researchers would use non-probability sampling. Non-probability sampling was that sampling procedure which does not afford any basis for estimating the probability that each item in the population has of being included in the sample. From this type of sampling technique, the researchers use purposive sampling because in this type of sampling, items for the sample were selected deliberately by the researcher; his choice concerning the items remains supreme. In other words, under non-probability sampling the organizers of the inquiry purposively choose the particular units of the universe for constituting a sample on the basis that the small mass that they so select out of a huge one would be typical or representative of the whole.

3.6.2. Sample Size

Selection of appropriate samples would depend on the sampling procedures followed. To this end, the researchers would use purposive sampling techniques. In terms of sample size, the researcher would select 30 respondents purposively from expertise people about Yejoka in Cheha Woreda like community, formal court judges, and Police officers as well as from different target groups such as elders, youths, formal judges and from other local authorities.

3.6.3. Participants

This study would focus on Yejoka as indigenous conflict resolution mechanism. To this end specially the habit of conflict resolution by local elders. Therefore, the participants of this study would be the local elders, formal court judges, police officers, and local authorities of Cheha Woreda of Gurage zone who have full information about the issue.

3.7. METHOD OF DATA PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

In order to examine, explain and analyze Yejoka as indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area, the researchers would administer qualitative data analysis method. After collecting the necessary data through the help of the above data collection tools, the next task is the categorizing, combining, synthesizing, and there by analyzing of the collected data. Before the actual analysis of the data, the collected data would be sorted and categorized in accordance to its source and type. For the purpose of clarity and convenience some selected data would be collected by each data collection technique would be transcribed, compiled and further

elaborated in to meaningful and patterned information soon after the completion of that particular data collection session.

3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATION

It is obvious that ethical consideration is as essential as other aspects in the process of conducting a research for it significantly affect the success of the study. In this regard, a researchers need to consider ethical standards of the host community on which the research would be conducted. Therefore, the researchers would consider the social and cultural norms of the host community on whom the research would be carried out.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with presentation, analysis and discussion of the data collected from respondents. The results of these findings are obtained from both primary and secondary sources of data from Yejokas an indigenous conflict resolution system (ICRS) in Cheha woreda in Gurage zone by using interview. In this analysis section the data deals with the data gathered from the community, police station, elders, municipal administration of the study area.

4.1. BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

4.1.1. Socio-Demographic Background of the Respondents

Table 4-1 Sex distribution of the respondents

| Sex | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|--------|-----------|----------------|
| Male | 30 | 100% |
| Female | - | - |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

Source, from interview 2019

As the above table indicated that the numbers of male respondents are 30 from total 30 respondents averagely around 100% where This shown that the case study is most of male oriented. Because of several cultural norms and customs female are not mostly participate in such kind of conflict resolution mechanism. It is undesirable to say that the research had been conducted only male oriented. It would have been unsatisfactory in other words; conducting the research without the involvement of women is meaningless. Since the women are one part of the community they play crucial role for the successfulness of the elders in the time of mediation. In addition to that, in Cheha woreda community even though women do not directly participate in the role of Yejoka ICRM.

4.1.2. Age Distribution of the Respondents

Table 4-2 Age Distribution of the Respondents

| Age | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------|-----------|----------------|
| 45-55 | 9 | 30 |
| 55-65 | 10 | 33.3 |
| 65-75 | 8 | 26.7 |
| 75-85 | 2 | 6.7 |
| Above 85 | 1 | 3.3 |
| Total | 30 | 100 |

Source; from interview 2019

As the number of respondents indicates in the above table, the age between 55-65 and 45-55 are the highest respectively. The researcher used interview for those peoples above 45 years old was so as to get detailed information about the role of yejoka ICRM and have striven the knowledge from those matured people to know about yejoka ICRM. Why the researcher has happy to collect data from those people who are the age above 45 was because those peoples have enough experience and knowledge about our study.

4.1.3. Religious Distribution of the Respondents

Table 4-3 Religion of the respondents

| Religion | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|------------|-----------|----------------|
| Orthodox | 10 | 33.3% |
| Muslim | 11 | 36.7% |
| Protestant | 9 | 30% |
| Others | - | - |

| | | |
|-------|----|------|
| Total | 30 | 100% |
|-------|----|------|

Source, from interview 2019

As indicated in the above table the highest number of yejoka elders is Muslim and Orthodox. The Muslim and Orthodox follower are 11 and 10 from the total respondents, in percentage 36.7 and 33.3 respectively. While the protestant followers are around 9 from the total respondents are three religions followers.

4.1.4. Marital Status of the Respondents

Table 4-4 marital statuses of the respondents

| Marital status | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|----------------|-----------|----------------|
| Married | 21 | 70% |
| Divorced | 3 | 10% |
| Widowed | 6 | 20% |
| Single | - | - |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

Source from the interview 2019

As shown from the above table4, 21 or 70% of the total respondents are married. They have their own family and houses, while the other which around 6 or 20% of the total respondents are widowed, and the remaining 3 or 10% are divorced and there is no single from our total respondents.

4.1.5. Educational Background of the Respondents

Table 4-5 Educational status of the respondents

| Educational Level | Frequency | Percentage (%) |
|-------------------|-----------|----------------|
| Illiterate | 7 | 23.3% |
| Primary Education | 7 | 23.3% |

| | | |
|---------------------|----|--------|
| Secondary Education | 6 | 20% |
| Diploma | 5 | 16.75% |
| Degree | 5 | 16.7% |
| Above | - | - |
| Total | 30 | 100% |

Source; from interview 2019

As it could be seen from the above table the majority of the respondents are illiterate and primary education. The number of illiterate and those of primary education is equal. Which are around 7 or 23.3% from the total respondents, the other respondents which are around 6 or 20% learn the basic educational skill only reading and writing. Other respondents which around 5(16.7%) are diploma and degree who are attend in higher educational level.

4.2. DATA GATHERED FROM THE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

4.2.1. The Meaning Concept of Conflict

According to yejoka ICRM elders Conflict is a *Situation* in which two or more parties try hard to acquire the same scarce resources at the same time. are part of everyday life they form in our close relations, at a group level and on global level. Conflict means a fighting struggle, a clash between two or more human beings desired goals, which they are being obtainable by one or the other, but not both and there must be at least two parties.

4.2.2. The Major Cause Conflict

According to the interviewee of yejoka ICRM elder conflict may be arised in different circumstance, such as: - land (farm and grazing land) boundaries, murder, property and mony, theft, damaging of property (burning of house), at the time of abduction, animals, bar room and the likes.

4.2.3. The Most Type of Conflict Resolved by Yejoka as Indigenous Institution.

According to participant most types of conflict resolved by yejoka indigenous conflict resolution mechanism are murder, at the time of body enjuring, land dispute (grazing and farm land disputes), marital disputes.

4.2.4. Producers of Resolving Yejoka ICRM in Conflict

According to interviewee, Yejoka indigenous conflict resolution mechanism follows its rules and producers in the time resolving conflict. Firstly, the disputant brings their dispute to be heard to those appointed elder either individual or group. The wrong doer may be appealing to reconciliation and dispute to become an end by saying I admit my wrong or the victim claims to elder the face to be heard and appease the elder to see the case. when in the time of the disputants says nothing for the resolution of dispute the nearest relative (tribe) claim to yejoka elder the case to be heard and the reconciliation to be given. after the case is bring to the elder the establish a committee from themselves to see the case. The established committee before starts to see the case appoint a judge to give decision and the disputant select guarantee. after the case is seen by those committees and judge they pass decision. After the decision given by the committee if the disputant not agree up on the decision there is another rank to give final judgment they can it 'Amseya'(hagows) the disputant are obliged to bound by the decision given by 'Amseya. The disputant after presenting his/her case to yejoka shall not leave the resolution if he does so he may be punished strictly like ostraction and also ostraction from gurage cultures and social life.

4.2.5. The Selection Criteria of Yejoka ICRM Elder

According to the respondents, there are many criteria appoint (select) yejoka elder lay person does not become the member of yejoka elder. to become the member of yejoka elder at least such criteria should be full filled, non-biasedness, shall be ascertained, able to speak guargigna, known or give recognition by his tribe and his society, his elder show be seen.

4.2.6. The Way of Yejoka ICRM to Enforce Decision

According to the interviewee of the study area yejoka conflict resolution mechanism used a way to enforce a decision. First the instition order the disputant to admit there wrong if they are refused to admit themselves the instition call testimony or witnesses. In the time no witnesses are existed he is compelled to make oath by calling the nearest relative known as (muri) if the muri make oath he is freed if they not make oath judgment is given up on him.

4.2.7. The Most Difficult Type of Conflict Resolving by Yejoka ICRM

The interviewee replies that there are many dispute presented to yejoka ICRM among the dispute the most difficult dispute are murder, grave, bodily injuring, and damage of property (burning of

house) and in the time of difficulty to resolve those conflict the wrong doer present his guarantee (was). The guarantee fails to persuade the elder the wrong doer call the nearest relatives (muri) to make oath if the murifaile to make oath to him (wrong doer) he will be punished because he deemed to wrong doer and the judgment will be given.

4.2.8. The Role of Yejoka ICRM in Cheha Woreda

This instition establish for society of guraghe (particularly sebat bet) cheha woreda is the place of origin of yejoka indigenou conflict resolution mechanism or yejokakitcha. However, the enforceability of yejokakitcha in resolving dispute is work in the same manner for all concerned woreda without differentiation.

4.2.9. The Contribution of Yejoka ICRM in Resolving Land and Marital Dispute

The respondents said that yejoka kitcha have a great role in resolving marital and land dispute. In resolving marital dispute, it follow rule and procedure for example (yankitkitcha) this method of marital dispute resolution bound the women not to marry another man before the dissolution made by her or wife. According to yankitkitcha in the time of marital dispute the dispute is raised with the fault of men the women administer the property. If the fault is on women her family will be called and punished near her family by ordering her not to commit further wrong.

Also yejokakitcha have a great role in resolving land dispute the instition have individual land dispute resolving in each tribe called yezhirdane. Each yezhirdane have the same role of dividing the land placing stone to differentiate the land (kiye). A person who displace the stone shall be punished by rule of yejoka.

4.2.10. The Supporter of the Local Elder When Resolving Land and Marital Dispute

According to the interviewee during the resolution of land and marital dispute individuals who are tribes and nearest relatives of opposite party are called to deals on dispute. Also the neighbor of the party if they are deemed necessary called to help the elder in giving witness and other information.

4.2.11. The Support of Government for Sustainability of Yejoka ICRM

The current government does not support this instition to sustain from generation to generation permanently. In the time period of derg there was an instition who support yejoka conflict resolution method called GOHRALD by giving land and other financial aid to build house.

However, the current government does not have any type of support for this institution and does not give any type of recognition and also people prefer formal court to entertain their case other than yejokakitcha.

4.3. DATA GATHERED FROM OBSERVATION

We observed that the manner of presenting the case by disputant, manner of hearing the case by the elder, and the producer during giving decision followed by the elder is fit with what we made an interview. Also we observed the disputant after the resolution is made returned their previous behavior and make normal relation among themselves. Especially in marital case husband and wife and child return previous condition. Also in the case of land dispute the disputant return their peace as previous condition. Generally, yejoka ICRM have a great role by maintaining peace and orders of guraghe society for last four hundred years.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter presents summary, conclusion and recommendations based on the findings of the previous chapter. Accordingly, the overall analysis is summarized and conclusions drawn from the study based on the finding of the study and lastly recommendations are also forwarded by the researchers.

5.1. CONCLUSION

Conflict becomes the day to day challenge for many residents in the study area. The source of conflict may vary from individual to individual and from local to local, but there are common types of conflict that continuously visible in the study area. Since majority of the household respondents living in the rural area, agriculture becomes the dominant source of income almost for all residents. Thus, access to land is important for every household.

Because of this, land is the main source of conflict for many households in the study area. The interest of land for many households increases from time to time and similarly conflict on land increase in alarming rate. More than eighty percent (80%) of the conflict in the study area is caused by land. The main sources of land conflict in the study area are directly related with high demand for land Poor border demarcation and disagreement over the inheritance of land among members of family.

Residents of the study area are using different types of local conflict resolution methods. Yjokea commonly practiced method of local conflict resolution which many people used to settle their conflict. This indicates that conflict resolution via local conflict mediators is preferable than using formal one or court system in the study area.

There are different reasons that forced the residents to use local conflict resolution mechanism. First, the cost of local conflict resolution system like material cost, transportation cost, time and other costs become low. Second, the process of local conflict resolution system takes greater speed. Thirdly, implementing this approach does not require sophisticated party structures or expensive campaigns; but formal conflict resolution systems are expensive. Finally, local conflict resolution system is very important means of conflict resolution by increasing social

harmony, addressing common problems of the society and increase support of each other and tolerance.

This conflict resolution method is necessary for the re-establishment of social relationship or bringing together of the society in general and conflicting parties in particular.

After using local conflict resolution mechanism, many households invite their conflicting party in different religious ceremonies and other social interactions because local conflict resolution mechanism has great contribution in restoring the relationship of the community.

There is a problem from the government and other governmental and non-governmental organization to provide the necessary support for the local people and elders to consolidate indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. The government provides training for Sometimes local elders but the process of selecting the participants filled by corrupt practices. The government also failed to provide financial and material support.

During decision making process, the local elders forced the conflict parties to come and discuss their problem; this considered as the domination of decision making process on the eyes of residents. During decision making process youths are actively participated in the decision making process. But women 's are not participating in the decision making process but it does not mean that women 's nothing contributed for peace building process. Local conflict resolution system in the study area become one of the manifestations of culture and the practice does not contradict with that of the existing traditional structure of the society.

5.2. RECOMMENDATION

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made:

Local elders play an important role to settle disputes and building peace. But there are many problems that challenge these elders to perform the right activity. Thus, it is better if the government provide the right training for the right elders. To minimize the problem of office or shelter for local elders, the local or Keble administrators shall cooperate and build house by using local people and local materials and the woreda government shall arrange this situation. For modern documentation storage system, it is better that the woreda government giving

training by selecting individuals from each Kebele how to documenting files and other related activities.

Sometimes there is problem of ignoring the decision of local elders but not always by the woreda court desk. Once the conflict solved using indigenous conflict resolution system, but the woreda prosecutors continuing their accusation by neglecting the decision of local elders and finally this situation aggravates the conflict. It is better if the woreda court create strong relation with famous local elders and accepting the decision local elders as a binding rule.

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APPENDIXES

Instructions:

Dear our Respondents,

Our name is 1. Semira Nuredin

2. Tagay Rufael

3. Solomon Desta,

We are graduate students at Wolkite University in Governance and development studies.

The aim of this interview questions is to collect data about the role of yejoka indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms: In Case of ChehaWoreda, Gurage zone. The information you provide is believed to have a great value for the success of this research. We confirm you that all data will be used for academic purpose and will be analyzed anonymously and you are not exposed to any harm because of the information you give. We highly appreciate in advance to your kind cooperation in providing the necessary information.

Thank you!!

Section one: Research site identification and personal data of key informants

Woreda_____

Kebele_____

Sub-Kebele_____

Name_____ Sex_____ Age_____

Marital status_____

Educational level_____

Section two: General questions for Key Informant Interview

1. What is conflict? How do you understand by conflict?
2. What are the major causes of conflict that exist in your locality?
3. What are the most types of conflicts resolved by Yejoka as indigenous institution?
4. What are the procedures used by Yejoka in resolving conflicts in your locality?
5. What are the selection criteria for elders in the Yejoka conflict resolution institution?
6. What are the ways used by these indigenous conflict resolution institutions to enforce the decisions? Are there any religious or social sanctions to enforce the decisions?
7. What types of conflicts are difficult to resolve through your institution?

8. What could your institution do in such difficult situations?
9. What is the role of Yejoka as an indigenous conflict resolution mechanism in resolving conflict in Cheha Woreda?
10. How do you evaluate the contribution of Yejoka as indigenous conflict resolution to resolve martial and land dispute?
11. Are there any supporting courses e.g. training given/provided to the local elders to resolve martial and land dispute?
12. What do you think about the support of the government for the sustainability of Yejoka as indigenous conflict resolution mechanism?

Section three: in relation to the observation data collection tools the researchers go to field and observe what Yejoka elders will do to resolve the marital and land dispute in their locality and the researchers will analyse the role of Yejok as indigenous conflict resolution institution to resolve land and martial disputes and others.