

**JIMMA UNIVERSITY**  
**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**Marital Conflict and Customary Resolution Mechanisms among Kaffecho**

**Thesis Submitted to Department of Sociology for Partial Fulfillment of  
Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Arts in Sociology and Family  
Studies**

**By: Eleni G/Senbet**

**Advisors:**

- 1. Dejene Gemechu (PhD)**
- 2. Adamu Amanu (MA)**

*October, 2017*

*Jimma, Ethiopia*

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**Marital Conflict and Customary Resolution Mechanisms among**  
**Kaffecho**

**By: Eleni G/Senbet**

**Advisors:**

- 1. Dejene Gemechu (Phd)**
- 2. Adamu Amanu (MA)**

*October, 2017*

*Jimma, Ethiopia*

**JIMMA UNIVERSITY**

**COLLEGE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES**

**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY**

**Marital Conflict and Customary Resolution Mechanisms among  
Kaffecho**

**By: Eleni G/Senebet**

**Approved By:**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor**

**Signature**

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Advisor**

**Signature**

**Date**

\_\_\_\_\_

**Reader**

**Signature**

**Date**

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My special and deep gratitude goes to my advisors, Dr. Dejene Gemechu (my thesis proposal principal advisor), and Ato Adamu Amanu (Co-advisor), who had dedicated their time in giving me constructive and valuable suggestions for my thesis proposal work.

My inherent appreciation to my adorable family, without whom, I couldn't do better.

Special thanks to Bonga town Culture and Tourism Bureau workers particularly Ato Worku W/Mikael, for the assistance and cooperativeness. My deepest appreciation and thanks to members of *Dedebe tato's* traditional court center, particularly for the leader of the traditional court for their welcoming approach as well as their valuable time for the sake of successful accomplishment of my study. Heartfelt gratefulness to all of my informants who shared me their knowledge, experience, as well as their valuable time for my study.

Last but not the least, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Ato Tesgaye Zeleke, or as I call him, "Tsegish". No words can explain his support regarding this study. "God bless you my dear". All in all, I just want to thank all of you who supported me for the successful accomplishment of my study.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	i
B. LIST OF MAPS .....	iv
C. LIST OF FIGURE.....	iv
GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS.....	v
ACRONYMS.....	viii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1 Background of the Study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the problem .....	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study .....	5
1.3.1 General Objective .....	5
1.3.2. Specific Objectives .....	5
1.5 Significance of the study.....	5
1.6 Scope (delimitation) of the study .....	6
1.7 Limitation of the study.....	6
1.8 Definition of terms .....	6
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW .....	8
2.1 Conceptual Framework.....	8
2.2 Theories on the Concept of Conflict and Conflict Resolution .....	11
2.2.1 The views of Functionalist and Structural Functionalists on Conflict and Conflict Resolution	11
2.2.2 The View of Marxist Theorists about Conflict and Conflict resolution .....	13
2.2.3 The view of Symbolic Interaction Theory about conflict and conflict resolution .....	14
2.4. Empirical Literature review .....	15
2.4.1 Studies on Marital Conflict.....	15
2.4.2 Factors for marital conflict.....	16
2.4.3 Roles of Indigenous Knowledge in Conflict Resolution.....	19
CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	21
3.1 Study Population.....	21
3.2 Research Approach .....	21

Why Qualitative approach for this study?.....	22
3.3 Method of Data Collection.....	22
3.4 Sample Procedures.....	23
3.5 Sources of Data.....	24
3.6 Methods of data analysis.....	24
3.7 Ethical Consideration.....	24
CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA.....	26
4.1 Overview of Kaffa.....	26
4.1.1 Description of the study area.....	26
4.1.2 Livelihoods.....	27
4.1.3 Socio-Cultural Contexts.....	28
4.1.4 Voluntary Associations.....	31
4.1.5 The social value of coffee ceremony.....	32
4.1.6 The Value of <i>Miyaatoo</i> relationship among Kaffecho.....	33
CHAPTER FIVE: RESULT AND DISCUSSION.....	36
5.1 Formation of marriage among Kaffecho.....	39
5.1.1 Marriage.....	39
5.1.2 Pre- Marriage lessons.....	40
5.1.3 Major criteria for mate selection among Kaffecho.....	41
5.1.4 Establishment of marriage.....	42
5.2 Understanding Conflicts and Their Causes.....	45
5.2.1 The conception of wrong doings in relation with marital relation.....	45
5.2.2 The Kaffecho’s understanding of conflict.....	45
5.2.3 Major causes of marital conflict among Kaffecho.....	46
<i>Establishing marriage without parental acceptance</i> .....	46
<i>Adultery (Bushittino)</i> .....	48
<i>Interferences of children</i> .....	49
<i>Fail to fulfill the expected role</i> .....	50
5.3 Customary conflict resolutions ( <i>Qaabittino</i> ) among Kaffecho.....	52
<i>Awchachign “Otto”</i> .....	53
<i>Mugit “Tucce taggoo”</i> .....	54
5.3.1 Customary mechanisms of marital conflict resolution in the study area.....	56

<i>Conflict resolution through in-law relationship (Nacho)</i> .....	57
<i>Conflict resolution through Community elders (Sheewe Genoo)</i> .....	61
<i>Conflict Resolution through Deddebe Tato</i> .....	64
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION .....	70
6.1 Conclusion .....	70
6.2 Recommendations.....	73
References.....	74

## LIST OF TABLES, MAPS AND FIGURE

<b>A. LIST OF TABLES</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>Table-1:</b> Characteristics of married couples who experience marital conflict and resolved it through customary marital conflict resolution mechanisms.....	36
<b>Table-2:</b> Characteristics of key informants.....	37
<b>Table- 3:</b> Characteristics of FGD participants.....	38
 <b>B. LIST OF MAPS</b>	
<b>Map-1:</b> Administrative Map of Kaffa Zone .....	27
<b>Map-2:</b> Bonga Town and Neighbors.....	30
<b>Map-3:</b> Gimbo Woreda Administrative Divisions .....	31
 <b>C. LISI OF FIGURE</b>	
<b>Figure-1:</b> Figure showing the hierarchies of marital conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area .....	57



## GLOSSARY OF LOCAL TERMS

Abelijo	Christian relations
Alammo	A person who holds the spirit of Eqqo
Ariyech geenana'o	knowledgeable elders
Bunno	Coffee
Shunemamoo	Adultery
Buhiishooch kereegimo	Interference of children
Daadde-goyo	Home garden
Dadoo	A voluntary support group of about 5 persons at a time of agricultural related or house construction activities for half day.
Dafo	A voluntary support group of about 15 persons at a time of agricultural related or house construction activities for one full day.
Dajewo	One of Kaffa's clan
Dedebe Tato	King of the hill
Dego	Kind of support in cash or in-kind for marriage ceremony
Diggo	Peace
Diggeemukoo	Quarrel or absence of peace
Etano	A kind of smoking element used as a "press charge" at dedebe tato's traditional court center.
Eqqo	A spirit of prophecy
Gaberecho	An individual who accompany the Alammo through all his actions and movement
Gaffoo	Village
Godayeeto	Offended
Godayito	Offender
Goonoo	Beating drum
Gurmashoo	Teen age boy

Ibero	Truth
Iddiro	Self-help voluntary association
Ikke Qondee eeyo	One pot honey
Ikke Ceelle, Barehoo	red ox
Ikke Kashe Gattoo	Paired oxen for farming purpose
Kaareebeemo	Fight and or disagreements
Kaffi Yaroo	Race of Kaffa
Tocho'na Qawonaa	Poem
Kenaamechee Kaaro	Marital Conflict
Koyo	Conflict
Maakkee niho	Very respected elder
Manjo	A minority and out casted clan of Kaffecho
Shaageyee Yesho	Marriage Relation
Miyaatoo	Best-man-relation
Naachoo	In-law relations
Nallee kexo	Court
Numoo	Compensation
Ooto	Awchachign
Gaffeto	A circular tap
Tate shagiyoo	Marriage between compatible social classes
Showee Geenoo	Community Elders
Shuneyechoo	Mediator
Ta'doono	Sir
Tayulebonaa	let me be tired
Ta'gennee	Madam
Taggo	Debate or hard talk
Tatiyaan Shaagiyo	Marriage between non-compatible social classes
Qaabittinoo	Customary conflict resolution

Qanee Miyaatoo	The right side best-man
Ufo	Curse
Uuxo	False banana
Yaroo	Race
Yeero	Holly creator
Yeeriibma	Thanking in the name of God
Yoochee Miyaatoo	The left side best man

## **ACRONYMS**

CSA - Central Statistical Agency

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

IK – Indigenous knowledge

SNNPR- Southern Nations, Nationalities, and People's Region

UNESCO- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

## ABSTRACT

*The main purpose of this study is to investigate the potential causes of marital conflicts and to describe the available customary marital conflict resolution mechanisms which are used in the study area. The research was conducted in Bonga and Gimbo community, which are located in the Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples' Regional State, particularly in Kafa Zone. Qualitative research approach was employed in this study for its appropriateness to meet the stated objectives. The informants were selected purposively and data was collected through the use of in depth interview, FGD, case study, personal observation as well as informal interview. In terms of sample size, a total number of 24 informants were participated. In depth-interviews with 6 (six) key informants; Six (6) cases; 2 FGD (each group consisted six members); observations during the conflict resolution proceedings takes place as well as informal interviews were used as a data collection tool in order to collect primary data. The secondary data were obtained from; books, journals, magazines, published and unpublished research materials. To interpret the data which was gathered through primary and secondary sources, thematic analysis method were used. The finding of the study shows that, among Kaffecho, the dominant ways of marriage formation were appeared to be arranged marriage, free choice marriage with parental acceptance and free choice marriage without parental acceptance. Establishment of marriage was much related with the causes of marital conflict as well as resolution mechanisms. In the study area, the major causes of marital conflict were happened to be, establishing marriage without parental acceptance, adultery, interferences of children, fail to fulfill the expected role as a husband or wife. The most widely practiced marital conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area were done through, in-law relations (nacho), best-man relation (Miyaatoo), religious leaders as well as community elders (Sheewe Genoo), volunteer associations (Idirro) and traditional belief leaders (Alamos). The finding also revealed that the customary marital conflict resolution mechanism is commonly used in resolving marital conflicts in the study area. Generally, for the region like Kaffa, where there is very few accesses of getting marriage counseling and family therapy services, it would be very wise decision to appreciate as well as preserve the traditional mechanisms of marital conflict resolution which are available in my study area.*

## **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

Marriage has been variously defined by different scholars, Amao-Kehinde (1999) defined marriage as a sacred and lifelong contract between a man and a woman who have consented to live a life of vocation, love and sharing for each other for the purpose of promoting their mutual growth and welfare as persons in their journey through life. This implies that marital union is intended to be a permanent one until the death of a partner. Also Eri (2004) see marriages as the contract between a man a woman to leave as husband and wife after performing the ceremony of payment of dowry. David and John (2000:8) defined marriage as the emotional and legal commitment of two people to share emotional and physical intimacy, various tasks and economic resources. According to Della (1998) marriage is a legal union of a man and a woman for co-habitation and often procreation. Regardless of the multifaceted nature of marriage union, for the purpose of this study, marriage only refers to a legal union of two opposite sex who decide to live together as husband and wife in assuming a permanent base.

Fagan and Churchill (2012) see family as is the building block of society and marriage as its foundation. Though marriage institution is considered as a basic unit of a society, it couldn't escape from some difficulties which could challenge the stability of marriage relations. Anibueze (2000, cited in, Obiageli, 2009 ) states that marriage is a legal union of two adult of the opposite sex who live together in joy and sadness, sorrow and tears, peace and harmony till death separates them. This implies that marital relationship between couples may experience problems, difficulties, challenges, conflicts and confusions at one time or another. According to Katzenback and Smith (1992), marital conflict is defined as a difference over which the parties involved recognize a threat to their requests, comforts or concern and it is also seen as a struggle or challenge between people with opposing needs, perspectives, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals. Also Buehler, Krishnakumar, Stone, Anthony, Pemberton, Gerard, and Barber (1998) see marital conflict as the existence of high levels of disagreement, stressful and hostile interactions between spouses, disrespect, and verbal abuse while Cummings (1998:60) interprets it as “any major or minor interpersonal interaction that involved a difference of opinion, whether it was mostly negative or even mostly positive.” Cummings further elaborates that everyday marital conflict refers to daily interactions,

whether major or minor, in which couples have a difference of opinion. When two people come together in marriage, each marriage partner comes into the union with his/her individualized personal characteristics, needs, attitudes, values and peculiarities (Uwe 2006). This implies that, since every marriage relationship is as unique as the individuals it contains, when one of the couple going to react in a different way to life challenges, it could be a reason for conflict to occur within the marriage.

Despite the fact that the occurrences of conflict with in any personal interaction particularly in marital relation is undeniable, there are also available ways for dealing with it. For instance there are two ways of marital conflict resolutions mechanisms i.e. the formal and informal. According to United Nations (2007) the formal one is conducted in the court through litigation with official recognition of the government and tends to be more strictly examined and monitored whether there are signs of impartiality, entrenched inequities and lack of due process. On the other side Tasew (2016) see customary or sometimes called informal conflict resolution mechanisms which functions on the basis of local customary practices or cultural norms based on ancient set of practices in almost all the societies in the world. Regardless of their location in time or space, almost all society, have norms and regulations to handle conflict and achieving resolution of differences. Gulliver (1979:1, cited in Abebe, 2016) states that every society has its own mechanisms of handling dispute. Similarly, Bohannan (1967, cited in Abebe, 2016) describes that society is impossible without conflict. But society is worse without control of it.

According to Tasew (2016) traditional conflict resolution are playing an important role in resolving conflicts and maintaining peace and stability in a community. Also Macfarlane (2007) states that, indigenous knowledge is run by elders who are well known and respected members of the community and may comprise religious leaders, wise-men and other community leaders. Similarly, Yntiso, Fikade and Asefa (2011) considered prominent and old-age groups within a society are the source of indigenous knowledge as they have experience and critical perception about their environment. Customary justice systems have functioned for a long time separate to the formal justice system without sufficient recognition and protection in law (Kariuk, 2011). As to him they have been called using different tags such as indigenous, informal, non-formal, non-state or non-official justice systems.

Most conflicts in Ethiopia could easily be handled at the grass-root levels by the societies themselves using their customary mechanisms without the direct intervention of the government (Macfarlane, 2007). Indigenous institutions of conflict resolution are considered by some scholars to be free of drawbacks of the state legal system which is described as evidence driven and containing the possibility of false allegation and testimony (Meron, 2010, cited in Teressa, 2016).

Traditional institutions play a proactive role to promote social cohesion, peace, harmony, co-existence; and a reactive role in resolving disputes which have already occurred (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2008, cited in Tasew, 2016). Therefore these traditional or customary conflict resolution mechanisms do not simply focus on the punitive measures nor do they only settle the conflict. They rather attempt to bring about sustaining peace among the conflicting parties thereby the frequency of hatred and enmity within the conflicting married couple might permanently be disappeared.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Marriage is socially recognized and approved union between individuals, who commit to one another with the expectation of a stable and lasting intimate relationship. However, in contemporary industrialized societies, marriage functions less as a social institution and more as a source of intimacy for the individuals involved (Skolnick, 2009). Accordingly, despite the fact that Ethiopia is one of the conservative countries where marriage is seen as one of the basic social institution for having a happy familial life through performing socially accepted type of marriage, as the period goes on, globalization and modernization has affected the value the society gives for marital life, especially in cities and big town, including Addis Ababa (Admasu, 2013). We all deal with conflict in our daily lives-at home, work and school, in personal and business relations. In today's complex society, it is common to see when communications break down, differences increase and conflicts arise. What is important is how to settle our differences (Abebe, 2016).

Araba (2002) has observed that marriages are being transformed and affected by several other factors; families abandoning key traditional practices in favor of modern ones, changes in family structures, migration, changes in marriage ages and increased cases of polygynous marriages in the form of 'small-houses'. Equality and how partners contribute economically into the family has



also played a role in the changes (Amin, 2002, Eloundou-Enyegue, 2002). These and other factors have forced to increase the occurrences of conflicts with in marital relationships.

Marital conflicts have been seen as the major causes of marital instability which often leads to divorce, desertion, single-parenthood and generally failed marriages (Olson 2000). This is because, when there is conflict at home, the consequences are great for the couples themselves, their children and to the society at large. As a result of the role the family unit plays in the overall development of the society, the problem of marital conflicts calls for urgent attention because when the home, which forms the structure of the society, is settled, the society itself is at peace (Esere & Idowu, 2000).

According to Teressa (2016) the roles that the customary mechanisms of conflict resolution recently receiving academic attentions. Accordingly, there are growing attentions from sociological and anthropological works examining indigenous institutions of conflict resolution in recent time. Since diverse Ethiopian societies have their own customary conflict resolution institutions and mechanisms of conflict resolutions, they use their traditional wisdom to deal with conflict which are both inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic in nature. In this regards, in Ethiopia, researches have been done by different researchers. They generally examined the various types of disputes and number of cases handled by indigenous conflict resolution institutions or mechanisms. The customary wisdoms employed to manage the various types of conflicts and the interface within indigenous institutions and between formal have been researched by different scholars (Demissie 2005; Girma 2009; Dejene 2007; Tilahun 2011; Wondiyrad 2010; Melese 2008; Mamo 2008; Yirga 2008; Uthman 2008; Ambaye 2008; Tasew 2016; Solomon, 2014; Teressa, 2016; Esayas, 2015). The studies above explored diverse causes of conflict and mechanisms of conflict resolutions based on the socio-economic and environmental settings of their study societies.

In addition, Meaza (2014) investigated the relationship between marital conflict, conflict resolution mechanism and the relation with marital satisfaction from psychological point of view. On the other hand Admasu (2013) analyzed the major changes and challenges of marital relationships. As to him, the issue of marriage has been one of the social capitals which should have been talked in order to have healthy, dynamic and responsive generation that would take more responsibilities, including marital responsibilities.

Zegeye (2016), who studied “the changes and continuities of indigenous *Qoollee Deejjoo* ritual practice, and its role in forest resource management among Kafecho”. He further explains that, the Kafa community, who live in Southwestern Ethiopia have enormous indigenous intangible customary practices which never been well investigated and recognized clearly. In fact I have seen a research which is done by Bisrat (2014) on traditional conflict resolution mechanisms among Kaffecho and the procedure followed in reconciliation process. But unfortunately, I never came across with researches directly dealing with marital conflict which are resolved by using customary resolutions mechanisms. The present shortage in local studies and lack of systematically documented information on marital conflicts and customary conflict resolution mechanisms as they have relationship with protecting marriage institution needs vital attention. Against this background, this study tried to fill the conceptual and geographical gap through deep investigation on Kaffecho’s traditional mechanisms of marital conflict resolutions.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The research has the following general and specific objectives.

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

- The general objective of this research was to investigate the causes and customary resolution mechanisms of marital conflicts among Kaffecho.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objectives**

- To describe the describe of marriage formation of marriage among Kaffecho;
- To identify the major sources of marital conflict in the study area;
- To explain customary marital conflict resolution mechanisms;
- To discuss institutions playing role in marital conflict resolution;

### **1.5 Significance of the study**

The study is significant from the following perspectives. First, it provide valuable information about Kaffecho’s culture regarding on, how they establish marriage, what could be the potential causes for marital conflict in that area, how they resolve it by using customary mechanisms. Second, the finding of the study may be used by the concerned bodies (e.g. legislative) to consider and preserve indigenous/customary knowledge and values.

Generally, the findings of this study could help marriage counselors as well as family therapists, government and non-government organization who works on the wellbeing of marriage, children and family institution through sharing Kaffecho's customary marital conflict resolution strategies. The knowledge assist them in helping families with cases of marital conflict. This implies that the mechanisms of marital conflict resolution will be enhanced through the findings of this study. Further, the results of the study will contribute to the limited literature in Ethiopia and Kaffecho.

### **1.6 Scope (delimitation) of the study**

The researcher believes that the problem would have been studied thoroughly. Shortage of time, finance and other constraints bear limitation on the geographical coverage and extent of the study. Even though, there are many places (sites) where customary mechanisms of marital conflict resolution among Kaffecho is applying, this study was limited in its scope with only two research sites. Therefore, it is with this delimitation that the study was done.

### **1.7 Limitation of the study**

I am not originally from Kafa and also not a native speaker of Kafa language. Thus I had some language constraints but I tried to overcome it through the help of translators. Regarding cultural barriers, I tried to manage it by creating one week rapport with the community members. Time constraint was the major problem by restraining the researcher from observing various actual events and processes of customary marital conflict resolution processes. Lack of books and previous researches in the area of my study was also the other major pitfalls in this research. Hence, these constraints challenge the claim that the thesis is exhaustive and comprehensive. My effort, however, is to establishes a ground for further research.

### **1.8 Definition of terms**

**Marriage:** is defined as a legal union between man and woman in an assumption of long lasting relationship.

**Marital conflict:** is the disagreement between husband and wife in their marriage relationship.

**Customary:** traditional, informal, indigenous, cultural, non-official, local

**Mechanisms:** is a process, techniques, or system for achieving a result.

**Conflict resolution** is defined as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution. The customary conflict resolution mechanisms are done through, family members, kinship groups, neighborhoods, friends, voluntary associations (*idir*), elder's religious institutions as well as traditional religious leaders aiming at restoring the previous peaceful relationship within the marriage as well as the community by avoiding the sense of revenge through culturally accepted practices and rituals.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

This chapter discusses the conceptual, theoretical and relevant empirical studies that are believed to be helpful to support the study. This section reviewed concepts related to marriage, marital conflict as well as customary mechanisms of marital conflict resolution.

### **2.1 Conceptual Framework**

#### **Marriage**

Ideally, marriage should be a lifelong agreement between husband and wife. Ocho (1996, cited in, Glorial, 2009 ) in her own view, contented that, marriage is a social process whereby a man and a woman agree to live together as husband and wife for the rest of their lives in the presence of at least, two witnesses.

Marriage is not only a close personal relationship but also a social institution which affects the life of people. It is basis for the formation of a family in terms of producing and raising children (Ponzetti & Mutch, 2006) as it legally allows sexual relations and encourages loyalty between husband and wife (Rao, 2002; Stutzer & Frey, 2006). Marriage starts with the selection of a marriage partner which is one of the most serious decision in the life of an individual (Fisman, Iyengar, Kamenica, & Simonson, 2006). The way of selecting a marriage partner, procedure, rules and criteria vary mostly from culture to culture and from one society to another. Individuals sometimes select their spouse with their own choice and sometimes they are selected by other individuals such as family etc. Hamon and Ingoldsby (2003) described three approaches for mate selection; marriage by capture, arranged marriage and free-choice mate selection. Marriage by capture is not a usual and accepted method as in it men marry the women by force and without women's will. Zadeh (2003) categorized marriages in terms of procedure into totally arranged marriages, partially arranged, partially love marriages and totally love marriages. In the same vein, Arif (2012) observed three ways of marriage in Pakistan i.e arranged marriage, marriage by choice with parental acceptance and marriage by choice without parental acceptance.

The following nine characteristics of marriage were identified by the late Carlfred Broderick (1992, 1993, cited in Olson, 2007). A former president of the National Council on Family

Relations, Broderick found these characteristics to be common across income levels, educational levels, and ethnic and cultural groups in the United.

- **Marriage is a demographic event.** Each marriage creates a social unit in society.
- **Marriage is the joining of two family and social networks.** When individuals marry, they marry not only each other but their partner's family and friends. Their social network may comprise friends of both partners, but only those friends liked by both partners tend to remain friends of the couple.
- **Marriage is a legal contract between the couple and the state.** Each state specifies the rights and responsibilities of the partners.
- **Marriage is an economic union.** A married couple usually becomes a single financial unit for most purposes. As a group, married couples are probably society's most important financial decision makers buying, selling, borrowing, and sharing resources as one.
- **Marriage is the most common living arrangement for adults.** Few people choose to live alone. Marriage is the most popular living arrangement for adults.
- **Marriage is the context of most human sexual activity.** Most married couples rate sexual activity positively, especially in the early years.
- **Marriage is a reproductive unit.** Most married couples become parents and see parenting as an important goal and a valued purpose in their lives.
- **Marriage is a unit that socializes children** (although children can also be raised by single parents, extended families, grandparents, and other caregivers).
- **Marriage is an opportunity to develop an intimate, sharing relationship.** Although many marriages fail, many others provide a supportive context in which people develop and maintain intimacy.

### **Why Marriage?**

Marriage is a foundation and a good for societies. It is a significant institution to maintain the continual of human kind in a stable, healthy, and productive way. It can be the most nourishing and durable asset in human relationship as pointed out by Olson and Olson, (2000). Holman and Larson (1994) posit that marriage provides the fundamental structure for establishing family relationships which are aimed at expanding the family by creating the next generation. A healthy

marriage is characterized by a series of constructive influences and changes in the physical and emotional health of adults and children (Gallagher & Waite, 2000).

Marriage benefits society by building and strengthening human relationships within the home (among spouses and children) and beyond (involving relatives, neighbors, and communities).

For this reason, the family has long been understood as the fundamental unit of society, the foundation from which religious, civic, and legal organizations naturally develop and flourish. As shown above, the weight of research supports these beliefs about marriage, demonstrating the benefits for the individual and consequently, for the society.

### **Conflict in Marriage**

According to Driscoll and Driscoll (2012), if you are married, you will have conflict. This is because marriage is a relationship between an imperfect persons. Many scholars suggests that marital conflict refer to difficult relationships experienced by husband and wife in their marriage. Olusanya (1970, cited in, Gloria, 2009) postulated that marriage often involves conflicts because it seems hard for husband and wife to live together year after year without having problems. In this context, it seems difficult for husband and wife to escape conflicts in their marriage relationship. Nwoye (1991, cited in, Gloria, 2009) found that conflict in marriage refers to disagreements between marital partners over values, beliefs, goals, mores and behaviors that make up the structure of the nuclear unit. For this study, marital conflict is considered to be a negative interaction in marriage, which can be verbal, or non-verbal or both in which the husband and the wife aim to disgrace each other.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution is a process of peace making and a means of handling conflicts in a society to create peace when conflicts occur either in a family, groups or interpersonal relations. According to Michael (2006), conflict resolution occurs by listening to and providing opportunities to meet the needs of all parties, and to adequately address interests; so that each party is satisfied with the outcome. Consequently, conflict resolution is usually involves consensus, conciliation and other techniques (Kestner and Ray, 2002). For that reason, the processes of conflict resolution is vary from society to society such as negotiation, mediation and arbitration.

In this understanding, negotiation is the act of dealing with or bargaining with others, through mutual decision, in order to arrange the terms of a transaction or agreement, as in the preparation a contract or treaty (Babbitt, 2006). It occurs between two parties talking to one another; there can be one negotiator serving as a go-between two parties or there can be two or more negotiators representing the disputing parties (Hampson, 2006; Babbitt, 2009b). In this case, negotiation involves the two direct conflicting parties in a process of decision which seeks to bring them into voluntary agreement. Although negotiation is not about who is right or wrong in a situation or conflict, it is the process of resolving a situation through agreement. Thus, its purpose is to arrange for or bring about settlements by means of discussion. On the other hand;

*"Mediation is an informal process in which disputing parties discuss their situation with the goal of reaching a mutual satisfactory agreement or gaining new perceptions about the situation, with the help of a neutral third party who serves as an intermediary to assist the disputing parties to reach their own agreement or resolution" (Kestner and Ray, 2002:208).*

This implies that mediation is a voluntary or confidential process in which a neutral third party facilitator helps people to discuss a difficult issue and negotiate an agreement. Thus, mediation is using third party to help the conflicting parties to come to neutrally satisfactory agreement. Accordingly, Schellenberg (1996) states that the third neutral party follow mediation process including gathering information, framing the issues, developing options, negotiating, and formalizing agreements. However, the mediator doesn't have any decision making power rather parties create their own solutions. Therefore, the mediator's task is not to solve the problem for the disputants but to help them to find a way to solve the problem themselves. Against to mediation, a third party decision-maker to which the parties take their case describes arbitration.

## **2.2 Theories on the Concept of Conflict and Conflict Resolution**

### **2.2.1 The views of Functionalist and Structural Functionalists on Conflict and Conflict Resolution**

Social scientists developed social theories that clarify about the behavior of society. To answer the fundamental question concerning: "What is the basic relationship among the parts of the body?" different theories propose different answers. Two contradictory answers are proposed by order and



conflict theories. For order theorists the answer for the above mentioned question is the parts of the society are in harmony. Equilibrium theory sees a society as a complex system of interdependent parts, working together to preserve stability. The parts of the systems are thought basically to be in harmony with each other. A high degree of cooperation (and social integration) is accomplished because it is supposed that there is a high degree of harmony on social goals and on cultural values. The parts of the system cooperates because of similar or complementary interests and because they need each other to accomplish those things beneficial to all. Thus, for order theorists the fundamental issue is answering the questions like; what is the nature of the social bond? What holds groups together? (Zinn and Eitzen 1991:39).

In line with this, Durkheim who was vitally concerned with establishing the reality of social facts believed that social cohesion (the term he used was ‘social solidarity’) was primarily the result of a force arising from participation in a shared system of beliefs and values, which molded and controlled individual behavior. According to Durkheim, individuals in a society are social actors who are restrained by social facts to stay in society. Social facts are functionalist in nature. They exist only if the society can derive utility or benefits from them. Extrapolating this theory to conflict resolution by customary mechanisms, conflict resolution is viewed as a social fact from which society derives some benefit. The social solidarity theory, being a functionalist theory, explains the resilience of conflict resolution by using traditional mechanisms even in modern societies that have embraced western legal systems. Where a community cannot access formal justice systems due to costs and other externalities, those customary mechanisms are there to resolve arising disputes. Therefore, the existence of customary mechanisms is a social fact in the society providing a conflict resolution utility occasioned by the absence or low penetration of western legal systems (Kariuki, 2015)

Durkheim elucidates what hold society in ‘primitive’ culture and modern society. To him what bound societies together in ‘primitive’ culture was kinship, however, in industrialized societies the primary ties between individuals come from economic and occupational interdependence and cooperation (McGee and Warms 2008). Durkheim sees conflict as abnormal phenomenon (cited in Bishop 2007: 35-36). Equally, Stohl (1976, cited in Jacoby, 2008) states conflict as a threat to the stability of social structure. Hence, he goes on to say, to achieve, attain and accomplish

attitudinal, behavioral, and situational integration respectively among a given society conflict must be reduced.

### **2.2.2 The View of Marxist Theorists about Conflict and Conflict resolution**

The assumption of conflict theorist is contradictory to the equilibrium theory. According to the former model, conflict is regarded as built into the social system. Conflict theorists usually perceive power as the central feature of society rather than thinking of society as held together by collective agreement concerning a cohesive set of cultural standards, as functionalists do. They seek to systematically explain the general forms of conflict in society i.e., how conflict starts and varies, and the effects it brings (Coser, Dahrendorf and Collins, 2006:213). They see conflict as a normal feature of social life, influencing the distribution of power, and the direction and magnitude of social life. Most adherents of this model heavily relied on the Marxism perspective. For Marxists, Competition, rather than consensus, is characteristic of human relationships and which often leads to conflict because individuals and groups compete for advantage.

Things people desire most are always in short supply; hence competition and conflict depict human relations. They perceive the interaction of the society constantly in conflict over resources that conflict drives social change. They see social change as abrupt, even revolutionary, rather than evolutionary (Zinn and Eitzen 1991:40). In the same manner, Coser (1957:198) explicates the function of conflict for technical progress and productivity. To him, conflict has not only served to generate new norms and new institutions but also it stimulates economic and technological improvements.

Generally, just as structural functionalism was criticized for focusing too much on the stability of societies; social-conflict perspective has also limitation as it overlooks the stability of societies. Though conflict usually paves the way for society's changes, it may sometimes result in the entire destruction of the system instead of giving rise to social transformation. This reveals the limitation of social conflict theory that argues conflict is always a source of better changes. Karl Marx conceives largely associated conflict with the economic factor i.e., he argues that conflict could be emerged between two groups: between the bourgeoisies (who own the means of production and powerful) and the proletariat (who are working for their masters – bourgeoisies and less powerful). The dynamic tension between the two classes resulted in the overthrow of dominants by dominated

units and the tensions will end up with the formation of a communist system where there is no tension exist (Zinn and Eitzen 1991:40).

Another Marxist theorist Ralf Dahrendorf added additional ideas and viewed conflict as not only a mere economic factor rather as an ever-present phenomenon, occurs because of other aspects of social organization. Depending on power relation he divided the population into 'haves' and 'have-nots.' In social organization, power is distributed unequally between haves and have-nots, there may always be a situation in every society the 'haves' will be in conflict with the 'have-nots.' Hence, to Dahrendorf (cited in, Zinn and Eitzen, 1991:40), conflict is endemic to social organization. Unlike Marx, Dahrendorf views conflict as an unending class struggle between authority figures and their subordinates that never ends, but merely temporarily regulated. As to him, various positions within society have different amounts of authority which always involves both superordination and subordination. Those who occupy positions of authority are expected to control subordinates; that is, they dominate because of the expectations of those who surround them, not because of their own psychological characteristics. Dahrendorf (cited in, Henkin and Singleton, 1984) proves that conflict is caused by many factors, irrespective of the political and economic system.

### **2.2.3 The view of Symbolic Interaction Theory about conflict and conflict resolution**

Symbolic Interaction Theory asserts that human individuals develop their personalities through interaction with others, by exchanging meaningful symbols with each other for the purpose of defining themselves. Symbolic interactionists do not conceive of the mind as a thing, a physical structure, but rather as a continuing process. It is a process that is itself part of the larger process of stimulus and response.

Symbolic interactionists have a view of the socialization process that is different from that of most other sociologists. To symbolic interactionists, conventional sociologists are likely to see socialization as simply a process by which people learn the things that they need to survive in society (for instance, culture, role expectations). However for symbolic interactionists, socialization is not simply a one-way process in which the actor receives information, but is a dynamic process in which the actor shapes and adapts the information to his or her own needs

(Manis and Meltzer, 1978:6). In line with this assumption, marital conflict may arise when the married couple's starts give different meaning for the same thing.

Mead's work of "Mind and the Self", individuals carry society around with them, giving them the ability, through self-criticism, to control themselves. The mind is related to virtually every other aspect of symbolic interactionism, including socialization, meanings, symbols, the self, interaction, and even society. Thus, even though, an individual assumed as an active member in the community who develops their own meaning rather than doing what is just told to do, since they are part of the whole community, it would be convincing that their action wouldn't be much more far from the actions of the whole community.

## **2.4. Empirical Literature review**

### **2.4.1 Studies on Marital Conflict**

Even though marriage is assumed to be the base for family, and family is a basic unit of society, it doesn't seem that much attention has been given to protect these institutions. As to Gemechu and Assefa (2006:252) described that, nearly all societies in the world recognize the importance of marriage as a source of the foundation of a society, which in turn is the result of many institutions among which one is family. They specified that every society should have to pay attention to promote marriage institution regardless of the technological advancement it has achieved or the geographical location irrespective of its being rural or urban. This is because, as the period goes on, the so-called 'globalization' and 'modernization' has affected the value that the society gives for marriage.

A lot of marriages collapse as a result of marital conflicts among married people in Enugu State. Although marital conflict is inevitable in marriages due to the fact that couples are from different backgrounds, many factors have combined to affect the marriage institution. These causes problems which both young and old married couples must contend with. A misconception of what is expected in marital relationships coupled with cultural patterns and behaviors further stimulate fear in couples. This fear builds up into tension which results in maladjustment or conflict (Adejoju, 1982, cited in Obiageli, 2009).

As to Seble (2011), some hold an opinion that love and relationships are something that follow the same rule across generations. However, every so often we hear many complain saying relationships, marriage and love are losing their value in the eyes of the present generation of Ethiopia. Especially older people exemplify this through the rising rate of divorce, the ‘take it easy’ attitude of the young and the seemingly missing appetite to compromise and sacrifice interests in relationships and marriages.

#### **2.4.2 Factors for marital conflict**

There are so many factors affecting marital relationships though the sources may differ from culture to culture. A national study conducted by Habtamu (1998) that involved most populous nine ethnic groups in Ethiopia reported major sources of conflict are misuse of family income and other economic issues, poverty, committing adultery, poor communication, jealousy, sexual incompatibility, in-laws interference, rumors and lack of love between the partners, wife beating and husband’s drunkenness are also other factors identified as contributing factors for family conflict. Causes of family violence are poor living conditions, poor management of family income, jealousy, husbands coming home drunk, and poor communication (lack of understanding) are the major causes mentioned as a group. However, female participants reported that poor management of family income, jealousy, and husbands’ coming home drunk are the main contributing factors to family conflict. It is to be noted that male chauvinism and wanting to dominate also serve as causes of conflict in family.

The major causes of marital conflicts among the married couples of Hosanna residents are the interplay of multiple factors such as gender role factors, psychological factors, sexual factors, socio-cultural and economic (financial) factors in order of ranking (Yacob, 2007). According to him, major causes of marital conflict and coping mechanisms among selected couples in Hossana town, Hadiya Zone listed the following reasons in ranking for marital conflict are: cultural differences, extra marital affairs, sexual maladjustment, premarital problems, kin’s interference, communication problems, social sanctions, the need for dominance, alcohol abuse, persisting stress, temperamental incompatibility, religious differences, insufficient preparation to marriage.

According to Akinade and Niolon (1997, 2003) the most common sources of marital problems include: finance, infidelity, children, in-laws and friends, sex, self-disclosure, privacy etc. Some typical issues that often spark conflict in marriage are:

**Money or Finance**—regardless of how much money a couple has, it is often the biggest sources of conflicts in marriage. Most times there is argument over how money that comes into the home can be used. It is important for spouses to discuss their values and feelings about money so each partner can try to understand the other. Working out a budget and planning finances usually require negotiation and compromise, but they are important tasks that help couples set priorities and goals for the future - such as training the children, type of school the children should attend, building a house, buying a car, giving to the less privileged or the orphanages, spending money as it comes or spending a little and having large reserve for the other day. Quarrel may arise over knowing one another's pay or financial status. When a partner wants to control the expenditure of the other partner, conflict may also arise (Akinade, 1997; Niolon, 2003).

At the same time, conflicts over money can occur for many reasons, beyond stresses on marital relationships that stem from objective levels of economic hardship. The fact that families are affluent or have sufficient funds to meet most everyday needs does not preclude money as a serious source of conflict. A well-established principle of interpersonal psychology is that deprivation is relative, rather than absolute, and that conflict between individuals or groups may be greatest in contexts of rising affluence that does not keep up with rising expectations (Myers, 2007).

Money is always to some extent limited, and the desires of family members with regard to the expenditure of money can easily exceed the available funds. Moreover, regardless of the amount of available funds, some or many members of the family may feel relatively deprived with regard to the opportunity to spend these funds or their perceived or real differences between their own access to money and other people's ability to spend funds, including the marital partner. Likewise, family members' perceived social power, relative worth, and feelings of being valued may be significantly affected by the perceived capacity to engage in decision making about money, and this may be linked to money disagreements. Finally, conflicts may occur because of the over expenditure of funds, blaming or hostility between family members as a result of such expenditures, or conflicts regarding proposed spending as over expenditures.

However, money may also be among the most "socially acceptable" topics that people can admit arguing about (Argyle & Furnham, 1998). As such, whether money emerges as a leading source of marital conflict in the naturalistic setting of the home, as it did in laboratory contexts, awaits examination. Communication is an important tool in solving the aforementioned problems relating to finance in homes. If couples could open up and dialogue/discuss among themselves concerning money

that comes into the home from both partners and how such money should be expended, then marital problems arising from finance administration would have been well managed if not fully eradicated (Akinade, 1997; Niolon, 2003).

**In-laws:** are usually most problematic in the early years of a marriage. In-law issues can trigger conflict within the entire family. Spouses can deal with in-law problems by sharing their feelings and discussing what kind of relationship they want with their in-laws. Expressing negativity about in-laws usually just makes things worse. Problems may arise in marriage as a result of misconception, insecurity and prejudices. A husband may not want to see the wife with her old friends and vice-versa. A mother-in-law may feel insecure because of the presence of the daughter-in-law who she feels now prevents her from enjoying the confidence of her son and blames any disagreement between her and the son on the wife. The wife may enter the marriage with a lot of prejudice about mothers-in-law, gets herself ready to deal with any mother-in-law so she becomes hostile and confrontational to her mother-in-law. Couples should learn to discuss and settle their differences without intrusion from friends and in-laws (Ibid).

**Sexual factors:** In this study it means sexual behavior or sexual act and is an emotional issue. Sexual expression is one of the happiest, most rewarding, and pleasurable experiences in a couple's life. Many spouses are afraid of getting hurt or rejected by their partners so they avoid discussing their feelings about sexual issues. Sex can be a source of marital problems when there is sexual dysfunction in any or both couples or when there is evidence of extramarital sex. Problems can arise in homes when couples deny their partners of sexual pleasure when the urge for sex occurs. These denials however, can lead to either of the couple having secondary sex partner outside the home, which can cause marital problems that may degenerate to separation and divorce. In order for couples to resolve conflicts about sexual matters, it is crucial that they communicate directly, specifically and lovingly about their needs because it requires mutual agreement as to when and how it should come up (Niolon, 2003).

**Child-rearing:** The birth of children into homes brings a type of pleasure and sign of fulfillment to the couple. It also helps to strengthen the marriage tie. However, it may also be a major source of marital problems if couples fail to discuss their priority and are not open to accept whatever comes their way in terms of having children in the marriage. Child rearing is a time-consuming task that requires huge amounts of energy. Husbands and wives often have conflicting views on how to parent, based on how they were raised. Whatever decisions and rules parents make, it is important that they are united in front of the children. Otherwise, kids will learn to play one parent off the other, which

contributes to further conflict in the marriage. Couples may quarrel over the number of children to have in the family, may have different views about children's upbringing, discipline, education, morals, responsibilities, absence of children, sex (male or female), number of children etc. If couples do not reach an agreement on these issues, it may degenerate into marital problems, which may end up in separation and divorce (Akinade, 1997; Niolon, 2003).

**Gender role factors:** the different ways in which men and women behave are linked to but not necessarily determined by, their biological sex. Individuals are identified as male or female on the basis of physical structures, which are determined by chromosomes, gonads, and hormones. This labeling occurs at birth and is the first step in the process of developing gender identity, a sense of being male or female and what that means is one's society (Cook, 1997). The gender role patterns assigned to males and females influence all over roles in life. According to Olson (2000), the traditional view of gender roles in society, males are assumed to be superior to females and to have characteristics that are more desirable. The contemporary view holds that neither males nor females are superior; both have desirable and undesirable traits not based specifically on sex. Traditional view of family was based on two roles which men's role was instrumental, to be the bread winner, the manager, and the leader of the family and women's expressive role was taking care of the emotional and comforting, one performed by husband and the other by the wife. But a more contemporary view assumed that both sexes are capable and can be successful in a verity of roles at home and at work. Women can be independent, strong, logical, and task oriented; men can be nurturing, sensitive, cooperative, and detail oriented. However, men and women can benefit by learning from each other (Defrain & Olson, 2000).

### **2.4.3 Roles of Indigenous Knowledge in Conflict Resolution**

Traditional conflict resolution is playing an important role in resolving conflicts and maintaining peace and stability in a community (Tasew, 2016). According to Macfarlane (2007), indigenous knowledge is run by elders who are well known and respected members of the community and may comprise religious leaders, wise-men and other community leaders. Similarly, according to Fiseha, et al., (2011), prominent and old-age groups within a society are the source of indigenous knowledge as they have experience and critical perception about their environment.

Most conflicts in Ethiopia could easily be handled at the grass-root levels by the societies themselves using their customary mechanisms without the direct intervention of the government (Macfarlane, 2007). As to Meron (2010), indigenous institutions of conflict resolution are



considered by some scholars to be free of drawbacks of the state legal system which is described as evidence driven and containing the possibility of false allegation and. Traditional institutions play a proactive role to promote social cohesion, peace, harmony, co-existence; and a reactive role in resolving disputes which have already occurred (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2008, cited in, Tasew, 2016). Therefore these traditional or customary conflict resolution mechanisms do not merely focus on the punishment nor do they only resolve the conflict, they rather make an effort to bring about sustaining peace among the conflicting parties thereby the occurrence of hatred and hostility within as well as across communities might permanently be vanished.

There are various ways of resolving conflicts among Kaffecho .While some of the mechanisms are also commonly used in other societies, most of it are indigenous to Kaffa society (Bisrat, 2014). As to him, the most common traditional conflicts resolutions mechanisms among Kaffecho are:

- i. Shimgelena: resolving conflicts through elderly and religious leaders
- ii. Resolving conflicts using leaders of indigenous beliefs i.e “*Tommo*” and “*Eqqo*”

According to Bisrat, through the above mentioned traditional mechanisms, conflicts are resolved in a sustainable manner since people in conflict strictly adhere to the decisions of the figures in the above mentioned mechanisms due to the respect those people command in the society.

## **CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology refers to a coherent set of rules and procedures that are used to investigate a problem within the framework of philosophical approaches (Kitchen and Tate 2000). In the same manner, a research methodology includes the tools and techniques of data gathering and analysis (Mikelson 2005).

### **3.1 Study Population**

This study was conducted within Bonga and Gimbo community, which is located in the Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples' Regional State, particularly in Kafa Zone. The SNNPRS region is situated at 4°27' to 8°3' latitude North and 34°21' to 39°11' longitude east. It has a total area of 113,539 km<sup>2</sup>, accounting for about 10% of the country. With its capital at Hawassa, the SNNPRS is divided into thirteen (13) Administrative Zones, seven (7) special Woredas and 72 Woreda's. Kaffa is one of the thirteen administrative Zones in the SNNPRS. This zone is located in the South western part of Ethiopia; astronomically lies within the latitude of 07°8' to 07°26' North and longitude of 35°53' to 36°36' East. The total land area of the zone is 10602.7 km<sup>2</sup> (ZOFED, 2011; Yonas, 2005). According to ZOFED (2011), the present Kafa Zone, with its capital at Bonga, has a total land area of 10,610.39 km<sup>2</sup>.

Kafa is about 9.65 percent of the total area of the region. The zone comprises 11 Woredas (districts), which are subsequently divided into 291 Kebeles (276 rural and 15 urban) (lower administrative units). In order of their alphabetic sequence, the Woredas' are Bita, Bonga (urban unit), Chena, Cheta, Decha, Gesha, Gewata, Gimbo, Menjiyo, Saylem and Tello (ZOFED, 2011).

### **3.2 Research Approach**

Though there are quantitative, qualitative as well as mixed research approach, I only used a qualitative research approach for the appropriateness of the research. This study is designed to be a qualitative descriptive case study research. The reason for using such design is that it presents the data of real life-life situation which may not be captured through experiment or survey research and detailed view of the subject matter in its natural setting (Creswell, 1998). This study describes the causes of marital conflicts and the role of customary conflict resolution mechanism in resolving or settling conflicts in a natural setting among Kaffecho community of Southern Ethiopia.

## **Why Qualitative approach for this study?**

According to (Straus and Corbin 1998), qualitative methodology is a typical research approach which enables to come up with data that cannot easily produced by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. It is also the means for exploring and understanding the meanings of individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems (Creswell 2009). Moreover, qualitative research is preferred to collect data about human life realities, experiences, behavior, emotion and feeling, organizational function, social movement, cultural phenomena and their interaction with nature (Straus and Corbin 1998).

### **3.3 Method of Data Collection**

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

#### **Key informant Interview**

In this study, semi- structured interview were used to conduct in-depth personal interviews with about six (6) key informants. These interview was prepared with the intention of guiding the informants, rather than restricting them to answering what just asked. Thus, through this method valuable information beyond the scope of the interview was collected. The key informants were each from, Bonga town Culture and Tourism Bureau, volunteer association (*idirro*), community elders (*Showee Geenoo*), leader of traditional belief, assistants of traditional belief leader (*Gaberecho*) and religious leader. Written notes as well as tape records was used. This method, therefore, was helped me to explain the formation of marriage in the area, to identify some of causes of marital conflicts in the study area, as well as to describe available mechanisms of customary marital conflict resolution among kaffecho.

#### **Focus Group Discussion**

On some specific issues different people may have different concerns. Thus, to look at concerns of different individuals and even to explore their level of understanding on some issue I used FGD as another method of collecting data for this study Therefore, considering the advantage of conducting FGD and the time given for completing the research, two FGD was conducted with the aim of accessing different views about the role of indigenous institutions in settling conflicts and

collecting a large amount of data pertaining to the issue under study, relatively over a short period of time. The focus group discussions was made with the community elders (*Showee Geenoo*), assistants' of traditional religious leader (*Gaberecho*) to explain the available customary marital conflicts resolution mechanism in the study area.

### **Observation (i.e., Observer as participant)**

Observation was another method to get the real picture of the customary conflict resolution proceedings held at “*Dedebe Tato's*” traditional court center which found in Gimbo woreda, In this case, my role was only be participate to observe the processes and procedures of marital conflict resolution proceedings. In order to supplement the observations, some of the proceedings was also tape recorded after getting their consent.

### **Case Studies**

In this study the researcher used case study as one of the data collection tool. Case study method is a form of qualitative analysis where in careful and complete observation of an individual or a situation or an institution is done; efforts are made to study each and every aspect of the concerning unit in minute details in order to make generalization and inferences (Kothari 2004:113). These cases were mainly used to identify the causes of marital conflict mostly arising with in Kaffa community. In all cases, personal names was not disclosed; rather pseudonyms was used for an ethical reason.

### **Informal interview**

Informal interview were used to supplement the findings obtained through other method of data collection tools. It is because, since it is done through informal interview, it fosters the interaction process and allows the informants to speak freely and openly regarding the intended research issues. The interview were made with different categories of community members.

### **3.4 Sample Procedures**

Selections of appropriate samples was depend on the sampling procedures followed. To this end, the researcher was opt to use purposive sampling techniques. Samples was taken purposively based on the knowledge and experience they have on the research issues. In terms of sample size, a total

number of 24 informants were participated in the study. In depth-interviews with 6 (six) key informants were used from; one (1) Bonga town Culture and Tourism Bureau, one (1) from volunteer association union (*nieus idir sebsaby*), one (1) from the community elders and one (1) from traditional religious leader (*Dedebe tato*), one (1) assistant of traditional religious leader (*Gaberecho*) and one (1) from religious leader. Six (6) cases were used. Two (2) male FGD groups were used; each group consisted six (6) members and the assembly were made from the community elders (the first FGD group) as well as from the *Gabeerechoo's* (the second FGD group). Observation was mad during the conflict resolution process takes place at *Dedebe tato* traditional court center and finally, informal interviews were made in order to supplement the findings which obtained through the mentioned data collection tools.

### **3.5 Sources of Data**

In trying to obtain the necessary data, the researcher employed both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources included; key informant interview, FGD, Case study, observation as well as informal interview. With regards to the secondary sources, books, journals, both published and unpublished thesis and dissertation papers were used.

### **3.6 Methods of data analysis**

It is apparent that in a given research, data collection is indispensable. However, a research should go beyond data collection. Any researcher has the responsibility of analyzing data to meet the objectives as well as to make the findings ready for scholarly consumption. Therefore, based on this certainty, in this research, I analyzed and interpreted the data which was gathered through primary and secondary sources to answer the research questions and to achieve the stated objectives by using thematic analysis method in order to interpret the data.

### **3.7 Ethical Consideration**

It is true that ethical consideration is as crucial as other aspects in the process of conducting a research for it significantly affects the success of the study. Since I am not originally from Kafa, I built a rapport for a week time through observation, informal communications and discussion with community members at public place, gatherings and ritual ceremonies in order to consider ethical values and socio-cultural norms of the host community in which the research was

conducted. Such actions helped me to minimize some problems which could result from language constraints and cultural barriers.

All the participants was given pre-interview orientation regarding the whole purpose of the study. They told the way how I chose them, and then allowed to ask a question and reflect their opinion freely. I also informed the informants that their confidentiality and anonymity was maintained in a way that any information obtained from them kept in secret and not be utilized for other purposes other than the objectives it intended for.

Regarding the process of data analysis, names and other related information of the participants was not disclosed; rather pseudonyms was used. After the information was analyzed, except some of the informants who might give their free consent on their names and photographs to be disclosed in this paper, the sources of information of others was destroyed.

The participants was told to agree or refuse to participate and also withdraw from the interview at any time by their interest.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: DESCRIPTION OF THE STUDY AREA**

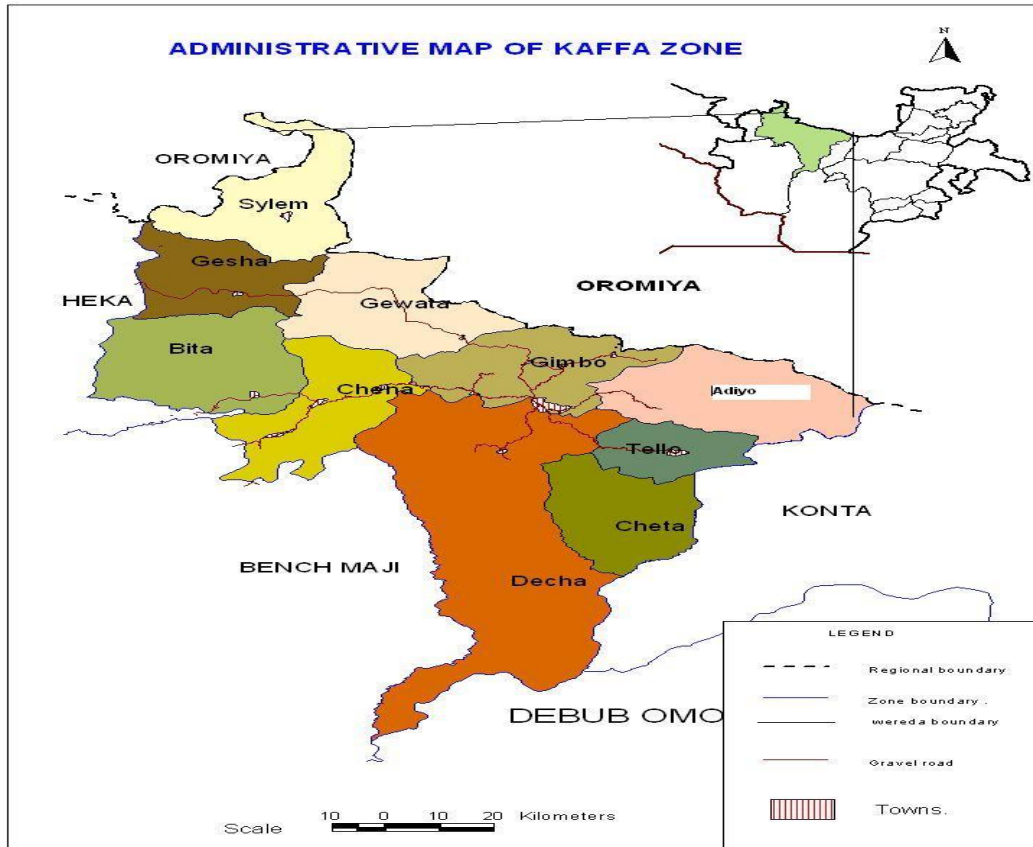
### **4.1 Overview of Kaffa**

The study were conducted in Bonga and Gimbo woreda's of the Kaffa Zone in the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People Regional State (SNNPRS). The Kaffecho is named for the Kaffa people whose homeland located in this zone that consists of 11 Woredas of which Bonga and Gimbo are the two. Before discussing the study Woredas, it is proper to deal with that the Kaffa Zone in which the former is a part.

#### **4.1.1 Description of the study area**

Historical evidences show that there were times when the territories of Kafa were as wide as the Gibe River in the north, the Sudan and Kenya border in the south. This could easily be noted from recent events taken place during the time of the Emperor and the Derg (Bekele, 2010). The fact that Kafa had its capital at Jimma and Mizan Teferi during these earlier two regimes, at different times, signifies the dynamism undergoing in the expansion and shrinking processes of territories in the area. Kafa would have also been extended to Baro River on the West, the Sudan and Kenya on the south, and Omo-Ghibe River on northeast and East (Grul, 1932; Orent, 1969).

The Kafa landscape is dissected by numerous small to large rivers and exhibits highly diverse topography including flat plateaus, undulating to mountainous terrain and very steep slopes. The land of kafa is one of the richest area in Ethiopia for natural resources include vegetation, streams, mineral waters, animals, birds, spices and mines. Vegetation is one of the main sources supporting the needs of Kaffecho (Bekele, 2010:45). They use vegetation for a variety of reasons like construction, medicine, fuel, animal shelter and moreover, for keeping the balance of the nature.



Source: Kaffa Zone, Finance & Economy Development Office

Three customary agro-ecological zones, *angesho* (which is characterized by higher elevation, more rainy months, and a lower temperature), *worefo* (a region of lower altitude, fewer months of rainfall), and *guddifo* (which occupies an intermediate position between the other two in terms of altitude, length of rainy season and temperature). This local classification corresponds to that customarily used at the national level in that *angesho* is equivalent to *dega*, *worefo* to *k'olla* and *guddifo* to *woinadega* can be recognized in Kaffa. According to the modern agro-ecological classification scheme (MOA 2000), Kaffa Zone belongs to the tepid to cool sub-humid mid highlands sub-zone.

#### 4.1.2 Livelihoods

The livelihood of the Kaffecho are mainly based on agriculture. As to Tezera, 2008, the major sources of cash and non-cash income in the study area are agricultural crops, livestock, honey production and collection of coffee and spices (such as cardamom and wild pepper) from the forest. The home gardens (*daadde-goyo*), which are integrated with the forest system, are the major place



of production. While *uu xo* is the major source of food in the study area, cereals such as maize and sorghum constitute the main food in lowlands. The farmers cultivate different cash crops like, Coffee, maize, sorghum, cardamom and wild pepper. Among the spices, Cardamom happens to be the most expensive one.

Coffee has a great impact on the economy of Kaffa. As to Bekele (2010) the coffee products are collected together from different areas of the zone and sent to Bonga to be exported to different countries of the world. Cattle and small farm animals are raised for household uses and also for income generation. Honey is the other source of income in the area. In the month of September and October most of farmers dedicate their time and energy in preparing beehives; and devoted farmers collect honey four times a year (ibid). Though, the livelihood of Kaffecho's are mainly depends on agriculture, some of them who reside in capital of the zone and other nearby zones engaged in various petty-trade and small to medium level business.

#### **4.1.3 Socio-Cultural Contexts**

According to the 2007 national population census, the total population of Kafa zone is 880,251 (CSA 2008); and the Kaffecho constitute the largest portion of this. According to (Bekele, 2010), Kafi-nono is the common language of Kaffa. As to him, the Kaffecho who share border with other zones speak both Kafi-nono and other dialects like Dawro, Bench, Meschengir, Oromigna, Nao and other respectively. As I observed during my data collection, Kafi-nono is the main language of the area with Amharic being the second widely used language especially by the people who reside in capital of the zone and other nearby zones.

The Kafa society has been assigned by a highly inflexible and complex class-system until the emperor Minilik II incorporated in to the Ethiopian empire. The division was based on occupation, descent and status. In the time of the kingdom of Kaffa low-status occupation groups included gold and silver smiths, black smiths (k'emo), weavers (shaman), potters (k'ejecca), tanners (Mano), and hunters (Manjo) (Gezahegn, 2001). As to him, the position of smiths and weavers has changed dramatically during the twentieth century. Though smiths were among the low-status occupation groups in the past, they currently live among the farmers and do not face severe marginalization. Weavers too, are not currently despised. But, the Manjo people, form for 5 to 10 % of the total

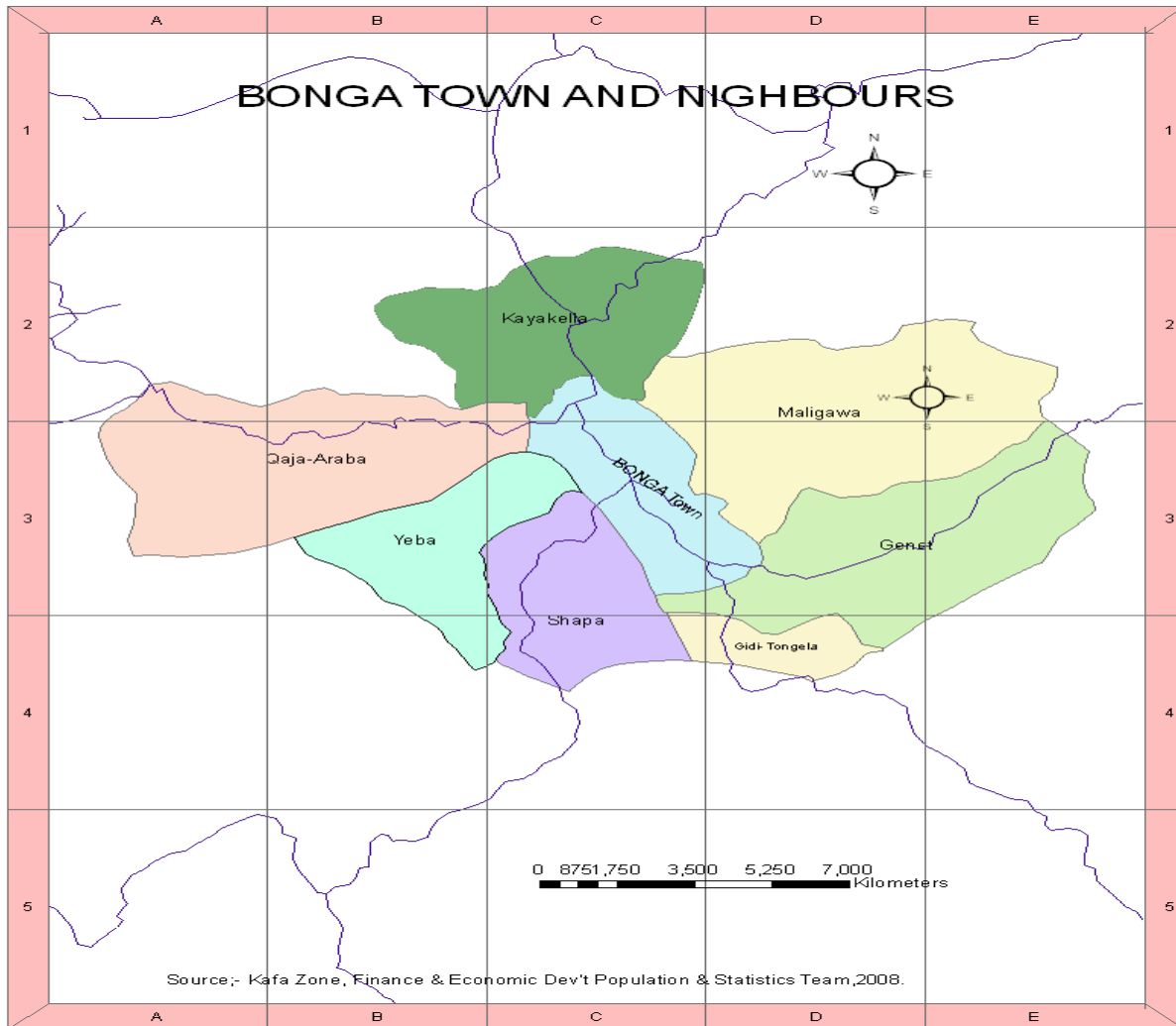
population, are the largest minority society that still faces prejudices and discrimination today (Feleke, 2011).

Many researcher divided the races (*yaro*) of kafa differently by putting different criteria. For instance, for Bieber, the race of Kaffa (*Kaffi Yaro*) is divided in to nine on the bases of their descent, language, beliefs and physical appearance. Against to Bieber, (Ford, 1963) consider the Kaffa to have a two class system and those were nobles and commoners with both consisting of one ethnic group. On the other hand Bekele, 2010 mentioned that the people of Kaffa are the intermixture of different nationalities or tribes like, *Enaraya, Oromo, Amhara,,Agew, Gurage, Boshu, Boro-Shinasha, Sheka, Yem, Bench, Dauro and Konta* as well as *Arab*. Generally speaking The Kaffecho who resides in the land of Kaffa are identified as 242 clans, seems to have come from different origins.

There Indigenous and cultural administrative structures of the Kaffa kingdom is known to be complex with a hierarchy that descent from the king down to village leader. A typical feature of the administration is known to be *Mikerecho* (The state counselor) which consists of seven to eight members (Bekele, 2010). As to him, the *Mikerecho* used to be participated in the political, social, and economic affairs of the kingdom as a whole and judicial, administrative, military, political and economic affairs at an individual level. They also had more political power than the king (Ibid).

Based on this background study of the kaffa zone administration, I need to proceed to the study Woredas which are the two of the eleven Woredas, of the zone and that shares all attributes of the kaffa community mentioned just above.

Bonga, which is one of the study woreda, the capital of Kafa Zone, is situated at 460 kilometers Southwest of Addis Ababa and 110 kilometers south of Jimma. The zone is bounded by Oromia Regional State in the north and Sheka Zone in the north-west, Bench-Maji in the south-west, South Omo Zone in the south and Konta Zone in the south-east of the SNNP Regional State.

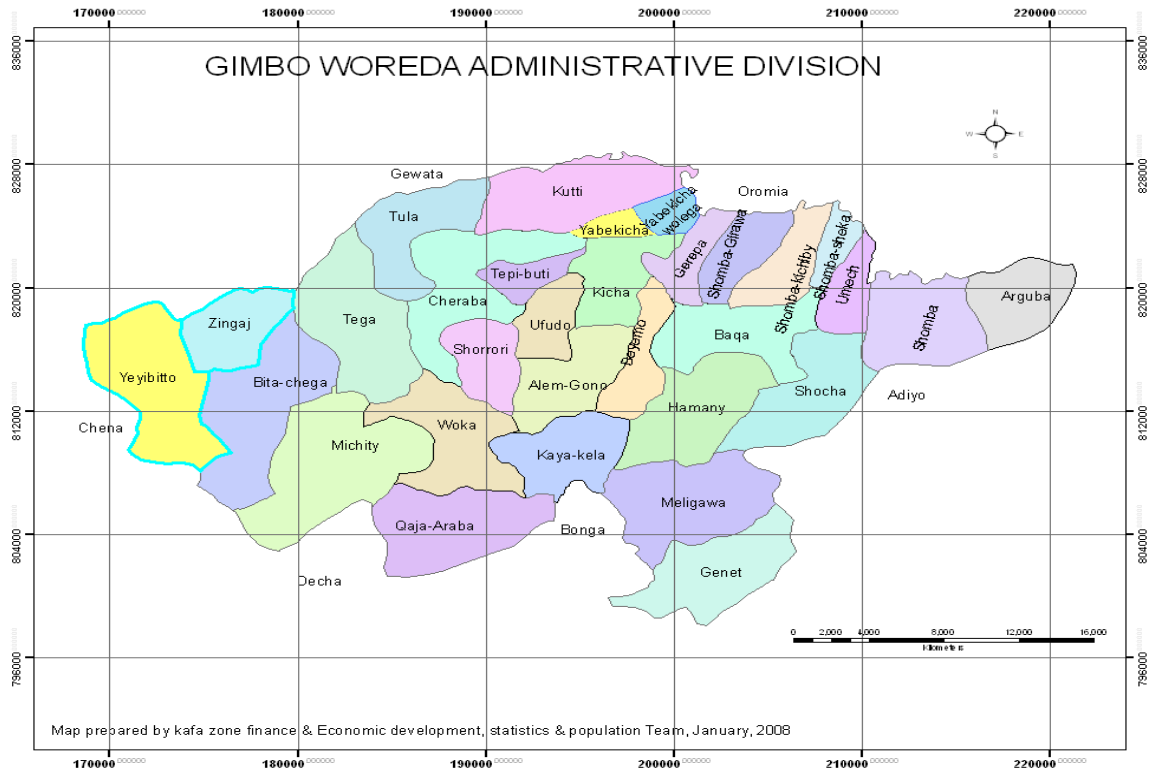


Source: Kafa Zone, Finance and Economy Development Office

According to CSA (2007), the population of this town was 30,350. Out of the total population of the town, 15,622 and 14,728 was male and female respectively. The researcher select this study site because since Bonga is the Capital city of the Zone, it used as to compare with the rural setting in relation with mechanisms of marital conflict resolution.

Gimbo woreda, which is one of the 11 woredas' in Kafa administrative Zones is also the other study woreda for my study. The area is bounded by the Oromo in the South, Decha woreda in the West, Cheta and Gewata Woreda's in the East and Adiyio Woreda in the West. It is located at about 7° 23' to 7° 49' South Latitude and 36° 00' to 36° 47' East Longitude. The total land area of Gimbo is 978.6km<sup>2</sup> and from that of the total area, climatically, it is classified in to highland (3%), semi-

highland (74.4%) and low land (15.3%) respectively (Kaffa Zone Finance & Economy Development office).



Source: Kaffa Zone Finance & Economy Development office

According to CSA (2007), the population of this woreda was 114,113. Out of the total population of the woreda, 56, 804 and 57,309 was male and female respectively. The reason why the researcher select this woreda as a main study area is because of the availability of this old age indigenous conflict resolution place which was and still serving the community who demands their service since the time immemorial without any pre-established payment.

#### 4.1.4 Voluntary Associations

Major traditional groups found in the area include “*Dafo*” “*Dadoo*” and “*Idir*”. “*Dafo*” is a community level voluntary participation of about 15 persons to assist in agricultural related or house construction activities (roof thatching, fencing, etc.) for one full day. Food and drinks will be served during these activities. “*Dadoo*” is also same as “*Dafo*” with the exception of the time duration (about half a day), number of participants (approximately 5 persons) and as well only

drinks are served. “*Idir*” is a social grouping in which members share the grief of those who lost their loved ones and / or assist in kind, finance as well as in moral. In addition to that “*Idir*” used as a traditional conflict resolution mechanisms especially conflicts occurred with in marriage as well as family.

#### **4.1.5 The social value of coffee ceremony**

Despite the aforementioned, the land of Kaffa and Coffee have indispensable history. Since time immemorial, Coffee Arabica has grown first in the wild forests of the south western highlands of the country, in most areas of Kaffa. It is believed that the name ‘coffee’ is derived from the name ‘Kaffa’, a district in Ethiopia where the bean has been originated. Recent studies confirm that the occurrence of wild forest coffee at the moment is limited in the southwest Ethiopia as the only place in the globe (Gruhl, 1932).

As to my participants, coffee have a huge place in Kaffa’s culture. Bekele, (2010), who wrote about the History of the kingdom of Kaffa states that, coffee has social, psychological as well as cultural or religious values for Kaffecho. It could be in relation with its emergence and has been in Kaffa since the dawn of its history, it appears to be intermixed with every aspect of their lives. Beside economic and so many other benefits, coffee plays an important role in social aspects regarding in creating a social tie with in the family, neighborhoods and community during gathering time.

While drinking the coffee, they discuss different issues of their lives. The discussion could be about their achievements with regards to their education, work, family and so many other aspects of successes or could be about the problems that they are facing in relation with their marriage, family, health situation and many other issues. As to my participants, so many angles of life discussed during the ceremony of the coffee drinking. These all discussion and sharing of their personal experiences may use as a strategy for better achievements through minimizing the occurrence of problems which could arise in the absence of different information, perspectives as well as experiences. Surprisingly among Kaffecho, skills in relation with coffee making is regarded as a major criteria for anticipating the fitness of the women for marital tie.

This is because, coffee ceremony is assumed to be a means for creating a social bond with family, kinship groups, neighborhoods, as well as surroundings with in the village. So if she (the intending

wife) is good in making the coffee, she is assumed to build a very strong relationship with all of these groups. Regarding coffee as being a major criteria of appropriateness for marriage, Bekele, (2010) describes that *“The preparing of cultural coffee ceremony is one of the main criteria of a women’s suitability for marriage”*. In addition to all of these, traditional coffee ceremony used as a complement for cultural conflict resolution mechanisms.

It is convincing that the value of coffee for Kaffecho is high. Because, the longevity makes it immersed with their every single aspects of life situations. Though, for the community, where modern marriage counselling and family therapy services couldn’t be available, it is really good to have such kind of social gatherings in order to discuss their problems and get relief. In line with this, Bekele, (2010:54) states that:

*“During holidays it is a tradition to invite neighbors, friends and relatives for food and drink. This gatherings create close attachments and entertainment among these people. In Kaffa traditions, all types of invitations, all type of invitations are accompanied by “drinking coffee”, “buno-uoyotie” and all invitation are associated with coffee. If coffee is not part of any invitation, it is said that the invitation is incomplete”*.

#### **4.1.6 The Value of *Miyaatoo* relationship among Kaffecho**

Among Kaffecho, only the groom will have best-man which are two in number. These best-man are called *“Qannee Miyaatoo Naa Yoochee Miyaatoo”* meaning first and second best man. They stand at the right and left side of the groom respectively. On the date of the wedding, the groom and the *“Miyaatoo’s”* with some accompany of selected persons will go to the bride’s house in order to bring the bride to the grooms place. They go to the bride’s house by using horses. When they leave, the cultural marriage sing will be song by saying that;

“SHARARA SHAARI WOBÉ

BI MACO DIGGE WOBÉ

BI MAAYO MADA CEER.....”

Meaning that let your horse return safely, let your *Mesob* be full and the like. While they are on the way to bride’s family house, they make sound by using *“Shameto”* (cultural sound maker)

which is made from elephant teeth. This cultural music material is used for marriage ceremony as well as mourning. The meaning of making sound with this cultural music tool is to provide information for the bride's family that they are reaching. When the guests of the bride side hear that sound, they know that they reach. So they start to sing by saying;

‘ BUSHEE BUUSHAAROO/2/  
KONE BUUSHAAROO/2/  
BUSHEE BUUSHAAROO/2/  
NOONE BUUSHAARO  
UUCHUDO DUUCHII/2/  
DOOCHI SHAAWUJJON/2/  
UTIRO QUCCII/2/  
QOCEE GAAWUCHOOCH/2/  
WOORAAFA NOOCHIN/2/.....

Meaning we won't let you in, we can't give you this amazing bride for you. It doesn't literally mean that they will not give her but just simply to show that it is very hard for them to give the girl without challenge. It is cultural music at wedding ceremony. After this ceremony they enter in to the bride's home. The right side best man "*Qannee Miyaatoo*" will go to the room that the bride sits with her friends and he will carry her at his back and will come to the main house. Then food and drink will be served. After all this ceremony, the groom and the bride get blessing from the bride's family and leave the house. The bride will be carried by "*Qannee Miyaatoo*" and uploaded to the mule with the help of the left side best-man.

After making the necessary conditions, the groom and the bride, the two best-man and those individual who accompany them while they come to the bride's house will return to the groom's family house. On the way of the groom's house there will be a cultural song. During the time of arrival, they make sound by using "*Shameto*" so that the groom's family and guests know that they are coming back. The songs will be sung in a welcoming manner especially to the bride. When they reach to the house, both the groom and the bride will be downloaded from the mule with the help of the right side best man "*Qannee Miyaatoo*" at in to the house of the groom's family to get blessing. After the blessing program finished, both the groom and the bride go to their honeymoon room /*kollee kexo*/.

After the food and drink served for the guests, the song will be sing in order to encourage the groom to deflower her. After making the necessary effort if he made it and if she keeps her virginity, the songs and the appreciation will be very huge. But if she is not virgin, only some kinds of insulation done by singing a song which do have a massage like, all of this things done for the girl that she didn't keep her dignity and the like. No further punishment is allowed on the bride among Kaffecho's culture for her premarital virginity.

After the wedding ceremony, at the fourth day, the bride will make a coffee at her in-laws house. The coffee, butter and some kinds of spices was brought from her parents' house at the weeding day in order to minimize some frustration till she adapt the new environment at her husband's place. In Kaffecho's culture, till the bride's family call the grooms' family by arranging some ceremony for the purpose of integrating the two family, there won't be a good relationship between the two families. Even if, the groom found member of his in-laws on the way of his journey, he won't give any greeting rather he will be hide or give his back for them.

Thus, for Kaffa community, *Miyaatoo* relationship is much respected relationship and also used as an actor which plays a role of a mediator when conflict arises with in marriage relationship in the study area.



## CHAPTER FIVE: RESULT AND DISCUSSION

As revealed in preceding chapters, the major objective of this study was investigate the causes and customary resolution mechanisms of marital conflicts among Kaffecho. This section presents the major findings of the study collected from 24 informants. In depth-interviews with 6 (six) key informants, Six (6) cases as well as two (2) male FGD groups; each group consisted six (6) members and the assembly were made from the community elders were used. Observation and informal interview also used to supplement the mentioned data collection tools. The findings presented in line with the research objectives. Formerly, demographic information of the informant are explored in depth.

### Characteristics of married couples who experienced conflict and resolve it through customary resolution mechanisms

Table 1: Characteristics of married participants who experience marital conflict and resolve it through customary marital conflict resolution mechanisms.

No of respondents	Sex	Age	Marital status	Type of marriage	Forms of marital contract	Ways of establishing marriage	No. of Years in marriage	Residence	Occupation	Children
P1	M	64	Married	Monogamous	Customary	Arranged	45	Bonga	Farmer	Have
P2	F	53	Married	Monogamous	Customary	Arranged	27	Bonga	House wife	Have
P3	F	27	Married	Monogamous	Civil	By choice with parental acceptance	7	Gimbo	Government worker	Have
P4	F	50	Married	Polygamous	Customary	Arranged	31	Gimbo	House wife	Have

P5	F	41	Married	Monogamous	Religious	By choice with parental acceptance	22	Bonga	Petty-trade	Have
P6	M	58	Married	Polygamous	Customary	Arranged	38	Gimbo	Farmer	Have

Table 1 represents, among the six informants, four of my informants were female and two of them were male. Regarding their age, it was in between 27 up to 64. All of my participants are married and also all of them experience conflict in their marriage and resolved by using customary mechanisms of marital conflict resolutions. They are selected purposively due to the nature of the study. Concerning the type of marriage, four of them have monogamous and two have polygamous type of marriage. In relation to marriage contract, three of my informant got married customarily, two of them got married through government offices and one of my participant made their marriage contract through religious institutions. In relation with establishing marriage, for three of my participant, their parents were the one who arrange the marriage. Two of my participant select their marital partners as well as got approval from their family to make the contract. Whereas one of my participant establish marriage with mutual interest but without parental acceptance. About residence, four of my informants resides in Gimbo Woreda whereas two of them resides in Bonga town. Finally, all of my participants have children with in their marriage.

No of informants	Sex	Age	Marital status	Position	Residence
P1	M	47	Married	Culture and Tourism Bureau of Bonga town	Bonga
P2	M	63	Married	Head of voluntary association union ( <i>Idir Sebsaby</i> )	Bonga
P3	M	76	Married	Community elder	Bonga

Table 2: Characteristics of key informants

P4	M	56	Married	Leader of traditional belief ( <i>Alamo</i> )	Gimbo
P5	M	43	Married	Assistant of <i>Alamo</i>	Gimbo
P6	M	55	Married	Religious leader	Bonga

Table 2 represents; the basic feature of my key information which is relevant for the study. All of my key informants were men, married and above the age of 47. Regarding their position almost except one of my informant who works at Culture and Tourism Bureau, all of my participants were active participant of traditional marital conflict resolution services. Regarding to their residence, four of my participants were resided in Bonga town as well two of them were resided in Gimbo town.

Table 3. Characteristics of FGD participants

No of FGD group	Types of Assembly	Residence
Group 1	Community elders ( <i>Shewee Genoo's</i> )	Bonga
Group 2	Assistants of traditional religious leaders ( <i>Gaberechos</i> )	Gimbo

Table 3 illustrates that, the first FGD assembly is a combination of six individuals who are resided in Bonga town. The assembly is done by taking their role in the community. All of them are elected community elders who are involved in traditional marital conflict resolution process. To explain it in detail, the community elders assembly was made up of, one from voluntary association union (*neus idir sebsaby*), one from religious leader, four from elected community elders. The second FGD assembly is made up from six *Gaberechos* (who are an assistants of traditional religious leader) who were resided at Gimbo town.

## 5.1 Formation of marriage among Kaffecho

### 5.1.1 Marriage

According to the information obtained from my key informants through in depth interview, Kaffecho has so many historical and cultural values. Among them marriage is one. In order show the relevance of marriage institution, they use proverbs by saying; “*Ashich Giidoo Shiishee Meetone. Aacoch Giidoo Yoochi Womone*”. Meaning, “The strength of the river is the coming of winter and the strength of the country is being high in number”. This proverb typically shows that how marriage institution is an important unit for the community. Ensuring the continuity of generation through reproduction is one of the role among various functions of marriage institution. In the case of Kaffecho, marriage is very crucial precondition in order to have children because, mostly, having children without marriage relationship is not socially accepted. This implies that in order to maximize the member of the community, the culture of Kaffa highly appreciates institution of marriage by using such proverbs.

The dominant types of acquiring wife among Kaffech is becoming free choice marriage which established with or without parental acceptance. But still in some rural part of the area, arranged marriage is still applicable. Kaffecho has highly stratified patrilineal social structure and patriarchal family structure. Patterns of marriage is monogamous but polygamous marriage is also applied in the study area. Patterns of residence is patrilocal. The size and depth of generation is mostly extended family. Among Kaffecho marriage is exogamous but there is also an endogamous marriage in some part of Kaffa especially with in the community who are the minorities. The basic forms of marriage contract is also customary marriage, religious marriage and civil marriage.

Among Kaffecho, marriage among member of the same lineage is prohibited. As the FGD participants explained it briefly, in early times, marriage of a women descended from an ancestor less than fourteen ascending generation on the father line and seven ascending generation on the mother line was incest. Though at present time due to various reasons it reduced to seven ascending generation on the father line and five ascending generations on the mother line is insect. In addition to that, mostly in early times, relationship like, marriage relations (*Nacho*), a Christian relationship or godfather and godmother (*Abelijo*) and best-man-ship (*Miyatto*) are very considerable relationship even more than sibling relations. With some exceptions, marriage with in this relationship is also incest.

For Kaffecho, gender is defined in terms of the particular cultural characteristics that people give to different biological sexes. As to my key informants, aspects of male reflecting the kinds of assumptions they make about how men should behave includes: leadership; taking control of situations; making decisions; and being active participant, and being unemotional. On the other hand characteristics of female's role include; physical dependence (especially during pregnancy); emotional behavior; lack of control over resources; motherly and family-oriented.

Ponzetti & Mutch (2006) states that Marriage is not only a close personal relationship but also a social institution which affects the life of people. It is basis for the formation of a family in terms of producing and raising children. Same is true for Kaffecho. Surprisingly, establishment of marriage doesn't simply considered as only the matter of married couples, there will be deep investigation about both intending married couple's families. This is because among Kaffecho, once a marriage relationship is maintained, it will be very hard to break it.

### **5.1.2 Pre- Marriage lessons**

Most of the time, the community as well as family plays an important role in socializing children to make them psychologically, emotionally, economically as well as socially competent for their future marital life. With this regard, one of my key informant provides me a brief explanation on how Kaffecho's family nurture their children by giving them different kind of roles which are considered to be useful for their children's future marital as well as social life. In Kaffa's culture, the expected role as a husband and wife are assigned on the basis of tradition not preference For example; the mother teaches to her daughter about domestic works especially in relation with taking care of her husband and children's. Most of the time the female children perform an activities like cleaning up the house, making coffee, fetching water, collecting fire wood, involving in small home garden cultivation activity which is only used for household purposes and the like. In the same manner the father teaches his son different activities especially in relation with taking responsibility and decision making. For that matter, one of my key informant explain the process of role teaching and role playing which is done between the father and the son in such a way that;

*“When the boy reaches at the age of fourteen, the father gives him a very small farm land in order to do small amount of cultivation. The boy cultivates a false banana, coffee, maize, beans, and the like in a given small area of his own. During*

*the cultivation process the father follows him and provide support whenever it is needed. The boy, after harvesting his own cultivations, he went to the market and changes it in to money in order to buys a hen, sheep, goat and the like. The money that he gets from his own work will be his own. And finally, when the boy reaches at the age of eighteen, he built his own room in his father's compound. The house is done with consent of his father. The building of the house is done in collaborating with his friends. Since the room is done by using traditional building materials, it wouldn't be costly. Having his own home garden and small farm land, domestic animals and a separate house are tends to be the first criteria for claiming marriage partner”.*

The above results shows that, with in all this process, the children develops confidence, independency and competency to stand on their own for their future marital as well as social life. In line with this, symbolic interaction theorists, G. Herbert Mead, individuals learns their expected future role as a husband and wife, by “taking the role of the generalized others”. As to him, the generalized other is the attitude of the entire community and also represents familiar propensity to give priority to the social, because it is through the generalized other that the group influences the behavior of individuals. In support to this assumption, Kaffecho's parent as well as the community members teaches the children some expected roles as a husband or wife from the grass root level with an assumption of protecting the children's future marital life from collapse which could resulted from unfulfilled role expectations. Thus, failed to play the expected roles as husband or wife would results conflict in marriage.

### **5.1.3 Major criteria for mate selection among Kaffecho**

Mate selection procedures vary from culture to culture. As to (Olson, 2007) all societies have considered some arrangement for matching individuals for marriage and parenthood. In line with this assumption, Kaffecho establish rules and procedures to either determine or shape the choice of spouse. Information obtained from my key informants and FGD participants, the bodily alterations and transitions have the potential to open up new opportunities. Among Kaffecho, when a boy make a transition from childhood to adulthood or “*Gurmashoo*”, the mother “*Genne*” starts to notice some physical as well as psychological changes on her son and discuss about it with her

husband (the father of their son) in such a way that, “our son has grown up, this is the time for us to find him a good wife and encourages him to continue the family name”.

The processes of mate selection and family formation among Kaffecho mostly starts from consultation with kinship members as well as much respected elders of the village called “*Maakke Nihoo*”. The mate selection process will go up to the getting together of two individuals in husband and wife role. According to the explanation made by all of my key informant as well as FGD participants, in early times, marriage was arranged. So identifying the perfect match for their son was the job of the groom’s family and kinship members with the help of “*Makke Nihoo*”. The identification criteria was based on, occupational caste, decent, family background and characteristics of the intending future wife. As to my key informants, providing dowry to the intending wife’s family is a common practice among Kaffecho. Regarding to marriage ceremony, all kinship members, and neighborhoods as well as nearby villagers contributes for the marriage ceremony by providing support in-kind. Such doings is called “*Deogo*” in Kaffa word.

In fact bodily alteration and transition have possible impact for the transition from singlehood to married life, psychological as well as economical capability has their own impact for the transition process. Such kind of custom was developed in order to control sex life of the individuals. This is in an assumptions that, if a person particularly male, passes from the age of eighteen, he will develop a feeling of neediness for having sexual intercourse. So unless otherwise they arrange marriage for him, he might involve in a wrong doing activities like rape, adultery and other unnecessary activities which considered to be wrong doings with in the community. Regarding marriage ceremony, both family (the groom and the bride) arrange a marriage ceremony at their homes based on their capacity. There is no fixed criteria regarding the size of the ceremony. Whereas, in recent times, most of the intending couples select their future marital partner based on their preference by taking mostly their culture in to consideration. While there are also some exceptional marriage unions which are made by some married partners based only on their personal interest.

#### **5.1.4 Establishment of marriage**

As the information obtained from my key informants and FGD participant, in early times arranged marriage was the dominant way of forming marriage. Family members such as parents, siblings, kinship groups as well as respected elders (*Makenihoo*’s) select suitable potential partners by

considering age, caste, religion, family reputation etc. On the other hand, now a days, the dominant way of acquiring marriage has become, marriage of choice with or without parental acceptance. The intending married couples are likely to date, court, fall in love, and then decide whether to get married, in accordance with their choice of a potential partner, with or without parental consent. In such cases, the potential factors for selecting suitable partner could be, love, economy, education, occupational interdependence etc. One of the key informant explained his perception in a comparing and contrasting manner with regard to formation of marriage in old times and recent times in such a way that:

*In early times there were a high degree of social integration and cooperation due to the huge respect and acceptance of the culture. I never questioned the culture. It was because there were no doubts about the appropriateness of the custom, beliefs, values and norms unlike this time. Even with regard to mate selection, family and kinship groups were the one who selected for my wife for me. In the marital arrangement process; descent, status, family reputation and occupational caste are the major concerns in the process of selection rather than love. During that time, once marriage relation (Nacho) is established, it is assumed to be long-lasting and it is very hard almost prohibited to break it even in the presence of problems with in our marriage. The problem could be even the absence of children due to fertility or other problem. The trend was whenever the problem arises between the married couples, it would be fixed by using different kinds of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. This was my culture. The culture I used to proud of. But now a days things has changed, the new generations seems to ignore their culture. They did things as they wish weather it is against the values and norms of the culture or not. Even in the process of marriage formation, they select whoever they wish based on their personal criteria as well as interest. Even there is a tendency of happening a marriage with the same lineage group due to improper investigation of lineage system. Especially among partners who live out of Kaffa due to urbanization and some other reasons. Sometimes, it would be hard to only blame the new generation. Because the so called 'civilization' by itself brought huge impact on the culture of Kaffecho.*



By supporting the previous idea, one of my participant from informal interview explained her perception in such a way that;

*“Even though change is expected phenomena in human life, it shouldn't be something that ultimately come to enslave us, rather it should be something that we are in control of it. Otherwise, directly coping others principles and perspective which might not fit to one's culture is being like unappreciative to oneself which might create an identity crises where there is no way out”.*

Durkheim who was vitally concerned with establishing the reality of social facts believed that social cohesion (the term he used was ‘social solidarity’) was primarily the result of a force arising from participation in a shared system of beliefs and values, which molded and controlled individual behavior. He elucidates what hold society in the past was kinship. However in modern society, primary ties between individuals come from economic and occupational interdependence and cooperation. Same is true among Kaffecho's. In early times of Kaffecho's the married couple tends to live to fulfill; the interests of their family, culture as well as the expectations of the community. But in the contemporary Kaffecho, especially in urban setting, love, economy, education, occupational interdependence and other related factors is becoming the reason for establishing marriage relations.

This implies that, the way marriage established in the study area was highly related with the occurrences of conflict with in marriage as well as the resolution mechanisms in such a way that; when marriage is done in a culturally accepted manner, the married partners use the support of their family and kinship as well as the community members as a social capital when they face some problems with in their marriage in order to escape from that unfavorable situation. Whereas, when marriage is done without culturally accepted manner or without getting their parental acceptance, the probability of not getting support from family as well as community member would increase the occurrences of disagreement and even frustration with in their marriage. And also decreases the chances of the way outs from such difficult times.

## **5.2 Understanding Conflicts and Their Causes**

### **5.2.1 The conception of wrong doings in relation with marital relation**

Kaffecho have their own conception on what action is wrong and right based on their cultural backgrounds, traditions, values and norms. According to the culture of Kaffecho, as forwarded from my key informants, what is wrong can be seen in terms of violating the principles, norms and customs of the community. If someone breaks the values, norms and principles of the community or acting against the common traditions, it is believed that the person is wrongdoer. It is also believed that such wrong doer will face curse from the family as well as the community. Curse, as to my informants, would result in bad consequences or misfortunes on the wrongdoer's health, property, family, even it will continue up to seven descending generation. For instance, establishing marriage with in same lineage as well as kinship groups, insulting the person who couldn't have child by fertility or other problem, not give respect to elders as well as family members are some of considered to be wrong doings in the study areas. In addition to that, as my FGD participant described, Marriage relations (*nacho*) Cristian relations (*abelijo*) and best-man – relation (*Miyaatoo*) are considered to be a major relation and much respect has been given to such relationship. As to them, not giving the deserved respect to such relation is also considered as a wrong doing in the study area. As described by my key informants, if such wrongdoings happened, it will be resolved through traditional mechanisms which are available within the study area.

### **5.2.2 The Kaffecho's understanding of conflict**

The Kaffecho define conflict in different ways since they doesn't have a single word to define conflict. The informants indicated that the word (*Diggeemukoo*) means quarrel or absence of peace, and (*Koyo*) means conflict among. (*Kaarebeemo*) refers to fight and or disagreements. Generally, the informants defined conflict as disagreements, quarrels and fights between individuals and groups of people.

### **5.2.3 Major causes of marital conflict among Kaffecho**

The major types and causes of conflict among Kaffecho are disputes over land and disputes due to ridding of cattle in to other peoples' crops, marital conflicts, conflicts that arise in the spirit of drinking, mostly having other subtle root causes, clan conflicts due to superiority/inferiority complex between the majority *non-manjo* clans and the minority *Manjo* clan; as well as recent practices of conflicts due to religious obsessives. Whereas, due to the nature of my study I tried to describe particularly the major causes of marital conflict in the study area. As to the information obtained from my participants mostly from my cases, the most frequent causes for marital conflict in the study area are happened to be; adultery, insult, economy, children, religion, alcoholism, unfulfilled expected roles as a husband or wife as well as a mother or father. While some of the informants couldn't disclose information related with sexual related conflicts, I used different mechanisms in order to get the information related with marital conflict which occurred with sexual matter. Causes of marital conflict in the study area will be discussed below in detail.

#### ***Establishing marriage without parental acceptance***

Establishment of marriage without getting the approval of the family was happened to be one of the causes of marital conflict in the study area. As to the information obtained from the focus group discussion, such kinds of marital conflict happens when marital tie established between different religion followers, occupational caste, when marriage happened with the same lineage group etc.

For instance, I came across one case, who establish their marriage without their family's recognition. That is because they are from different occupational castes who are *Manjo* and non-*Manjo* clan. According to the belief of the society, *Manjo* is the most despised and excluded section of the society. Therefore, people often dislike to be connected with this name in any form of their social relationship. Besides, other non-*manjo* clan members do not agree to make marriage any relationship. Even if an individual from non-*manjo* decided to create marital or any other relationship with this *Manjo* group, the probability of getting acceptance from their family is very less. Even though the community understands that it is not good to do such things, till now it couldn't be possible to make a huge change.

The following` is an example of a case related to the marriage made between the couples who are from different social group. It is narrated as follow:

## Case- 1

*Ms. Almaz is from Dajewo clan which is non manjo-clan and her husband is from a manjo-clan. They met at college while they were attending their college education. It was that time where their little history begun. Even if they know that they belong to different social category, they couldn't help themselves from falling in love to each other. Now it's been eight years since they got married. They had two children. She described it passionately how loving, caring and honest her husband is. She even wonders that, what if they fall for each other at the time when marriage between different social classes were unthinkable. She remembers that in early times, among Kaffecho, marriage was made between compatible social classes called "Tate shagiyoo". A deep investigation were made by both parents of the groom and the bride to accept the marriage proposal. At that time, Manjo and craft person and smiths were very much marginalized groups. For that reason, marriage with this minority group was unthinkable. This minority groups married from their own social group. She continued by saying that, in fact that trend was used very dominantly in early times but still now there is observable prejudice and discrimination made on them. In order to prove this her family were and still are not happy by her choice of marriage partner. When she told them that she was going to marry, and he is from manjo-clan, they were very disappointed on her. For that matter, all of her family abandoned her and refused to come to her home. But she had made her own decision to marry him without her family's recognition. She would be very happy if they could respect her choice over their pride. But her family couldn't do that. She was dead sure that it could be so hard for them to change their stands overnight with regards to accepting the marriage as a normal marital tie. Because, it was uncommon to do such thing in this area. But she blames them for avoiding her for this reason. She also blames herself for not making a huge effort to convince them. Because she doesn't feel complete now. Feeling abandoned and lacking a healthy relationship with her family happened to make her very depressed. At such times her husband became unhappy. Because he feels like she is questioning her judgment to marry him and stop being happy with him. Even if she became angry with something else, her husband always relates it with*

*him and lose confidence. Generally speaking despite the fact that there are some issues me and my husband wouldn't agree up on, this one happened to be the major cause of conflict in our marriage”.*

As tried to discussed above, among Kaffecho, due to the expansion of education and other socio cultural changes as well as government intervention, being discriminated based on occupational caste seems latent at present time, but from the above statement one can understand that there is still facing hard times due their previous discriminated social status. But, now a days, some married couples occurred to be against such traditions and start to make their own decisions. Symbolic interactionist support such perspective in such a way that, a person is not a passive recipient who only conform what is told to do but rather is a capable of making decision based on the information obtained through social interaction.

### ***Adultery (Bushittino)***

Adultery is also the other causes of marital conflict in the study area mostly in urban setting. As the information obtained from my participants, having sexual affair with any married person is considered as a shameful act. Adultery brings a serious moral shock against the whole community in the study area. A person who committed adulterous action with someone else's wife/husband remain to be an enemy of the victim's side unless it is resolved by using different kinds of conflict resolution mechanisms.

In the rural part of the study area, relative to urban setting, adulterous act is very uncommon. That is because, as to my participant, in rural part of the study area the married couples are more committed to their cultural values and norms and among Kaffecho adulterous actions is against the culture and norms. But in urban setting, relative to rural settings, married couples give priority to their personal interest rather than their culture. Due to that, adultery was happened to be the main causes of marital conflict. As to one of my key informant said that;

*“The married person commit an adulteries action out of their marriage due to various reason, among those, desire to have sexual intercourse with another person, when there is a fertility problem in relation with having biological child, to get a better position at work, etc .... Such actions are mostly happened in urban*

*settings of the area, individuals cheat on their marriage partner even for silly reasons”.*

As clearly showed in the statement above as narrated by my informants, adultery happened to be potential cause of marital conflict mostly in the urban setting of the study area. The culture of Kaffecho is strongly against the act of adultery. It is because, based on the belief of the people, being adulterous is not only considered as the violations to the societies norms and values but also is against the holy creator (*Yeero*). The condemnation by the community in turn results in the reduction of the status of the individual. The study made by Meaza (2014) also confirms as adultery as a potential cause of marital conflict. Even though adultery could be a reason for breaking down of marriage relationship, there are also available customary marital conflict resolution mechanisms in the area in order to save those marriage in danger.

### ***Interferences of children***

Land is the most important resource among Kaffecho. As to my key informants as well as FGD participant described it briefly, in the study area, since the family structure is patriarchal, most of the economy is in control of the male. The husband only provide a household expense to his wife. Even though the wife has a full power to know their (hers’ and her husbands’) income as well as decide together about their whole expenses, it doesn’t seem applicable especially in the rural parts of the study area. Due to this and other related cultural influence, the mother may not know their exact amount of their income. Which may give the husband the privilege to make expenditure without necessarily informing to his wife. When such actions happened continuously, the marriage will be resulted in conflict. And most of the time the male children take the situation as an opportunity in order to separate their family. The separation mechanisms is done by making side with the mother as they are concerned for her by saying that she do have an equal right like her husband, to decide on their income as well as their expenses. Here is a direct quote as to my participant narrates her real experience with this regard;

*“My own son tried to convince me in order to make a divorce with his father without considering the negative consequences that would come with the divorce. Our son was only concerned with fulfilling his personal interest in order to maximize his benefits and accomplish his own goal”*

As to Dahrendorf, various positions within society have different amounts of authority which always involves both super ordination and subordination. Those who occupy positions of authority are expected to control subordinates; that is, they dominate because of the expectations of those who surround them, not because of their own psychological characteristics. Taking advantage of the assumption “authority resides in positions, not in persons” some of the Kaffecho’s male children try to separate their family in order to control their father’s position as well as the power attached to the position.

### ***Fail to fulfill the expected role***

As explained earlier in the formation of marriage section, Kaffecho’s family as well as the members of the community socialize the children’s most of the expected roles as a husband or wife for their future marital life, by using different teaching mechanisms. As to my participant, in that area, the wife is expected to take care of her husband, the children, the house hold activities, to maintain a good interpersonal relationship like; with her husband’s family, with neighborhoods, as well as expected to be actively participated in social relationship and so on. But, when a wife fail to fulfill the expected role, it is obvious in the study area that potential marital conflict would be occurred.

As one of my participant shared his previous marital conflict experience in such a way that;

*“My wife wouldn’t take responsibilities in household tasks. When I get back from work, lunch as well as coffee wouldn’t get ready for me. At such time, I would be so annoyed. So, that was the reason that most of the time disagreements raised between us”.*

In the same manner, one of my participant who experience marital conflict and resolved through traditional mechanisms narrates in such a way that;

*“I and my wife were a great couple. The way she takes care of me, children, the house and the home garden as well as the good relationship with my family and neighborhoods was unbelievable. She even take some home garden cultivations as well as domestic animals to the market when it became more than house hold uses and change it to money. On the other hand, I was not as hard worker as my wife.*

*Due to that reason, we started to have conflict with in our marriage. Then, she told to my best-man in order to advise me and he did as she told him. At the time when he told me, I realized that how much I hurt my wife and promised to myself to be a good husband. Then I started to cultivate crops as well as produce honey by preparing beehives. At present time, we are economically very good and living together a happy life with our four children's”.*

As to my participant, most of Kaffecho's community's livelihood depends on agriculture. So, the husband needs to be a competent farmer in order to fulfill the needs of his own family. But if they (both married partners) fail to do such expected roles, marital conflict will arise. The following is an example of a case, in relation with this issue,

#### Case-2

*It was in 2002 E.C. M/s Abiyot and Mr. Kochito got married by choice with getting their parental acceptance from both sides. Since they established their marriage based on love and affection, they enjoyed their marriage at the beginning. In 2003, 2004 and 2007 E.C, she delivered their first, second and third born children to her husband. They became happier than before. While her husband went to farming, she takes care of their children's as well as the households. She even cultivates home gardens in order to use for the household. As the time of her husband's coming from the farm, she prepares food and coffee in an attractive manner. This was their routine till 2008 E.C. But after, she started to notice some weird behavior on her husband like being late to come to home, got drunk, neglect them (her and their children's), being lazy on his farming work etc. As time goes the situation became worse and created a huge disagreement between them. Since they live in an extended family structure with in his parent's home, she told to her in-law (her husband's father) through her sister in-law about the situation. Then after Mr. Kochito's father called both of them and discuss their problem calmly. After hearing the cases from both sides, he found his son guilty. So that, he told to his son to apologize Ms. Abiyot. Finally Mr. Kochito apologized his wife in front of his parents without hesitating. Then the matter ended with the reconciliation of the*



*two married couples. Finally, the conflict between Ms. Abiyot and Mr. Kochito was resolved based on the custom and traditions of the studied community.*

As mentioned earlier, most of cause of marital conflict was happened to be occurred as a result of failed role expectations as a husband or wife. Supporting this assumption, symbolic interactionist, view socialization as a more dynamic process that allows people to develop the ability to think, to develop in distinctively human ways rather see socialization as simply a process by which people learn the things that they need to survive in society. In the study area, role is mostly related with gender. As a wife/husband there are expectations to be fulfilled, for instance, a wife is expected to take care of household activity as well as the children. So, whenever the wife failed to fulfill those expectations, it is common that conflict will arise. In the same manner, as a husband there are expectation like; to be a hard worker, capable making decision, and so on. But is he failed to such things, this could also create a conflict with in marriage relationship.

### **5.3 Customary conflict resolutions (*Qaabbittino*) among Kaffecho**

The Kaffecho communities have different mechanisms of conflict resolution. Most of these mechanism are also commonly used in other societies, where as some of these mechanisms are unique to Kaffecho. Thus, their mechanisms of customary conflict resolutions is described and analyzed under this chapter. As a whole, efforts have been made to discuss and analyze the customary conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area, conception of wrong among kaffecho, their understanding of conflict. And finally, due to my research topic, further attention has been given to discuss particularly on mechanisms of customary marital conflict resolutions which are used in the study area.

As to the data obtained from my FGD participants, among Kaffecho conflicts are seen as an abnormal phenomena. So, whenever conflict occurred, it is assumed to be resolved by using their various cultural mechanisms before it create a potential damage in the community. As to my informants, such kind of thinking has been developed from the past generations of Kaffecho. Thus whenever conflict occurred among the member of the community, it is uncommon to ignore the situation as nothing happened or as it is not their concern. It was because, they perceive conflicts as a damage which have the potential to interrupt the social substance which holds the society together. In line with this among Kaffecho, there are various ways of customary conflict resolution

mechanisms available in order to resolve conflicts from simple disagreement up to complex quarrels.

### ***Awchachign “Otto”***

Otto is one of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms among Kaffecho which is used to detect the thief among the community member. According to the information acquired from the interview and Focus group discussion, whenever a theft of property like; cattle, product of honey are lost, the person, who are the victim of the theft, will apply to the elected community elders (*ariyech geenana'o*) who are assigned by the community members for such reasons. Those *ariyech geenana'o*, after hearing such unfavorable actions, will make an announcement to that specific community members to come to a place where it was arranged for this reason by beating drum (*Gonno*).

After hearing the announcement, it is very uncommon to be absent. Thus, after the arrival off the villagers, the *ariyech geenana'o* explain the situation as to their village (*gaffoo*), they will be asked to sit in group. After making such arrangement, the *ariyech geenana'o* selects one group leader for each group. Each individuals will be asked to prepare a (*buushaaro*) from their respective group. Those individuals who couldn't get *buushaaro*, will be identified and isolated from their groups for further investigation.

Among the strategy of identifying the thief, if theft is done on cattle, the fire will be prepared and the identified individuals asked to put their hand on the fire. After doing so, those persons whose hand became greasy or moisturized, will be identified for further investigation. And finally, the means for the moisture on the hand will be critically investigated and the thief will be identified. Such action is made in an assumption that the person who make such kind of theft is assumed to be only for eating purpose. In line with this, one of my key informant describe it in such a way that;

*“In rural parts of Kaffecho, the social integration is high. Most of the villagers know each other and whenever such things happened, it will be heard easily. Thus, if the thief took the cattle to the market, he/she could be caught easily. So most of the time, when the theft of the cattle happened, it is obvious that it will not be for*

*eating purpose rather than selling it. And the eating is done by hiding in to the forest by making sure that no one will be near to that place.....”*

Whereas, when the theft is made on the product of honey, the strategy of identifying the thief was happened to be; every suspect ordered to chew a fiber which is made from *inset* and after the chewed fiber will be inserted to the fire. If the fiber blow, it is considered that the individual ate honey at recent time. So the investigation will be carried out from when he/she ate that honey. After making critical investigation the thief will be identified.

Such traditions could have a huge impact on reducing the action of theft in the community. Because, since the process of identification is made in front of the community member, the humiliation will not be easy for the person who is considered to be thief. Once the community attached good or bad name to an individual person, it won't be easy to erase it. The legacy might even continue to his/her next generation.

### ***Mugit “Tucce taggoo”***

*Tucce taggoo* is a kind of debate made by both conflicting parties in order to reach on an agreement. Among Kaffecho, such customary mechanisms of conflict resolution is held in an open air under a big tree. Their place of sittings will be arranged for those *Sheewe Genoo*'s, to take care of the conflict resolution proceedings conveniently. The opening of the proceedings is done by with *Sheewe Genoo*'s prayer to the creator (*Yeroo*) to be part of the proceedings. After doing so, both disputants will be asked to stand in front of *Sheewe Genoo*'s and to explain their case. The offended party explains the whole situation. After hearing so, the *Sheewe Genoo*'s asks the defendant if he/she did such action or not.

If the defendant deny the action, the offended party will explain to the *Sheewe Genoo*'s by saying *“I am quite sure that the defendant commit such actions, but, I will leave the decision for you and if the defendant not found guilty on the eyes of you (Sheewe Genoo's), I will present such item as a buushaaro (guarantee) ”*. The items are; one pot honey, an ox or paired oxen for farming purpose, in Kaffa word, *Ikke Qondee eeyo, Ikke Ceelle Barehoo Ikke Kashe Gattoo*, respectively. After making such sayings, the offended party say *“tucco”* in order to make sure that, if he/she failed to win the debate, to give to the winner one of the item which was put as *a buushaaro* in the beginning of their debate. Following

the offended party, the defendant will announce the debate by saying “*Agaabiiyo*” meaning, “*I didn't do anything, but if I found guilty in the eyes of you, I will present the items which was presented as a buushaaro to my opponent*” in order to continue the argument between his opponents rather than back to reconciliation. The final step of the conflict settlement was happened to be, the *Sheewe Genoo*'s, after following the presented arguments and critical investigation on the matter, they identify the person who claimed to be guilty and briefing the wrong actions of that person. And finally decided on him/her to present the *buusharro*'s, which was presented willingly at the beginning of the debate, for the offended party as a payment for the wrong actions as well as for denying it instead of admitting and asking forgiveness.

Whereas, if the defendant admits and regret his wrong actions, as explained by my FGD participant, the *Sheewe Genoo*'s asks the offended party to give mercy for his opponent. And also they decide on the defendant to give compensation (*numoo*) for the offended party. But most of the time, it is uncommon that the defendant accept the *numoo*. That is due to, first, the defendant only needs to be the truth to come out, second in order to continue their good relationship in the future, the offended party give mercy for free, and the third reason was happened to be the question of pride. Among Kaffecho, social relationship have a great value than material. So in order to keep good social relationship prior to material, most of the time the offended party reconcile with the opponent, without accepting the *numoo*.

In addition, religious institutions such as; Ortodox, Islam, Chatolic as well as Protestants, plays a significant role in resolving conflicts within the study area. Besides that, traditional religious ritual practice such as has a “*k'oolle-deejjo*” and “*Bare k'oocho*” ritual practice which is performed once in a year with a presence of a large crowd, has a significant role in resolving any kind of conflict and maintaining cohesion among the people of Kaffa. That is because, the major criteria to attend the ritual is to be free from any kinds conflict as well as feelings of revenge. However, if someone came on the ritual practice without resolving the conflict, there is a belief that, something bad will happen on that person. Since most of the community have a beliefs on such traditions, they will resolve their problems by using different kind of traditional resolution mechanisms in order to attend the rituals.

### 5.3.1 Customary mechanisms of marital conflict resolution in the study area

In the history of Kaffa, as the information obtained from the fieldwork, before the application of modern state law, customary mechanisms for conflict resolution were there to play the role of social control. And even at the present time, side by side to the modern state law, it is playing a significant role. The traditional institutions take organizational forms based mainly on councils of elders set up at different levels from family/kinship to neighborhood/village to clan/tribal levels. Their purpose is to set and enforce norms and rules governing aspects of life ranging from simple socio-economic relations between individuals to wider community, local and regional issues. Customary resolution of conflict are aimed at maintaining social order and cohesion among community members in the area.

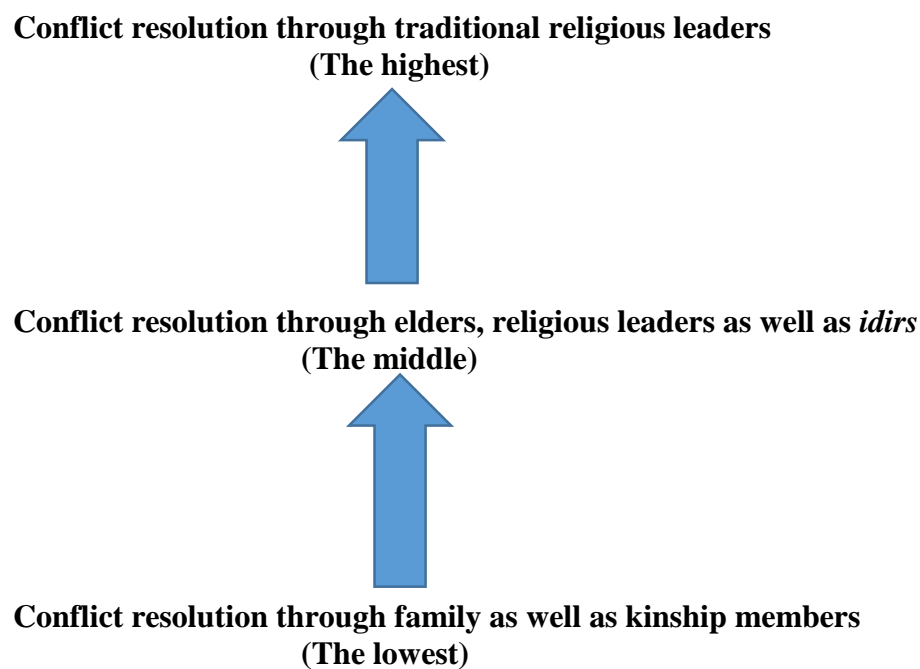
As to my FGD participants these traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have been developed with in the area through the countless interactions with the natural as well as social environment: in agriculture and animal husbandry; hunting, beekeeping, fishing and gathering; struggles against disease and injury; struggles within social interactions, naming and explanation of natural phenomena; and strategies to cope with inconsistent situations since the time immemorial and still used as an alternative mechanisms.

The most widely practiced marital conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area are done through, in-law relations (*nacho*), the groom's first best-man (*Miyaatoo*), the elder person who took the responsibility of the bride from her family while the marriage contract was done (*Makenihoo*), spiritual leaders as well as community elders (*Sheewe Genoo*), volunteer associations (*Idir*) and finally through the leaders of traditional beliefs (*Alamos*). As to my participants, these various mechanisms of marital conflict resolutions are used as an alternative ways for the conflicting married partners in order to save their marriage from collapse. These traditional marital conflict resolution mechanisms are done willingly without expecting almost any kind of payment.

According to Emile Durkheim, social facts are functionalist in nature. They exist only if the society can derive utility or benefits from them. Such perspective is perfectly described in the work of Dejene (2007) that; despite the imposition by the government and internal changes, the Oromo traditional judicial system has retained its basic structure for centuries. Same is true among Kaffecho in such a way that, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are playing a significant

role in maintaining peace and social order even in inconvenience situation and undeserved attention. It is convincing that, within these long process, the community established rich sets of information, understandings, experiences, and explanations relating to the environments they live in. Due to that and other reason, such traditions intermixed with their lives and became their social asset. As well, such accumulated local knowledge is used as a mechanisms to resolve all types of conflicts particularly marital conflicts .Therefore, the existence of the customary mechanism is a social fact in the society providing a marital conflict resolution utility occasioned by the absence or low penetration of formal legal systems.

Figure 1: Showing the hierarchies of marital conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area.



***Conflict resolution through in-law relationship (Nacho)***

As I discussed with my cases and FGD participants, the first mechanism to resolve marital conflict in the study area was happened to be through the involvement of the groom's family members. As mentioned earlier on the formation of marriage section, the pattern of residence among Kaffecho is patrilocal. Due to that reason, after getting married, the bride, supposed to go and live in her husband's area. Since most of the time the groom built his home with in his family's compound, their family structure will have extended family type. In Kaffa's culture, as the information

obtained from my key informants, once the bride brought to their place, she will be taken as one of the family member. Due to that reason, the groom's family feels quite responsible for her.

As to my participants, when the married couples start to experience some disagreements within their marriage, the groom's family is the primary option for settling the unfavorable situation. At such time, it is common in the area that the wife explain her complain to her sister in-law. The mediating program will be held in the groom's family house with the presence of the two conflicting married couples. There will be a coffee ceremony in the reconciliation process because it is believed that it brings a good luck for the reconciliation. The groom's family, starts asking and understanding the causes of the conflict, if the blame is on the wife, they will provide a consultation by referring different examples calmly. Their reason is, as to them, she (the bride) leaves her family and became their son's wife, because she trusts him as well as her in-laws. On the other hand, if the blame is on the husband (their son) they will be hard on him. That is because among Kaffecho's culture, it is very inappropriate behavior to mistreat the wife rather supporting her with her matters.

According to my key informants, if the situation is somewhat serious, the in-laws (especially the father) discuss it with the neighborhoods about the situation in order them to be part of the reconciliation process. As to my informants, this is done for two purposes; the first one is, in order to show them that the reconciliation is free from any biases by allowing them to be part of the reconciliation process. The second reason is, since neighborhoods are attached with their neighbors, they know most of their neighbor's strengths and weaknesses. But, if the in-laws fail to do this, the neighborhoods and the nearby villagers would be angry with that family so that that family member will lose their previous grace in order to establish marital relationships in the future. One of my case from Bonga town shares me her real experience on this regard. It is be narrated as follows;

#### Case – 3

*M/s. Tewabu and Mr. Mulugeta are married for 27 years. The incidence was happened before 26 years soon after they got married. The reason of their disagreement was Mr. Mulugeta's drunkenness and coming at home at late night frequently. Ms. Tewabu, after tolerating her husband for a while, she told to her*

*sister in-law in a way that, her husband has changed because she couldn't give him a child.*

*Both the father and the mother of Mr. Mulugeta, after listening the situation from the sister in-law, they called both Ms. Tewabu and their son (Mr. Mulugeta) to their home and asked them about their problems. Ms. Tewabu started by saying that, her husband is angry with her because she couldn't give him a child. So in order to save her marriage, she offered him a chance to marry another wife. Because she knows that her husband has enough capital to manage two wives. On the other hand, Mr. Mulugeta suggested his wish of having a child by supporting his wife's opinion.*

*The in - laws (Mr. Mulugeta's mother and father), after listening the situations, they called close neighborhoods in order to provide an advice to their son to wait a while before deciding such decision. Because they believed that 1 year was very soon to decide that Ms. Tewabu couldn't gave birth. So they (the in-laws as well as the neighborhoods) convinced Mr. Mulugeta by mentioning examples related with the situation.*

*Mr. Mulugeta touched by their advice and his wife's voluntary offer and decided to wait to sometimes. He also apologized for his inappropriate behavior and promised to his wife, parent as well as neighbors not got drunk and come late at night.*

In Kaffa's culture, marital conflict is settled with the involvement of third party. According to Schellenberg (1996), the third neutral party follow mediation process including gathering information, framing the issues, developing options, negotiating, and formalizing agreements. However, as to him, the mediator doesn't have any decision making power rather parties create their own solutions. In addition to that, Dejene (2007) states that, the role of a third party as a mediator varies in degree from case to case. Where the conflicting parties have no serious problem in negotiating through face-to-face discussion, but are unable to settle their own case on their own, a mediator simply facilitates so that the negotiators to arrive at a favorable decision on which both parties agree. Same is true among Kaffecho when marital conflict is resolved through *nacho*. In such case, the role of the *nacho* during conflict resolution process is to mediate the conflicting



married couples by providing different opinions for solution in order to reach a favorable ends rather than imposing any decision on the matter.

### ***Conflict resolution through the best-man-ship (Miyaatoo)***

The other local mechanism of marital conflict resolution is through the help of *Miyaatoo*. As to the information gathered from the key informants, the value of *Miyaatoo* relationship is much more than sibling's relationship. Before describing the role of *Miyaatoo* in marital conflict resolution, I will try to describe the value of *Miyatoo* among Kaffecho as to the data obtained from my informants.

According to the data obtained from most of my participants, I can affirm that, establishment of marriage among Kaffecho is much more related with the cause of marital conflict as well as traditional resolution mechanisms. For instance, marriage which is done with the acceptance of both families (the groom and the bride) have the tendencies of low marital conflict than marriage which is done with non-acceptance of family. It is because, both the grooms and the bride feel safe that their family gave them approval of their marriage. So that they will get their support in good as well as difficult times. Similarly, when I come to conflict resolution mechanisms, some of the mechanisms which are available in the study area are by products of the marriage relationships. For instance, the groom's family members, the *Miyaatoo* relationships, the *Maakeenihoo* relationship are used as a social capitals in order to helps the married partners in a good as well as in a difficult times throughout their life.

Even in early times, when the first best man *Qannee Miyaatoo* come for visit his married friend, the wife of his friend leaves the bed room for the two friends. They spend all by night talking and laughing. Once *Qannee Miyaatoo* came for visit, it is obvious that he stays not less than a week. And when the time reaches for him to go to his place, his friend cries by saying "I will going to miss you my brother" and so on. And also, whenever conflict occurs among the married partners *Qannee Miyaatoo* plays a great role in resolving their conflicts. The resolution process is made by negotiating the married couple as a neutral third party or negotiator.

What makes this mechanisms unique from the previous one was, as to my FGD participants is, the transparency of the conflicting married partners to the *Miyaatoo* regarding their problems. Even the problem which is related to sexual matter, both the husband and the wife will be free to tell to

*Miyaatoo*. By supporting this idea, one of my key informant shares me his real experience. It is narrated as follows;

*“The situation was happened 17 years ago which means after a year later from our marriage takes place. My wife became unwilling to make a sexual intercourse with me. Due to that there was a conflict in our marriage. One day I discuss the situation with my Miyaatoo. After listening the problem, he asked my wife about her problem regarding the situation. And my wife told him that she was feeling high pain during the sexual intercourse. Then, he advise me to take her to hospital in order to check the problem. As he said I took her to hospital and it was happened to be health problem which required a medical treatment. Thus my wife got the necessary medical treatment and became fine. Finally thanks to my Miyaatoo, our marriage was saved. At the present time I and my wife have three children.”*

Among Kaffecho, the women doesn't have a bridesmaid, but she took her husband's best-mam as her own brother. So, whatever the case could, she will only be free to discuss with him without any hesitation. As to Bekele (2010), and participants of the study, the *Miyaatoo* relationship is more than sibling relations among Kaffecho. Therefore, *Miyaatoo* relationship contribute as one and very powerful mechanisms of marital conflict resolution mechanisms in the study are.

#### ***Conflict resolution through Community elders (Sheewe Genoo)***

This is a mostly common traditional conflict resolution mechanisms among Kaffecho through the use of the elder people (*Sheewe Genoo*) in rural as well as urban parts of Kaffa. As people having central role of resolving conflicts through this mechanism, the choice of *Sheewe Genoo*'s considers the following criteria:

- Age: people having older age are preferred as such people are likely to have general wisdom, knowledge of the culture, and self-control in cases of temptations.
- Ability: people having convincing ability.
- Charisma: respected people whose judgments are accepted unquestionably.
- Blood ascription: people having “good” and respected hereditary origin, especially in terms of their clan.

- Religious leaders: especially if the two conflicting couples are followers of the same religion.

Based on the above mentioned criteria the elders are selected as judges and as people who suggest the terms of agreement to bring an end to conflicts.

The time duration the reconciliation process for marital conflicts depends on some factors. The first factor is the level of the conflict. In this regard, simple and medium level marital conflicts are resolved mostly in one session while if the conflict is very serious it may take up to four or five sessions until final resolution is reached. The other factor is the nature of the conflicting married couples, especially on the side of the offended. If the offended married partner simply accepts the provided solutions by the elders, the time the process takes tends to be shorter, whereas if the offender is conservative and rigid, it tends to take longer time to resolve the marital conflict. As the majority of the Kaffecho- are agrarians the dates preferred for reconciliation proceedings are communal day-offs such as monthly church holidays and Sundays, when people do not go farming.

Based on the information obtained from my key informant and FGD participant, the process of reconciliation at the beginning, the offender married partner (*Goddayito*) select and invite the community elder to their house. When the process starts, the first step is that both the offender and the offended asked by the elders to present their cases. After hearing the presented cases, those elders propose the idea of peaceful reconciliation of the dispute. The offended married partner may or may not accept this proposal at the first encounter.

If the offended married partner resist the reconciliation, the elders use different mechanisms in order to know the reason for the refusal. The first step is, they ask the offender to wait outside in order to discuss with the matter freely with the offended married partner. After doing so, the elders asks the offended partner to the problem without any restriction because they guarantee the offender that his/her secret are safe with them. After taking their (the elders) words, the offended partner explains all problems that he/she faces.

The elders, after listening the whole story carefully, they ask the offended partner to wait outside in order to discuss about the issue only by themselves. After letting both married partner to wait outside the home, the elders discuss wisely about the issue. Every member of the elder share their opinion on the matter in order to bring fair solution for their problem for bringing them back

together. After a long discussion, the elders make an agreement on their strategy to resolve the conflict. After such discussion, they call the offender to express the blame on him/her and advise him/her to admit it's wrong deed; and require him/her to suggest a commensurate compensation for his/her offense. After that, the elders call the offended and make their statement to bring lasting solution and the required compensation in the presence of both sides.

The type of compensation can be jewelry, full clothe, sheep, oxen or money. Sometimes, after the type and amount of the compensation is decided; the people on the side of the offended, especially if they are intending to win social respect, declare that they have willingly lifted the compensation and would not require it, with positive intentions.

Then after, cold water is presented in a circular tap (*Gaffeto*) and a bunch of fresh grass is inserted in to that water. Then the conflicting married partners put their hands in to the tap containing cold water and fresh grass and wipes their mouth with the water. This symbolizes that their wish to cool down their conflict like the cold water and to wash and throw their past hurtful sayings and start fresh or clean in their future marital life. And then the elders insert their hands in to the tap containing cold water and fresh grass and then bring the fresh grass from the tap in order to put the fresh grass on conflicting married partners' heads. This symbolizes that the elder's wish that to cool down the conflict like the cold water and to flourish their future marital life like the fresh grass.

After blessing by the elders for the future peace, all the persons who attend in the reconciliation process celebrate the situation with eating and drinking the served foods and drinks. Coffee ceremony will always be there. Especially the peaceful interaction between the offender and the offended married partners shows the end to their past silence and disappointment by serving the available food and drinks at their home.

As my informants argued, once conflicts are resolved through *shimgelena*, the terms of the agreement are respected with strict compliance. Such strict compliance to the terms of agreement is mainly due to the respect the communities have for the elders and the social sanction in it. Failure to observe the decision of such respected elders would result in out casting from the community because it is considered as disrespect for the elders and ultimately the sacred values of the society. In some cases after agreement is reached through the *shimgelena*, some amount of punishment

(mostly material or monetary) is decided in case if the parties violate the terms of the agreement in the future. So, fear of incurring such punishment on the side of both parties also helps strict compliance to the terms of agreement.

Moreover, once marital conflicts are resolved through *shimgelena* a condition of genuine peace, security and trust is created among the conflicting married partners. The revival of conflict over the same issue is not likely to occur between the two parties, once it is resolved through *shimgelena*. In addition, mostly the relationship between the conflicting parties gets smoother and smoother through time, after resolution of conflict through *shimgelena*.

### ***Conflict Resolution through Deddebe Tato***

*Deddebe Tato* is the other and the most powerful traditional conflict resolution center among Kaffecho. *Deddebe* named for hills and *Tato* named for a king. So *Deddebe Tato* is called “king of the hill”. *Deddebe Tato* is a person who is a leader of this traditional court center. The position of being *dedebe tato* (leader of this traditional court) is acquired through decent not achievements. *Dedebeto* is from *Dajewoo* clan which is one of Kaffa clans. As to the information obtained from my FGD participants, in early times, the kings of Kaffa select their *miyaatoo* from *Dajewoo* clan. In addition to that this clan was also known for their ability of fair judgments and skills in reconciling the disputants.

*Deddebe Tato* traditional conflict resolution center is found in Gimbo Woreda, which is one of the 11<sup>th</sup> woredas in Kaffa Zone. The woreda has 31 kebeles. Among them, *Dedebeto* traditional conflict resolution center is established particularly in Tula Kebele. As to my participants this center is established long time ago since the time immemorial to provide a conflict resolution service as well counselling for everyone who wishes their services without any distinction based on gender, religion, educational as well as social status in order to maintain social order. The current *Dedebeto* is believed to be the 12<sup>th</sup> generation descended from an ancestor on the father line. The service has been and still been carried out for free without any pre-established payment. The conflict resolution process is done every Saturday which means four times a month. This traditional court center is believed to be a sacred place and supervised by the spirit possessed by *dedebeto*. This traditional court center have an assistants known as *Gaberecho* who fully involve in the conflict resolution proceedings. Bekele, (2010) describe *Gaberecho* as “a person who sits

*in front of the king during meal time*". In early times of Kaffecho both the Kaffa king as well as traditional religious leaders have *Gaberecho*. In the case of *Dedebe tato* traditional court center, the role of *Gaberecho* is vast.

### **The Selection and the role of *Gaberecho* in the *Dedebe tato*'s traditional court center**

The choice of *Gaberecho* comprises the following criteria:

- Age: an individual whose age is more than 35;
- Marital Status: has to be married as well as a good reputation in handling his family;
- Residence: permanent settler to that particular place;
- Religion: has to be the follower of that particular traditional religion
- Clan: has to be member of *Dajewo* clan; which is one of the Kaffa clan.

As to my two FGD informants, once an individual selected as *Gaberecho*, the position will stay with him throughout his life unless and otherwise that person became against the traditions of the *dedebe tato* traditional court center. Though, being against the tradition is unthinkable because there is a belief that the deviance action have a curse, which bring a bad fortune to the individual who deviate from such action. In every Saturday, according to the number of cases held in that traditional court center, starting from eight up to twelve or more *Gaberecho* will be there in order to play their role in the conflict resolution proceedings. Next to *Dedebe tato*, they are very important figures for that traditional court center. Beside the day of the conflict resolution proceedings, each *Gaberecho* has to various role in a day to day lives of *dedebe tato*. For instance; one *Gaberecho* stays with *Dedebe tato* for a week. This is because, it is not appropriate that *dedebe tato* to be alone in a meal times as well as in other activities. Every *Gaberecho* is like the right hand of *dedebe tato*. When guest, visitors etc come to this traditional court center, *Gaberecho* is the one who first approach and make arrangement as their comings in order to present their reason of comings to *dedebe tato*. In addition to this, *gaberecho* takes care of *dedebe tato*'s farm by arranging *dafoo* and mostly *Gaberecho* is always accompany the *dedebe tato* because. As one of the *Gaberecho* said that;

*"In dedebe tato traditional court center everyone served equally without any distinction by their status, gender, religion, or color. Everyone who render the*

*service will get according to their time of arrival. I serve in this traditional court center for almost 23 years. Since, every member of the community have a huge respect for this sacred place, all conflicts or disagreements which came to this center resolved in a long lasting way. I serve here with pleasure. I will also serve throughout my life”.*

As to my observation, I have seen a large number of people gathered at *Deddebe Tato*’s traditional court center to have their cases heard. My participants also confirmed that, it is very common to see more than three hundred peoples every Saturday in this traditional court center. In fact some of people came just to attend rituals. The proceedings was held in a halls which is constructed for this purpose.

### **Methods of handling cases**

As to my two FGD participant, such large number of cases handled through sharing responsibilities. In *Dedebe tato*’s traditional court center power is decentralization. When the cases became large in number, *Dedebe tato*, delegate some of his power to *gaberecho* in such a way that; first, *dedebe tato* together with *gaberecho*, hear the cases presented by the opponents and give responsibility for two number of *Gaberecho* in order to mediate the opponents accordingly and also make decision on the amount of compensation on the accused party if it is required. The mediation is done outside the hall which is constructed for this purpose. With the same manner, the next opponent present their cases, and passed to two number of *Gaberecho* and the like. After reconciling the opponents, those *Gaberecho* present the reconciled party to *Dedebe tato* and explain the final decision, after hearing so, leader of the traditional court (*dedebe tato*) thank both *Gaberecho* and the reconciled party and give blessing for their future. Almost all the time the cases end with reconciliation. In line with this, one of the *Gaberecho* states in such a way that;

*“ ... All of this people came to this traditional court center from different places of kaffa because. Every Saturday ‘esachew’ as well as all of us (Gaberecho) eat very good breakfast before the conflict resolution proceeding starts. After starting the reconciliation proceeding, it is unthinkable to stand for lunch in order to save time. That is because, since too much people come to this place to resolve their problem”.*

## **Conflict resolution proceedings**

As I observe the whole proceedings, held on Saturday, May 19, 2009 E.C., everyone was appeared on day of their appointments. The *Deddebe tato* makes a short speech about the overall situation and objective of the gathering. Following his opening speech, as to their order, the opponents requested by the *Gaberecho* to stand in front of *dedebe tato*. By continuing the offended party is requested to present the case which occurred among the married partners. Then, the offender is allowed to have a say on the points mentioned by his/her married partner who claimed to be harmed/mistreated. After listening to both sides, *Deddebe tato* asks the *Gaberechos* to take the conflicting married couples outside the hall in order to mediate and make decision on the compensation if it is required. Since the *Gaberechos* heard the case of the conflicting married partners, they pass directly to the mediation process by counselling them in order to reach in save their marriage from break down by resolving their problem. The *Gaberecho* also decide on the offender to compensate the offended married partner. After making the necessary procedure, all the *Gaberecho* as well as the married partners returned to the hall and present the final result to *Deddebe tato*. The result was favorable. Before they go, both married couples down on their knees in front of *dedebe tato*, and *dedebe tato* gave blessings to the couples by putting his hand on both couples and say;

*Yeeri Iritoochee ittoshin ruyeba*                      May God protect your marriage from destruction;

*Yeeri itto shaageyoon wodiiba*                      May God bless your marriage;

*Yeeri itto busheen wodiiba*                      May God bless your children;

*Yeeri Ittoshin wodiiba*                      May God bless you;

and both couples accept the blessings by saying amen which literally means 'let it be'. Finally, the couples thanks all of them who gave their time and energy in order to save their marriage by saying "*Taelebona*" which means "let me be tired" and go to their home. Most of the time in this traditional conflict resolution center, most of conflicts resolved in a lasting manner because of the communities huge respect for this traditional court center. The main objective of this traditional court center is to restore peace and harmony among the conflicting parties rather punishing the offender. Even compensation is made in accordance with the offender's capacity. The people who use this mechanism tend to be bounded by the decisions of the *Deddebe tato* because deviance



from the words of the *Deddebe tato* is believed to bring curse to the violators, in ways such as lose of wealth and mental illness. Below is the case relevant to this belief.

#### Case -4

*“I and my husband were married for 45 years. We had four children, one son and three daughters. My husband is a very hard working farmer. He wants everyone in the family to be very hard working. Even though we (me and the children’s) try to do our best, it was never be enough for him. Due to that reason most of the time, there were much conflict in our home. I was very tired with my husband’s high expectations and complain. One day in 2002 our first born and only son who was at the age of 27 years came to me and give me some advice. Which was to make a divorce with my husband (his father) and live a peaceful life. He convinced me that if I make a divorce, he will take care of me the rest of my life. I was convinced and decided to make a divorce. Even though, except our only son, all of the family and other kinship members tried to resolve the disagreement. But I said no and make a divorce. After divorcing my husband things couldn’t be as I expected. It was because, my son was suggesting the divorce not for the sake of me rather it was for his benefit. He (my son) control every aspect of our economy. He started to waste excess money without my consent. At this time, I just realized that divorcing my husband was the biggest mistake that I ever done in my life. I started to blame myself every single day. After two years of divorce, one day I decided to ask my husband’s forgiveness but I could get the courage to do it. So that I went to Dedebe Tato’s traditional conflict resolution institution to confess my mistake and to get the necessary advice how to get my husband’s forgiveness. After hearing the whole story the dedebe tato gave me the “etano” in order to call him. I gave to him through our daughter. Every Saturday, conflict resolution process has been and still being performed. My daughter told me that he (my husband) decided to come to this place. It was in 2005 on the day of Saturday, I and my husband stands in front of the traditional court. After I explained my deepest regret, I begged his forgiveness down on my knees. The dedebe tato asked my husband to accept my apology. My husband forgave me because it is not good to be against the words of*

*dedebetato. It brings bad fortune. I came here because I knew that my husband won't be against their decision. And finally, thanks to "dedebetato's traditional court center" now, we are living a happy life together as a husband and wife with our children's without any difficulties. Even if I and my husband are divorced legally.*

Like the other traditional conflict resolution mechanisms in Kaffa society, the *Dedebetato* traditional marital conflict mechanism resolves conflicts. But what makes this one very unique is, the reconciliation proceeding takes place in a fixed place and time, free from pre-established payment. In this regard my data confirms Dejene (2007) who states that the *qaalluu* court is also effective in both time wise and economical. In addition to that *dedebetato* traditional court center very long age institution with much more experience in conflict resolution skills, and it is also believed that there is an involvement of spirit in the reconciliation process. Due to that is because, the couples who failed to resolve through other traditional as well as formal marital conflict mechanism came to this traditional institution in order to get to solution for their problems. Nearly all marital conflict cases resolved through *dedebetato* traditional court center. That is because, most of the community member in the study area were tends to believe that, deviance from the words of the *Dedebetato* brought curse like; loss of wealth, sickness as well as mental instability to the violators.

## CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### 6.1 Conclusion

In so far presentation, the inevitable nature of conflict in every relationship including marital relationship was clearly mentioned. In the same manner, married partner among Kaffecho also experiences conflict during their marriage relationship despite the fact that the parents as well as the community member of Kaffecho puts different coping mechanisms. Among Kaffecho, strategies of minimizing of marital conflict started from nurturing the children's to be a competent husband/wife in their future marital life by providing them different kinds of responsibility at their early ages. The works of Mead, which explained by Ritizer, supports this idea;

*“Children may play at being “mommy” and “daddy” and in the process develop the ability to evaluate themselves as their parents, and other specific individuals, do” (Ritizer, 2010:364).*

In the study area, the establishment of marriage carried out through deep investigation of both couples as well as their family's backgrounds. That is due to, once marriage relationship is established, it will be very hard to break it. Rather it will be strengthened and taken care of. According to Kaffecho's traditions, establishment of marriage is much more related with the causes of marital conflict as well as mechanisms of resolutions in such a way that, when marriage carried out in accordance with the culture of the area as well as with the acceptance of the both couples family, the happening conflict with in marriage tends to decrease. That is in relation with getting a social support from both families in good and bad timings. But, when the couples established their marriage against their culture as well as without getting their parents acceptance, it creates conflict in marriage. It is related with, since family and kinship members could be a social capital to a married couples, not able to get such support creates burden to the married couples which finally create conflict in marriage.

As it is indicated in the literature review section, writers have attached the causes of marital conflict to various sources. In the case of Kaffecho also, varies potential causes for marital conflict was happened to be; establishment of marriage without parental acceptance, adultery, interference of children, unfulfilled expected roles as a husband or wife as well as a mother or father. But, the major cause of marital conflict was appeared to be unfulfilled role expectation as a husband and

wife. The reason for that was, in Kaffa's culture, the expected role as a husband and wife are assigned on the basis of their tradition rather the preference of the couples. Thus when the married couples tends to act against to the socialized way, it resulted in marital conflict. As to Symbolic interactionist, mind is not thing which always do what is told to do but rather as a continuing process which could create its own meaning or truth through social interaction. In accordance with this assumption, most of the marital conflict which happened due to unfulfilled expected roles was, when the married couple intentionally changed the assigned expected role as a husband or wife and choose to act on the bases of their preferences.

Even though marital conflict occurs for different reasons among Kaffecho, due to the great value the community offer to marriage institution, the conflicting married partners acquires the privilege of protection from every member of the community member in order to save their marriage from brake down. They even spend plenty of times, effort and energy for marital conflict resolution and peacemaking process.

In the study area, customary marital conflict resolutions was available starting from simple to highest level. Though, it is not a must to follow a stages of customary marital conflict mechanisms which available within the area, it is recommended to go in accordance with the stages. The first mechanisms of customary marital conflict resolution was done through the groom's family member, especially the father of the groom. That is because, among kaffecho, patterns of residence is phatrilocal, due to that the bride comes to her husband's place and have an extended type of family structure. Thus, due to familial as well as geographical intimacy, makes it the primary options for marital conflict resolution. According to that tradition, if the father of the groom did nothing while his son in-law is experiencing continuous conflict with in her marriage, the neighborhoods as well as the nearby villagers criticizes him for his ignorance. As well as bad names also be attached to that family; such as "*that family is not good to establish a marriage relationship with*". Thus, this mechanism is very useful in resolving marital conflicts at early stage through mediation.

The second customary marital conflict resolution mechanism was through the groom's best-man (Miyatoo). This traditional mechanism has a great role in resolving marital conflicts like the causes of conflicts are sensitive or secret. That is due to both married couples would be open to *miyatoo* to explain the reasons of their conflict is happened to be in relation with sexual matter.

The *Miyaatoo* resolve marital conflict by mediating the married couple through facilitating the situation in order them to discuss about their problems and arrive in to agreements.

The third customary marital conflict resolution mechanism available in that area was happened to be through the use of the community elders (*Sheewe Genoo 's*). This type of mechanism is common in rural as well as urban parts of Kaffa. Such mechanisms is very relevant in resolving marital conflicts through their various strategies. That is because, each *Sheewe Genoo* has an accumulated experience and knowledge regarding marital conflict resolution mechanisms. By using such skills, they resolve conflict in a long lasting manner. They also have a power of making decision, as an arbitrator, on the defendant to give compensation for the offended party in order to compensate the damage he/she creates. Being against the decision of *Sheewe Geno* is very uncommon in the study area. That is because it is considered as disrespecting the elders and the violator might be excluded from the social participation; like marriage ceremony, grief, social gatherings and the like.

The fourth and the most power full mechanisms of customary marital conflict resolution was occurred to be through *Dedebe Tato* traditional court center. The role that this traditional conflict resolution center tremendously explained by my informants in such a way that “*No one returned without resolving the conflict at dedebe tato's traditional conflict resolution center in a long lasting manner*”. That is due, it's long existence, being free from any pre-established payments for using the service unless and otherwise someone wants to offer payment in cash or in-kind as a “thank you”, it is because its fixed time and fixed place of the services, equal treatment for everyone who comes to get their services and most importantly it was because of the belief that, *dedebe tato* acquire a spirit which enables him to know the truth about the opponents without asking any witness. So, if anyone goes to that place, as to the communities' belief, will only tell the truth or admits his/her wrong actions and ask forgiveness rather arguing to deny the wrong action.

In line with this, Structural Functionalist, Emile Durkheim who was vitally concerned with establishing the reality of social facts believed that social cohesion (the term he used was ‘social solidarity’) was primarily the result of a force arising from participation in a shared system of beliefs and values, which molded and controlled individual behavior. According to Durkheim, individuals in a society are social actors who are restrained by social facts to stay in society. Same

is true among Kaffecho in such a way that, traditional conflict resolution mechanisms are playing a significant role in maintaining peace and order in a society even in inconvenience situation and undeserved attention from the government. But those traditional conflict resolutions mechanisms among Kaffecho are still serving the community member by using resilience approach in order to cope up with the internal as well as the external changes which are resulted from changes in political structure of the country and consequences of globalization in defusing the culture of respective country respectively. Therefore, the existence of the customary mechanism is a social fact which reduces the degrees of marital instability in the study area through tireless involvements on marital conflict resolution actions.

Generally speaking, even though there are marriages which end up in divorce in the study area, all of the available customary marital conflict resolution mechanisms plays a great role in resolving marital conflicts in order to save the marriage as well as the family from break down.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

Even if marital conflict resolution mechanisms among Kaffecho are relatively known and used, still there is a knowledge gap on traditional conflict prevention mechanisms. So, it would be very advisable to have a study on such traditional marital conflict prevention mechanisms and find way for their application in the society. This would be very necessary for the region like Kaffa, where the availability of modern marriage counselling as well as family therapy service is very less. In addition, doing so will enhance the stability of marriage and reduce the rates of divorce which could result from marital conflict.

The traditional conflict resolution mechanisms discussed in this study are mostly held and used by relatively elderly people. Thus, the continued application of such mechanisms to the next generations is questionable. Therefore, there should be awareness creation on the knowledge and application of those traditional conflict resolution mechanisms among the youth.

Finally, Government organizations; particularly, the Kaffa Zone Culture and Tourism Bureau, The Woreda's Formal court office as well as NGO's who works on the area of marriage and family's wellbeing, should works on strengthening as well as recognizing such figures; who works on customary marital conflict resolutions, for their altruistic contributions.

## References

- Abebe Demoz. 2016. “*The Role of Sidama Indigenous Institutions in Conflict Resolution: In the Case of Dalle Woreda, Southern Ethiopia*”. *American Journal of Sociological Research* 2016, 6(1): 10-26
- Assefa, Abebe. 2005. *Indigenous mechanisms for prevention of Conflict: The Experience of the Oromo*. Proceedings of the Second National Workshop of Ethiopian Chapter of, Pp 50- 76. Addis Ababa: OSSREA.
- Bohannan, L. 1989. *Justice and Judgment among the Tiv*. Long Grove IL: Wave Land Press.
- Brock, Utne B. 2001. *Indigenous Conflict Resolutions in Africa*: Paper Presented to the Week and Seminar on Indigenous Solution to Conflict at Oslo University .Institute for Educational Research, 23-24, February 2008
- Burton, John. 1990. *Conflict: Human needs Theory*: Macmillan.
- Cai-Lian Tam. 2011. “Communication Skills, Conflict Tactics and Mental Health: A Study of Married and Cohabiting Couples in Malaysia.” *Asian Social Science*, 7(6): PP. 79-87
- Coser, Lewis A. 1968. “*Conflict, Social Aspect*” *In international Encyclopedia of the Social Science*. V.3. the Macmillan Company and Free press.
- Coser, Lewis, Ralf Dahrendorf and Randall Collins. 2006. —*Conflict and Critical Theories*. *Allan (Social)*. vol, 07.pp. 211-241.
- Eri, U. (2004). *Law and Procedure in the area court*. Kaduna: Tanza Publishing Company.

- Eseré, M.O. & Idowu, A. L. (2000). The effects of cognitive restructuring in resolving marital conflicts among selected couples in Ilorin. *Nigerian Journal of Applied Psychology*, 6 (1), 87-98.
- Eseré, M.O., Yahaya, L.A., Ogunsanmi J.O. and Oniye, A.O. (2008). *Marriage, sex and family counselling*. Ilorin: Unilorin Press.
- Ezeilo, B.N. (1995). *Family stress management*. Lagos: ABIC Publishers.
- Fiseha, A. et al. (2011). *The state of knowledge on customary dispute resolution in Ethiopia*. In: Yntiso, Gebre, FekadeAzeze and AssefaFiseha (eds.), pp. 21–36.
- Gloria, Okorie. 2009. Relationship between Personal Factors and Marital Conflict Resolution Strategies among Married People in Enugu State, Nigeria. A Doctoral Thesis, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
- Gulliver, P.H. 1979. *Disputes and Negotiations: A Cross cultural Perspective*. London: Academic press.
- Hamad, Ahmad. A. 2005. “The Re-conceptualization of Conflict Management: Peace, Conflict and Development”. *An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Vol, 7, pp 1-31. Retrieved from <http://www.peacestudiesjournal.org.uk>.
- Jeong, Ho-Won. 2000. *Peace and Conflict Studies: An Introduction*. Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. Aldershot: Ashgate USA.
- Katzenbach, J.R. and Smith, D.K. (1992). *Wisdom of teams*. Harvard Business School Press.
- Lederach, John. 1995. *Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation across Cultures*. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press.



Macfarlane, J. (2007). Working towards restorative justice in Ethiopia: Integrating traditional conflict resolution systems with the formal legal system. *Cardozo Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 8(487), 487–509.

Mehari Haile. 2013. Divorce: Common Causes and Socio-Economic Costs – A Survey of Divorced Individualism Mekelle City. M.A. Thesis, Mekele University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Meron Zeleke .2010. *Ye Shakoch Chilot* (the court of the sheikhs): A traditional institution of conflict resolution in Oromiya zone of Amhara regional state, Ethiopia. *African Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 10(1): pp.63–84.

Meyer, C. (2011). *Causes of marital discord*. Available: <http://EzineArticles.com/170017>. (September 25, 2013).

M. Ndulo, *African Customary Law, Customs and Women's Rights*, (Cornell Law Publications, 2011), p. 87.

Nader, Laura. 1968. "Conflict: Anthropological Aspect." In *International encyclopedia of the social Science*: vol.3, pp.230-241. New York: Macmillan Company and Free press.

Omari, T. P. (1989). Changing attitudes of students in West African society towards marriage and family relationship. *British Journal of Sociology*, 2, 197-210.

Olaitan, S.O. and Akpan, A.E. (2003). *Children development and family life education*. Bauch: Ndudim Printing and Publishing Company.

Olson, D. H. & Olson, A. K (2000). *Empowering couples: Building on your strengths*. Minneapolis, MN: Life Innovations

Onyechi, K. C. (2003). Some Correlates of family stability among couples in Anambra State. *Unpublished Ph.D Thesis*. Department of Educational Foundations. University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Roberehek. Clayton. 1990. “*Motivation and Material Causes: an Explanation on conflict and War*” in Jonathan Haas (ed.) *the anthropology of war*. New York: Cambridge University press.

Rosenberg, M.B. (2005). *Non-violent communication: A language of life*. California; Puddle Dancer.

Seble Teweldebirhan. 2011. “Love, Relationship and the New Ethiopian Generation”. Ethiopian News, Entertainment and Business Information Network. Retrieved September 22, 2011.

Tasew Tafese1. 2016. “Conflict Management through African Indigenous Institutions: A Study of the Anyuaa Community.” *World Journal of Social Science* 3(1). Retrieved January 31, 2016 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.5430/wjss.v3n1p22>).

Teressa Cherana. 2016. *Indigenous Mechanisms of Conflict Resolution among the Soddo Oromo with Particular Emphasis on Guma and Wada Practices*. M.A. Thesis, Haramaya University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

The Federal Supreme Court of Ethiopia. 2015. “Divorce in the Capital, Ethiopia staggeringly high” Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Uwe, E.A. (2006). Effective communication: A tool for marital adjustment and stability. *The counsellor*, 22,22-31.