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**The *Atete* Institution: The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution
among the Arsi Oromo**

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Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this MA research thesis is my original work and that all sources of materials used for the proposal have been duly acknowledged. The advisors comments have been duly incorporated.

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Abbreviations

AU: African Union

CSA: Central Statistical Agency

COMESA: Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa

DW: Deutsche Welle

EAC: East African Community

ECOWAS: Economic Community of West African States

EPRDF: Ethiopian People Republic of Democratic Front

ESDP: European Security and Defense Policy

EU: European Union

ICG: International Crisis Group

IGAD: Intergovernmental Authority on Development

IIRR: International Institute of Rural Reconciliation

IMF: International Monetary Fund

MINUSMA: Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali

PRIO: Peace Research Institute Oslo

PSC: Peace and Security Council

SADC: Southern African Development Community

UCDP: Uppsala Conflict Data Program

UN: United Nations

UNMISS: UN Mission in South Sudan

UNSMIL: UN Support Mission in Libya

UNSOM: UN Assistance Mission in Somalia

WB: World Bank

Glossary of Terms

Abba bokkuu: - Father of the scepter

Abba Gadaa: - Leader of *Gadaa* system

Ejersa: - Olive tree from which *siinqee* is made

Gadaa: - Indigenous socio-economic and political system of Oromo

Gosa: - Clan

Guddifachaa: - Adoption

Hanfalaa: - a women belt made of animal leather

Gumaa: - Institution of bloody conflict resolution among Oromo

Jaarsummaa: - Mediation by male elders

Qaalluu: - A person on which spirits descend and leader of religion

Qarruu: - Muddy water that pushed to the side of a river by the waves of water body

Saddeeta: - Member of Councils in *Gadaa* system

Abstract

Conflict is inevitable in human relationships from an immemorial time. The majority of African people live in conflict zones. However, they have indigenous institutions to resolve conflicts. Ethiopia has also indigenous institutions, which are mostly ethnically based, to resolve various forms and levels of conflicts. To this end, the main objective of this study was to investigate the roles of women in conflict resolution through the exclusive women owned institution called atete among the Arsi Oromo Women. To address this objective, the researcher employed a qualitative research approach. Methods of data collection include in-depth interviews, key informant interviews and focus group discussions from primary sources such as Abbaa Bokkuu, Abbaa Hookkaa, Haadha Siinqee, religious leaders, elders, and experts from government bodies while documentary review was another method of data collection from secondary sources like reports, published materials, and personal notes. To select the above samples, a purposive sampling method was employed and sample size was determined by saturation point. The collected data were thematically analyzed. Throughout all stages of the research, all required ethical considerations were considered. The results of the study indicate that atete on is a well-established social institution owned by customarily married women. Depending on its main objectives, it is classified into ateetee falaa, ateetee goraa and ateetee araaraa. Ateetee araaraa is manifested through atete ritual in order to resolve both interpersonal and intergroup conflict. Women organize ateetee araaraa ritual through three general steps. These are pre-atete ritual, atete ritual and post-atete ritual. These steps have different consecutive and interdependent activities. Atete has promising opportunities such as the development of scientific research, arts, books, social media and the current government intentions to incorporate in its social policies. However, these opportunities do not make the institution free from the challenges like political situation, immigrated religions, migration, urbanization and change of cultural elements influence. Therefore, individuals, government and non-governmental organizations should incorporate the institution in policy making, implementation and analysis so as to get its best in conflict resolution.

CHAPTER ONE

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Conflict is natural and inevitable in human relationships. Conflict can be constructive and destructive. Constructive conflict, which is an essential instrument of social change and progress, helps to “clarify the causes of conflict, modify institutions, enhances social relationship and strengthens social development” (Eyayu and Ethiopia 2020:1-2) while destructive conflicts have adverse consequences such as “displacement, deaths, famine, fear, persecution, hardships, refugee migration, grief, asylum seekers, disorganization of societal structure, and damage of cross-border infrastructure and an irreparable damage to the society” (Adegbonmire 2015: 22). Conflicts are multidimensional and multi-causal. They arise out of political ideology and power, religious views, economic privileges, and control of natural resources. Those causes could be categorized into structural, proximity and/or trigger causes depending on their settings and levels (Folarin 2015).

Conflict is not a new phenomenon in Africa (Bakken and Rustad 2018). Lumumba (2017) states that 25% of population in sub-Saharan Africa live in conflict afflicted countries. The peace Research Institute Oslo [PRIO] (2018) states that the number of conflicts (state-based conflicts, non-state conflicts and one-sided violence) in Africa is increasing. Although African Union aimed to end civil conflicts, gender based violence, violent conflicts and pretending genocide in the continent by 2020 with the motto “Silence the Guns”, the conflicts last and they do not stop (Alison 2020). The current situations in East African Countries (EAC) namely South Sudan, Sudan, Somalia, Uganda, and Ethiopia are just some of the examples. Conflicts in Sub-Saharan Africa has directly or indirectly resulted in the displacement and death of millions of civilians and economic destructions and leave a complex lasting legacy that is challenging to remove.

Conflicts in Africa are diverse and complex, and efforts at managing and resolving them are also mixed (Aall 2015). Besides formal mechanisms, which are conducted in the court through litigation with official recognition of the government (Macfarlane 2006), different indigenous conflict resolution institutions are embedded in community customs and values in Africa (Ajanaw and Hone 2018). They are continuous and effective to maintain peaceful society

(Astatike 2018). Botswana and Ghana are considered as the best examples in respecting and using indigenous institutions to resolve conflicts and thus why comparably they had political stability and progressing social development (Fosu 2009).

Ethiopia has various indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms that are deeply rooted within the culture of different ethnic groups (Ajanaw and Hone 2018; Zigale 2016). For example, *Jaarsummaa*, *Ilaafi ilaamee*, and *siinqee* in *Gadaa* system among the Oromo (Assefa 2001; Dejene 2002), *Yajoka and Maaga* among the Gurage (Daniel 2016), *Aba'la* among the Affar, *Shimgilinna* among the Amhara (Gowok 2008), *Gutara* among the Wolaita, *Mangima* among the Gumuz and other ethnic groups are some of the institutions playing a great role in conflict resolution. However, women have minimal participation in the above indigenous institutions (Bamlaku, Yeneneh and Fekadu 2010).

Women and men have different power and decision making skills before, during and after conflicts and also differently affected. Women have special skills in searching for peace (Bamlaku et al. 2010). Scholars such as Ngongo and Mohammed (2003) argue that women would have been at the center of conflict resolution processes. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon (2016) stated that ensuring women's participation is critical as a pillar of social cohesion. Accordingly, in a different part of Ethiopia women have indigenous institutions of conflict resolution, which have been playing a great role in resolving various forms of conflicts such as interpersonal, intergroup and family conflicts in the country (Astatike 2018). For example, *Don Kachel* among the Agnuak (IIRR 2009), the *yakka* and *saqqa* among the Sidama, *Debarte* among the Raya-Aseobo (Astatike 2018) and *Siiqqee* institution among the Oromo (Jemila 2014).

There has been debate among scholars over the role of women in the *Gadaa* system for a long period of time (Tesema 2016). Scholars such as Kuwee (2004) and Jeylan (2004) argue that the political aspect of *Gadaa* system left out women of its participation. The nature of *Gadaa* system is based on male age grade sets that exclude women. Women do not hold political power being an *Aabbaa Bokkuu* or *Abbaa Gadaa* and they do not participate in proclaiming *Gadaa* laws nor participate in deciding cases. Another side of scholars claims that women have a parallel institution which is called *Siinqee* that is given for them by *Gadaa* system (Temam 2019). Tesema (2016:91) claims that women indirectly participate in decision making by consulting

their husbands. He further argues that women can keep the position of *Abbaa Gadaa*, “when the husband dies before completing his term of office.”

Siinqee and/or *atete* are among the institutions of the Oromo women. Some scholars use them interchangeably as they are the same while others describe them as two interdependent institutions. Østebø (2007) and Tolosa (2010) explain that *atete* and *siinqee* are used interchangeably. Daniel (2002:33); Temam (2019:18) and Tesema (2016:92) presented *atete* and *siinqee* as two co-dependent institutions of Oromo women. They defined *atete* as “a special spiritual power given to Oromo married women by *Waaqa* (God)” and *siinqee* as is a ritual stick that only married women carry during the various social, ritual, spiritual and political purposes. *Siinqee* is given to the girl on her wedding day with blessings as a transition from girlhood to womanhood (Jemila 2014). Kuwee (2004) has described that *Siinqee*, which is an exclusively female deity, is among some of the institutions in the *Gadaa* system.

Among Arsi Oromo, the institution is known by the name of *atete* that is an indigenous ritual (Bartels, 1983; Etefa 2012) or institution (Qashu 2016; Hamdesa 1998) and matriarchal figure of women’s divinity (Daniel 2002; Jeylan 2004). This is contrary to the remarks of Baxter (1979) that *atete* is simply the meeting of neighbor women. Therefore, *atete* is among indigenous institutions to resolve conflicts among its other motives (Temam 2019; Megerssa 1993).

Generally, indigenous knowledge and practices have been playing a great role in resolving social conflicts for a long period of time. The same is true for *atete* institution among the Arsi Oromo. Therefore, studying the like institutions and then promoting and educating the coming generations about those institutions will have immense contributions to preserving peace among the people of the world.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Ethiopia, the second-most populous country in Africa with a population of more than 115¹ million, is known for the civil war and internal conflict that keep it as the poorest country in the world (Eyayu and Ethiopia 2020). The religious and inter-ethnic conflicts caused or triggered by psychological, economic, socio-structural (discrimination and subjugation) and cultural

¹ Ethiopian population (2020) - Worldometer

dimensions of human interactions over the years have torn apart the social fabric and also weakened the solidarity and human characteristics of the Ethiopian society (Girma 2019; Gedamu 2019). Even though politically motivated, the most atrocious inter-ethnic conflict that involved the Qemant in the Amhara Regional National State, the Gumuz with the Amhara, the Guji Oromo-Gedeo conflict and the Somali-Oromo conflict are some of conflicts and violence, thus led to the killing of thousands, displacement of more than three millions of people and depredation of property (ICG 2019; Deutsche Welle [DW] 2019). These would open a Pandora's Box on the future of the Ethiopian peaceful life (Adeto 2019).

The country is also characterized by intra-group conflict over the control of natural resources and territorial expansionary moves particularly among the pastoral societies (Etefa and Laddusaw 2019). This form of conflict has resulted in livelihood destruction, loss of lives and massive displacement of people which would have a gender-specific impact on the affected population (Zigale 2016). Gender-based domestic violence and conflict that leads to physical, mental, social and economic suffering to women is another form of conflict pervasively found in Ethiopia (Talilee 2018; Kuwee 2004; Qashu 2016). This is why accurate information on conflict and the role of women in its resolution is essential for well-informed planning, policy making and action in order to build a culture of peace in Ethiopia.

Government, Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and local communities are the main actors in preventing and resolving conflicts in Ethiopia. In almost all cases of ethnic conflicts, the government takes a leading role in handling them. Government and CSOs have been taking initiatives to adopt indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms in their conflict management programs. Besides, they promote, enhance and facilitate indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms and also specifically the institutions owned by women (Sisay 2007) because evidences from around the world show that integrating women in conflict resolution has an indispensable value (Endalkachew 2018; Eyayu and Ethiopia 2020).

A huge amount of empirical data has been published on the women indigenous institutions or mechanisms of conflict resolution in different ethnic groups in Ethiopia. Bamlaku, Yeneneh and Fekadu (2010) have described the role of Somali women in conflict resolution through an indigenous institution. They have analyzed activities done by women before conflict, during conflict and after conflict. With the same research design, Alemu (2019) has presented the role

of women in indigenous conflict resolution in Gamo zone. In both of the above cases, both married and unmarried women participate in indigenous conflict resolution systems. Eyayu and Ethiopia (2020) have attempted to synthesize the conflict resolution institutions performed by women in some parts of Ethiopia through systematic review and meta-analysis. Comparing with the Amhara and Tigray region, they claimed that the Oromo women play the greatest role in conflict resolution through the *siinqee* institution.

Many researchers have already conducted studies on the Oromo women indigenous institutions (Jemila 2014; Talilee 2018; Kuwee 2004; Qashu 2016; Temam 2019). Jemila (2014) has studied the role of *siinqee* institution in conflict resolution among the women of Waayyu shanan Arsi Oromo. Her analysis has dominantly focused on the role of *siinqee* institution in keeping the women rights and resolving the conflict between individuals (husband and wife; mother and son and male and female). However, among Arsi Oromo *siinqee* institution is known by *atete* institution which could be a conceptual gap in the case of this study. Besides this conceptual gap, there is also a geographical gap. Culture is environment sensitive and cultural elements (material and non-material) are different depending on the environment in which they are used. For example; setting, types, a dialect of songs and elements of *atete* institution procedures might varies among Waayyu Shanan Arsi Oromo and Samu Oromo (the Oromo who currently live around and in Dodola District).

Qashu (2016) and Talilee (2018), employing a historical study approach, have studied *atete* ritual partly focusing on its roles in protecting the rights of women against the domination and oppression of men and conserving the environment and the nature of songs in it. The focus of both researchers was on the nature of songs during *atete* ritual ceremonies. Kuwee (2004) has studied *siinqee* institution in Oromia and categorized her analysis in to three sections: *siinqee* institution before colonialism, *siinqee* institution after colonialism and prospects for reviving the principles of *siinqee*. Under the first section she discussed the definition, setting, and women rights symbolized *siinqee* while under the subsequent sections she illustrated the historical revival of *siinqee* institution. Her study is a grand work to explore detail on the role of *atete* institution in conflict resolution among Arsi Oromo.

Temam (2019), employing a historical approach, studied *atete* as a ritual ceremonies performed by Oromo women in conflict resolution. He studied the setting of *atete* ritual ceremony and its

roles (recurring drought, overcoming crop failure, alleviating epidemic disease, depending Oromo lands, settling disputes, and evoking for fertility). On another hand, he did not solidly identify the structure and types of *atete* institution, the existing opportunities and challenges associated with *atete* institution particularly in conflict resolution, how women organize *atete* in conflict resolution and the nature and levels of conflicts solved by it in detail. Hence, this study was aimed to fill these gaps. Finally, as far as my literature review is concerned, comprehensive literature about the status and roles of women in resolving conflict through *atete* institution is rarely organized, documented, and being transferred from generation to generation.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of the study was to explore the role of women in conflict resolution through *atete* institution.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

- To describe the structure and types of *atete* institution
- To explore the causes and types of conflicts resolved through *atete* institution
- To understand how women organize *atete* ritual and work toward conflict resolution
- To find out the existing opportunities which help to strengthen the role *atete* institution plays in conflict resolution
- To describe challenges facing *atete* institution in conflict resolution

1.4 Significance of the Study

The study provides a solid document that might be used as a source of information for various people such as readers, students and researchers. It might be a source of references for the researchers who are interested to conduct the research on the topic under study.

The study can serve as a source of information for government and non-government bodies such as policy makers, legal personnel and development partners. It would help them to reconsider *atete* institution in strategic plans and policies. This can be possible

since the result will be provided to the district's responsible bodies and will be published on reputable international journal.

1.5 Scope of the Study

The title of the research and the study area are the things that determine the scope of the study. Accordingly, the study was limited to study indigenous conflict resolution institution which is practised by women at Dodola district of Oromiya National Regional State. Though the indigenous institution is not bounded by politically made districts in Ethiopia, the researcher selected the Dodola district assuming that the case in it would be representative of other districts in the Western Arsi Zone. Another dimension of the scope of the thesis is in terms of the target groups that serve as the primary sources of data. The target groups were married women, women leaders, *Abbaa Bokkuu*, *Abbaa Hookkaa*, elders, government offices, and religious leaders.

1.6 Limitation of the Study

This study employed qualitative approach which would be considered as the limitations. I cannot make generalization from the data which were collected from the participants selected purposively. Time, budget, COVID-19 and political instability were the factors in the study of which I arranged myself accordingly.

CHAPTER TWO

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter deals with definition of terms (conflict, conflict resolution, and indigenous conflict resolution), theoretical framework, causes and consequences of conflict, conflict and gender, empirical evidences on the conflict and conflict resolution in Ethiopia and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. Finally, the legal or policy review on the issue is discussed.

2.1 Definition of Terms

This subtopic deals with definition of terms such as conflict, conflict resolution, and indigenous institutions of conflict resolution.

2.1.1 Conflict

“Conflict is as old as mankind” (Folarin 2015:1). Although a volume of researches has been conducted on conflict, there is no universally agreed upon definition since the nature of conflict is influenced and understood in their social context involving values and beliefs, fears and suspicions, interests and needs, attitudes and actions and relationships and networks (Eyayu and Ethiopia 2020). Tjosvold (2006) also argued that enough attention was not given to defining conflict which eventually leads to the continuing negative attitude that conflict is destructive.

Traditionally, conflict is thought of as a disagreement between opposing interests caused by limited resources (Fisher 2006). It is used to mean a strike at another, to fight with an enemy or an opposing force. It might be the incompatibility of values or goals and disagreement on public issues (Folarin 2015). Schramm-Nielsen (2002) defines conflict as a state of significant dispute about something which is considered or perceived important by the one party and the other party disagrees. It can be observed and analyzed on the basis of individual, group and organizational levels. In other words, it can be role conflicts, interpersonal conflicts, task conflicts and resource conflicts.

Regarding politics, conflict is a struggle to the value of the status of power among political elites, political entrepreneurs and political agency in the formation of cleavages (Kriesi et al. 2012; Sunstein 2018). The current conflict between the federal government of Ethiopia and TPLF would be the best example of political conflict. However, conflict does not always denote war.

“While all wars are a state of conflict, all conflict situations may not be a war situation” (Folarin 2015:2).

Conflict has various levels such as intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict, inter-group conflict, family conflict, intra-state conflict, inter-state conflict (Sunstein 2018). Intrapersonal conflict is the incompatibility of attitudes, values and opinions pertaining to personality (Lauterbach 1991). Interpersonal conflict is “a dynamic process that occurs between interdependent parties as they experience negative emotional reactions to perceived disagreements and interference with the attainment of their goals” (Barki and Hartwick 2004:234). Fisher (2006:178) stated that “the essence of intergroup conflicts focuses on incompatibilities, behaviors and sentiments.” Generally, conflict is natural, dangerous as well as an opportunity and something that is culturally bound (Tesfaye 2020).

2.1.2 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is an emerging discipline throughout the world. A number of researchers have studied it particularly since the Second World War. Conflict resolution encompasses a complex network of forces involving conflicting parties. For Mial and Wood House (2001) conflict resolution is addressing and resolving deep rooted sources of conflict among conflicting parties. For them it is a healing process in which the parts provide positive energy. Sanson and Bretherton (2001:1) posit that conflict resolution is “a range of forms of resolving disagreements which may be manifested at different levels of society”. It is a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems. Conflict resolution aims to maximize the positive potential inherent in a conflict and to prevent its destructive consequences.

Sanson and Bretherton (2001:4) further outline four principles of conflict resolution: (1) conflict resolution is a cooperative endeavor, (2) the solutions sought are integrative ones, (3) the foundation is an understanding of all parties’ interests, and (4) both the process and its outcome are nonviolent. From these principles, a conflict is resolved when the basic needs of the parties involved have been met with necessary “satisfiers” and their fears have been alleviated. An outcome in which the issues in an existing conflict are satisfactorily dealt with through a solution that is mutually acceptable to the parties, self-sustaining in the long run and productive of a new, positive relationship between parties that were previously hostile adversaries.

Conflict resolution is becoming indispensable to deal with conflict and would follow steps such as identifying causes and consequences of conflict, alteration of conflicts directions and conflict resolutions. The immediate objective of conflict resolution to mend broken relationships, rectify wrongs and restore justice. It is a process of moving away from accusations and counter accusations to reaching a compromise that would improve future relationships. The term conflict resolution may also be used interchangeably with dispute resolution, where arbitration and litigation processes are critically involved (Jirata 2017).

2.1.3 Indigenous Conflict Resolution

There are different ways to manage conflicts, some of them are formal and others are informal – indigenous institutions. Indigenous approaches to conflict resolution vary considerably from society to society, from region to region, from community to community. The actual place of tradition in indigenous conflict resolution activities is the reproduction of the rituals and social practices of conflict resolution proceedings and the interpersonal and practical experience, which transferred from generation to generation (Ajanaw and Hone 2018).

Indigenous conflict resolution institution is a social capital which indicates the capability of social norms and customs to uphold members of a group together focus on the values of empathy, sharing and cooperation in dealing with common problems (Fred, 2005 and Murithi, 2006). It is a part of a well-structured, time proven social system geared towards reconciliation, maintenance, and improvement of social relationships. It focuses on the principles of empathy, sharing, and cooperation in dealing with common problems which underline the essence of humanity. It is embedded in cultural practices, customs, folkways, values, beliefs, folk stories, folk songs, and proverbs (Endalkachew 2018). It is relatively informal thus, less intimidating (Zigale 2016). Finally, indigenous conflict resolution institutions promote sharing and equitable distribution of resources and promoting a climate for peace.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

Many theories have explained the origins of conflicts, their causes and manifestations, their trajectories and their social, cultural and economic implications at the individual, group, country, regional and international levels (Lumumba 2017: 30). The main questions in selecting a theoretical analytical framework for this study are: (1) why do conflicts occur? (2) How do they

occur? (3) Who are their agents? (4) How are they managed? In other words, the researcher attempted to select the theory which does pay enough attention to the condition that lead to the conflict and how it would be solved. Regarding resolution of conflict, an indigenous institution is the base for this study. Therefore, the theory which gives much attention to the indigenous institution, social capital theory, has important concepts used in analyzing the data collected from the respondents.

Regarding indigenous institution of conflict resolution, social capital theory is predominantly employed by researchers in many cases. Phillips and Pittman (2009) defines social capital as a set of resources intrinsic to social relations and includes trust, norms, community responsibility, reciprocal obligations, civic sense and networks that can improve the efficiency and social relationships of society by facilitating collective action for achieving mutually beneficial ends. According to Häuberer (2011), the central thesis of the theory can be summed up in the relationship among members of the society so as to create a conducive and peaceful environment for social life. People connect through a series of networks and they tend to share common values with other members of these networks. It is these social ties that guaranteed the existence and effective functioning of societies.

In this study, the social capital theory provided the basis to understand and describe the descriptive nature of conflict resolution by women through *atete* institution in Dodola district, West Arsi Zone. The theory helped to understand how women restore and maintain social ties, social solidarity and community relations while resolving conflict throughout the institution. Women use songs, proverbs, and poetry to transmit positive social capital values. The principles of respect, dialogue, negotiation, reconciliation in indigenous conflict resolution institution affirms the social cohesion and ties that exist among the community members. However, Sanginga, Kamugisha and Martin (2007) determined that social capital has some limits, and are not always effective in resolving some types of conflicts. Social capital was not effective for managing conflicts between local communities and external powerful stakeholders. It often cannot accommodate conflicts among different communities, or between communities and government structures, or external organizations. For example, in the current situations of urbanization, the assumptions of this theory do not work. Therefore, the cases to be included in

the study are among the community members or the clans of the Arsi Oromo, who are ethnically homogenous.

2.3 Conflict and Gender

Gender and conflict are two inseparable concepts. Recently, it is believed that it is difficult to understand conflict and design effective peace building without taking gender in to consideration. ‘Gender’ refers to the socially and politically constructed roles, behaviors, and attributes that a given society considers most appropriate and valuable for men and women (Dietrich and Quain 2014). It is believed that conflict is an exclusive preserve of men battling to either defend some class of people or territory ideology. Women are commonly associated with domestic works and situated in private arenas. There are ideologies which associate men with war and women with peace. The proponents of this belief define women as war’s passive outsiders and victims and men as purely patriarchal wrongdoers of armed conflict and gender-based violence (Aoláin et al. 2018). Contrastingly, another dimension of conceptualizing gender in conflict claim as women are also active as men in wars, riot, conflict and revolutions. For example, in Middle East Arab countries, both women and men had actively and equally participated in revolutions. An assumed difference between men and women in conflict and peace reinforces the inequalities between them (Okyere 2018).

Regarding the impacts of conflict on women, there are two opposing arguments. The first argument views women as a victim of conflict. For the promoters of this argument, women are adversely and indirectly affected than men in wartime. Women are believed to be prone to economic impoverishment, infrastructural devastation, losing their precious ones, homes, and communities during and post wartimes. They went through many atrocities ranging from death, adverse health, sexual exploitation and abuse, forced prostitution, and rape (Ruddick, Lorentzen and Turpin 1998). They suffer severe physical insecurity throughout wars which places them in a state of psychological trauma (Dietrich and Quain 2014). They might be further subjected to domestic violence by men in countries affected by conflict. Generally, they become socially, economically and geographically displaced and susceptible to numerous socio-economic problems (Okyere 2018).

An opposite argument sees conflict as an opportunity for women. The supporters of this argument claim that conflict would increase the participation of women in economic activities since it is a must for them so as to support the dependent family members in the absence of a male household head. For example, El-Bushra and Sahl (2005) basing their arguments on case studies of the conflict-prone zones in Africa namely Uganda, Sudan, Mali, Angola and Somalia and conclude that women gain greater economic participation which enhances their empowerment in the home. Consequently, women are empowered to be decision makers within the family once they become the main providers of needed items for survival (Okyere 2018).

Historically, women were excluded from the conflict resolution and negotiation table. However, some scholars have currently advocated for the construction of conflict and dispute resolution processes centered on gender neutrality. The leaders of many nations and international organizations argue that attempts to address the human rights consequences of conflict, including the particular impact on women, can only be comprehensive and long-lasting if women play an active part in all the relevant processes and mechanisms given the gender-differentiated impact of war on women. Women could be activists and advocates for peace, women wage conflict nonviolently by pursuing democracy and human rights. Women as peacekeepers and relief aid workers, contribute to reducing direct violence. As a social group, women have been suitably identified as being pro-peace. Women have been highly visible in the forefront of movements for non-violence and peace worldwide. Women usually assume the roles of peacemakers in families, in communities and society even though they have often been victims. Above all, women as mediators, trauma healing counselors, and policymakers work to ‘transform relationships’ and address the root of violence (Agbalajobi 2009).

2.4 Causes and Consequences of Conflict

There are a number of causes of conflicts. Some of those causes could be political, economic, religious, cultural, ethnicity and natural resources. The causes of conflict vary depending on the actors, levels and types of conflict. For example, regarding ethnic conflict Michael Edward Brown provided a useful approach to understand the causes of ethnic conflict. He distinguished between underlying (structural, political, social, cultural and perceptual factors) and proximate causes (bad domestic problems, bad neighborhoods, bad neighbors and bad leaders).

Structural factors are intrinsically associated with a failed state. Political factors deals with the questions of representation in public and political institutions. Economic problems such as slowdowns, stagnation, deterioration, and complete collapse are sources of state destabilization and can lead to increased tensions and competition among ethnic groups. Cultural factors such as problematic group histories, stereotypical perceptions, and grievances over cultural discrimination—including limitations on religious and cultural practices, unequal educational opportunities, and restrictions on the use of minority languages—are common causes of ethnic conflict (Folarin 2015). Khan, Hussainy and Iqbal (2017) stated as lack of freedom, resource scarcity and interest of position as the factors for the happening of conflict in organizations. Therefore, there are various factors for the occurrence of conflict at different levels.

Regarding Ethiopia all forms of the conflict would have an association with one or all of the factors like competition over grazing land and water resources, boundary conflicts on farm lands, problems of access to water irrigation, a sense of superiority, and women's abduction (Eyayu and Ethiopia 2020).

Conflicts do have negative impacts on individuals or groups but it has some positive impacts as well and it depends upon the characteristic of the conflicts (Khan, Hussainy and Iqbal 2017:157). Its positive and negative impact has an association with social, economic, political and cultural aspects of the society. Taking the positive consequences of conflict, the above scholars argue that individuals and groups which lack conflicts and do not face conflicts are most likely dealing with the absence of creativity, lack of resolution and inability to discuss on emerging issues and interests. Sociologists call these types of conflicts functional conflicts since it is believed to serve to strengthen social solidarity and cooperation.

It has its own economic impact particularly on women. It leads to the loss of livestock, destruction of public infrastructures, and damage of private properties which eventually has adverse impacts on the economic growth of one country. Conflict causes physiological damage to a person, social relationships failure, destruction of economy and political instability (Bamlaku, Yeneneh and Fekadu 2010). As a result of conflict, an individual becomes air-headed, isolated from social groups. It could lead to behavioral changes such as chain smoking, excessive alcohol consumption, aggression which deliberately cause damage to others, lack of communication with others, counter behavior attempts and change in eating habits. Psych-

biologically, it increases the heart rate of a person which increases the adrenaline level in blood and causes high blood pressure, due to secretion of hydrochloric acid in the stomach and the individual becomes prone to peptic ulcers, asthma, hypertension, headaches and serious chronic problems (Khan, Hussainy and Iqbal 2017).

2.5 Conflict in Africa: Causes, Consequences and Resolution Mechanisms

“The history of Africa as a continent is replete with conflict.” Since the era of decolonization, series of conflicts and wars have taken place from north to south and from east to west (Aremu 2010:549). Those conflicts could be civil wars and inter-state conflicts which are regularly happening in the continent. Some examples of civil wars are Sudan (1995-1990), Chad (1965-85), Angola since 1974, Liberia (1980- 2003), Nigeria (1967-70), Somalia (1999-93) and Burundi, Rwanda and Sierra Leone (1991-2001) (Bayne, Gourlay and Ojanen 2006). The nature of civil wars in Africa has changed since before independence when they were mostly ideologically-driven guerilla warfare ((Ighobor 2019).

Although much effort has been taken to reduce civil wars, armed conflicts continued in the parts of the continent. According to the Uppsala Conflict Data Program (UCDP), there have been an estimated 630 state-based and non-state armed conflicts on the continent between 1990 and 2015 (Williams 2017:33). The SIPRI Yearbook 2020 report also indicates that including Ethiopia there were at least 15 countries with active armed conflicts in sub-Saharan Africa in 2019. Those countries are Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR), Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Sudan (Davis 2020).

Even-though the contemporary conflicts in Africa are typically complex, the main causes of civil wars are associated with control over natural resources, competition for political power, and the historical socio-cultural and economic grievances. For instance, competition to control gold and platinum in DRC, oil fields in South Sudan and Libya, struggling for self-determination and political and socio-economic grievances in Mali and Ethiopia and competing for power in Somalia are the main causes and triggers of the respective bloodiest civil wars (Ighobor 2019). Bayne, Gourlay and Ojanen (2006: 16) further categorize the factors for conflicts in Africa in to: (a) structural factors (such as ‘weak’ states, social/ethnic division or exclusion, bad or

authoritarian government, inequality, violent crime, impunity, environmental scarcity); (b) the interests, relations, capacities, and agendas of relevant actors; and (c) dynamics (such as impacts of disasters, elections, reform processes challenging interests, scandals, fiscal reforms, migration, terrorism).

Conflict has a lot of adverse consequences. The majority of conflict-related deaths and injuries in the world have occurred in Africa, and large numbers of people continue to suffer from insecurity and fear of violence (Bayne, Gourlay and Ojanen 2006). For example, more than five million people have been killed in the Congolese war and about half million have been killed in South Sudan (Ighobor 2019). It has also lasting negative impact on socio-economic development in Africa. Problem of reconstruction, unemployment, refugee problem, social breakdown and poverty might be socio-economic problems resulted from conflicts (Aremu 2010).

There are typically many different stakeholders that are likely involved in a variety of ways to emerging conflicts. Starting from Africa, the Africa Union (AU) is always there 'to play a leadership role for promotion of peace, human security and good governance in the continent' through a Peace and Security Council (PSC). Within the overall African institutional architecture for promoting peace and security, there are five key sub-regional organizations: ECOWAS, IGAD, EAC, SADC, and COMESA. There are also EU strategies such as European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP), EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and Cotonou Agreement to prevent, manage and resolve conflict in Africa for partnership with African Union (Bayne, Gourlay and Ojanen 2006).

Other key stakeholders are UN organizations and international institutions such as WB and IMF for promoting peace and security in Africa. Wherever civil wars happened the UN mission was established with specific strategies and a large number of personnel (troops and civilians with different skills). To just list some of the examples, the UN Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), the UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL), the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), the UN Assistance Mission in Somalia (UNSOM). These UN missions might provide security for civilians threatened by the armed groups; support the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants; provide policy advice to the government and other stakeholders on security sector reforms, disengaging combatants, rule of law, among other issues; and support political

processes and bolster security in the country among other tasks (Ighobor 2019). Regarding Sub-Saharan Africa, there were 20 multilateral peace operations active in 2019 (Davis 2020). In Africa, there are also indigenous institutions of conflict resolution as well as dispute resolutions at the inter-personal or family level, the extended family level and village or town level (Lawal et al. 2020).

2.6 Empirical Evidences: Conflict and Conflict Resolution in Ethiopia

Types of conflict in Ethiopia are inter-ethnic conflict, gender related conflict, religious-based conflicts, cross border conflicts (Jemila 2014). Perceived or actual scarcity of natural resources such as water and pasture for livestock could be the major causes of conflict in pastoral areas of Ethiopia. They were stated that both intra and inter-ethnic conflicts over the use of natural resources are common especially in Borana areas (Eyayu and Ethiopia 2020). Similarly, Woubishet (2011) pointed out that issues of divorce, communal property, geographical boundary, commercial case and criminal case are the common sources of conflict. Another issues regarding cause of conflict is the issues of taking women as source of conflict.

In Ethiopia there is huge evidence on the mechanisms of conflict resolution. Gowak (2008) has pointed out that customary conflict resolution mechanisms are basically practised in all parts of the country and especially among rural communities. Ethiopia is the home for various ethnic groups. Almost all ethnic groups have developed indigenous mechanisms of conflicts resolution. Different ethnic groups like Oromo, Afar, Amhara, Benishangul- Gumuz, Hareri, Somale, Sidama, Walayeta, Gamo, Tigray and others develop their own indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution with certain peculiar features (Daniel 2016). These conflict resolution mechanisms appear for long times and still practicing in Ethiopia because there are different kinds of "inter-group" conflicts which were persistent. The customary conflict resolution mechanisms are more important than governmental institution to know the root cause of conflict (Eyayu and Ethiopia 2020).

Assefa (2005) studied indigenous mechanisms for the prevention of conflict among the Oromo. He indicated that the Oromo people use different indigenous mechanisms such as *Ilafi Ilamee*, and *Jaarsummaa*. Yacob (2001) studied the traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in relation to a conflict over the Chaleb grazing area between the Borena and Guji Borena. Mamo (2008)

dealt with *jaarsaa Biyyaa* institution among the Arsii Oromo in relation to its role to resolve conflicts. Mellese (2008), in his research on the role of elders in resolving conflicts, the case of Walayta people of southern Ethiopia, said the traditional institution of handling conflicts in Walayta is called *awassiya* literary meaning reconciliation. Zigale (2016) studied the indigenous institution to resolve the conflict among the Ittu Oromo and Issa Somali clans. Generally, there are also other numerous studies conducted on the indigenous institutions of resolving conflict among various ethnic groups of Ethiopia.

Women also play key roles in the process of conflict resolution at different stage. Women contribute to violent conflict prevention by acting as participants that particularly help to integrate gender equality into planning and policy (Alemu 2018; Eyayu and Ethiopia 2020). Women play numerous roles in handling conflicts in families and neighbors. They are the center of family peace (Jemila 2014; Eyayu and Ethiopia 2020; Kuwee 2004).

2.6.1 *Siinqee* Institution

Siinqee is physically a ritual stick (Kuwee 2004) which women use to play social, economic and political roles in their society. It is considered as an emblem of peace and women empowerment. The stick is made of various trees such as *Harooressa*, *Ejersa*, *Waddeessaa* and etc. This variation depends on geography interaction with other cultural elements (Endalkachew 2018).

There are contradicting ideas on the historical evolution of *siinqee* institution. There are scholars who claim that women themselves have created the institution to struggle against oppression on them by men counterpart, exclusion from *Gadaa* system, and inactive participation in main politico-military structures (Kuwee 2004). Asmarom (1973) argued that women were not born to *Gadaa* grade; but they were only married into one. However, he finally concluded that *Gadaa* system is uniquely egalitarian because it encompasses interdependent institutions of both male and female groups. In other words, *siinqee* institution functions together with *Gadaa* system as one of its checks and balances mechanisms (Kuwee 2004).

Another side contends that *siinqee* institution has evolved simultaneously with other aspects of *Gadaa* institutions. They further justify as *siinqee* institution had been formulated by *Qaalluu* (religious leader) and given to the wife of *Abbaa Gadaa* (Endalkachew 2018).

The Women take *siinqee* with them to “all ceremonial occasions as a symbol of their hon and indication of their married status” (Kuwee 2004: 122). *Siinqee* is a weapon exclusively used by women to protect their natural rights, environment, boundaries and land. To guarantee the property right, the women touch that specific property by the tip of *siinqee*. Women have been mobilizing themselves against violence and abuse facing them using this instrument. Another role for which women hold *siinqee* is for pray to *Waaqa* and to settle conflict. *Siinqee* is involved in all aspects of life but not death (Kuwee 2004).

Another institution which is sometimes interchangeably used with *siinqee* institution is *atete* institution. Hamdessa (1998) defined *atete* as an institution organized and run by women for protecting their rights and interests. He further analyzed as women use it to resolve the conflicts between female and female; male and female, intra-Oromo groups, and inter-ethnic groups in Ethiopia (Taliilee 2018). Hussein (2004) depicted *atete* as a matriarchal figure of women’s divinity. The Oromo women organize *atete* to strengthen their solidarity as a tool to counter atrocities staged against them by men (Hussein 2004). According to him, the Arsi Oromo women have been practicing *atete* institution for immemorial time though the coming of Christianity and Islam religions and the political domination of the north the country had an adverse effect on it.

2.7 Legal Framework

In the culture of every human society, various traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution have been utilized before and after the introduction of modern legal systems (Jirata 2017). In Ethiopia, it is believed that indigenous conflict resolution institutions of different ethnic groups were the major body of law for centuries. The Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (1994) indigenous and religious institutions are given a constitutional right to handle personal and family matters if the conflicting parties give their consent to get decision by these institutions. Despite their invaluable roles, the procedural and substantive laws of Ethiopia, including the Constitution itself, exclude the application of indigenous institutions in criminal matters (Endalew 2014).

CHAPTER THREE

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section portrays the methodological procedure used to realize the study. It makes discussions over study area and population, research design, methods (sampling methods, methods of data collection and methods of data analysis), and ethical considerations.

3.1 Study Area and Population

The study was conducted in Dodola District. Dodola is located in the Southern part of Ethiopia in Oromia National Regional State, West Arsi zone, at a distance of 320 km from Addis Ababa and 75 km from Shashemene – West Arsi Zone capital city. It lies between latitudes 6°56' N and 7°01' N and longitude 39° 11' E and 39° 16' E, situated within the Bale Mountains massif. It has a mean annual temperature of 19.1°C and a mean annual rainfall of 782.8 mm. About 60% of the rainfall comes during the main rainy season from June to August while a small amount of rainfall occurs between January and March followed by a dry spell in May.

Arsi Oromo, who live in Dodola District, speak Afaan Oromo, the third widely spoken language in Africa surpassed only by Arabic and Housa Fulani and it belongs to the Cushitic family (Jeylan 2004; Temam 2019). They have an indigenous *Gadaa* System, which has numerous institutions under it, to organize and structure its society (Asmarom 1973; Zelalem 2012). *Gadaa* system deals with all aspects of life including conflict resolution (Endalkachew 2018). Scholars such as Daniel (2002); Qashuu (2016) argue that Arsi Oromo have been practicing *Gadaa*, next to Borana.

Arsi Oromo organize themselves on the basis of blood relationship. They also incorporate non-kins into their descent line through the process of *guddifachaa* (adoption) and *moggaafachaa*. Whether born in and/or incorporated into the descent line, they organize their kinship structure into five levels: *Mana*, *Warra*, *Aanaa (Ardaa)*, *Balbala*, and *Gosa* (Daniel 2002). However, the expansion of Christian and Islam religions and the internal colony affected the indigenous Oromo institutions for a long period of time (Talilee 2018).

The main economic activity of the study area had been livestock keeping. Currently, a massive number population of the district has been engaging in farming besides to livestock keeping and various crops like barley and wheat is widely produced.

I selected this site because I am familiar with it and this advantage helped me to finish the study effectively and efficiently.

Figure 3.1 Map of Study areas

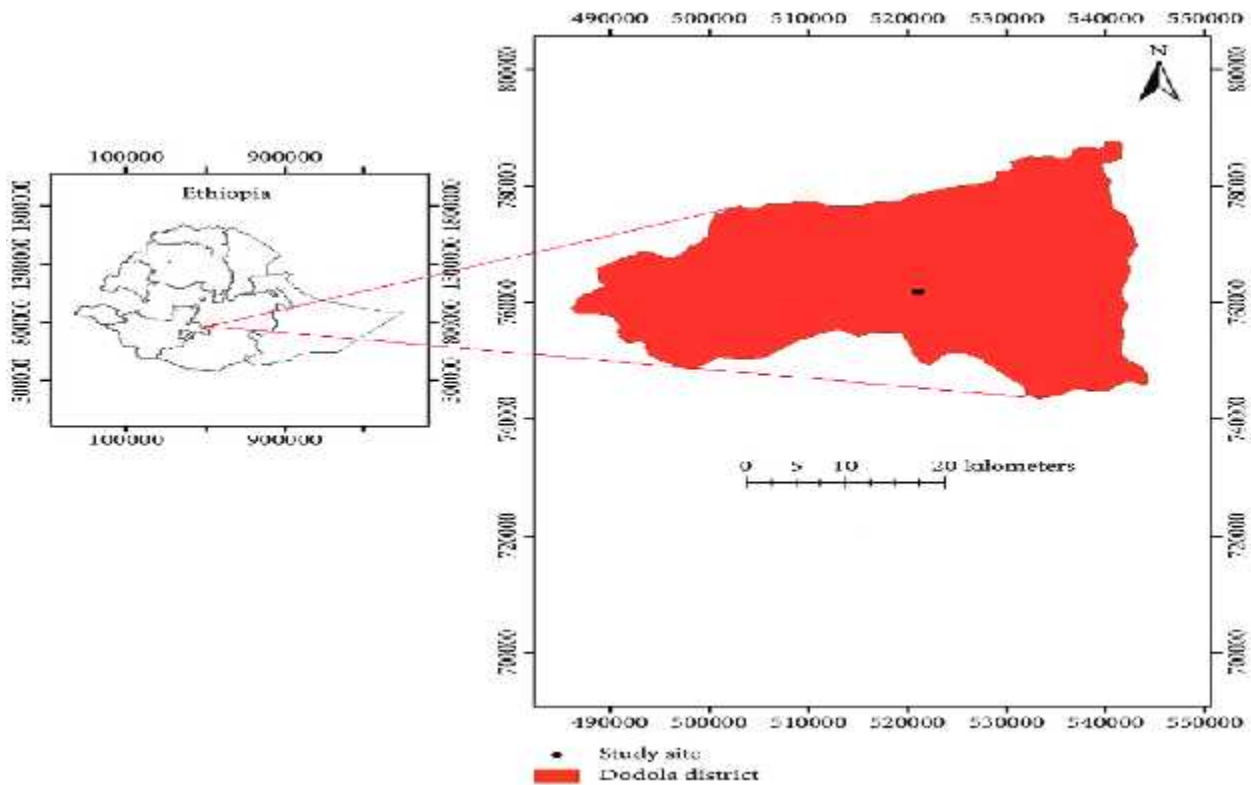


Figure 1: Location Map of the Study area

3.2 Research Design

Research design illustrates the procedures for “collecting, analyzing, interpreting and reporting data in research studies” (Creswell & Clark 2017:58). It is overall plan to connect research problem with empirical research. This study deployed qualitative research design. Qualitative research design “examines the way people make sense out of their own concrete real-life experiences in their own minds and in their own words” (Cropley 2015:5). The study concerned

with the Oromo women ontology of how they organize reality in their minds and express it in their *Atete*. The study focused on the premise that women's indigenous conflict resolution institution could be utilized to enhance the peaceful communities in Ethiopia.

3.3 Types and Sources of Data

The study relied on both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data are the first-hand information directly collected by the researcher from the original sources - informants or discussants of the study area. The collected primary data were concerned with meaning of *atete*, causes and types of conflict resolved through *atete*, procedures of organizing *atete* ritual, and opportunities and challenges facing *atete* in resolving conflict. Secondary data are second-hand information obtained from published and unpublished materials of various government and non-government organizations. Books, government records, website, and journal were the sources of secondary data in this study. The researcher used tools such as internet-enabled devices, library and museum to identify and select the secondary sources. In selecting these secondary sources and data, the researcher has attempted to ascertain the credentials of the sources and information taking academic background and experience in to account in the case of authors of the sources. Date of publication and coverage of the document were also other methods of identifying and selecting secondary sources and data in this study. The researcher has tried her best to identify the currently published or updated sources and data.

3.4 Methods of Data Collection

In the vein of philosophical perspectives and research strategies, this study applied the combinations of various data collection methods. Babbie (2013) justified that the examination of a given social phenomenon is often best attained through the tap of different methods. He further argues that social researchers, who limit themselves to a single method severely, limit their ultimate ability to understand the world around them. Accordingly, interviews (in-depth interviews and key informant interviews), focus group discussions (FGD) and document review were methods of data collection.

3.4.1 In-depth Interviews

In-depth interviews, as a distinctive form of field research, entailed the use of a face-to-face interaction between the researcher and the target groups. Crano and Brewer (2002: 223) shared

that “...interview occurs when the nature of the research issue demands a personal, interactive, method of data collection” The researcher handled in-depth interviews with elders (both male and female), *Abbaa Bokkuu* (the father of scepters), *Abbaa Hookkaa* (vice of the father of scepters) and *Haadha Siinqee* and religious leaders. The researcher carried out in-depth interviews in two ways: in-person interviews and telephonic interviews. During in-person interviews, the researcher used note-book to take note of conversation and mobile phone to take audio and video. In-person in-depth interviews took an average of 50 minutes.

Telephonic interviews were carried out over the call through ordinary voice call. The researcher used this method in two cases. The first is that it was too difficult to reach in person due to his location to one *Abbaa bokkuu* who was highly suggested by Dodola district culture and tourism bureau and I gave him the call which took 26 minutes to collect the required data. Secondly, after I returned back from field and started analyzing collected data, I had telephonic interviews with informant in the case I faced the difficulty of understanding the respective previous ideas and I felt there were missed data on the issue under study.

3.4.2 Key Informant Interviews

Key informants are groups of people with whom the researcher talks and communicates extensively over a lengthy of duration (Bernard 2006). These include people who largely, understand or express their expertise and knowledge on the topic of discussion. Accordingly, key informant interviews were conducted with respective Dodola District Culture and Tourism Bureau and Women and Children Affairs Bureau since these two bureaus have been directly working on the issue under study. And informants were drawn from these bureaus. I employed an experience and a professional expertise as criteria to select the right informants. Face-to-face interviews with those informants, which provided me free ex-change of ideas, took in average 25 minutes. This method was employed to generate data on the roles, motivations and suggestions of government bodies on *atete* institution and its role in conflict resolution and to interpret the data collected through other methods.

3.4.3 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussion, as a data collection method, is a guided group discussion on selected topics. It is a team deliberately formed to discuss on key issues and gaps of the research under

focus (Mwanje 2001). I made intentional decisions to achieve the best group composition, which share homogenous features, in light of the research question. Councils of *saddeetaa* from both male and female groups were the focus of this method of data collection. As its name implies each council has eight members. The researcher assumed that composing groups depending on discussants sex helps them to feel free and talk openly. Since it is pre-existing groups, it was an easier for the researcher in the process of keeping in touch to the discussants and a relaxed to the discussants to challenge each other comfortably. Therefore, the researcher had two focus group discussions in which totally fifteen discussants took part (eight in a female group and seven in a male group).

In principle, a moderator guides the focus group discussion by introducing the topic and manages the undergoing conversations among the discussants while the note taker jots down discussants idea. However in my case, the researcher played both the role of a moderator and note-taker. It was also used to generate information on the collective views and definition of *atete* and its role in conflict resolution; to understand the discussants experiences and beliefs; and to extend and qualify data collected through other methods. To keep the safety of researcher and discussants, required COVID-19 protocols were kept.

3.4.4 Archives and Document Analysis

Documentary analysis is “the extensive collections of records, documents, library collections or mass media materials that have been amassed” (Mouton and Marais 1990:77). Data from the census, demographic profiles, personal documents as well as materials collected from Media prints are all genres of archival sources. Therefore as a distinct method of data collection, the researcher identified the relevant, depending on the themes and time, archival sources which helped to reconstruct retrospectively the occurrences of the *atete* institution and its rituals events and feelings and emotions of the people who had been practicing in it and others.

3.5 Instruments of Data collection

Instruments of data collection are “mechanisms used to collect factual information, support observations...in a given study” (Colton and Covert 2007:6). In this study, the main data-generation instruments were semi-structured interview guides. They were semi-structured guides that helped to elicit qualitative information through deeper consultation with informants, key

informants and discussants. Exercise book, pen and mobile phone were also some of the tools used during collecting and analyzing data.

3.6 Sampling Methods and Sample Size

Non-probability designs are often mentioned predominantly in the execution of qualitative social research. In non-probability sampling designs, randomization and representativeness of the sample remain dubious and controversial (Babbie 2008). Hence, in-depth interviews, key informant interviews, and FGDs were carried out under the principles of non-randomization and without bold claims on the representativeness of the individuals recruited and consulted for the study. Accordingly, from non-probability sampling designs, the researcher selected purposive sampling design to carry out a deeper investigation on the role of *atete* institution in conflict resolution.

The criteria taken into accounts in sampling methods were “language (communication), the status of informants, gender, age, and personal experience of informants and the experience of field assistants” (Berrman 1972: 137). I have no language barrier since I am native speaker of the Oromo language. However, since I am not specifically from Dodola district, I had to find field assistants. In spite of the fact that the *atete* institution is entirely owned and practised by women, there are places for men. Therefore, the data were from both selected men and women in the community. Taking the above criteria into consideration, I selected participants or discussants purposively. The sample size was determined by a saturation point. Accordingly, three *Abbaa Bokkuu*, three *Abbaa Hookkaa*, three *Haadha Siinqee*, three religious leaders, five local elders (three male and two female), four key informants from government offices (two from culture and tourism bureau while the rest from women and children affairs bureau), one FGD with female (which had eight council members of women) and one FGD with male (which had seven council members of men) were the informants and discussants of the study.

3.7 Trustworthiness of the Research

To keep the credibility of data I triangulated the sources of data through different methods. Ensuring the trustworthiness of the paper extended to reporting the results. The findings were driven only from the participants’ responses not on any potential bias or my personal motivation.

To establish conformability, I provided audit trail which highlights every steps of data analysis that were made from participants' narratives in a transparent manner.

3.8 Method of Data Analysis

The qualitative data were analyzed based on the theoretical and methodological principles of interpretation. A descriptive case study analysis technique was employed for the ethnographic description, interpretation and analysis of qualitative data. The data from the primary foundation of various kinds were transcribed, put in to thematic and analyzed rationally. The validity of the information of the study was cross-checked in parallel with data which was generated from secondary sources. Once the accuracy of data was assured, it was analyzed and interpreted using the above technique. Recorded (audio) and field notes were used to substantiate the description and analyses of the subject matter under investigation.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

In conducting this study, ethical considerations and safety measures were made. Accordingly, before going to the field, the letter from Jimma University, College of Social Sciences and Humanities Postgraduate and Research Coordination office was collected and given to Dodola district administrative office and other required bodies. After I went to the field and contacted with respondents, the objective of the study was illustrated for the participants of the study and informed consent was obtained from each of them. Thus, participants were given the authority to accept or refuse their involvement in the collection of data in any form; full right was deserved to withdraw at any time: to change ideas or to edit recorded materials. Besides, the privacy of the participants was promoted and they were informed that whatever information they provide will be kept confidential.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter deals with findings and discussion depending on the responses from the respondents. The findings part has four main sections. The first section describes the definition, structure and types of *atete* institution. The second section accounts about the causes and types of conflicts. The third section, which is strongly attached to the second section, presents about how women organize *atete* institution to resolve social conflicts. And the final section of this part deals with the main opportunities and challenges in the development of *atete* institution. This section is followed by discussion part. In discussion part the results of this study are discussed with the works of previous researchers on the issue. Finally, conclusion and recommendations are made.

4.1 Definition, Structure and Types of *Atete* Institution

4.1.1 Definition of *Atete* Institution

Atete institution (hereafter simply referred to *atete*) is one of the pillar institutions of *Gadaa* system. *Atete*, *atete* gathering, *atete* ritual and *siinqee* are the concepts commonly and sometimes interchangeably used with *atete* institution. To provide a comprehensive definition of *atete* institution, it is invaluable to understand these concepts.

The definition given for the *atete* by all respondents of the study was nearly the same. Haadha Siinqee, 46 years, defined *atete* as; “*ateeteen dubartii wayyuu dha*” which literally means, ‘*atete* is the sacred women’. Discussants of focus group discussion specify a sacred woman as a woman who customarily gets married and have *siinqee* and *hanfalaa*². The girl is given *siinqee* at bride home and *hanfalaa* at bridegroom home on her marriage date. Among the Arsi Oromo, the girl that does not pass through *rakoo*³ ritual process cannot get a sacred woman status. After once marries through the *rakoo* ritual, whatever subsequent marital status she would be (married, divorced and widowed), she is a sacred woman. *Rakoo* ritual is the spiritual process of blessing

² Hanfalaa is a women belt made of leather of an animal slaughtered for *rakoo* ritual

³ It is the ritual which legalizes and fulfils the traditional marriage among the Arsi Oromo.

so as to introduce *idaayyaa*⁴ to new clan into which she is married. Currently, few women are getting married through *rakoo* ritual which eventually has been creating an adverse effect on *atete* institution. According to the above definition a woman, who get married through sharia (Muslim law) or court, does not fulfill the basic criteria to trustily get the status of *atete*. Thus, *atete* is customarily married woman.

Atete gathering is the coming together of two or more customarily married women to practice *atete* ritual. Regarding the definition of *atete* ritual, 60 years *Abbaa Bokkuu*, defined it as a ceremony performed by the women to implement the principles of *atete* institution. There are various *atete* rituals performed during various positive social events such as wedding, giving birth and victories and negative social happenings such as drought, heavy rainy season, conflicts, inflation, emergency of new diseases and tyrannies. The women use various material and non-material cultural elements while they perform *atete* rituals.

The third concept, which has strong association with *atete*, is *Siinqee*. Even though some researchers use *atete* interchangeably with *siinqee*, they are differently defined by the study respondents. Data from the male and female discussants of FGD indicate that *siinqee* is among the foundational components of *atete*. Cultural dressings, *hanfalaa*, grasses, blessings, ululate and songs are among its other components. *Siinqee* is a multipurpose weapon of the women. The utilization of these components could be intermediated by time, accessibility, space, nature of the issue and knowledge of the participants. For example, the data from the female FGD indicate that in the case of *rakoo* ritual, all participants do not need to hold *siinqee*. Accordingly, the data collected from the respondents unanimously shows that reducing *atete* to the simple gathering of women for a specific *atete* ritual or a single element of it (*siinqee*) is the result of misinformation or lack of understanding.

Atete is a well-organized institution given to the customarily married women to deal with social, economic, cultural and political aspects of society. It is the institution given for the women as equal to the men's *yaa'aa* literally means assembly institution in *Gadaa* system. According to 56 years *Abbaa Bokkuu*, Women have *atete* while men have *yaa'aa* institution and these institutions are complementary and cooperative. Both institutions have their own independent structures and

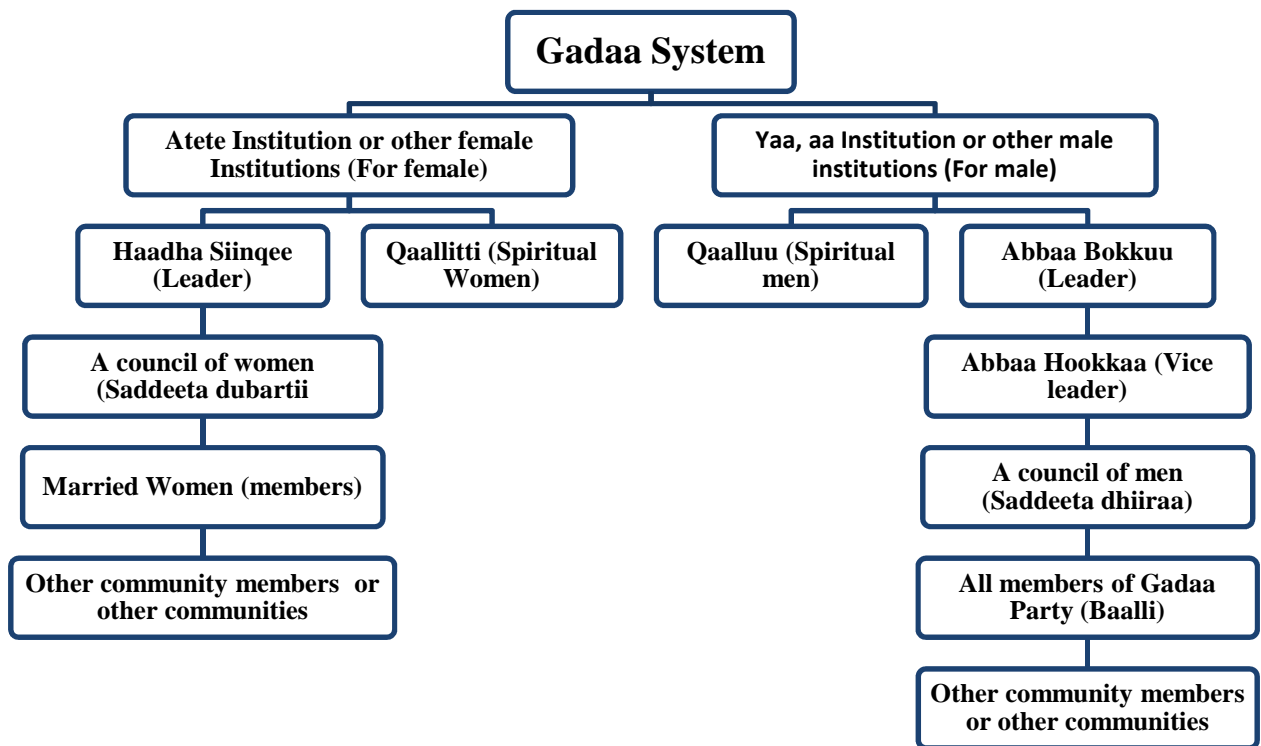
⁴ *Idaayyaa* is a recently married woman which should stay in the home for three months. And there are a lot of ritual activities associated with it. It could be an indispensable research topic.

participants. Male partners and unmarried girls, who are considered as male before marriage, do not directly participate in *atete* institution.

4.1.2 Structure of *Atete*

Atete has a well-established structure. It has various positions, roles, laws, norms, customs, mores and folkways which have been practised for a long period of time among society. For example, 46 years *Haadha Siinqee* confidently claimed that *atete* has its own well-established roles and laws. Depending on the data from the respondents, I have framed the following structure of *atete*.

Figure 4.1: Structure of *atete*



Source: Field study, 2021

I described the components of *atete* with their roles in the above diagram as follows while I recommend an interested researcher to study that of the male institutions.

A. Gadaa system

Gadaa system is a holistic indigenous system of the Oromo. All other institutions are drawn from it. Both males and females have parallel and interdependent institutions. In *Gadaa* system, women were given *atete* while men were given *yaa'aa* institution. The leader of *atete* is *Haadha Siinqee* while the leader of *yaa'aa* is *Abbaa Bokkuu*. To this end, leader of *atete* was given *Siinqee* whereas the leader of *Yaa'aa* was given *Bokkuu* as a symbol of power and respect.

B. Haadha Siinqee (the leader)

Haadha siinqee has a power and responsibility over all aspects of *atete*. She is democratically elected from the married women by the women themselves. Even though there is no specifically known for how many years and terms a woman is selected, she is replaced by another in the case she fails to play her responsibility or passes away. There is no direct interference from the men or other external bodies in the process of selection. The following are some of the commonly employed criteria to select among the study population.

Experience and Knowledge: a woman having a relatively rich knowledge about the *Gadaa* system in general and the *atete* in particular is given a priority to be selected as a leader. All of the respondents argue that most of the time knowledgeable and experienced woman could be the leader of *atete*. Experience of participating in various *atete* rituals, social problem solving and social conflict resolution would be the top criteria seen and analyzed during the process of selection.

Age: a woman who relatively lives for a long period of time in her community assumed as experienced and familiar with the environment. Depending on his long time experience, *Abbaa Bokkuu*, whose 60 years, stated that “the older woman is preferred to be selected as the leader in the *atete*.” Being an aged woman is an opportunity to have deep knowledge, experience, and respect in her community.

Socially acceptable character: society has various mechanisms of evaluating and judging the socially acceptable character of a woman. Respecting and understanding ones husband would be among the core socially acceptable characters among the study population. It was noted from 45 years *Abbaa Hookka*; “a woman who does not respect her husband does not respect others.” The

same respondent added that commitment, patience and being free from gossip are other socially acceptable characters of a woman. In addition, “there is a strong woman behind a strong man” is a famous Oromo proverb. Therefore, a woman having the above and other good characters would have more chances to be selected.

Social and technical skills: problem solving, communication, critical thinking, preparing traditional foods and other material cultural elements skills give the women a possibility to be selected. These skills are analyzed based on their previous achievements and reactions towards those achievements from the community members.

Those mentioned above are not the exhaustively listed criteria and there is no rigid way of considering them. Recently, there are cases of selecting the *Haadha Siinqee* based on her status of modern education, participation in modern political activities and relations with the politicians. The current selection procedure of *Haadha Siinqee* is strayed from the original ones.

C. Saddeeta Dubartii (a council of women)

A council of women has eight married women members who are accountable for *Haadha Siinqee*. The members of a council are selected by the women and of themselves and approved by *Haadha Siinqee*. Those women are also selected depending on the same criteria for *Haadha Siinqee*. The council has a responsibility to pass a final decision on the respective social issues and announce it to all married women in the community.

Furthermore, the eight members of a council are assigned to different roles and responsibilities by *Haadha Siinqee* depending on their experience, knowledge, skills, wisdom and context. Family, economy, politics, religion, health, environment, cultural, communication and social interaction are some of the areas on which the members of the council are transparently and reasonably assigned. For example, an issue about husband and wife conflict is handled by a council member, which is called *Haadha Badaa*. In addition, *Haadha Badaa* is a council member who leads and organizes the *rakoo* ritual in family formation. Likely the rest seven members would have also had respective role descriptions. Depending on their successes and failure as well as natural process, the members of the council can promoted, demoted or replaced by other. Nowadays there is neither such positions nor comprehensive and clear division of roles and responsibilities among the members of the council.

D. Married Women

The next component of structure to council of the eight women deals with all married women in the specific community organized and established either geographically or through clan lineage. This is where actual implementation of the made decisions by a council of women. They are called on by the members of the council during various *atete* rituals. The married women would be the sources of information for the bodies in the above structure of *atete*. They are the active women from and by whom the leader and members of the council are selected.

E. Other community members

Other community members include men, youth, unmarried girls, children, immigrants, modern government bodies and neighbor communities. These stakeholders have indirect participation in *atete*. For example, the married women might be gathered on the top of mountain for a specific ritual purpose and stay there for about days and/or nights. Thereby it is the responsibility of the youth and the men to protect the women from threats and provide them with necessary basic needs there.

F. *Qaallittii* (Religious Women)

Qaallittii she has roles and responsibilities on the issues associated with the spiritual aspects. As 55 years Haadha Siinqee said; “*Qaalittii* works closely and cooperatively with *Qaallichaa* (religious man), *Abbaa Bokkuu* and *Haadha Siinqee*.” She may or not a member of council of women. However, the female FGD discussants argue that most of the time *Qaallitti* is not member of a council of women.

4.1.3 Types of *Atete*

The objectives of *atete* are to prevent and protect society and the environment spiritually from risks or social problems, defend the rights of women and resolve social conflict. Depending on these objectives, three types of *atete* is commonly known in the study area. These are:

1. Ateetee Falaa (Spiritual Atete)
2. Ateetee Goraa (Griviance Atete)
3. Ateetee Araaraa (Conflict Resolution Atete)

1. Ateetee Falaa

Atete falaa deals with the spiritual dimension of the society. It is performed at sacred places such as the top of a mountain, sides of a river, under and near sacred trees and purposely selected home. Its main objective is to seek protection from *Waaqaa* during various natural and man-made social problems. It comprises various types of rituals depending on the types of the problems. Drought (seeking rain ritual), emerging of new diseases (protection from the disease ritual), deviation of society's members from the normal social behavior (keeping *safuu* ritual), giving a birth (*wabaxaa dhiquu*⁵ ritual) and marriage (*rakoo* ritual) are some of the *ateetee falaa* rituals. These rituals are performed in different setting with different objectives and activities. Depending on the detail discussions of the female FGD discussants, let me explain 'seeking rain ritual' for clarification.

Seeking rain *atete* ritual is performed if the community is hit by heavy drought which causes livestock to death and people to starve. It has its own procedures such as preparation before the ritual date and sequential activities on the actual ritual date/s. The men and other community members beg the women to perform this ritual and save them from the problem. Depending on the request from other community members and the severity of the situations, a council of women lead by *Haadha Siinqee* decides to call on the women. Then the members of a council inform the reasons and setting of *atete* ritual to the married women. Accordingly, the married women prepare themselves. Then after, *atete* gathering goes to the side of a river. While they go, they should have various material cultural elements such as *sardoo* (grasses), *siinqee*, *hanfalaa* and others. On their way and after they reach the river, the women beg their *Waaqaa* and sing the songs which have the contents of:

- Greatness, power and oneness of *Waaqaa* (God)
- The sins of human being and its consequences on all living things and the earth
- Begging the forgiveness for those sins and mercy of *Waaqaa* (God) to send the rain down
- Giving thanks to *Waaqaa*

Some of their songs are the following:

⁵ *Wabaxaa dhiquu* ritual is performed by the women at the house of a woman who gave a birth after one week. It includes various activities such as washing the mother, naming the child and etc.

Waaqni koo tokkoo *My Waaqaa is one*
Waa qabaa rakkoo? *Does he have a problem?*

Waaqni koo guddaa *My Waaqaa is the greatest*
Waa qabaa muddaa *Does he have impatience?*

These are the rhetorical questions in which they intend to say *Waaqaa* has no any problem and impatience. Accordingly, they truly believe that *Waaqaa* is the only capable enough to solve their problems.

While they remember about their sins and what God had done for them, they say:

Jaalala gannee jibbaa qabannee *we lost love and hold hatred*
Maalala dhabnee dhibban waldhabnee *we lost moral and conflicted with hundreds*

In this song they are telling their sins to their lord. The meaning of the song is that they are enemies to each other and not obeying by the custom and laws. In other words, the women tell their *Waaqaa* as the deviance from both men and women deviate from *seera uumaa* (creator laws) and *seera namaa* (humankind laws) could be the causes of the problems encountering the community. After they narrate the common problems observed among the community, they gradually start begging their *Waaqaa* to forgive them and give them rain down.

Some of the songs are:

Caancoo tee jala yaati jabbiin *the jabbii pass under your streams of river*
Raammoo tee gadi laali Rabbii *look down at us (your creatures)*

Siinqee tiyya lootii qabadhee *I held my straight siinqee*
Rabbii kiyya mootii kadhadhee *I begged my lord, Rabbi*

The interpretation of the above song is that creatures depend on the rain from *Waaqaa* to drive their life. It is believed that except human beings other living things have not the sins that cause the drought. Therefore, the women wish the *Waaqaa* gives them rain down because of his mercy. Another point is that *Siinqee* is a meaningful and respected material culture that helps the women to get the response from *Waaqaa*. According to 53 years *Haadha Siinqee*:

Siinqee is straight sticking which symbolizes truth and peace. It is believed that the women holds Siinqee in their hand do not speak false harm others and think negatively. They kindly and humbly approach their lord with pure heart. Consequently, they would immediately get the response for their request.

In addition to *siinqee*, the women tie their *hanfalaa*. *Hanfalaa* represents humbleness of the women.

The women do not return back to their house without getting the response from *Waaqaa*. Even if the situation beyond capacity is happened, a woman should get permission from *haadha siinqee* before returning back to her home. After she returns back to the home, she should not sleep with her husband, eat and drink from her home and should come back to the *atete* gathering within the time given for her. A woman, who does not obey the *atete* laws, faces a painful punishment, which ranges between destruction of a home furniture to putting an isolation sanction, by the rest of the women.

Regarding an immediate response the women can get from their *Waaqaa*, 60 years *Abbaa Bokkuu* said; “on the date the women gathered at the side of a river, the *Waaqaa* sends the rain down.” This was what the respondent has witnessed for a lot of times during his life time. After they get the rain from their lord, they sit in that rain and thank their God. There is no running away from it to house, cave and shade of trees or using an umbrella. They play songs which have the contents of gratitude to the God. For example;

Siinqeen bayee	<i>I have gone out with Siinqee</i>
Sirraa dayee Rabbiyyoo	<i>I have gotten from you, our Lord</i>
Nuu guddeesitee	<i>you have made us great</i>
Nuu ulfeessitee Rabbiyyoo	<i>you have respected us, our Lord</i>
Garaa koo beette	<i>You have known my heart</i>
Naa dhageettee, Rabbiyyoo	<i>you have listened to me, our Lord</i>
Nuu araramtee	<i>you have forgiven us</i>
Rooba nuu roobdee, Rabbiyyoo	<i>you have sent the rain down for us, our Lord</i>

After they get rain, all community members are thankfully gathered near the sides of a river together with the women. The men partners give different kinds of gift for the women. The gift is called *wareega* which means sacrifice. They sacrifice different gifts such as food, sheep, goat, and bull as of their economic status. All gifts, which are animal, are slaughtered by *Qaallichaa* (religious man), prepared by youth and unmarried girls and eaten by all community members. All community members celebrate the bounty of their lord together in different ways. Finally, *Qaalliittii* (religious woman), *Qaallichaa* (religious man) and all the women bless all the members of society, thank their *Waaqaa* and return to their home happily and hopefully.

2. Ateetee Goraa

In the Arsi Oromo, the women had been oppressed by the patriarchal system for an immemorial time. They had been given the lower social status though they were given *atete*. Even though it has the like and horizontal position and functions with *yaa'aa* institution, *atete* had been devalued by the patriarchal system for a long period of time. Consequently, the rights of women have being oppressed till today. There are a lot of sayings and proverbs which degrade the women. “*Dubartiin ji'a du'e*” which means ‘*the women are the dead moon*’ is one of the derogative proverbs. According to 58 years *Haadha Siinqee*, to cope up with this oppressive system, the women have a sub-institution called *ateetee goraa*.

The main objective of this *atete* is to defend the rights of women in all aspects. In addition, it is a mechanism of controlling the behaviors of community members particularly the men segment. Like other types of *atete*, it is also manifested through *atete goraa* rituals. It has an intractable relationship with *atete araaraa*. There are the cases, particularly during husband and wife conflict, in which *ateetee goraa* could be considered as a distinctive step of *ateetee araaraa*. Therefore, its rituals are presented as the steps under account of *ateetee araaraa* ritual procedures.

3. Ateetee araaraa (Conflict resolution atete)

Ateetee araaraa is the type of *atete* which deals with resolving the conflict. It is the main objective of this study. Accordingly, the following sub-sections describe the causes and types of conflict as well as how *ateetee araaraa* is organized to resolve those types of conflict in the study area.

4.2 Causes and Types of conflict

4.2.1 Causes of Conflict

Conflict is a part of life for the study community. As understandable from the respondents of the study, conflict is widely defined positively. It is assumed as a mechanism of forming, updating and promoting sub-institutions of *Gadaa* system such as *atete*. There are various causes of conflicts and the following are the major ones among the Arsi Oromo.

4.2.1.1 The competition to control resources

Depending on the data collected from the focus group discussions of both male and female, in-depth interviews and key informant interviews, the competition to control the (natural) resources is provoked by the nature of livelihood strategies, types of marriage and an increasing number of population of the study community. It was noted from 48 years *Abbaa Bokkuu* that “the Arsi Oromo is known for having a huge livestock for which they demand a wide-ranging grazing land.” A 34 years head of a district women and children affairs added; “with limited land for its competing functions such as grazing, farming and building; number of population is alarmingly increasing.” So, competition over these resources would be a potential cause of conflict in the study area.

Among the Arsi Oromo, there is a polygamy marriage type (in which a man marry more than a wife) and the *dhaalaa*⁶ system (the system in which a wife together with all her property and children traditionally transferred to her husband’s brother or nearby relative after the death of her husband). Regarding this, a 55 years *Haadha Siinqee* stated:

In the case of a polygamy marriage type; in dhaalaa process, there have been high likelihoods of dynamic and lasting conflicts among the involved family members of both sides. The causes of conflicts would be on sharing resources such as land, livestock and other resources among themselves. The like cases have been threatening along with the shrinking of land per household since the recent decades especially among the children and the stepmother that extends to killing one another. In spite of the fact that it has being challenged by a lot of multifaceted and interdependent factors, the atete have been playing a great role in preventing and resolving the conflicts of this type for a long period of time.

All respondents of the study consistently and strongly argue that both polygamy marriage type and *dhaalaa* system had been causing bloody conflict among community members. Currently, however, both a polygamy marriage type and the *dhaalaa* system are being rarely accepted and practised not uncommonly by the youth and as result confined to only remote areas and few elderly people. An interview with an expert, 30 years female, from the district women and

⁶ I recommend interested researcher/s conduct an independent study on this indispensable indigenous topic.

children affairs bureau stated the reasons for the declining of a polygamy marriage and the *dhaalaa* system as follows:

The formulation and implementation of both government and non-governmental organizations' policies and strategies on harmful traditional practices (HTP), rapidly expansion of modern education across the country, ubiquitously expansion and influence of nonindigenous religions (except Waaqeffannaa), desolately changing and replacing of indigenous cultural elements with that of the western, and an unoriginally changing and becoming complex of economic activities among others are the primary factors in transforming the societies not to practice either one or both a polygamy marriage type and the dhaalaa system.

4.2.1.2 Breaching Societal Norms

Breaching the socially constructed and accepted norms is another critical cause of the conflict among the Arsi Oromo. The data from both men and women focus group discussion shows that socially unacceptable affairs, theft and robbery, disrespecting elderly and knowledgeable people, disrespecting sacred people (mother, father, father-in-law, mother-in-law), refusing to participate on collective social issues, firing on others house, killing sacred animals (bull and horse for only riding (*far-sangaa*)) and destructing or abusing sacred places and trees (ritual places such as top of the mountain, sides of the river, burial places) are just some of the factors for the occurrence of the conflicts.

4.2.2 Types of Conflict

Depending on the above causes of conflict drawn from the data of respondents, I have categorized the types of conflict in two. Those are interpersonal conflict and intergroup conflict. A detailed account of these conflicts is discussed below.

4.2.2.1 Interpersonal Conflict

We can further classify this type into following various strands depending on how women organize conflict resolution *atete* ritual. So, it incorporates the conflict between man and woman, woman and woman, man and man, young and woman and young and man. Depending on socially and biologically constructed relationships we can say the conflict between husband and

wife, son and mother, son and father, two wives of the same husband (*masaanuu*), etc. However, the types of interpersonal conflict pervasively found and getting resolved through *atete* are both the conflict between young and woman and the conflict between man and woman. The conflict between woman and woman are informally resolved within small group of women or women and men while the conflict between man and man is mostly resolved through the male institution/s. Therefore, I focused on the former two types of conflict and how they are getting resolved through *atete* in the following descriptions.

a. The conflict between young and woman

The respondents of this study define the young as the individual who is not married but ready to marry. They did not define referring specifically to limited age ranges. Regarding the constructive and destructive roles of the youth in the community, an interview with 60 years *Abbaa Bokkuu* was noted as:

The Youth are active forces who play a constructive as well as destructive. They are like a sword. It is the responsibilities of their community to get the best from them appropriately through the well-established social institutions. I have witnessed and heard several cases among our neighbors. In those cases, the youth were primarily the causes for disorganization of the family institution.

The youth enter into conflict with women because of the above presented causes of conflict among the Arsi Oromo. For example, the respondents raised many cases in which the conflict occurred between young men and women because of socially unacceptable affair (sexually intercourse) interest, actions and reactions. The youth had not any room until recently to have an affair with the unmarried girls. According to *Abbaa Hookaa*, 45 years:

The unmarried girls are considered as a male segment of the community and thinking of or having sexual intercourse with the unmarried girls is assumed as the same as thinking of or having sexual intercourse act with male. And having sex with the male is a wicked sin and expected to have resulted in a serious punishment both from the community and Waaqaa. To escape from the punishments the youth would have forcedly and secretly preferred the married women to those of unmarried girls.

There are also other several conflicts between the young men and women because of different factors discussed above. The conflict between young and his mother, step mother, social mother and another woman are prevalently seen and heard among the Arsi Oromo.

b. The conflict between man and woman

The respondents of the study define the man and the woman as the one who once married and more probably in productive and reproductive age or not. This definition could encompass the man and the woman who are presently divorced, widowed or married.

Conflict is likely to occur between individuals of the group, for instance, if Mr. X had beaten or ridiculously insulted or had socially unacceptable affair with the wife of Mr. Y or vice versa. When the case is unfortunately disclosed to the people, conflict possibly would be happen among the family members on both sides (Mr. X and Mr. Y). These are: (a) conflict between the men (Mr. X and Mr. Y), (b) conflict among women (Mr. X wife/wives and Mr. Y wife/wives), (c) conflict among the men and the women (Mr. X with his wife/wives, Mr. X with Mr. y's wife/wives, Mr. Y with his wife/wives, and Mr. Y with Mr. X's wife/wives), (d) conflict among children and other significant persons of both families. If the men are from different clans, the fifth type of conflict could be arising between the clans and I call it 'inter-clans conflict'. The *atete* has been resolving these types and forms of conflict in the Arsi Oromo for a long period of type.

In addition, violating social norms of caring for wife could be a cause of conflict between husband and wife. The husband is socialized to care for and respect his wife in different ways. For instance, on the marriage date, there are cultural practices such as *dhaamannaa*, *bayee-bayee* and songs among others. *Dhaamannaa* is a customary speech by the bride family members (only male) kindly to the bridegroom, his family and participants with him about how the bridegroom should care for their girl. After others have done, the father of the bride makes *dhaamannaa* as the follows:

Dhaamadhe;

Gosti abbaa intalaa X

Gosti haadha intalaa y

Lameenuu gosa beekamtu,

Lameenuu gosa kabajamtu

the clan of the bride father is X

the clan of the bride mother is Y

both are the known clans

both are the respected clans

Intalti gosa kanneen irraa baate	<i>the girl was born from the combination of these clans</i>
Gosaan hin arrabsin, hin xiqqeessin	<i>do not insult and ridicule (her) by her clan</i>
Dhugaa sitti kennee hin dabsin	<i>I gave you the truth, do not deny it</i>
Ija sitti hin kennine hin jaamsin	<i>I did not give you an eye, do not make her blind</i>
Lafee sitti hin kenninee hin cabsin	<i>I did not give you the bone, do not break it</i>

Bayee-bayee is a song by the only female family of the bride at the same time and contents with *dhaamannaa*. They strongly tell the bridegroom not to insult their girls by her parents' clans, break her bones and beat their daughter (the bride) while she will give birth (dressing on *Qanafaa*) and participate in the clan's special ceremonies. Therefore, it is expected that the man takes the orientation of what he should do and should not do on his marriage date. Therefore, if he fails to abide by these norms and values, the conflict happens among many individuals of both sides (bride family and bridegroom family) and it is expected to be resolved through *atete*.

4.2.2.2 Group conflict

For this study, I have classified group conflict into intra-group conflict and inter-group conflict. Intra-group conflict happens among the groups of the same community or *gosaa* (clan) while the latter is the conflict that happens among different communities or clans. These types of conflict are also caused by one or more of the factors discussed above.

All respondents of the study stated that many of intra-group and inter-group conflicts are being heard pervasively among the Arsi Oromo because of the spread of pre-marriage sex between the youth and the unmarried girls. Triggered by complicated associated factors, this could be one of the potential causes of conflict among the family members, friends, clans of the youth and the unmarried girls. One of my respondents, *Abbaa Hookkaa*, whose 60 years, narrated:

The Samuu clan and the Shedama clan have been accusing each other to Gumaa⁷ system for about seven years. One strong young male from the Samuu clan was killed by the man from the Shedama clan. The cause of the conflict was a girl, the daughter of the Shedama man. This man had suspected the young and his daughter of having a love affair and his wife of misinforming him about the issue. He had been following them for about a month. One day he left his home telling his family speciously that he will be back home within

⁷ The indigenous system to resolve the conflict associated with killing one another. It is believed that among other indigenous systems, it is the system that has been widely functioning among the Arsi Oromo. I suggest interested researcher(s) to conduct study on it.

two days. However, after an hour he had returned home and caught the young red-handed while having had sexual intercourse with his daughter. He (the father of the daughter) killed the young man on the spot. The case was the cause for the death of many individuals from both clans. Finally, because of the successful engagement and functioning of yaa'aa and atete institutions, the case was resolved three years ago.

Generally, and fortunately interpersonal and intergroup types of conflict have been resolved through *atete* among the Arsi Oromo for a long period of time.

4.3 How *Atete* Resolves Conflict Among the Arsi Oromo?

Atete has various procedures to resolve interpersonal conflict (between man and woman or young and woman) and group conflict (intra-group and inter-group) depending on the causes and consequences. *Atete* is manifested through *atete* rituals to resolve these types of conflict.

4.3.1 Resolving interpersonal conflict through *atete*

Depending on the data gathered from the respondents and then having the actual ritual date at the center, I categorized the women roles in conflict resolution through *atete* institution into three steps. These are *pre-atete* ritual, *atete* ritual and *post atete* ritual steps. Whatever types of interpersonal conflict, they pass through these general steps with different time limits, places, contexts, commitments, punishments and cultural elements. These steps are interdependent and most of the time indicates consecutive cultural, social, spiritual, economic and political practices. They are shortly and precisely presented below taking a selected case for clarification.

1. Pre-*atete* ritual

As wrongly written by some scholars, women do not chaotically hold their *siinqee* and run out from their home. Unless the situations and setting do not hinder them to perform all, the women shall do the following activities during the pre-*atete* ritual performance.

a. Collecting and analyzing information

It is commonly known that the victim must immediately inform what happened to *Haadha Siinqee* or another member of a council of women before rushing to another action. *Haadha Siinqee* orders other members of a council of women to collect information instantly and

cautiously. Collecting information does not need for scientific and bureaucratic procedures. The required data are about the causes of the conflict, impacts of the conflict, profile of the victim, profile of the alleged wrongdoer, setting of the conflict, instruments and strategies employed and words said during conflict. The data are collected from community members, victims and alleged wrongdoers (if possible).

A council of women analyzes these data or shortly talks over it so as to fairly identify and understand the nature, types and impacts of the conflict. Having understanding from the data, a council of women proceeds to the next step.

b. Making Decision

A council of women makes two decisions. These are resolving the conflict either before or through *atete* ritual. The first decision is made if the woman (the alleged victim) regrets for disclosing the case to a council of women and requests to resolve the conflict informally before proceeding to *atete* ritual. The woman request should be persuasive to a council of women. Besides the woman request, a council of women also sees two other important issues. The first is about the nature of conflict and its consequences at the community level and the second is associated with the actions and reactions of the alleged wrongdoer at different times. Thereby if they found that the conflict is tolerable and the man is respectful in his communication and action, a council of women mediates between the man and woman in the conflict without going to *atete* ritual. In the case all the above criteria are unfulfilled; a council of women decides to call on all the married women for the *atete* ritual.

However, what happens if after a council of women starts mediating, one party in a conflict refuses to accept the proposed suggestion or punishment? If an alleged wrongdoer or victim haphazardly denies and rejects the request for reconciliation or ridicules at the proposed punishment, a council of women advice the individuals in conflict before proceeding to the next decision. Here there are very attractive songs, which a council of women also plays to advice an alleged wrongdoer or victim before going on to the next step.

Gorsa koo diddee obsa koo qortaa?
Obsa koo fixxee boru maali taataa?!

This means,

*Rejecting my advice, why have you challenged my patience?
You have finished my patience, what will happen to you tomorrow?*

The above songs have indispensable and well-organized contents. It encompasses the women patience, unity, knowledge and power. They advise and make the decision wisely and unitedly before going to another serious punishment. And finally they tell the individual that s/he will return back to them tomorrow and there is no scape for her or him.

2. Atete Ritual

This is the step at which the actual *atete* ritual is performed to resolve conflict. The Arsi Oromo women organize and perform *atete* ritual through the following well-established logical and subsequent activities. These are:

a. Waamicha ateetee (Atete call out)

A council of women informs all married women to prepare themselves for and participate in the scheduled *atete* ritual. The married women have a right to get information about the reason, purpose and setting of the ritual. It is a must for all married women to participate in the ritual except the situations beyond their capacity happen. The below *atete* song, by the members of a council, has a contents of calling out all the married women to the *atete* ritual.

Waraana kankee fudhadhuu bayii *Come out with your weapons*
Kunoo si waamee hunduu dhagayii *I have made a call let you all hear it*

While they leave their home, all the married women should have their weapon (commonly *siinqee* and *hanfalaa*) with themselves. These weapons symbolize unity, strength, commitment, truth, humbleness, bliss, and peace. In other words, the Arsi Oromo women are strong military army who are not easily defeated If they unite; they are committed if they decide; they are humbleness if they are respected; it is true if they speak; and it is immediately responded if they bless or curse. For example, regarding *hanfalaa*, a 55 years *Haadha Siinqee* claimed as “*hanfalaa hidhachuu* (taking on *hanfalaa*) indicates the women involvement in the struggle with full of preparation, commitment and weapon while *hanfalaa hiikkachuu* (taking it off) refers bless and humbleness.” It is thoroughly assumed that the *atete* gathering only speaks the truth and act scrupulously, which have symbolically and philosophically association with the *siinqee* they hold in their hand and *hanfalaa* they tie on their abdomen. Generally, *atete* calling out is the

process of organizing the above attributes of all married women, mostly at the house of *Haadha Siinqee*, for the purpose of resolving conflict and bringing peace in the community.

b. *Baya fi gaya ateetee (Atete going away and arriving)*

The *ateete* gathering, which is led by *Haadha Siinqee*, gorgeously and unitedly goes to the place of ritual. The place of ritual would be at the home of the alleged wrongdoer or other sacred places such as on the top of a mountain, side of a river and side and under sacred trees. While they go and after they reach the place, they play songs which have different contents such as explaining the causes, consequences and types of conflict among others. Some of the songs, which have various contents that are played successively, are described below.

Tuffiin hammaatee taa'ee arrabsaa
Dubbiin jabaatee dhayee gaggabsaa

This means,

Ignoring has become worse; (he) simply sits down and insults (her)
The case has become serious; (he) beats her to put in coma

Garaa na bayee maa na arrabsaa?
Garaa na dhayee maa na gaggabsaa?

This means,

Why (he) insults me whereas he came out from my womb
Why (he) puts me in coma by hitting in my abdomen

Qanafaa cabsee deettuu rakkisee
Seera koo dabsee beektuu salphisee

This means,

(He) has broken qanafaa and challenged a woman (who has given a birth)
(He) has violated my laws by disrespecting the wise (woman)

The above *ateete* songs deal with the conflict that happen after a young or a man insults and physically harms a woman or a mother. The woman who has a *qanafaa* on her forehead is sacred. Insulting or disrespecting biological or social mother is highly prohibited. Breaking the bones of the women is another serious issue to call out *ateete* ritual. In the above songs, the women claim claim that a disrespected young or man did one of the prohibited acts on their

member. And the song also specifies that the women are knowledgeable because they are the mother of knowledgeable and brave men.

There are other additional songs which narrate the detail of those deviant behaviors. They directly and indirectly describe the contents of speech, the setting (place and time), the witness (other people or individual around), an immediate cause of the conflict, the woman reaction and consequences (social, psychological and physical) in their songs. They describe these details to other community members such as *Abbaa Bokkuu*, *Abbaa Hookkaa*, a council of men and elderly, who are a potential negotiator between the man (deviant) and the *atete* gathering, so as indirectly proposing the type and level of punishment to be passed on the man and eventually to resolve the conflict.

c. *Himataa fi fixata ateetee (Atete complaint and punishment)*

When *atete* is leaves out, no married woman is left at the house. As a result, it is locally *said ibiddi ardaa dhaame* which means (the fire has gone from the village). The male community members send the respected and well known elders to the women. The elders, holding the grasses in their hand, go to the women. At the time they met with the women, they say *dhiltee dhinna* (3x) and the women either say *didnee jirra* (we have refused) your request in the case they do not trust those elders or *hobba'aa, ija irraa hafa, bulaa ijaaramaa* (3x) which means 'you are allowed, let (*Waaqaa*) save you from (an evil of) eyes, let you live constructively and unitedly' in the case they accept the request. If the women reject the request, the elders return to the community and replaced by others whereas if they accept the requests, the women give *sardoo* (long grasses) to the elders invite them to sit down. The elders ask the women why they left out from their home. *Ulfoo tiyya maaliif manaa baate?* Which means 'my respectful women; why have you left your home?' Then the woman who has relatively good communication skills, not uncommonly *Haadha Siinqee*, tells their complaints and the expected punishments to the elders. Taking the complaints, the elders return to the community and discuss the issues in the presence of the alleged wrongdoer. The women stay there, playing the songs, and wait for the response of the elders. For example,

Dhugaa koo malee manatti hin galuu
Dhugaa koo baree mee natti haa qaluu

This means,

I will not return to home without (getting) my truth

Let (he) knows my truth and slaughters (specified kind of animal) to me

The above *atete* song manifests the women commitment to address objective of their gathering. After they leave their home to *atete* ritual, the women being committed and patiently stay at the ritual place. No woman is allowed to return back to her house, unless there is the societal known circumstances which are beyond her capacity (giving birth, *idaayyaa*, sick, very old), without getting their truth and a young or man (deviant) get punished accordingly.

The young or man may either accept or reject his mistakes and/or the supposed wrong behavior. If he admits his problem, the women bargain through singing the songs which identify the types of punishment. The expected punishment is not the same for the conflict between young and woman and man and woman. In the case of a young and woman (mother) conflict, the women beat a young up to one hundred times with their *hanfalaa* or advise him and finally bless him. In the case of a man and a woman conflict, the women identify and propose what a man should prepare. Most of the time it includes the local beer (*daadhii*), milk and an animal, which its meat is eatable, such as *korbeessa hoolaa ykn re'ee, jibicha, sangaa fi sa'a maseena*.

The women are flexible and rational in their passing punishment decisions. They do not take *sa'a dhaltii* (milking cow) *fi korma* (bull) since these animals have identified social and spiritual values. A milking cow is a means of living while a bull is considered sacred. Generally, they pass the punishment decision on the man depending on the social and economic status as well as the interaction and communication styles of the man regarding that specific conflict. All these bargaining are done through the mediation efforts of the elders. One example of songs on bargaining is:

Maaliif jallatee beekaa salphisaa? *Why (he will) be a deviant and disregards the wise?*

Maaliif waakkatee deega farrisaa? *Why he has claimed poorness by hiding his wealth?*

Daadhii naa buusee sangaa haa qaluu *Let he prepares a local beer and slaughters an ox for me*

Dhaltii fi kormi anaan hin maluu? *I do not deserve a milking cow and a bull*

d. *Eebba ykn Abaarsa ateetee (Atete bless or curse)*

If the man accepts his punishment, the women bless him. The man who accepts the punishment prepares all required food and slaughters specified animal and then hand it over to the women in

the presence of elders. The wrongdoer called on to fall on the legs of the victim and asks forgiveness saying *nahofkalchaa* which means forgive me. Then, the victim says, stand up; I have forgiven you let the *Waayaa* forgive you. Again the man kisses the forehead of the victim woman and says *ulfaadhaa* which means be respected. In other words, conflict is resolved. Then the women bless the man. They perform the following activities while they bless him. Firstly they touch the blood of slaughtered animal with an inverted V point of their *Siinqee* and grasses. Secondly, they call on the man and give him the grasses on hand and touch his forehead with their *Siinqee* and *qaaruu*⁸. Then the women stand parallel facing each other and allow the man pass under the *Siinqee*. At that time they bless the man saying;

Hoffoli,	<i>be safe</i>
Fafti tun sitti hin deebi'in	<i>let this immorality does not return back to you</i>
Nu sii dhiifne waaqni siif haa dhiisu	<i>we have forgiven you, let Waaqaa forgives you</i>
Nu sii dhiifne lafti sii haa dhiiftu	<i>we have forgiven you, let the earth forgives you</i>

Thirdly, *atete* gathering invites available members of the community to eat and drink. Finally, the women close the ceremony with blessing and return back their homes.

If the man denies what is being claimed by the women or challenged the negotiator, the women continue their struggle by changing their tone of songs from politely and positively asking to the songs which have insulting and cursing contents. They label the man as liar, deviant, loser and the one who has no hope. The following is an example:

Haqa dhoksitsee dharaan kakattaa?	<i>Covering the truth, why do (you) swear in false?</i>
Har'a waakkatee boru eessa dhaqtaa?	<i>Denying today, where will (you) go tomorrow?</i>
Nu tuffattee Waaqaa jalaa miliqxaa?	<i>Belittling us, can you scape from Waaqaa?</i>

The above song stressed that nobody, who violates the women rights, escapes from women since they (supposedly) transferred to *Waaqaa*. They believe as “*Waaqaa* will punish the man” for his deviant behavior and disbelieving the truth (elder man, 58 years). And they presume that the man fears an expectedly painful punishment from *Waaqaa* and eventually disclose the truth as well as to get the blessings from the women. Finally, if he completely refutes to accept the claim on him, the women curse him. The respondents of the study claim that the man will face the so called health or economic problems for himself and that extends to his future generations. Some examples of *atete* curse are:

⁸ Muddy water that is mostly pushed to the side of the river by the wave of water bodies

Dhugaa jallistee si haa jallisuu
Ganyaa salphistee si haa salphisuu
Waan qabdu dhabii ta'ii kadhataa
Waan jettu dhabii ta'ii maraataa

This means,

You have disordered the truth, let (Waaqaa) disorder you
You have disrespected the women, let (Waaqaa) disrespect you
Let (you) lose what you have, be the beggar
Let (you) lose what you say, be insane

Generally, this is a mechanism to warn other men from violating the rights of the women and denying the truth.

e. *Gala ateetee* (atete returning home)

This is the final step of *atete* ritual. After either they perform blessing or cursing rituals, the women are left with one activity. That is checking the attendance of the local women who have participated in the ritual. If there are absentees, they discuss the reasons why they did not participate. Unless they are convinced by the reasons, they directly go to the house of absentees and destroy their home furniture. Finally, they return back to each house.

3. Post-*atete* Ritual

The last step after *atete* ritual is *post-atete ritual*. Post-*atete* ritual revolves around monitoring and evaluating the final decisions and their outcomes. This is the responsibility of some or all of the members of a council of women and it is the main step of all types of *atete* institution. The monitoring and evaluation stage has the advantages of strengthening the power and influence of women in the community. The women have their own mechanisms such as *buna dhuguu* (*drinking coffee*), observing *bayaa fi gala loonii* (leaving out and coming back of the livestock) and valuing *tapha ijoollee* (children game) to monitor and evaluate their decisions and reactions.

4.3.2 Resolving intergroup conflict through *atete*

Atete is not restricted to resolve only interpersonal conflict. It also plays an indispensable role in resolving inter-clans conflict. There might be different types of inter-clans conflict depending on their causes. Even though it is infeasible to say *atete* could be a cause for resolution of all types,

it has been involving in bloody inter-clans conflict. The women would follow the following procedures to take a part in inter-clans conflict resolution.

Firstly, the women (*atete*) share information (cause, setting, name of clans) among its members in the case of planned inter-clans conflicts. The sources of information are their husbands or other community members. Depending on the credibility of information, *Haadha Siinqee* orders the women to prepare themselves. Then the women arrange their weapons (*siinqee* and *hanfalaa*) and the *atete* gathered together at the house of *Haadha Siinqee*. At the house of *Haadha Siinqee*; the women wash their face with water boiled with coffee (*buna dhiqachuu*) and make supplications and blessings. Their supplications and blessings are about peace for all.

Secondly, the gathering of *atete* goes to the place of conflicts. The women led by *Haadha Siinqee* go in order depending on the reputation and status they have in the community. While they go, they may play music (songs) which value the peace. For example,

Nuti nagaya *we are peace*

Nuu dhagayaa *let you listen to us*

Nagaa naa fidi *let you (Waaqaa) bring us peace*

Balaa naa didi *let you (Waaqaa) protect us from risk*

Thirdly, after they approach the place of conflict they reassure the current situations between the clans. The women might return their home, before seen to the men, in the case the clans in the conflict sat down to resolve the conflict by the elderly mediation. The women are only involved if and only if they found the clans are in the fighting battle. Then they inter between the clans to stop fighting and put down their *siinqee* and take of their *hanfalaa*. At the time she inters between the conflicting sides, nobody should pass by their *siinqee* and on their *hanfalaa*. Passing by the *siinqee* and *hanfalaa* is a great sin which might result in *siinqee itti jigsuu* which means cursing. After the fighting stops, the women proceed to the next step.

Fourthly, the women identify and select the elders from both sides and take a promise from them to resolve the conflict between the clans. The women kindly request the elders to resolve the conflict depending on only the truth within a given time and in return they will bless the elders. In other words, the women give responsibility to the elders and return back their homes. *Siinqee hulluuquuf* which means to get blessings, the elders play their best in resolving the conflict within the set time line.

Finally, the women indirectly follow the case and finally request the report from the elders to whom they give a responsibility. The women may bless the elders or prepare themselves again for the first step depending on the report. Generally, these are the procedures of resolving inter-clans conflict and intra-group conflict through *atete*.

4.4 Opportunities and Challenges of *Atete*

4.4.1 Opportunities for developing *atete*

This sub-section discusses about the existing opportunities to revive and develop *atete*. For simplicity, I categorized these opportunities into three sub-topics. The first sub-topic describes what and how government and non-government organizations actions and reactions are considered as an opportunity. The second sub-topic deals with three interrelated mechanisms namely conducting scientific researches, writing reliable data based books and working on true stories through drawing, film, drama and music and how they are seen as an opportunity to revitalize and promote the institution. The final sub-topic, which is considered as a supportive instrument for the first and second sub-topics, explains how various social media could be a powerful and feasible opportunity for the sustainable development of *atete*.

1. Government and Non-government Organizations Actions and Reactions

Government and non-government organizations have been working in empowering and promoting indigenous institutions. Indigenous institutions have been serving the community for a long period of time than modern institutions. For example, *atete* institution had been resolving the conflict even before the coming of various international and national policies. As a result national governments bodies and non-governmental organizations have been incorporating indigenous institutions in their policy formulation, implementation and analysis. Likely, Ethiopian various government bodies and local as well as international non-governmental organizations have been using indigenous institutions along with modern institutions in order to address international and national set objectives such as bringing peace.

As a result of the government and other successful efforts, the *Gadaa* system was registered in UNESCO. Head of district culture and tourism burea, 36 years female, argued; “Ethiopian government and other think tanks have been working to promote and develop *atete* to the international level.” In other words, international recognition would be an interesting opportunity

to motivate the owners of institutions such as *atete* with its original qualities. Oromo women from all corners of Oromia are strongly working to achieve that the *atete* will get registered in UNESCO.

Achieving gender equality shortly is one of the objectives of the national government and international organizations. It is believed that the roles of female through either indigenous institutions and knowledge or modern institutions in socio-economic development are irreplaceable. Without them bringing peace is impossible. Particularly, in the current societies where social conflicts and risks are pervasive, the roles of females are agreeably assumed noteworthy across the world. Among the Arsi Oromo, together with other parallel indigenous institutions, *atete* has been resolving the conflicts happening between individuals and clans for a long period of the time. Various local and international non-governmental organizations, which mostly work on vulnerable groups and gender equality through applying a strength based approach, have promoted indigenous institutions to achieve the objectives of their respective social policies. To this end, the Ethiopian government and non-government organizations have been empowering the women and their institutions since the last two decades. In addition an expert, 30 years, of the district women and children affairs added:

Other exciting opportunities of atete being taken and done by the government are incorporating it in modern education curriculum; supporting it financially; establishing centers; funding researches conducted on it; funding to publish books and other literature on it; and supporting and developing arts on it.

In Oromia, *Gadaa* system is being given as a course starting from grade one. Some government Universities namely Mada Walabu University and Bule Hora University have been giving *Gadaa* system at BA and PhD programs respectively. Private education institutions have been also following the footsteps of government institutions. Generally, incorporation of sub-institutions of *Gadaa* system like *atete* in the curriculum starting from kindergarten to higher education would be an opportunity for the *atete*.

2. Researches, Books and Art

Conducting research, writing books and working on art are interrelated and interdependent opportunities for the revival of *atete*. National and expatriate researchers have conducted

researches and produced a massive remarkable literature on *Gadaa* system in general and *atete* in particular. Kuwee (2004), Tamam (2019), Jeylan (2001), Taliilee (2018), Qashuu (2018) have directly conducted research on *atete* or its specific attribute. They have indicated the gaps and recommended other interested researchers to do on it. Currently, professor Loko (Professor of Sociology at Arsi University) has been studying indigenous institutions including *atete* and *yaa'aa* among the Arsi Oromo, particularly where this research is conducted, Dodola district.

A 60 years *Abbaa Bokkuu* strongly mentioned that their children should learn and write the culture of Oromo from the elders. In addition to conducting research, the educated generation is expected to write books and present the findings on different stages such as international and national conferences, symposiums, debates and policy issues/agendas. Written sources are easily transferred from generation to generation than that of oral sources. Besides conducting research and publishing and writing books of different type and form; developing modern Oromo art in the form of drawing, drama, film and music are among the ground hitting opportunities for the development of *atete* institution. The works of art and books, which are supported by scientific researchers, would take the *atete* institution many steps forward. Finally, all respondents of the study steadily suggest that those who write the books and work on drawing, drama, film and music to depend on the reputable researches conducted by collecting and analyzing original and reliable data in order to not to transfer or share corrupted indigenous institutions.

3. Social Media

Social media has become source of massive information. Respondents from the government offices state that social media is a fascinating opportunity to show up our indigenous institutions including *atete* to the world. Oromo people have a lot of media outlets. Even though it is not to an expected level, these media have played a role in promoting and empowering indigenous institutions. For example, a 55 years *Haadha Siinqee* appreciated Oromia Broadcasting Services (OBS) for its sharing their true identity to the world. Generally, the respondents argue that If the people can use them effectively; Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and others would be considered as opportunities to sustainably develop *atete* and other institutions of *Gadaa* system.

4.4.2 Challenges in reviving and developing *atete*

This sub-section deals with the major challenges of *atete*. The following are some of those challenges.

1. Immigrated religions

The Oromo had its own religion which is called *Waaqeffannaa* before the coming of Christianity and Islam to Ethiopia. They believe in one *Waaqaa*. *Qaalluu* is the leader of their religion. The spiritual aspect of other institutions of *Gadaa* system is performed by *Qaalluu*. The philosophical and functional definitions and descriptions of both material and non-material cultural elements are drawn from their religion. For example, the women need to go to sacred places to perform *atete* ritual ceremonies. However, the immigrated religions have been corrupting indigenous institutions of *Gadaa* system since they came to Ethiopia.

Both Christianity and Islam religions have a negative attitude toward *atete* institution. Their religious leaders and teachers preach in the churches and the mosques not to perform and participate in *atete* rituals. They label as uncivilized (who wear the skin of an animal, pray to the trees and stone), and *khafir* (disbelievers). For example, dressing *bonkoo*; holding *siinqee* and *sardoo*; performing ritual near a river, near and under trees and top of a mountain; and playing songs are *Haraam* (forbidden) for the Islam religion leaders and teachers. The main justification they bring forward is that doing the ritual ceremonies at those sacred places is defined as *shirki* (inventing new things in Islam religion). But an interesting question should be; which came later? (*atete* institution or Islam religion) for the Oromo Arsi women? The answer is obvious. Other respondents argue that there is a religion institution which has been attacking indigenous institutions of the Oromo for a hidden political agenda.

Both Christianity and Islam religions leaders forbid all community members from having a social relationship with the women who did not repent from participating and performing *atete* institution all her families. For 55 years religion leader, there are cases of disallowing burial places and outlawing making a prayer or other required respective religious rituals on the funeral of the people who committed to indigenous institutions including *atete*. The religious leaders further warn the people that they should repent from believing in something created by God before their death unless they will face hellfire, which is painful.

The participants of study unanimously argue that the immigrated religions have their own positive and negative sides. Invading indigenous cultural elements and institutions is among its feasible negative sides. For instance, a large number of women have refrained themselves from participating and performing *atete* rituals. As a result, *atete* has not been strong as it had been before the coming of these religions to the Arsi Oromo. It has been originally functional in the far rural areas where these religions do not reach out. However, currently it has been reviving everywhere in Oromia as the result of promising opportunities discussed above.

2. Political influence

The Arsi Oromo, like other Oromo branches, have *Gadaa* system. In *Gadaa* system there is a model democratic political structure. The Arsi Oromo had been ruling them through that structure for an immemorial time. However, after the 19th century the invaders from the northern part of Ethiopia have mercilessly attacked the *Gadaa* system. The Arsi Oromo bloodily confronted them but eventually lost the battle. Majority of *Gadaa* system major institutions were overpoweringly dismantled and gradually eradicated particularly in urban areas. Sacred places, names and attribute were devastatingly destroyed or replaced with other functions or names. In other words, sub-institutions of the *Gadaa* system such as *atete* have encountered challenges to survive as a result of the hot political dynamics of the time.

The invaders had been stopping the women from participating and performing *atete* through force and using Orthodox religion as an instrument. One of my interviewees sadly argued, “Oromo women had been imprisoned or killed for performing *atete* ritual.” Besides, physical war, there were also psychological war. The invaders have been psychologically exploiting the indigenous people which have an adverse impact on the owners of the institution till today. They had been describing and deriding at the *atete* and its participants as a backward, stupid or uncivilized community members. Consequently, the indigenous people were alienated from their nature and identity. They were not allowed to ask the human rights given to them from their *Waaqaa*. As a result, the women had been rarely and surreptitiously managing *atete*. Therefore, Ethiopian politics have a challenging effect on the development and sustainability of *atete* in addressing its objectives such as resolving conflict. However, currently, because of the above discussed opportunities this challenge has been losing the battle among the Arsi Oromo.

3. Migration and urbanization

Nowadays, migration is a typical feature of modern people. They move from place to place for different reasons. According to a district Women and children affair bureau head, 34 years female, one of the mentioned reasons include: “change of economic activities, development of public infrastructures, development induced displacement, natural induced displacement and insecurity induced displacement are some of the factors from the migration of people.” Regarding the study area, there is a high tendency of people migration from rural areas to urban centers which has a possibility of changing a societal composition from homogenous to heterogeneous society. Assuredly stated by 53 years *Haadha Siinqee*; “*atete* is owned by an ethnically (Oromo) and religiously (*Waaqeffataa*) homogenous married women.” Urbanization is characterized by heterogeneity depending on the division of labor, religion, ethnicity, education status and political ideology. Consequently, all participants of my study reliably argue that migration and urbanization have been eradicating the original and basic attributes of *atete* institution. To this end, *atete* and its elements have become fashionable without its original value and definition.

4. Modern education

Indigenous institutions are transferred from generation to generation through orally and repetitive practices. According to respondents, female children should have learnt *atete* from their mothers. Family should have been the center of socialization before proceeding to the modern education. However, the coming of modern education has taken the place of family in children socialization which would have eventually an adverse impact on *atete*. An expert from the district women and children affairs bureau argued that education per se has no impact, but how people manage and use it does.

Although there are promising efforts, Ethiopian government has not adequately incorporated indigenous institutions in the modern education curriculum till recently. A detail from 46 years *Haadha Siinqee* was stated:

The current generation does not know about atete. They are not learning from us but they incline to only modern education. In the modern education, I think, there is no a topic about atete. Had the attention given for it by the government, atete institution and other

institutions would have incorporated in the modern education curriculum for socio-economic development.

However, the focus was given to the theories and experiences of western countries which have an impact on the students to remember and practice their own culture. As a result of modern education, the students erroneously assume the indigenous institutions such as *atete* as uncivilized. Therefore, rather than promoting sometimes they would consider it as preposterous.

5. Change of family institution formation and roles

Family institution had been the foundation of other institutions for a long period of time among the Arsi Oromo. Currently, the process of family formation and the roles of family members are noticeably changed. Mate selection, marriage style and type, children socialization, the role of father and mother, the role of children and other members in the case of an extended family are all changed. For example, the marriage through *rakoo* ritual is rarely being practised across the communities because of immigrated religions and other associated factors. An interview with one of *Abbaa Bookkuus* narrated this case as follows;

The youth and the girls are not abided by their parents in mate selection. Without knowing her/his background (ethnicity, clan, history), both the young and girl are rushing into the marriage and throwing themselves and their families in the depth problem. The Arsi Oromo used to marry allowable clans after the ayyaanaa (sprit) is seen for them by Qaalluu. Then there is a rokoo ritual which makes a married woman a member of her husband clan. Then after both husband and wife have their own distinctive social roles. All these have been overlooked. As a result atete has lost its originality and became artificial.

6. Change of cultural elements

There are two cultural elements. Those are material and non-material cultural elements. Today, among the Arsi Oromo, irrational change of indigenous cultural elements forms, shapes, meanings and utilization has become normal. Some of the indigenous cultural elements in *atete* are *siinqee*, *sardoo*, *bonkoo*, *hanfalaa*, songs, blessings and sacred places. For example, the form of *siinqee* changed from an inverted V form to straight stick form and implicitly being used as a fashion. Unmarried girls have been seen holding it on different occasions such as *irreechaa*

(thanks giving) and other special ceremonies. People claim that changing the shape, form and utilization is a natural process of modernizing it. The meaning, value and sacredness attached with indigenous cultural elements are being changed with the change of cultural elements shape, form and utilization. Finally, the participants of the study argue that the complex and dynamic change of indigenous cultural elements in form, shape, meaning and utilization has a direct impact on keeping the originality of *atete*.

7. Development of alternative institutions to take over the roles of *atete*

Atete has roles in the spiritual, political, economic and social aspects. Recently, these functions were taken over by other institutions such as immigrated religions, government bodies and non-governmental organizations. For example, “the woman beaten by the man prefers to take her case to the modern court than the *atete* for the complex and interrelated reasons discussed above” (District Culture Tourism bureau head, 36 years female). Regarding religion, interviewee added;

At the absence of rain the women used to go out to river in order to beg their Waaqaa. The Waaqaa immediately send the rain down to them. But currently, doing that is considered as a sin and as a result the people go to the immigrated religious centers.

Therefore, *atete* institution has been gradually leaving its space for those alternative institutions in all its original aspects.

4.5 Discussion

Atete gathering, *atete* ritual and *siinqee* are the concepts included under *atete* institution and need to be defined depending on various sources. The respondents’ responses show that *atete* represents sacred women. Holding a *siinqee* and wearing on *hanfalaa*, the weapons of women in *atete*, are the fundamental criteria to call the women *atete*. A woman can get a status of *atete* only through customarily marriage with *rakoo* ritual. Before marriage, girls are members of a clan into which they were born since they are considered as a boy and they transfer their membership into a clan to which they are married through *rakoo* ritual. This is different from the idea of Kuwee (2004). She claimed that the women are not members of the clan into which they were born or the one into which they are married.

When two or more *atete* (women) come together, we call it *atete* gathering and the ceremonies performed by them is called *atete* rituals. *Atete* rituals can be performed by a single woman. For example, the *rakoo* ritual performed by *Haadha Badaa* is considered as *atete* ritual. Therefore, *atete* is a well-organized social institution owned by customarily married women to function in social, economic, political and cultural aspects of the society. This definition contrasts with the definitions by Daniel (2002); Jeylan (2004); Temam (2019) that *atete* is the spiritual power given to married women by *Waaqaa*. Unlike (Jemila 2014; Tolosa 2010), it also deflects from using *atete* institution interchangeably with *siinqee*. Depending on the data from the respondents I defined *siinqee* as a weapon of women basically used during *atete* rituals and this definition is similar to that of Gemetchu (1993).

Atete institution is one of the components of *Gadaa* system. Having *Gadaa* system at the top, *atete* has different structures with clear roles and status. *Haadha siinqee*, *saddeeta dubartii* (a council of women), married women and other stakeholders are the positions of *atete* structure. These positions have their own roles. Researchers who have conducted researches so far focused on only the procedures of *atete* rituals (Bartels 1983; Daniel 2002; Etefa 2012; Kuwee 2004). In other words, the well-established social structure of *atete* was overlooked in their study or rarely presented in other attributes of *atete*.

Atete has three types. Those are *ateetee falaa* (spiritual *atete*), *ateetee goraa* (grievance *atete*) and *atete araaraa* (reconciliation *atete*). Spiritual *atete* encompasses spiritual and religious actions done together with *Qaalluu* institution in order to protect and promote societies from manmade and natural risks. *Atete goraa* is a type of *atete* institution functions to defend the rights of women in all aspects. It is the structure against the adverse impacts of the patriarchal system to achieve gender equality and equity. It further could be seen as a mechanism to control human behavior. The last type is conflict resolution *atete* which deals with resolving various types of conflict in the community. Even though they did not solidly categorize in to three types, the previous researchers have touched on these roles on which the women work through the institution. Kuwee (2004) and Jemila (2014), inconsistent with my research, associated these roles with *siinqee* institution.

The main objective of this study revolves around the third type of *atete* – reconciliation *atete*. Among the study area, there are different types of conflict. Depending on the person involved in

it, I have categorized it into interpersonal conflict and group conflict. This categorization of the conflict is the same as that of (Sunstein 2018) while inconsistent with Bakken and Rustad (2018) who employed different models of identifying the types of conflicts at the Africa level. Folarin (2015) describes these categorizations as a level of conflicts, but I have analyzed them as types depending on the data from respondents.

The causes of conflicts are long term or immediate factors. Regardless of the time, I have identified two major causes of conflict in the study area. These are competition to control resources and breaching societal norms. The competition to control the natural resources is associated with livelihood strategies and an alarming increment of the number of population. The latter category comprises theft, robbery, disrespect, killing others, destroying other resources, extinguishing biodiversity and so on. The Arsi Oromo have set a rule to prohibit their members from those deviant behaviors. They have different controlling mechanisms such as *atete*. Scholars who studied conflict raised these issues in one or other ways. The study unit matters while we discuss the causes and consequences of the conflict. For example, Khan, Hussainy and Iqbal (2017) studied the conflicts in a formal organization and the causes were lack of freedom and interest of position. Therefore, while my unit of study was households, it is impossible to talk about structural and political causes of conflict (Asnake 2013; Taye 2017).

Regarding how women organize *atete* rituals to resolve conflicts, previous researches have rarely discussed it. Kuwe (2004) has reviewed the works of Gemetchu (1993) and discussed how *atete* ritual is organized to defend the property, control over sexuality and fertility, social and religious and moral authority rights of women. In this study, I have identified three sequential steps of *atete* institution; which are pre-*atete* ritual, *atete* ritual and post-*atete* ritual. These steps are general and interdependent. They have their own specific consecutive activities performed by the women. Pre-*atete* ritual is about collecting and analyzing information and making a decision by a council of women. *Atete* ritual is the actual ceremony to implement the *atete* institution's law. During *atete* ritual, the women perform the following consecutive activities to resolve conflicts. These are: *atete* call, *atete* going out, *atete* complaint, *atete* blesses *atete* curse and *atete* getting in. The last step, post-*atete* ritual, describes the functions of women such as following, monitoring and supervising their achievements in previous achievements through different mechanisms. Kuwe (2004) has also discussed about activities in the above steps. She did not put

in order and she employed the concepts such as *siinqee* curse, *siinqee* scream, *siinqee* trek, *siinqee* compliant and *waraana kutaa* (war between clans) to restore *safuu*.

Even though *atete* institution has an indispensable role in resolving conflicts, several challenges have been encountering it. In addition to this study scholars such as Jemila (2014); Jeylan (2004); Kuwee (2004); Qashu (2016); Talilee (2018); Temam (2019) and Tesema (2016) have identified one or more challenges in the development of *atete* institution. Those challenges are associated with imported religions (Christianity and Islam), political influence, migration and urbanization, modern education, change of family formation style and roles, change of cultural elements and the development of alternative institutions to take over the primary roles of *atete* institution. This does not mean that *atete* institution has no opportunities to revive and develop.

Unlike other previous researchers on the topic, I have identified the following opportunities for the development of the institution. The first opportunities would be the current government and non-government organizations actions and reactions through various ways such as incorporating in social policies, funding researchers and incorporating it in the modern educational curriculum. The second activity which is considered as an opportunity encompasses scientific researches, books and arts. And the final issue I took as an opportunity is social media. Effective and wise use of various types and forms of social media would be an opportunity to develop *atete*.

CHAPTER FIVE

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of this chapter is to present the conclusion drawn from study findings and some recommendations forwarded to concerned bodies that are interested in the topic under study.

5.1 Conclusion

Atete is one of the pillar institutions of the *Gadaa* system. It is a well-established institution owned by customarily married women. In other words, *atete* is a sacred woman, who has *siinqee* and *hanfalaa*. It encompasses concepts such as *atete* gathering, *atete* ritual, *siinqee*, and *hanfalaa* under it. *Atete* gathering is the coming together of two or more customarily married with their weapons (*siinqee* and *hanfalaa*) to perform *atete* ritual. *Atete* ritual is a procedure of implementing the laws of *atete*. Therefore, reducing *atete* to its components is a wrong assumption.

Atete has a comprehensive structure, which has status and roles for its participants. In the structure, the top position is led by the leader of the institution called *Haadha Siinqee*. *Haadha Siinqee* is elected by the married women depending on interdependent criteria such as experience and knowledge, social and technical skills, age and personality. The position next to *Haadha Siinqee* is that of a council of women. A council of women has eight members and as a result called *saddeete dubartii*. The members of a council of women are selected and nominated as of the above criteria by *Haadha Siinqee*. They are assigned to different aspects of their community. They have also the responsibility of contacting and informing the made decision on certain issues to all married women and other members of the community or other communities. Married women and other community members are found at the bottom structure of *atete*. They have also their own roles, primarily performing *atete* ritual, in addressing the objectives of the *atete*.

Atete has three main objectives. These are: to protect the community and environment from (social) problems, to defend the rights of women and to resolves conflict. Depending on these objectives we can categorize *atete* into three types namely *atete falaa*, *atete goraa* and *atete araaraa*. *Atete falaa* deals with the spiritual aspect of the community and performed at various sacred places such as the top of a mountain, near the river, and under a tree. The rituals performed at different setting have different objectives and activities. The main purpose of *atete*

falaa is to protect the community from different problems such as drought, heavy rain, emerging disease, immorality, inflation and environmental problems. The second type of *atete*, *atete goraa*, has a function to defend the rights of women in all aspects (social, economic, political, religious, and cultural) against an everlasting patriarchal system. The final type of *atete*, which is the main objective of this study, is *atete araaraa*. It has a role in resolving different types of conflicts.

Conflict is a part and parcel of the study community. The competition to control resources and breaching societal norms are the two major causes of different types of conflict. These causes are the major categories and they encompass various components under them. Along with these causes, there are two main types of conflict. These are: interpersonal conflict and group conflict. Interpersonal conflict is a conflict between individuals. The second category of conflict is group conflict. It has intra-group conflict (conflict among the groups within the same clan or community) and inter-group conflict (conflict between groups from different clans or communities). *Atete araaraa* has logical and consecutive procedures of resolving the above stated conflicts among the Arsi Oromo.

The procedures of resolving conflict through *atete* are categorized in to three consecutive and interdependent steps. These are: pre-*atete* ritual, *atete* ritual and post-*atete* ritual. Pre-*atete* ritual involves not only collecting and analyzing information but also it is the stage at which a council of women passes a decision about the next step. The next general step, *atete* ritual, is the step at which the actual *atete* ritual is performed. Indeed it has subsequent and interconnected sub-steps and activities in order to resolve the conflict. From the beginning to the end, these sub-steps are; *waamicha ateetee* (*atete* call), *baya ateetee* (*atete* going out), *himataa fi fixata* (*atete* complaint and punishment), *eebba yookin abaarsa ateetee* (*atete* bless or curse) and *gala ateetee* (*atete* getting back to their home). The last general step is post-*atete* ritual which comprises monitoring and evaluating the final decision and its outcomes. Even though the above steps are performed and followed in resolving interpersonal conflicts, *atete* is not limited to resolve only this type of conflict. It has also an indispensable role in resolving inter-clans conflict through following well-established and logical activities.

Atete institution has opportunities to be revived and developed to the status it used to be before more than a century. Some of those opportunities are: current government and non-government

organizations' actions and reactions; improvement of conducting scientific researches, writing books and doing or involving in different types of arts; and the development of social media. In contrast, *atete* has been and being challenged by a lot of factors. Some of those factors are immigrated religions, political influence, migration and urbanization, modern education, change of family institution formation and roles, change of cultural elements and development of alternative institutions to take over the role of *atete*. Despite all these challenging factors, *atete* has been revitalizing and functioning in resolving conflicts in some rural areas of Oromia, including the study area.

5.2 Recommendation

This section of the thesis deals with the recommendations made for two bodies namely scientific communities and government and non-government organizations.

1. Recommendations for the scientific communities

Scientific communities include students, teachers, researchers, universities, research centers and other training centers. Depending on the findings of this study, I made the following recommendations for those stakeholders:

- ✓ *Atete* institution is not well studied Among the Arsi Oromo. Let alone other components, the scholars, who have tried their best in studying it, did not reach the consensus in providing its straightforward definition. This would be the result of differences in cultural elements, immigrated religions, political influence and others. Therefore, research is needed to be conducted in each part of the Oromia so as to get a full-fledged picture of *atete*.
- ✓ Conducting research and putting it on the shelf is not enough. But also the findings should be communicated among intra-generations and inter-generations. This would be possible through presenting the findings on different conferences, publishing on reputable journals, writing books, exhibiting it in different forms of arts and encouraging students to review articles and write term papers on it.
- ✓ I also recommend to the universities and other training centers to include *atete* in their academic year education curriculum. In addition, they might make it among the core

research areas of the university and releasing a sufficient budget to the interested scholars so as to conduct scientific research.

2. Recommendations for the government and non-government organizations

Even though it directs to the specific government offices (culture and tourism offices and women and children affairs offices, etc.) and non-government organizations' offices are also recommended to include *atete* in their policy making, implementing and analyzing. The offices working on the education sector, conflict resolution and management, human rights, environmental conservation, health sectors and human development should give invaluable attention to *atete* institution.

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Annexes

Annex 1: In-depth interviews Guide

Jimma University

College of Social Sciences and humanities

Department of Sociology

The *Atete* Institution: The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution among Arsi Oromo

Dear respondent!

The aim of this interview guide is to collect data for the study entitled **The *Atete* Institution: The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution among the Arsi Oromo**. The study will be conducted for the requirements for the completion of Masters of Arts degree in Sociology (Family and Gender Stream) at Jimma University. Your response to the items will highly contribute to the success of the study. To this end, your participation and genuine response to the questions is invaluable to the success of the study. Trust that the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and serve for academic purpose only.

No need of writing or disclosing your name or any personal identification.

Thank you for your cooperation!!

Part I: Socio demographic information

1. Sex: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Core status in the community: _____

Part II: This part of interviews guide deals with introduction to *atete* institution among study area Arsi Oromo.

1. What is *atete*?
2. Who participate in *atete*?

3. Where do women organize *atete*?
4. When do women organize *atete*?
5. What are the cultural elements required for *atete* ritual ceremonies?
6. Why these cultural materials are required on the *atete* ritual ceremonies?

Part III: This part encompasses the interviews guide to address the first and second specific objectives of the study. In other words, it guides the data collector to collect relevant data on the role of *atete* institution in conflict resolution. The data collector will probe to the issues in the brace.

1. Do you think that *atete* institution has a role in conflict resolution? A. yes B. No
2. If your answer for Q#1 is yes;
 - a. What are the types of conflict resolved by *atete* institution (inter-personal, inter-group...)?
 - b. What are the causes of those types of conflict?
 - c. How do women organize *atete* institution to resolve conflict? (Who do what? when? where? why?)
 - d. What are the required cultural materials in organizing *atete* to resolve conflict?
 - e. Do other segment of individual (male counterpart, children, elderly, religious leader and what they do?) participate in it?
 - f. What do these individuals do in the process?

Part IV: This part deals with the existing opportunities which help to strengthen the role of *atete* institution in conflict resolution and challenges facing it in conflict resolution

1. What are the existing opportunities for *atete* institution in resolving conflict? (**Probe to:** *social, economic, political, administrative, environment, and cultural related opportunities*)
2. What are the challenges facing *atete* institution in resolving conflict? (**Probe to:** *social, economic, political, administrative, environment, and cultural associated challenges*)

Annex 2: Key informant interviews Guide

Jimma University

College of Social Sciences and humanities

Department of Sociology

The *Atete* Institution: The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution among the Arsi Oromo

Dear respondent!

The aim of this key informant interviews guide is to collect data for the study entitled **The *Atete* Institution: The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution among the Arsi Oromo**. The study will be conducted for the requirements for the completion of Masters of Arts degree in Sociology (Family and Gender Stream) at Jimma University. Your response to the items will highly contribute to the success of the study. To this end, your participation and genuine response to the questions is invaluable to the success of the study. Trust that the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and serve for academic purpose only.

No need of writing or telling your name or any personal identification.

Thank you for your cooperation!!

Part I: Socio demographic information

1. Sex: _____
2. Age: _____
3. Name of Organization (bureau): _____
4. Position: _____

Part II: This part of interviews guide deals with introduction to *atete* institution among study area Arsi Oromo.

5. What is *atete*?
6. Why *atete*?

Part III: This part encompasses the interviews guide to address the first and second specific objectives of the study. In other words, it guides the data collector to collect relevant data on the role of *atete* institution in conflict resolution. The data collector will probe to the issues in the brace.

1. Do you think that *atete* institution has a role in conflict resolution? A. yes B. No
2. If your answer for Q#1 is yes;
 - a. What are the types of conflict resolved by *atete* institution (inter-personal, inter-group...)?
 - b. What are the causes of those types of conflict?
 - c. What are the procedures of *atete* institution in resolving conflict? (Who do what? when? where? why?)
 - d. What are the required cultural materials in organizing *atete* to resolve conflict?
 - e. Do other segment of individual (expert from government office, male counterpart, children, elderly, religious leader and what they do?) participate in it?
 - f. What do these individuals do in the process? (Particularly your office)

Part IV: This part deals with the existing opportunities which help to strengthen the role of *atete* institution in conflict resolution and challenges facing it in conflict resolution

3. What are the existing opportunities for *atete* institution in resolving conflict? (**Probe to:** *social, economic, political, administrative, environment, and cultural related opportunities*)
4. What are the challenges facing *atete* institution in resolving conflict? (**Probe to:** *social, economic, political, administrative, environment, and cultural associated challenges*)

Annex 3: FGD Guide

Jimma University

College of Social Sciences and humanities

Department of Sociology

The *Atete* Institution: The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution among the Arsi Oromo

Dear respondent!

The aim of this interview guide is to collect data for the study entitled **The *Atete* Institution: The Role of Women in Conflict Resolution among the Arsi Oromo**. The study will be conducted for the requirements for the completion of Masters of Arts degree in Sociology (Family and Gender Stream) at Jimma University. Your response to the items will highly contribute to the success of the study. To this end, your participation and genuine response to the questions is invaluable to the success of the study. Trust that the information you provide will be kept strictly confidential and serve for academic purpose only.

No need of writing or disclosing your name or any personal identification.

Thank you for your cooperation!!

The discussion points are the following

1. Introduction to *atete* (*definition, setting, history, required cultural materials, setting, participants*)
2. Roles of *atete* in conflict resolution (*type and causes of conflict, procedure, status of each individual involved in it, setting, practices*)
3. Opportunities and challenges of *atete* institution in conflict resolution (*social, cultural, environment, politics, economic, technology*)

Annex 4: List of informants

S.no	Full name	Sex	Year	Role position
1.	Haliimaa Qancuu	F	53	Haadha Siinqee
2.	Shuree Qaabatoo	F	46	Haadha Siinqee
3.	Hajjoo Nuuree	F	55	Haadha Siinqee
4.	Qaabatoo Fanjaajaa	M	56	Abbaa Bokkuu
5.	Caakkuu Waaqoo	M	60	Abbaa Bokkuu
6.	Lolee Oogatoo	M	48	Abbaa Bokkuu
7.	Daalee Xussannaa	M	65	Abbaa Hookkaa
8.	Bariisoo Waabee	M	45	Abbaa Hookkaa
9.	Qumbii Dhaddee	M	60	Abbaa Hookkaa
10.	Shekh Usman Tukee	M	55	Religion leader
11.	Shekh Hajjii Nuuree	M	60	Religion leader
12.	Shekh Hamzaa kadiir	M	44	Religion teacher
13.	Kinniisoo Cuuqarii	M	70	Male elder
14.	Nageessoo Gafarsoo	M	58	Male elder
15.	Saaddoo Gammadii	M	61	Male elder
16.	Kamsoo Daaluu	F	58	Female elder
17.	Ganamee Badhaasoo	F	62	Female elder
18.	Roobdu Gammadaa	F	34	Women and children Affairs bureau head
19.	Seeneet Tasfaayee	F	30	Women and children Affairs bureau expert
20.	Zeynabaa Muhammad	F	36	Culture and tourism bureau head
21.	Getu Gutama	M	29	Culture and tourism bureau expert