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# Indigenous Knowledge Practices on Conflict Resolution Mechanism of Koore Nation and Its Contribution for Community Development

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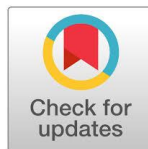
## Article History

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this research is exploring indigenous knowledge practices on conflict resolution mechanisms of Koore nation and its contribution for community development. It is qualitative research approach and ethnographic research design was employed with interpretivism research paradigm. Six community elders and two ethnic leaders were selected purposively by taking in to consideration their experiences and their skills on conflict resolution for interview, two focus group discussions one, only with nine community elders and the other with seven ethnic leaders both selected by snow baling (referral) sampling technique. Three ethnic leaders, four community elders and two disputant individuals were found in the observation of conflict resolution were selected by available sampling technique for observation where they resolve conflicts of two individuals in the community. Thematic analyses were employed to look at meanings in the study. The findings of the study revealed that Koore nation have very important indigenous knowledge practices on conflict resolution and peace building. It is known as Ohe system. Ohe system has many contributions for community development in social, economic, cultural and political aspects. Ohe system plays great role in political, economic and social aspects. But there is no support for Ohe system from the District government to recognizing, appreciating and documenting Ohe system and its contributions of community development. So the District government affairs, the peace and security offices and all other stakeholders need to take in to consideration the contribution of Ohe system for community development and work hardly to preserve and maintain the Ohe system from its marginalization

**Keywords—** Indigenous knowledge practices: conflict resolution: contributions

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## INTRODUCTION

Indigenous knowledge as part of the life experience or cumulative and complex knowledge and know how, practices and representations that are maintained and developed by local people have great significance for the life of the society/community. Indigenous knowledge is unique, traditional, local knowledge that exists within and is developed around the specific conditions of people indigenous to a particular geographic area in a particular period (UNESCO, 2012). Separating indigenous knowledge from its socio-cultural context becomes meaningless and dangerous, as it may lead to misleading interpretations and misuse of this knowledge (UNESCO, 2009).

Indigenous knowledge is linked to the local culture and history of a particular community and holds significant value for problem-solving strategies in indigenous organizations and local communities. Indigenous knowledge is used in the communities for economic development; health; the preservation of culture, and political transformation, all of which lead to poverty reduction (Kayombo, 2013). Moreover, indigenous knowledge is used to prevent and resolve conflicts. It manage almost all kinds of conflicts ranging from petty offences, civil cases, such as financial, familial and contractual disputes to murder case and blood feuds ( Ajanaw & Hone, 2018). It is a Situation in which two or more parties try hard to acquire the same scarce resources at the same time (Mikael and Swanstrom, 2005). Similar with the above idea Helvard (2011) described that conflicts are part of everyday life; they form in our close relations, at a group level and on global level. In the broad sense, conflict involves the inability of parties to reach a mutual acceptable agreements and it relates to all levels, between individuals, within families, organizations or states and even between animals (Scanne, 2008). Since conflict is natural and inevitable part of human life it is very important to focus on its resolution mechanisms and building peace to make the social interaction healthy.

According to Sanson and Di (2007) conflict resolution is a set of strategies which can be used to satisfy human needs of security, identity, self-determination and quality of life for all people who are engaged in a conflict. In similar context Dereje (2010), explains conflict resolution as the suppression of conflict that has already broken out in the form of searching for solution that would reduce the levels of violence and prevent its intensification either through formally or using indigenous conflict resolution mechanism.

Indigenous conflict resolution is one of the most prominent methods of conflict resolution in many countries especially in developing nations. Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms focus on the values of empathy, sharing and cooperation in dealing with common problems which underline the spirit of humanity (Murithi, 2006). As long as people live in the form of group or society, there are conflicts arising from differences in interests, prejudice, needs and ambitions. Therefore, indigenous conflict resolution approach adopted to prevent or resolve such difference of interests and determines its resolution.

In Ethiopia various indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms has been practiced for many centuries (Gowok, 2008; Endalew, 2014). These indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are deeply rooted in different ethnic groups of Ethiopia. As a result, they do not have uniform application all over the country (Endalew, 2013). Indigenous conflict resolution is a general name to the process of resolving disputes harmoniously with no or less adjective nature is a common phenomenon in Ethiopian societies known by the most common Amharic term shimagilina (Eshetu and Getu, 2009). The Shimagilies are known by different names in different societies and the process to settle conflict will be seen is also different in different areas of the country. Elders are likely to evaluate the evidence of the conflicting parties and formulate their decisions based on existing norms and values of the

society and to handle their cases. Thus, the decisions made by those elders are accepted and respected by the community in generally and by disputants in particularly.

There are different types of traditional institutions in Ethiopia that have their own customary methods to settle conflicts. For instance, the Afar elders strongly underscore that all Afars are governed by the same custom (Ada) irrespective of their clan affiliation, area of residence or changes in national politics (Kelemework, 2011). Similarly, in Oromo communities Jarsummaa is used as indigenous conflict resolution mechanism which arises among groups and individuals (Abadir & Bamlaku, 2021).

In Amhara nation also the main indigenous conflict resolution mechanism is the Shimgelina. In essence a council of elders the 'Shimgilina' is a collection of five Shimageles (elders) who are appointed by the disputing parties themselves based on their choice. According to Tihut (2010), many people in Amhara region use indigenous system of conflict resolution because it is preferable due to its accessibility, low cost, and trust. The main roles of indigenous conflict resolution mechanism is to restore peace and social synchronization within the community by make sure that disputants and their respective followers are reconciled (Elechi, 2004).

Societies world-wide have long used indigenous mechanisms to prevent and resolve conflicts. In every community, systems of indigenous conflict resolution often based on community customs, familial relationships, or embedded in institutional practices run alongside the formal state sanctioned processes (Macfarlane, 2007). 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, traditional conflict resolution stands out as the best method of conflict resolution (Mapara, 2009).

Ethiopian societies have diverse indigenous knowledge that they cope up with their natural and human built environment. Before the introduction of western-oriented curriculum, Ethiopians have their own education system mainly offered by religious institutions. This ancient Ethiopian indigenous knowledge and curriculum are underestimated in the western-oriented curriculum. However, the ancient curriculum was rich in equipping students with the knowledge from both natural and human built environment. It was also significant in enriching the knowledge of the world with different inputs and it had social, political and economic contribution for the country Ethiopia. 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 depend generally on parties own choice. Failure in investing in the indigenous knowledge and its integration in to school curriculum, marginalizes the importance of indigenous knowledge to contribute to the national endeavor of the country in all aspects (social, economic and political). The result is the erosion of indigenous knowledge and loss of valuable resources for human and sustainable development (Jameison et al 1998). Even though Ethiopians have such and more valuable indigenous knowledge practices regarding all aspects of life activities, due attention is not given to it and many indigenous knowledge practices are not registered, documented and recognized. And also, its contribution to the society is not seen as crucial. Therefore, it is very important to asses' Ethiopians indigenous knowledge practices, documenting and recognizing it and incorporating it in to the school curriculum so that the students (young children) get an access to it and preserve it from its disappearance or extinction. In Ethiopia various indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms has been practiced for many centuries (Gowok, 2008; Endalew, 2014). These indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are deeply rooted in different ethnic groups of Ethiopia. They are associated with the cultural norms and values of the peoples and gain their legitimacy from the community values

instead of the state. Besides, due to the multi-ethnic composition of the country, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms of Ethiopia are different from ethnic group to ethnic group. There are many contribution of indigenous conflict resolution for community development. Indigenous conflict resolution offers independent, unbiased, fair and efficient access to justice (Helgesen, 2008). Any disagreement that takes more than a year to resolve in a formal justice system is resolved in relatively much less time by indigenous or local institutions (Helges, 2008). In addition to this, people are well conscious of their own indigenous laws and principles of conflict resolution; therefore it is simple for these societies to come up to their indigenous institutions for the management of justice (Srivastava, 2004).

Koore nation as part of Ethiopian nation in general and that of southern nations nationalities and people region in particular, have many indigenous knowledge practices in all aspects of livelihoods. Amongst, that they have conflict resolution and peace building system (*'Ohe system'*) which is very important and emphasis is not given. The new or current generation of Koore nation is not valuing such system by unknowingly considering it as it is unorganized, weak, traditional and un recognized and non-documented and did not understand the contributions it provides for the community development. Due to this reason, the system is marginalized and going to lose its value and importance for economic, social and political development of the nation (Abdulfetah, 2006). I could not get researches that have been done on the area. The research that I have got which is done by Abdulfetah (2006) in relation to this stated the general Koore nation cultural law /administration system and on the way, it highlighted the Ohe system. Since the topic is very broad and lacks delimitation to specific issues under cultural laws of the nation, simply it touched few issues of the Ohe system not the detail mechanisms of it. The researcher intended to conduct on this title to fill that research gap by exploring the Ohe system of Koore nation in detail as valuable indigenous conflict resolution and peace building mechanism.

To fill the gaps the following basic research questions were forwarded.

1. What are the major conflict resolution indigenous knowledge practices do the Koore Nation have?
2. What are the contributions of the conflict resolution indigenous knowledge practices of the Koore Nation to the community development?

### **Materials and Methods**

Creswell (2007) and Tracy (2013) explained research paradigms as expectations and mechanisms of noticing truth, accumulating evidences and construction of facts of the globe in which the inquirer made in dealing with qualitative researches. Creswell (2007) divided research paradigms in to four main groups: positivism, interpretivism /constructivism, advocacy/ participatory and pragmatism. The intention of this study is to understand particular experience of koore nation indigenous knowledge practices of conflict resolution and peace building and its contribution for community development. Therefore, interpretivism paradigm was selected for its advocacy to people's various interpretation towards certain issues based on their viewpoints (Creswell, 2003). The approach of this study was qualitative among three approaches of scientific research. Qualitative research is based on qualitative data and tends to follow the exploratory mode of the scientific method and uses a wide- and deep-angle lens, examining human choice and behavior as it occurs naturally in all of its detail (Johnson and Burke, 2014). The research design selected for this research was ethnographic research design. According to Johnson and Burke, (2014), there are six specific designs of qualitative research: phenomenology, ethnography, narrative inquiry, case study research, grounded theory, and historical

research. Among these research designs, ethnographic research design was employed for this study. Ethnography is a form of qualitative research design focused on discovering and describing the culture of a group of people and one of the most popular approaches to qualitative research in education and the word ethnography literally means “writing about people” (Johnson and Burke, 2014). Ethnographers are interested in documenting things like the shared attitudes, values, norms, practice, patterns of interaction, perspectives, and language of a group of people. Most of the time, it is assumed that anthropologists only conduct ethnographic research. But both anthropologists and educational researchers can conduct it. The main difference is that anthropologists usually describe small cultures across the world (especially in less developed nations) while educational ethnographers usually study the cultural characteristics of small groups of people or other cultural scenes as they relate to educational issues (Johnson and Burke,2014).

Collecting or gathering data can be accomplished through a primary source, where the researcher is the first person to obtain the data and a secondary source, where the researcher obtain the data that has already been collected by others (Mesly, 2015). For this research both primary and secondary sources of data were used. A primary source is one in which the creator was a direct witness or in some other way directly involved in or related to the event (Johnson, 2014). Primary sources of data were obtained from direct interview respondents of community elders and ethnic leaders selected by purposively sampling, participant observation were conducted with community elders and ethnic leaders that were selected by available sampling techniques where the elders resolve the conflict to obtain data about the sitting structures of disputants, community elders and ethnic leaders gathered for conflict resolution, punishment levels and participation of female and youth in Ohe system and two focused group discussions, one with community elders and the other with ethnic leaders were conducted who were selected by snow balling (referral) sampling techniques to the study. A secondary source is one that was created from primary sources, other secondary sources, or some combination of primary and secondary sources (Johnson, 2014). A secondary source is therefore at least one step removed from direct contact, involvement, or relationship with the event being researched. The data which are obtained from some written documents, myths and sayings of Koore nation that have relation to the study are secondary sources for this study. The book entitled “Koore nation cultural laws” and other Koore nation indigenous knowledge related materials or books were used as secondary sources of data for this research.

### **Population sample and sampling techniques**

In the language of research, the people, objects and things on which the research conducted are the total population of the research. For this study all Koore nation were the total population of the study. A sample is a set of elements taken from a larger population according to certain rules and an element is the basic unit selected from the population. The overall sampling strategy used in qualitative research is criterion-based selection, because the researcher develops inclusion criteria to be used in selecting people or other units. Although the goal is always to locate information-rich individuals or cases, decisions about whom to study are also affected by logistical constraints, such as the accessibility of the potential participants and the costs of locating the people and enlisting their participation. Researchers virtually always face practical constraints such as these when they decide whom to include in their research studies (Johnson, 2014). The key point is that a researcher should pick a sample that can be used to meet the purpose of the research study and answer research questions while meeting cost and other constraints.

Although, the saturation or redundancy rate determines the sample size of the research in most qualitative researches, it is crucial to state the size of the sample of the study. Therefore, six community elders and two ethnic leaders (8) respondents were selected

purposively by taking in to consideration their experiences and their skills on Ohe system for interview, two focus group discussions one, only with nine community elders and the other with seven ethnic leaders both selected by snow baling (referral) sampling technique and 3 ethnic leaders, 4 community elders (7) and 2 disputant individuals were found in the observation of Ohe system which were selected by convenient or available sampling technique for observation where they resolve conflicts of two individuals in the community.

The quality of a research recognized or failed not only by the appropriateness of methodology and instruments but also the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted (Luis, 2007). Since the research approach is qualitative, non-probability sampling technique was used as it does not aim to produce a statistically representative sample or draw statistical inference. The researcher used his judgment to select people that he feels were key informant or a particular expertise or knowledgeable in the area of indigenous knowledge on conflict resolution mechanism and peace building and its contribution for community development. As types of non-probability sampling techniques, judgmental (purposive) sampling technique were employed to select 8 respondents for interview (community elders and ethnic leaders), participant observation were conducted with community elders and ethnic leaders that were selected by available sampling techniques where the elders resolve the conflict to obtain data about the sitting structures of disputants, community elders and ethnic leaders gathered for conflict resolution, punishment levels and participation of female and youth in Ohe system and two focused group discussions, one with community elders and the other with ethnic leaders were conducted who were selected by snow baling (referral) sampling techniques to the study. Purposive sampling is one of non-probability sampling in which the researcher specifies the characteristics of the population of interest and locates individuals with those characteristics (Johnson, 2014).

Depending on research type, methods of data collection include: documents review, observation, questioning, interview, focused group discussion, or a combination of different methods. The data for this study was collected through interview, observation and focused group discussion.

As Corona (2017), states among three types of interviews, semi-structured interviews tend to be used to gather qualitative data, usually last a little longer, and allow the interviewers to explore questions in greater depth. In semi-structured interviews the interviewer has more flexibility when it comes to adding questions or asking for clarifications. Generally speaking, the researcher facilitate the collection of personal data, given that the participant feels more comfortable and relaxed, making the interview more of a conversation than a calculated interrogation of questions and answers. Semi-structured questions were used to obtain data from community elders and ethnic leaders selected purposively.

Observation is an important way of collecting information about people because people do not always do what they say they do (Johnson and Burke, 2014). Researchers can make use of observation guides that will help them focus on what they need to know (Pascual, 2017).

Direct but uninformed observation was used to collect information about the mechanisms of Ohe system directly from the respondents while carrying out conflict resolution and peace building system practices in the nation and the practices that were observed are the sitting structure, types of corrective punishment, participants of Ohe system and types or levels of Ohe system in collecting valuable information to the study.

A focus group is where a number of people are asked to come together in order to discuss a certain issue for the purpose of research. The focus group is facilitated by a moderator

who asks questions, probes for more detail, makes sure the discussion does not digress and tries to ensure that everyone has an input and that no one person dominates the discussion (Catherin, 2007). A focus group is a type of group interview in which a moderator (researcher) leads a discussion with a small group of individuals to examine, in detail, how the group members think and feel about a topic. It is called a “focus” group because the moderator/researcher keeps the individuals in the group focused on the topic being discussed. Therefore 2 focused group discussions which have 9 and 7 members of community elders and ethnic leaders respectively were conducted in this study.

## **FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

This research was conducted to explore the Indigenous knowledge practices on conflict resolution and peace building of Koore nation. Nineteen community elders, twelve ethnic leaders and two disputant individuals, totally thirty three respondents were taken as participants for gathering of relevant data. Information was obtained from community elders, and ethnic leaders using in-depth semi-structured interviews, focus group discussion and participant (indirect) observations of the actual Ohe system.

This chapter, therefore, present the findings and discussions of the research. The finding disclosed the major indigenous knowledge practices on conflict resolution and peace building of Koore nation, nature of community elders and ethnic leaders participated in the study, types of Ohe system, steps of Ohe system, corrective measures (punishment mechanisms) of Ohe system, contribution of Ohe system to community development and the ways of aligning Ohe system for use of modern community development. In this research findings and discussion are not separated. Rather discussion was stated next to findings so as to interconnect with what known so far in the body of literature.

### **Application Of Ohe system in resolving disputants conflict**

In resolving disputants’ conflict, the major indigenous knowledge practice of conflict resolution mechanisms, the nature of community elders and ethnic leaders, types of Ohe system, contribution of indigenous knowledge practice of conflict resolution (Ohe system) for community development, and corrective measures (punishment levels) and ways of alignments for use of modern community development were inquired. Thus, the findings brought from interview, focus group discussion and observation were presented in addition to their discussions as stated in next session.

#### **The major indigenous knowledge practice on conflict resolution mechanisms and peace building**

Conflict is inevitable part of life of each community or nation. In a community/ nation, groups and/or individuals engaged in to conflict due to many reasons. It is impossible to avoid conflict totally. But it is possible to minimize it and its possibility. Indigenous conflict resolution mechanism made by community elders is the most effective and efficient way of minimizing conflict. In exploring major indigenous knowledge practices of conflict resolution, findings of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms describes, major Koore nation conflict resolution and peace building or Ohe system, its process, and types of Ohe system, punishment levels, its contribution for community development and the nature of community elders and ethnic leaders those resolve the conflict by indigenous conflict resolution mechanism were discussed.

#### **Indigenous conflict resolution and peace building or Ohe system**

The use of indigenous dispute resolution methods outside of the formal criminal justice system is important in maintaining close and continuing relationships in every community (Julie, 2007). It has been practiced for a long period of time even today, particularly in

many developing countries, indigenous conflict resolution process dealing with victims and criminal offenders are widely practiced and deep rooted with different degrees among the different ethnic groups.

Elders of Koore nation described conflict, as it is a kind of biting, killing and insulting of each another. When one or more of such action takes place in the community/nation, community elders were gathered to resolve the conflict that happened in the community. When a community elder man asked about the indigenous conflict resolution and peace building practices of Koore nation, he stated that,

“Ohe system is the only indigenous conflict resolution and peace building practice of Koore nation. All conflicts can be resolved via Ohe system. When conflicts happen in our nation in between individuals and/or among groups, it is given to community elders and ethnic leaders of the community and resolved by them. I am one amongst the community elders. I have not heard as Ohe system was taken from any another nation or learnt via modern education”.

There is excellent use of indigenous knowledge practice of conflict resolution and peace building (Ohe system) in Koore nation to resolve their conflicts. Ohe system is developed by Koore nation and also used by them for so many years until today. When conflicts happen in the nation, disputants appeal their case to community elders and ethnic leaders and the elders engaged in to the process of Ohe system and resolve and negotiate the disputants.

At the same time, another community elder and ethnic leader when asked, can Ohe system resolve all conflicts? Replied that,

“Yes, Ohe system can resolve all types of conflicts. Destruction of materials, grazing land conflicts land cases, boundary issues.... Whatever conflicts resolved in Ohe system. I participated many times even in Ohe system where people killed each other”. Any types of conflict that happened in the nation of Koore irrespective of its scope or magnitude can be resolved by Ohe system.

#### The process of Koore nation Indigenous conflict resolution and peace building or Ohe system

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 depend 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). The process to settle conflict through indigenous means is lead by traditional kings, chiefs, big men, elders (being a social elder, not a biological category) (Volker, 2007). These authorities are highly honored for their knowledge of custom, tradition, the history of the communities and the relationships of the conflicting parties. They are rich in experiences of conflict resolution, their skills in interpreting symbols of reconciliation and their ability as orators and their social capital as leaders of the communities authorize them to negotiate a resolution to the conflict that is acceptable to all the society.

Koore nations' indigenous conflict resolution (Ohe) system has its own process that it has to passes in order to reach to peace building. In relation to this, a well-known conflict resolver of the community asked a question how you start and complete Ohe system and He stated,



“Umm... the process of Ohe system differ from one another based on types of Ohe systems and the nature of the conflict. If one individual killed a person, the ethnic leader of an individual who killed a person went to the home of the ethnic leader of died man to give his hand. Then the ethnic leader of died man announce for his ethnic groups ‘do not touch or kill that ethnic group, already they give me hand’ he say for his ethnic members. Then after the ethnic leaders of all the community and elders were collected and state that as killing of a man is very bad and ignored the issue together and clearly describe the killed ethnicity groups as they made a great mistake. They decide the mistake makers to be punished by bringing ox, cow and sheep. Then the ox is given to died family or ethnicity as compensation and the sheep and cow killed and the meat reached all people that participated in the Ohe system and eaten there. By eating together the meat of sheep and cow and kissing each other died and killed ethnic groups, conflict resolution and peace building process completed. But the Ohe system process of other conflicts are different from this process”.

Similarly, another community elder replied,

“the Ohe system process of zawa Ohe (family conflict), start from when the damaged or loosed person appeal the case to the leader or father of that family. Then the leader or father of that family gathered together and tell to them to collect elders to resolve their conflict and set the place and date for the collection of elders. The community elders collected on the date specified and place. Then the leader of the family for whom the case was appealed, took time and state who appeal the case to him and he told them to collect elders to resolve their cases. Then the community elders were gathered. After that he brought the issue to elders to deeply investigate and identify mistake maker and punish him thus, they live together in peace in their community. Then the elders take session and asked both the accuser and accused whether the elders they called for their conflict resolution fulfilled or not. When they checked this they assign one individual to ask both of the accused and accuser turn by turn and the elders follow everything throughout the whole process and identify who made mistake easily and report for the first case holder or leader as they identified who touch or who made mistake. Then the leader give back it to elders again by saying “as you see punish the mistake maker and negotiate them together”. Then elders punish mistake maker based on the magnitude of the mistake and build peace between them by shaking their hands together and kissing each other”.

In general Ohe system has its own well defined processes through which it need to passed and reach in to peace building stage. However, the nature of conflict and the types of Ohe system determine which process the Ohe system need to follow. The community members know that which Ohe system to follow for what type of conflict and what type of Ohe system.

#### Types of Koore nation Ohe system

Compared to other elders of interviewed, the most conflict resolution experiential elder (34 years) described that,

“Uhh I know four types of Ohe system in Koore nation. First one is **Karra Ohe**, is a type of Koore Ohe system by which small or lower level conflicts or cases are resolved in a village levels. The second one is **Leddo Ohe**, is an other Ohe system in which middle level or moderate conflicts or issues can be seen and resolved the cases which are not resolved by the former passed to this type of Ohe system and get its last decision. This type of Ohe system encompasses total one kebele cases. Third type of Ohe system is **Gubba Ohe** and deals with higher level conflicts and conflicts which are not completed by leddo Ohe. It resolves a conflicts takes place among or between kebeles and have special centers in some kebeles where it carried out. The fourth and the last type of Ohe system is **Kaaso Ohe**. It is

a type of Ohe system by which the highest cases or conflicts get their resolution. It is the final court in Koore Ohe system”.

In addition to this the data that were obtained from secondary source (a book written about Koore traditional administration system) describes, as Koore nation have four types of Ohe system or traditional conflict resolution mechanism which are known as Kara Ohe, Leddo Ohe Gubba Ohe and Kaaso Ohe whose level and power of decision making became higher and higher respectively.

As discussed above, Koore nation Ohe system has different types based on the severity of the conflict and the scope of the conflict. And if it is not completed by one type it has the possibility to proceed to the next and get completed.

### **The nature and selection criteria of Koore nation elders/conflict resolvers**

Indigenous conflict resolution 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).

The nature and the selection way of community elders can influence the Ohe system in positively and negatively. In relation to the nature and selection criteria of Koore nation community elders, the focus group discussion participants stated,

Yaa we know that the nature of Koore nation community elders, all of them may necessarily not be old in terms of their age. There are some middle aged individuals who are effectively carrying out conflict resolution mechanism together with us. .... There are two criteria or ways by which conflict resolvers/elders collected for Ohe system in Koore nation. The first way is .... Simply by being a leader of one ethnic group and the second way is very standardized way of selecting elders. This involves selecting elders based on their critical thinking ability, truthfulness, impartiality, convincing power, lack of fear, knowledge of Ohe system.

In Koore nation Ohe system, special focus was given for community elders selection to resolve a conflict. Because community elders determine the whole process of Ohe system and the decision passed by the elders were accepted by the community members totally as certain and truth, even if the elders made wrong decision. The Koore nation community elders were selected as elders of conflict resolution by two reasons. By having a title of leadership of an ethnic group and based on their truthfulness, critical thinking, impartiality, know-how about Ohe system and etc.... Those who were selected by having a leader title, may or may not have the abilities that the rest elders have. But they selected by only having the title. The selection criteria of other elders are logical interesting way to reach at right decision.

#### **4.2.2.1 The challenges that elders faces in Ohe system**

In applying indigenous conflict resolution mechanism to solve conflicts, traditional customs and practices are seriously respected and carefully practiced. Ordinary people in villages still trust the advice of elders in resolving local 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. Elders faced some difficulties while resolving disputes in some times. The respondents of FGD described when discussing the challenges that elders faced while conflict resolution time,

Umm, most of the time the offender and his close relatives may want to disturb and destroy the resolution system ...because he is going to be punished. And also there some cases in which some elders were corrupted and stand against the victim. Sometimes, the offender

tried to insult (*chade*) elders when they dig out his problem or mistake. There are times where some disputants need not to be negotiated and prefer accusing each other by formal or legal court system special currently. Also there are community members who were unable to discuss their cases through ohe system due to lack of knowledge of Ohe system.

As the Ohe system of Koore nation is the only way by which the people of the community resolve their problem, it challenges the elders from different dimension like, from offenders, victims, from some elders even, by different reasons.

#### **4.2.3 The punishment or corrective measures of Ohe system**

Indigenous conflict resolution typically incorporates consensus-building based on open discussions to exchange information and to simplify concerns. Indigenous conflict resolution system implies that local instruments that aim to resolve conflicts without resorting to state-run judicial systems, police, or other external structures. Regarding the punishment or corrective measures of Ohe system elders stated,

The punishments or corrective measures of Ohe system depends on the type and scope or magnitude of the conflicts. For little conflicts even simply saying “you are the offender/attacker so ask him/her excuse” is a type of punishment” And also others replied that,

“we punish the defenders in different ways based on the conflict they committed. We punish individuals who committed ordinary conflicts by ordering them to bring a sheep as compensation. And higher conflict offender also punished by bringing an ox. And sometimes we punish by money. But all the punishment sheep, ox and money is given to the ethnic leader or father of the victim. And both disputants have to bring some money or something need to be eaten by sharing together for elders and who participated in the conflict resolution process. This is taken as a sign of negotiation and building or restoring the social relationship. If the punishment (compensation) decided by the community elders and ethnic leaders do not given, the elders have the power to decide to exclude from any social life of the community those individual who did not gave the punishment”.

At the same time the data obtained from observation in relation to punishment or corrective measures implies that, even the sitting structure of the Ohe system itself shows a type of punishment. The individuals who engaged in to conflict sit in front of elders in isolation from any other where the eyes of all elders forwarded to the and due to this the disputants can not speak false speech for elders.

Therefore, in Koore nation Ohe system the types of punishment for mistake committers depend up on the level or magnitude of the conflict they committed. For individuals who committed very lower or ordinary conflict, even simply providing oral warning is a type of punishment. And higher level conflicts were punished by imposing an ox, cow and sheep and three of them.

#### **4.2.4 The contribution of indigenous conflict resolution mechanism of Koore nation (Ohe system) for community development**

The main purpose of practicing indigenous conflict resolution mechanism is to restore peace and social synchronization 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. Koore nation traditional conflict resolution mechanism has contribute for the development of their community in social, economic and political aspects.

### The contributions in terms of Restoring social relationship between/among the disputant parties

Indigenous conflict resolution system cultivates the relationship of conflicting parties towards the future. This conflict resolution method is necessary for the re-establishment 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 relations ship of the conflicting parties or the ultimate aim of indigenous conflict resolution is the re-establishment of relationships. Indigenous conflict resolution system allows conflicting parties to work cooperatively by minimizing their gap in productive way that does not demolish their relationship. In relation to the data obtained from respondents describes that,

“ yes Ohe system mainly focuses on restoring the disputant parties earlier social relation by forgiving for the currently happened conflicts not punishing individuals. It builds strong social interaction in contrast to formal or legal judicial conflict resolution. In Ohe system the elders shakes the hands of the disputants together at the end of the Ohe system and this implies restoring great social interaction”.

### Contributions in terms of reducing cost and time for disputants relatively legal court or judicial system

The other contributions of indigenous method of conflict resolution are to decrease the cost and time involved in solving conflict. Formal conflict resolution systems are expensive, sometimes the cost may goes even the amount of making the victory of a party irrelevant or beyond the amount of decision .There are many expenditures while using the formal conflict resolution mechanism like; court charge, filling cost, expenditure for lawyers, and other costs. Additionally indigenous mechanism consumes lower cost and the process takes greater speed, the reason for this is solving conflicts through this mechanism normally requires the permission, and commitment of the parties involved in the process (Bendeman, 2007).

The traditional or indigenous conflict resolution mechanism of Koore nation has contribution for community development in economic aspect by reducing the costs or expenditures and time of conflict resolution for the disputant parties. Regarding this an elder man asked the question what are the contribution of ohe system for community development in economic dimension? Replied,

“in Ohe system of conflict resolution mechanism, there is no more cost expended for resolution process. And also it is completed in a short period of time in contrast to the formal legal conflict resolution, which is seen as costly and takes a long period of time. Ohe system saves cost and time for disputants”.

### Contributions of Ohe mechanism in political dimension

Indigenous conflict resolution offers independent, unbiased, fair and efficient access to justice (Helgesen, V., 2008). Local elders who lead the process of resolving conflict through indigenous mechanism are impartial and free from government control. Indigenous conflict resolution is culture specific and reliable with tried and experienced methods that have restored social relations in the past.

Indigenous conflict resolution system advances a greater wisdom of unity by permitting many community members to witness and to participate in the process of making decisions. It often generates community focused results that impact positively on the entire social relationship. The agreement reached between individuals, groups, and societies is normally indisputable and has to be put in to practice for the purpose of satisfying the entire

community. The ohe system of Koore nation has contribution for community development in political dimension by uniting and building peace and security among members of the community residents. On the contribution of ohe system in economic aspect of community development an ethnic leader stated,

“Ohe system plays a great role in economic dimension of community development in restoring peace and security between the disputants, their ethnic groups. It also builds unit among the whole members of the residents of the community. Since it is free from political interference, however the political system went right or wrong, it remains constant/the same and keeps the security of the community members”.

The finding shows that Koore nation Ohe system has great contribution for the community development of the nation in social aspect by restoring intimate social relationship in between the disputant groups and among their ethnic groups. Economically, it reduces the expenditures (cost) and time taken to resolving the conflict for the disputants in contrary to formal/judicial way of resolving conflicts. In political aspect also Ohe system played crucial role by building peace and stability in the community/nation. This is the main reason for widely use of Ohe system for conflict resolution by Koore nation.

## Conclusion

Standing from the aforementioned findings, it can be concluded that:

There is very important indigenous knowledge practice on conflict resolution and peace building mechanism in Koore nation. It is most widely used conflict resolution practice and its process is reliable and trustworthy. The selection criteria (bases) of community elders to resolve conflict in Koore nation is right way in which there is truthfulness.

Ohe system (Koore Nation indigenous conflict resolution Mechanism) provides many contributions for the development of the community in different developmental aspects (economic, social, cultural and political). Thus, it needs preserving and using it for modern community development by documenting, recognizing and promoting it by different mechanisms.

## Recommendation

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn above, the following recommendations were forwarded;

- The finding has shown as Ohe system of Koore nation (indigenous conflict resolution and peace building) practice is the most widely used conflict resolution mechanism by which all types of conflict can be resolved. However, the new or current generation of Koore nation is not valuing Ohe system by unknowingly considering it as it is unorganized, weak, traditional, un recognized, undocumented and did not understand the contributions it provide for the community development. Due to this reason the system is marginalized and going to lose its value and importance for economic, social and political development of the nation. Ohe system plays great role in political, economic and social aspects. But there is no support for Ohe system from the wereda government to recognizing, appreciating and documenting Ohe system and its contributions of community development. So the Disrict government affairs, the peace and security offices and all other stakeholders need to take in to consideration the contribution of Ohe system for community development and work hardly to preserve and maintain the Ohe system from its marginalization and make it for future use.
- Since alignment of Ohe system for use of modern community development is highly needed, working cooperatively with different stakeholder offices, community elders, community ethnic leaders and community members of the nation.
- By taking in to consideration the minimum cost, least time it takes and less biased of the Ohe system, the whole members of koore nation decide to prefer solving their conflicts via Ohe system.
- The indigenous knowledge practices and the hard work of community elders should be recognized and certified by concerning government bodies from different level.
- As a country in general, we are losing very important and valuable indigenous knowledge practices in different aspects and shifted our face towards western practices and fashions, which is resulting in marginalizing and eroding our indigenous knowledge, culture, values/norms customs, tradition and etc, by which we were known so far.

## DECLARATIONS

### Limitation of the study

Limitation of this study was unable to reach massive population, difficulty topography of the nation/wereda to transportation, and lack of written documents about the issue. Even though it is challenging, the kebeles selected purposively for the study were covered by traveling in a great difficulties.

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### Competing Interests

I want to declare that there is no any potential conflict of interest exist in this publication of this abstract.

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