

## THE STRUCTURE AND PROCESS OF SERA INSTITUTION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SILTIE SOCIETY

Ezedin Fedlu Nuri

### ABSTRACT

The structure and process of sera institution in conflict resolution in the Siltie society has rarely been treated in previous literatures. Thus, this study mainly aimed to fill this gap by examining the structure, process and major rituals of sera institution in resolving conflicts in Siltie Society. The study employed a descriptive qualitative research design. The researcher has collected data from primary and secondary sources. The data collected were organized thematically and analyzed qualitatively. The findings revealed that Sera institution in Siltie society has its unique structures and process for conflict resolution such as steps of hearing, examination of parties, judgments process, appeals, methods of decision enforcement and rituals. Finally based on the findings of the research, the researcher has recommended some key points such as high promotion, research, artistic activities such documentaries have to be done on Sera for the case of Siltie society to promote and best benefit it.

**Keywords:** conflict, conflict resolution, sera, structure, process, rituals

### 1. INTRODUCTION

There is no single meaning for the term conflict. Different scholars have provided different meanings for conflict (Roderick Ogley, 1999). Montagu defines it as: a condition of disharmony in an interaction process and usually occurs as a result of clash of interest between the parties involved in some form of relationship (Montagu, 1973).

Conflict is a common phenomenon in any community with different cultural background or within the same ethnic group with the same culture (Ramsbotham, 2005). Though conflict is common and inevitable in every human interaction, it has to be resolved in order to prevent a violent action or distraction and thereby to ensure the peaceful, harmonious and stable co-existence of the society (Oppenshaw, D.L., Nel, M. & Louw, L., 2018).

To this end, apart from the formal government courts, different societies have developed and used different customary institutions to resolve conflict based on their social, economic, religious, political and cultural contexts (Kendie, S.B. & Guri, B. 2006).

Researchers showed that, almost all over Africa, there are customary institutors to resolve conflicts (Alula and Getachew, 2008). As part of Africa, in Ethiopia; there are many customary conflict resolution institutions (Gebre, 2011).

As part of Ethiopia, Sera institution in Siltie Society plays greater role to resolve social conflicts and keeps harmonious life between the members of the Society. The role of the institution is very broad in the Siltie Society that it plays great role in every aspect of their life including the upbringing and fostering of children with ethical and moral values (Keyredin, 2012).

There are previous studies which have studied on the Sera customary institutions in resolving conflicts. The previous studies such as (Keyredin, 2012) and (Alula and Getachew, 2008) have studied the roles of sera and its aspects in a general context of conflict resolution or management. But specifically the structures and process Sera institution in resolving conflicts, the judgment and appeal process as well as the ritual has not

been well addressed to the case of Siltie Society. Therefore, this study aimed to fill these gaps and has come up with that.

The study used qualitative approach as a research methodology; data has been gathered through purposive interviews with elders and field observations. Fifteen elders have been interviewed in three Woredas out of eleven Woredas of Siltie Zone (five interviews in each Woreda) and the researchers observed five conflict resolutions scenarios (three in Mierab Azernet-berbere Woreda Mugo-terara kebele and two in Misraq Azernet-berbre Woreda in Gomoro village). Finally data has been analyzed qualitatively.

When we see the geographic scope, the study was conducted in the Siltie society whose origin is Siltie zone in the former SNNPRS of Ethiopia (currently re-structured as central Ethiopia regional state). This study was limited only to three Woredas out of eleven woredas of Silte zone. Concerning the scope of the issues, the study has assessed the structures, the processes and the rituals of Sera institution in resolving conflicts in Siltie society.

With respect to its significance, this study indicates the major structures and process as well as rituals of sera institution in conflict resolution for the case of Siltie society. Thus, policy makers and non-governmental actors can get organized information in order to consider public policy.

However, the study was not out of limitation. For instance lack of prior literature on the topic at hand specific to Siltie society is rare. Citing prior research studies forms the basis of my literature review and helps me lay a foundation for understanding the research problem in a better way. This factor has impacted me in one way or another.

Lastly, in terms of the sample size, the number of the units of analysis of the study has been limited to three Woredas of Siltie Zone. Due to the huge resource it demanded, I haven't covered the whole Siltie zone. Therefore, were the number of Woredas increased, the opportunity of gathering more information and concreting the research could increase.

## **2. THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Both conflict and conflict resolution are interdependent concepts (Hugh Miall, 1999). That is why conflict resolution cannot be talked if there will be no conflict. Being means to resolve conflicts, customary institutions such as sera can be taken plat forms to understand how conflicts are raised and ways to resolution (Zartman, W.I., 2000).

The contribution of customary institutions for conflict resolution is influenced by a complex set of social, political, institutional and personal factors (ibid). Its positive factors are the outcomes of their interactions, social factors (such as reciprocity practice, informal sanctions) accompanied by well support and encouragement by properly studying the process is vital (Tsongo, Claudine, 2012). Theoretically, conflict resolution through customary institutions cannot be imagined without structures and process of the institution (Schellenberg, James A., 1996). Though customary institutions may have common structural and process wise similarities each institutional may vary in many specific aspects (Tsongo, Claudine, 2012). Hence, In order to address this, knowing the structure, process and rituals of Sera institution to the case of Siltie society is are crucial. Accordingly the study aimed to fill gap.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1. The Structure of Sera Institution in Siltie Society**

According to the data gathered (interviews, focus group discussions) and field observations, Sera institution in Siltie society covers the social aspects of the society from growth to marriage, from marriage to death.

Under the structures mentioned below conflicts arise when reciprocity practice is violated. The structures and process are as follows.

### **3.1.1. Hemdgnet**

As my informant stated: sera governing birth or Hemdgnet Sera is based on the types of social life which (specifically governs birth and social conflict management related to birth governance). This usually happens when a woman gives birth; women and men go to the house where the baby has been delivered and say Shukr yegbay holding gifts and food. This practice is a kind of reciprocity practice that everyone in the system is expected to return the thing he had received in his turn. This is called Hemdinegt (Birth governance). Conflict arises when someone gives birth and the reciprocity practice is violated.

### **3.1.2. Dumefetche**

Depending on the statement of my informant: Dumefetche Sera is also based on the types of social life. This celebrates when a child grows up to seven years old or more. On one hand to bless the child for his future fate and on another hand to expresses the family's happiness that their child is going to be an asset for the family. In the ceremony the families prepare special food and gather the neighbors, relatives and the friends of the child. Then, the elders bless the child and the food will be eaten.

### **3.1.3. Nitre-hiterot**

My informants stated that: Nitre-ye-eiterot Sera is based on the types of social life and reciprocity practice in Siltie society. This happens when the family celebrates male circumcision. Traditionally after the circumcision, the families gather together and invite relatives and neighbors of the child for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Then the women come with a kettle of coffee. After the ceremony the elders bless as usually and the people enjoy talking and eating.

### **3.1.4. Herashi**

According to my informants, Ye-Arashi Sera or Sera governing Barnyard usually bases on economy governance and social conflict resolution in the course of the economic interaction. This takes place when adult men or young boys cooperate with a group of three, four or six for farming. In the case of these Sera, women are expected to gather in the Herashi house and help their friends to prepare food and Shameta, a traditional drink.

### **3.1.5. Meher**

As my informant stated, Yemeher Sera or Sera governing smashing of Inset Plant is another one. According to my informant, the villagers have special food culture practiced in all the generation. Once a year after the thirteenth month Pagmen when a Meher time comes, the women assemble and prepare a Kusa which is made by Wese plant (false banana) and a "Bulla" and the whole process is known as Meher. In this process women are expected to co-operate each other.

### **3.1.6. Yelam mewt/yegubuligne**

As stated by my informants: When someone's cattle dies, all of the villagers and if the situation demands the clan members are expected to contribute money for assistance and those who have no money are expected to help and cooperate the family in facilitating the ceremony. This is called Yelam mewt/yegubuligne Sera or Sera governing death of cattle.

### **3.1.7. Ye-wujo Sera**

As attested by my informants: In the wujo, all the women who can possibly milk their cows get together and accumulate the milk in the house of one of the wujo members. Then wujo taker woman sells the butter and the cheese to get money for the family's house consumption. This process continues until all the members of

wujo takers take their rounds. The wujo ends when the cows stop to give milk. This is what mean by Ye-wujo Sera or Sera governing accumulation of milk.

### **3.1.8. Ye-abekerache Sera**

According to my informants, in the yearly Arafa holiday, all adults especially fano persons that come from different cities of the country to celebrate the holiday in their home village, slaughter a sheep or an ox; while children surrounding the beef chant, talk and play “yegnay kerab fuqrin...” (Our beef is fat!). In the morning of the holiday, the men chop meat while women preparing financho and the whole process are called abekerache. At the night of the Arafa day, all the family members living in the village chant. The elder girls make Dapha which is special kind of financho to be eaten with meat. While the elders bless the rest of the people say “let Allah accepts our blessing!” This is known as Ye-abekerache Sera.

### **3.1.9. Ye-einjera Sera**

As stated by my informants: When cows give birth, the women accumulate milk for about two weeks and the neighbors and relatives, including the entire family member aggregate to celebrate einjera ceremony. It is to mean that everyone in the ceremony eats financho with milk proportionally to his age. The more his age the more proportion of milk he can share; even no one begins to eat and drink before the elders begin. This process is governed by Ye-abekerache Sera.

### **3.1.10. Elilola**

As the data obtained from my informant, Yezaqilo/Elilola Sera or Sera governing cowboys' interaction are related with cow boys. Cow boys co-operate each other and play with harmony in grazing lands. They are expected to comply with brotherhood and sense of affiliation one for the other. Cowboys give special names for their cattle. “Bokish” is a name given to black cows while Bushul for red cow. Sancho, Sahrad and Dama are also names given to cows. During winter, where there is no availability of moist grass, the people feed their cattle with the leaves of inset plant which can store large amount of water for a long period of time and the horses are used to carry goods from market and grasses for cattle from river mouths. Like that of cows, they also give different names for the “wese” plant depending on the test it gives, availability and the medical significance of the plant. Tororo, Kinhiba, Kminar, Agade, Ahiro, Benezi, Demworad and Garye are the commonly available inset plants. Similarly the name “Shire” is given to a white horse and “Dama” for a blue horse. The best mule is given a name “Sinar”.

### **3.1.11. Atwachat**

According to my informants, Atwachat/Noqo Sera is Sera governing a kind of girls' night party. Most of time adult girls select their future husbands in the ceremony. In the ceremony, adult girls come together; holding their younger sisters and brothers with hands, then the children walk behind them. Before one day of Atwachat, mothers are expected to offer butter, financho, cheese and afrinja for their daughters. In addition to these, a variety of traditional food is taken from the families of each adult girl. Then in the evening, the participants prepare food for dinner and breakfast. At the mid-night, chanting, singing and talking about their future husbands begin. It is exclusively organized by adult girls. In the ceremony girls give nick name for each other and for mothers such as Bora, Shewa, Galshewa, Leta, Washto, Boserchit etc.

### **3.1.12. Yediglaye Sera**

My informants stated that: In their cultural marriage, the parents are expected to choose wife for their adult boys and send a middle men known as ye bad Balliq (the elders of the country). When the selected elders go to the family of the chosen girl, then the parents of the girl will have two options which depend on the personalities of the elders. If the elders are highly respectable in the society, then the parents say “yemal seb geban minteqela” (the country's respectable elders have come to us; what shall we do!) And then agree. In

the next day the elders for the second time, with one or two members of the family of the boy, go to the family of the girl to give money and cloths for the girl. This is known as Samot or kissing. It is said so for the parents of the boy bend down ward and kiss the foot of parents of the girl to show their happiness to be a member of the family by affinity and are expected to give some money to parents and the nearest families. When a man marries, his relatives have prior right to be his Meri/best man and violating such practices results in isolation from relatives. In addition to this the Meri takes the bride or the brume to his or her house to invite breakfast, lunch or dinner. The whole process is governed by Yediglaye Sera or Sera governing marriage.

### **3.1.13. Ye-esedoro Sera**

In Siltie society, the burden of the family is on the shoulder of ladies and girls. The women make a traditional spoon called Kershe, fetch water from river, paint the wall and roof of the tent, clean and decorate the floor, bring Berbero and Nazo which are lime stone and red soil structures from a far distance. For the painting purpose, paint the doors, window and floors with animals dung, prepare Ineche, Kapat and Workima (traditional beds), and prepare Mesob (a traditional dish), Isedoro and Bitre for the purpose of meal. When the men plough the land to plant varieties of plants and crops; the women assist their husbands walking behind singing motivating slogans and songs. This called Ye-esedoro Sera.

### **3.1.14. Abach-yigezot Sera**

My informants further added that, women usually get together and help the men during farming, harvesting and collecting harvest from fields. It is said helping men because basically the women gather together in round to address each ones turn to do the same practice/helping men in work. This is called abach-yigezot Sera or Sera governing women's men co-operation in the farm.

### **3.1.15. Wobaje**

According to my informant, Yeshura sera practices where families, relatives or any parts of the society gather together to discuss issues raised on them to settle the problem and come up with solution. In addition to this they may discuss issues concerning the situation of the country as a whole. This is governed by Yeshure/wobaja Sera or Sera governing Discussion.

### **3.1.16. Yedebelot/Tedbabelot Sera**

In conformity with my informants, the term Tedebelot refers to maintaining smooth and continuous relationship among the society based on their social status so that all the members of the society visit each other. This is governed under Yedebelot/Tedbabelot Sera or Sera governing get together. As stated by my informant, Yeshaziot Sera/Asawe yebelot Sera is also under this category. This is sometimes a kind of conflict resolution involves when the conflicting parties meet together without involving third party by themselves to negotiate and settle their interests based on mutual benefit.

### **3.1.17. Yebil-tigagezo Sera**

As attested by my informant: when a member of a society becomes economically weak and unable to hire Harashi for his farming and tent building. The members of the society get together and work the farms of the person on a fixed day. This practice also occurs during normal times to develop and strengthen the social relationship between the societies. This is what means by Yebil-tigagezo Sera or Sera governing help for job performance.

### **3.1.18. Awl/ Yatiwlot Sera**

According to my informant, within the society sometimes children or cattle may lost and the woman loudly shouts yebad awle, yedinet awle and all the people hearing such shout are expected o respond fast. This is known as atwilot (seeking assistance from the community).

### **3.1.19. Yemesgid sinq**

According to my informant, this practice takes place where women prepare food and invite the villagers to mosques and old men bless. This happens casually. In addition to this Deresas (religious students) come from different places and settle in the mosques and the villagers are expected to feed Deresas based on their number. The villagers share Deresas and feed them until they leave the village. yemesigid-sinq/Wodo Sera or Sera governing mosque food is the way of feeding Deresas.

### **3.1.20. Yenegde-tekibelot Sera**

As attested by my informant, when old people or elders of the country Comes to someone's house tonight or day time anyone is obliged to accept and send messenger to the villagers to let them know that gust has come to his house. Then all the villagers come up with a kettle of coffee and food. Then the one to who's house the gust comes slaughter sheep or beef. Men chop the meat and the women prepare a traditional food called financho and the people eat together. The gusts bless the villagers. This is known as Negde-tekibelot.

### **3.1.21. Yalfate Sera**

According to my informant, Yekatot/Mura Sera or Sera governing measurement of funeral food is under the category of this sub division. This is to refer that on the day of funeral of the passed away person those who are in the same Edir brings food and women distribute the food after receiving from the people. Those who receive the food have some traditional measurement tools. This practice is called yekatot sera. All the people under the same Edir and all relatives including friends are expected to be presented in the funeral or after funeral as their situation demands. Within a single funeral ceremony thousands of people gather together. This is called Alfate yejigot sera. The people receive gusts, do jobs and help and assist the families of the passed away person.

### **3.1.22. Awtchachgne**

According to my informant, in the sera of Awtchahigne, where property is lost, stolen or if there is some kind of suspicion that certain property is a stolen, the elders from all villages including every member of the society get-together in one place to celebrate an institution called Awchachigne. In this institution the elders discuss the stolen property and come up with conclusion. If they reach on an agreement or the majority of them decide that the property could be stolen they will say "the one who has stolen this property will have two options. Option one: to return the property and put in certain specified place chosen by the elders as well as by the villagers without seen by any one and the second option is to be condemned by the elders of the country and the people as well."

Most of the time the people who has stolen the property fear some kind of spiritual power and return back the stolen property, otherwise they feel that their life will be darkened by the condemnation.

### **3.1.23. Yemegent Sera**

As attested by my informant, in this institution, when two people fight each other or someone who seeks protection from enemy after committing some form of crime either intentionally or negligently, comes to third partly and ask Megent (seeking protection). The protection results from the personality of the third party because the enemy abandons his attack for the sake of the respect and honor of the third party. Even in some cases, if a person intends to commit suicide, his neighbors go to the country's elders and Seek yebad megent (protection from the country). It is to seek the country's elders assistant to help the depressed person

so as to escape him from that state of depression either by settling any dispute happened on him or material assistance.

According to my informant, yerubt Hilq sera or Count and let me Count/ or Sera governing remand is under this category. This begins with the two parties and the two side elders with third party elder. The number is usually odd to enable them make decisions with majority vote. First the complaint stands from his place and says rubte hilq (count guarantees). Then the defendant counts two or four elders and on his turn asks the complaint to count. The complaint again counts two or four elders. The two together with the assistance of the counted elders add another third party elder. The next step is examination in chief, cross examination, and re-examination of parties by the elders. Finally the elders give their own decisions like punishment, reconciliation, mediation nature or any another proper decision based on equity also.

### **3.1.24. Yebaliknet Sera**

As my informants stated, this form of conflict resolution involves a kind of negotiation, arbitration or mediation depending on the kind and gravity of the conflict as well as the nature of conflicting parties. Elders usually demand the parties to take cooling period and see the values and the interdependence of the parties and the values that the parties share in common. The elders usually persuade the parties invoking that one party cannot exist without the other party. Hence solving their problem by themselves helps them to restore their relation. The elders in this scenario argue that the parties have no true conflict but disagreement and misunderstanding each other.

In conformity with my informants, herat or accommodation Sera is in this category. This takes place usually when the conflicting parties have two opposite interests; the elders reconcile them and negotiate the other party to give and take. Usually the conflicting party ends up with agreement.

In conformity with my informant, in this category there is yemugut Sera which sometimes aggressively involves litigation process, examinations and hearings. Usually two or four elders on both sides and one third party neutral elder to make the decision based on majority vote.

In all of the above scenarios, Conflict also occurs if someone fails to comply with usual cooperation or violation of reciprocity practice happens. The friends of the man or woman whom failed to comply with cooperation try to reconcile the situation and if they fail, elders will involve in the case. This will usually end up with agreement up on fine payment on the defaulted party or forgiveness.

## **3.2. The Processes of Sera Institution in Resolving Conflicts in Siltie Society**

Sera institution to the case of Siltie Society has its own Processes, evidences, rules of admissibility and examination of parities in the course of conflict resolution.

### **3.2.1. Laws**

According to my informant, sera institution uses different laws/ or qiche both customary and state laws. Usually informal laws such as universal moral standards, equity, reasonable man standard measure and elders' decision practice known as raga records. The raga rules and decisions are used as jus-cojens practice. In addition, religious laws are also used for martial, inheritance and pity offence decisions. On the other hand, there are different rules and admissibility of evidences. The basic prerequisites of admissibility are relevancy, materiality or competence. In general, if evidence is shown to be relevant, material, and competent, and is not barred by an exclusionary rule, it is admissible.

### **3.2.2. Evidence and admissibility of evidence**

As attested by my informant, evidence is relevant when it has any tendency in reason to make the fact that it is offered to prove or disprove either more or less probable. To be relevant, a particular item of evidence need not make the fact for which it is offered certain, or even more probable than not. All that is required is that it has some tendency to increase the likelihood of the fact for which it is offered.

In conformity with my informants, evidence is competent if the proof that is being offered meets certain traditional requirements of reliability. The preliminary showing that the evidence meets those tests, and any other prerequisites of admissibility, is called the foundational evidence. When an objection is made that an answer to a question, a document, or a thing lacks a proper foundation, what the objector is really saying is that a showing of competence, or of another prerequisite of admissibility, has not yet been made. Exclusionary rule is a rule that excludes evidence from admissibility. An example of exclusionary evidence is evidence based on the past conflict which has been solved by agreement.

According to my informants, there are five traditional types of evidence in the sera institution in Silte society: real, demonstrative, documentary, and testimonial and character. Real evidence is a thing the existence or characteristics of which are relevant and material. It is usually a thing that was directly involved in some event in the case. Demonstrative evidence is just what the name implies that it demonstrates or illustrates the testimony of a witness. It will be admissible when, with accuracy sufficient for the task at hand, it fairly and accurately reflects that testimony and is otherwise unobjectionable. Typical examples of demonstrative evidence are maps, diagrams of the scene of an occurrence, animations, and the like. Documentary evidence is often a kind of real evidence, as for example where a contract is offered to prove its terms. When a document is used this way it is authenticated the same way as any other real evidence. The informants further elaborated that, testimonial evidence is the most basic form of evidence and the only kind that does not usually require another form of evidence as a prerequisite for its admissibility. It consists of what is said in the court at the proceeding in question by a competent witness. Character is a generalized quality usually attributed to a person, such as truthfulness, violence, drunkenness, and the like.

My informants stated that: form and steps of examination are different. There are three forms of examination. Direct examination is questioning by the victim and the elders who calls the witness to testify concerning matters that into which he is the first party to inquire. Cross examination is an examination intended to destroy the testimony of the other party through creating logical arguments and showing speculations, gaps on the arguments of the party. Re-examination is a form of examination by the party who began the examination to restore what is destroyed by the opponent party. The examination process begins by the defendant party to damage the words and testimonies of the other party priory attested against the party. The plaintiff party will be crosschecked and leading question is allowed in this step. If the re-examination ends with contradictory or suspicious words of the plantain the probability that the decision will be in favor of the defendant is high. In this case elders are impartial and ask clarifying questions.

### **3.2.5. The Rule against Hearsay, Privileges, Presumption, Megent**

According to my informants, hearsay evidence is evidence of a statement that was made other than by a witness while testifying at the hearing in question and that is offered to prove the truth of the matter stated. A statement can be in words or conduct that is intended by the actor as a substitute for words. The first step in any analysis of possible hearsay is the determination of whether the statement being offered is in fact hearsay. If the statement is not hearsay, the analysis ends. If the statement is hearsay, step two is a determination of whether the hearsay statement helps to trace the truth. Unlike the modern justice system



hear say will be accepted not to measure itself but to use it as a hint to trace out the truth. There are also Privileges. Evidentiary privileges are rights held by certain persons that allow them either to refuse to provide evidence or to prevent evidence from being offered against them. In the Sera case privileges are allowed when a person wants not to disclose his criminal secret that doesn't affected anyone.

According to my informants, Presumptions are also key points. A presumption is assumptions based known facts. For example if a certain thing is commonly known by the society, it would not be an issue for examination and cross-check. Rather it will be accepted as a known fact. On the other hand there is a principle of Megen or Objections. Megen or Objection is a procedure done by the opposing party in order to stop personal harassments, an admissible proceedings and lying by the other party during litigation.

### **3.2.6. Hearing, Procedures and Principles, Steps of Hearing, Decision making**

In conformity with my informant, under this there are procedures and principles. Assuring the Absence of Conflicts of Interest is the first procedure under oral hearing. Before the elders begin the processing of the case the elders assure that the elders are not from one side. The elders have to be composed of equal number from each party and one neutral. The neutral elder has to be non-relative for all parties. However, parties may give consent to be judged by elders from only one side. This usually emanate from the integrity and personality of elders. This is done to avoid conflict of interests in the process of decision making. Then pre-hearing is the next procedure and principle. This usually helps to know if parties are not at issue. Sometimes people on the same argument but with different ways of expressions may feel as if they are in conflict. The pre hearing can save time, money and energy greatly.

According to my informant, pre hearing involves briefly hearing both parties to find possibility of running the case in an easy way. Elders usually make pre hearing to know the gravity of the case and enter in to the formal hearing process. Next to the above, the procedure and principle of or interveners and interested persons are the next. While elders begin to deal the case and cross examine some interested parties can come and appeal that they have interest in the case either because of economic benefit such as subrogation practice or if they bring some new fact that third party is injured by the defendant or plaintiff because of them, then the elders usually adjourn the case and hear the new party. After hearing the facts of the new party and analyzing the case the new party will be allowed to elect his own elders and then he will be allowed to be part of the case. The case will be re-heard and examination of parties and witnesses will continue on another fixed day.

In conformity with my informants, "Tert" or oath and the role of "Raga" are the next procedure and principle. Affidavits are usually accepted before the elders' examination and usually attested by religious books and the elders examine the situation based on the proceeding. After examining the result of the oath the elders decide on the next thing to be done. Sometimes the affidavits result may cause cancelation of the examination of parties and witnesses if the two parties agree on the outcome. In addition to the above, Raga which is the final appeal decision giver judge may order the process of affidavits for the examination purpose. Raga exceptional can also see cases directly when Maze or elders appear to him seeking solution for crimes whose committer is unknown or seeking decision for crimes whose committer is known. Next o the above persons attending the hearing and giving evidence will be managed. Based on the type of the case persons attending before the hearing of the case may vary. For example if the case is exclusively family issue and confidentiality of information demands, the elders will not allow external parties to attended the case. Most of time fathers and mothers of the two parties are allowed to attend the hearing. Then Appearance at oral hearing will be managed.

According to my informants, once the elders hear and decide to start examining parties, the parties will receive appointment to present their cases orally and briefly. But if one of the parties fail to appear on the hearing day without good reason the failed party will be given another chance upon fine penalty for his absence. He will be also given another two short time appointment chances. But if he fails for the third time either the case will be decided against him or the elders will pass alternative decision usually substantial fine penalty against him and they will inform to the state system to protect the appeared persons rights stating that the default person is above the capacity of the elders because of his immoral nature against the culture of the society. In addition to this they may condemn the defaulted person. The appeared person will be blessed by the elders “Daoten-teqibel’ or receive our blessing. There are steps of hearing and decision making. First panel of elders will take their place. The elders usually seat in front of the people on tall chairs. The next is Attendants who have given permission by the elders and the parties based on the nature of the case will seat on their places. Then the two parties will seat on their position; usually in the middle in front of the elders right and left side. After this, Opening remarks by elders chair will be made. Parties’ identification will be made. Then Preliminary matters, oral requests, Attendances remark , Parties’ opening remarks and presentation of their case, Presentations by interveners and interested persons (if any), Examination of witness, Reply on evidences , Final arguments by parties will be made and they usually remark that they have revealed out their case to the elders and they give their demands and interests for the elders, Clarification questions by the elders, Accepting aggravation and Mitigation Circumstances and Appointment for Decision making or decision are subsequent steps.

### **3.2.7. Judgment, Aggravation and Mitigation, Appeal, Punishments and Enforcement**

In conformity with my informant, judgment is the whole process that the elders undertake from first to last until giving final decision. These are circumstance taken by elders to aggravate or mitigate the punishment after the proof of the crime doer. For example if a man killed another person while trusted by the victim can be one gravitation circumstance. Similarly if the killer attempted to help the victim once he attacked him, it can be one mitigation circumstance. The elders give different types of sanctions and decisions such as fine penalty, isolation of the defaulted party from certain social practices such as isolation from gathering for wedding, farming etc. this kind of penalty will remain only for shorter period of time. In case of incidental or negligence homicide crimes the elders put a huge amount of money for penalty against the offender. In addition to this if someone is found to be cooperative for the commission of type crime or denies assistance for the victim or hides the offender then he will b isolated from certain social practices. But intentional homicide crime will not be exonerated from state penalty and litigation also. But the elders’ penalty will help the offender to restore his relation within the society after returning back to his village by finishing his penalty in prison if death penalty will not be passed against him before a court.

According to my informants, in addition to the above restorative decisions will be decided by the elders. For example if someone stoles property the elders will decide the restoration of the property or payment of the same amount in addition to penalty of fine payment. All in all deterrence punishments such as fine penalty and isolation, restorative sanctions in addition to fine penalty and equity based decisions will be decided by elders.

According to my informant, the appeal structure in hierarchical nature begins with Abot-endet. Pity case are to be handle with fathers and mothers of the children as far as possible and if things become out of the control of fathers and mothers appeal or assistance sick will be to the Aberos (extended family). The next is Aberos. The Aberos in turn through its representative elders gathers the elders among the Aberos members

and tries to settle the conflict. If the elders within the Aberos fails to come up with effective solution appeal or assistance sick will be referred to the next extended baliq (the elders of neighbors). Usually failing to settle the case within Aberos elders is considered as declining the glory of the Aberos and those who violates the Abrors elders will be seen as guilt so that for the respect of the Aberos most of time the case ends up with agreement. If the case is failed to be settled within the aberos baliq then it will be referred to the next extended baliq and the extended baliq first consults with the aberos baliq and gives to the conflicting party to settle the case within aberos baliq. Then if the cooling period ends the next extended baliq asks permission of yegar baliq and entertain the case in order to protect unexpected outcome and violence. But usually once the case has begins to be entertained by baliq chain of settlement, taking justice in once own hand before disposition of the case by baliq results condemnation and as a result the process is highly respected. If the case is failed to be settled by the next extended baliq, the case will be will refered to yegicho baliq (clan elders).

As attested by my informant, this stage of the conflict shows that the cases is getting intense and needs more attention. The elders from clans/tribes try to settle the problem carefully and if they fail to settle they refer it to yebad baliq (countries elders). If the case has reached to this stage, usually the elders ask assistance of the government justice system to take care of the situation and take proper action to protect further crime commission and aggravation. Yebad baliq usually make examination of parties with the brief elaboration of prior steps from the first instance baliq and asks the decision of the case from raga or yekicha. Raga or yekicha gives decision and yebad balq declares the decision. If the parties fail to comply with the decision yebad baliq refers the case to the state system to take urgent and proper action against the rejecter. Because this times the situation most probably results further mistake or bloodshed. Ragga is the final appeal stage. Raga usually gives final decision on a given case.

As my informants stated, there are different enforcement mechanisms such direct and indirect. The indirect enforcement mechanism includes isolation, moral obligation and denying cooperation until the defaulted party performs the decision rendered by the elders. The direct enforcement mechanism includes referring to state execution mechanism and fine payment. This is usually in case of intentional homicide crimes. As the researcher observes homicide crime is seen as the most serious crime and seen as violation against the society as a whole only few case are happened.

### **3.2.8. Rituals of Sera in Conflict Resolution in Siltie Society**

Sera institution has rituals while resolving and after resolving conflicts. While resolving conflicts there is a practice of oath, blessing, condemnation and celebrations. After the conflict is resolved, there will be celebrations to restore the conflicting parties past relations.

### **3.2.9. Tert, Swearing Ritual**

According to my interviewees, the disputants, the witnesses or the Mulli, as the Siltie call them and the defendants are expected to make an oath or tert before the commencement of dispute resolution process. These individuals swear in front of dispute settlers to show their sincerity and impartiality.

Tert also implies that disputants and witnesses stand for their rights and do not want to violate others' rights and will not give false witness.

The Siltie also believe that if those individuals who give witnesses or the Mulli vow falsely to give witness, the Almighty Allah will bring dangerous consequences including death on them and their descendants. It is

also believed among the Siltie that any individual who gives false evidence on somebody and commits Fero will get the penalty of his/her evil deeds afterward.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

##### 4.1 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study revealed that:

4.1.1. Sera institution in conflict resolution to the case of Siltie society has its structures process.

4.1.2. The Structures of Sera Institution in resolving Conflicts include: Hemdgnnet, Dumefeche, Ntre-yehiterot, Herashi, Mmeher, Yelam mewt Sera, Yewujo Sera, Ye-abekerache Sera and Yehinjera Sera, Yezaqilo Sera, Atwachat Sera, Yediglaye Sera, Yisedoro Sera, Abach-yigezot Sera, Yeshure Sera, Yedebelot Sera, Yebil-tigagezo Sera, Yatiwlot Sera, Yemesigid-sinq Sera, Yenegde-tekibelot Sera, Awtchachigne Sera, Yemegent Sera, Rubt Hilq, Yatirot Sera, Elilola, Yebaliqnet Sera.

4.1.3. Sera institution has its own processes and procedures in conflict resolution to the case of Siltie Society. Some of the process include megent, rubt hilq etc.

4.1.4. Usually informal laws such as universal moral standards, equity, reasonable man standard measure and elders' decision practice known as raga records are used.

4.1.5. The Ragg rules and decisions are used as jus-cojens practice. In addition to religious laws are also used for martial, inheritance and pity offence decisions.

4.1.6. There are also rules of evidence such as admissibility and presumptions, hearing procedures such as examination and cross examination, judgment steps such as hearing, witness, examination by elders, and appeal structures such as extended elders, the next extended elders, raga and enforcement mechanisms such as fine payment.

4.1.7. Sera institution has rituals in conflict resolution to the case of Siltie Society. Some of the rituals include the muli practice; the celebrations after the conflicts have been resolved, post-relation restoration celebrations, blessings, oath etc.

##### 4.2. Recommendations

Sera institution in conflict resolution to the case of Siltie society has its own structures, process and procedures. It has also its own process, evidence and laws rules, appeal structures and enforcement mechanisms. The institution is persistently used by the Siltie society for it builds mutual cooperation between the people, cost effectiveness and easiness for applicability. The institution plays great role in the society. It acts as amoral school for the Siltie society. Hence, its role is complementing the tasks of government by resolving most conflicts out of the regular courts and reducing crime rates, increasing peace and harmony. Therefore:

4.2.1. The Siltie Zone Justice sector should promote the practice of Sera without interfering and politicizing for its political advantage. (Emphasis is added not because of distrust but for the society may take it as political process and ingot it if the political scenario will be operated).

The role of sera can help the work of non-governmental organizations. Because there are organizations working for the moral building of the society in order to avoid mal practices. Therefore:

4.2.2. Non-governmental organizations working in Siltie Zone should facilitate the application of sera institution. They should facilitate high promotion.

An institution like sera can be bolded by integrating its practice with different social aspects of the day to day activities of the people. Though Sera is already integrated with the life of the siltie, experience sharing

between social institutions in southern nation's nationality and peoples of Ethiopia regional state, can increase positive competition and the benefits of the institution has to be promoted more. Therefore:

4.2.3. The Siltie Zone tourism office should integrate the practice of sera with tourism values and should also arrange experience sharing.

Concerning the appeal structure of Sera institution in Siltie Society, the area of financing and the application of the decision of judge before the formal government courts and areas of jurisdiction needs more discussion and research to reach on consensus between the elders, the expertise in Siltie Zone. Therefore:

4.2.4. Further researcher should be under taken through the facilitation of either Worabe University of the Siltie Zone education sector the role of sera in conflict resolution to the case of Siltie society.

## REFERENCES

1. Anifowose, R. 1982. Violence and Politics in Nigeria: The Tiv, Yoruba and Niger Delta Experience, Lagos: Sam Iroanusi Publications.
2. Augsburger, David W. 1992. *Conflict Mediation across cultures*. Path ways and Patterns. London. Westminster John Knox press.
3. Bahru Zewde. 2002. "Systems of Local Governance among the Gurage. The Yajoka Qicha and the Gordanna Sera". In Bahru Zewde and Siegfried Pausewang . Ethiopia: The Challenge of Democracy from Below. Stockholm and Addis Ababa. Nordiska Afrika Institute and Forum for Social Studies.
4. Bannister, R. 1997. Qualitative Methods in Psychology: A Research Guide, Burman, Erica, Journal of Psychosomatic Research.
5. Barash, D.P. and Webel, C.P. 2013. Peace and Conflict Studies, 3rd Edition, Sage Inc publisher.
6. Barash, D.P. and Webel, C.P. 2002. Peace and Conflict Studies (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications), Berkowitz, L. 1969. 'The Frustration-Aggression Hypothesis Revisited in Berkowitz, L. ed. (1969) Roots of Aggression .Ney York: Atherton.
7. Berkowitz, L. 1969. Frustration-Aggression, Hypothesis: Examination and Reformulation, University of Wisconsin-Madison.
8. Bernand, Russel H. 1994. Research Methods in Anthropology. Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches. Second Edition. New Delhi. SAGE Publication.
9. Bright-Brock Utre. 2001. Indigenous Conflict Resolution in Africal. Institute of Educational Research, University of Oslo.
10. Bloor, Michael and Fiona, Wood. 2006. Key Words in Qualitative Methods: A Vocabulary of Research Concepts. London. SAGE Publications.
11. Bowler, P.A. 1976. Ramalinopsis, a unique genus endemic to the Hawaiian Islands. Hawaiian Botanical Society Newsletter .
12. Burton, John. 1996. Conflict. Human Needs Theory, London. Macmillan.
13. Caplan, P. J. 1995. They say you're crazy: How the world's most powerful psychiatrists decide
14. who's normal. Reading, MA, US: Addison-Wesley/Addison Wesley Longman.
15. Coser, Lewis A. 1968. "Conflict, Social Aspect" In international Encyclopedia of the Social Science.V.3. The Macmilian Company and Free press.
16. Creswell, John. 2003. Research Design. Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Approaches. Second Edition. Thousan Oaks. Sage Publications.
17. Deutsch, M. and coleman, p. 2000. The resolution of social conflict: Constructive and destructive processes. New Haven, CT. Yale University Press.

18. Deutsch, M. 1973. The resolution of social conflict. Constructive and destructive processes.
19. New Haven, CT. Yale University Press.
20. Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1940. The Nuer. A description of the modes of livelihood and political institutions of a Nilotic people. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
21. Fisher, R.J. 2000. The social psychology of intergroup and international conflict resolution. New York.
22. Fink, C.F. 1968. Some conceptual difficulties in the theory of social conflict, 2019 American Psychological Association, First Street NE, Washington, DC., Journal of Conflict Resolution.
23. Galtung, J. 1964. 'A Structural Theory of Aggression', Journal of Peace Research, vol. 1. Georges Sorel, 1861. Reflections on Violence, "Introduction to the First Publication" (1906), New York, Collier Books.
24. Gebre Yntiso, Fekade Azeze, and Assefa Feseha (eds). 2011. Customary Dispute Resolution Mechanism in Ethiopia: The Ethiopian Arbitration and Reconciliation Center. Addis Ababa.
25. Gulliver, P.H. 1979. Disputes and Negotiations: A Cross cultural Perspective. London Academic press.
26. Haralambos, M. and Holborn, M. 1995. Sociology: Themes and Perspectives (4th ed.) London.
27. Collins Education.
28. Hintjens, Helen, Zarkav, Dubravka. 2015. Conflict, Peace, Security and Development. Theories and Methodologies (Edited Book) co-edited with Dubrakva Zarkov.
29. Jacob Bercovitch, V. K. 2009. Introduction : the nature of conflict resolution. The hand book of conflict resolution.
30. Jeong, H. 2000. Peace and Conflict Studies. An Introduction (Studies in Peace and Conflict Research) 1st Edition, Routledge publisher, Amazon.
31. Keyredin Tezera. 2012. The Silte people History, culture and Language.
32. Kit chin, R. & Tate, J.N. 2000. *Conducting Research into Human Geography; Theory, Methodology and practice*, Pearson Education Limited, England.
33. Kothari, G. 2004. Research Methodology, Method and thechnique. New Dellih:.New Age International publish.
34. Kotze, Dirk. 2000. Issues in Conflict Resolution. African Journal on Conflict Resolution.
35. Lawrence Manion and Keith Morrison. 2007. Research Methods in Education, 6th Edition, British Journal of Educational Studies, London and New York. Routledge.
36. Lederach, J.P. 1997. Building peace: Sustainable reconciliation in divided societies, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC.
37. Levine, Robert.1961. 'Anthropology and the Study of Conflict: An Introduction'. The Journal of Conflict Resolution.
38. Lewellen, 1983- Lewellen, Ted C. 1983. Political Anthropology: An Introduction. New York: Bergin andGarvey.
39. Loewenberg, B.J. 1945. Review of Social Darwinism in American Thought, 1860–1915 by Richard Hofstadter. The American Historical Review.
40. Maill, H. 2011. conflict transformation :multidimensional truck. Bergrof Research Center for Constructive Conflict Management.
41. Miall. H. 1999. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution: the prevention. Management and Transformation of Deadly Conflicts*. Polity press.

42. Mann, Kristin and Richard Roberts. (eds). 1991. *Law in Colonial Africa*. London.
43. McGee, Jon R. and Richard L. Warms. 2008. *Anthropological Theory: An introductory*. (4<sup>th</sup> edition). New York. Frank Mortimer.
44. Mikkelesen, B. 2005. *Methods for Development Work and Research. A new Guide for participation*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed, sage publication, New Delhi.
45. Miles and Huberman. 1984. *Qualitative data analysis*, Sage Publications London.
46. Montagu, Ashley, Ed. 1973. *Man and Aggression*, Second Ed., New York: Oxford University Press.
- Marcuse, Herbert, 2017. "The Rationality of Philosophy"--San Diego lecture. *Transvaluation of Values*.
47. Nader, Laura. 1968. "Conflict: Anthropological Aspect." In *International encyclopedia of the Social Science*. vol.3, New York: Macmillan Company and Free press.
48. Nicholson, M. 1992. *Rationality and the Analysis of International Conflict*, Cambridge University Press.
49. Omotosho, M. 2004. *Evaluating Conflict and Conflict Management: A Conceptual Understanding in Africa*, *Journal of International Affairs and Development*, vol.9.
50. Radcliffe-Brown, A. R. 1952. *Structure and Function in Primitive Society. Essays and Addresses*. London: Cohen and West.
51. Ramsbotham, Oliver. 2005. *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*. Cambridge. Polity Press.
52. Rapport, Niger and Joanna Overing. 2000. *Social and Cultural Anthropology: The Key Concepts*. New York. Routledge.
53. Roberehek. Clayton. 1990. "Motivation and Material Causes. An Explanation on conflict and War" in Jonathan Haas (ed.) *the anthropology of war*. New York. Cambridge University press.
54. Robert M. Fogelson. 1969. "Violence as Protest," in *Urban Riots: Violence and Social Change*, *Proceedings of the Academy of Political Science*, Columbia University.
55. Ron, Fisher. 1990. 'International Peace and Conflict Resolution'. School of International Service. The American university.
56. Ross, E.A. 1907. Comment on D. Collin Wells, "Social Darwinism". *American Journal of Sociology*.
57. Schellenberg. 1996. *Conflict Resolution, Theory, Research, and Practice*, Society of American Archivists, United States of America.
58. Schellenberg, James A. 1996. *Conflict Resolution: Theory, Research and Practice*. New York. State University of New York Press.
59. State University of New York Press.
60. Saldaña, J. 2012. *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
61. Santos, Boaventura da Sousa 1995. *Toward a New Common Sense: Law, science and politics in the paradigmatic transition*. New York. Routledge.
62. Seymour-Smith . 1986. *Macmillan Dictionary of Anthropology*. London: Macmillan Press Ltd
63. Stringer, Ernest T. 2007. *Action Research*. Third Edition. New Delhi. SAGE Publications.
64. Tanner, Fred. 2000. "Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution: Limits of Multilateralism". *International Review of the Red Cross*.
65. Tillet, G. 1991. "Conflict and its Resolution". In *Theories of Conflict Resolution: A Study a. Guide Module*. Charles Sturt University

67. Tsongo, Claudine. 2012. Introduction to Conflict Analysis, Prevention and Resolution. MA Thesis in Gender and Peace Building. University for Peace.
68. Voget, Fred. 1996. Functionalism. In David Levinson and Melvin Ember. (eds.). Encyclopedia of Cultural Anthropology. New York. Henry Holt and Company
69. White, Leslie. 2008. 'The Reemergence of Evolutionary Thought. Energy and the Evolution of Culture'. In, Jon R. McGee and Richard L. Warms. Anthropological Theory: An introductory. (4th edition). New York. Frank Mortimer.
70. Yihunbelay Teshome. 2010. The Causes and Types of Conflict, and the Different Indigenous conflict Management Institutions among the Oromo of Arsi Robe District. MA Thesis in Indigenous and Cultural Studies. Addis Ababa University
71. Zartman, W. 1991. ed. "Resolving Regional Conflicts: International Perspectives".
72. Kendie, S.B. & Guri, B. (2006) *Indigenous Institutions, Governance and Development: Community Mobilization and Natural Resources Management in Ghana*. Cape Coast, Ghana, Centre for
73. Development Studies, University of Cape Coast.
74. Oppenshaw, D.L., Nel, M. & Louw, L., 2018, 'Conflict resolution and reconciliation within
75. congregations', *HTS Teologiese Studies/ Theological Studies* 74(2), a4641. <https://doi.org/10.4102/hts.v74i2.4641>
76. Roderick Ogley., *Conflict Theory*, edi. by Lester Kurtz, Encyclopedia of violence, Peace and Conflict vol. 1, Academic Press, London (1999) p.402.
77. Hugh Miall, Oliver Ramsbotham and Tom Woodhouse., *Cotemporary Conflict Resolution*, Black Well Publishing Inc. and Polity Press, U.S.A (1999) p. 12.
78. Zartman, W.I. (2000). Introduction: African Traditional Conflict —Medicine. Traditional Cures for Modern Conflicts: African Conflict —Medicine.
79. Schellenberg, James A. (1996). *Conflict Resolution: Theory, Research and Practice*. New York: State University of New York Press.
80. Tsongo, Claudine. 2012. Introduction to Conflict Analysis, Prevention and Resolution. MA Thesis in Gender and Peace Building. University for Peace.