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MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY IN INDIGENOUS STUDIES

The ROLE OF INDIGENOUS INSTITUTIONS IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION: IN THE CASE OF INTER- ETHNIC CONFLICT BETWEEN ARGOBBA & AFAR PEOPLE, NORTHEAST ETHIOPIA.

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June, 2023

Dilla, Ethiopia

DILLA UNIVERSITY

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A Thesis Submitted By:

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Thesis Submitted for the School of Graduate Studies, Institute of Indigenous Studies in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies

Supervised by: Yacob Cheka (PhD)

June, 2023

Dilla,Ethiopia

Declaration

I declare that this thesis represents my original work and findings, based on extensive research and analysis of the role of indigenous institutions in conflict resolution in case of interethnic conflict between Argobba and Afar people in northeast Ethiopia. I acknowledge and appreciate the support, feedback, and insights provided by my thesis advisor, colleagues, respondents, and sources of information, as well as the funding and ethical clearance obtained for this research.

In addition to this, I declare that this thesis reveals and discusses the complex and varied roles of indigenous institutions in conflict resolution in case of interethnic conflict between Argobba and Afar people, highlighting their strengths, limitations, challenges, and prospects. I argue that indigenous institutions can complement and reinforce the formal justice and security systems, provided that they are recognized, respected, and supported by the state and other relevant actors.

Student's Name:	**Signature**	**Date**
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Advisor's Approval sheet

This is to certify that, the thesis topic "The Role of Indigenous Institutions in Conflict Resolution: In the Case of Inter- ethnic conflict Between Argobba and the Afar People, Northeast Ethiopia" has been submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of philosophy in Indigenous studies and has been carried out by Mr. Juhar Ahmed Mohammed under my supervision. Therefore, I recommended that the student has fulfilled the requirements and can submit the thesis to the institution.

Approved By:

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Topic: The Role of Indigenous Institutions in Conflict Resolution: in the Case of Inter-ethnic conflict Between Argobba and the Afar People, Northeast Ethiopia.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

EPRDF- Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front

FGDs- Focus Group Discussions

JPFC- Joint Peace Forum Committee

SSRC- Social Science Research Council

TPLF- Tigray people's Liberation Front

Glossary of Local Terms

Abeggar: an individual who possesses extensive knowledge about the Argobba and Wollo communities and is relied on by the community to manage conflicts.

Bele: is likely a cultural ritual or tradition in a community that is used to help resolve disputes and maintain peace. The act of crossing the Abeggar's stick and making a promise reinforces the importance of keeping one's commitments and respecting the agreement made between the two parties.

Duberti: women association in the wollo community generally, and Argobba particularly.

Guma: a compensation for the victim when resolving conflicts or blood feuds by way of reconciliation among the Argobba community.

Mada'a; a traditional law of Afar

Makaban; clan leader of Afar

Shimgilena: a process where the two parties involved in a conflict meet in the presence of the elders.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the role of indigenous institutions in conflict resolution, with a focus on the inter-ethnic conflict between Afar and Argobba in the northeastern part of Ethiopia. It investigates the effectiveness of indigenous institutions, such as the Abeggar, religious leaders, and clan leaders, in managing conflicts and promoting reconciliation. The study employs a qualitative research approach, using interviews and focus group discussions with key informants from both communities, observation as a non-participant, case studies, and document analysis. The findings indicate that indigenous institutions are critical to conflict resolution as they possess legitimacy, trust, and authority from the communities they represent. They have unique methods of conflict resolution, such as mediation and reconciliation, based on their cultural practices and values. However, the study also highlights the need for greater recognition of indigenous institutions by the state and the importance of incorporating indigenous institutions into formal conflict management processes and strengthening their capacities to provide effective conflict resolution and peace building services in the region. The study provides valuable recommendations for policymakers and practitioners to build on the strengths of indigenous institutions and incorporate them into a formal system of governance. Overall, this study contributes to the growing literature on the role of indigenous institutions in conflict resolution and underscores the importance of engaging with local communities and their institutions in peace building initiatives.

***Key Words**: indigenous institutions, inter-ethnic conflict, conflict resolution, Abeggar, Clan leader, Afar, Argobba.*

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Conflict is a constant feature in all human societies, though the nature of these conflicts may vary from society to society. Conflicts may arise between individuals, groups and communities within the same ethnic group & between different cultural groups. There are many ethnic conflicts, fragilities and instabilities in the world and in the Horn of African countries namely Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Ethiopia. According to the Social Science Research Council (SSRC), the region "is one of the most complex and conflicted regions of the world" due to the problems relating to political rivalry between these countries as well as the internal violence arising from protracted inter-ethnic conflicts (Tigist, 2014).

The continent of Africa is believed to be the most tumultuous in the world, with a significant amount of disagreements. The root cause of these disputes lies in the aftermath of gaining independence, conflicts between ethnic groups and religions, competition for natural resources and borders, deficiencies in leadership, corruption, poverty, and poor governance, which leads to political instability(Bello, 2016; Kariuki, 2009). As conflict is an unavoidable part of human existence and Africans being the birthplace of humanity, they have developed strategies and systems to manage and resolve their everyday issues efficiently and sustainably. Customary resolution methods have been practice in Africa for many years and hence, are not a novel concept (Wassara, 2007).

In Africa, traditional leadership is a form of leadership based on the cultures of the people. It remains legal in some parts of African countries and functions as an umbrella for traditional leaders. According to Logan’s study conducted in 15 sub Saharan African countries, traditional authorities, chiefs, and elders still have a crucial role in resolving conflicts, not only for Africans but also for many people worldwide. In addition, traditional leaders serve as intermediaries for both violent and nonviolent disputes in numerous African nations (Logan, 2008).

There existed over eighty (80) ethno linguistic groups in Ethiopia, each with unique cultures, languages, and histories. In recent years, despite the presence of mutual respect and common principles among the diverse ethnic communities within the nation, Ethiopia has been marred by a number of conflicts, often sparked by inter- ethnic disputes. The Afar and Argobba communities have not been exempt from such conflicts. In such situations, indigenous institutions have traditionally played a crucial role in conflict resolution, bringing together the conflicting parties and negotiating a settlement (Missaye, 2021).

However, the effectiveness of these institutions has not been thoroughly studied. This thesis aims to examine the role of indigenous institutions in conflict resolution in relation to the inter- ethnic conflict between the Afar and Argobba communities. By examining the mechanisms employed by these institutions and the challenges they face, the study seeks to not only shed light on the efficacy of indigenous institutions, but also to provide recommendations for future conflict resolution efforts in Ethiopia that can build upon indigenous mechanisms.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Since the establishment of the modern state in Ethiopia, conflicts between ethnic groups within the state have become a common occurrence. Despite this, Emperor Haile Selassie and the military regime chose to neglect this issue and instead focused on building up the Ethiopian state. This led to prolonged civil wars which ultimately contributed to the downfall of the military regime in 1991. In an effort to manage these intra- state conflicts, federalism was introduced in Ethiopia by the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Front (EPRDF) regime back in 1994. This approach considers the ethnic and geographical diversity of the modern day Ethiopia and is rooted in the nation's history of reunification (Mulunesh, 2019)

The 1995 Ethiopian constitution is an ethnic-based federal system, which gave recognition to many ethnic groups and gave the ethnic groups the right to form their own respective regions and the right of secession. Article 39, Sub article 3, states in the following way:

> Every nation, nationality, and people in Ethiopia have the right to a full measure of self-government, which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the

territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in state and federal governments (The Constitution, 1995).

The federal structure of Ethiopia promotes competition among ethnic groups for power and resources, leading to numerous conflicts. Additionally, the system exacerbates ethnic differences and sentiments, increasing the possibility of inter- ethnic disputes. Taye (2020) asserts that individuals involved in violent conflicts based on their collective identity have played a significant role in triggering ethnic based disputes.

Consequently, Ethiopia witnessed ongoing inter- ethnic conflicts that led to an increase in political unrest. The shortcomings of the civil government contributed to Ethiopia leaning towards a dictatorial system. Because the constitutions that were approved to ensure the safety of the country's citizens came with serious problems, the people of Ethiopia have been forced into an intractable civil war by their leaders for political gain. Among these communities, mainly the Afar and the Argoba communities are mentioned. Why, because the current government of the FDRE has implemented a policy that allows the formation of federal states, resulting in nations and nationalities managing their own affairs. As a result, minority ethnic groups have also been able to establish their own local administration. The Argobba ethnic groups, currently residing in south wollo, Medina special district and Gacheni of Afar, have been self-administration in the Argobba special woreda in the Amhara and Afar regional states. This has led to the Argobba people in the Afar region administering their own localities, and those in other regions such as Amhara, Afar, and Oromia have started to request their own administrative areas.

Following this, the Argobba and Afar have an uneasy relationship, as they share common issues such as lack of resources and retaliatory actions after incidents of violence. While their hostility towards each other has existed for a while, tensions have escalated since the creation of the Argobba special woreda. This has led to loss of lives on both sides and affected the security situation, making travel between the two woreda's challenging.

Azmera's (2013) study, titled "Ethnic relationships in Ethiopia: the case of Argobba and their Neighbors," examines the conflict between the Afar and Argobba groups and its impact on the areas political stability, revealing that previous efforts to mediate between the two groups have

been unsuccessful. Similarly, Muktar's (2019) research focuses on the dynamics of inter- ethnic conflict between the Afar and Amhara communities in the border areas of chifra woreda. His findings show that while the two groups have a history of friendly coexistence, occasional conflicts arise due to competition for scarce resources and undefined territory near these resources.

In recent years, there has been an increase in academic research and publications focusing on indigenous conflict resolution institutions and their mechanisms. Diverse scholars, including Ajanew, Dagne, Kelemework, Missaye, and Kefelegn, have conducted studies on these mechanisms in Ethiopia, covering topics such as nature and process of dispute resolution. Indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms are widely utilized throughout Ethiopia to ensure justice, as different ethnic groups possess their own homegrown conflict resolution mechanisms based on customary laws and rules. While these systems vary between societies, they share a common goal of addressing the root cause of disputes and discouraging revenge.

Indigenous institutions and their tools are founded on the social and cultural values, norms, beliefs, and methods of the people and are approved by the community. Applying these cultural practices to settle disputes saves time and effort for the conflicting parties and consolidates genuine relationships. Crucially, the problems are dealt with by elders, esteemed community members, and religious and community leaders. The decisions that the elders pass have the greatest impact; the outcomes are more binding and influential, and the extent of their practicability is strong.

However, the practicability of these systems is decreasing because the government is not working noticeably to promote the principles, norms, and values of those valuable cultural assets. The media, stakeholders and communities are not working persistently to inform the new generation of the greatness of those customary institutions and their mechanisms. Moreover, the studies conducted on the indigenous institutions and their roles in resolving several types of conflicts and making peace for their communities in Ethiopia are unsatisfactory when compared with the multi-ethnic cultural diversity of Ethiopia.

This study acknowledges the plethora of past scholarly works on the indigenous institutions of the Afar and Argobba peoples. Although the researchers highlight the existence of native establishments in resolving ethnic group disputes, they do not provide a thorough exposition of how crucial these institutions are in settling inter- ethnic conflicts between the Afar and Argobba communities. Neither did their findings tell how those traditional institutional arrangements have been functioning. Moreover, their study could not identify the key indigenous institutions of both ethnic groups that deal with conflict resolution, their experience of resolving inter-ethnic conflict, or their recent experience of resolving inter-ethnic conflict, including their joint activities with state actors and/or modern legal systems.

There is insufficient scientific evidence to support the existence and structure of indigenous conflict resolution institutions and their contribution to peace building in a specific community. To address this gap, a study was conducted with the goal of identifying the root causes of conflicts, examining the role of indigenous institutions in resolving inter- ethnic conflicts, evaluating the challenges faced by these institutions, and identifying capacity building activities to improve these institutions in the study area. Specifically, the study focused on the conflict between the Argobba and Afar communities, which has resulted in displacement, loss of life, and property damage. Despite efforts to resolve the conflict, the potential role of indigenous institutions in creating sustainable peace has not been fully explored.

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

This research aimed to examine how indigenous institutions played a part in solving conflicts between two ethnic groups, specifically the Argobba and Afar communities in the northeastern regions of Ethiopia, through their community reconciliation system.

1.3.2. Specific objectives

- To explore the reasons behind the conflict by examining the historical, social, and political connections between the two groups.

- To analyze the contribution of native establishments in settling the inter- group conflicts within the studied domain.
- To examine the limitations and challenges encountered by indigenous institutions.
- To identify capacity-building activities those have been done to address gaps in the indigenous institutions in the study area.

1.4. Research Questions

The study aims to answers the following questions, based on the research goals and assumptions mentioned earlier;

- What are the root-causes of the conflict between the Argobba and the Afar?
- What has been done by the indigenous institutions to address the conflict between the Afar and the Argobba ethnic groups?
- What were the limitations and challenges for the indigenous institutions?
- What has been done to address the gaps in the indigenous institutions of both groups?

The researcher sought to comprehend how indigenous institutions handle inter- ethnic conflicts from an outsider's viewpoint, considering the aforementioned questions. Although this aligns with the primary goals of the study, the research inquiries sought to identify the underlying cause of conflict between the two ethnicities and assess the abilities and drawbacks of current indigenous institutions in resolving inter- ethnic conflicts.

1.5. Relevance of the Research Output

The main focus of this study is to examine the indigenous institutions that have been created to regulate social, political, economic, and religious aspects of life among the Afar and Argobba societies. The study puts special emphasis on the significance of these institutions in resolving inter personal and inter- group disputes, particularly those of inter- ethnic nature. Ethiopia has various native conflict resolution systems and processes that have been utilized for hundreds of years by diverse cultural communities to reestablish justice and preserve harmony. There are various dispute settlement institutions among these two ethnic groups, such as the modern legal system, the indigenous conflict resolution mechanism, and religious institutions that settle

conflicts. These approaches enable both communities to resolve their disputes peacefully, strengthen the fabric of their communities, and maintain their social integrity.

The use of indigenous institutions can provide effective and appropriate solutions to issues related to collective action in different environments. These institutions not only help in conflict resolution but also promote coordination and cooperation among groups to accomplish common goals, as well as achieving consensus among conflicting parties. Indigenous institutions are crucial in the resolution of conflicts, promotion of reconciliation and overall development. They represent the shared understanding of individuals involved in a particular situation who need to collaborate to achieve a desirable outcome despite the challenges of collective action.

Based on the above insight, this study is crucial and highly significant, as it aims to identify the root cause of conflicts and how indigenous elders resolve these disputes too establish peace. By doing so, the study can provide valuable insights for the woreda administrations and legal offices to collaborate with indigenous institutions and promote peace in their communities. Specifically, the study examines the coexistence and conflicts between two ethnic groups at a local level and within the states ethnic group policies. Through analyzing the indigenous conflict resolution methods that have maintained their harmonious coexistence, this study hopes to make significant contributions.

- First and for most, I believe that the methods and findings of this thesis will not only add value to the existing scholarly discourse but also pave the way for further investigations in this area, positioning this thesis as a valuable contribution to the academic landscape.
- It may provide valuable information about what types of conflict resolution methods can be adopted, from indigenous institutions to modern legal services,
- It may give directions to governmental bodies, especially offices under the ministry of peace, to include some indigenous knowledge in the process of expanding peace for all, and as such, the findings of this research will be invaluable for policymakers, NGOs and other stakeholders who work on conflict and peace transformation.

In general, this study has the potential to offer a concise and dependable account of the way indigenous conflict resolution institutions contribute towards establishing peace, leading to

peaceful environment in both the study areas and the country as a whole. Knowing the general nature of these indigenous institutions and how they help to resolve conflicts and promote peace can be used as a starting point for further scientific research and can encourage policymakers to consider these institutions as a viable alternative or supplement to the modern legal system. Additionally, there is a lack of documentation regarding the indigenous conflict resolution institutions and their methods used by the Ethiopian ethnic groups, which are mostly oral and not systematically organized. Thus, this study can address the shortcomings of previous research by examining these institutions and their community based reconciliation mechanisms for resolving conflicts.

1.6. Scope and Limitations of the Study

1.6.1. Scope of the study

Geographically, this study primarily concentrates on the Afar and Argobba populations who reside in certain areas such as Medina special district of Argobba as well as Telalak and Gacheni of Afar surrounding villages. The methodology pursued in this research is qualitative and uses a case- study technique. The study involves various informants from both communities, including traditional and religious leaders and other important figures. Information was gathered through extensive interviews, group discussions, observations, and the analysis of relevant documents.

Thematically, the focus of the study is centered on examining the function of indigenous institutions in resolving conflicts within the context of inter- ethnic disputes between the Afar and Argobba communities. The study analyzes the cultural and historical background of these communities, taking into account their political, economic, and social aspirations. One of the main goals of the study is to evaluate the efficacy of indigenous institutions and their mechanisms in mediating conflicts between the two cultural groups. To accomplish this, the study investigated various types of indigenous institutions, such as community leaders, religious leaders, and council of elders. The Argobba and Afar communities are the primary subjects of the study, as inter- ethnic conflicts occur frequently and indigenous institutions continue to play a crucial role in promoting conflict resolution.

The study investigates how effective indigenous institutions are in resolving conflicts and examines the difficulties that arise during this process. Additionally, it evaluates the consequences of indigenous institution's involvement in conflict resolution, such as their impact on fostering lasting peace, communal reconciliation, and social unity. The study seeks to offer valuable knowledge about the role that indigenous institutions play in resolving conflicts, especially between the Afar and Argobba ethnic groups. Its results can guide conflict resolution and reconciliation policies and practices in the studied region and other similar contexts within Ethiopia.

1.6.2. Limitations of the study

This thesis has encountered situational, environmental and cultural limitations. In the first place, since the period of field work coincided with the command post, some informants long hesitated to provide information, suspecting the researcher as an agent of either the government or opposition parties, until they proved his neutrality. Secondly, the inhospitably hot climatic condition of the area, together with the long journey to rural Kebeles on foot, remained a real challenge. Third, because of their cultural orientation, females are not normally supposed to interact with aliens, particularly males. Moreover, there was natable scarcity of means of transportation to access various locations within the research zone. Ultimately, the existing security issues in certain regions of Argobba and Telalak of Afar woreda impeded the movements of the researcher and assistants.

1.7. Organization of the Thesis

This thesis is comprised of six chapters, with the first chapter serving to introduce the main issues and contextualize the study's objectives and questions. Chapter two is broken in two parts, with the first providing the theoretical framework of the thesis, the second part outlines a review of relevant literature related to the research question. The third chapter provides a methodological framework for the study, outlining the various data gathering methods used and ethical considerations taken into account. The fourth chapter offers a description of the study area. Chapter five a discussion of the findings, and the thesis concludes with a final chapter summarizing the overall conclusions.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of Related Literature

2.1. Concept of conflict and Conflict Resolution

2.1.1 Conflict

The definition of conflict in literature varies depending on the context in which it is presented. For instance, Coser (1956) defines conflict as a struggle between competing parties over values, status, power, and resources that are limited. Wellensteen (2002), on the other hand, characterizes conflict as a situation where multiple parties compete for the same limited resources, including non-economic resources such as human security, environment, and historical concerns. Barash and Webel (2002) perceive conflict as a different perspective or interpretation of a situation, sometimes accompanied by hostility or physical confrontation. Conflict, therefore, implies diverse motives and perspectives, but the fundamental factor involved is the scarcity of resources.

Conflict arises when people or groups have incompatible interests or goals towards a common thing. It is a common occurrence in all human societies due to differences in interests, goals, values, and aims. Most conflicts occur within small units of society like families or villages (Kariuki, 2009). Conflict can originate from cognitive, emotional, or behavioral perspectives, each with its unique characteristics. Conflict perception is a set of contradictory interpretations of personal or group needs, interests, and values. The emotional dimension of conflict is a physiological phenomenon characterized by feelings like fear, sadness, or anger. The behavioral component of conflict is the expressive response of individuals or groups to their conflicting interests. Conflict generally aims to meet one's desires at the expense of others, and it can either be constructive or destructive (Ramani & Zhimin, 2010).

Conflict is a phenomenon that can occur among humans and animals alike, and its impact can be felt in all social scenarios and at all levels of interpersonal relationships. The diverse interests that individuals and groups have ensure that conflict will always exist in any society. Scholars argue that a lack of conflict indicates a lack of meaningful interaction among people. The nature

of conflict itself is neither inherently positive nor negative, but how it is handled will determine whether it is constructive or destructive. Conflict typically arises from incompatible goals or values between parties in a relationship, leading to hostile attitudes and behaviors that take advantage of others. It can be a catalyst for societal change or a source of catastrophe. The destructive consequences of conflict throughout history, such as loss of life and damage to property, highlight the importance of understanding its dynamic nature and taking action early to prevent it. While there are many causes of conflicts globally, the desire to exploit resources, particularly natural resources like oil, gas, minerals, borderlands, and water, is a significant contributor to deadly and violent conflicts between nations and groups (Mengesha et al., 2015).

My final argument is that, Conflict is a situation where groups or individuals have opposing views and this creates tension and disharmony. This divergence arises from varying priorities, values, experiences, and personalities. Every person may have a distinct point of view in a particular situation. This is my concluding claim.

2.1.2 Ethnic Conflict

According to numerous experts, ethnic conflict refers to a clash between a minimum of two ethnic groups arising from their wish for power, resources, identity, social status, and similar factors. It represents a circumstance where ethnic communities feel separated and antagonistic toward one another as a result of disparities in their cultural, religious, linguistic, or other ethnic features. Such conflicts frequently originate from historical complaints, disputes over land, economic rivalry, political neglect, discrimination, or brutality. The consequences of ethnic conflict can include violence, forced relocation, and even mass extermination.

Smith (2000) defines 'ethnic conflict' as a range of events that involve ethnicity, from expressing discontent to violent or non-violent interactions, including civil war or insurrection. According to Brown (1997) as cited in Hussein (2005:8), 'ethnic conflict' is a dispute about important issues between two or more ethnic groups, but this definition lacks clarification as to whether it pertains to disputes between neighboring ethnic groups or conflicts between a government and excluded ethnic group. Babatunde (2004: 35) posits that 'ethnic conflict' occurs when two or more ethnic groups contend against one another to achieve incompatible objectives. However, he also suggests that positive inter-group contact is a more effective way to resolve such conflicts.

Ethnic conflict is often more likely to occur when ethnic groups with close settlement and similar resources compete against each other.

When people mobilize against others based on their ethnic identity, this is known as ethnic conflict. This conflict can arise when parties involved belong to different ethnic groups. Markakis (1996) states that inter- ethnic conflict involves fighting both within and between states, and primarily occurs along ethnic lines. When ethnic conflict occurs, groups emphasize their ethnic identity when confronting one another, regardless of the specific cause (Fowkes, 2002). Inter-ethnic conflict typically occurs when two or more ethnic groups live in close proximity to one another, leading to greater vulnerability in multi-ethnic states compared to homogenous ones (Blagojevic, 2009). However, it is important to note that ethnic diversity is not necessarily a direct source of ethnic conflict. Rather, conflict arises when ethnic differences are politicized for personal or group gain. In today's world, ethnic diversity can lead to conflict when it is constructed and used for political purposes by different groups (Young, 2000).

The term "ethnic conflict" is sometimes incorrectly applied to various types of conflicts within a country that are not actually based on ethnic differences. For instance, the conflicts in Somalia have been called an ethnic conflict, despite the fact that Somalia has a very uniform ethnic makeup. It is important to acknowledge that ethnicity alone is not a cause of conflict, but rather can be manipulated as a means of mobilizing a particular group that has been shaped by social and political factors (Yasin, 2010).

Overall, there is disconnecting in understanding the concepts of "ethnicity," "ethnic group," and "ethnic conflict" among scholars in the field. Hussein (2005:24) succinctly states this, "Academics perceive ethnic group, ethnicity, and ethnic conflict from different perspectives. The existence of ethnic groups and ethnicity is objective to some and circumstantial to others'. However, this study will adopt Brown's definition, which includes many factors, ethnic conflict to arise, and Smith's definition, which concentrates mainly on violent ethnic conflict. Furthermore, this study will examine the clash between neighboring ethnic groups. Babatunde's definition is appropriate to use as a framework of analysis in this study, as he claims conflict is likely to happen, among other things, when two or more ethnic groups have close settlements and share the same resources. The concept of ethnic conflict will therefore be used in this study

to refer to ethnic conflict with so many complex factors that happens between neighboring ethnic groups, the Afar and Argobba.

2.1.3 Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution is the process of attempting to resolve a dispute or conflict. Conflict resolution resolves disputes with the approval of all parties involved. Successful conflict resolution occurs by listening to and providing opportunities to meet the needs of all parties and to adequately address their interests so that each party will be satisfied with the outcome. Over the years, there has been inter-ethnic conflict over land; increasing reliance on formal contracts to regulate relationships and create understanding; and shifts in methods of conflict resolution in that mediation seems to have given way to more confrontational statutory approaches based on formal court procedures. Despite this, traditional methods still prevail, especially at the grassroots level.

Conflict resolution comprises a complex network of forces surrounding the parties in the conflict. It is a healing process in which all stakeholders contribute positive energy. The task is to re-establish the energy flow within individuals, families, and communities so as to re-build social harmony. In this context, reconciliation often requires symbolic gestures and associated rituals, including the exchange of gifts, and the slaughter of animals (chickens, goats, sheep, and cows) (Ndumbe III, 2001).

Conflicts may be managed so that they do not escalate and lead to crises. Conflict management is different from peace building, which seeks to prevent conflicts from developing in the first place by engaging all stakeholders in processes that facilitate peaceful coexistence. Conflict resolution deals with the settlement of conflicts that may already exist. The spiritual dimension of conflict resolution refers to creating and restoring impaired relationships with God, the spirits, ancestors, family and neighbors, as the case may be. This is critical to restoring other relationships at the physical level. In this context, rituals play an important role in the reconciliation process. They help to link people to the past, present, and future. Conflicts must be understood in their social context, involving "values and beliefs, fears and suspicions, interests and needs, attitudes and actions, relationships and networks..." (Brock-Utne, 2001: 6). Thus, the root causes of conflicts must be explored to emphasize shared understandings of the past and present. Brock-Utne

(2001:9) notes that "the immediate objective of such conflict resolution is to mend the broken or damaged relationship, rectify wrongs, and restore justice". Another aim is to ensure the full integration of parties into their societies again and to adopt a mood of cooperation. The objective of conflict resolution, therefore, is to move away "from accusations and counter-accusations, to settle hurt feelings, and to reach a compromise that may help improve future relationships." The effectiveness of the process and sustainability of the outcomes, generally, are attributed to such factors as simplicity, participatory nature, adaptable flexibility, complete relevance, and comprehensiveness (Ibid.).

Generally, conflict resolution is a community process involving the identification of the root cause of the problem and bringing all parties involved to address the underlying issues. This usually ends with the guilty party accepting their wrongdoing, leading to reconciliation, which may include compensation or just forgiveness. The process of conflict resolution has to do with how indigenous structures and systems ensure action in bringing peace to individual and community level relationships. In this respect, conflict resolution procedures are generated from general cultural life and daily experiences of living.

2.2. Theoretical foundations for conflict resolution by indigenous institutions

Before colonialism, most African societies, if not all, lived communally and were organized along clan, village, tribal, or ethnic lines. Being part of a community was important, if not downright necessary, due to the vicissitudes of life in primitive or communal societies. Social ties, values, norms, and beliefs, as well as the threat of excommunication from society, provided elders with legitimacy and sanctions to ensure their decisions were complied with. There are different social theories that explain why traditional leaders and community elders are able to resolve disputes in such contexts.

By employing the lenses of social capital theory and social solidarity theory, I was able to establish that indigenous institutions serve as vital arenas for conflict resolution, which, in turn, contributes to the cultivation of social cohesion and sustainable peace.

Using social capital theory would be relevant to my thesis because it emphasizes the importance of social networks, relationships, and trust in promoting conflict resolution. In the case of

interethnic conflicts, indigenous institutions can act as a bridge between communities, promoting intergroup relationships and trust. Social capital theory helps conceptualize the ways in which social networks and relationships can be leveraged to facilitate conflict resolution. So, I used this theory to understand how social relationships between members of the Argobba and Afar indigenous institutions can facilitate conflict resolution efforts, and I looked into how these indigenous institutions build trust and networks of relationships that can contribute to conflict resolution efforts and maintain social cohesion in their communities.

On the other hand, social solidarity theory underscores the importance of shared values, traditions, and norms in promoting cooperation and conflict resolution. In the context of indigenous institutions, social solidarity theory may be facilitated by shared cultural values and practices that promote peaceful coexistence. By emphasizing the importance of shared cultural norms and values, social solidarity theory complements social capital theory by providing a holistic understanding of conflict resolution mechanisms. As a result of this, I used this theory to understand how the indigenous institutions of the Argobba and Afar people promote social solidarity and how this solidarity can contribute to conflict resolution efforts.

Overall, these two theories can help me to understand how social relationships, bonds, and solidarities impact conflict resolution efforts in the context of interethnic conflict between the Argobba and Afar people.

The Social Capital Theory

Many of the definitions draw from Putnam, who defines social capital as "those features of social organizations, such as trust, norms and networks that can improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions" or as "features of social life—networks, norms and trust—that enable participants to act together more effectively to pursue shared objectives" (Putnam 2000a, p. 664). Putnam is concerned not only with the role of social capital in economic development but also with its role in forming democratic societies. Thus, he equates social capital with the quality and intensity of individual membership in social and professional associations. An alternative definition is provided by Huysman and Wulf (2004), who wrote, "Social capital refers to network ties of goodwill, mutual support, shared language, shared norms, social trust, and a sense of mutual obligation that people can derive value from. It is understood as the glue that

holds together social aggregates such as networks of personal relationships, communities, regions, or even whole nations" (p. 1). As it appears from these definitions, all use of the concept of social capital refers to social norms. Social norms provide a form of informal social control that obviates the necessity for more formal, institutionalized legal sanctions. They are generally unwritten but commonly understood formulas, both for determining what patterns of behavior are expected in a given social context and for defining what forms of behavior are valued or socially approved.

The social capital theory explains the formation of communal societies and the attendant social ties that bind them together. Putnam R.D., in theorizing social capital, posits that social networks, bonds, reciprocal duties and trust, bind people together and enable them to co-exist. It is these social ties that guarantee the existence and effective functioning of the society. Putnam outlines two types of social capital: bonding social capital, which fastens the ties of individual members of a group, and bridging social capital, which allows inter-linkage with other social groups (Putnam, 2000).

The social capital theory can also explain the restorative nature of dispute resolution by elders in African societies. Social capital theory suggest that traditional elders have accumulated a significant amount of social capital, which is defined as the resources, connections, & networks that individuals and groups can draw upon to achieve their goals. In the case of traditional dispute resolution, elders have established strong interpersonal relationships with members of their community over time. This social capital enables them to better understand the needs and interests of individuals involved in disputes, and to facilitate peaceful resolutions that satisfy all parties involved. In most of Africa, elders aim at restoring the social ties or social capital that has been broken by wrongs done, committed, or omitted. Without strong social ties, communities could not exist and function effectively. Even in serious cases such as murder, the threat of excommunication from society, and therefore exclusion from social ties, acted as a deterrent for wrongdoing.

Indigenous institutions often rely on traditional forms of conflict resolution, such as mediation and restorative justice, which emphasize reconciling damaged relationships and restoring balance to the community. These methods are often grounded in cultural norms and values, which helps

to create a shared understanding of what constitutes justice within the community and can facilitate more effective conflict resolution. Social capital theory also emphasizes the importance of social networks in creating and maintaining social capital. In the context of indigenous institutions of conflict resolution, this means that the existence of strong social networks within the community, built on trust and common values, can facilitate the resolution of conflicts between members of the community. These networks can also provide a mechanism for the dissemination of information and the sharing of resources, which can support conflict resolution efforts.

Overall, social capital theory suggests that conflict resolution is not just about the specific individuals or issues involved but also about the broader social context in which conflicts occur. By building strong social ties and networks, individuals and groups can promote a more peaceful and effective resolution of conflicts in a variety of contexts.

Social Solidarity Theory

The social solidarity theory proposes that societies are held together by shared beliefs, values, and norms that create a sense of community and a common identity. In this theory, individuals are interconnected and interdependent, and the wellbeing of the community as a whole is important. From this perspective, indigenous institutions play a crucial role in conflict resolution by promoting social solidarity and cohesion.

Indigenous institutions are rooted in local customs, traditions, and beliefs and are often run by community members. They are considered an important part of the social fabric of a community and are trusted by community members. These institutions are often well equipped to handle conflicts because they take into account the cultural context and unique needs of the community. Indigenous institutions typically provide spaces for mediation, negotiation, and adjudication of conflicts. They strive to bring all parties involved in a conflict to the table to find a mutually acceptable solution that upholds the values of the community. In this way, the indigenous institutions promote social solidarity by addressing conflicts in a way that preserves the wellbeing of the community as a whole.

Emile Durkheim, in his book, The Division of Labor in Society, explains society in terms of social order and social facts. According to Durkheim (1893), individuals in a society are social actors who are restrained by social facts to stay in society. Social facts are functionalist in nature. They exist only if society can derive utility or benefit from them. Extrapolating this theory to dispute resolution by elders, dispute resolution is viewed as a social fact from which society derives some benefit. Elders resolve disputes due to their long experience, wisdom and respect in society. The social solidarity theory, being a functionalist theory, explains the resilience of dispute resolution by elders even in modern societies that have embraced western legal systems. Where a community cannot access formal justice systems due to costs and other externalities, elders are there to resolve arising disputes. Therefore, the existence of elders in society is a social fact that provides a dispute resolution utility occasioned by the absence or low penetration of western legal systems (Durkheim, 1893).

Overall, the social solidarity theory proposes that indigenous institutions must be respected and supported for their crucial role in conflict resolution. This means acknowledging their legitimacy as a way of addressing conflicts and incorporating them into formal systems of governance. By working together, formal and informal systems of conflict resolution can strengthen the social fabric of a community and promote social solidarity.

In summary, while social capital theory emphasizes the importance of social networks and relationships, social solidarity theory highlights the importance of shared traditions and values. Both theories are relevant in understanding the role of indigenous institutions in conflict resolution, helping to shed light on the ways in which these institutions can promote peace and inter-communal understanding. In both theories, the role of indigenous institutions and the elders in resolving disputes is based on their ability to draw upon social resources and networks, as well as their shared understanding of community norms and values. This enables them to play a vital role in fostering social cohesion and resolving conflicts within their communities.

2.3. Indigenous Methods of Ethnic Conflict Resolution in Africa

Conflicts may occur within families, clans and villages due to differences in interests, values, aims and goals among people; therefore, no society is immune from conflict. Conflict occurs

when two or more parties pursue incompatible interests or goals through actions that they try to undo or damage each other. These parties could be individuals, groups, or countries, and the parties' interests can differ over access to resources, the control of political or traditional power, their identity and their values or ideology. The realization of these needs and interests by people can lead to conflict and therefore, when two groups or individuals, such as ethnic groups, pursue incompatible interests and needs which could either be political, economic, social, or cultural, they can engage in conflict that can be violent (Bukari, 2013).

In traditional African societies, people live a communal way of life, sitting down informally to resolve and manage conflicts. In Africa, family ties and community networking are constantly respected, maintained and strengthened. Most indigenous communities in Africa have their own traditional conflict resolution processes that enable them to manage and resolve conflicts, and these communities are moving towards incorporating indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms into their policies, laws and constitutions. Conflict resolution can be regarded as any process that resolves or ends conflict via methods that can include violence and warfare, on the other hand, it can be seen as a non-violent process that manages conflict through compromise or with the assistance of a third party who either facilitates or imposes a settlement or resolution (Ghebretekle & Rammala, 2018).

The African Conflict Resolution System aims at identifying the main causes of a conflict so as to put an end to it and ensure sustainable peace. Indigenous conflict resolution systems in Africa are closely bound with the sociopolitical and economic realities of the lifestyles of the communities and these systems are rooted in the culture and history of the African people and are in one way or another unique to each community.

Indigenous methods of ethnic conflict resolution in Africa have developed over time based on the cultural practices and values of various African societies. Some of the common methods of conflict resolution include negotiation, mediation, reconciliation, or arbitration by elders. Communally, disputing parties would sit together informally and resolve disputes and conflicts to maintain social harmony and restore social bonds. Thus, all the methods of dispute resolution had the aim of restoring social order. Conflict resolution was wholesome and tried to resolve all the underlying causes of conflict by ensuring that the parties to the conflict participated and

reached a settlement. In some cases, fines and compensation were used, but only as a means to acknowledge the wrongs done and restore the parties. The fines and the compensation were not retributive in nature but compensatory. The social bonds and social ties referred to as social capital, enabled elders to resolve disputes since the threat of exclusion from the community made parties willing to settle.

Overall, indigenous methods of ethnic conflict resolution on the African continent focus on finding a peaceful and sustainable solution that benefits both parties while respecting the cultural values and practices of the society.

2.4. Ethnic-based conflict in Ethiopia

Ethnic-based conflict in Ethiopia is a complex issue rooted in historical grievances, competition over scarce resources, and political power struggles. Ethiopia is a diverse country with over 80 ethnic groups and languages, and tensions between these groups have been simmering for decades. One of the most significant ethnic-based conflicts in Ethiopia is between the Amhara and Oromo ethnic groups, which collectively make up over two-thirds of the country's population. Both groups have longstanding historical grievances with the ruling ethnic Tigrayan Peoples Liberation Front (TPLF), which dominated Ethiopia's political landscape from 1991 until 2018. The TPLF is an ethnic Tigrayan group that has been accused of marginalizing other ethnic groups and monopolizing political and economic power.

In recent years, the conflict has escalated, and there have been reports of widespread violence, displacement, and human rights violations. Violent inter-ethnic disputes have escalated significantly in recent years, posing a threat to the country's existence as a nation. The conflict between the Argoba and Afar ethnic groups is one of the most deadly inter-ethnic conflicts in the country. The long-lasting violent inter-ethnic conflict areas between Argoba and Afar ethnic groups are Senkele, Telalak, Gachine, Dewe Harawa, and Chifra Woredas. These inter-ethnic conflicts cause different kinds of social, economic, and political consequences in the area. Unprecedented causalities have resulted in the loss of human lives, the destruction of properties, and the displacement of people from their birthplaces. Interethnic conflicts between Argoba and Afar ethnic groups have a variety of structural and triggering causes. According to many scholars

who surveyed inter-ethnic conflicts, they strongly support resource competition as a root and fundamental cause of the conflict. They suggested that the conflicts emanated from rivalries over scarce resources, which emerged following the state division along ethnic lines that was coupled with resource redistribution.

It's true that competition for scarce resources, boundary demarcation issues, cultural enmity, the culture of violence associated with blood feuds and the hidden political interest driving ethnic nationalism are among the key structural causes of the conflict. In addition, lack of good governance and the rule of law, cattle raids, and conflict traders in particular and war mongers in general who have potential to benefit from the conflict are key triggering factors of interethnic conflicts. Researchers who study inter-ethnic conflict in Ethiopia, such as Berhane and Tefera (2018), Mehretu (2012), Tareke (2020), Taye (2017), Taye (2012), and Teferi (2012), mentioned mass categorization, hate, anger, and humiliation as the causes of the conflicts and/or barriers to the community's conflict prevention and management efforts. These causes indicate that stereotyping and prejudice could be among other factors that affect inter-ethnic communications and interethnic conflicts between different ethnic groups. When two groups are competing over scarce resources, stereotypical beliefs and hostile, prejudicial feelings can develop towards the other group. Moreover, there is an emerging argument about conflicts in the Horn of Africa, particularly in Ethiopia, that portrays them as "elite-driven conflict" rather than ethnic conflict (Asebe, 2007, 18).

2.5. Indigenous Conflict Resolution Methods in Ethiopia

Indigenous conflict resolution is social capital, defined as the "capability of social norms and customs to hold members of a group together by effectively setting and facilitating the terms of their relationship... sustainability facilitates collective action for achieving mutually beneficial ends" (Fred-Mensah, 2005:1). Indigenous 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 (Mekonnen, 2016).

As humans are constantly looking for conflict resolution mechanisms, conflict resolution is critical for day-to-day coexistence. As a result, different societies around the world have developed their own mechanisms to resolve conflict within their communities. Like other parts of the world, Ethiopians have also developed their own indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. In Ethiopian traditional societies, conflict resolution through indigenous institutions performs a healing function. It provides an opportunity for the examination of alternative positive decisions to resolve differences. Indigenous conflict resolution is a structured political, judicial and arbitration mechanism that plays a vital role in local and grassroots communities in relation to socio-economic development and the administration of justice in the modern political system. This is also part of the cultural heritage of the people. The institution of traditional leadership plays a critical role in promoting and sustaining social cohesion, peace and order in societies. Indigenous institutions play two important roles: a proactive role to promote social cohesion, peace, harmony, and coexistence; and a reactivation role in the resolution of disputes that have already occurred.

In Ethiopia, indigenous conflict resolution methods are still widely practiced, especially in rural areas. Pankhurst and Assefa (2008) described the practice of such institutions in different areas of Ethiopia, such as Gamo, Afar, Amhara, Beni-Shangul Gumuz, Gambella, Harar, Oromia, Somali, Sidama, and Tigray. The importance and necessity of indigenous conflict resolution institutions lie in the fact that they strive to restore balance, settle conflicts, and eliminate disputes; considering the escalating ethnic conflicts in the Afar, Argoba and other regions of Ethiopia. Studies have revealed that regions with fewer social conflicts have demonstrated better socio-political stability and economic growth. In the pursuit of conflict resolution, the vital role of indigenous institutions is to mediate and resolve different types of conflicts, thereby providing strong social security and safety in a society vulnerable to a wide range of disputes (Ramani & Zhimin, 2010).

On the other hand, the conflict resolution institutions and their mechanisms among the nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia are not completely similar, even though the objective is the same. For instance, the Gadaa system is a form of democratic governance used by the Oromo people in Ethiopia. It is a system of social, political, and economic organization that is based on

age sets. The system helps to address conflicts between individuals and groups within the community by bringing people together and allowing for mediation and consensus building.

In addition to this, elder councils are another conflict resolution method in many parts of the country. Elder's councils are groups of respected elders who are chosen by the community to help resolve conflicts. The councils are mostly made up of men with vast experience in mediation and dispute resolution. They use traditional values and customs to address conflicts and make decisions that benefit the community.

Both of the above-listed indigenous methods of conflict resolution have been effective in resolving conflicts in Ethiopia for centuries. However, with modernization and the growth of cities and towns, the use of these systems has declined. Nevertheless, they still play a vital role in the resolution of conflicts in rural areas to this day.

Widely throughout the world, the purpose of conflict might be different, as explained by plenty of social science scholars, because for some groups, the purpose of conflict is to control important natural resources, while for others, it is to control political authority. Also, for some groups, the purpose can be about religious fundamentalism, while for other groups, it may be about racism, and so on. However, for all conflict justifications, the aim of resolution is somehow similar because the necessity of conflict resolution is to create socially, psychologically, and mentally peaceful societies. But the resolution system depends upon the causes of conflict, nature of conflict, cultural background of the participants, religious background of the participants and other social and legal frameworks of the area.

Generally, the indigenous conflict resolution system in Ethiopia is a community process involving the identification of the root cause of the problem and bringing all parties involved to address the underlying issues. This usually ends with the guilty party accepting their wrongdoing, leading to reconciliation, which may include compensation or just forgiveness. The process of conflict resolution has to do with how indigenous structures and systems ensure action in bringing peace to individual and community-level relationships. In this respect, conflict resolution procedures are generated from general cultural life and daily experiences of living. Ethiopia is the most widely known country in Horn Africa and holds more than 80 ethnic groups.

As many in number and as widely spread, every single nation has its own indigenous culture to solve the conflict raised among its group and other nations, nationalities and people of Ethiopia. As explained by plenty of social sciences scholars, the Afar and Argoba peoples are two of the Ethiopian nations, nationalities and people that have their own different indigenous institutions of conflict resolution.

2.6. Features of Indigenous Conflict Resolution in Ethiopia

Indigenous conflict resolution methods are customary practices used to resolve conflicts and promote peace and stability in a given society. These traditional practices are rooted in various Ethiopian cultural groups and stem from age-old practices that govern society's social relations. They are tied to the cultural norms and beliefs of the people and derive their legitimacy from community values rather than the state. In other words, these indigenous conflict resolution methods are based on local customary practices or cultural norms. However, due to the country‘s multi-ethnic composition, the Ethiopian indigenous conflict resolution institutions and their mechanisms vary from society to society and culture to culture, so they do not have a uniform system throughout the country at all. Indigenous conflict resolution institutions are locally organized institutions that work according to the customs and norms of a given society and the specific culture of a particular community.

One of the features of the indigenous conflict resolution institutions in Ethiopia is that each indigenous institution has its own distinct structure for conflict resolution, which dictates how various forms of conflict should be resolved. For instance, Ambaye (2008), in his study of the Sidama ethnic group's indigenous conflict resolution mechanism in southern Ethiopia, indicates four levels of Sidama Songo (the elder‘s council): Mini Songo, Nafaru Songo, Ayadu Songo, and Woma Songo. According to these four structures of Sidama council, a case that does not get a decision at a primary council passes to the next council and Omo Songo is the final decision-making structure (Ambaye, 2008, as cited in Mekonnen, 2016).

In summary, the indigenous conflict resolution system in Ethiopia has several unique features that are rooted in traditional practices and rituals. Some of these features include:

- Consensus-based decision-making (indigenous conflict resolution in Ethiopia emphasizes the importance of consensus-based decision-making) the process involves bringing all parties involved in the conflict together to discuss the issue and find a solution that satisfies everyone.
- Mediation is a crucial element of indigenous conflict resolution in Ethiopian society. The mediator is typically an elder, a respected member of the community, or a religious leader who is trusted by both parties involved in the conflict. The mediator listens to both sides of the dispute, and then works to find a solution that is acceptable to everyone.
- Restorative justice: indigenous conflict resolutions mainly focus on restoring relationships and repairing harm caused by the conflict. It prioritizes restorative justice rather than punitive justice, which is intended to punish the offender.
- Emphasizes group harmony: indigenous institutions for conflict resolution in the many ethnic groups of the country value group harmony above individual needs. The focus is on resolving the conflict in a way that maintains the peace and stability of the community as a whole, rather than prioritizing the interests of individual parties.
- Traditional rituals: Finally, after resolving the disputes between them, there is a ritual of slaughter to ensure that peace is realized. In most indigenous institutions of conflict resolution, conflict resolution is accompanied by traditional rituals such as blessings, purification, and forgiveness. These rituals are intended to help restore harmony and balance in the community.

2.7. The Role of Indigenous Institutions in Conflict Resolution in Ethiopia

Indigenous institutions have played a significant role in conflict resolution, especially in communities that have been marginalized and excluded from western legal and political systems of governance. These institutions are founded on indigenous values and traditions, and they focus on restoring social harmony and promoting reconciliation rather than punishing offenders. Indigenous institutions are mostly relying on community participation, consultation and consensus building to resolve conflicts. This community-based approach ensures that the needs and interests of the entire community are taken into account and that everyone has a say in the resolution process. In addition to this, indigenous institutions are rooted in cultural traditions and values passed down from ancestors. These values play a significant role in conflict resolution,

helping people see how their actions have a ripple effect on the community and how they can help preserve cultural values and traditions.

Ethiopia is a country of diversity, harboring varieties of languages, different religions and faiths, as well as quite a few nations and nationalities with their own philosophical perspectives and unique cultural practices. The multiple ethnic groups, languages, cultures, and religions make Ethiopia a very diverse nation. Ethiopia is one of the oldest and most historical countries in the world. Though scientific pieces of evidence and pieces of literature regarding indigenous conflict resolution institutions are very few, there are several such social institutions across the country.

Ethiopia is home to many ethnic groups, and almost all of them have developed indigenous conflict resolution institutions and mechanisms. Indigenous conflict resolution institutions are local informal social organizations founded and led by well-accepted and respectful individuals to govern disputes and behaviors that induce conflicts in a certain society. The people make indigenous mechanisms for conflict resolution; not by the state, and they derive their legitimacy from the participation and consensus of the community. Different ethnic groups like Oromo, Afar, Amhara, Benishangul-Gumuz, Hareri, Somalia, Sidama, Walayeta, Gamo, Tigiray and others develop their own indigenous institutions to resolve different conflicts with certain peculiar features. These features, which comprise social traditions, values, norms, beliefs, rules, and laws, are communicated and accepted among the respective communities for peaceful co-existence.

In Ethiopia, there are a number of indigenous institutions for conflict resolution that are deeply rooted in different ethnic groups. These practices help to manage conflicts and maintain peace and stability, and thus play a role in conflict resolution. They are connected with the cultural norms and beliefs of the peoples and gain their legitimacy from the values of the concerned community instead of the state. For instance, Shimgilinna (also known by other names among different ethnic groups) is a kind of arbitration or reconciliation by elders that is widely practiced in different areas of the country. The Gada system could be mentioned as another traditional conflict resolution mechanism among the Oromo tribe; Yajoka is the other most important traditional conflict management institution of the Guraghe people. These indigenous local

institutions, together with the formal legal system, provide the mechanism for resolving conflicts.

According to Abera (2000), these indigenous conflict resolution institutions of different ethnic groups were the major body of law in Ethiopia for centuries. The use of indigenous conflict resolution institutions in Ethiopia is deeply rooted in the customs, culture and traditions of various ethnic groups, which could play a pivotal role in resolving violent conflicts. Indigenous conflict resolution institutions in Ethiopia are one of the conflict resolution institutions used to resolve intra- and inter-ethnic conflict, both at the state and local government levels. Even though indigenous conflict resolution institutions vary by society, region, and culture, there are some characteristics that indigenous institutions share (resolving conflicts peacefully through mediation, conciliation, and arbitration).

Indigenous systems of governance have been used to maintain social order across the Ethiopian regions. The role of indigenous institutions and governance was indispensable before the introduction of the modern state system. Anthropologists have been studying indigenous systems of governance in Ethiopia and other parts of the continent. Some of the indigenous systems of governance have been well studied, while many others have not been adequately studied. Understanding indigenous systems of governance helps we know our cultures. There is some literature on only a few cases elaborating on the importance and strength of these multipurpose institutions. For instance, the Gadaa system, a traditional institution practiced by the Oromo people, is well known for its political, social, and judicial aspects. Many sources have discussed its democratic nature, and it is one of the most extensively studied indigenous governing systems. Many scholars like Asmrom Legesse have researched the Oromo Gadda since the 1950s. The Gadda system is a complex institution involving administration, lawmaking, and dispute resolution. It is highly regarded among the Oromo people as an egalitarian and effective system for maintaining peace and harmony in society.

In brief, cultural institutions of indigenous communities have a significant impact in settling disputes by drawing from their heritage, customs, and norms. These practices aim to facilitate recovery, foster reconciliation, and reinstate community unity. Additionally, these institutions mitigate political and ethnic tensions that have been on the rise in Ethiopia due to its

federalization policy. Furthermore, they can substitute for the state judiciary system, which is inaccessible and expensive for most people.

CHPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

In order to effectively investigate the roles and processes of indigenous institutions and their conflict resolution methods and meet the objectives and questions of this study, a qualitative research approach has been utilized. Qualitative research is a suitable method for social science research as it enables exploration and understanding of events, theories and human behaviors (Creswell, 2007). The aim of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of the views of the Afar and Argoba ethnic groups on the causes of conflict and their respective conflict resolution systems which forms the core purpose of this investigation. Qualitative research is considered useful because it aids in developing insights into research conducted in a natural setting to improve understanding of phenomena.

Exploratory design is recommended for gaining in-depth knowledge from knowledgeable individuals and relationships, to gain insight from experiences and perspectives (Kothari, 2004). This thesis has been designed to be exploratory to meet the objectives of deep exploration in a natural setting. There are various data collection tools, though it is important to gather appropriate data in context.

Qualitative research places greater emphasis on the personal experiences of participants and strives to interpret their statements to uncover the underlying reasons for them. Therefore, methods that allow for open and unconstrained expression by participants should be used. The researcher's chosen framework can guide the selection of methods to be used. In this particular study, semi-structured in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and non-participatory observation were employed to gather primary data from various key individuals such as clan leaders, community elders, religious leaders, court judges, police officers and Militias. The in-depth interviews were conducted with selected individuals, while FGDs were used to corroborate and supplement information about the community's conflict resolution system gathered from interviews. Two FGDs involving seven participants were held with representatives from clan leaders, Abeggars, religious leaders, and local members.

Obtaining dependable information is crucial for accomplishing successful research, and a major method for gathering valuable data was through non-participant observation. This method was necessary as people's words and actions can sometimes contradict each other. Direct observation as a non-participant was the most effective solution, allowing the researcher to witness conflict resolution processes in various parts of the Medina and Telalak districts. During these observations, the researcher discovered how indigenous institutions maintain peace and security based on the customs, traditions, and worldview of the studied people. Additionally, reviewing various documents such as published and unpublished journals, conflict-related workshop manuals, brochures, magazines, and key historical documents was significant in collecting data and enriching the study's findings.

During the interviews, voice recordings were made and field notes were taken. The collected data was then organized according to the study's research question, transcribed, and translated from Amharic to English. The data was then classified into meaningful themes based on the research objectives. Specifically, the responses were categorized in terms of conflict sources, conflict resolution methods, the involvement of various stakeholder groups (such as Abegars, religious leaders, clan leaders, and community elders), and the relationship between indigenous institutions and formal state law. The study was conducted using qualitative research methods that adhered to the principles and protocols of indigenous research methodologies, such as reciprocity, respect, accountability, and ethics. The research focused on the role of indigenous institutions in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts between the Argobba and Afar people in the context of conflict, indigenous knowledge, and conflict resolution systems.

3.1 Research Approach and Design

In order to achieve the aims of this research, the researcher utilized qualitative data collection methods. This involved conducting interviews with key individuals using open-ended questions and an interview guide, which allowed for the description of their thoughts, emotions, and experiences related to ethnic conflict dynamics. The study used diverse interview questions and gathered data from a variety of informants chosen based on proportional representation from the Argobba and Afar ethnic groups in the two study regions. Primary data sources included community leaders, local experts recommended by the woreda/district administration chief, as

well as individuals with relevant knowledge and experience who were asked about the Argobba-Afar conflict. The researcher visited the Medina and Telalak study sites from March 15 to March 28, 2023. Secondary data sources included books, reports, legal and policy documents, internet articles, research articles from other journals, databases, and other relevant sources.

The study utilized a qualitative research method, which focuses on language usage instead of numerical analysis. This approach enabled the researchers to observe and communicate with the subjects using their own language and setting, leading to a participatory process involving the participants (Bryman, 2004).

The researcher chose to use the qualitative approach in his study to allow for direct participation with the participants in their natural environment and gain insight into the roles of Abeggar and clan leaders in promoting peace in their community. This approach also respects basic human rights and values. The researcher employed a case study design, which involves in-depth exploration of a program, event, activity, process, or individual. Case studies have open-ended questioning and can reveal new phenomena and raise more issues through broad inquiry (Creswel, 2009).

3.2. Sources and Methods of Data Collection

3.2.1. Sources of Data

This research acquired information from both primary and secondary sources. Primary data, which pertains directly to the topic being studied, is original and highly accurate. Furthermore, it provides the researcher with a current and realistic view of the subject at hand.

Although there are various techniques available for collecting data, obtaining appropriate data is vital. As a result, the researcher chose to gather information by conducting extensive interviews with a range of individuals, including elders, social leaders, Abeggars, clan leaders for the Afar, religious figures, and members of the community, to elicit descriptive accounts of their experiences. Additionally, the researcher held separate focus group discussions (FGDs) with diverse participants such as religious leaders and police officers from the Afar region, as well as

key informants from the Medina district security office, culture and tourism office, and peace forum committee from the Argobba ethnic group.

3.2.2. Methods of Data Collection

To gather information on past occurrences and present situations, conducting interviews with a handful of knowledgeable individuals was deemed more effective. Therefore, in this study, this approach was utilized to complement the results obtained from alternative methods.

Key Informant Interview

To gather information about past and present events, it was deemed more effective to conduct key informant interviews with knowledgeable individuals. Therefore, this study utilized this approach to supplement other data collection methods. The study collected data mainly through interviews with 20 selected interviewees, including clan leaders, farmers, government employees, religious leaders, and district police. The study incorporated both unstructured and semi-structured interview techniques, with the latter being more prominent due to the need to follow an interview guide/checklist. Semi-structured interviews combine the flexibility of unstructured interviews with the guidance of structured interviews. The interviews were conducted face-to-face with the informants because it is a suitable format for conveying the importance and credibility of the research, particularly with individuals who may struggle with written responses. Furthermore, conducting interviews in person shows respect for the research participants (Robson, 2002).

The study involved interviewing individuals assumed to possess expertise and understanding of the subject being researched. To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the state of conflict resolution institutions between the Argobba and Afar ethnic groups in the research area, detailed interviews were conducted with key informants. The selection of key informants was based on their age, awareness/knowledge of their culture, society, and environment. These individuals were interviewed to gather information on various aspects of the conflict and its impact on peace and stability in the research area. Qualitative interviews were utilized to capture firsthand accounts of events and experiences as described by the interviewees. The data collected provides an intimate understanding of the topic at hand (Berg, 2001).

Observation (observer as a non-participant)

The utilization of observation as a means of gathering data can significantly enhance the effectiveness of qualitative research. The researchers visit, or participate in, the location or group they are studying in order to gain a deeper insight into the situation. This can be done from either an internal or external point of view. Observations are particularly useful when the researchers are unfamiliar with the people or environment being studied. This is because it allows them to gather valuable information on how these groups act, respond, interact, behave, and engage with each other.

Direct observation is often the best solution as there may be contradictions between what people say and what they do. Unfortunately, the researcher in this study was unable to observe the two indigenous institutions resolving their conflict. However, while staying in the Argobba community, the researcher was able to observe how the Abeggar resolved various intra-community conflicts that arose. This gave the researcher insight into the processes and procedures of conflict settlement within Argobba society.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

According to Patton (2002), the focus group discussion is an essential method of qualitative data gathering. Essentially, focus groups are interviews without structure, with multiple participants free to interact and build upon each other's ideas and conversation under the guidance of a facilitator. The process of collecting data generated by groups can prove to be a challenging experience.

FGDs are an approach to qualitative research wherein a trained moderator gathers insights and opinions from a small group of people to better understand their thoughts, emotions, and actions. Participants are purposefully selected, based on the topic of discussion, and provided with a list of key themes to discuss. In this study, FGDs were used as a major data collection technique to explore differing concerns and understandings regarding indigenous conflict resolution. FGDs offer the benefit of exploring participants' responses in real time, observing group dynamics and clarifying responses. This makes FGDs a useful tool for gaining a deeper understanding of cultural practices and qualitative research methods (Creswell, 2009).

In order to gather information about the causes of conflicts and related concerns, two focus group discussions were carried out in different locations in the Argobba and Afar region. The first discussion occurred at a market in Lemene and included clan and religious leaders. The second discussion was held in Medina with government employees, Abeggars, and religious leaders. Participants were selected based on their age and level of awareness of cultural backgrounds, and each focus group had seven members who shared similar opinions. To prevent boredom, discussions were limited to thirty minutes.

During my initial field visit, I had the opportunity to meet with some of the community's elderly members through the help of district administration officials. This helped me establish contact with some potential key informants, which included identifying some of the oral historians who were well-known in the woreda. Afterwards, I identified many other community elders, especially oral historians, through the elders with whom I had already established contacts, which constitutes a ‘snowball sampling’ (Bryman, 2004). During focus group discussions (FGDs), my role as a researcher was more of a facilitator, providing topics and questions to initiate and provoke discussions within the group. I developed an FGD guide that was used for all sessions, which were conducted in Amharic with participants who had a sound understanding of the language. If participants did not understand Amharic, interpreters were used. Throughout the field visit, adjustments were made to better understand the research environment.

This study involved collecting data from traditional elders (the Abeggar and clan leaders) who work as peacemakers in their community. The purpose was to gain insight into their perspectives and experiences with regard to maintaining peace and resolving conflicts. The discussion involved seven elders from each woreda who were chosen based on their respected and influential standing in the community. The discussion was led by the researcher and focused on open-ended questions. The first question addressed the primary sources of conflict in the community, which were identified as land and water disputes, revenge, and inter clan rivalries. The second question explored traditional conflict resolution methods, particularly "the Abeggar", a customary system of mediation and reconciliation that involves bringing the conflicting parties together, listening to their stories, and engaging extended families and community leaders. The elders serve as mediators to advise and guide parties towards peaceful solutions that restore trust and harmony.

The other question explored the role of the elders as peace builders in the community. They explained that as elders, they carry the weight of maintaining the social order and ensuring the wellbeing of the people. They serve as mentors and educators to the younger generation and pass on the values and traditions that promote peaceful coexistence and respect for diversity.

Overall, the FGDs provided rich insight into the traditional peace building practices of the elders in the community. The findings suggest that the elder's role as a mediator is critical to maintaining peace and fostering social cohesion.

Case Studies

The method of case study research is employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of a complicated subject matter in its actual context. Such a research design is highly adaptable, enabling the investigator to retain the integrated characteristics of real-life events while investigating empirical events. More generally, a case study involves an empirical inquiry into a contemporary occurrence within its real-life setting when the border between the phenomenon and context are not evident, and several sources of data are utilized. This investigation utilized a case study research strategy alongside explanatory and descriptive methods. The purpose of the study was to analyze and record the nature of conflict cases that have been resolved. The decision to utilize the case study strategy was based on the complexity of the phenomenon and the desire to understand it in detail. Case study research is a familiar research approach in the field of indigenous studies, as well as other social sciences, such as anthropology, to provide an all-inclusive and meaningful understanding of actual events. Furthermore, case study research is often deemed most appropriate when answering how and why questions, which was suitable for this analysis as the research objective was to provide a profound understanding of the phenomenon.

The researcher used a qualitative method to gather extensive information about conflict resolution processes, practices, and actions. By studying specific conflict cases through interviews and group discussions, the researcher gained a deeper understanding of indigenous conflict resolution in the subject matter. The study employed a qualitative-based approach, utilizing semi-structured key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and informal discussions to collect data. The analysis and documentation of the case studies helped to clarify

the overall conflict solving process. In order to obtain reliable data, a case study approach was utilized, and two actual cases were analyzed in detail to identify conflict types and resolution methods.

3.2.3 Secondary Data Collection Method

As well as primary data collection approaches, the researcher also utilized secondary data sources, where data previously gathered and analyzed by others for another purpose is used. Examples of these sources include government publications, academic publications, online databases, historical records, and data from various organizations. Examining related empirical studies assists the researcher in recognizing research gaps in their proposed study, ensuring that the data gathered is useful, relevant, and distinct.

Secondary data collection can be a cost-effective and time-saving solution to research needs. However, it should be noted that secondary data may not be tailored to your specific research needs. And there may be issues with the validity or reliability of the data or ethical concerns around data privacy.

3.3 Methods of Data Collection, Procedure, and Analysis

The importance of collecting data in a research project is undeniable, but it is not sufficient on its own. Researchers should also analyze the data to achieve their objectives and present their findings in a scholarly manner. In this research, the author analyzed and interpreted raw data gathered through various methods such as literature reviews, observations, focus group discussions, and case studies. Descriptive and qualitative approaches were used in the analysis.

The researcher utilized the qualitative data analysis approach to investigate, clarify, and assess the cultural principles of the community under observation. Once all the essential data had been gathered through the use of specified data collection techniques, the next step was to classify, combine, integrate, and evaluate the gathered data. Before proceeding with the analysis, the data were first sorted and categorized based on their source, type, and research inquiry. To further enhance clarity and ease, data collected through each data collection method were chosen,

transcribed, and elaborated upon to form significant and orderly information soon after each data gathering session was completed.

3.4 Field Experiences

During my two-week fieldwork, I found my experience in the study area to be captivating. To gather data from the research entities, I sought a formal letter from my college and waited for permission to begin my research. After receiving confirmation, I delivered instruments to identified participants and conducted interviews with selected individuals. My first visit was to the Argobba Culture and Tourism Office where I learned from experts the locations of well-known elders, or the Abeggar. Upon meeting an Abeggar, he introduced me to his friends and neighbors who opened up to me about the Argobba culture and Afar history. They expressed their surprise at my interest and offered words of encouragement. The Abeggar and the woreda administrations readily shared their experiences and provided me with valuable information.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

When you are collecting data from the host community, you need to consider ethical considerations that may arise during your research. This is particularly important in the field of indigenous studies, where the participants may be vulnerable or marginalized. Hence, it is incumbent on researchers to ensure that ethical principles guide their research process.

As the researcher of this thesis, I am committed to adhering to the ethical principles and guidelines (informed consent, confidentiality, and anonymity). In this regard, I have taken a number of measures to ensure that the participants in my study are not only well-informed about my research, but also fully aware of their rights.

Before the commencement of my fieldwork, I submitted a letter of permission taken from Dilla University to the concerned body in the study area. In addition, I obtained informed consent from all participants before the commencement of the research study. The informed consent process involved providing the participants with a clear and concise explanation of the purpose and objectives of the study, the potential risks and benefits associated with their participation, the measures taken to protect their privacy, and their rights to withdraw their participation from the

research study at any time. Furthermore, I have taken measures to protect the confidentiality and privacy of the participants in my research study. All personal identifying information collected from the participants has been de-identified and encrypted to prevent unauthorized access and use. Moreover, the data collected as part of this study will be for research purposes only, and under no circumstances will any information related to individual participants be disclosed to any third party.

In conclusion, ethical considerations are of paramount importance when conducting research involving human subjects. As the researcher of this thesis, I have taken the necessary measures to ensure that the research study is conducted in accordance with ethical principles to protect the rights, privacy, and welfare of the participants. I believe that by adhering to these ethical principles, my research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the phenomenon being studied, and will further the cause of knowledge generation in the fields of indigenous studies and social sciences.

CHAPTER FOUR

4. An Overview of the Argoba and Afar People

4.1. The Argobba people

The Argobba belongs to a group of Semitic-speaking communities and their dialect is classified within the South Semitic cluster. The population is currently distributed throughout administrative divisions such as the Amhara, Afar, Oromiya, and Harari regions. This was gathered from the reports of the field studies conducted on March 17, 2023. However, this study mainly focused on the Argoba communities located in the Medina Special District of the South Wollo Zone in the Amhara region.

Argoba is one of the ethnic groups found in Amhara National Regional State, Ethiopia. The Argoba Nationality [special Woreda] was founded in June 2006. It is found in the South Wollo Zone of Amhara National Regional State. It is bordered by Kalu Woreda of the South Wollo Zone in the north and northwest, Dewa Chefa Woreda of the Oromia Zone in the south, and Telalak Woreda of Afar Regional State in the east. The center of the Woreda is Medina, a small town 85 km and 375 km from Dessie and Addis Ababa, respectively (District Administration Office).

With an area of 30,918.70 km2, the Argoba Nationality special Woreda district has a total of nine (9) kebele, eight (8) of which are rural kebeles and one (1) urban kebele. It is a home for about 40,000 people (22,715 males and 17,594 females). The community is entirely Muslim. Only some of the government employers, who came from other areas, are non-Islamic. With respect to economic activity, 99.5% of the total population is engaged in agricultural activities. Only 0.5% of the rest participate in trade and other service economies (ibid.).

The Argobba inhabit various villages in several regions. In Kallu woreda of south Wollo zone, they live in Feteqoma, Areranechro, Chomiye, Medina, and Afeso. In Oromiya zone, they reside in Shonke, Toleha, Jile, Timuga, Artuma, Farsi, Isye Gola, Chefa Gola, and Dewe. In Semen Shoa zone, they live in villages surrounding Shoa Robit, and Aliyu Amba. They also live in zone 3 of the special district of Gachene in Suf Ager, Abale, Belai Meteqleia, Betach Meteqleia, Bilo,

Chesa, Debreko, Koka Begweze, Work Amba, Maqo Amba, and Cheno. They inhabit Awash and Metahara towns in Fentale and Melka Werer in Amibara woreda.

Language

It is known that more than 86 languages are spoken in our country, Ethiopia. The Ethiopian ethnic groups and peoples are divided into four (4) major language groups: Sematic, Cushitic, Nilo-Saharan, and Omotic. The semetic languages are spoken in the northern, central, and eastern parts of Ethiopia (mainly Tigray, Amhara, Harar, and the northern part of the southern people like Gurage, Silte, etc.). Among those spoken in the semetic language family are Amharic, Geez, Tigrigna, Argobba, Guragigna, Silte, Adarigna, Gafat, Harari, etc. The Argobba ethnic group is also an ethnic group with its own communication language. The language is also known as Argobgna (culture and tourism office).

At present, the Argobba language lacks both an alphabet and literature. There is a significant amount of linguistic exchange and assimilation happening, resulting in the gradual disappearance of the Argobba language as it gives way to Amharic, Afarigna, and Oromigna. The Argobba language is predominantly spoken in the villages of Shonke and Toleha, located in the Special Oromiya Zone of the Amhara National Region, though it is still spoken in some villages in other regions. However, even in these other villages, the language is slowly being replaced by the dominant language of other ethnic groups. Generally, Amharic, Oromigna, and Afarigna are spoken as second languages alongside Argobba, either individually or in combinations of two of the three languages (ibid.).

4.1.1 The traditional values of the Argobba people in the study area

The Argobba people, residing in Amhara regional state in southern Wollo, have a rich cultural heritage that is deeply rooted in their conventional attitudes, convictions, and practices. There are many cultural values that can be great tourist attractions in the district, including the traditional dressing style, the traditional cooking of weqalimo (a very special Argobba food that is prepared only on holidays, weddings, and special ceremonies), the construction of the tower house, and the Abegar administration and reconciliation ceremony. In addition to this, some of the traditional values of the Argobba people, as I observed and interviewed different informants, are:

- Respect for elders: the Argobba people place great value on elders and respect them for their wisdom and experience. They believe that elders are the custodians of culture and tradition and must be treated with respect and honor.
- Hospitality: The Argobba people are known for their hospitality and kindness. They believe in welcoming guests and treating them with the utmost care and attention.
- Unity: the Argobba people believe in the power of unity and collaboration. They believe that working together and supporting one another is a key factor in achieving success and progress.
- Hard work: the Argobba people are known for their hard work and determination. They are willing to work long hours to achieve their goals and provide for their families.
- Preservation of culture and tradition: the Argobba people place great value on their cultural heritage and believe in preserving it for future generations. They take pride in their traditional customs, language, dress, and music.
- Spiritual beliefs: the Argobba people have strong spiritual beliefs and practice Islam as their main religion. They believe in the power of prayer, fasting, and pilgrimage (culture and tourism office).

Overall, the traditional values of the Argobba people reflect a deep sense of community, respect, and pride in their identity and heritage.

4.2. Afar: A Brief Historical Overview

The Afar region, situated in the northeast of Ethiopia, is divided into five zones, 29 woreda, and 339 kebele. The territory of Afar, which covers an area of approximately 100,860 square kilometers, extends from the middle awash valley in the southern part to the coastal plateau of the Red Sea in the north. The Afar people are a significant cultural group in Ethiopia, mostly inhabiting the northeastern section of the country, mainly within the region of Afar. Additionally, the Afar people live in the northern part of Djibouti and the coastal area of Eritrea south of the Bori peninsula. The Afar's borders are with Eritrea and Tigray in the north, Oromia in the south, Djibouti and Somalia in the east, and Amhara in the west.

The history of the Afar people dates back to ancient times, and they have survived through the various political and social transformations that have occurred in the region over the centuries.

The Afar people are known for their distinct culture, language, and way of life. They have traditionally been nomadic pastoralists, known for their skill in raising camels and goats in some of the harshest and most inhospitable environments in the world. Furthermore, most of the population leads a nomadic lifestyle and relies on transhumant pastoralism for survival. While the Afar people have traditionally settled in the Awsa region in the lower Awash valley, they have also adopted irrigated agriculture around the middle Awash. They are involved in trading goods such as salt and other valuable commodities within the area. The Afar community has had a significant history of interacting with other societies, including engaging in long-distance trade and participating in alliances and conflicts with nearby groups.

Telalak is situated within the Afar Region of Ethiopia and is positioned close to the eastern escarpment of the Ethiopian highlands in Administrative Zone 5. Its neighboring areas include Dewe to its south, South Wollo Zone Argoba Special District in the Amhara Region to its west, Administrative Zone 1 to its north, and Administrative Zone 3 to its east.

4.3 The Argobba and Afar Conflict Resolution Processes

The significance of cultural beliefs and approaches in advancing peace throughout society is highlighted by the two native methods of dispute resolution in Argoba and Afar. These approaches are centered on achieving harmony, stability, safety, and reconciliation, and are based on traditional norms and practices. Both systems hold a deep reverence for cultural institutions and authorities, and the conflict resolution process is typically open and transparent, allowing for public viewing and discussion of evidence and solutions. Additionally, due process is stressed, with the right to appeal to higher levels of authority.

The resolution of conflicts within a community is a matter that concerns everyone, as it allows individuals to gain an understanding of local regulations, traditions, beliefs, history, and discussions essential to achieving peaceful coexistence. Young people can learn from older generations about established practices, language, and behavior that are appropriate for public conversations. Throughout this process, the importance of dialogue in reconciling differences is emphasized. Indigenous conflict resolution methods demonstrate the significance of public participation, supporting victims in forgiveness, urging offenders to accept responsibility and show regret, and emphasizing the importance of unity and interconnection to promote social

unity. These approaches are widely understood by members of the community and enable them to be full participants in the reconciliation process. Clan leaders, seniors, religious figures, the peace forum committee, family members, and other community participants all play an integral part in facilitating peace between disputing parties.

4.4 The Joint Peace Forum Committee of Argobba and Afar people

To manage and address conflict, the government has established a collaborative peace forum at both the kebele and woreda levels. These forums convene every other week to address issues pertaining to peace and stability in their respective areas. The Joint Peace Forum (JPFC) is responsible for facilitating discussions and conflict resolution, and includes representatives from both sides. Individuals who hold positions of influence in both kebeles are members of the JPF and work together to reconcile conflicts between the Argobba and Afar communities.

Forming a joint peace forum is a significant progress in addressing conflicts between two ethnic groups, serving as an initial step towards resolving any issues. Medina special woreda and Telalak have established a joint peace forum (JPFC) that holds regular meetings every two weeks to oversee the peace and security of the region, supported by the government. The forum consists of religious leaders and respected elders, selected by their communities based on their integrity and societal standing. In selecting members, emphasis is placed on good behavior and respect among the two groups. The peace forum educates people on the significance of peace for development and highlights its benefits. Medina special woreda and Telalak Woreda of Afar JPFC have a total of twenty members, with half representing different kebele of each woreda. The JPFC emphasizes the effects of conflict, encouraging the return of stolen or lost items to their rightful owners from both sides. The forum acknowledges the value of peace for the welfare of society and promotes reconciliation by listing all lost items and urging their return to restore peace.

As per the report from the administration and security affairs office of the Medina special woreda, the joint peace forum is responsible for several tasks. These include aiding in the restoration of stolen goods to their rightful owners, overseeing compensatory payments for physical harm or death of humans and animals, discussing obstacles to peaceful coexistence and identifying reasons for violence in the region, preventing disputes from escalating into violence -

particularly in cases of possible conflicts over resources among cattle herders during drought periods - and facilitating the reconciliation of ethnic conflicts.

The primary responsibilities of the joint peace forum revolve around conflict management, with some emphasis on conflict resolution. If the forum members identify the root causes of violence, they are working towards containing the conflict- essentially trying to preserve a negative peace. When they manage disagreements, they believe they are resolving disputes. Additionally, efforts such as facilitating the return of stolen items to their owners, facilitation of compensation payments, and reconciling ethnic conflicts are all directly linked to conflict management practices. However, it is important to note that these are preliminary steps that must be taken before further progress can be made towards conflict resolution.

In the study regions, the JPFC operates according to regulations that are established and endorsed by public meetings in both communities. These regulations define the interaction between the communities and play a crucial role in resolving conflicts. By adhering to these rules, the residents are actively fostering peace. They also contain information about various criminal acts and the associated fines.

CHAPTER FIVE

5. Result and Discussion

To gather primary data on the subject being investigated, the researcher visited various locations including Argobba special woreda, Senkele (Medina), the capital of Argobba, Gachene, and Telalak of Afar. The researcher conducted interviews with government officials who had knowledge of the issue and posed questions to key informants and professionals from the Argobba and Afar ethnic groups who were working in different government offices in Medina, Gachene, and Telalak woreda. An Argobba ethnic group member living in Medina was employed as a research assistant and helped in identifying people for focus group discussions and key informant interviews. The discussions focused on the ethnic relationships between the Argoba and neighboring Afar, Oromo, and Amhara residing in the south Wollo zone as well as the impact of the new arrangement on the development of the Argobba special woreda. The researcher and assistant spent two weeks in the study areas to collect data, and the results of the key informants and focus group discussions were analyzed together.

The peaceful coexistence of people in Africa is constantly threatened by various socio-political issues more so than any other continent (Babatunde, 2004). This includes Ethiopia, which has faced similar issues. Previous attempts to resolve these problems, using western solutions, have been unsuccessful despite their procedural efficiency and philosophical purity. The inter-ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia are intricate and have various underlying causes. Some possible factors that may contribute to these conflicts include historical and cultural differences between different ethnic groups, competition for resources such as land and water, political and economic marginalization, and social and economic inequality. Additionally, some experts suggest that the Ethiopian government's policies related to ethnic federalism and identity policies have also contributed to these tensions by reinforcing ethnic divisions and prioritizing certain groups over others. Ultimately, addressing these underlying causes and promoting greater understanding and cooperation between different ethnic groups will be crucial to reducing inter-ethnic conflict in Ethiopia.

5.1 Major Causes of Conflict in the Study Area

Ethiopia has a long history of being a multiethnic state, but past governments have failed to protect the country's multicultural and multilingual nature. This has resulted in ethnic-based armed struggles for justice and self-administration. In 1991, the Ethiopian People Revolutionary Front (EPRDF) took power and recognized the country's various ethno-linguistic and cultural communities. They granted self-administration through federal arrangements, a significant shift from centralized monarchy and military rule. This new approach gives the people of Ethiopia sovereignty over the state (the Constitution 1995).

The Ethiopian government reorganized the state into nine regions with ethnic divisions using the proclamation of the Transitional Government in 1992 and the constitution of 1995. The study focused specifically on the shared border between the Afar and the Argobba's, who live in the Afar and Amhara regions in the southern part of Wollo and share a common boundary (Takele, 2021).

Throughout history, the Afar and Argobba communities have had a strong relationship of coexistence and assimilation due to shared culture, economic interdependence and religious beliefs. However, there were also times of animosity and intermittent conflict caused by various factors such as resource competition, territorial expansion, and a faulty government system. The conflicts that have persisted in Ethiopia since 1991, including the ones between Afar and Argobba, can be traced back to political changes that led to the separation of ethnic groups through strict land and boundary demarcation. Key informants and focus group participants identified territorial expansion, competition for resources such as water and land, ethnic rivalries, and revenge as the primary causes of conflict in the area. The scarcity of resources in the region can be attributed to environmental degradation, population growth, natural resource depletion and climate change.

The elders stated that recent clashes between the two cultural groups were primarily over access and use of resources, such as farmland, grazing areas, and water. Sometimes, the conflicts arose due to damage caused by Afar cattle entering Argobba farmland. Based on discussions with local individuals, it appeared that competition over grazing land and water resources was prevalent among the communities. Resource scarcity led to increased levels of violent conflict and tension

between the two ethnic groups. Mr. W, a farmer from the Argobba ethnic group involved in the conflict with Afar pastoralists, presented a perspective that an elderly key informant interviewee had shared as follow:

> *As a farmer, I understand the traditional way of life of pastoralists and their need for grazing lands for their livestock. However, the increasing frequency and intensity of conflicts with them over land use and resources have become a significant concern for my community. The encroachment of their animals onto our farms has resulted in crop damage, loss of income, and even violence. We have tried to find solutions through dialogue and negotiation, but the situation remains challenging. We hope that a sustainable resolution can be reached that respects the rights and livelihoods of both farming and pastoralist communities.*

Moreover, in a study carried out by Azmera (2006) among the Argobba and their neighboring communities, it was discovered that conflicts in the region were largely caused by factors such as livestock theft and the archaic tradition of the Afar, which encourages the youth to kill members of other ethnic groups, including the Argoba. Scholars have identified various reasons for hostility, competitiveness, and conflict among pastoralists in the Horn of Africa, including limited resources, poverty, the need for pastoral migration to access grazing and watering sites, historical relationships and animosity, and government policies that marginalize certain clans.

During an in-depth interview with Mr. A, a Medina resident who works for the government, a participant noted that “historically the two cultural groups did not have any anonymity. Instead, they lived together for centuries and shared much communality such as religious identity, economic interdependency, marriage, and common institutions that dealt with resource utilization, management, and conflict resolution. However, policies introduced after 1991 established an ethnic border between the two groups, creating a strong association between identity and territory” (Interview with Mr. "A" at Medina District, March, 2023). This resulted in mistrust, a feeling of rivalry, and territorial disputes, particularly in areas that were previously owned by both communities and are now identified as either the Argobba or the Afar territory.

The vast majority of respondents from both groups, around 75%, perceived that competition for pasture land and water resources, as well as the tradition of seeking revenge, were the most significant factors contributing to conflicts. The limited availability of resources and demographic pressure in pastoral and agro-pastoral societies makes competition for resources a source of conflict. After 1991, ethnicity became the primary basis for administration units, tying resource access and utilization to specific ethnic groups within certain boundaries, leading to discontent and conflicts over resource allocation. This has resulted in mobility restrictions for pastoral and agro-pastoral communities, as well as ethnic groups vying for control over rangelands and water sources. Both study areas demonstrated how competition for resources is a crucial factor in fueling ethnic and boundary conflicts. Key informant Mr. B from the Medina districts noted that the conflict in the study area stems from groups' desire to expand their territory and acquire more land, which is a common response to resource scarcity. This often leads to violent means of controlling territorial resources, disregarding customary rules and regulations that promote fair and equitable resource utilization and management, and sanction those who violate them (interviewed with Mr. B at Medina District, March, 2023).

Another respondent who is working in Medina, Argobba Special woreda Mr. C suggests that, “the livelihood of those who lead a pastoral lifestyle is heavily influenced by the amount and quality of their livestock, as well as the availability of water and grazing lands. These factors are all interconnected and are particularly concerning in the months of April through June when both sources become scarce. This often results in clashes between neighboring pastoralists who are searching for these limited resources” (interviewed with Mr. C at Medina District, March, 2023).

He also suggests that prolonged periods of drought can trigger conflicts among pastoral communities who share limited resources. The Afar and Argobba societies have traditionally negotiated access to and use of natural resources such as pastures, water sources, and forests. However, the shortage of these resources due to overgrazing and drought has led to their degradation. The reduced availability of resources has impeded the free movement of pastoralists across boundaries, resulting in increased conflict and instability between these two ethnic groups (ibid).

Additionally, regarding the underlying reasons for the dispute in the surveyed region, the results from the focus group discussions with the Argobba main sources stated that the two factions sought retribution for the death of their members. The information received from the Afar and Argoba communities showed that the Argoba were the first to take action by killing a member of the Afar group, and the cycle of retaliation between the two groups has persisted till present times. During my fieldwork, I had the opportunity to interview multiple locals from both sides on our FGDs on their views regarding blood revenge in the study area. The general consensus amongst those I spoke to was that blood revenge is a serious act and an important aspect of their culture. Many believe that it is necessary to protect the honor of their family and community. In fact, it was stated that failure to avenge a family's member's death can result in shame and dishonor. Nevertheless, there were some people who had apprehensions regarding the adverse effects of blood revenge on the families of the victim and the perpetrator, which can result in an unending cycle of violence spanning across multiple generations.

One of the respondents I interviewed (Mr. X) says that the act of blood revenge is a grave matter where the family of the victim seeks to kill the murderer and their kin. This tradition is deeply rooted in Ethiopian culture and not retaliating is seen as a sign of moral deficiency, even for the entire family. If the victim's family seeks monetary compensation instead of revenge, it could be viewed as weakness and dishonor. Despite efforts by the government's justice system, the risk of retaliation remains, as the victim's family is expected to take revenge even after the murderer has served their time. Only through intervention by Abegars or clan leaders can the conflict be resolved and both parties live in peace (interviewed with Mr. X at Telalak District, March 2023).

Due to various factors, including resource competition, the conflict in the area has progressed from a simple dispute to territorial conflicts at the local level. Multiple players and forces are now involved, and traditional weapons have been exchanged for modern warfare, resulting in a complex and intractable situation between the two communities. The nature, behavior, and patterns of the conflict have changed over time, resulting in significant consequences. Currently, ethnic conflict poses a major threat to national, regional, and local peace, security, and development.

Regarding this and related issues, the following statement by Mr. Y from Medina Special District in an interview summarizes:

> *Personally, I don't have that much information about the root causes of the recent conflict between the two cultural groups. However, historically, there have been conflicts between these two groups over access to resources such as water, grazing land, fertile soil, and revenge. Additionally, there have been boundary disputes between the two groups, leading to tensions and violence at times. Ethnic and political differences have also played a role in fueling the conflict.*

Overall, interethnic conflict is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to resolve. Regarding this, the following recommendations can be considered to mitigate the conflict, which were given to me by different individuals who came from different areas and are employed in government offices in the Medina district:

> *First, there should be dialogue and reconciliation between the different conflicting parties. Governmental bodies from each group should encourage and facilitate open conversations between the two ethnic groups to promote mutual understanding and resolve tensions between them.*
>
> *Secondly, the government should ensure equal opportunity for all ethnic groups to participate in politics and decision making processes.*
>
> *Third, education and awareness, the government must promote education and awareness programs that highlight the benefits of diversity, tolerance, and mutual respect.*
>
> *Fourth, the government must support and give credit to the indigenous institutions and develop their conflict resolution mechanisms that are accessible, fair, and impartial and that can resolve disputes before they escalate.*
>
> *Finally, the government should build trust between ethnic groups. Foster trust between different ethnic groups by supporting cultural exchange and social integration. Therefore, by implementing these recommendations, the Ethiopian government can take*

significant steps towards reducing inter-ethnic conflict and promoting a more peaceful and inclusive society.

5.2 The Role of Indigenous Institutions in Conflict Resolution in the Study Area

Both traditional and modern institutions in the study area are utilized for conflict resolution and peace building. However, the indigenous methods are recognized by the study communities as being more effective in addressing the underlying causes of conflicts and establishing long-term peace. Mediation facilitated by these indigenous institutions is considered the most legitimate and successful. In situations where the government is incapable of preventing or resolving inter-ethnic conflicts, indigenous institutions play a crucial role as an alternative solution. They offer specific guidelines tailored to the immediate situation, resolving conflict, fostering coordination and cooperation among groups, and promoting reconciliation of diverse interests.

Uthman's (2008) research revealed that the Abegar (divine father) plays a significant role in conflict resolution in Northern Wollo. The Abegar institutions utilize diverse tactics for interpersonal and inter-group compromise to achieve sustainable solutions for conflicts, operating with a bottom-up approach instead of a top-down one. On top of this, indigenous conflict resolution institutions are by far a better alternative for conflict management. This is because at the national level, the formal court structures are often unable to provide access to justice for the disputants in a timely manner. Consequently, various ethnic groups or communities have established their own conflict management systems in response to these challenges.

Indigenous conflict resolution institutions (the Abegar and different clan leaders) can provide us with procedures that can successfully resolve disagreements without harming relationships. In indigenous conflict resolution institutions, the conflicting parties could rather learn information that will permit them to work more efficiently in their future lives. Indigenous conflict resolution institutions can provide us with procedures that can successfully resolve disagreements without harming relationships. The data I gained from Medina of Argobba FGDs participants revealed that local elders have played a great role in providing advice for the community to minimize local conflicts. One key interviewee participant (the Abeggar) also said that "we always advise

the conflicting parties to solve their conflict through local elders. Because the decision passed by the court or formal conflict resolution systems is not good for social relationships, it leads to revenge in the community" (interviewed with The Abegar, in his home at Medina District, March 2023).

The conflict resolution systems of indigenous institutions foster the development of future relationships among parties in conflict. They are vital for rebuilding social relationships and uniting society as a whole, as well as resolving conflicts between opposing parties. Such institutions enable opposing parties to collaborate in a productive manner, with minimal negative impacts on their relationships. Additionally, participants in the study indicated that indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are simpler and more time and cost-efficient when compared to modern approaches. Many participants highlighted the established effectiveness of these time-tested indigenous conflict resolution methods. In addition to this, another resident of Afar Mr. D, who is living in Telalak district and whom I interviewed provided his testimony about the service he got from the indigenous institutions as follows:

> *I had a conflict with my neighbor over the use of a shared water source on our land. We tried to solve the issue between ourselves, but it became heated and contentious, reaching a point where we couldn't find a middle ground. I was desperate for a solution, so I decided to reach out to the Makaban of the neutral clan leader for help. The staffs were very professional and welcoming. They took the time to understand the nature of our conflict and our concerns. They recognized the need to integrate traditional indigenous values and practices into the process. They facilitated a community justice circle and invited respected elders as well as members of our respective clan leaders and families to participate. Together, they provided guidance and support in reaching a resolution that was equitable and satisfactory for all parties. I totally appreciate the support I received from the institution, which not only helped resolve the conflict but also deepened my understanding and appreciation of indigenous values and practices. I am grateful for their role in bringing harmony to our community.*

Following this, he praised the role of clan leaders and religious leaders in the community and explained the weakness of the modern legal systems and the abuse they inflict on people with the following idea.

> *If I go to a modern court, there will be many ups and downs. They waste my time by making me go through many court doors by making appointments, but they don't give quick responses or decisions on our issues. They are not only time consumers, but I will also spend a lot of money on that matter during the court process. And when the final decision is passed, they will pass inappropriate decisions, thus bringing us back into conflict.*

Another informant from Argobba special district (Mr. K) also adds his testimony about the indigenous institutions by comparing them with the modern legal system. As he said, Indigenous institutions often prioritize community over justice, and the decision making process is based on consensus and consultation. On the other hand, the modern legal system emphasizes individual rights, and decisions are made by a single authority, whether a judge or a jury. The other thing that makes them different is that indigenous institutions aim to restore the balance between the individual, the community, and nature, while the modern one focuses on punishment and rehabilitation (interviewed with Mr. K at Medina District, March, 2023).

Furthermore, individuals belonging to the Argobba ethnic community emphasized the significance and reliability of the Abeggar, in settling disputes. During an interview with a representative of the Argobba ethnic group named Mr. M, one informant elucidated the function of the Abeggar in the following manner:

> *The Abeggar is a very successful dispute resolution system to settle peace and tolerance between our ethnic group and other neighboring ethnic groups, like the Afar and Oromo ethnic groups. To mention an example, there was an ethnic-based conflict that occurred between us (the Argobba) and Afar. The conflict caused many displacements and migrations, resulting in the loss of human life and property for both ethnic groups. Following this, the Abeggar plays a critical role in the resolution process. And finally,*

the conflict was solved through indigenous mediation, and the displaced peoples have returned to their districts.

According to many FGDs participants from Argobba, these institutions are not only skilled and effective at resolving conflicts, but also at promoting healing and reconciliation between disputant parties. Their approaches prioritize empathy, forgiveness, and understanding, rather than punishment or retribution. These institutions promote a sense of community ownership over the conflict and encourage dialogue and nonviolent solutions. Overall, the time tested experience of the Abeggar or other elders, like religious or clan leaders in conflict resolution is invaluable, and their roles should be recognized and respected in any effort to promote peace and reconciliation.

In addition to this, the informant I have interviewed during FGDs in Argobba, explains the identity of the Abegar and their role in the community, particularly, and in our country as a whole. As the said that, the role of the Abegar is not only to solve the problems that arise in their society, moreover, their ability to solve any conflict with the Afars, Oromos, and Kallu of Amhara people in their area and to bring peace is very important. This is not all, during the past two or three years, when our country was in great trouble, they played a major role in stabilizing the community and protecting their area from invading forces.

According to my other informant Mr. E who is working at Telalak woreda, Afar, testify about the significant role played by indigenous institutions in ensuring sustainable peace to the local communities.

As an observer of traditional societies and culture, I have had the privilege of witnessing the powerful and significant role that traditional elders play in building peace. In many communities around here and there (in the Argobba), these elders are revered and respected for their sage wisdom and ability to resolve conflicts. One of the most striking aspects of traditional elders is their unwavering commitment to the welfare of their communities. They are often seen as the guardians of community values, and they take their responsibilities seriously. This means that when conflict arises, they are often called upon to provide guidance and mediation. In many cases, the role of the elder is to act as

a neutral party, working to bring both sides to the table and ensure that all voices are heard. They are skilled at navigating complex interpersonal dynamics, and their extensive knowledge of community history and culture can help bring much-needed perspective to contentious issues.

Beyond their role in conflict resolution, traditional elders also play an important role in establishing community norms and promoting social cohesion. Many traditional elders also act as teachers or mentors, passing down knowledge and skills to younger generations. In a world that is all too often beleaguered by conflict and divisiveness in general and in our country in particular, the role of traditional elders is more important than ever. Their commitment to the greater good is an inspiration and one that we would do well to emulate in our own lives and communities.

In general, the significance of indigenous institutions in settling disputes among the Argobba and Afar societies cannot be overstated. These institutions have been crucial in providing a peaceful and non-violent platform for resolving conflicts. Typically, elders from the Afar and Argobba communities in the research zone are responsible for resolving disputes among groups or individuals, using their expertise and following a set of methods. Focus group discussions with the Afar revealed that these institutions have daily information-gathering systems to help them assess situations and make decisions for resolving disputes. As a result, Abeggars, clan leaders, and religious leaders, who are all indigenous conflict resolution institutions, have an important function in resolving ethnic conflicts at the local level. They are respected in the community because they are local, accessible, and less expensive than modern conflict resolution methods. The mutual social values, use of marriage links, and shared trade in the study area contribute to a peaceful resolution of conflicts between the two communities.

Case study 1: the conflict over land and water resources

For a considerable amount of time, there has been a conflict between the Afar and Argobba ethnic groups located in the north-eastern area of Ethiopia. This conflict is rooted in historical land disputes and political representation. Both communities have been fighting over control of pasture and grazing lands, which are essential for their survival. The Afar pastoralists rely on water points in the region for their livestock; while the Argobba farmers need water for irrigating

their crops. In addition to this, the Afar pastoralists traditionally graze their livestock on communal land, while the Argobba farmers cultivate crops on individual plots. On June, 2015 in the region of Argobba, the disputes arose when the Afar grazed their livestock on land that the Argobba considered to be theirs, resulting in crop damage and conflict. The dispute between the two groups has often led to violence and bloodshed, with both sides accusing the other of stealing or destroying their resources.

To resolve this ongoing conflict, traditional elders from both communities came together in a series of town hall meetings and negotiations. These elders used customary laws and traditional dispute resolution mechanisms to create a more peaceful coexistence between the two groups. They established a committee to manage the water points and ensure that both farmers and pastoralists have access to them. The committee also arbitrates disputes between the two groups to prevent further violence.

The traditional leaders also encouraged the Afar and Argobba communities to build mutual respect and trust, by inviting each other to social events and cultural festivals. This initiative helped to improve relationships between the groups, leading to fewer conflicts in the region.

Case study: 2 Revenge

In the past years, the Afar and Argobba communities living in the northeastern part of Ethiopia have engaged in a protracted inter-ethnic conflict over land and resources. Their conflict revolves around land and resource ownership, including grazing areas and water sources. The dispute escalated into multiple incidents of violent clashes, resulting in numerous deaths, injuries, property destruction, and the displacement of people from their homes.

According my informants, on November, 2022, one such incident occurred in the remote village of Medina, located in the Argobba special woreda, where an Afar man was brutally murdered by anonymous individuals. The killing triggered an immediate retaliation by the Afar community, which attacked an Argobba village nearby, burning houses and killing anyone they could find. The Argobba community responded with their own acts of revenge, leading to a cycle of violence that lasted for weeks.

As the conflict intensified, the Ethiopian government intervened by deploying security forces to the affected areas. The government also held peace talks between the two communities, but they were largely unsuccessful due to deep rooted feelings of distrust and animosity. The conflict has led to the displacement of thousands of people from both communities, causing severe economic and social disruptions. As the violence spiraled out of control, the traditional elders of the two communities intervened to broker a ceasefire and initiate a peace process. The elders established a peace committee composed of impartial individuals from each community to mediate the conflict and bring about a lasting solution. They also invited government officials to observe the negotiations and provide guidance as necessary.

Through dialogue and negotiations, the peace committee was able to achieve a truce between the warring factions, leading to a gradual cessation of hostilities. The committee also facilitated the return of displaced families and initiated community based development projects to promote inter-ethnic cooperation and harmony. This agreement not only resolved the conflict but also helped to strengthen the relationship between the two communities.

In conclusion, inter-ethnic conflicts between the Afar and Argobba communities in the study area have been resolved through dialogue, negotiation, and mediation led by traditional elders. By using their customary laws and dispute resolution mechanisms, the elders have helped to create a more peaceful coexistence between the two groups. The agreements reached through these negotiations have not only resolved immediate conflicts but also established frameworks for cooperation that promote long-term stability and mutual benefits for both communities.

5.2.1 The Argobba Indigenous Institutions of Conflict Resolution (the Abegar)

The way disputes are settled by elders in Ethiopia is an uncommon practice in other African nations. Due to the lack of colonization in Ethiopia, it was expected that western influences would not impact the process. Despite this, it is believed that religion, specifically Christianity and Islam, has greatly affected the way elders from various Ethiopian tribes resolve disputes. The reason behind this is due to the fact that these two religions have a significant presence in the country. Both religions have their own set of values and principles, which have been incorporated into the traditional dispute resolution mechanisms of the various tribes.

For example, Islam emphasizes the importance of peaceful conflict resolution and the avoidance of violence. Islamic principles such as shura (consultation) and Tawakkul (reliance on Allah) are often embedded in the dispute resolution processes of various tribes in Ethiopia. Similarly, Christianity emphasizes forgiveness, compassion, and reconciliation as important principles for resolving disputes. This is reflected in the traditional dispute resolution processes of various tribes in Ethiopia, which often involve mediation and negotiation to reach a peaceful settlement. In addition, the elders who preside over these processes are often respected members of their community who are familiar with its teachings and customs.

In summary, the influence of Islam and Christianity on traditional dispute resolution mechanisms in Ethiopia is a reflection of the strong presence of these religions in the country and the importance placed on their values and principles in resolving conflicts.

The Argobba people, who are predominantly found in the north-eastern part of Ethiopia (southern Wollo, Medina Special District), have a long standing tradition of conflict resolution called "Abeggar". The system is a form of indigenous justice that has been used for generations to manage disputes and maintain social harmony within the community. The Abeggar system is the traditional method of resolving conflicts among the Argobba people. Its purpose is to regulate various aspects of their lives, including social, political, economic, and religious matters, while also managing resources and helping to settle disputes between individuals and communities. This type of conflict resolution institution has been present for many years in the southern Wollo Administrative Zone of Amhara National Regional State. The Argobba community has developed customary rules over generations, which are informal and unwritten agreements that are specific to their culture.

The Abagar

The Abeggar is a conflict resolution system that has been practiced by the Argobba people for a long time. This system is a type of native justice that the community has used for many generations to resolve disputes and maintain social balance. The Abaggar is an individual who possesses extensive knowledge about the Argobba and Wollo communities and is relied on by the community to manage conflicts. The Abaggar utilizes a process of reconciliation known as guma, which entails compensating the victim during or after a conflict occurs to resolve conflicts

or blood feuds. He is entrusted to not only reconcile at the conflict stage but also to ensure long-term peace in the area where he resides. When conflicts arise, the Abaggar collaborates with famous elders to intervene and bring an end to the conflict. After conversing with both parties, he delivers a verdict, and the guilty party/group is punished and compensates the victim/victims. The goal of the punishment is to teach the offender a lesson and deter them and others from repeating such offenses. However, both the compensation and punishment imposed by Abaggar on the guilty do not incite the victim and culprit to seek vengeance.

The process of using the Abeggar conflict resolution method involves several steps. Following this, my informant, Mr. B, suggested the following:

> *First, the conflicting parties must agree to participate in the Abeggar system of governance. Then they meet with a group of elders who act as mediators. Then, each side is allowed to present their case and provide evidence to support their claims. During the case presentation, the Abeggar listens carefully and asks questions to clarify the issues. Once both sides have had a chance to speak, the Abeggar deliberate and come up with a decision based on the evidence presented and the cultural norms of the community. Then, after the implementation of the solutions, both sides should agree to the terms and work together to implement the solution in a way that is fair to everyone. For the sustainability of peace between the disputants, the two parties make a promise and cross the Abeggar's stick, which is respected by the people. Mostly, the person who could not apply the Belle, culturally condemned and implicated, as well as ignored and sanctioned by the communities, and lived alone according to the culture. Then, the Abaggar has taken a great role in managing the conflict.*

The Abeggar plays an important role in resolving disputes within the Argobba communities and resolving conflicts between neighboring ethnic groups such as the Afar, Oromia, and Amhara. The system operates based on its established functional structure and is widely practiced in the Amhara Regional State of Ethiopia. The Abeggars prioritize the safety and security of society and impart teachings about peace, love, and the common good. They are revered as the fathers of peace in many parts of Southern and Northern Wollo, where their authority is strictly respected. Any disobedience to their rule will result in sanctions imposed by society, and some believe that

disappointing the Abeggar can bring about divine curses. This is why there is no opposition to the proposals put forth by the Abeggar. Abeggars are frequently successful in solving aggressive and concealed disagreements, healing the feuding parties' connections, avoiding further acts of retribution, and guaranteeing the tranquility and safety of the nearby populace. It is expected that they display impartiality.

As I spoke with Abeggar of Argobba during my data collection process based on the role they played in conflict resolution and bringing peace to their community, it became evident that they played an essential role in mediating the conflict between Argobba and Afar communities. They shared how they maintained a neutral stance and actively participated in resolving disputes between the two communities. These traditional elders also shared their success stories in preventing the escalation of the conflicts by building trust and encouraging dialogue. Their efforts were focused on finding peaceful solutions that benefited both communities, and they ensured that the communication lines were always open to prevent misunderstandings or further hostilities. According to the traditional leader (the Abeggar), "I believe that the role we played here within and with other communities is becoming more important than ever as communities continue to face complex and often violent conflicts. We have a deep knowledge of the customs and traditions of our communities and are well respected by our people. As such, we are uniquely positioned to promote dialogue and reconciliation between different groups" (interviewed with the Abeggar in his home place at Medina District, March, 2023).

Overall, the indigenous institutions of conflict resolution (the Abeggar) among the Argobba are based on traditional cultural practices that promote harmony, reconciliation, and the restoration of broken relationships in their communities and around their boarding areas. Based on this, the Abeggar system remains an integral part of the Argobba culture and continues to play an important role in managing conflicts and maintaining social harmony (FGDs with the Argobba).

5.2.2 The Mada'a of Afar indigenous conflict resolution

Conflict among pastoralists typically arises from disagreements among ethnic groups or within ethnic groups when interests overlap (Kelemework, 2011; Tigist, 2014; Mekonnen et al., 2016). Each country has its own set of traditional institutions with customary methods for resolving conflicts. The pastoral community, including those in Ethiopia, has a sophisticated approach to

conflict resolution that involves elders and clan leaders who rely on traditional law. Examples of indigenous conflict resolution and management systems include the Xeer of Somali, the Gadaa system of Oromo, and Mada'a of Afar. However, there may be variations in practice and implementation. The Somali, Borana and Afar pastoralists do have their own indigenous institutions led by Oath, Abba Gadda and Kedo Abba, respectively (Tigist, 2014; Abdisalem, 2012). The conflict resolution laws of the respective pastoral communities may pertain to either intra-ethnic group disputes or interethnic group conflicts (Kinfe, 2014). In Afar, the conflicts between different clans are managed by the Madaa based on customary law and clan leaders. Clan leaders of each clan do not representing members in disputes, are selected from different clans (Bekele, 2010). The decisions by the clan leaders are highly esteemed due to the tradition of forgiveness, respect for elders, and the transfer of resources as compensation.

Conflicts between Afar clans rarely escalate to the point where outside mediation is necessary, and Madaa has been successfully resolving disputes between Afars and their neighbors in the past, according to research by Getachew (2001) and Kinfe (2014). Afar and Karrayyu communities had previously established shared institutions to handle cases of fugitives, compensation, and tensions between the two groups. These institutions relied on a joint jury comprised of members from both ethnic groups. However, due to various complex factors, these institutions no longer hold as much influence as they once did.

5.2.3 Afar Indigenous Institutions of Conflict Resolution

The clan leaders

The Afar people have long relied on a method of resolving conflicts that is unique to their own culture. This system draws from their deeply ingrained values and customs that have been passed down over generations. Indigenous dispute resolution in the Afar communities involves clan leaders and religious leaders solving minor disputes in the context of Afar traditional law (Mada'a). The law is called Afare when the dispute resolution is within the Afar and Adanle for those with outsiders. Islamic laws (the shari'a) are also secondary to traditional law. Muslim judges (Qadi) are consulted only for civil affairs like marriage and divorce.

The Afar community is most tightly bonded through their clan structure, which features the most robust and influential traditional leadership practices (Voelkner, 1974). Within Afar, clans (known as Kedo) are defined by shared hereditary ties, communal territory, shared customs, and shared political leadership, consisting of a few hundred to a thousand individuals split into ten to twenty sub-groups that may vary over time due to division or amalgamation (Getachew, 2001: 55). The clan leadership serves a legislative, executive, and judiciary role, settling conflicts and maintaining defense of land, people, and property through cooperation among clan members (Ali, 2008; Getachew, 2001; Fekadu et al., 1984).

The Afar people have a traditional system where their clan leaders are responsible for resolving disputes. Clan leaders are respected members of the community and are often seen as the final authority in decision-making. They play a crucial role in mediating conflicts between individuals or families. They are considered the custodians of traditional customs and values that are guiding principles for the Afar community. In the past, disputes were often resolved by clan leaders, who acted as mediators and arbitrators based on their knowledge of cultural norms and traditions. Today the role of the Afar clan leaders in conflict resolution remains essential, both in inter- and intra-clan conflicts. The leaders of clans play an essential part in settling disputes and making peace deals between various factions. They pay attention to the complaints of both sides of the disagreement and utilize their skills to determine a resolution that is agreeable to everyone involved. The individual whom I interviewed Mr. G, a native of the district, expresses his trust and hope in the clan leaders and their role in the community as follows:

> *I have been witness to the important role played by the clan leaders here in our community in the conflict resolution process, especially in inter- and intra-clan conflicts. The clan leaders are respected by their clan's men and are considered legal and traditional experts in our communities. Their decision making processes are based on the principles of justice, equality and impartiality. When a conflict arises, the first step to be taken by the clan leaders is to ascertain the facts and identify the root causes of the conflict. They then listen to the grievances of all parties involved, bringing them together as necessary, and with their knowledge and experience, they offer a range of resolutions and mediation to ensure a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Their mediation efforts are successful in most cases because they are impartial, taking into consideration the*

interests of all parties involved while also promoting lasting reconciliation and peace in the community. In summary, the Afar clan leader's role in inter- and intra-community conflict resolution processes is critical to promoting the stability, peace, and protection of our communities.

The other states that, the influence of the clan leaders in the community is high. As he (Mr. Q) said that, "clan leaders play a crucial role in reconciling and resolving conflicts within our communities. Through their influence and authority, they are able to bring conflicting parties to the table and facilitate communication and negotiation" (interviewed with Mr. Q, at Telalak Police Station, March 2023). Another respondent Mr. N also adds his view on the role of clan leaders in bringing peace and stability to their communities. He said that, "in the absence of a strong state authority, clan leaders have long served as the primary source of justice and security in our community. They have a vested interest in promoting peace and stability, as it is essential to their own power and legitimacy" (interview with Mr. N, at Market Place, Telalak, March 2023).

As per a clan leader from Cidihabura clan in Telalak woreda, Afar,

We use our knowledge of the community to analyze the root causes of the conflict and come up with a solution that addresses the issue; we act as mediators between the conflicting parties. Our responsibility is to make sure that our community avoids further violence and lives in peace, not only within our people but also with other ethnic groups like the Argobba, the Oromo, and even the Amhara.

These private institutions of conflict resolution play a vital role in maintaining peace and stability in the Afar community and with their neighbors, which have a history of conflicts with neighboring communities over resources such as water and pasturelands and revenge. During the data collection process for my thesis on the significant role played by clan leaders in their community, I had the opportunity to discuss this issue with Mr. H, a respected member of the community who has worked closely with clan leaders for many years. According to Mr. H, clan leaders are the backbone of their community. They play a significant role in ensuring peace, resolving disputes, and promoting the welfare of their people. He emphasized that the clan

leaders have a unique understanding of the needs and challenges of their community, and are well placed to provide guidance and support. He also noted that, the clan leaders are instrumental in preserving the culture and tradition of their community. They serve as custodians of their cultural heritage and are responsible for passing on their traditions to the next generation. In conclusion, Mr. H's views on the significant role played by clan leaders in their community were insightful and demonstrated the crucial importance of clan leaders in maintaining the stability and growth of their community.

Moreover, I was also trying to have some conversations with the other clan leader about how they played a significant role in the conflict resolution process between the Afar and Argobba communities last year. My conversations with the Secabura clan leaders during data collection revealed how they were instrumental in conflict resolution between the Afar and Argobba communities. They had a deep understanding of the conflict's causes, knew the needs, and concerns of both sides. They acted as a bridge between the communities, encouraged dialogue, and framed their discussions in a way that would encourage both parties to develop a better understanding. They also provide guidance and support to the communities during the reconciliation process, ensuring that the agreements are respected and their implementation is consistent. Their efforts in facilitating the reconciliation process ensured a peaceful resolution that was sustainable in the long run.

Overall, the data I gained from the Afar FGDs indicates that, the Afar people have a sophisticated and nuanced system of dispute resolution that reflects their deep spiritual and cultural traditions. While this system may not always be perfect, it has proven to be very effective at resolving disputes and maintaining peace and harmony within the community. The Afar clan leaders are crucial in conflict resolution because they act as moral guides, judges, and diplomats. Their deep understanding of the Afar culture enables them to build bridges between individuals and communities in conflict, preventing them from escalating. The Afar people's reliance on their clan leaders, focus on restorative justice, community involvement, and adherence to cultural norms make them unique in their conflict resolution practices. These practices have contributed to their peaceful coexistence with neighboring tribes as well as their ability to resolve internal conflicts amicably.

5.2.4 Different parties who are involved in the conflict resolution process

The process of resolving inter-ethnic conflicts involves the participation of various actors, with actors such as actors at the local administration level playing a crucial role. In the area under study, local actors, particularly the woreda administration, are leading the effort to manage and settle conflicts. The study also found that several other actors, such as local farmers, religious leaders, and government officials, have played roles in resolving conflicts, either directly or indirectly, according to interviews and focus group discussions. Additionally, local farmers, pastoralists, elders, religious leaders, Abeggar, clan leaders, government officials, are among the actors involved in the conflict resolution process.

Governmental Bodies

The government takes charge of organizing the peace committee and maintaining peace through its different departments. They offer assistance to the kebele in coordinating the elders and peace committees from both the woreda and kebele. Government officials are diligently working to arrange conferences and meetings between the two ethnic groups. The woreda and kebele government officials, along with the police and JPFC, attempt to settle conflicts and put an end to them. The administration of both the woreda and kebele are dedicated to preventing conflicts between the two different ethnicities. They strive to manage the conflict by gathering the people and leaders of the community. Many discussions are held at the irrigation sites to deter conflict but, sometimes, conflicts do arise between the ethnic groups. Regardless, the administration puts in their best effort to regulate the conflict between the two groups at the irrigation sites. The kebele and woreda administrative bodies both consider themselves accountable for discouraging conflicts.

In the event of conflict between two ethnic groups in a particular location, the kebele peace forum takes immediate steps to resolve the issue through discussion and negotiation, before involving woreda officials at the conflict site. The committee responsible for maintaining peace at the kebele levels tries to manage or resolve the conflict, with the assistance of elders and religious leaders. If necessary, the woreda officials would intervene and work towards a resolution. The objective is to resolve the conflict as soon as possible and prevent escalation, with the assistance of the peace forum committees, elders, and religious leaders. If the conflict

cannot be resolved at the kebele level, negotiations and discussions would occur at the woreda level to maintain peace.

In order to promote the importance of peace, peace committees and peace clubs were established by the administration and security offices at the kebele and school levels, respectively. Preventing the outbreak of conflicts is achieved through the implementation of awareness-raising activities and the use of early warning and response mechanisms. However, conflicts are an inherent part of daily interactions and differ in their manifestation in the study area. As conflicts arise, the administration and security offices intervene in order to prevent violent confrontations and work towards improving relationships. In times of violence, efforts are made to minimize the escalation of conflicts and restore negative peace. Once negative peace is established, further actions are taken to foster positive relationships.

Typically, the woreda's administration and security affairs offices receive assistance from their zonal and regional counterparts through their channels of command. The Amhara and Afar regions have established a hierarchical structure for their administration and security affairs offices, starting from the region to the kebele level. The bureaus at the regional level take care of conflict resolution and offer guidance to the zonal security departments. They are accountable to their respective regional state's chief administrator. By declaration, they now have the authority to handle conflicts, and in conjunction with the police commission and militia bureau, they can investigate security-related issues on behalf of the regional government. Likewise, the zonal administration and security affairs divisions tackle any conflicts arising within their boundaries and provide assistance to the woredas. Working alongside the regional and zonal administrations' guidance and support, the woredas are taking on a range of activities to manage conflicts in their regions. According to the administration and security office of Medina special woreda, the main responsibilities of the woreda administrations include evaluating the overall state of peace and security, identifying possible sources of conflict through information from local sources, supporting peace forum committees by allocating funds received from regional administrations, dispatching security personnel to areas where violence has occurred, coordinating social and economic developmental efforts with the goal of achieving lasting conflict resolution, and ensuring that offenders of violence are held accountable by the law.

The functions of the woreda administration listed above are crucial for resolving disputes and maintaining harmony in the region. In order to prevent the onset and spread of violent conflicts, the woreda administration conducts initial assessments of potentially problematic areas and works alongside community leaders to prevent conflict escalation. Regular monitoring of peace conditions within each kebele also takes place, with a view to addressing any underlying factors that may cause tension. If required, the woreda administration may involve local authorities and security forces to bring an end to violent conflicts, using force if necessary.

Indigenous Institutions

Various individuals are involved in indigenous conflict resolution institutions. Pankhurst and Getachew (2008) found that many areas in Ethiopia use the lineage system for conflict resolution, while Afar, Gamo, and Borena observed that clan members or heads are often involved. Interested parties may participate in conflict resolution institutions, which consist of three types of actors: conflicting parties, conflict resolvers, and the crowd. Each of these groups has their own responsibilities and entitlements (Mekonnen, 2016; Kelemework, 2005, Ambaye, 2008). The presence of conflicting parties is essential for the existence of this system as they bring cases seeking justice. Without conflicting parties, there would be no indigenous conflict resolution.

The locals consistently prefer the indigenous conflict resolution system due to their familiarity with it, trust in the Abegar elders, and its efficiency. The Argobba FGDs noted that anyone, including friends, family, neighbors, or strangers, can participate in the process, but only the appointed mediators, such as the Abegar, religious leaders, and clan leaders, have decision-making power. Selecting trustworthy mediators is essential, and is based on their reputation, wisdom, experience, patience, commitment, ability to make fair decisions, knowledge of traditional law, and other desirable qualities.

According to my observation as I have seen in the two ethnic groups and the information I have received from many people during FGDs from both sides, the Abeggar, clan leaders, and religious leaders are Individuals who are esteemed and welcomed in their locality are chosen as conflict resolvers in the conflict resolution procedure based on their sagacity, expertise, ethical principles, familiarity with community traditions, capability to assess and suggest solutions to

disputed parties, and traits such as tolerance, impartiality, integrity, and consideration for diversity. Owing to these qualities, conflict resolvers are held in high regard and confidence by the broader society, and as a consequence, they prove to be competent in preserving harmony and settling disputes within their community.

Indigenous institutions exist in both communities, comprising clan leaders known as Makabans, religious leaders or sheiks, Abaggar, and respected individuals who use their knowledge, experience, and abilities to resolve conflicts. These institutions play a key role in determining and fostering peace between the ethnic groups, particularly regarding the shared use of resources such as land and water. The involvement of elders, sheiks, clan leaders, and Abaggar often negates the need for government intervention. Religious leaders who uphold Quran principles are instrumental in promoting peace, mutual respect, and tolerance, with their teachings being held in higher regard by both communities than government regulations. The contributions of the Abaggar and Makaban in mediating and preventing disputes are of great significance according to (FGDs with the Afar Clan leaders).

A group of elderly individuals work as a committee to resolve disputes between parties. This committee is comprised solely of men, which makes it problematic under democratic principles. Women and other members of society who are excluded from the decision-making process can become the targets of decisions made by the committee. Developing countries often see women subjected to unfair indigenous conflict resolution processes due to the male domination of the committee. Based on my research in the study area, it was found that the elderly play an active role in the decision-making process for indigenous conflict resolution. A significant number of those surveyed agreed that elders are heavily involved in decision-making. However, women are not typically included in this process. The feedback from Argobba FGD participants and interviewees indicates that local elders dominate decision-making, although women still play a crucial role in sustaining peace building and resolving conflicts in the region. The FGDs suggest that women can influence the men in their lives to use indigenous conflict resolution systems and possess valuable skills and power to diffuse conflicts.

5.2.5 The Role of Women in Indigenous Conflict Resolution in the Study Area

Ethiopia is a country where traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have been used for generations. Different ethnic groups and communities have their own customary practices for resolving disputes, including those related to land ownership, inter-communal conflicts and domestic disputes. Women have historically been excluded from these conflict resolution processes, or their roles have been limited. However, in recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of women's contributions to peace building and the need for their participation in the conflict resolution process.

The role of women in the indigenous conflict resolution process in Ethiopia is slowly evolving. In many traditional societies, women are seen as caretakers of the household, and their role in decision-making is often limited. Regarding this, I can provide some information about the exclusion of women from the decision-making process in the study area. According to my informants, Mr. U, a witness regarding the exclusion of women from participating in the indigenous institutions of conflict resolution, stated as follows:

> *In many parts of our country generally, and particularly here in our community, women are often excluded from the decision making process, whether it be in family, community, or political matters. This exclusion is often rooted in patriarchal beliefs and societal norms that view men as the dominant gender and, therefore, as the sole decision-makers. Women's voices and perspectives are often ignored or dismissed due to perceived notions of inferiority and a lack of knowledge or expertise. This systematic exclusion of women from decision making processes has consequences for their wellbeing, perpetuating gender inequality and limiting their ability to participate in civic life and contribute to society.*

Moreover, Ms. J also adds her personal view about the exclusion of women from the decision-making process and its consequences as follows:

> *Excluding women from their system of governance is discriminatory and contributes to the perpetuation of gender inequality. We know that women can bring unique perspectives and skills to conflict resolution, as well as a focus on community and*

collaboration. When they are excluded from the process of decision-making, their voices and experiences are silenced, and solutions may not be effective or sustainable. In addition, exclusion denies women the opportunity to participate in decision-making, which can have broader implications for their social, economic, and political empowerment. So, in my opinion, it is essential to promote gender equity in all aspects of conflict resolution, including representation and participation.

However, some communities have recognized the important contributions women can make to conflict resolution and have begun involving them in the process. Women's involvement in conflict resolution can provide a different perspective on the issues at hand and help to create more sustainable and lasting solutions.

In unusual situations, Ethiopian women are involved in resolving disputes. In certain cultures, women are included in settling conflict regarding marriage and women's concerns. Women are actively engaged in Indigenous system of governance, conflict resolution, and promoting peace in traditional ways. There are parts of Ethiopia where women have established their own committees for peace and are instrumental in settling disputes, For example, Hade siqqe of Oromo. Duberti is an organization in the study area that is primarily run by women and focused on supporting the peace process by advising and denouncing men, as well as teaching children and women in the community about the significance of achieving peace. Additionally, Duberti is responsible for resolving conflicts and defending women's rights.

As Ms. J explains, "The Duberti women are very important to us. They have a special stick that they use for their prayers and we believe that it has magical powers. When they pray for us, we feel a sense of calm and peace. They are like our mothers and we respect them a lot. These women are so wise and respected that they can even mediate conflicts between clans. They are skilled at bringing people together and finding solutions that work for everyone. We are very lucky to have them in our community." The Duberti women's specific prayer practices are also highly regarded, as she adds more that, "Their singing and prayers after a meal are so beautiful and powerful. It's like they are connecting us to the divine and bringing us closer together as a community. We all feel so blessed to have them in our lives" (ibid). Overall, the Duberti women hold a cherished role in the Wollo community as trusted peacekeepers and spiritual leaders.

Although women play an essential part in resolving indigenous conflicts their involvement is frequently curtailed by cultural and social conventions, as well as gender-based bias. The solution is to prioritize women's empowerment and inclusion in the conflict resolution process. This entails furnishing them with instruction and resources to assume leadership positions, encouraging their involvement in decision-making, and involving men in conversations about the significance of gender equality in conflict resolution.

5.2.6 The relationship between the indigenous institutions and the formal legal system in the study area

In Ethiopia, there exist both formal legal systems and indigenous conflict resolution methods. The latter are more dominant, available, and robust in several parts of Ethiopia. They are employed in rural areas to preserve harmony and tranquility by resolving conflicts and reinstating the peaceful coexistence of community members. These methods prioritize the compensation of the aggrieved party and the assimilation of the wrongdoer. Their primary goal is to mend the fractured social fabric and protect future relationships through avoidance of customary retribution practices.

In my research, I have explored how the indigenous method of resolving conflicts and the official court system work together to maintain security and peace within society. Both of these institutions are crucial sources of stability in the areas I examined, so it's evident that they must collaborate. There are specific ways in which these institutions cooperate, always with the goal of benefitting both organizations and preserving societal harmony.

The report shows that in the study region, the relationship between the conventional court system and the local, indigenous institutions is positive and advantageous to both parties. The two systems work hand in hand, recognizing and endorsing each other. The formal legal system explicitly recognizes the existence of the indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms, according to Article 34(5) of the FDRE constitution. Through data gathered from elders and FGD participants from Argoba special woreda, it was established that Abeggar has established a connection with the formal court system. The two institutions collaborate because they rely on each other's unique abilities. The formal mechanism has a legal framework for maintaining peace, while the indigenous one has the expertise and traditional authority to promote social cohesion. During my

research in Telalak Woreda, I observed that the formal court often collaborates and supports the elder's council to settle cases through indigenous conflict resolution methods.

According to information gathered from Afar FGDs, the methods and roles of indigenous institutions are distinct, but they are currently being utilized for conflict resolution and prompting government attention when communities are unsafe. In the study location, these institutions are collaborating with the formal court system.

Regarding intra- or inter-ethnic conflicts, no matter how many conflicted people go to a modern court and make reconciliation, they must come back and verify that the reconciliation is genuine with the flag of their indigenous elders. Regarding this, I talked with Mr. O, who describes the interdependence of the modern legal system and indigenous institutions as follows:

> *Even if most of the people in the area solve their conflict by using the modern one, the court sends those conflicting parties to community elders not for negotiation or reconciliation but to clarify the issue. Oftentimes, modern legal systems are based on written documents, so hoping that they will not be disappointed with the decision and lead to a worse situation, they recommend the conflicted party to solve their problems by the Abeggars.*

Furthermore, as per the information gathered from the FGDs by my source from Argobba, public organizations including peace and security offices, police stations, and peace forum committees from both the Afar and Argobba regions present cases to the local institutions regarding their desire to settle the conflict. Upon analyzing the issue, the conflicting parties were able to address their grievances by coordinating with government bodies and scheduling a meeting at a specific location and time. Ultimately, the reconciliation has been formally acknowledged and is on the verge of being accepted.

In most cases, traditional indigenous systems of justice do not rely on modern legal practices. In rare instances, individuals may opt to pursue legal action in their best interests but are often redirected by court officials to consult with their respective clan leaders to allow for intervention by traditional conflict resolution institutions. This has become an accepted solution for inter-clan and inter-ethnic conflicts in areas like Afar and Argobba. Previous experience has demonstrated

that modern courts are not effective in managing such disputes, and their resolutions have usually been unsuccessful in bringing about long-term peace within the community.

In disputes between clans, it is common for the indigenous system to be used for conflict resolution and the involvement of state court is rare. The state typically avoids involvement in disputes between different ethnic groups. The state only intervenes when there is a high level of conflict involving violence or animal raiding, but the objective is to restore peace and allow indigenous leaders to resolve the dispute. The state only gets involved in cases where one side disagrees with the decision made by local elders in a family or intra-clan dispute and takes the case to a modern court. However, these cases are infrequent, and even in those circumstances, court officials usually encourage the involvement of indigenous systems of governance. (Kelemework, 2011)

In the study area, both the traditional and formal conflict resolution institutions contribute to the community's peace and stability. The traditional institutions are highly active and deal with a significant amount of criminal, civil, and commercial cases. In fact, the woreda police report that more cases are resolved by traditional institutions than by regular courts. It is recommended that a thorough regulatory legal framework be established to formalize the traditional institutions and clarify their relationship with the formal justice administration institutions.

Nonetheless, according to the Abeggar from Medina District, "we are playing a great role here within our community; the laws of Ethiopia do not provide adequate breathing space for our activities and cultural practices" (interviewed with The Abeggar, March 2023).

5.3 Strengths, Limitations, and Challenges of Indigenous Institutions of Conflict Resolution

It has been abundantly shown that informal institutions are more effective in resolving violent conflicts. This is because norms and customs, which determine right and wrong, are better understood by everyday people. Elders have acquired a wealth of experience and wisdom, allowing them to handle cases in a more approachable manner than the courts, which rely on widely unfamiliar and inflexible regulations. Legal institutions are prohibitively expensive and inaccessible, making them unsuitable for conflict resolution.

State legal proceedings rely on a set of predetermined laws and do not typically consider long-standing societal and economic relationships between community members. Furthermore, government legal systems often result in a win-lose situation as justice is served through imposed agreements rather than focused on reconciliation and peaceful coexistence. Alternatively, local dispute resolution through negotiation leads to mutually beneficial outcomes that consider the interests of all parties involved. In cases of inter-clan conflict, government legal institutions are seen as supportive of local mediation involving community elders. In Ethiopian society, understanding and resolving conflicts involves considering all aspects of the social context, including norms, values, beliefs, fears, suspicions, interests, needs, attitudes, actions, relationships, and networks.

Many researchers suggest that indigenous conflict resolution institutions have both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, the cost of these institutions is relatively low in terms of time and money since elders do not charge for their services and fines and compensation are modest. Furthermore, the conflict resolution process is conducted in public spaces within the community, involving various stakeholders such as victims, offenders, and community members, with the results announced publicly. Consequently, decisions can be easily enforced through sanctions imposed by the community, including social exclusion, while blessings and the threat of curses help to ensure compliance. Moreover, these institutions have a broader social purpose, promoting community harmony, social relationships, collective spirit, and social solidarity through the honoring of elders, the practice of forgiveness, and the transfer of compensation embedded in indigenous belief systems.

According to the respondents, indigenous institutions and their conflict resolution mechanisms are less expensive and take more time. This is because this method of conflict resolution typically requires the consent and commitment of the parties involved, rather than complex organizational structures or costly campaigns. It is a low-cost and empowering way to resolve disputes quickly. Unlike the formal conflict resolution system, it is less difficult, which reduces the tendency for a "win or lose" mentality and establishes a framework for future disputes. Indigenous conflict resolution processes, unlike formal ones, are quicker, less expensive, and less formal.

According to different sources, the biggest issue with the official conflict resolution systems or courts is the lengthy nature of their processes and the perception that they require a significant amount of time and money. Indeed, the legal system can be convoluted, daunting, and time-intensive. Additionally, enduring multiple hearings and presenting witnesses or evidence were cited as aspects of the court system.

The data retrieved from Afar FGDs and interviews demonstrate that utilizing local conflict resolution institutions offers numerous benefits in terms of cost and time savings. Conflict resolution is faster, and disputants can reach an agreement within their community, reducing expenses related to transport, materials, and time. In contrast, using the formal court system can take a substantial period of time, resulting in financial setbacks such as legal fees, court fees, and representation costs. Indigenous conflict resolution systems are thus a better option for saving both time and money.

Another informant, a native of Afar, Mr. D, who received the services of the traditional institution, gave me the following idea about how the traditional institutions play a significant role and are giving great service to the community:

> *The traditional system of governance, which is led by our clan leader, is, like many other indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, very cheap, easily accessible and non-bureaucratic. Besides, it always allows the disputants to actively participate and resolve their conflicts based on the customary rules of our own people, which make its decisions acceptable. In addition to this, the traditional institutions also play an important role in bringing the disputant clans to reconciliation. Moreover, the institution emphasizes reconciliation rather than punishment of any disputant.*

Based on the FGDs and interviews with key informants on the Afar side, it was found that traditional institutions were integrated into the community and addressed matters according to social agreement, as opposed to the contemporary judicial system. The sources also highlighted the value of utilizing local languages and honoring shared community customs to bolster the efficacy of indigenous institutions in resolving disputes that satisfy both the harmed party and the perpetrator. Traditional structures also offer assistance in restoring the mental and physical well-

being of victims, while providing emotional backing. As per one informant's statement- "Being community-based and using the same language is the source of our strength. Essentially, our systems of resolution are free for all and all proceedings are impartial" (Cidihabura clan leader, Afar).

In addition to this, the Abeggar said as follows:

> *Our systems of governance are like a community well, where everyone can satisfy his/her thirst. It shows that we are part of the community, use familiar language, are impartial, and are fair. Above all, we emphasize a win-win situation. This is the source of our strengths as servants of the people we lead.*

In a broad sense, despite their limitations, the indigenous institutions - particularly their conflict resolution methods - are more advantageous than disadvantageous in terms of maintaining collective security, peace, order, and justice within and between communities where law enforcement is weak. Accordingly, they facilitate social justice through peaceful means and encourage strong social connections within and among communities. No matter how high the service provided by the traditional institution is, the informants who gave me the information state that there are various challenges. To this end, I present Mr. E's idea as follows:

> *Although indigenous institutions have many advantages in conflict prevention and resolution, they also have some weaknesses that need to be addressed to improve their performance. First, whether the Abeggar or religious leaders give decisions orally based on precedence and customary rules passed down to them from their forefathers orally by word of mouth. This allows them flexibility in the system but may result in variation and a lack of standardized, fair decision-making over time and space. Above all, the institutions in both ethnic groups are largely dependent on oral tradition rather than written documents and lack a permanent venue.*

Intact social institutions that are culturally appropriate can provide parties involved in conflict with an opportunity to actively participate in resolving their issues and managing their affairs in accordance with their own cultural practices. However, it is important to note that these indigenous institutions also have certain limitations, such as a lack of early warning and conflict

prevention mechanisms. Additionally, these institutions tend to be male-dominated, with women having no direct involvement in resolving community conflicts due to their lower social status. Despite these limitations, these institutions are still effective in managing disputes within their communities.

5.3.1 Challenges of the Indigenous Institutions

The primary difficulties that indigenous conflict resolution institutions encounter, as stated by key informants, are logistical issues primarily caused by inadequate resources. Indigenous institutions frequently have limited funding and equipment at their disposal to handle inter-ethnic disagreements, making it problematic for them to react quickly to urgent disputes and possibly curtailing their capacity to provide comprehensive solutions. Whenever a conflict arises, the elders are expected to travel to the location of the issue. However, they are beset by financial problems since there are no resources assigned to them, and they must obtain money from the clan, which may take some time.

Because of several reasons (financial constraints, geographic accessibility for those living in rural areas and remote locations, complex procedures of the formal justice system), the poor and many marginalized or disadvantaged people are irregular users of the formal justice system, and the indigenous institutions role lies in guaranteeing access to justice for those poor and disadvantaged or marginalized groups. It's well-known that many studies show how important indigenous conflict resolution institutions and their systems of governance are for marginalized and poor people to have access to justice more than anything else. But governments in different cultural groups failed to support and provide the necessary help to indigenous conflict resolution institutions and their systems of governance, as happened in the study area. According to my informant Mr. Y from the Argobba ethnic group, it was explained as follows:

> *Our Abeggar and their system of governance play a critical role in conflict resolution in our community. However, their role in conflict resolution is often overlooked or undervalued by external actors, including governments and international organizations. This can lead to a lack of support for indigenous institutions and the marginalization of their role in the peace building process. Therefore, it is very important to recognize and respect their roles in conflict resolution and strengthen their capacity to effectively*

address conflicts in our communities and with others. This can be done by providing resources and training to the Abeggar and religious leaders and promoting inclusive and participatory processes that involve all members of the community.

Indigenous institutions face lack of interest from young generations. Many young people do not see the value of their traditional practices & are not willing to learn them. This often results in a loss of knowledge as the older generation dies off. Because, Most of their customs and practices are neither written nor codified since they are passed from generation to generation through word of mouth. This knowledge is only passed on orally to the elder generation, which creates a gap between the younger and older generations. The younger generation prefers modern institutions, leading to the gradual disappearance of the indigenous institutions. Additionally, rural elders have limited knowledge as their children are sent to urban areas for education, which may cause a conflict in authority between younger and older generations. Although sustainability of the indigenous institutions is certain in the short term, the lack of knowledge transfer may lead to eventual erosion of the system and they are at great risk of losing them. The FGDs suggested that "most of our customs and practices are neither written nor codified since they are passed from generations to generations through word of mouth; they are at great risk of dying away and should therefore be taught not only for use in dispute resolution but also for posterity and appreciation by present and future generations" (FGDs with the two clan leaders, Afar).

While indigenous conflict resolution can offer various socioeconomic benefits to individuals, groups, societies, and communities, it encounters numerous challenges from various sources. To mitigate these issues, governmental and non-governmental organizations must lend their support to this system of conflict resolution.

5.4 Capacity Building Activities to Support Indigenous Institutions

The respondents suggest that the local government or the woreda government is involved in supporting indigenous conflict resolution institutions and their mechanisms in the study area. The researcher presents evidence that the government provides support for the local elders and their conflict resolution institutions, but only limited to training. The informants argue that the

government has failed to offer financial and material support to strengthen the institutions in the study area.

The respondents to the research blame the government for prioritizing and investing in capacity-building activities for the traditional elders who are working as peace builders in their community. Mr. A argues that "these elders play a crucial role in maintaining peace and resolving conflicts at the grassroots level, and that without proper training and support; they may not be able to carry out their roles effectively" (Mr. A). In addition to this, the respondents also point out that the government has a responsibility to support and empower the local leaders who are working for the betterment of their communities. They argue that by neglecting to invest in capacity building for traditional elders, the government is failing to fulfill its duty to promote peace and stability in the region.

Furthermore, different informants criticize the government for focusing too heavily on top-down approaches to conflict resolution, such as military intervention or political negotiations, rather than supporting community-led initiatives like those being carried out by traditional and religious elders. They argue that these elders have a more nuanced understanding of local dynamics and are better equipped to address the root cause of the conflict and promote sustainable peace.

Indigenous conflict resolution institutions face various challenges, including a lack of explicit legal directives, insufficient funding from national and international governments, and inadequate oversight capacity, jeopardizing their ability to enhance justice access for society, particularly in remote regions. Mr. Y affirms that traditional elders can efficiently resolve disputes and foster harmony in their community if they receive governmental assistance.

> *As an Ethiopian citizen, I have witnessed firsthand the crucial role played by traditional elders in our country. These respected members of society serve as both custodians of our cultural heritage and guardians of our social cohesion. Despite their invaluable contribution to our communities, these elders often struggle with a lack of resources and support from governments. However, in instances where they receive support, their role becomes even more effective. When our traditional elders receive support from the government in the form of funding, training, and recognition, they are able to carry out*

their duties more effectively. For instance, they are able to coordinate community initiatives such as peace building more efficiently. They play a crucial role in conflict resolution, especially in areas where the formal justice system is weak or nonexistent. By providing different supports, our religious leaders and clan leaders can prevent our conflicts from escalating into violence and assist in restoring peace when they do.

Furthermore,

The elders can serve as a link between us and the government. They can effectively communicate the concerns and needs of our community to the government, ensuring the government delivers the necessary services and support. In conclusion, our elders are an essential part of our communities and their value cannot be overstated. With support from the government, our elders can make an even greater impact in our communities and even become more effective. It is crucial that the government acknowledges and allocates resources towards supporting our elders and spiritual leaders, who play significant roles in preserving our heritage and promoting social progress.

Overall, the informant's criticism of the government regarding capacity-building activities for indigenous elders as peace builders may stem from a belief that the government is not doing enough to support homegrown solutions to conflict and is instead relying on outside actors to solve problems that could be addressed at the community level.

CHAPTER SIX

6. Conclusion and Recommendation

These findings provide the study's outcomes and subsequently suggest appropriate courses of action.

6.1 Conclusion

In conclusion, the interethnic conflict between Argobba and Afar in the northeast of Ethiopia is a complex issue that requires a multifaceted approach to resolution. This study aimed to investigate the causes of the conflict, describe the role of indigenous institutions in resolving it, examine the limitations and challenges faced by these institutions, and identify capacity-building activities that could address gaps in their operations.

Through a historical and sociocultural analysis, the study found that the conflict between Argobba and Afar has deep roots in the two groups' identities and land use claims. Indigenous institutions, such as the Abeggar and clan leaders, have played a crucial role in resolving conflicts between the Afar and Argobba communities. The study revealed that existing traditional indigenous conflict resolution institutions, such as the Abeggar system of governance in the Argobba community and the woreda council of elders (clan leaders) in the Afar community, have been effective in resolving conflicts between the two ethnic groups. Their institutions have successfully resolved conflicts through traditional methods of dialogue, mediation, and reconciliation. These methods are based on community-driven approaches and cultural norms that hold people accountable for resolving conflicts.

However, the study also identified several challenges and limitations that hinder the effective operation of traditional indigenous conflict resolution institutions. The difficulties that they face consist of inadequate backing and acknowledgment from the government, restricted supplies, and the reality that their traditions and rituals are typically not documented or organized as they are handed down through word of mouth from one generation to another. There is a significant danger that they will lose them.

The findings of this study have highlighted the urgent need for intervention in enhancing the capacity of indigenous institutions to address various issues faced by their communities. Failure to initiate relevant training programs will not only hamper the growth of indigenous institutions, but it will also deprive them of the much-needed support they need to operate effectively. In conclusion, the role of indigenous institutions in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts in Argobba and Afar, northeast Ethiopia, cannot be overstated. By addressing their limitations and challenges and strengthening their capacities, these institutions can play a critical role in promoting sustainable peace and development in the region.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are proposed.

1. The government and policymakers should recognize, value, and support traditional indigenous conflict resolution institutions as critical actors in resolving ethnic conflicts, such as that between the Afar and Argobba. This can be done by providing resources, promoting their activities, and incorporating them into the legal framework.
2. Traditional indigenous conflict resolution institutions should collaborate with modern governance and legal frameworks to ensure that the conflict resolution process is fair and just for all parties involved.
3. The communities should be educated on the importance of traditional indigenous conflict resolution institutions and their role in resolving conflicts between ethnic groups.
4. Research should be conducted to assess the effectiveness of traditional indigenous conflict resolution institutions in other ethnic conflicts to determine their broader significance in conflict resolution in Ethiopia.

In summary, the study concludes that traditional indigenous conflict resolution institutions have a crucial role to play in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia. Therefore, more attention and resources should be dedicated to the development and promotion of these institutions to ensure peaceful coexistence between different ethnic groups in the country.

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Appendix - 1

Dilla University

Institute of Indigenous Studies

Master of Philosophy in Indigenous Studies

Questionnaire for the Concerned Bodies

Dear respondents,

The purpose of using in-depth interviews and focus group discussions is to collect information about how Indigenous institutions resolve conflicts in situations where there is inter-ethnic tension between the Argobba and Afar people in Northeast Ethiopia. Your input will be used to create an academic paper, so please provide accurate information. Rest assured that any data provided will be kept confidential.

Thank you in advance for your kind cooperation!

I. In-depth Interview Guide Questions for community Members

1. Can you provide a historical perspective on the relationship between the Afar and Argobba communities?
2. What are the social and cultural factors that contribute to inter- ethnic conflict between the Afar and Argobba communities? Is there instance of enmity between Afar and Argobba? Which group is mostly often involved in the enmity? When the enmity started and what are the impacts?
3. What role has politics played in exacerbating or mitigating inter- ethnic conflict between the two communities?
4. Are there any traditional conflict resolution institutions that the Afar and Argobba communities have relied on in the past to resolve conflicts? If so, can you describe them?
5. Can you give me examples of successful conflict resolution efforts in which indigenous institutions played a leading role in the study area?
6. What has been done by the indigenous institutions to address the conflict?
7. How much the indigenous institutions are effective in the interventions to bring sustainable peace in the two ethnic groups?
8. What limitations and challenges have indigenous institutions faced in their efforts to resolve interred - ethnic conflicts in the two ethnic groups?

9. What types of relationship exist between the indigenous institutions and modern legal systems in the two ethnic groups?

10. What capacity buildings activities have been undertaken to address potential gaps in the effectiveness of indigenous institutions in the context of inter- ethnic conflict in the study area?

11. In your experience, what do you think are the most important elements for long term conflict resolution between the Afar and Argobba communities?

II. Interviews with Abeggar and Clan leaders, based on the role they played in conflict resolution and bringing peace to their community are presented as follows:

1. Good afternoon. Thank you for speaking with me today, and I wanted to talk to you about the conflict resolution process between Afar and Argobba last year. Can you provide a brief history of the relationship between the Afar and Argobba people? What is your understanding of the current conflict between the Afar and Argobba people?
2. What are some of the cultural and social practices that may contribute to inter- ethnic conflict between the Afar and Argobba ethnic groups?
3. Can you describe any traditional or indigenous methods that have been used in the past to resolve conflicts between the two groups?
4. Can you tell me about your role as a traditional leader in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts? How did you, as a clan leader, play a significant role in this process? In what ways have local elders and religious leaders can contribute to the resolution of inter-ethnic conflicts?
5. How do you approach conflicts that arise between different ethnic groups?
6. Can you describe a particular conflict that you were involved in resolving?
7. How do you see the role you are playing and other traditional leaders evolving in conflict resolution?
8. Can you give me some examples of specific actions you took during the negotiation process?
9. How effective do you think the conflict resolution process was, and what positive outcomes have you seen as a result?

10. What do you think makes you and other clan leaders effective mediators in conflicts like this?
11. In your opinion, what are some of successful methods indigenous institutions use to resolve inter- ethnic conflicts between the Afar and Argobba people?
12. What resources or support might be needed in-order to effectively resolve this conflict, and how might you acquire those resources?
13. What are some of the major limitations and challenges that indigenous institutions face when mediating inter- ethnic conflicts between Afar and Argobba?
14. Have any capacity building activities been implemented to address these limitations and challenges?
15. What might be some effective ways to enhance the capacity of these institutions to resolve inter-ethnic conflicts in the future?

III. Interview Guide Questions for Government Officials (peace and security office & police station)

1. Can you provide insights into the historical, social, cultural, and political relations between the Afar and Argobba communities that have led to the current conflict?
2. In your opinion, what are the key cultural practices and values of the Afar and Argobba communities that can be leveraged for conflict resolution?
3. What role can traditional leaders, elders, and other indigenous institutions play in resolving the conflict between the Afar and Argobba communities?
4. What are the main challenges faced by the indigenous institutions in effectively resolving the inter-ethnic conflict in the two cultural groups?
5. Have any capacity building activities or training programs been implemented for the indigenous institutions? If yes, what has been their impact?
6. How can the external actors, including the peace and security office, support the efforts of indigenous institutions in resolving the inter-ethnic conflict between the Afar and Argobba communities?
7. What is the relationship between indigenous institutions and and the government in times of inter- ethnic conflicts between the Afar and Argobba people?

8. How can outside organizations or government institutions work effectively with indigenous institutions to resolve inter- ethnic conflicts between the Afar and Argobba people?
9. Finally, how can we ensure that indigenous institutions continue to play a vital role in mediating inter- ethnic conflicts between the Afar and Argobba people in the future?

IV. Focus group Guide questions

1. What indigenous institutions exist in your community to resolve conflicts between the Afar and Argobba people?
2. Have these institutions been effective in the past in resolving inter-ethnic conflicts between the Afar and Argobba people's?
3. How do community members perceive the role indigenous institutions in conflict resolution compared to government led initiatives?
4. What challenges do community members face when accessing indigenous conflict resolution institutions?
5. How can indigenous conflict resolution institutions be strengthened and made more accessible to all community members?
6. Are there any cultural practices or beliefs that hinder effective conflict resolution between the Afar and Argobba people?
7. How can community elders and leaders work together to promote peaceful coexistence between Afar and Argobba people?
8. Should the government play a role in supporting and promoting indigenous conflict resolution institutions in your community?
9. How can community members work together to prevent future conflicts and build stronger relationships between different ethnic groups?
10. What role can women's play in promoting peaceful coexistence between the Afar and Argobba people?

Appendix - 2

List of Key Informants & FGDs Participants

No	Interviewed Code No	Sex	Age	Ethnic group	Educational level	Place of interview	Date of interview	Remark
1	Mr. W	M	57	Argobba	Able to write & read	Medina	15th, March	Religious leader
2	Mr. A	M	38	Amhara	Degree	medina	18th, March	
3	Mr. B	M	33	Amhara	Degree	medina	16th March	Expert at peace &security office
4	Mr. C	M	42	Argobba	Diploma	medina	15th, March	
5	Mr. X	M	41	Argobba	Diploma	medina	17th, March	Police officer
6	Mr. Y	M	32	Amhara	Degree	medina	17th, March	
7	The Abeggar	M	53	Argobba	Able to write & read	medina	22th, March	Traditional elder
8	Mr. K	M	45	Argobba	Able to write & read	medina	22th, March	
9	Mr. M	M	52	Argobba	Able to write & read	medina	19th, March	
10	Mr. U	M	37	Amhara	Degree	medina	17th, March	
11	Mr. J	F	33	Amhara	Degree	medina	18th, March	
12	Mr. O	M	32	Amhara	Degree	medina	18TH, March	Expert at Justice office
13	Mr. D	M	48	Afar	Able to write & read	Telalak	24th, March	Victim person
14	Mr. E	M	35	Afar	Degree	Telalak	24th, March	
15	Mr. G	M	42	Afar	Able to write & Read	Telalak	24th, March	
16	Mr. Q	M	36	Afar	Diploma	Telalak	27th, March	Police officer
17	Mr. N	M	45	Afar	Able to write & read	Telalak	24th, March	
18	Clan leader	M	48	Afar	Able to write & read	Telalak	27th, March	Cidihabura clan leader
19	Mr. H	M	56	Afar	Able to write & read	Telalak	24th, March	

20	Clan leader	M	53	Afar	Able to write & read	Telalak	27th, March	Secabura clan leader

Key: Argobba Focus group discussion participants

No	Participant code No	sex	Age	Ethnic group	Educational level	Place of discussion	Date of discussion
1	ARFGDP 1	M	53	Argobba	Able to write & read	Medina	22, March,2023
2	ARFGDP 2	M	41	Amhara	Diploma	**	**
3	ARFGDP 3	M	48	Argobba	Able to write & read	**	**
4	ARFGDP 4	M	57	Argobba	Able to write & read	**	**
5	ARFGDP 5	M	48	Argobba	Able to write & read	**	**
6	ARFGDP 6	M	44	Argobba	Able to write & read	**	**
7	ARFGDP 7	M	33	Amhara	Degree	**	**

Afar Focus Group Discussion Participant

No	Participant code No	sex	Age	Ethnic group	Educational level	Place of discussion	Date of discussion
1	AFFGDP 1	M	48	Afar	Writing & reading	TElalak, Afar	27th, March, 2023
2	AFFGDP 2	M	36	Afar	diploma	Telalak, Afar	**
3	AFFGDP 3	M	56	Afar	Writing & reading	Telalak, Afar	**
4	AFGDP 4	M	48	Afar	Able to write & read	Telalak, Afar	**
5	AFGDP 5	M	35	Afar	degree	Telalak, Afar	**
6	AFGDP 6	M	46	Afar	No school	Telalak, Afar	**
7	AFGDP 3	M	51	Afar	Writing & reading	Telalak, Afar	**