

The Future of the Past: The Roles and Challenges of Women in Fostering Indigenous Methods of Peacebuilding in West Arsi Zone: Case Study from Selected Districts



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Declaration of Statement

This research is original work, which is developed by the respective investigators mentioned below. We, the investigators confirm that the research was not previously addressed and all materials referred are dually acknowledged.

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List of Acronyms

CAMP= Community Appraisal and Motivation Programme

FGDs=Focus Group Discussions

KIIs= Key Informant Interviews

ORSCTB= Oromia Regional State Culture and Tourism Bureaus

ND= No Date

UN=United Nation

Abstract

The general objective of this study was to critically examine the roles and challenges of women in fostering indigenous peacebuilding methods in West Arsi Zone in Oromia region, Ethiopia. This study was employed qualitative research approach and phenomenological research design. The study was used focus group discussions and key informant interviews as key instruments of data collection. In terms of sampling, purposive sampling techniques were purposively employed accompanied with snowballing and inductive data analysis in this study. The finding of this study shows that the role of women in nurturing peacebuilding in the study area in the past time was very strong as compared to the current time where there are implicit and explicit challenges that are deteriorating the status of women in nurturing indigenous peacebuilding. At the past time and relatively today, women holding siinqee are seen as the messenger of peace and they are participating in handling from simple to complex conflict in the study area. Nonetheless, challenges from religion, politicization of the culture, passiveness of youth on culture, information gap on nature of Gada system, less coverage of indigenous cultures in modern education, cultural transformation, and censoring the role of women in peacebuilding are some of challenges that are hindering the futurity of women status in nurturing peacebuilding in the study area. Although there are such challenges, women are implicitly or explicitly playing their part in nurturing indigenous peacebuilding mechanisms although it is too limited as compared to the past. Finally, the study conclude that there is still a chance to restore the contributions of women in nurturing of indigenous peacebuilding that are linchpin for creating sustainable peace and positive peace in the study area by closely working with all stakeholders.

Key words: women, siinqee, peacebuilding, indigenous knowledge, conflict resolution

Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

Peace is absence of war, disturbance or conflict. This create conducive environment for human interaction to flourish which ensure development either humanly or economically and this in return guarantee sustainable development. In situation where this is absent conflict occurs, nothing seem to grow. Conflict resolution and peace building are however, highly gendered activities (Beth Speake, 2013). Peace processes increasingly go beyond outlining cease-fires and dividing territory to incorporate elements that lay the foundations for peace and shape the structures of society (O'reilly Marie, 2015). The signing of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security” in October 2000, marked the first time in the UN history that women’s role in maintaining peace and security was recognized by the Council. The resolution has been described as the most significant political success of women peace activists and a mile stone in women’s peace work (Dahlström, 2012). In conflict zones, women are active participants in the conflicts that affect their countries. They may become the sole providers for their families, more active in the informal or formal sectors of the economy, or more active in peacemaking groups as a result of conflict. Yet during war and in its aftermath, women too often are excluded from activities aimed at resolving the violent conflicts that so deeply affect them. Those conflicts cannot be brought to a lasting end without making women’s lives more secure, and it is women who are best positioned to determine how that security is achieved (Norville, 2011). Women are typically excluded from formal and informal peacebuilding processes. They tend to be absent at the peace table, underrepresented in parliaments that are developing policy in countries emerging from conflict, and underrepresented in peacebuilding (ibid).

In most African societies, women still occupy inferior positions both in the family and society as there is discrimination against them in terms of participation in decision making both in formal and informal mechanisms. In conflict situations, women are much more disadvantaged compared to men. (Mukabi N. Benardatte, 2015). Women are leading peacebuilding efforts in a range of capacities, despite being largely excluded from informal negotiations. Many women in government, including in several high-level positions, are advancing peacebuilding efforts in official legislative or military capacities. These women, particularly in the parliament, open opportunities for greater civil society engagement and for more women to have their voices

heard by decision-makers (Roslyn Warren *etal*, 2018). This implies that though women have potentials, they are disempowered from the peacebuilding process in the society they are living in. Therefore, this research critically examined the role of women in nurturing indigenous mechanisms of the peacebuilding process in West Arsi by taking selected woredas.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Indigenous approaches to conflict resolutions are varying considerably from society to society, from region to region, from community to community in the process of peacebuilding. There are as many different indigenous approaches to conflict resolution as there are different societies and communities with a specific history, culture and custom (Boege, 2006) cited in (Alemie, 2018). Women and men have different access to resources, power and decision making before, during and after conflicts. The experience of women and of men in conflict situations is significantly different. While entire communities suffer the consequences of conflict, women and girls are particularly affected because of their status in society (Bamlaku Tadesse, ND). Based on the account of (ORSCTB, 2015), in the Gada system, women empowered in indigenous mechanisms of the peacebuilding process in ending any act of hostilities and war whether it is taking place between different stakeholders and whenever there is war going on and women arrive at the place carrying their *Siiqqee*¹ stick and go between the parties at conflict, both parties promptly give up the fight. Nonetheless, the office did not address clearly the challenges that stepping back the continuity of women empowerment in indigenous mechanisms of the peacebuilding process.

Arsi Oromo men in Ethiopia traditionally dominate decision-making regarding major resources such as land, livestock and conflict resolution whereas the role of women has been limited primarily to domestic affairs (SHIGETA, 2014). Indigenous peacebuilding processes in different parts of Ethiopia are playing a decisive role in conflict transformation and maintaining peace and stability among the peoples although there is a difference in their process, structure and participants. Currently, indigenous mechanisms to build durable peace have not been adequately addressed by scholarly research and political practice. Particularly on participants, the involvement of women in fostering indigenous mechanisms of the peacebuilding process so as to bring a culture of peace or durable peace in general is less emphasized in the study area (researcher emphasis). Though the previous study (for instance, (Leila, 2016), (Jemila, 2014) etc attempted

¹ A thin straight beautiful stick held by married women. It is also called Weapon of women/solidity of women.

to come up with area where women participate to foster peacebuilding process, there was less emphasis on coping mechanisms of women disempowerment in an indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the proposed study area.

Arsi in general and west Arsi in particular is rich in indigenous knowledge that play a vital role in the restoration of broken justice or stability in the society. Nevertheless, the key participants in the different indigenous conflict transformation/ mechanisms of peacebuilding process was/is dominated by men and the involvement of women in the process are declining from time to time due to multifaceted challenges based on data acquired during pilot study. As a result, this study was critically analysed about the role of women in fostering indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the proposed study area. Above all, this study can be a source for other interested researchers by filling the gap of previous studies related to current study so as to restore the empowerment of women in an indigenous mechanism of peace building process in the future as they did in the past. Therefore, this research was examined the role of women in fostering indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in West Arsi zone. .

1.3 Objective of the study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study was to explain the role and challenges of women in fostering indigenous peacebuilding process in the proposed study area.

1.3.2 Specific objectives

- ✍ To identify an indigenous methods of peacebuilding that embraces women in the study area in the past and present
- ✍ To identify the role of women in fostering indigenous methods of peacebuilding in the past time in the study area
- ✍ To examine the current status of women in fostering indigenous methods of peacebuilding in the study area
- ✍ To identify the major challenges that exacerbate declining of women role in nurturing indigenous methods of peacebuilding and its coping mechanisms in the study area

1.4 Basic research questions

- ✍ What are the major an indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process that embraces women in the study area in the past and present

- ✍ What were the roles of women in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the past time West Arsi zone?
- ✍ How is the current status of women in fostering indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding in the study area?
- ✍ What are the major challenges that exacerbate declining of women role in fostering indigenous methods of peacebuilding and its coping mechanisms in the study area?

1.5 Significance of the study

Women empowerment in different politico-economic and socio-cultural issue is a cross-cutting issue in contemporary world in general and our country in particular. In achieving lasting peace in a given community, the empowerment of women in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process is inevitable. As a result, the study contribute to identify indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process that are currently functional and the role of women in fostering indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the past and present time in the study area. In addition, the study contributes in examining the status of women in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process and the major factors that exacerbate declining of women empowerment in nurturing indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the study area. Above all, the study examined and identified possible coping mechanisms of women's role in nurturing indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the study area and become a source for interested scholars and public policy makers.

1.6 Scope of the study

Geographically, the study was delimited to West Arsi zone and particularly on Kokossa, Kofale and Arsi Negelle town districts as case study. The rationale behind selecting these woredas as case study was due to potentiality of indigenous mechanisms for conflict management, transformation, reconciliation or peacebuilding in general in the study area. Methodologically, the study was employed qualitative research approach and phenomenological research design respectively. The rationale behind employing qualitative research approach is that the nature of topic of the study and its objective achieved more by using qualitative based data collection instruments like key informant interview and focus group discussions. The research design of this study was delimited to phenomenological due to the fact that its purpose is to identify phenomena through how they are perceived by the actors in a situation. Theoretically, the study

shares the ideology of feminism as it is stand for women empowerment in each and every activity of a given society.

1.7 Organization of the study

This study has five chapters. The first chapter covers introduction with its major components and in general. The second chapter covers review of related literature while chapter three deals with research method and methodologies in general. Chapter four covers result and discussion and the last chapter deals with conclusion and recommendation.

1.8 Operational definition

Peace building: encompasses measures in the context of emerging, current or post-conflict situations for the explicit purpose of preventing violent conflict and promoting lasting and sustainable peace.

Indigenous mechanisms for peace building: they are an informal conflict resolution and lead by local peoples without going to litigation.

Chapter Two

Review of Literatures

2.1 Introduction to peace

Peace is among necessary condition for survival of human being across the globe. According to (Galtung, 1990), peace derived from the Latin *pax*, peace in the Western world is generally considered a contractual relationship that implies mutual recognition and agreement. Understandings of peace throughout the world often disclose a much deeper comprehension of peace in relation to the human condition, which also includes inner peace. The comprehensive understanding of peace outlined above extends beyond what are referred to as positive conceptions of peace but acts in accordance with them as well. This contrasts with negative conceptions of peace, which are described most commonly as the mere absence of war or violent conflict. As to him, peace means creating the conditions under which individuals in society can benefit from coherent legal frameworks, public order, political stability, and economic opportunities. This comprehensive definition implies that peace connotes more than a mere absence of war or hostilities; an absence of conflict is impossible and the state of peace should be distinguished from techniques that simply avoid conflicts or employ violent or coercive approaches to engage in, manage, or resolve them (ibid).

2.2 Indigenous Conflict Resolution

Conflict is a relationship between two or more parties (individuals or groups) who have, or think they have, incompatible goals. Conflict takes place when two or more parties find their interests incompatible, express hostile attitudes, or take action which damages the other party's ability to pursue their interests (CAMP and Saferworld, 2014). Traditional conflict resolution processes are part of a well-structured, time-proven social system geared towards reconciliation, maintenance and improvement of social relationships. The methods, processes and regulations are deeply rooted in the customs and traditions of peoples of Africa. The importance and utility of the processes lie in the fact that they strive "to restore a balance, to settle conflict and eliminate disputes (Choudree, 1999). Societies in different part of the world apply indigenous laws in their administration of justice to solve socio-economic and political problems. In the process of solving social and economic problems through indigenous method, conflicting parties are all willing to accept and abide by their traditional cultures; ignoring these traditions would amount to exclusion from the societal norms and neglecting by the society. The mechanisms are

indigenous ingredients that would be tolerated in any societal interactions (Seyoum, 2010). This implies that the role of indigenous conflict resolution is decisive in achieving expected peacebuilding in post-conflict reconstruction.

2.3 Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding involves establishing normalized relations between ordinary citizens on both sides of a conflict. According to (Alison Milofsky, 2011), it can be done at any time, peacebuilding efforts usually follow peacekeeping (the enforced prevention of further violence) and peacemaking (the forging of an actual settlement agreement). Unlike peacekeeping which can be implemented relatively quickly, and peace-making, which can occur over a period of a few months, peacebuilding usually takes a number of years. This implies that it takes people at least as long to get out of a conflict as it does to get into one and some of the conflicts he has been involved in have gone on for decades, or even centuries. Peacebuilding is a very long, slow process. Peacebuilding usually involves efforts to increase "normal," cooperative contacts between opponents. Based on the arguments of (Herbert H. etal, 2006), peacebuilding "builds bridges between the ordinary people." Efforts are made to open channels of communication, get people involved in joint projects, work with the media and the educational system to try to break down stereotypes and reduce prejudice and discrimination. The goal of all of these efforts is reconciliation or getting the people to accept each other as part of their own group or be reconciled to mutual co-existence and tolerance.

Peacebuilding is a relatively new term, but the ideas and practices behind peacebuilding have deep roots in all cultures. All cultures and communities have ways of building peace. The tasks of those who desire to be peacebuilders are; to help uncover the traditions of peacebuilding within each culture, to borrow peacebuilding ideas from other cultures, to adapt them to local contexts, and to empower people to engage in peacebuilding processes. In simple terms, peacebuilding is all activity aimed at improving the quality of life. Peacebuilding prevents, reduces, transforms, and helps people to recover from violence in all forms. Peacebuilding actively creates the capacity within communities to meet all forms of human needs and rights (Schirch, 2004). Peacebuilding is a comprehensive concept that includes, generates and sustains the many processes, approaches and stages needed to transform destructive conflict towards more sustainable, peaceful relationships. The term thus involves a wide range of activities that

occur before and after formal peace accords. In this understanding, peace is seen not merely as a stage in time or a static condition, but as a dynamic process (CAMP and Saferworld, 2014).

Unequivocally, involving women and gender expertise in peacebuilding activities is essential for reconstituting political, legal, cultural and socio-economic and social structures so that they can deliver on gender equality goals. Gender equality brings to peace-building new degrees of democratic inclusiveness, faster and more durable economic growth and human and social capital recovery. Indeed, peacebuilding may well offer the single greatest opportunity to redress gender inequities and injustices of the past while setting new precedents for the future. But these opportunities can be enhanced significantly or constrained by how the international community sets its priorities for recovery and uses its resources for peacebuilding (Klot, 2007).

2.4 Women and peacebuilding

Different literatures expounds that gender and conflict are unidentifiable and the role of gender-inclusive in peacebuilding process in a given society is indispensable. According to (CIDA, 1998), as gender is a relevant dimension in peacebuilding, conflict is a gendered activity where men and women experience it differently. Each conflict/peacebuilding situation is different and there is always needs for specific analysis. Thus, gender mainstreaming in peacebuilding initiatives involves a concern for increasing women's participation which also goes beyond this and analyzed differently. UN had begun to rethink its policies on peace building in its quest for conflict free world and identified women as the major missing link in conflict resolution and peace building and security. The declaration and adoption of the Resolution 1325 by the United Nations Security Council brought on board many governments as signatories committed to domesticate and implement the issues on "women, peace and security in their local settings in an effort to make the world peaceful conflict free (Jendia, 2020:3-4). According to (United States Institute of Peace, nd), for most of history, men have been seen both as decision-makers and as soldiers. Women's experiences in war have been little understood. The international community has only recently focused on women's potential contribution to peacebuilding and on the difficulties that women face in war. A gendered perspective on war and peace allows us to unpack the effect of excluding women and other groups from power and access and to explore the impact of this exclusion on peacebuilding.

The participation of women and girls and the inclusion of gender perspectives in both formal and informal peace processes are crucial in the establishment of sustainable peace. Women cannot voice their concerns if they are not consulted by fact-finding missions or if they are not involved in peace negotiations. Political structures, economic institutions and security sectors negotiated in peace talks will not facilitate greater equality between women and men if gender dimensions are not considered in these discussions (United Nations, 2002:53). The fact that women make a difference when they are in decision and policymaking positions is indisputable. When women, as human rights advocates, participate in peace negotiations and in the crafting of a peace agreement, their inclusion helps to ensure, to build and to strengthen policies which create sustainable peace and development in their communities and nations. A lasting peace cannot be achieved without the participation of women and the inclusion of gender perspectives in the peace process (Cabrera-Balleza et al, 2005:VII).

Peacebuilding includes a set of values, relational skills, analytical tools and processes to create sustainable, just, and peaceful communities. Peacebuilding is found in every community and in every culture, but many of our communities need help to explore and strengthen their capacity to build peace. Men and women in every community are already engaged in building peace, but their tasks are almost always different. Ideas about gender help determine the roles women and men play in peacebuilding (Schirch, 2004). According to (Francis, 2002), peacebuilding is a kind of approach to address the root causes of conflict and to develop a foundation of peace and the role of women is very critical. Every society has conflicts among different groups of people. A conflict tends to turn into violence when stakeholders of the conflict cannot solve the conflict in peaceful means, although a conflict does have a positive dimension as a struggle to initiate change for the better. According to (HO-WON, 2017), many women all over the world are subject to various types of psychological violence in indigenous cultures. Many sources of oppression prohibit the realization of women freedom for involvement in different societal activities. Violence against women represents a form of social control that limits their ability in every aspect of life. Oppression of women and other marginalized groups has been explained by the feminist critique of a hierarchical world order. The occurrence of both manifest and latent violence against women has emerged as an important concern in peace studies. Images of

women have been historically associated with pacifism. Feminine values of caring, compassion and nurturing have enriched the conceptions of peace. Most importantly, the application of feminine values to the radical conflict transformation and peacebuilding process in a given society serves as an important principle to achieve durable peace.

Grounding peacebuilding in relationships means that we engage in a process that respects the abilities and talents each person brings to projects and programming. Relationships are built on trust amongst staff and partners, and the groups in conflict. To fully respect those with whom we are working, we need to engage with them in the process of programming, and identify the goals, means to achieve those goals and ways to evaluate them together. The roles men and women play in peacebuilding may not be exactly the same, and they will vary by location and culture, but we need both men and women for peacebuilding to last. A relationship centered and process-driven peacebuilding approach requires that we include men and women, as well as people with different ethnicities and religions. People often assume that women are natural peacebuilders, but this is not always the case, nor is it always the case that men are natural war-makers (Reina Neufeldt et al, 2002). Women are agents of change and peace, evidenced by their active participation and peace processes. Therefore, their inclusion in all aspects of peacebuilding, conflict prevention and post-conflict reconstruction can draw attention to critical economic, social, political and cultural issues that are often the root causes of conflict (UN Women, 2014:7).

2.5 Peacebuilding and Women Participation in Africa

The international community should better involve women in peace processes to help achieve sustainable peace and more effectively build amicable relationships between entities in conflict (Shepherd, 2015:55). Peacebuilding needs often needs transformative approaches that is inclusive in its very nature and such approaches also look women as the key actor of achieving sustainable developments. Transformative approach to peacebuilding believed to be better sustain through indigenous peacebuilding methods which are common phenomenon in Africa in general and Ethiopia in particular. According to (Kezie-Nwoha, 2020), transformative approaches address the root causes of conflict including marginalization and African indigenous knowledge is characterized by acquisition of the community-oriented knowledge. In peacebuilding, various traditional methods have been advanced in traditional African societies

including mediation, adjudication, reconciliation, arbitration and negotiation. Indigenous methods of peacebuilding are largely informal. According to United Nations Development Fund for Women, (2005), Africa still experiences recurring violent conflicts in communities where wars are sometimes viewed as gendered activities and issues of peace and security are often considered as male preserves. There is a need to recognize the unequal power relations that still exist in public life in Africa and the discrimination that women continue to face when vying for and occupying public office. While the achievement of a critical mass of women in power is vital, it is also necessary that institutions transform themselves in order to be conscientised over gender concerns within peace and security issues. Understanding the culture and currently prescribed role of women in a society is absolutely necessary when working on gender-specific programs. Women must be involved in conflict prevention, resolution and management efforts at all levels. When they are not active participants, the views, needs and interests of half of the population are not represented, and therefore interventions will not be as appropriate or enduring (USAID, 2007:3). At the dawn of post-colonialism and independence, most African countries were eclipsed with challenges, major amongst being protracted conflict situations. The subject of women and peacebuilding is arguably an area of research, which prior to the 21st century remained undeveloped and unexplored in the field of conflict and peace and in the practice of peacebuilding. Certainly, the experiences of African women embody a comprehensive narrative that has witness remarkable changes in their abilities to move incrementally from their roles as ordinary participants in mainstream political, economic, social and security developments, to proactive contributors and architects in same processes (Shulika, 2016).

Chapter Three

Research Methods and Methodology

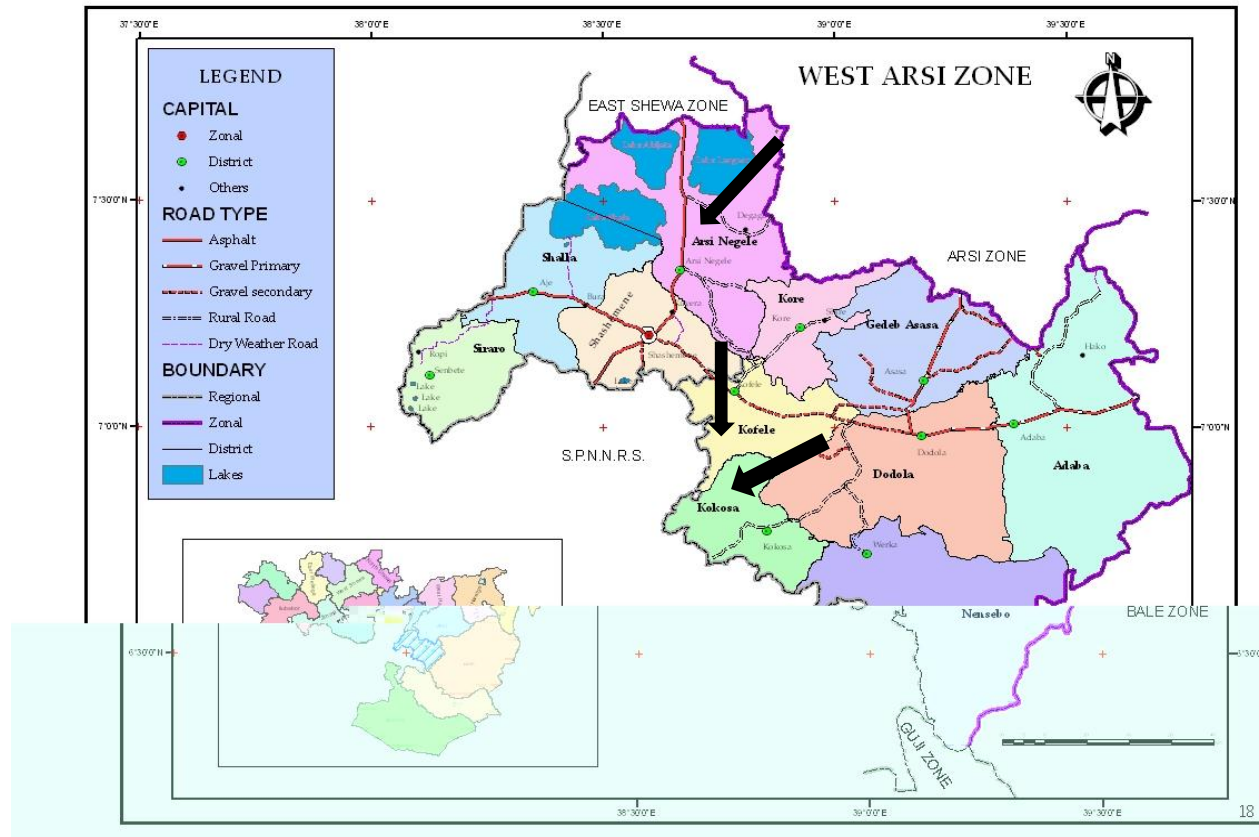
4.1 General Overview of the study area

West Arsi is one of Oromia Regional state zone which is bordered by Sidama and Southern Nation, Nationality and people regional state to the west and south. It shares boulder line with East Shewa zone to the north, Arsi to the northeast, Guji to the south east and Bale zone to the east. Most parts of the zone have elevations of ranging from 1500 to over 2300m. Shashemene town is the administrative center of the zone and located at 250km from Finfinne/Addis Ababa and the total **area** of Zone is 12767km² and located in the Rift Valley Region. The Astronomical location of West Arsi zone lies between 6^o12'29" to 7^o42'55" latitude and 38^o04'04" to 39^o46'08" longitude (West Arsi Zone Planning and Development Office, 2020).

West Arsi Zone has 13 districts and 4 urban administration and about 324 peasants associations. This area is home to three lakes (langano, Lake Shalla and Abjata) and Kaka Mountain is one of the largest mountains in Oromia next to Tulu Demtu and Chilalo. The mean annual temperature of the zone is found between 20-25^oc in the high land and 10-16^oc in the low land area. However, there is a slight variation of temperature from month to months. October to May is the hottest months while June to September is the coldest months. For most of the areas, the rainy season starts in March and extends to November with the highest concentration in June, July and August. The number of rainy days varies from Dega to Weina Dega and this number slightly decreases as one goes down to the kolla areas. Based on the climatologically data available in our office, the mean annual rainfall varies from woreda to woreda . Generally, West Arsi zone receives abundant and well-distributed rainfall both in amount and season, which is conducive for different types of vegetation growth and agricultural activities. On average, the zone gets annual mean rainfall of 1300mm. West Arsi zone is connected with neighboring zones and region by national or trunk road. The economy of the zone is mainly dominated by Agriculture. The zone is known by Maize wheat and barley production (West Arsi Zone Planning and Development Office, 2020).

In terms of population, about 3,062,625 peoples are residing in west Arsi zone according to data acquired from west Arsi zone planning and development office. Among this, total number of male in the zone is accounts about 1,514,093 and total number of women accounts about 1,548,

532 i.e about 50.56% from total populations living in the zone. Particularly, the total population of Kofale districts accounts about 25, 1180(12, 6291 male and 12, 4889 female), Nagelle Arsi Town woreda total population accounts for about 108753(54,161 male and 54,592 female) and lastly Kokossa districts total population accounts for about 20, 9384(10, 1503 male and 107881 female) (West Arsi Zone Planning and Development Office, 2020).



Source: West Arsi Zone Planning and Development Office, 2020

4.2 Research approach

This study was employed qualitative research approaches. Qualitative research approach is important due to the fact that it emphasis on interpretative study of specified issues in which the researcher is the central to the theory derived from participants of the study. According to (Creswell, 2007), qualitative research approach is an inquiry grounded in the assumption of that individual constructs of social reality in the form of meanings and interpretations.

4.3 Research design

In this study, phenomenological research design was employed as the nature of topic invites it and its aim is to illuminate the specific, to identify phenomena through how they are perceived

by the actors in a situation. It also assists the researcher to gain valuable insight into the structure of how people understand their experiences of participation in an indigenous mechanism for building durable peace and stability in the study area. According to (Donalek, 2004), phenomenological studies examine human experiences through the explanations provided by the people involved. These experiences are called lived experiences. The goal of phenomenological studies is to describe the meaning that experiences hold for each subject. In phenomenological research, respondents are asked to explain their experiences as they perceive them. They may write about their experiences, but information is generally obtained through interviews and FGDs among the others.

4.4 Data source and Target population

The study was used both primary and secondary data source. Primary data sources were employed to find firsthand information and secondary data source were employed so as to find supportive literature and for cross-checking. The target population in this study was women have potential knowledge and skill in indigenous culture of peace restoration, Abbaa Gadaa's, Haadha Siinqee, local elders, youth, experts from culture and tourism and women affairs office. The rationale behind the emphases on these segments of society in the study area was basically due to their appropriateness to achieve the overall and specific objective of this study.

4.5 Instrument and procedure of data collection and target population

For the purpose of achieving objective of this study, focus group discussion and key informant interviews were thoroughly implement as key instruments of data collection. Here is brief explanation on rationale and implementation mechanisms of focus group discussions and key informant interviews.

4.5.1 Focus Group Discussions

Focus group discussion is a type of in-depth interview accomplished in a group, whose meetings present characteristics defined with respect to the proposal, size, composition, and interview procedures. The moderator stimulates discussion with comments or subjects. The fundamental data produced by this technique are the transcripts of the group discussions and the moderator's reflections and explanations. According to (Creswell, 2007), focus group discussion involves gathering people from similar backgrounds or experiences together to discuss a specific topic of interest. It is a form of qualitative research where questions are asked about their perceptions attitudes, beliefs, opinion or ideas. It involves group interviewing in which a small group of usually 8 to 12 people.

Accordingly, there were two FGDs in each selected woredas that encompasses notable community elders and adult women group and young women group and each of them were participated on the discussion independently. These categories were boosted the free flow of ideas among participants and expand the chance of getting multi-dimensional perspectives from the participants of FGDs. Some participants of FGDs were selected based on their experience on participating in an indigenous method of nurturing peacebuilding while other participants were selected based on snowball purposive sampling techniques. The numbers of participants in each discussion were not fixed due to unexpected high interests of participants from different segments of society in the study area. There was a great interest from study area peoples to participate in the discussions so as to share their experience on the role and challenges of women in nurturing indigenous method of peacebuilding in siko-mando Gada system of Oromo. Due to this good opportunity to collect detailed data, the researchers were opted to be flexible on numbers of participants in each group discussion. Based on this notion, there were seven to twelve participants in each FGD and they were discussed critically on the quested questions by researchers for about forty minute to one hour at the venue prepared by mutual agreement with great cooperation of culture and tourism offices experts at different districts aforementioned under the scope of the study. The language of communication during the discussion was Afan Oromo. Video and audio recording was implemented on some of focus group discussion based on mutual agreement with participants. The major responsibility of the researchers were moderating the discussion from the beginning to end based on the objective of topic of the study.

4.5.2 Key Informant Interviews

For the purpose of this study, structured or direct interview were employed with much emphasis on key informant interviews. According to Walliman (2006), key informant is a person (or group of persons) who has/have unique skills or professional background related to the issue/intervention being evaluated, is knowledgeable about the project participants, or has access to other information of interest to the evaluator. Key informants interview were employed in this study, because it is an in-depth interview technique and mostly, it employed with people selected for their first-hand knowledge about a topic of the study. In addition, key informants interview allows a free flow of ideas and information. The following stakeholders on an indigenous method of peacebuilding in the study area were invited and interviewed to share their experience or knowledge on the role and challenges of women in nurturing indigenous method of

peacebuilding in the study area thoroughly. These includes *Siinqee*(weapon of women) actors, Abba Gada, local elders, youngsters from both sex, employees of each selected woredas who are working in gender and tourism office for general information, employees at zonal level who are particularly working in gender and tourism office were part and parcel of key informant interview among the others. The language of communication during interview was Afan Oromo. Video and audio recording was implemented with few of key informants' interview by taking into consideration their interests. The overall process of interview was taken place based on mutual agreement with concerned participants in all districts.

4.6 Sample techniques and sample size

For the purpose of this study, non-probability/purposive sampling techniques were purposively employed. According to (Elder, 2009), a purposive sample refers to selection of units based on personal judgment rather than randomization. This judgmental sampling is in some way “representative” of the population of interest without sampling at random. Hence, this type of sampling was very essential to answer basic research questions and achieve objective of this study. Accordingly, there were three districts (Kofale, Arsi Negelle town and Kokosa) from west Arsi zone that were directly embraced in this study. Accordingly, the sample sizes were purposively decided based on segments of society that were aforementioned under the instruments of data collection. Based on this, there were two FGDs in each selected districts and there were from seven to twelve participants in FGDs conducted in different districts. Hence, six focus group discussions were thoroughly implemented for the purpose of achieving the general and specific objectives of this study. The number of participants were varies from one group the other in different districts due the rationale discussed under the instruments of data collection. Based on this, about seventy one participants were directly participated in focus group discussion from Kofale, Arsi Negelle town and Kokossa districts to share their experience or knowledge on the role and challenges of women in nurturing indigenous method of peacebuilding in the study area.

In addition, key informants participants were purposively from different segments of society based on potential experience or knowledge on the role and challenges of women in nurturing indigenous method of peacebuilding with great facilitations of culture and tourism office experts from each districts aforementioned above. Accordingly, key informants participants were conducted with haadha siinqee, Abbaa Gadaa, government officials and potential local elders in

the study area. Just like participants of focus group discussions, the numbers of key informants were varying from district to district based on the potentiality of informants. For instance, number of key informants participated in this study from Kokossa were greater than key informants participated in this study from Kofale and Negelle Arsi town districts. The rationale behind this was due to potentiality Kokossa districts in indigenous culture followed by Kofale districts among districts found in the west Arsi zone according to data acquired from west Arsi zone culture and tourism office. Through this vein, about thirty eight key informants were purposively participated in this study. Hence, about one hundred nine participants were directly participated in the study to achieve the objective of the study.

4.7 Method of data analysis

Inductive data analysis method accompanied with explanatory was used throughout the study due to its consistency with the title of the study. Explanatory based data analysis seeks to identify causes, to ascertain causality between factors and to determine effects on behaviour of a social phenomenon, and to predict how one phenomenon will change. Secondary data were gathered and saved in the item bank. Especially for the information gathered during FGDs, labeling or categorizing system of participants' point of views was employed to create general ideas. To do so, the scripts of question were prepared carefully so as to facilitate the process of coding and assigning the answers of participants of FGDs to posed questions. In the same vein, the information gathered from key informants was coherently organized and analyzed carefully. The actual names of participants were purposively opted to be anonymous to respect the interests of informants. Likewise, both primary and secondary data were combined carefully for triangulation and reanalyzed before finalizing the study.

4.8 Ethical Consideration

Researchers were made every effort to avoid bias to ensure the objective, analysis and interpretation of the collected data. We were given due attention for participants of FGDs and key informants to their confidentiality, rights, needs, values, and desires throughout the course of this study. Moreover, we informed participants that the information they gave for researchers will used only for the purpose of this study. Lastly but not the least, we gave due attention for plagiarism to keep the originality and credibility of the study.

Chapter Four

Result and Discussion

Indigenous conflict prevention, management, resolution and reconciliation play a great role in creating sustainable peace at grassroots level. They are easily accessible and cheap in processing it as it is most of the time take place at grassroots level. Indigenous peacebuilding method vary from one society to the others and they are still functional in some area while dysfunctional in other areas due to multiple exacerbating factors that are deteriorating the role of indigenous peacebuilding in nurturing negative and positive peace. In the study area, there are numerous indigenous means of nurturing peace in the society and some of them are currently functional while others are nearer to extinct or weak in implementation currently. For instance, jaarsummaa², Gada system, Woga³, ateetee and Siinqee practice are some of indigenous peacebuilding method in the study area that embraces women both in the past and present. In this section, we will critically analyze the role in nurturing indigenous peacebuilding in the past, present, challenges and possible means of restoring previous women status in peacebuilding by taking the practice of siinqee, Gada⁴ system and woga system for the purpose of this study.

4.1 Meaning, Background and Nature of Siinqee/Weapon of Women/

Siinqee is a thin straight stick made up of the tree called siinqee tree or from other selective trees and it is only hold by married women starting from the date of wedding on different occasion/events. It is also defined as the sovereign power/solidarity/ of women and if somebody censure, degrade or insult a woman who holds siinqee, there will be punishment or moral compensation from offender/s. If lawbreaker is unmarried, the family or close relatives of lawbreaker will be responsible for moral compensation because the defamed siinqee not return back to home without amnesty and compensation according to data acquired from FGDs and KIIs. According to data acquired from KII and FGDs participants, wedded women hold siinqee at least on the following common events⁵ in the study area. Data collected from districts and zone culture and tourism office also confirms the response of FGDs and KIIs with regard to common events where a woman holds/uses siinqee.

1. For conflict management and reconciliation/siinqee araaraa/. It plays a decisive role in managing even the stalemate conflict either it be inter-personal, inter-religion, intra-

²² Arbitration

³ Requesting apologize after learning from own mistake and sending women to victim to process reconciliation

⁴ Traditional government system/institution of Oromo nation

⁵ Holding siinqee by wedded women is not restricted to events that are briefly introduced in this chapter.

religion, inter and intra-group, inter and intra ethnic conflict, inter and intra-clan conflict and etc by holding siinqee with very strong passion. This contributed in the process of nurturing sustainable peace at family, neighbor, districts and zone level in the past and currently, it is contributing in fostering peacebuilding rarely in the study area due to multi-dimensional challenges.

2. For condemning evil events in the society like immorality, pleading almighty God to bring rainfall or stop heavy rainfall, discarding epidemic or pandemic/siinquee falaa/
3. For defending for natural and cultural right of women/siinquee morkaa/. For instance, the right of women who were delivered recently is strictly respected both by her family, relatives, neighbor and wider community.
4. Thanks giving day/**irreecha**/. In Gada system, irreecha is the most respected public ceremony twice a year i.e celebrates around spring and autumn season with larger public gathering and women holds their siinqee and go to celebration place by ululating.
5. For blessing/**eebba**/. Women hold siinqee and bless their society to escape from malevolent events and live together harmoniously. For instance, women hold siinqee and bless women who delivered recently, women who needs to have child, peoples who needs to good properties, person who face healthy challenges, men selected to got to official war and etc by ululating and strongly asking the almighty God to consider their blessing.
6. For cursing/**abaarsa**/. There is a situation where women holds siinqee and curses peoples/ groups/ who breaks societal moral laws and disobedient of the decision passed by women. Since women are assumed as the holder of truth and messenger of peace in the study area, using siinqee for cursing is rarely seen both in the past and present according aggregate data collected from FGDs and KIIs.

The participants of FGDs unfolded that although practice of siinqee is relatively functional or semi-fuctional in all districts of west Arsi zone, it is found in good progress in the districts of Kofale, Kokossa, Nagelle Arsi(both at town and rural). In the past time, a woman has special dignity in the society and assumed as the symbol of peace messenger. As result, the practice of siinqee is directly attached to women because women do not hold gun and other materials to accomplish the role in the community like examples of event of using siinqee aforementioned

above. When we say siinqee is a weapon⁶ of women, we are talking about the special status of women in the society because women are not obliged to arm modern or traditional military weapon, rather they use siinqee to deal with issues. When we talk about practice of siinqee, there is one performs that come to the mind of all of us; that is ululating. A woman ululates⁷ at least on the following events in the study area.

1. Guyyaa araaraa/ during conflict management, conflict resolution and reconciliation/
2. Guyyaa dahuumsaa/ during delivery to show belongingness and happiness/
3. Guyyaa falaa/ during condemning extraordinary event in the society and etc/
4. Guyyaa wabaxaa/ during sharing table with neighbor in post-delivery period/one week/
5. Guyyaa morkaa/ defending their natural and moral right/ and other events.

In the practice of siinqee, no one crosses women holding siinqee because it is forbidden in the study area. In case if somebody crosses women holding siinqee intentionally or unintentionally, he/she need to quests apologize and if he/she failed to do so, there will be moral compensation according to the norms of the study area. She further explained that the practice of siinqee was stayed with Arsi Oromo for long period of time and it was passed from generation to generation relatively without deteriorating its originality along its basic norms/principles⁸.

The practice of siinqee is very strict when a given husband violates his wife who is in the period of “qanafa” because giving special places for a mother who gives birth recently is mandatory in the Gada system. Women who were gave birth recently will carefully treated by her husband and neighbours in post-natal period/from delivery date to 40 days/. For instance, the practice is siinqee is critical when a husband hurt his wife who was recently delivered child psychologically or physically, she informs the case to nearby women and then, women gathered together and go to council of local elders/Abba Gada/ to inform them what happened and to got victim house by ululating⁹ by holding siinqee. Then they pushes the husband to quest apologize his wife and compensate her based on recommendation of gathered women in his house. The practice of

⁶ An interview with the coordinator of women association on siinqee practice in the Kokossa District October, 2020

⁷ FGDs conducted at the study area, October, 2020

⁸ An interview with the coordinator of women association on siinqee practice in Negelle Arsi town October, 2020,

⁹ Ululating is the ultimate symbol of the practice of siinqee and the study area peoples aware of that there is something new in their village when they here women ululating by holding siinqee. It is the symptom of calling parties in the conflict to cease fire/stop physical or psychological violence and ready to reconcile their differences in order to build durable peace and the role of practice of siinqee is indispensable from onset to outset of the process of addressing the causes of conflict and giving final decision via local council of local elders/Abba Gada/.

siinqee also punish the husband who forced his wife not join women gathering who are going to the house of victim to defend for her natural and moral right due to the fact that siinqee is the strong weapon of women to empower themselves in the community issues. The following poem used by women when a given husband violates the right of his wife who was recently gives birth.

Deettuu harma aananii.....the delivered women with rich milk in her breast

Deettuu tiyya dhaananii....you violated women who recently delivered

Uleen isiin ati dhooftu.....the stick you used to violate her

Deebiteetuma si haa dhooftuu....let it violate you back

Silaa addabbiin sirraa hin ooltuu.....because you will never escape from moral punishment

The central message of the above poem is clearly indicates that the delivered women have special status in the society and violating women who are in the period post-natal/delivery period is strictly forbidden. In addition, the message of this poem indicates that there is strong solidarity and cooperation among women on their common issues including sharing the challenges of each other's to ensure their national right and participation in overall societal issues.

Women work in team to defend their right in the community and by doing this; they contribute in peacebuilding at the grassroots level by solving conflict among clan, family and different violence committed against wife by husband. For instance, if husband beat his wife who is recently delivered and live with "*Qanafa*¹⁰", she report to neighboring women about the type of violence committed on her. Then, neighboring women join to gather and went to Abba Gada¹¹ to report the case and get permission. Then, they go to victim women house and quest offender to compensate his wife according to accepted social norms and morality of that area. When they agree with compensation provided by offender, the offender will bend down by knee on the land in front of gathered women and ask apologize for breaking norms of the society. In case if a given husband forced his wife not to join the gathering, he will be forced to accept punishment due to violating his wife natural and cultural right. By doing this, women contributed in building egalitarian family because family is the key driver of peacebuilding and nurturing peace in a

¹⁰ Cultural symbol used by mother who delivered child recently, most probably used up to 40 days from delivery date in the study area.

¹¹ Head of community

given society. Although this norm was very strong in the study area previously, today its practice is declining from time to time and its futurity is also doubtful in the study area¹².

In Gada system, properties are equal for both husband and wife according to points of view of different Abba Gada's who participated in this study. In case when a husband failed to share common property for his wife, she informs nearby women to inform others women to gather together and defend for her right to equally share/use/ their common property. Since the practice of *siinqee* is respected, the women will reconcile the differences with support of local elders.

Women have special status in Gada system and the rule and regulations made in Gada system always give due attention for women and children. As a result, the process of marriage in the study area takes place in accordance with Gada system and the process of *siinqee* usage also commences from the wedding¹³ day. Proposing a given girl for marriage is not only requesting permission of her close family, but her clan and this is one way of displaying the status of women in the society¹⁴. There are certain poems of *siinqee* that are used by women on different events. For instance, women use the following poem for convincing somebody to follow right direction or learn from his/her shortcoming.

Siinqee waraana beeraa... siinqee the weapon of women
Ateetee beenaa..... Let us go to perform ateetee
Siinqee tiyya lootii hananee.... I hold my beautiful siinqee
Rabbi kiyya mootii amanee..... I believe on my almighty God
Safuu tiyya ilaali..... let you look women morality
Abboo na wallaalinii..... Respect me and accept my decision

The message of this poem indicates that women use diplomatic and non-violent methods to persuade parties in the conflict so as to come to round table and deal with their differences in a reasonable way and handle it constructively by taking into consideration norms and morality of society they are living in. The poem also shows women strongly pray or quest their God to sophisticate the process of restoring peace and mutual understanding in the society.

¹² Discussion conducted with FGDs participants of residing in Kofale districts

¹³ In the study area, mothers are responsible to teach her daughter about meaning, background and nature of *siinqee* and *ateetee* and also prepare *siinqee* from selected trees according to the norms of the study area.

¹⁴ An in-depth interview conducted with the members of Kokossa district council of Abba Gada and residing in Kokossa town. They have an in-depth knowledge and skill on Siko-mando Gada system and practice of *siinqee/weapon of women/*.

Women hold the grass along with siinqee and go to river or mountain by ululating when there is war, natural problems, pandemic or epidemic or other extraordinary cases that will violate implicitly or explicitly human security. During gathering at river and mountain, women hold their siinqee and beg God to ensure lasting peace for human being irrespective of their culture, language, ethnicity and religion. They also beg the God bring rainfall when there is no rainfall and suspend when rainfall is heavy challenges human security. In addition, women hold their siinqee and beg God to eliminate epidemic, pandemic or other communicable disease in the society. In siinqee institution, women play an important in ensuring negative peace in the community due to the fact that parties in the conflict are rarely denies ceasing the violence and they respect the regulations and objective of siinqee practices¹⁵. There are certain poem used when women are participating conflict management and other extraordinary issues in the community. Women use the following poem when they want to condemning immoral action, asking God to solve natural problems and seek remedies for others urgent/emergency issues in the society¹⁶.

Siinqee waraana beeraa.....Siinqee, the weapon of women

Rabbiin araaraa deemnaa.....let requests forgiveness from God

The overall message of this poem indicates that women commence reconciliation process first with God and it is assumed that the ultimate cause of social or other conflict is due to weakness or denial of God commandments by human being and such indigenous knowledge is indispensable for nurturing peace in the society from multiple perspectives.

4.2 The Roles of Women in Nurturing Indigenous Peacebuilding Methods

Regardless of the historical exclusion of women from negotiating tables and security apparatuses, the evidence of women's contributions to conflict prevention and resolution is growing. Women's participation in formal peace processes also contributes to the achievement and longevity of peace agreements. Including women at the peace table can also increase the likelihood of reaching an agreement because women are often viewed as honest brokers by negotiating parties. Women often advance peacemaking by employing visible and high profile tactics to pressure parties to begin or recommit to peace negotiations, as well as to sign accords. Women's inclusion in peace talks not only advances the likelihood of achieving a resolution but

¹⁵ Data acquired from members of FGDs and experts from culture and tourism office at district and zone level,

¹⁶ An interview conducted with the member of council of Abba Gada of Kokossa district in the west Arsi zone

also contributes to the sustainability of an agreement, partly because women are more likely to raise social issues in negotiations that help societies reconcile and recover (Bigio et al, 2016).

The data researchers acquired from west Arsi zone culture and tourism office portrayed that, the residents of the study area commence each and every activities related with peace, marriage and other issues with elders/Abba Gada/ blessing and supplication so as God accomplish the objectives of gathering together and discussion. For instance, the following blessing before commencing the discussion is common almost in all districts of west Arsi zone. Such blessing is conduct by two people or group and the person or group repeats the last word or phrases of first person or group most of the time.

Intelinnaa marti keessanuu.....hobbayaa ijarraa haffaa(Permit me to commence discussion.....never mind, led God escape us from evil)

Waaqaa gadaan nagayanagaya (our Gada system is peace....peace)

Jarsaa gadaan nagaya....nagaya (Gada is peace for our elders.....peace)

Kormaa gadaan nagaya.....nagaya (Gada is peace for ox....peace)

Dhaltii gadaan nagaya.....nagaya (Gada is peace for cow....peace)

Mucaa gadaan nagaya.....nagaya (Gada is peace for boy....peace)

Mucattii gadaan nagaya.....nagaya (Gada is peace for girl....peace)

Abbaa gadaan nagaya.....nagaya (Gada is peace for father....peace)

Haadhaa gadaan nagaya.....nagaya (Gada is peace for mother....peace)

Daa'immanii gadaan nagaya.....nagaya (Gada is peace for children....peace)

Hayni tun toltuu*2....tolchi waaq!*2(this all are good.....let God accept it)

Waaqni sii dhagayi.....dhagayi (let God hear you.....Let it be)

Lafti sii dhagayi.....dhagayi (let the land hear you.....Let it be)

Dhibdee akka maleerraa nu qabi...qabi(escape us from heavy controversies.... Let it be)

Gadabitti galchi...galchi(take us to wealth... Let it be)

Gadaa hulluqsisi...hulluqsisi(pass us this Gada.... Let it be)

Kormaa sa'a horsiisi.....horsiisi(let our cattle reproductive... Let it be)

Balaa dhaamsi.....dhaasi(let God avoid accidents... Let it be)

Nagaa buusi...buusi (let God bring us peace... Let it be)

Aadaa safuu deebisi....deebisi((let God restore our culture and morality... Let it be)

Bara beelaa balleessi.....balleessi(let god avoid famine..... Let it be)

Hayni tun toltuu*2....tolchi waaq!*2(this all are good*2....let God accept it*2)

The overall all message of the above directives or blessing indicates that peace is the most important asset in the society and praying God to confirm their supplication for peace for all mankind. Blessing or supplication is the prerequisite in the public gathering or meeting/ any other issues before commencing the main topic of discussion. After accomplishing this blessing and supplication, they commence to discuss about the rationality of gathering. One of the agenda that elders come and discuss together is about peace restoration due to conflict escalated that may include inter-personal, inter/intra-group, inter/intra-clan, inter-religious, inter-ethnic and the like. Hence, peacebuilding is one of the potential agenda that the study area local elders and women give due emphasis discusses together both in the past and present time. Peacebuilding is very crucial for the restoration of positive peace or social justice like social integration and healthy communication and the role of women in the realization of such common values of society via indigenous peacebuilding mechanism is crucial as peacebuilding process also needs women empowerment in peace restoration activities¹⁷.

Peacebuilding is all activity aimed at improving the quality of life. Peacebuilding prevents, reduces, transforms, and helps people to recover from violence in all forms. It actively creates the capacity within communities to meet all forms of human needs and rights (Schirch, 2004). It refers to the long-term project of building peaceful, stable communities and societies. It is understood as relationship-centered and participatory process with aim of achieving long lasting peace in the society to boost social integration via harmony and solidarity (Neufeldt, 2002). To achieve this, the role of indigenous mechanisms for non-violent conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation, reconciliation and peace is indispensable. In the same vein, the role of women in indigenous peacebuilding is very important due to the fact that peacebuilding process is all inclusive, comprehensive and commences at the grassroots level and this is also true in the study area.

¹⁷ Data acquired from members of FGDs conducted at Kokossa and Kofale districts, October, 2020.

Peace-building includes gender-aware and woman-empowering political, social, economic, and human rights. It involves personal and group accountability and reconciliation processes that contribute to the reduction or prevention of violence. It fosters the ability of women, men, girls, and boys in their own culture(s) to promote conditions of nonviolence, equality, justice, and human rights of all people, to build democratic institutions, and to sustain the environment (Mazurana D. & McKay S., 1999). Women bring a different perspective to formal and informal peace processes. Their involvement in conflict prevention, stopping war, and the stabilization of regions impacted by warfare is essential because women can bridge religious, ethnic, political and cultural divides. Women are known to play a critical role in mobilizing their communities to begin the process of reconciliation and rebuilding, rehabilitation, reintegration and reemergence of economic activities in a society. The presence of women in the peace process changes the dialogue. Their concerns stem not only from their own experiences, but from their nature and their relationship to their communities (GOYOL, 2019).

In modern society, conflict management is not a question of gender. It is a concern for both sexes. Men and women equally participate in the management process. However, in the traditional era, it had a different form from the existing trend (Filicha, 2012:48). In the study area, the nexus between siinqee and women in peacebuilding process is much intertwined. There are some songs which used by women in the study area when attempting to decrease the probability of raising the status of conflict into stalemate¹⁸.

Siinqee tiyya lootii qabadhee.....I hold my beautiful Siinqee
Rabbi waa hunda uume qabadhee-----quest the creator all things, God
Nageenya keessaniif isin jidduu dhaabbadhee--standing between you in seek of your peace
Rabbii jedhaa narraan hin tarkaanfatinaa---quest you not crossover me in the name of God
Wal-dhabdeen duris har'as salphinaa---conflict is evil and mortification

This message of the above poem clearly indicates that no one is beneficial from conflict and the only means to build mutual understanding or solidarity in the society is preaching the value of peace so as to sophisticate the process of peacebuilding in short, medium and long term. The poem also give higher emphasis on the role of women in nurturing peace and violating women

¹⁸ Data acquired from KIIs working in Zone and districts culture and tourism office.

gathered for preaching peace is immoral, unethical and unacceptable. As a result of the respect they have for *siinqee* norms, moralities and values, usually parties in conflict tolerate *siinqee* institution procedures. Most of the time, conflicting parties' will refrain from verbal or physical attack while mature women stand between them by holding *siinqee* and conducts *siinqee* mottos, which will be described below briefly. Women lay down *siinqee* on the ground and say that “*Gadaamessa kiyyaa keessaa baatee akka narraan hin tarkaanfanne*”, meaning that ‘you came out of my womb and do not cross over me’. Since jumping over the *siinqee* is forbidden, deceitful, immoral, and it is recognized that such issue is also symbolically equivalent to pacing over oneself mother’s womb and committing a wrong act in the study area¹⁹. Consequently, conflicting parties refrain soon from crossing *siinqee* to escape from what is called “*abaarsa siinqee*” which means *siinqee* curse and come to solve their differences through negotiation, mediation or arbitration. The role of *women* in this process is very visible to all parties and elders elected to guide reconciliation; that is management and facilitating condition for creating sustainable peace/relation among parties in that particular dispute/conflict.

According to (Muchie Z, 2015) women have an indirect participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution to ensure durable peace in the community. In the early stages of a conflict, they act as peace envoys or messengers sent between the disputing parties. Moral strength is pivotal in war against foes and peacebuilding in a given society. According to (Chala, 2002).The traditional Oromo societies consider women as messengers for peace. They are not allowed to participate in areas that require hard work and that demand a tremendous amount of energy. Due to this, they are excluded from directly participating conflict prevention, management and resolution process and rather, they implicitly participate as moral encouragement for those men participated in the warrior. Based on discussion conducted with participants of this study area, women participate implicitly in defending societal border/sovereignty previously by preparing ritual ceremony called “*buna qalaa*” and bless those men selected to participate in the against their sovereignty to come back with victory over their foe Men also accept women blessing with great interest and motivation because it believed that women blessing augments the internal strength and morality of those men selected for warrior. This imply that inclusion of women in indigenous peacebuilding processes can further generate

¹⁹ Data acquired from members of FGDs conducted at Kokossa and Kofale districts, October, 2020.

larger opportunities for the society including amplification of women voices in the process of conflict prevention, management and resolution be it family or societal level. Traditional conflict resolution processes are playing a critical role in peacebuilding because they geared towards forgiveness, reconciliation, maintenance and improvement of social relationships. Among these indigenous conflict resolutions that are contributing to peacebuilding, siinqee is unique in its nature and procedure because it is practiced by women. Women have sacred status in the community because they are assumed as messenger of peace. One of the greater contributions of siinqee practice in the study area was its contribution in managing and solving boarder related conflict between west Arsi zone and Sidama regional state. In boarder area, there were many conflict escalated between west Arsi zone and Sidama regional state and the contribution of women in restoring peace in the area were very indispensable. As a result, the two nations are living harmoniously in the study area and they also shares common market, language and culture.

Sometimes, such conflicts are complex and heavy for local elders, districts and zone administration, to give binding decision as land related conflict is case sensitive area. Nonetheless, the gathering of women from Arsi and Sidama nation interfere between parties in conflict by holding siinqee contributed a lot in abstaining physical violence from both side for long period of time. Since the practice of siinqee is well known among communities living on the border area, parties from both sides cease verbal or physical violence and show their interest to resolve their differences non-violently. Then, the gathering of women give report about the issue for council of elders from both side and give final decision after critically discussed on the cause, course and consequences of conflict. Then, the conflict perpetrators give moral compensation for women gathering for their contribution of restoring peace and social integration. Hence, women are most of the time successful in creating sustainable peace and security in west Arsi zone²⁰.

“The practice of siinqee has special status in the Arsi Oromo society. It is playing a decisive role in creating durable peace and security. We believe that God hear the supplication for peace from women than men, women wear their golden cultural clothes

²⁰ An aggregate data collected from participants of FGDs and KIIs at district and zone level, October, 2020.

accompanied with siinqee and quest God to restore peace in their society by ululating and singing a songs that are basically used during the process of conflict prevention, management, resolution and reconciliation. As result, there were numerous boundary related conflict resolved and village and zone level with contributions of women”²¹.

This implies that there is room for the women to participate in the community issues and men also give priority for women to take initiatives for restoring broken social life due to different types of conflict. Getting acceptance from local people encourages women to enhance their involvement in conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation, reconciliation and above all nurturing peacebuilding in short, medium or long term. According to data gathered from FGDs conducted in Negelle Arsi town, there were many conflicts that were managed and resolved with the initiatives of women from 2018-2020. Some of these conflicts include inter-religious, inter-clan, inter-ethnic and inter-family. This further contributed in the process of peacebuilding in the town and rural area although there are great challenges from youth on practice of siinqee. The participants of FGDs further portrayed that previously the status of women holding siinqee have special place in the community and also considered as the symbol of gender equality and peace. The current women association on siinqee practice in Negelle Arsi town is strongly attempting to re-integrate and empower women in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding as they did in the past time. For instance, women association on siinqee practice in Negelle Arsi town contributed a lot in decreasing the consequences of conflict created in the Negelle Arsi town upon the massacre of popular Oromo singer and human right defender called Hachalu Hundessa. According to key informants²² from Negelle Arsi town district, their association on the practice of siinqee get admiration certificate from the district based upon their great contribution in decreasing the consequences of conflict in their town. Hence, the practice of siinqee has special representation in the study area and in the structure of Gada system as it is one instrument that contributes a lot in the process of creating egalitarian society. As we know, peacebuilding is without ensuring women empowerment is not such effective and the practice of siinqee in the study area is playing its part to restore women active participation in the societal affairs.

²¹ Data gained from members of Abba Gada council of Kofale District and Secretary of council of Abba Gada of west Arsi zone. They have a potential knowledge on the area of women participation in peacebuilding.

²² The interview conducted in October, 2020 Negelle Arsi town

In the Gada system, women have great representation in the process of conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation and reconciliation and creating lasting peace in the society. Women in the study area use the following poem when they want to urge negotiation, mediation, or arbitration for inter-personal conflict's like conflict between two men and mitigate or avoid bloody consequences of conflict.

Siinqee waraana beeraa.....siinqee, the weapon of women
 Beenaa araaraa deemnaa.....let us go to terminate hostility and restore peace
 Siinqee tiyya lootii qabadhee.....I hold my beautiful siinqee
 Rabbi kiyya mootii kadhadhee....I requests my almighty god
 Killaan bahee sirraa dahee.....I got child from you
 Killa keessee sitti dheessee*2..... I request you to cease fighting*2
 Siinqee araaramaa guurree....We collect our siinqee of reconciliation
 Yaa waaqi araarami nullee....Our God, please compromise us
 Siinqee waraana beeraa.....Siinqee, the weapon of women
 Rabbiin watwaata deemnaa....We are crying to our God to restore peace
 Ateetee beenaa.....Let we request our God to support us to restore peace
 Akkanatti siinqee siif dallayaa.....I protect you with this siinqee
 Yoo kadhe Rabbi naaf dhagayaa..... My God is with me to help us
 Alallee buluu waraabo nahin nyaatuu....I may stay outdoor at night because hyena not injure me
 Araaraaf bahee waraana hin barbaadu....I need reconciliation, not violence
 Rabbi jedhaa waliin mari'adhaa.....Let you discuss to achieve common consensus
 Rakkoo keessan waraana malee furadhaa....Resolve your differences non-violently *2

The main idea of this poem indicates that the contributions of the study area women in minimize the negative consequences of conflict is so great and resolve the existing point of interest/differences reasonably on the round table non-violently. Unless the conflict is carefully and constructively management, its consequences may be create further suspicion, anxiety, misunderstood, mutual exclusion and further violence. Fortunately, the study area women employ indigenous cultures that help them to minimize or abstains the bloody consequences of conflict. Most importantly, the practice of siinqee along with its poem is contributing a lot in the study area and this is briefly the central message of the above siinqee poem. In addition, the above poem used during peace restoration clearly show that peacebuilding needs holistic transformation of the spirit of parties in the conflict to commence social integration and avers the practice of different types of revenge. The role of women in reducing or averting the practice of

different types of revenge in the study area was contributed in the process of peacebuilding in the previous time and currently such tendency is declining from time to time.

The role of women in peacebuilding in the society is not limited to urging the parties in the conflict to cease hostility/fighting and bringing the defenders and offenders to council of Abba Gada or local elders, they are play a great role in processing the traditional of “woga²³” in Siko-mando Gada system. It is a means for requesting apologizing for crime committed intentionally or unintentionally. Here, the offender go to the house of haadha siinqee/practitioner of siinqee/ and report his/her that he is learned from his shortcoming and now needs to restore the peace and social relationship with the defenders by conducting appropriate moral compensation. The women take him/her to the house of the victim and invite him/her to be calm down and forgive the offender due to the fact the offender learned from his/her shortcoming and now needs to restore peace and social interaction. Then, the two parties forgive each other and conduct reconciliation according to norms of the study area. In the previous time, woga is widely practiced among Siko-mando Gada system and played a great role in peacebuilding and averting different types of revenge in the study area²⁴.

The practice of siinqee is very important in peacebuilding at family and neighbor level. Since breaking siinqee law is strictly forbidden and lead to moral compensation, the society opts to break the rules and regulations of siinqee and respect decision of women on different events including call for peace restoring and social integration. In Gada system, women play an extraordinary contribution in peacebuilding and strengthening social interaction and solidarity. According participants of FGDs and KIIs, west Arsi zone council of women association on the practice of siinqee playing a great role to restore indigenous knowledge for peacebulding in coordination with council of west Arsi zone council of Abba Gada and the government is also relatively supporting women empowerment in indigenous conflict management and resolution. The researchers posed the questions related with the acceptance of women decision by men and participants of different FGDs and KIIs responded as follows. Since the status of women in Gada

²³ The practice of sending siinqee practitioners for reconciliation among Siko-mando Gada system after learning from own mistake

²⁴ Interview conducted with experts of Kokossa district culture and tourism office and they have detailed knowledge /information/awareness on the contribution of women in the process of peacebuilding among Siko-mando Gada system, October, 2020.

system is good experience for others, the decision passed by women for conflict management, resolution, transformation and reconciliation is widely acceptable in the study area especial in the past time. The gatherings of women holding siinqee manage and resolves from simple to complex conflict because women are assumed the messenger of peace; not commits crime, they defend for truth, equality and equity.

In generally, the participation of women in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding was very strong in the study area as almost all participants in this research confirmed. The data acquired from different districts and west Arsi zone culture and tourism chief experts also shares the idea of participants on FGDs and KIIs. For instance, the interview conducted with west Arsi zone culture and tourism chief experts indicates that different stakeholders are sharing the experience of women participation in peacebuilding by practicing siinqee rules and regulations to adopt into their own indigenous culture in order to enhance the participation of women in conflict management and resolution area. For instance, a team gathered from Sudan visited the practice of siinqee in the west Arsi zone particularly Kofale districts. Accordingly, the association of women on siinqee practice shared their potential experience on peacebuilding, conflict management and resolution for guests by using demonstration like drama and role play method. The team also strongly admired such indigenous practice of restoration of peace according to interview conducted with head of Kokossa and Kofale culture and tourism office. As a result, the team invited west Arsi zone representative of women to celebrate 2021 irreechaa/thanks giving day/ in Khartoum, Sudan. The culture and tourism office argued that such visit by non-nationals to share the experience of women in conflict management and resolution will further initiate them to work more corporately to repeat the previous status of in the community. They also portrayed that the office giving different recognitions and moral encouragement to restore the participation of women in indigenous peacebuilding in all perspectives. For instance, there is relatively good women association on the practice of siinqee that basically work on promotion of women participation in indigenous peacebuilding mechanisms both at zone and each districts. There is council of Abba Gada both at zone and each districts and they work corporately with culture and tourism office both at zone and each districts. The following photos are screenshot from video we acquired from Kofale district culture and tourism office. The video was captured

in September, 2020 during the visit of Sudanese team to share experience on women participation in indigenous peacebuilding method and other conflict resolution area.



Kofale district women welcoming guests from Sudan



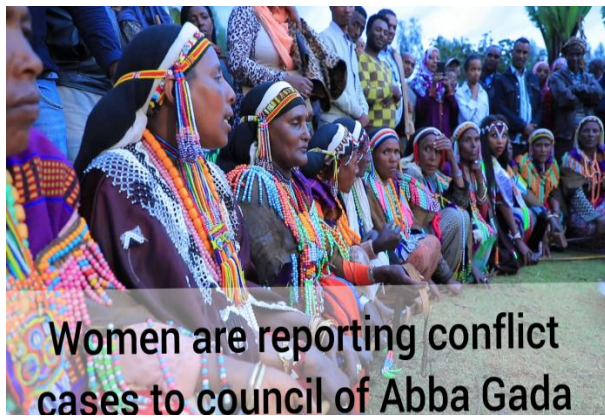
Kofale women sharing their experience on Peacebuilding for guests come from Sudan



Conflict over territory



Women are intervening between parties by holding siinquee



Women are reporting conflict cases to council of Abba Gada



Parties reach reconciliation and women are ululating as peace restored



Women give their siinquee to Abba Gada when parties show interest for reconciliation



Parties give moral compensation for siinquee after reconciliation

Source: Kofale District Culture and Tourism Office, October, 2020 (These photos were edited by Amin Mamma, principal investigator)

4.3 The Current Status of Women's roles in Nurturing Indigenous Peacebuilding

Women's participation in peacebuilding is indispensable in the process of achieving durable peace. Participants of key informant interview also confirmed that with women empowerment in social justice including peace making and building is critical to achieve sustainable development. Nonetheless, the tendency to exclude the women in traditional decision making in the study area needs attention. In the past time, the participation of women in the indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the study area was undeniably contributed in creating sustainable peace in the society especially at grassroots level.

Nonetheless, currently the participation of women in the indigenous means of peacebuilding is not as strong as part time due to multiple explicit and implicit factors. Some members of FGDs conducted with men argue that generation gap in the context of using an indigenous knowledge is going to happen as there is explicit knowledge and skill gap among the young generation. For instance, the knowledge and skill of young generation on the meaning, nature, background, rules and procedures of *siinqee* is deteriorating from time to time. Particularly, young females are rarely interested to learn and apply the role of women in peacebuilding and this implies that there is high probability of losing such indigenous that attempts to build egalitarian society where women have actual participation and decision making in the societal affairs in all perspectives. Other member of FGDs conducted with men uncovered that indigenous culture that enhances and nurture the role of women in indigenous peacebuilding are drastically weakening in the area due to multiple factors. For instance, the procedure of marriage/weeding being westernized, daughters are not following their mother customs, Gada system is not as strong and acceptable as the past time, females are being delivering before official marriage, young generations are rarely eager to request and know about the customs of their family, mothers are rarely interested to teach their daughter about the contribution of their indigenous conflict resolution and peacebuilding for society wellbeing and finally the participants were depicted that the current young generations love the culture of their family but not committed to study about nature and application of indigenous culture including the practice of *siinqee* for multi-faceted purpose.

Almost all women participated in this study as a potential KIIs were argue that though there is too limited effort to revive indigenous culture, the government is attempting to restore and

strengthen the golden contribution of indigenous knowledge in the process of peacebuilding in the short, medium and long period. Some potential KIIs was critically argued that although the practice of women participation in in indigenous peacebuilding process in past time, there are certain districts in the west Arsi zone that are empowering fully the women to have a say in conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation and above all, participate in traditional means of peacebuilding process as they did in the past. They added that although there are certain implicit and explicit factors that are tackling active participation of women in to restore the practice siinqee, the current empowerment of women in traditional peacebuilding is good in the aforementioned three districts as compared to other districts of west Arsi zone.

All participants of FGDs and KIIs commonly depicted that the current status of the practice of siinqee in particular and Gada system in general needs urgent measures to restore not only in the study area, but also in Sikko-Mando Gada system. They further depicted that women are too active on the practice of religion and relatively passive in the practice of culture including siinqee system. Previous generations area very committed in learning from their family in the form of dialogue and demonstration, the current generations are passive to learn, follow and apply their family's indigenous cultures including the practice of siinqee. Currently, women are seeing the practice of siinqee as serious breakdown of religious law and believe that they may not granted paradise in the second world if they exercise siinqee and others culture that are mainly driven by women in the study area. There is too weak connection between women in discussing about their issues in the society as compared to past time where women strongly communicate formally or informally to play their part in the society. The current young generations are rarely interested and eager to develop the knowledge and skill for non-violent conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation, reconciliation and peacebuilding.

The hot FGDs conducted with Kofale district representatives of women association on the practice of siinqee portrayed that their culture is being politicized and this is creating moral deterrence in the mind of siinqee practitioners currently in the study area. Due to the dwindling of Gada system from time to time in the study area, their children are being colonized by globalization than following their family's culture and norms. They use our cultural clothes only on different social events like weeding and public holydays. They are being governing by

different Social Medias than by their family's moral law and even, rarely governed by public law. Beside this, it seems that there is enthusiasm from young generations at least to know the culture of their family particularly women participation in the indigenous peacebuilding though it is rhetoric in the implementation.

To sum up, the process of peacebuilding needs continuation of all inclusive not only in modern law, but also in the indigenous mechanisms that are the linchpin for creating sustainable peace and stability in a given society. It is clear that the role of women in the indigenous mechanisms for peacebuilding is not limited to ensuring negative peace in the society, but also women plays an indispensable role in paving the way for restoration of positive peace. The central task of peace-building is to create and promote positive peace. That is because the task of peacebuilding mainly concerns addressing the root causes of a conflict and urging the parties in that particular conflict not agree non-violently and restore social justice, social integration and equality. Nonetheless, the data collected from FGDs and KIIs including public officials indicate that the participation of women in the indigenous peacebuilding is dwindling from time to time as compared to past time due to multifaceted visible and invisible challenges which we are going to discuss in the next topics.

4.4 The Challenges of Women in Nurturing Indigenous Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding can be assumed as activities that are designed by peace practitioners to increase tolerance and promote coexistence in the society. Sustaining peace understood as the process of building a common vision of society like preventing the outbreak and continuation of conflict, ending hostilities, ensuring reconciliation, and reconstruction in the post-conflict (Mincieli, 2018). Deeply held patriarchal beliefs perpetuate gender inequality and are at the root cause of sexual and gender-based violence and other expressions of gender inequality. Sustainable peace processes must therefore address fundamental imbalances in power by challenging oppressive gender norms (UN Women, 2014:7). Women are underrepresented in informal peacebuilding processes and as a result, different countries are facing major challenges in the process of implementing their national plans on women's empowerment in overall activities of the country (Warren et al, 2018). This is also true for Ethiopia in general and study area in particular in the process of enhancing women's role in the society. Previously, the participations of women in conflict management were very high in the study area. Specially, women through their solidarity

weapon called siinqee were played a great role in conflict management between clan and worshipping God to avert difficulties in the society. By doing so, the respect for women decisions making were also good because women are assumed as symbol of peace in Gada system. Nonetheless, these trends were become declining gradually due to multidimensional challenges which are implicit or explicit in its very nature. Hence, we present the summary of challenges that area hindering the participation of women in the indigenous peacebuilding in the study area. The challenges we are going to present as follows are the summary of views portrayed by all participants in this study.

The participants were depicted that the central value of the practice of siinqee is being inappropriately understood by other including government. The indigenous cultures are being politicized by politicians and this initiates women to exercise their culture due to fear of politics. There are great challenges from all religion on the continuation of the practice of siinqee/solidarity of women. The current generations give priority for western culture and this is drastically declining indigenous cultures in the study area. Youths are passive in learning and applying indigenous cultures that are a key linchpin for peacebuilding at grassroots level. Families are rarely seen in sharing their knowledge on the potential role of women in peacebuilding and other societal affairs. The numbers of women who are actively exercising siinqee along with its general objectives is being decreased from time to time and there is tendency to limit Gada system to a given district or zone. The current generation is rarely seen in fearing and respecting women who holds siinqee and attempt to manage conflict and restore peace in the study area as compared to the past time where women were seen as the messenger of peace and all parties accept the decision of women indifferently.

The inappropriate understanding and writing of Oromo history and culture by different writers' also creating confusion among young generations in practicing their family's indigenous culture that are indispensable for creation durable peace in the study area. For instance, some writers look the practice of siinqee as religion and women praying siinqee than God. However, the practice of siinqee and religion are independent and not contradict according all participants who participated either in FGDs or KIIs. As result, inability to differentiate the difference between culture and religion is explicitly contributing in declining of the role of women in peacebuilding

via indigenous cultures in the study area. In addition, there is great information gap among non-omros about meaning and nature of Gada system and there is a condition when they see the practice of siinqee as practice of sin. There is also misperception between women association on siinqee practice both at districts and zone on its central objective according to aggregate view of participants. There is a question of autotomizing women association on siinqee practice and government is giving priority only during controversies accompanied with attempt to use the association for political purpose are rarely seen the study area and contributing to declining the role of women in indigenous peacebuilding according participants.

Both in the past and present, there are certain sayings in the society that contributed a lot in degrading the active participation of women in fostering indigenous peacebuilding in the study area. Here are few saying we got from participants during primary data collection with word by word translation in the context of the topic of the study.

1. Dubartiin furdoo malee guddoo hin qabdu (women may have greater body size, but not have or produce greater idea).
2. Dubartiin lama hin beektu, takka hin wallaaltu (women don't know two way/decision; they rather know one way/decision/knowledge).
3. ሴት ምንም ብታቅ በወንድ ይለቅ(although women have greater knowledge, the final verdict should complete by men).
4. Dhiyana dubartii maaf gaafattaa? Yooka nyaatee garaa qabdii yooka godhattee lafaa qabdii(why you quest about the meal for women? They are either ate or prepared to eat).
5. Dhiirri dubartii hin moone dhiiraa miti/the husband who do not dominate his wife is not a husband/.

These and other sayings in the communities are contributing in censuring the roles of women in peacebuilding through their solidarity weapon called siinqee. According to participants of FGDs conducted with women, this may have direct relation with the need for strengthening patriarchal system which currently exercised in some rural peasant associations to some extent. What are surprising here that there are some women who need patriarchal system both in past and present time to some extents in some rural peasant associations. Underestimating the decision of women, suspicion on women knowledge and skill, less coverage of indigenous cultures in modern education, cultural transformation, globalization, negative interpretation of women decision in

domestic culture, modern law/litigation, reluctance of young women to share their mothers' custom, less emphasis of government on traditional, weakening of Gada system, modernization and the explicit existence of great awareness gap among young generation about indigenous cultures role for creating sustainable peace are among the key challenges that are explicitly or implicitly contributing in declining women participation in domestic peacebuilding in the study area according all participants of this study. In generally, although there is such controversial challenges against women in the process of peacebuilding in the study area, participants of FGDS and KII shares the idea that women are implicitly or explicitly playing their part in conflict prevention, management and resolution under their solidarity weapon/siinqee, ateetee/ although it is too limited as compared to the past.

4.5 Means of Restoring Women's Role in Fostering Indigenous Peacebuilding

Peace is more sustainable and achievable when women join men to ensure equitable inclusion of gender perspectives in decision making and peacebuilding. Effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies are intimately connected to the meaningful participation of women. Peacebuilding is often considered to be confined to post-conflict reconstruction, a matter of preventing a violent relapse by rebuilding national political and economic capacity (UN Women, 2014:7). Peace is very comprehensive concept that is inevitably linked with daily activity of human beings and it is indispensable for developing countries like Ethiopia. Peace can be built in multi-dimensional mechanisms across the world and one way among the other is using indigenous knowledge which very important to build peace at grassroots level. Indigenous conflict prevention, management and resolution mechanisms focus on the principles of compassion, sharing and cooperation in dealing with common problems which highlight the spirit of humanity. Giving priority for humanity is the key features on indigenous peacebuilding mechanisms in the study area and the role of empowering women in domestic peacebuilding is crucial to show that humanity prior to each and every actively of human being according participants of this study. According to World Bank (2017:3) report, enhancing the meaningful participation of women and youth in decision making, as well as long-term policies to address the economic, social, and political aspirations of women and young people are fundamental to sustaining peace at all levels in a very fast-changing world. This implies that empowering women in peacebuilding is one possible means of creating peace at grassroots level and

strengthening the meaningful participation in indigenous peacebuilding mechanism is needs an important reconsideration. During we travelled to different districts of west Arsi zone to conduct FGDs and KIIs, the participants were portrayed many possible means of restoring women's role in the indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the study area. Hence, we summarized and present possible means of restoring women's role in the indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the study area as follows.

To restore the declining of indigenous culture in the study area, working at grassroots level is very important. Particularly, working with family is very indispensable as family is the fundamental for all activities. According to (Filicha, 2012:48), family institution is the basic school that shapes the future life of anyone apart from the lessons learnt in modern schools in academics or in other ways. This implies that working closely at grassroots level particularly with family will contribute a lot restore that the status of women in indigenous peacebuilding mechanism as teaching family is teaching whole society. According to FGDs and KIIs, mothers have primary duty to teach children at early stage about the culture of that area and the difference between culture and religion. Participants were added that let mothers reshape their children inline of an indigenous culture of that area that supporting to run with western culture which is the potential challenge of women participation in traditional means of peacebuilding. In addition, teaching children about our identity, create awareness about the function of siinqee, teaching children the role of women in peacebuilding and peacekeeping in the study area in the past time and clearly teaching young generation about overall purpose and procedure of siinqee accompanied with how and when women participate in the peacebuilding. Hence, it need to working together with all stakeholders because there are multiple challenging the meaningful participation of women in indigenous peacebuilding process in the study area.

Women empowerment in indigenous peacebuilding is very important for wellbeing of society and finding possible means to restore the previous status of women in peacebuilding needs the commitment of all stakeholders in short, medium and long term. Accordingly, restoring Gada system, freeing Gada system for politics and religion, correcting the misunderstood or misinterpreted culture and history of Oromo nation, working critically on reinstating the Oromo moral law, averting political interferences in Gada system, teaching Gada System as an

independent subject at different level of education, teaching young generations about value of using own culture, working together, conducting continuous research on the difference between culture and religion and continuous awareness creation can be assumed as necessary condition to restore the meaningful contributions of women in domestic peacebuilding as this culture is very important for creating egalitarian society, ensure negative peace and facilitate the realization of positive peace in the society.

In addition, facilitating and strengthening the office that basically works on women empowerment in indigenous culture of peacebuilding, increasing the number of dates that women association on practice of siinqee meets each other's per month and let government plays its part to restore the special status of women in the society by sharing the skill and knowledge of women in peacebuilding, strengthening the current women association on the practice of siinqee to transfer to future generation, giving reinforcement for key practitioners of siinqee and conducting an integrated and comprehensive awareness creations for non-Oromo nations in the Ethiopia. Above all, giving continuous capacity building training for women to ensure the continuity of such culture that doubtfully contributes to nurture the culture of peace and non-violent conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation and genuine reconciliation.

Chapter Five

Conclusion and Recommendation

In this world, there are numerous issues required as priority for survival of human being and these issues are inseparable in their very nature. The existence of one issue is prerequisite for the survival of others and vice versa. Among these interdependent issues which are decisive for survival of human being, peace and peacebuilding are among the top interest of all human beings. Peacebuilding is all activity aimed at improving the quality of life, prevents conflict, reduces destructiveness of conflict, transforms hostility into hospitality, and helps people to recover from violence in all forms. Peacebuilding actively creates the capacity within communities to meet all forms of human needs and rights. Peacebuilding cover all activities intended to encourage and promote peaceful relations and overcoming violence. As it is obvious, peacebuilding is not only achieved through modern law and hence, the role of indigenous cultures/knowledge is also indispensable in the process of creating sustainable peace. Particularly, the inclusiveness of participants of peacebuilding through indigenous mechanism is crucial as the process of peacebuilding by its nature needs compressive approaches and this was/is true in the study area though there great variation between the past and present. In the previous time, the role of women in indigenous peacebuilding in the study area through solidarity weapon called siinqee. Their contributions in the process of peacebuilding in domestic were meaningful especially in creating durable peace at grassroots level like solving family, clan and neighbor conflict in the past. They contributed a lot in solving majority of conflict between Arsi Oromo and Sidama nation on boarder non-violently. They also contributed a lot in ensuring in the process of convincing or pushing parties in the conflict to achieve commonly negative peace where parties agree to terminate physical or verbal violence and solve their differences either through negotiation or with support of third parties. The discussion on findings, it can be conclude that the contribution of women in the indigenous peacebuilding process was contributed relatively in ensuring positive peace like keeping the equality of women in conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation and reconciliation though currently such trends are declining drastically from time to time. As peacebuilding is fundamentally interested with the process of achieving peace and peace consolidation, the practice of siinqee system in the study area were contributed in consolidating peace at grassroots level in the past time.

Although the role of women indigenous peacebuilding is relatively functional in some west Arsi zone districts like Kokossa and Kofale, such culture being lacking its previous acceptance and deteriorating from time to time in the study area based on discussion conducted in this chapter. Currently, there is less emphasis for the practice of siinqee and this may in turn lead to declining of the status that women have in the study area in the past time. In addition, one can conclude from given discussion that the current generation is rarely seen to ensure the continuity of their family culture including the practice of siinqee and other culture of peacebuilding that embraces women in the study area. The study also concludes that there are implicit and explicit critical challenges that are hindering the previous cultures of peacebuilding to the future and these challenges need immediate response from all stakeholders as indigenous knowledge are very important to create and consolidate peace and stability at grassroots level.

Lastly but not the least, the study conclude that there is still a chance to restore the contributions of indigenous inclusive cultures that are vital for creating sustainable peace and security, social justice or positive peace in the study area by closely working with practitioners of that particular culture like practice of siinqee and Gada system in general. Based on data gathered from KIIs and FGDs participants and analysis conducted in this this study, we recommend the concerning body to take in to consideration the following recommendations in the process of restoring the role of women in indigenous conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation, reconciliation and above all, in peacebuilding process.

- The participation of women in fostering indigenous peacebuilding method is directly related with Gada system. Hence, reinstating and strengthening Gada system is necessary condition and this needs critical reconsideration.
- Based on data acquired from participants of KII and FGDs, there is confusion on difference between Gada system, religion and politics. Hence, it is recommendable if government strongly works with local elders, Abba Gada and women practicing siinqee and abates such confusion through continuous awareness creation both for Oromo and non-Oromos by using different mechanisms that may include using media outlets.
- Culture plays a get role in portraying the real identity of a given society in multi-dimensional. Based on data collected from participants', there is misunderstanding of the culture and history of Oromo nation. Hence, correcting the misunderstood or misinterpreted culture and history of Oromo nation in collaboration with local elders,

potential practitioners of Gada system and academician/elite/ is recommendable to restore the role of indigenous knowledge in conflict prevention, management, resolution, transformation, reconciliation and above all, in peacebuilding process in the study area.

- Based on data we got both from different districts and at zone level, there is association of women who are basically working to restore that value of siinqee and cultural representation of women in the study area. Hence, let government plays its part to restore the special status of women in the society by sharing the skill of women in peacebuilding, strengthening the current women association on the practice of siinqee to transfer to future generation, giving reinforcement for key practitioners of siinqee to initiate others to participate in peacebuilding process through traditional means in the study area.
- Family is the base for all events in the society. Family will contribute a lot restore that the status of women in indigenous peacebuilding mechanism as teaching family is teaching whole society. Particularly, mothers plays a great role in reshaping their children inline of an indigenous culture and this mitigates running with western cultures that the key challenges of our culture and it is recommendable to work with family at local level with facilitation of each districts culture and tourism office and peasant associations coordinators to realize the futurity of previous cultures that contributed in creating peace and stability in the society.
- Education plays a great role in the process of declining and strengthening the culture of a given society. If it is properly managed, education will restore even the culture which is nearer to extinct. Although there are differences from one district to districts and zone to a zone, Gada system is relatively functional to some extent. Hence, we recommend designing curriculum for Gada System as an independent subject at different level of education and teaching children about their identity appropriately to realize the futurity of previous cultures.

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**Appendix A: Interview and Focus Group Discussions Guiding Questions
Madda Walabu University**

College of Social Science and Humanities

Department of Civics and Ethical Studies

**Research Title: The Future of the Past: The Roles and Challenges of Women in
Fostering Indigenous Peacebuilding Methods in the West Arsi
Zone: Case Study from Selected Districts**

INTERVIEW AND FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS GUIDING QUESTIONS

I. Guiding Questions Prepared for Office at Different Level

1. What were the roles of women in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the past time in West Arsi zone? What was the main challenge of women in participating in peacebuilding process in the past time in West Arsi zone?
2. What are the major an indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process that are currently functional in West Arsi zone? How about the involvement of women in it? Mostly, they involved in which indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding?
3. What are the unique features and their implementation procedures of each indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding that are currently functional in West Arsi zone? What are the roles of women in each indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding that are currently functional in West Arsi zone?
4. Which segments of societies are mostly participating in these indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding?
5. What is expected from each level of government in the process of recovering the roles of women in each indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding in West Arsi zone?
6. What is expected from women to enhance their involvement in the process of recovering their role in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding?

II. Guiding Questions Prepared for Key Informant Interviews

1. What are important criteria/guidelines that are used for recruitment of participants of indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding? How is the involvement of women?
2. How is the current status of women in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the study area? How women do perceives their role in peacebuilding in the study area?

3. What are the major factors that exacerbate declining of women empowerment in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the study area? How do women recognize these exacerbating factors of their participation in indigenous peacebuilding?
4. What are possible coping mechanisms of women disempowerment in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process the study area?
5. What is expected from each level of government in the process of recovering women's participation in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding?
6. What is expected from local elders/Abba Gadas in the process of recovering women's role in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding?
7. What is expected from women in the process of recovering their participation in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding?

III. Guiding Questions Prepared for Focus Group Discussions

1. In which indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process women were mostly participating?
2. How do you evaluate women contribution in indigenous mechanism of peacebuilding in society in the past time? What were major lessons that the current generations learn from previous contribution of women in indigenous mechanism of peacebuilding process?
3. Is there strong indigenous mechanism of peacebuilding that women are participating in it today? If there, how do you characterize it? If not, what is the rationale behind it?
4. How do you examine the current status of indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding in west Arsi zone? What are the key differences between former and current generation on perception and empowerment of women in traditional conflict resolution?
5. What must be improved to enhance women role in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding in west Arsi zone currently?
6. How do you examine the consistency of current factors that exacerbate declining of women roles in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding process in the study area? Can these factors diminish the role of women in peace building process in west Arsi zone in the future?
7. What is expected from women in the process of recovering and nurturing their role in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding in the future?
8. What is expected from local elders/Abba Gadas in the process of recovering and nurturing women's role in indigenous mechanisms of peacebuilding?

Appendix B: Sample photo taken during discussion and interviews



Discussion with Kokossa District Culture and Tourism Office staffs, Oct, 2020

Women are assumed as the messenger of peace in the study area



Some members of FGDs conducted with women @Kofale, Oct, 2020





Sample photo of FGDs conducted with elders, Oct, 2020

