THE PROCESS AND ROLE OF MELCHO INSTITUTION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SILTIE SOCIETY: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS WITH RESPECT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Ezedin Fedlu Nuri

Abstract

The Siltie Society lives in southern Ethiopia 172 Kilo meters far from Addis Ababa (the capital city of Ethiopia). The role of Melcho institutions in conflict resolution (dispute settlement) has been manifested in their greatest neighborhood and cultural persistence with the life of the community they serve. This study was aimed to comparatively explore the role of the Melcho institution in conflict resolution to the case of Siltie Society with respect to the principles of restorative justice. The study used qualitative and doctrinal approach for the case of principles of restorative justice doctrinal approach, for the case of assessing the existence of the principles of restorative justice in the role of Melcho, qualitative approach. Finally a comparative analysis has been made. For this purpose fifteen interviews made with elders in three Woredas of Siltie zone out of eleven Woredas. Accordingly, data was collected and analyzed. The findings of the study revealed that the role of Melcho encompasses the principles of restorative justice.

Keywords: Conflict, Conflict resolution, Melcho, Kiche, Principles of restorative justice

1. INTRODUCTION

Conflict is inevitable; it can arise at any level of human interaction. It is a normal part of human life. Economists relate conflict with the competition of economic interest. Others considered conflict as antagonism, aggression, disagreement. For Rummel (2007), conflict "is against peace, against an important human value. Peace has always been among humanity's highest values for some, supreme".

According to Sanson and Di (2017), conflict resolution is a set of strategies that can be used to satisfy human needs of security, identity, self-determination, and quality of life for all people who are engaged in a conflict. In a similar context, Dereje (2010) explains conflict resolution as the suppression of conflict that has already broken out in the form of searching for a solution that would reduce the levels of violence and prevent its intensification either through formally or using indigenous conflict resolution mechanism (Dereje, 2010, Sansonand Di,2017).

According to Fred (2005), indigenous conflict resolution mechanism is a social capital that implies the ability of social norms and customs to grasp members of a group together by effectively setting and making possible the terms of the relationship, sustainability facilitates collective action for achieving mutually beneficial ends (Fred, 2005). Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms focus on the values of empathy, sharing, and cooperation in dealing with common problems which underline the spirit of humanity (Murithi, 2006).

According to Francis (2006), African societies unanimously have their own cultures of civilizations. In a similar assertion, Wilson-Fall (2000) has also written about how effective the traditional institutions to resolve conflicts were in pre-colonial Africa. According to him and other authors, however, these were intentionally degraded and paralyzed. An exemplary step to be mentioned in this regard is the application of Gacaca to resolve "modern" conflicts in Rwanda. The Rwandan societies have been using Gacaca traditionally for so long years at a grass root level to handle any sort of conflicts and/or disputes. The

Rwandan government has also recently been able to apply it in dealing with the most deadly and worst crisis of 1994 which had eventually led to genocide reportedly claimed near to a million people. Tongerenet*et al.,*(2005) Gacaca and how it functions as:

Gacaca refers to a traditional Rwandan method of conflict resolution at a village level. In cases of conflict in a Community, such as the dispute over land, property damage, material issues, or inheritance rights, meetings were convened between aggrieved parties and presided over by community leaders. The meetings not only were meant to sanction the violators of the village norms, but also ensure that those accused, and found guilty, were again fully accepted as members of the community. Reconciliation between violators and their communities was at the core of the traditional Gacaca system (Ibid:466).

Ethiopia as part Africa has its own indigenous conflict resolution institutions. For instance, Bahru Zewde (2002) has written about the traditional political and judicial institutions in Gurage. He pointed out the Yajoba Qicha and Gordanna sera practiced in the society. He has stated these institutions as:

The Yajokaand Gordanna assemblies seem to combine legislative and judiciary functions. Representatives of the Constituent Units of the Sebat Bet and Kestane, respectively, were assembled to agree on the fundamental rules governing their community. Periodic meetings were also held to revise the laws when such revisions were deemed necessary. At the same time, the assemblies serve as courts of final recourses.…Individuals who felt dissatisfied with the ruling of their territorial assembly could invoke either right of appeal with set expressions: Äjoka(”let the Yajoka rule on this case”)or Gefacha ("I appeal") …, confirmation (or otherwise) of a lower verdict by the supreme court was mandatory in all cases, irrespective of appeals being made or not (Bahru,2002).

The Siltie society in Ethiopia has also conflict resolution institutions such as Melcho. Previous studies such as (Keyredin Tezera, 2012), have demonstrated the history of the people and culture. Through their studies, they have touched the issue of Melcho. However, they haven't analyzed the role of Melcho in the context of comparative analysis with respect to the principles of restorative justice. Therefore, this study aimed to fill this gap.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In the culture of every human society, various indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution have been utilized before and after the introduction of modern legal systems (Macfarlane, 2007). One among these mechanisms is community elders' conciliation (*Melcho)* which is very common in siltie culture.

 The community elders' conciliation (*Mlcho)* is an informal method of conflict resolution whereby elders of a given village of Siltie Society willingly or upon the request of disputant parties gather in on agreed place and resolve the dispute based on the process and rules of Melcho. *Melcho* has been used across all Siltie society for centuries. In the Siltie society, as it could be true in other societies as well elders have moral responsibilities to resolve conflict and establish peace in their community. They are supposed to resolve any kind of *conflict* that they may come across in their community. They either resolve it on the spot or fix a date, usually weekends or holidays, to mediate the disputants (Oppenshaw, D.L., Nel, M. & Louw, L., 2018).

This process involves mutually agreed procedures and values. Because as the functionalist theory sees society as a consensus among the individuals on a body of rules and law, which are based on custom, morals, and values of the society and reinforces the work of its interdependent parts, the Siltie societies in general have their customary conflict resolution institutions such as melcho which is based on mutual

understanding, common values and sprits. The Siltie society is abides by on the *kiche law of melcho* and if any individual commits a crime, they punish it according to the law.

Bamlaku *et al*., (2008) say that "according to the theory of structural functionalists, social institutions are functionally integrated to form a stable system, and a change in one institution will precipitate a change in other institutions. Societies are seen as coherent, bounded and fundamentally relational constructs that function like organisms, with their various parts (social institutions) working together to maintain and reproduce them.

Through its acceptance and functionality, melcho institution in Siltie society plays roles and the main objective of this study is to comparatively assess the roles of melcho with respect to the principles of restorative justice such as emphasizing the making of amends or repays to the harms that resulted from the crimes by imposing obligations on the offender and communities (Zehr 2002:33), involving the legitimate stake holders to the crime in the process (Zehr 2002:22), encouraging the voluntary participation of the parties concerned (Luna 2003: 291), a collaborative sanctioning process in dealing with the crime (Schmid 2002:96) and restoring and reintegrating the parties in to the community (Zehr 2005: 128).

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION
3.1.   Socio-Demographic Characteristics of the Informants
It is very necessary to look at the socio-demographic characteristics of the informants to have some hint about the population under investigation. It includes age, sex, educational levels, marital status, occupation, religious background, and social position of the informants in the study area.

Age and sex of the informants

Table1. Age of the informants

No	Age	No of Informants
1	61-70	7
2	71-80	5
3	81-90	3
Total		15

Source: From own fieldwork/interviews' data, 2023.

According to Table1, 7 informants are from the age of 61-70, 5 informants are from the age of 71-80 and 3 informants are the age of 81-90 respectively. This indicates that the majority of the informants were selected from the age of 61-70 years old. These informants were selected from community elders. Because, they are the maturity age and they also active groups physically, as well as, mentally. Most of the individuals taking part in conflict resolution are elders.

Table 2: Sex of the Informants

No	Sex	No of Informants
1	Men	13
2	Women	2
Total		**15**

Source: own field work/interviews' data, 2023.

According to Table 2, out of 15 participants, the researcher conducted the study with 2 women and 13 men. These informants are selected from members of community elders. The majority of participants were

selected from men. Because men mostly take place in conflict resolution over-community elders and they have more experience than women.

Marital status, religion, and educational level of the informants

Table 3.Marital Status of the informants

No	Marital status	No of informant
1	Married	14
2	Widowed	1
Total		15

Source: from own field work/interviews' data, 2023.

Table3 shows that out of the 15 informants, 14 informants were married, 1 was widowed respectively. Thus, the above results of the study showed, more than half of the informants were married. While, one of informants was widowed. In general, the above lists of marital status simply shows that how relatively all individuals who are taking part in conflict resolution over-community elders are married.

Table 4: Religious of the informants

No	Religion	No of the informants
1	Muslim	15
2	Christian	0
Total		15

Source: from own field work/interviews' data, 2023.

As Table 4 shows, out of the 15 total informants of the study, all of them were Muslims. As we see from Table 4 lists of the religions, all of the informants were Muslims. This is because the Siltie are hundred percent (100%) Muslims.

Table 5: Educational Backgrounds of the Informants

No	Educational Level	No of informants
1	Grade 1-2	5
2	Grade 6-8	6
3	Grade 9-10	4
4	Diploma	0
5	Degree	0
Total		15

Source: From own field work/interviews' data, 2023.

According to Table 5, from the total informants of fifty-seven (15), 5 informants have learned grade 1-2, 6 informants were also from grade 6-8, 4 informants were grade 9-10 whereas no informants have received their degree and diploma respectively. This implies all of the informants can read and write Siltie language.

Social position and occupation of the informants

Table 6: Social Position of the informants

No	Status of the informants in the community	No of the informants
1	Community elders	15
2	Land Administration	0

3	Conflicting groups	0
4	Legal experts	0
5	Police	0
6	Government officials	0
Total		15

Source: From own fieldwork/interviews' data, 2023.

According to Table 6 lists of informant's role/ status in the community show that, out of 15 informants, 15 informants were selected from community elders, 0 informants were selected from the rest. This is because the study employed purposive sampling to pick community elders who have much knowledge and experience on the role of melcho in resolving conflicts in Siltie society.

Table 7: Occupation (Livelihood) of the Informants

No	Occupation/Livelihood	No of the informants
1	Farming	14
2	Self-employers	1
3	Government employers	0
Total		15

Source: from own field work/interviews' data, 2023.

As Table 7 indicates, from the total of (15) informants, almost more than half or 14 informants are farmers, whereas 0 and 1 informants were Government employers and self-employers respectively. Because more of the individuals who took part in community elders conflict resolution setting is Elderly local individuals and those individuals are the farmers.

3.2. Social Understanding of *melcho* and Values Governing

My informant, on 22/01/2023, at the place of Mugo remarked that: the villagers social understanding is a social concise which enable to know the advantage and disadvantage of everything as well as identifying the individual and group living system together in one society. Also they have awareness of living together among different communities by their ethical and cultural consideration. *Melcho is* a gathering of people before elders who wisely known the condition of his society through their ethics and culture. *melcho* means a group or individual who's wisely, known the problems of its society as well as oversee and resolve the situation of conflicts and other cases which arise among group and individual. From the view of Social awareness, *melcho member is* a person who understands the problems of his society and tries to solve them together with others.

Among the key informant's interview, on 01/01/2023, at the place of Dilla district :

melcho refers to the process of conflict resolution through the use of melcho members and kiche law. Which is a setting in which the *conflict resolution* process takes place is also called *place of melcho.* Here, elders or baliq is those elderly individuals of the society who mediate and solve conflict cases.

Among the in-depth interviews with community elders, one of the K-2 informants, in 01/01/2023, at the place of medecha remarked that:

According to the kiche of the siltie society; baliq know the norms of the society, they are impartial, and have a wealth of experience. They also hold a fair public hearing and make a decision. First the *baliq (the elder) or a compliant* party calls upon the participation of the public and wise people.

From this above result of the study, one can understand how *baliq* use this participation to make their decision that largely follows certain procedures to find out the possible solution. But sometimes defendant can also call the melcho for purification of his name in case of defamation.

3.3. Role of *melcho* in conflict resolution

Among the focus group discussants interview with community elders, one of the P-5 discussant, on 01/01/2023, at the place of azobad said that:

The role of the *melcho* depends on the prevailing conditions and type of conflict on the ground. If the given conflict is of less complexity and dealt with minor social issues, the elders play conciliatory and facilitation roles between conflicting parties by providing promise ideas of the agreement without imposing sanction upon them.

From this result of the study, we understood how the concerned parties in conflict reach a consensus, understanding to reach a final agreement. If they fail to do so, the elders encourage contestant parties to restart negotiation and mediation. Once again, if the parties in the conflict continued in their differences, *melcho* takes the arbitrary role. As arbitrators, the *baliq* invites both parties to air (tell) their conflicting ideas and after learning their cases they pass binding decisions. The elders within arbitrary positions enjoy traditional autonomous power to maintain the social order of the society by delivering fair and reasonable judgment. Even though the offender is in refusal the action, because of the fear of cursing by the elders, he accepts the binding decisions passed.

According to my informants, on 10/01/2023, at the place of shefad remarked that: *Cursing (sidebo atfot) is believed by the society of the siltie. The Society* believes that if someone or somebody is cursed by the elders, his life will be darkened.

3.4. Selection of *Baliq* in conflict resolution

In conformity with my informant, Baliq (elder) is selected from the society based on their knowledge of the societies' culture, honesty, oratorical skill, and knowledge of customary law, ability to convince someone and to understand others idea. About this issue, among the interviewee one of them, P- 15 discussants in 10/01/2023, at the place of Doyo stated the following:

> To choose effective and responsible elders, usually considerations will be given to better skill and knowledge status and influential personality to be elected as baliq. In my view among the community, active participation in social and ritual ceremonies would create more influence for conflict resolution. As I understood, the community gives more emphasis to social and ritual participation if anyone wishes for becoming influential for dispute settlement. Deep knowledge of the customary rules of the community is another important criterion to be chosen as baliq for handling conflict cases are among certain attributes.

They hold *melcho* meetings when called upon by the conflicting parties or their relatives, by their initiatives or when the formal court refers the case to them. Baliq could be volunteer or solicited. Accordingly, volunteer *baliq* resolves conflicts between individuals or groups through its initiatives. It arbitrates either on the spot when and where conflict happens or receives the case up later. Solicited *baliq*, on the other hand, is *a megen* that either of the parties in conflict approaches and solicits to get help to resolve the conflict in the practice of megent (seeking protection). As the focus group discussants on this issue, on 10/01/2023, at the

place of chungo remarked that: They identify three types of baliq accordingly *daot* yashan (blessing), *yateran* (arbitrator), and *sutyageban* (facilitator).

daot yashan (blessing) is the one who listens to the conflicting group issues patiently; talking the truth; transfers the issue to the *yateran* (arbitrator) for decision usually called Ragge for making a decision based on truth. He is not sided with any interest but he only motive and goal he is trying to achieve agreement and restoring distorted peace through healing broken relation. Finally *daot* yashan (blessing) *baliq blesses the parties and the participants.* The arbitrator baliq gives decisions while the facilitator organizes the melcho with collaboration of the villagers or the society.

The main feature of *melcho* is the presence of *baliq who* are chosen by their good reputation, extensive and good knowledge of custom, precedent, and *sera* (law), kiche of the Siltie. Besides, the individual talent and experience in dealing with conflict and willingness to give his time to reconcile the disputants are also other qualities expected from baliqo. Most conflict cases are therefore resolved locally using customary conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area.

3.5. Proverbs of melcho or Baliq

The Siltie have their oral traditions, which have been transferred from generation to generation. These oral traditions are loaded with proverbs as a spice of the speech in every aspect of their life. These proverbs are known as *mekamanchot* and are used to start or end a speech. The secret is always forwarded in these proverbs. In the context of conflict and conflict resolution there are several proverbs used to identify the problem; to find the solution to the problems; to inspire someone to speak the truth; even to end the reconciliation and if the reconciliation is impossible they also use proverbs.

Among the in-depth interviews with community elders, one of the I-6 informants, in 01/01/2023, at the place of Tonet said that:

> When the family or extended families (relatives) conflict, baliq who starts the
> session of melcho says "even when the donkeys hit each other they do not break the
> teeth of each other (humar tumar biraget esne elesaber)".

With the help of such sayings, the *baliq* provides for a comfortable environment for the resolution of conflicts and used to reconcile the people for centuries. Likewise, other the in-depth interviews with community elders, one of the I-4 informants, in 01/01/2023, at the place of chungo expressed other proverbs that the baliq uses when they start the melcho session:

> Thus, when one *baliq* says "yedel merke chumin" (the relatives issue got concern),
> the parties at conflict cool down their anger. The proverb reminds them that the
> parties are relatives to each other.

3.6. Number of *Baliqs* for *melcho*

Melcho process is not a simple process held by one or two mediators, but it takes series of procedures with the help of enough numbers of elders. The melcho session is held by more than 2 elders and at least quarter of the villagers to reconcile the parties in conflict. One respondent p-12 pinpointed that:

> There is neither a specific number of baliq to hear a case nor a particular group of
> people eligible to sit in a *melcho* proceeding. But usually baliqs are more than one
> and between three to five will be elected for that case. In my view, Individual talent
> and experience in dealing with conflict, and willingness to give his time to reconcile
> the parties in dispute are included in the number of baliq. Of course, it is not

common that those individuals who are believed to have proven ability to handle disputes are frequently called on to hear cases.

3.7. The Process of Dealing with Conflict in the melcho

According to my informants in 10/01/2023, at the place of Fereze, remarked that: *the nature of melcho and the process of dealing with conflict is consistence with space and time. First, once an agreement to reconcile is reached, each conflicting party calls his baliq.* A specific neutral baliq or baliqs *will be* selected by the plaintiff and the defendant. Or the baliqs on both sides add another baliq. The villagers gather under a shade or trees or sometimes in filed. The parties will be heard, then the baliqs cross examine and reach on decision. The decision includes cost of rituals for post conflict relation restoration, preventive measures for the future and necessary measures. The baliqs bless and ends up with agreement.

Among the in-depth interviews with community elders, one of the I-7 informants, on 01/01/2023, at the place of Dilla said that:

> As the two parties select the members of *bliq*, they decide the date, time, and place of *melcho.* Each party is responsible to take the *melcho* he/she has already solicited to the place on time. The preferred place for *melcho* sessions is usually in afield found in the village. Before the beginning of *melcho*, among the selected *baliqs (*one person thought to be the elder of the selected elders) blesses to start the process for reconciliation.

Accordingly, the *baliq* and other selected elders say:

O' Allah make our day good day,

Do not let us corrupt,

Do not let us misinform,

Let the disputants be reconciled.

From the above, one can understand how the melcho have a certain procedure of hearing cases. The plaintiff and the defendant come in front of the *melcho* and present their case by standing there. The plaintiff stands on the right side and presents his/her case first. While one party is speaking the other party is expected to listen carefully for which he/she responds later and not to speak against. The defendant, who stands on the left side, is the second to presents his/her case. After hearing the cases, the *baliq* may ask both parties turn by turn for clarification. Besides, if the case needs further investigation and one of the two parties conceal the truth, the baliq does his creative and wisdom full tasks to examine or investigate in an appropriate way as he thinks fit.

As they identified the basic cause of the conflict, *the baliq* requires both parties to stay away from them for a moment. During this time, they discuss what they have observed, including what they knew before, and propose a possible solution. Then, the parties are called and the proposed decision is presented to them, with detailed explanation and advice. If the parties are satisfied with the decision, the reconciliation process would take place. The reconciliation process often involves oath-taking rituals, making of pledges to honor the agreement reached, and payment of compensation by the wrong-doer.

Finally, the *baliqs* give direction and concluded the case. At the culmination of the reconciliation ceremony, the *baliqs* let the two parties shake hands with each other and kiss one another. Then, the conflict parties swear oaths as a sign of joint commitment to peace and reconciliation.

3.8. Comparative analysis with respect to the principles of restorative justice

According to discussions above (section 3.2):

> *According to the kiche of the siltie society; baliq* know the norms of the society, they are impartial, and have a wealth of experience. They also hold a fair public hearing and make a decision. First the *baliq (the elder) or a compliant* party calls upon the participation of the public and wise people.
>
> The role of the *melcho* depends on the prevailing conditions and type of conflict on the ground. If the given conflict is of less complexity and dealt with minor social issues, the elders play conciliatory and facilitation roles between conflicting parties by providing promise ideas of the agreement without imposing sanction upon them.

In addition, from this result of the study (discussion 3.4):

> We understood how the concerned parties in conflict reach a consensus, understanding to reach a final agreement. If they fail to do so, the elders encourage contestant parties to restart negotiation and mediation. Once again, if the parties in the conflict continued in their differences, *melcho* takes the arbitrary role. As arbitrators, the *baliq* invites both parties to air (tell) their conflicting ideas and after learning their cases they pass binding decisions. The elders within arbitrary positions enjoy traditional autonomous power to maintain the social order of the society by delivering fair and reasonable judgment. Even though the offender is in refusal the action, because of the fear of cursing by the elders, he accepts the binding decisions passed.

Furthermore, (from discussion 3.4 and 3.7):

> To choose effective and responsible elders, usually considerations will be given to better skill and knowledge status and influential personality to be elected as baliq. In my view among the community, active participation in social and ritual ceremonies would create more influence for conflict resolution. As I understood, the community gives more emphasis to social and ritual participation if anyone wishes for becoming influential for dispute settlement. Deep knowledge of the customary rules of the community is another important criterion to be chosen as baliq for handling conflict cases are among certain attributes.
>
> After the final hearing, *baliqs* give direction and concluded the case. At the culmination of the reconciliation ceremony, the *baliqs* let the two parties shake hands with each other and kiss one another. Then, the conflict parties swear oaths as a sign of joint commitment to peace and reconciliation.

On the other hand, there is no consistent and universally accepted definition for restorative justice, partly due to the growing nature of the field. However, scholars provided their own working definitions in their writings.

Tony Marsha (1999:5) defines restorative justice: a process whereby all parties with a stake in specific offence collectively resolve how to deal with the aftermath of the offence and its implications for the future. Howard Zehr (2002: 40) has refined Marshal's definition as follows: restorative justice is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offence to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations in order to heal and put things as right as possible.

The most comprehensive working definition of restorative justice has been provided by Robert Cormier (2002): restorative justice is an approach to justice that focus on repairing the harm caused by crime which holding the offender responsible for his or her actions, by providing an opportunity for the parties directly affected by a crime- victim (s), offender and community to identify and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime, and seek a resolution that affords healing, and prevents further harm.

Furthermore, scholars have provided five main principles of restorative justice such as emphasizing the making of amends or repays to the harms that resulted from the crimes by imposing obligations on the offender and communities (Zehr 2002:33), involving the legitimate stake holders to the crime in the process (Zehr 2002:22), encouraging the voluntary participation of the parties concerned (Luna 2003: 291), a collaborative sanctioning process in dealing with the crime (Schmid 2002:96) and restoring and reintegrating the parties in to the community (Zehr 2005: 128).

Thus, coming to the case of melcho as seen in the discussion, all the principles of restorative justice have been manifested. Therefore, we can say that melcho encompasses the basic principles of restorative justice in its role to resolve conflicts in Siltie society.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1. Conclusion

In Ethiopia, customary institutions of conflict resolution are very important as much as formal legal systems do. These traditional institutions of conflict resolution are deeply rooted in the history of the community it is identified with. The core importance of these institutions is not only their being a traditional institution, but also their application as a participatory institution. As such:

4.1.1. *melcho* includes all participants like offender, victim, and all concerned bodies actively. Its processes are open to all in contrast to other formal legal processes.

4.1.2. As can be seen from the previous analysis, *melcho* has an effective role like reconciliation; manage resource-related conflict; cost and time effectiveness, and confidentiality.

4.1.3. As such, in Ethiopia particularly in the Siltie society, there are everlasting *melcho* and other ways of conflict resolution as the normative principle of how to behave or that regulate the conflict in their society.

4.1.4. As the conflict resolution process perspective, *melcho* works towards the restorative justice system in which all stakeholders such as the offender, victim, and the community are participating in the resolution of the conflict. As such this participation of all concerned bodies aimed at the rebuilding of relationship and creating the sense of responsibility to the offender for the offense, he/she inflicted on the victim and the sorrow he/she has brought to the community due to the injury that happened.

4.1.5. *Melcho* conflict resolution institution is a participatory institution in which all concerned bodies such as elders, offenders, and victims as well as the relatives of both offenders and victims take part to resolve the conflict.

4.1.6. It is, therefore, very important to provide a space (place) where people can actively participate in the deliberation process.

4.2. Recommendation

As seen from the discussion and the results of the study, melcho plays great role of conflict resolution and encompasses the basic principles of restorative justice. Therefore:

4.2.1. The absence of strong policy related to the practice of *melcho* conflict resolution mechanisms

and their affiliation with the formal justice system has to be given consideration by the Siltie zone justice sector.

4.2.2. To sustain continues peace in Siltie society, institutions like melcho has to be promoted by the Siltie zone security sector and social affairs.

4.2.3. To reduce the over-loads from the government formal court, the zone and district administrators should have to work to increase the *melcho* (community elders) practices in conflict resolution by creating opportunities for having income-generating resources for the institution and by providing incentives.

4.2.4. Finally, to create access to documented materials on *melcho* (community elders) institution and to benefit the coming generation by allowing them to know its process, procedures, and mechanism of the enforcement of its decision as combined intelligence of the ancestors and present descendants which has been transmitting from past generation to present through observation and imitation, all community members and government experts from kebele's to zone should work together.

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