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## **School of Journalism and Communication**

# **'Guma' as Indigenous Communication Practice for Conflict Resolution: A Case Study of Degem District in Oromia Regional State**

**A Thesis Submitted to the School of Journalism and Communication in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication (Multimedia)**

**By**

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**Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

**November 2022**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this thesis, which is titled, '**Guma**' as **Indigenous Communication Practice for Conflict Resolution: A Case Study of Degem District in Oromia Regional State**, has not been submitted earlier to Addis Ababa University or other universities/institutions. Furthermore, I declare that all sources of material used for the thesis have been duly acknowledged.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several loops and a central vertical stroke, positioned above a horizontal line.

Yitbarek Tekalign

November 30, 2022

# Addis Ababa University

## School of Journalism and Communication

### 'Guma' as Indigenous Communication Practice for Conflict Resolution: A Case Study of Degem District in Oromia Regional State

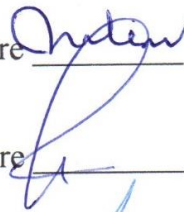
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## **Abstract**

*The main purpose of the study was to explore and describe ‘Guma’ as indigenous communication practice in conflict resolution in Degem District, North Shoa Zone of Oromia regional state. A case study design was used and 42 participants were selected using purposive sampling and a snowball technique. Key informant interview, FGD and participatory observation were used as data collection instruments in which qualitative data was generated from interview and FGD. The data was thematically analyzed by arranging, organizing and coding them into themes to answer the research questions. The result indicated that ‘Guma’ is the only indigenous communication mechanism used to resolve homicide-related conflicts in the community of Degem District. It is a mechanism that restores peace and stability on the basis of justice and truth. Once the death committed is reported to the elders of the neighboring community, they quickly appoint someone who can hide or protect the killer his/her family and facilitate fleeing home. Then, the elders of the murderer's side cry out to the victims in which the cries are not only addressed to the family/clan of the murdered but also to God as all the families and relatives of the murderer are considered sinners and believe that they are all imprisoned before God. The finding of the study also revealed that committees called ‘Luba’ on the side of the murdered and ‘Luka’ on the side of the murderer are selected and serve as communication bridges until the end of the reconciliation process. According to the finding of the study, homicide is a morally reprehensible and dangerous sin in the community of Degem District and the sinner is not only a slayer but also his/her family/clan. Accordingly, the ‘Guma’ ritual purification ceremony, replete with traditional symbolic communications, is undertaken to wash away the sin and polluted hand of the killer. It has also advantages over state courts and limitations. ‘Guma’ should be reformed and women should participate in equal position with men and the practice of it should be documented and reserved for new generations.*

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## **Glossary**

Abba Qunnaa – Chief Community elder

Alangee – Whip

Arfaasa - Autumn

Birraa – Spring

Daabaa – Sin passes from generation to generation).

Dhugaa – Truth

Eeboo – Spears

Guyyaa Milkii – Day of good fate

Hiddii – Thorny plant

Irraafii – A piece of new cotton cloth

Izgoota – Crying out for reconciliation

Jaarsa Biyya – Community elders

Kallachaa/Caacuu – Ritual objects for peace and reconciliation in Oromo society

Kebele – Small administrative unit

Laga ce'uu – Going away

Muka qoree – Thorny tree

Safuu – The indigenous Oromo thought

Ulee zangii – Thin straight stick

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. Introduction

This part of the study deals with the introductory part of the study which includes background, statement, objectives, research questions, significance, scope, limitation and organization of the study.

### 1.1. Background of the Study

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are rooted in the cultural, historical, social and political life of any community. They reflect the condition of life of that community by giving the symbol of pride and identity emphasizing the existence of a peaceful coexistence and harmony in their life. The primary purpose of these mechanisms is to bring an amicable resolution of conflicts. The involvement and full participation of the parties concerned is an essential characteristic of these mechanisms. As conflicts are invariably dynamic in nature, these mechanisms also take different approaches to preventing, controlling and resolving them (Jeong 2008).

The approaches taken to preventing and resolving conflict of interest determine the extent to which conflict resolution might be possible. In support of this argument, Tsega (2002) states that the process by which such differences could be discussed and resolved could be peaceful, amicable, problematic, unpleasant or violent and largely depends on the social, economic and social environment policy in which differences are discussed and resolved. The mechanisms are deeply rooted in the culture and history of the people and are in one way or another unique to each community (Dessalegn, 2005). These mechanisms could be characterized as traditional mechanisms in which conflict resolution practices reflect principles of reconciliation based on long-standing relationships and values (Myers, 2010). They tend to be effective in resolving intra-community and even inter-community conflicts, where shared relationships and values are part of the reconciliation process. They emphasize group unity, the reconciliation of individuals or groups, peaceful reintegration and the interest of the group above that of the individual. It is in this situation that traditional leaders, as a council of elders, use their position of moral force to find an acceptable solution by consensus (Myers and Shinn, 2010). The solution is often forgiveness and compensation.

There are rich and multifaceted cultures, traditions, religious practices, tolerance and ways of life in Africa. The environment in which these traditional conflict resolution mechanisms operated had been affected by both internal and external factors (Abebe, 2012).

The adoption of these mechanisms differs from one society to another according to the cultures of the peoples of that society. Some people use them as an independent and regular method of resolving conflict, but others use them as a method of supporting court litigation. The history of traditional conflict resolution in Ethiopia, especially among the Oromo, explicitly shows us the usefulness of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. There are different indigenous communication mechanisms used to resolve conflicts. Notably, conflict management mechanisms in the Geda system such as 'Guma', 'Jaarsummaa', 'Sinqee' and others play a crucial role in reconciliation, re-establishment of good relations, restoration of justice peace building and other different roles in community.

Following this line of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, this study focuses on 'Guma' as Indigenous Communication Practice in Conflict Resolution in Oromia, North Shoa, Degem District. 'Guma', an indigenous communication mechanism, is one of the conflict resolution processes broadly used by the Oromo people. However, its performance varies from place to place, depending on the specific culture in which it is practiced. Although it can be used in cases of vendetta, revenge, blood cost or compensation, quarrel, and the purification ritual that follows, it can generally be viewed as a process of compensation and purification that follows a conflict.

Civil war has a long history in Ethiopia and always occurs in the way that it has sometimes escalated and other times stabilized. The current civil war almost everywhere in Ethiopia is devastating. There has been constant war between the government and the anti-government rebel groups here and there in Oromia region including the study area, North Shoa, Degem District for over four years. Although it is a war between the government and the group fighting for their freedom, there are killings among the local residents as some support the government while others are inclined to support the rebel group.

The situation in the District of Degem seems to be the worst. Due to the unrest, people are unable to carry out their daily activities, especially the majority who live in rural area. Therefore, man-made famine will occur if the situation continues. Moreover, an eternal social tragedy would be in

place. The crisis would not be manageable by modern methods of conflict resolution unless 'Guma', an indigenous communication mechanism, could bridge the gap.

The aim of 'Guma', the indigenous communication mechanism, is to restore social, moral and psychological values damaged by conflict. The important thing in the practice is not to judge the past, but rather to create a peaceful future life. The main result of the 'Guma' is not to maximize the benefits of the victim through compensation and restitution, but to help conflict parties and victims to recover from socio-psychological crises and trauma and agony.

## **1.2. Problem Statement**

In Africa, communication is an important element for the resolution of economic, political and socio-cultural conflicts. Many indigenous methods of conflict resolution have been developed and used by African society since ancient times. Research has shown that almost all African societies had their own indigenous conflict resolution communication system before the formal system was introduced by colonization in colonial times. In Africa today, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms can still be used to resolve conflicts. According to Murithi (2006), the African continent continues to face the challenge of peace and development.

Ethiopia is a museum of diverse societies where different ethnic groups live together having their own culture, religion, customs and traditions (Meron, 2010). This makes the country a source of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms as well as a melting pot to nurture the interwoven customs, culture and traditions of different ethnic groups (Desalegn, et al., 2005). Indigenous conflict management mechanisms play irreplaceable role in transforming intra and inter group's conflict of any type (Daniel, 2016). A notable example, in this sense, the Oromo people are known as legalistic societies in Africa in general and in Ethiopia in particular in their laws, which are consciously developed rules, not customary developed habits (Asmarom, 2006). In short, Oromo society is governed by a democratic and inclusive system known as Geda. The Geda system is the well organizational structure that governs the political, social, cultural and judicial practices of the Oromo people (Ibid).

There are various studies conducted on the indigenous cultural communication practices of a certain community, but nothing is said about the indigenous communication, 'Guma' in Degem

District community. From the study of communication and society in cultural contexts, Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms among the Mijikenda by Sammy Baya, Dagu of the Afar community by Moges Endris, Wukiyer by Cheha Guraghe by Anwar Mussema, Sidama folk media by Nigussie Meshesha, the role of indigenous communication practice as a means to resolve inter-ethnic conflict between Gedio and West Guji by Aster Dagnachew and the role and utilization of indigenous communication practice of Gedio in conflict resolution by Desalegn Bekele are the related studies to this research from the others.

The first study related to this study is MA thesis by Baya (2009) on the Mijikenda people of the coast of Kenya. The study focuses on indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. In this case, the center of the study matches the current study as both deal with the indigenous mechanism of conflict resolution. However, the present study focuses on specific mechanism, i.e. 'Guma', while the study deals with different mechanisms. Moreover, the nature of the mechanisms and people's circumstances are vastly different.

Moges (2010) MA thesis is the other study associated with this study. It is about Dagu, the indigenous communication practice of the Afar people. The title of the study is *'Dagu as a cultural Regulator among the Afar people: The communication aspect'*. The study explores 'Dagu', as a way to regulate culture. It discusses the role of traditional indigenous communication practice, i.e. 'Dagu'. Since 'Dagu' and 'Guma' are indigenous communication practices, the theme of the study matches. The current study focuses on 'Guma's as an indigenous communication practice in conflict resolution, while the other does not from a conflict resolution perspective. In addition to this variation, the study area of the present study is so different by culture and by the socio-economic background of the people.

The third related study is the study by Nigussie (2016) *'Socio-political discourse and communication in Sidaama Folk Media.'* The study aimed to analyze folk media by describing the socio-political realities of the Sidaama community. It is the analysis of discourse and communication; it is the analysis of popular media discourse to understand societal knowledge and their way of life. Thus, the content, the scope of the study correspond to the current study. However, the previous study focuses on analyzing the political communication trend of Sidaama

and explores the power relationship in society using discourse analysis. Whereas this study describes the practice of indigenous communication, i.e. 'Guma' in conflict resolution.

The other study, which corresponds to the current study, is the MA thesis by Anwar (2019) that entitled '*Exploration into Wukiyer Intra-cultural Communication Practice in Promoting Cultural Values and Cultural Identity: The Case of Cheha Guraghe*'. The scope of the content of this study is related to 'Guma'. Both studies focus on the role of indigenous cultural communication practices. However, the way the role of practice has focused and the area of study of current research is different. The previous study explores the 'Wukiyer' as a way to promote cultural values and identities while the current study emphasizes on indigenous communication practice, i.e. 'Guma' in resolving conflicts.

The MA thesis titled '*The Role and Utilization of Indigenous Communication in Conflict Resolution: The Case of Gedeo People South Ethiopia*' by Desalegn (2019) is also the other relevant research to the current study. It is about the indigenous communication practice of the Gedeo people as a means of resolving conflicts. Like the present study, it aims to explore the role of the practice of indigenous cultural communication. However, the roles discussed in this study added some important roles of practice. The study area is also different.

*'The role of the indigenous communication mechanism in inter-ethnic conflict resolution: Gedeo and West Guji'* by Aster (2019) is a study somewhat related to the present study. It explores the role of the indigenous cultural communication practice of the Gedio and West Guji peoples as a tool for conflict resolution. It mainly focuses on the causes of the conflict and the mechanism used to resolve the conflict. Aster's study focuses on how indigenous cultural communication practices resolve the inter-ethnic conflict of the Gedeo and West Guji peoples. Nevertheless, the current study focused on how 'Guma' resolves societal conflicts, not ethnicity. Moreover, area of the study is also different.

There are also other studies particularly on 'Guma' such as MA thesis by Cherenet (2021), MA thesis by Dejene (2002) and Solomon's (2012) Journal of Politics and Governance. However, no similar research has been conducted from a communication point of view. Therefore, this research explores and describes 'Guma' as an indigenous communication practice in conflict resolution in the community of Degem District.

Cherenet's MA thesis (2021) focuses on the practices and role of 'Guma' in conflict resolution among the Oromo of Wayyuu Shanan whereas this study focuses more on the communication practice. Furthermore, the place of study is also different with the difference of the cultural practices of the community.

Dejene's MA thesis (2002) aims to document certain aspects of conflict and conflict resolution among the Waliso Oromo. The thesis explores some local institutions and practices of conflict management with a particular focus on the case of the 'Guma'. It focuses more on practices and cases. However, the current study discusses 'Guma's communication strategy as an indigenous communication mechanism. Like Cherenet's MA thesis (2021), the study area is also different.

Solomon's Journal of Politics and Governance (2012) indicates the role of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, which include 'Guma', in creating cohesive communities beyond conflict resolution. The perspective of the study is different as the current one is focused on the communication perspective. The study area and the heart of the study, which is the communication practice, makes the current study different from any other done before.

### **1.3. Objective of the Study**

#### **1.3.1. General Objective**

The main purpose of the current study was to explore and describe 'Guma' as indigenous communication practice in conflict resolution in Degem District, North Shoa Zone of Oromia Regional State.

#### **1.3.2. Specific Objective**

- To describe the nature of 'Guma' as an indigenous communication practice in the community of Degem
- To explain the symbolic communications used in the 'Guma' processes
- To find out 'Guma's participants and their key roles
- To identify contributions of 'Guma' to peacebuilding and security

### **1.4. Research questions**

The study answers the following questions:

1. What is the nature of ‘Guma’ as an indigenous communication practice in the community of Degem District?
2. How symbolic communications are used in the ‘Guma’ processes?
3. Who are the participants of ‘Guma’ and how do they play roles?
4. How does ‘Guma’ contribute to peacebuilding and security?

### **1.5. Significance of the Study**

Studying the indigenous communication practices of a certain community is essential for the community, researchers, and scholars. As a first step, the study contributes to the community by revealing its strategy as a communication practice. It also shows how indigenous communication practices are beneficial in solving different societal problems in the local community and the citizen in general, i.e., it can help foster peacebuilding practices in the community of study area in particular, and it can be a good alternative for the organizations concerned who work to maintain the peace and stability of the country.

In addition, media houses can gain insight into the study and pay attention to strengthening and promoting the practice of conflict resolution. It also allows the government or the decision-maker to choose the best communication mechanism to reach such a community. So far, no prior research has been carried out on the indigenous communication practice of the Degem community in relation to ‘Guma’. Researchers who like to explore related studies can be availed of the study by taking it as a benchmark. In addition, it can initiate researchers in various fields of study to multidisciplinary approaches to understanding society. It will also provide information to legislators to take into account indigenous communications and values in law-making, for better planning and implementation of policy at the local level.

### **1.6. Scope of the Study**

‘Guma’, an indigenous conflict resolution mechanism, is practiced throughout Oromia, the largest region of Ethiopia. However, this study was conducted only in the community of Degem District in North Shoa. Moreover, the study was limited to the ‘Guma’ of homicide in terms of its communication practice. The researcher focused on indigenous communication trends of the Degem District community in homicide conflict resolution. The main area of study is the

indigenous communication mechanism. Conflict resolution, cultural values and traditional symbolic communications are the variables and concepts studied.

In terms of participants, the researcher emphasized those who have in-depth knowledge and comprehensive experience on 'Guma', such as community elders, culture and tourism experts, and researchers. Regarding the methodology of the study, it was limited to a qualitative method that applies purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Additionally, the study was conducted from December 2021 to July 2022.

### **1.7. Limitation of the Study**

To conduct the research, a researcher used in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and participatory observation to understand the indigenous communication practice of the Degem community i.e., 'Guma'. It is time consuming and requires a large amount of data, which was a challenge of the study due to the large nature of the study. Moreover, to manage this, the researcher was strategic in selecting the appropriate and manageable information size in a way that does not affect the data.

The other challenge was a lack of documented material related to the topic. This was managed by having primary data via interviews and focus group discussion. In addition, currently as there is no reliable security in the study area, a lack of cooperation from the concerned body has occurred and the researcher has been challenged under suspicion. There was a time when District' government cadres came to the researcher while he was leading the FGD, threatened the discussants and arrested him. However, having a letter of support from Addis Ababa University, School of Journalism and Communication, helped manage this. In addition, if the researcher had not submitted the letter to all relevant bodies beforehand and established a good relationship, the situation could have been worse.

### **1.8. Organization of the Study**

This study is organized into five chapters. The first chapter presents the background of the study, problem statement, objectives of the study, research questions, significance, scope, limitations and organization of the study. It presents the main concerns of the study in general. The next chapter, chapter two, contains a review of related literature that serves as a baseline against which to

measure the data collected and the theoretical frameworks of the study. In this chapter, fundamental concepts, theoretical frameworks and related studies are discussed to familiarize the concepts of the study. In the third chapter, the methodology, which is the core of the study, discussed. Research design, study location and community, sampling techniques, source of data and data gathering tools, data collection procedure, techniques of data analysis and the ethical considerations are explained here. The analysis and discussion of the data are presented in chapter four. In the last chapter, chapter five, summary, conclusion and recommendations presented.

# **CHAPTER TWO**

## **2. Review of Related Literature**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter discusses the fundamental concepts, theoretical frameworks and related studies by reviewing the related literature in order to draw a roadmap for the further work of the study. The basis of the discussion such as analytical points, measures and standards are included in this chapter to become familiar with the concepts included in the study. In general, in this chapter, important conceptual issues are reviewed to understand them. Moreover, the chapter discusses the theoretical framework of the study.

### **2.2. Communication, Conflict and Culture**

#### **2.2.1. Communication**

Communication comes from the Latin word “communicare” which means “to make common or to share” (Fruehling and Lacombe, 2006, p. 6). The word "communication" is often used even though there is no consensus among communication scholars regarding its definition. It is defined as the process of conveying to others and receiving from them information, ideas, feelings and beliefs in a particular time and place (Fruehling and Lacombe, 2006). Communication is an interaction in general. There is usually a sender (source) and a receiver in communication. This involves the speakers exchanging signals. These signals can be verbal, graphic, gestural or visual. Communication involves the use of codes created with the eyes, body movements or sounds made with the voice. There is always a process in which someone initiates a meaningful intention, which is transmitted to the receiver. In this line, Daniel (2013) states that it is during feedback, which involves the receiver responding to the signal by initiating another circle of meaning exchange. Critical listening is very crucial to make communications more effective and efficient. According to Nigussie (2017), the rewards of effective listening are numerous. Likewise, in ‘Guma’, the indigenous communication, each party listens attentively to each other. The culture of critical thinking is one of the factors that make it more effective in resolving conflicts.

### **2.2.1.1. Components of Communication**

Communication includes components identified by many scholars to be effective. Many different scholars identify and offer various components of communication in their own terms. Although they tend to explain things subjectively and label them with different names, they generally agree on most of them and share a common understanding of what is needed for the communication process to be complete. Therefore, the essential components found out by the researcher, which are commonly shared and given by many communication scholars, are people, message, channel, feedback and noise. Each component is briefly discussed below.

The first component of communication is people. According to Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Hosek (2017), people are involved in the process of communication in two roles as sources and receivers of messages. The communication process begins with the source of the sender. The sender has some type of information, an order, request, question, or idea that they want to present to others. Whereas a person to whom a message is addressed is called the receiver or the interpreter. The receiver must first be able to receive the sender information to understand sender's information and then decode or interpret it. The people we communicate with are diverse. They are of different ages and genders and may come from different cultural backgrounds. Each of these characteristics associated with diversity can influence the communication process when people attempt to negotiate the meaning of messages (Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Hosek, 2017).

Message is another important component of communication. It is the information that the sender wishes to convey to the recipient. Likewise, Nigussie (2017) states message to be a verbal utterance and a non-verbal behavior that senders use to convey their meanings. Moreover, Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Hosek (2017) reveal that the message includes the symbols like words and phrases we use to communicate our ideas, as well as our facial expressions, body movements, gestures, physical contact and tone of voice, and other non-verbal codes. The message can be relatively short and easy to understand or long and complex. Some experts believe that real communication only comes from messages that are intentional, those that have a purpose. However, we believe that some messages may be unintentional. For example, we may not intend to show our emotions in certain situations, but our facial expressions and tone of voice can show others that we are angry.

These unintended messages add potentially important information to the communication interaction (Ibid).

The third component of communication is a channel. McLean (2005) explains channel as how messages travel between source and receiver. Spoken channels include face-to-face conversations, speeches, telephone conversations and voice messages, radio, public address systems, zoom, skype, etc. Written channels include letters, memos, purchase orders, invoices, newspaper and magazine articles, blogs, emails, text messages, tweets and so forth.

The fourth component of communication identified is feedback. When we respond to the source, intentionally or unintentionally, we are giving feedback. Feedback is made up of messages that the receiver sends back to the source. According to Nigussie (2017), feedback is the recipient's response to a message. It is vital for communication because it allows participants in the communication to see if ideas and feelings have been in the intended direction. The answer can be in words, in letters, in silent actions or in all. Feedback is a vital part of communication. It tells the sender if and how the message was heard, seen and understood. If a verbal or non-verbal response tells the sender that the intended meaning was not heard or understood, the source may try again to encode a message that a receiver might better understand. As the amount of feedback increases, including spoken and unspoken responses, the accuracy of communication also increases (Ibid). Along the same lines, Stone, Singletary and Richmond (1999) revealed that feedback is too important in a communication process so that not having effective feedback or being unable to interpret feedback may lead to misunderstandings, distortions and inaccuracies in communication.

The last but not least of the components of communication is noise. In the communication process, noise is any interference in the encoding and decoding processes that reduces the clarity of a message (Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Hosek, 2017, p. 11). Noise can be physical, like loud sounds or distracting views. Noise can be mental, psychological or semantic and can be anything that interferes with the reception, interpretation or feedback of a message (Ibid). According to Nigusie (2017), noise is any external, internal and semantic stimulus that interferes with the sharing of meaning. External noise is sight, sound, and other stimuli in the environment that distract people from what is being said or done. For example, while listening to a lecture, we may be disturbed by a passing fire truck. Internal noises are unrelated thoughts and feelings that distract

from what is being said or done. Semantic noises are the unintended meanings elicited by certain symbols and behaviors that distract our attention from what our friend has to say. The use of jargon, ethnic slurs, profanity and vulgar speech are common causes of semantic noise (Ibid).

#### **2.2.1.2.. Models of Communication**

Models of communication are pictorial representations of the communication process, ideas, thoughts or concepts through diagrams. They can be considered as systematic representations of the process that help us to understand how communication can be carried out. Models are a simplified description in graphical form of certain aspects of reality and seek to show the main elements of any structure or process of human social interaction, the relationships between these elements, and any flow or exchange that takes place. According to Wood (2008), theorists create models to describe how things work. Over the years, communication researchers have developed a number of models, which reflect increasingly sophisticated understandings of the communication process (Ibid). Linear communication model, interactive communication model and transactional communication model are briefly discussed below.

The linear communication model is communication that leads straight from the sender to the receiver directly. In this model, the sender creates a message, encodes it for the appropriate delivery channel, and delivers the message to their target audience (Gavi, 2013). Moreover, Wood (2008) points out that an early model (Laswell, 1948) described communication as a linear, or one-way process in which one person acts on another person. This model consisted of five questions that described early visions of how communication works such as, who, says what, in what channel, to whom, and with what effect (Ibid).

The second model of communication is the interactive model. It takes the linear model and doubles it with a quick flip of the return message. The interactive communication model allows for an element of feedback because after a message is encoded and sent to the decoding receiver, the roles reverse and the receiver encodes and sends a response back to the original sender who has now become receiver (Gavi, 2013). The interaction model of communication describes communication as a two-way process in which participants alternate sender and receiver positions and generate meaning by sending and receiving feedback in physical and psychological contexts. Feedback can be verbal, non-verbal or both and it can be intentional or unintentional (Wood, 2008).

The third is the transactional model of communication, which describes communication as a process in which communicators generate social realities in social, relational and cultural contexts. According to Gavi (2013), the transactional model is becoming more sophisticated and describes face-to-face interaction, or transaction, as a dynamic and changeable process that goes beyond simple definition. In the transactional model, the receiver and the sender can play the same roles simultaneously, as sometimes happens, because messages can be sent simultaneously (Ibid).

### **2.2.1.3. Indigenous Communication**

Indigenous communication is local communication that is unique to a given culture of society, which existed before the advent of modern mass media that is a formally organized bureaucratic communication system. This indigenous communication system still exists today despite the changes brought about by technology.

According to Wilson (1987), an indigenous communication is a continuing process of information dissemination, entertainment and education used in societies that have not been seriously disrupted by western culture or any other outside influence. Although the Geda system of the Oromo people has been weakened by the modern government system and the modern religion in most parts of Oromia, 'Guma', an indigenous communication mechanism is in place, has been practiced and plays a huge role in conflict resolution.

Indigenous communication media refers to the mode of control (ownership) and model. It is important to note that within the framework of the indigenous communication system, the ownership of the means (media/channels) of communication belongs to the society. The village chief only acts as an administrator and head of the control process. Similarly, Mundy and Compton (2013) postulated that indigenous communication includes the transmission of entertainment, news, persuasion, announcement and social exchange of all types - it is an important aspect of culture and the means by which a culture is preserved, transmitted and adapted.

#### **2.2.1.3.1. Folk Media**

There are various forms of indigenous communication and folk media is one of them. The word 'folk' comes from a German word 'yolks' that means the people. Folk media is the media of the people, which means of communication available to rural and tribal people. It is also known by various names such as traditional media, indigenous communication system, alternative media,

group media and low cost media. Folk media works with materials that are locally available and in the quantity they need. The skills required for folk media operations do not require formal training and since there is participation by all. Folk media have a great impact on society and play a key role in social change. Despite the fact that modern media has reached almost every nook of the society, folk media has retained its space and functions as a powerful medium to influence the thoughts and attitudes of the masses and also bring changes in the society. (<https://www.owlgen.in>)

According to Chapke (2003), folk media is an effective form of human communication. It has often played a role in communicating and promoting new ideas and adjusting to a new social or political order, apart from its traditional role of preserving and teaching established values. In a country like Ethiopia, which is multilingual and diverse in character and where the peasantry constitutes the largest segment of the population, knowledge of folk institutions, their habits, customs, traditions and culture serve as important tools in the process of motivation of the rural masses (Chapke, 2003).

Folk media are traditional media based on sound, image and sign languages. They include plays, dance, songs, festivals, puppet shows, storytelling and poetry (Valbuena, 1986). Among the various indigenous channels, folk media have been used the most to support development activities. Moreover, there are various forms of indigenous communication such economic relationships and service suppliers, indigenous organizations, deliberate instruction and unstructured channels.

Economic relationships and service providers, such as traders, suppliers of agricultural inputs, and indigenous specialists, such as healers and traditional midwives are important sources of information for the local population. Market traders provide information on prices, varieties and use of fertilizers. Healers explain diseases and treatments. Any society has individuals who are considered authorities in their field of expertise. They are powerful sources of indigenous communication on that subject.

According to Akker (1987), indigenous organizations are such as religious groups, village assemblies, irrigation associations, mothers' clubs and loan associations. These organizations arrange much communication through formal meetings of members, by messages sent about activities and obligations, and via work activities.

Parents teach their children how to eat, how to drink, how to behave, how to cook, how to act. Warren (1964, p. 10) calls this process "deliberate instruction." Deliberate instruction would seem much more important in the communication of technical information than the occasional folk media performances or village festivals, or even the mass media and schools.

Indigenous communication occurs in many other contexts. Speak at home and at the well, in the fields and on the road, in the teahouse and wherever people meet and talk. A major part is communication between parents and peer groups. These communications are neither organized nor orchestrated but spontaneous and informal.

### **2.2.2. Conflict**

Conflict is always about distribution of power. Indeed, the exercise of power is a prerequisite for retaining a stake in determining future relationships as well as for acquiring or retaining other benefits. The word conflict derives from the Latin word 'confligere' that means to strike together. It can also refer to a disagreement or clash between ideas, principles or people.

A conflict occurs when two people wish to perform acts that are incompatible with each other. They may both want to do the same thing, or they may want to do different things where the different things are incompatible with each other. For example, the logical inconsistency of two billiard balls being in the same place at the same time is resolved by the conflict that results in their rolling into different positions (Burton and Dukes, 1990). Conflicts have been studied over the centuries by many great minds. However, a more systematic study has only been possible since the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Schellenberg, 1996).

#### **2.2.2.1. Nature of Conflict**

By its very nature, conflict is a process of polarization and retrenchment of opportunities. When two people or parties are in conflict, they usually move to opposite sides of an issue. They reinforce their position by exaggerating their case, creating further distance between them.

Conflict is a feature of all societies and possibly an aspect of all social relationships. Conversely, ideas about the root causes of conflicts differ widely. The parties in conflict find areas in which cooperation is valued and sought, even if it is only that inherent in maintaining the fundamental relationship between them, continuous and viable. Thus, many conflicts, involve mixed motives

that are competition and cooperation. It is also the combination of both objective and subjective dimensions (Avruch 1998). Conflict is normal because people have different needs desire and values. Conflict has positive or negative result; it can be managed (Galvin and Terrell, 2001, p. 218).

The researcher assumes that conflict has positive or negative side, and it is everywhere. Conflict can occur due to a reason, and can be seen as a distance category of social behavior as two parties trying to get something one of them cannot have.

### 2.2.2.2. The Life Cycles of a Conflict

Conflict is a dynamic situation. The intensity changes over the life cycle of a conflict. Understanding the conflict cycle is key to understanding how, where and when to apply the various conflict prevention and resolution strategies and measures. According to Niklas and Mikael (2005), over time, numerous suggestions and models of conflict patterns have been put forward.

A number of patterns stand out, among these models and suggestions. Conflicts tend to be described as cyclical in their levels of intensity, such as escalating from relative stability and peace to crisis and war and then de-escalating to relative peace. Most scholars also agree that these cycles are reoccurring. It should also be noted here that many scholars add stable peace, sometimes referred to as lasting peace, as an additional phase in which the conflict is considered resolved, i.e. the recurring pattern of the conflict has stopped. In addition, most models divide both the escalation and de-escalation of the conflict cycle into phases. It can also be noted that in many cases the conflict model has taken the form of a U, or an upside-down U (Ibid).

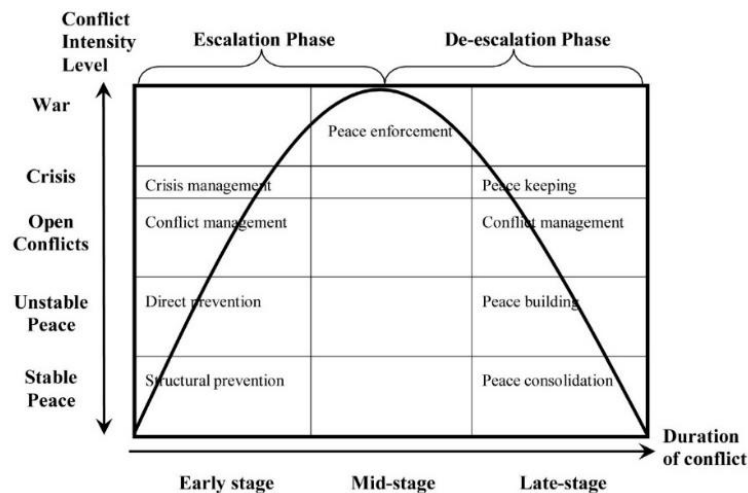


Figure 1: The Conflict Cycle (Niklas and Mikael, 2005, p. 13).

As stated on the above Conflict Cycle Model, the curve is divided into five levels of conflict intensity (stable peace, unstable peace, open conflict, crisis and war) out of a total of nine chronological phases. A stable peace is a situation where the tension between the parties is low and where there are different forms of ties and cooperation between them, often including economic and environmental cooperation, as well as cooperation in other non-sensitive areas. During a period of unstable peace, tension increased. It is a situation where, although negative peace exists, the tension between the two is so high that peace no longer seems guaranteed. Open conflict is when conflict is defined and the parties have taken steps to address it, even if militarized options are not adopted. In a crisis phase, the risk of war is imminent and militarized options are the preferable or probable option. There may be sporadic violence between the parties at this stage, but there is no regular overt violence. In the war phase, on the other hand, the violence is widespread and intense. In the de-escalation phase, the pattern is reversed, moving from war to crisis, through open conflict and unstable peace to finally reaching a situation of stable peace (Niklas and Mikael, 2005).

### **2.2.2.3. Components of Conflict**

Conflict arises from a collision of perceptions, goals, or values in an area where people care about the end result (Scannell 2010). The seed of conflict can be sown in confusion or disagreement with the common goal and how to achieve it. According to Scannell (2010), there are components of conflict such as communication, competition, diversity, inconsistency, perspective, interdependency and emotional intelligence.

**Communication:** - Communication is one of the components of conflict. It is a component that can both cause and remedy conflict. Lack of open communication likely makes conflict subversive and can create a downward spiral of misinterpretation and enmity. On the other hand, effective communication like 'Guma' is the means by which disagreement can be prevented, managed, or resolved. Effective communication, including active listening, is the means by which disagreements can be avoided, managed or resolved. In support of this, Nigussie (2017) stated that effective communicators are able to focus on themselves and use their frame of reference to listen to the message. Likewise, when we come to 'Guma', the indigenous communication practice, each participant listens carefully to each other for effective understanding.

**Competition:** - Competition for limited resources will undoubtedly generate conflict. Time, money, space, materials, supplies, and equipment are valuable assets. Competition for any of these resources could lead to conflict. Whenever people compete for scarce resources, conflicts can arise (Scannell 2010).

**Diversity:** - Individuals differ in many ways; these differences are often a starting point for conflict. Differing personal values can cause conflict (Ibid).

**Inconsistency:** - Anytime policies are changed, inconsistently applied, or missing, misunderstandings are likely to occur. Associates need to know and understand rules and policies; they should not have to guess. Accordingly, inconsistency is a common source of conflict (Ibid).

**Perspective:** - People may have different out looks and may view the same incident in dramatically different ways. For instance, if there are four people in a given work place, each individual may bring a different perspective. Consequently, this situation can cause conflict (Ibid).

**Interdependency:** - Interdependency and increased interactions within an organization are also sources of conflict. The more people interact the greater the potential for conflict. Conflicting pressures can arise when two or more associates or departments are responsible for separate actions with the same deadline (Ibid).

**Emotional intelligence:** - Emotional intelligence is a personal attribute that is very valuable in reducing conflict. Conflicts are less likely to occur when emotional intelligence is higher (Ibid).

#### **2.2.2.4. Forms of Conflict**

Conflict arises in different context, and occurs at different levels. There are five forms of conflict (Sandole, Byrne, Sandole-Staroste and Senehi, 2009, p. 3). These are intrapersonal conflict, interpersonal conflict, intergroup conflict, organizational conflict and international conflict.

Intrapersonal conflict is form of conflict occurs with a person himself/herself. It is said to be self-conflict. Besides, interpersonal conflict is a conflict, which takes place between two or more people. Intergroup conflict is a form of conflict occurs between groups while organizational conflict is a conflict that happens between different organizations. Finally, when a conflict is across

a boundary of two or more independent countries, the form of conflict is international conflict. Simply, it is a conflict that comes about internationally (Ibid).

#### **2.2.2.5. Conflict Process**

According to Wood (2006), there are four key components of conflict process. The components are conflict of interest, conflict of orientation, conflict response and conflict outcome (Wood 2006, p. 147).

The first component of conflict process is goal, interest, or views that are perceived as incompatible. When we find ourselves at odds with people who matter to use, we need to solve conflict, preferably in a way that does not harm the relationship (Ibid).

The second component of conflict process is conflict orientation. It is simply how we perceive conflict. Cultural background highly influences orientations towards conflict. How people react to conflict reflects one of three distinct orientations. The orientations are lose – lose, win – lose and win – win. According to lose – lose view, conflict results in losses for everyone and it cannot produce positive outcome. Win – lose orientation to conflict assumes that one person wins at the expense of other. A win – lose matter thinks whatever one person gains is at the other's expense and what one person loses benefits the other. Thus, a win – lose orientation towards conflict tends to undermine the relationship. Even though, a win – lose is said to be win – lose – lose because who win each other loses both the person and relationship, it might be effective when conflicting parties do not care of each other. Finally, win – win is a view of conflict that assumes that there are usually ways to resolve conflict so that everyone gains. Win – win attitudes result in compromises that satisfy enough of each persons' need to provide confirmation and to protect the health of the relationship (Ibid).

How we respond to conflict is the third component of conflict. There are four responses to conflict namely exit, neglect, loyalty and voice. The exit response involves either leaving a relationship, by moving away or withdrawing psychologically. Exit is forceful and active; due to this, it fails to solve tension. Even if exit can be destructive, there are situations in which exit is it can be positive response. When a person denies or minimize problems, the response occurs is said to be neglect. It is also disconfirming because it fails to acknowledge and respect how other feels. Neglect evades difficulties so that it can be destructive; it does not actively promote discussion in order that it is

passive. Loyalty is another response to conflict that consists of remaining committed to the relationship despite the differences. It is silent allegiance, so loyalty is passive. Besides, it does not end a relationship and preserves the option of addressing tension. Loyalty can be constructive, but if people never get around to addressing the tension or problem, it can harm the relationship. Finally, voice is a response to conflict which focuses on dealing directly with problems and trying to help the relationship by managing the differences. Consequently, it is an active and constructive response to conflict (Ibid).

The final component of conflict is the conflict outcome. When most people think of conflict outcomes, they think the decision that has resulted and whose preferences have prevailed. Although these are indeed outcomes of conflict, they are neither the only one nor the most important (ibid).

#### **2.2.2.6. Styles of Conflict Management**

According to Rothwell (2000), there are five styles of managing conflict; these are collaborating, accommodating, compromising, competing and avoiding.

**Collaborating:** - This is cooperative style of conflict management. Thus collaborating is win – win because it is working together to maximize the attainment of goals for all parties in a conflict. It is we – not me- oriented. Collaborating style has three key components specifically confrontation, integration and smoothing (Rothwell, 2000, p. 253).

Confrontation is the overt recognition of conflict and the direct effort to find creative ways to satisfy all parts in the conflict. It is assertive strategy that brings the conflict out into the open for careful examination and discussion. Confrontation is best attempt at a time when people are able to work on problems. Furthermore, confrontation should be used judiciously for important issues. A collaborating strategy that meets the goals of all parts in the conflict is called integration. Two integrative tactics are expanding pie and bridging. Expanding the pie refers to the creative ways to increase resources typically money. In the other hand, bridging considers the goals of parts in the conflict and offers a new option that satisfies the interests of everyone involved Finally, Smoothing is collaborating that is the act of calming the agitated feeling of others during conflict. When tempers flare and anger turns to screaming or tears, no collaborating is possible. Smoothing addresses the emotional side of conflict. It can make integrative solutions and possible defusing

emotionally volatile situation (Ibid).

**Accommodating (yielding):-** When we surrender to the needs and desires of others during a conflict, we are using the accommodating style. This is non assertive style of conflict management. It may appear that accommodate is we- oriented because the accommodator yields to others for the sake of relationship. Accommodating can be a constructive and necessary style of conflict management. Less powerful person may need to yield a more powerful person to keep a job, maintain a relationship or avoid nasty consequences. Nevertheless, being too accommodating can make you someone else's dormant (Ibid).

**Compromising:** - We lose something to gain something; we are compromising. Conflict management occurs most often between parties of relatively equal power is compromising style. It may be the only feasible goal in a conflict of interest where parties have equal power (ibid).

**Avoiding (withdrawing):** - Avoiding is a form of conflict management in which people physically or psychologically remove them from conflict. This withdrawing creates lose – lose situation because all parties lose something to keep on the relationship. On other hand, when we are considering withdrawing from relational sates, it has negative consequence. When avoiding used repeatedly, the relationship decline. A particular powerful form of avoiding is called stone walling. Stone waling is exhibited by stony silence, muttering, refusal to discuss problems, or physical removal when one party is complaining, disagreeing or attacking the other partner (ibid).

**Competing (power – forcing** - This style of conflict management flows from the dominance perspective on power. Competing style is exhibited in variety of ways. For instance, by threats, criticism, contempt, hostile, remarks and jokes, sarcasm, ridicule, intimidation, faultfinding and blaming and denials of responsibility. All of these behaviors upset the ratio of positive to negative. Therefore, communication between partners is very important to sustain relationship. The competing style of conflict management emphasizes the negative, and it is not assertive but aggressive. It is me – oriented style that is focused on winning a dispute at other's expense. The essence of competing style is pressuring others to change their behavior to your advantage. The more one tries to force others to do his/her bidding, however, the more he/she ignites psychological reactance. Simply put the competing has the greatest potential destructive conflict because it can easily escalate a conflict even beyond stupidity and pointlessness. The key aim of

competing style is victory or oneself; not mutual satisfaction for all parties involved. Finally, competing style attempts to create or to expand power imbalances in relationship (ibid).

#### **2.2.2.7. Steps to Successful Conflict Resolution**

Pincus (2004) suggests ten steps that are valuable to successful conflict resolution. In the process of managing conflict, to be successful in managing it, first we should present the issue without emotion, blame, or judgment. Secondly, ask for the other person's point of view and listen to carefully the person speaking. After that, we must explain our point of view clearly. In this step we must be sure whether other person fully understands us. Fourthly, restating the issue, reporting accurately on both parties' needs. Then, we should jointly agree upon objective or condition that both parties. Subsequently, brainstorming possible alternative solutions should take place. After this, we must evaluate all possible solutions and choose the most practicable one. The eighth step is developing an action plan and record specific assignments, responsibilities, and deadlines. Then after, we must implement what we plan. Lastly, we should evaluate progress, select alternative solutions if needed, and spotlight achievement.

In general, different scholars suggest different idea concerning cultural communication in which that has a role in managing conflict. This part of the study would help the researcher to compare and contrast within the analysis part of the study to put the final output and in form of conclusion and recommendation for the study.

#### **2.2.3. Culture**

Although the word culture is a part of our everyday vocabulary, it is difficult to define. The word 'culture' comes from the Latin word 'cultura' derived from 'colere' meaning 'to cultivate'. Therefore, how the minds of the masses inhabiting a particular area are cultivated, somehow determines the culture of the area. Culture is a part of everything we think, do, feel, and even we believe (Wood, 2006, p.163). Renzetti and Curran (1998) defined culture as the learned norms, values, knowledge, artifacts, language and symbols that are constantly communicated among people who share a common way of life. It is a term which means many things to many people and thus has been defined in many ways (Anteneh, 2012, p. 85).

Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Harter (2003) stated the definition of culture comprehensively as

follows:

*Culture is the system of shared beliefs, values, customs behaviors, and artifacts that members of a society use to cope with one another and their world. It transmitted from generation to generation through social learning. Culture is a mechanism that allows human beings to make senses of the world around them (Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Harter, 2003. p. 212).*

From the above definitions, the researcher understands that culture is necessary to establish an order in the society. Culture is not only a means of communication that exists within the people, but it also creates a feeling of belongingness and togetherness among people in the society.

### **2.2.3.1. Importance of Culture**

People's behavior patterns, belief systems, life principles and way of life are derivatives of culture. Culture is that invisible bond that unites the people of a community. It refers to the model of human activity. The art, literature, language and religion of a community represent the culture of the community. Culture manifests itself through the way of life of individuals in a community. The moral values of people in a community also represent their culture. The importance of culture lies in its close association with people's lives. The different cultures of the world have brought diversity in the lifestyles of people inhabiting different parts of the world (<https://theintactone.com>).

Culture brings stability; it provides stability, which in turn, gives everyone in society a sense of security and safety. For most people, culture gives them the same emotional response they have for their family. Foreigners have an instant connection when they are part of the same culture. Moreover, culture nourishes. In their, individuals feel nurtured and even loved. They share the same history and the same ideologies as those of their community, which gives a unity to everything. It binds them to their ancestry and gives them a sense of longevity that gives them a sense of truth and living an authentic life (<https://family.lovetoknow.com>).

According to Gabriel (2015), Social values can simply be considered as those beliefs and practices that are practiced by a particular society. Society either has a way of dictating beliefs and practices that are performed regularly by its members or performed whenever the occasion calls for it.

Therefore, we have festivals, games, sports and dances that are unique to different societies. These activities are carried out by society because they are deemed necessary. Some social values, especially in African society, cannot be exactly separated from religious, moral, political values, etc. This is why we see that in a traditional African society such as in Ibibio land (Nigeria), the festivals celebrated often had a religious connotation – they ended with sacrifices which were offered to certain deities on special days in order to attract their benevolence to the members of society. Social values are supported by customary laws. They include those traditional carnivals that a people consider necessary for their meaningful survival. Let us illustrate with an example: the new yam festival as practiced in Ibibio land has a way of encouraging hard work and stemming famine. It was a shame for any man to buy yams for his family in the first two to three weeks after the festival. It would expose a man as being too lazy. These festivals really discipline society because no one has to do anything when it is not the time. For example, the new yam cannot be eaten until the new yam festival has been celebrated (Gabriel, 2015).

African culture is embedded in strong moral considerations. It has a system of various beliefs and customs that each individual must maintain in order to live long and avoid bringing curses upon themselves and others. Adultery, theft and other forms of immoral behavior are strongly discouraged, and whenever an alleged criminal denies the charges against him/her, he/she is forced to take an oath as proof of innocence (Ibid). Likewise, there is a similar action in the process of 'Guma', the endogenous communication mechanism, although an oath is not made to prove innocence but of real forgiveness, reconciliation and non-revenge.

### **2.3. Culture and Communication**

Culture, communication and community are inseparable from each other. In order to have proper relationships, culture plays a very important role as the medium through which these relationships are expressed, but at the same time, there must be proper communication. Thinking about the different ways in which human beings are apprehended is also very important. How to think, feel, communicate and behave in a particular culture becomes good or bad, understandable or incomprehensible, acceptable or ridiculous, if they conform to our "way of thinking, feeling", communicating and behaving.

Culture and communication are intimately linked. Our communication reflects our culture, and our culture influences our communication (Rothwell, 2000). Moreover, Wood (2006) explained

the following.

*Communication expresses sustains, and alters culture. For this reason, we can say communication is strongly connected to culture. Our culture directly shapes how we communicate; how much eye contact is polite, and whether conflict is desirable. We acquire attitudes as we interact with others, and we then reflect cultural teaching in the way we communicate (Wood, 2006, p. 163).*

Communication is an element of culture. It has often been said that they are inseparable. Culture is a code that we learn and share (Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Harter, 2003, p. 37). Moreover, learning and sharing requires communication. Similarly, communication requires coding and symbols that should be learned and shared. Every cultural pattern and every act of social behavior involves communication. To be understood, two must be studied together. Culture cannot be known without the study of communication. The same is true, communication can only be understood with an understanding of the culture it supports (Pearson, Nelson, Titsworth and Harter, 2003).

Culture, communication and community are always together. In order to have proper relationships, culture plays a very important role as the medium through which these relationships are expressed, but at the same time, there must be proper communication. Thinking about the different ways in which human beings are apprehended is also very important. There is, as can be seen, an almost universal tendency to judge other cultures and communities based on one's cultural predispositions. Thus, how to think, feel, communicate and behave in a particular culture becomes good or bad, understandable or incomprehensible, acceptable or ridiculous, if they conform to our way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving. In order to overcome many obstacles and prejudices, it is particularly important to know the relationship between culture and communication and the role they have within the community (Samuel, 2018).

According to Dumitru (2002), communication can be accepted as a complex relationship created between individuals or groups through learned or inherited symbolic representation that allows messages to be transmitted and received in a specific context, at a given time and in specific spatial conditions. It has, but is not always, an objective or subjective goal, causing changes in actions or behaviors in desired or undesirable, null or unintended, positive or negative ways through the states

caused by the interpretations of the messages transmitted to the receptors. Accumulations produced at the level of the communication system are dominated by the culture in which the individual or group is born and develops. Communication relations are therefore culturally dependent and therefore always interpretable in a specific context (Ibid). Interpretive researchers view the relation between culture and communication as the former influences the latter and the latter reinforces the former (Anteneh, 2012, p. 87).

#### **2.4. Use of Communications in Conflict Resolution**

Often, the only tool we have to resolve a conflict is our ability to discuss. Half the key to good communication in a conflict situation is the ability to clearly hear what the other party is saying (and often not saying); in a way, that empowers them feeling of being heard. The other half is communicating what you want to say clearly, in a way that will allow the other party to hear and understand your message – and that encourages them to be sensitive to your needs and wants (Ian, 2020).

Good communication in conflict situations eases tension, builds trust, strengthens relationships and puts people at ease because they understand each other. Ian (2020), stated that conflict resolution relies on good communication and that in most cases the only tools to resolve conflict are communication skills. Good communication is more about listening than talking.

#### **2.5. Indigenous Mechanisms of Conflict Resolution**

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms include social, economic, cultural and religious-spiritual dimensions in accordance with a society's set of traditions, customs and worldviews in the different spheres of societal life. The methods involve negotiations, mediations and reconciliation based on community knowledge, customs and history. The process is led by community leaders such as traditional chiefs, kings, priests, healers, elders and other tribal chiefs and takes the form of rituals in which the whole community participates. Exchanges of wealth, prayers and sacrifices to gods/ancestors are practiced and there is often rejoicing. In traditional African societies, conflicts are often resolved using established traditions (Nwolise, 2005). This is because the restoration of peace, its maintenance and social harmony are paramount to the well-being of the whole society. According to Pkalya, Adan and Masinde (2004), traditional social entities such as chiefs, community elders, extended families, lineages, clans, tribes, religious

brotherhood, local institutions and ethnolinguistic groups remain important in the conflict resolution process.

Distinguishing indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms from Western Weberian/Westphalian methods of conflict resolution, Peter and Eric (2003) argue that indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are not just about determining who is right or wrong and punishing wrongdoers, but the reconciliation of the parties to end the conflict. The main goal is conflict transformation in which both parties are satisfied and willing to “let go of their pain and forgive each other”. Boege (2006) describes this as restorative reconciliation. Thus, Indigenous approaches to conflict resolution aim for restorative justice, restoring order, harmony, and maintaining relationships within the community by reintegrating conflicting parties for true reconciliation (Boege, 2006).

Moreover, indigenous methods are holistic and consensus-based and often involve the participation of all parties as well as the whole community (Kaderi, 2013). Westphalian methods of conflict resolution such as the use of the court system and the use of foreign NGOs do not lead to proper conflict resolution. The justice system often leads to blaming and punishing certain factions, which tends to aggravate hostility between warring factions and lead to escalation of violence (Ibid).

Similarly, Agyeman (2008) argues that the involvement of foreign and international NGOs in conflict resolution often does not lead to genuine conflict resolution at the local level. Indeed, most of these foreign NGOs do not know the local roots and dynamics of these conflicts and are therefore unable to prescribe local solutions to the real end of the conflicts (Agyeman, 2008). ‘Gum’, the indigenous conflict mechanism that is the focus of this study has no involvement of local and foreign NGOs in its resolution.

Africa has enough indigenous traditions for peacebuilding, which can promote healing, reconciliation and restore social solidarity (Pendzich, Christine, Garry and Tim 1994). These include the Akan conception of the personhood, the cieng concept of human relations among the Dinka of southern Sudan, the Ubuntu concept found among the Bantu communities of southern and central Africa, the Mato Oput of the Acholi people in Uganda , as well as the Gacaca concept in Rwandan judicial system among other traditional African conflict resolution mechanisms (Baya, 2009). Similarly, Guma, an indigenous communication mechanism, which is part of the Geda

system of the Oromo people, can also be considered as an African indigenous communication for conflict management and peace building. Infusing these traditional approaches into our current system of conflict resolution and peacebuilding can strengthen social solidarity in our institutions of governance.

## **2.6. Theoretical Framework**

### **2.6.1. Symbolic Interactionism Theory**

George Mead is considered a founder of symbolic interactionism theory. It is a theory that focuses on the meanings attached to human interaction, both verbal and nonverbal, and to symbols. Communication - the exchange of meaning through language and symbols is seen as how people make sense of their social world. George Herbert Mead was an early social constructionist who believed that our thoughts, our self-concept, and the broader community we live in are created through communication, symbolic interaction (Griffin, Ledbetter & Sparks, 2019). Symbolic interactionism theory is an essential concept for understanding how human beings interact with society. Meaningful symbols are relevant to understanding how humans act and interact. Therefore, the theory describes human beings and the source of most actions. This means that the center of actions and interactions within society is with human beings (Andersen and Taylor, 2002).

According to Griffin, Ledbetter and Sparks (2019), Herbert Blumer coined the term “symbolic interactionism” and described these basic premises: humans interact with things based on the meanings assigned to those things; the meaning attributed to things comes from our interactions with others and society; the meanings of things are interpreted by a person when dealing with things in specific circumstances. Social scientists who apply symbolic interactionist thinking look for patterns of interaction between people. Their studies often involve observing individual interactions. For example, while studying a political protest, a symbolic interactionist would be more interested in how individuals in the protesting group interact, as well as the signs and symbols that protesters use to communicate their message and to negotiate and thus develop shared meanings (Goffman 1958). In this sense, ‘Guma, the indigenous communication practice, is practiced with many symbolic interactions.

According to Baghdadi (2009), objects exist in society in many forms, as any thing can be pointed or referred to, from a table, a carpenter, or an ideology. Although a broad definition of what an

object is, this definition brings with it the idea that objects are the product of symbolic interactions. Objects can be classified into three categories: 1) physical objects (a tree or a soccer ball), 2) social objects (a mayor, a sister, or a friend), 3) and abstract objects (values, norms, manipulation). According to (Blumer, 1969), the nature of all objects is such that each object carries with it a meaning for the person for whom it is an object.

The meaning of objects is inherently derived from how those objects are defined by the interaction one has with the object. Through indications, certain objects come to have a common meaning. We have come to understand that lawyers are the professional cadre responsible for enforcing the law and that the priests are held in high regard as the authority on Christianity and the sheikh on Islam. Likewise, among the Oromo in general and the community of Degem District, where ‘Guma’ is practiced widely, in particular, Aba Geda and Haadha Siinqee (women of the Siinqee) are highly esteemed. Mutual indications lead to the emergence of common objects that are perceived by a given set of people as having a similar meaning (Blumer, 1969).

Symbolic interactionism also postulates that the meanings attributed to objects are derived from the social interaction between humans. The cyclical nature of conflict perpetuates the meanings that both parties attribute to the actions of the other. The history of the conflicting interaction is entangled in repeated misinterpretations and subsequent actions based on that particular misinterpretation. The interpretive processes by which meanings are internalized by actors are essential to interaction. If two parties interpret meanings the way they are meant to be interpreted, effective mutual communication occurs. In the event of a conflict, the communication is interrupted. Symbolic interactionism requires us to understand at what point in the process of interpretation the interaction has been disrupted or misinterpreted and why (Baghdadi 2009).

Symbols are a cultural element created by human to be used as a means of communication and a tool of symbolic communication. Many cultural anthropologists have also claimed that the basic unit of culture is the symbol - the container of information and the first social genetic core of humanity. The concept of symbolism is placed in cultural interactions. Therefore, on the basis of human symbolic capacity and seeing the symbol as a form of representative cultural linguistic expression (Linh, 2019)

According to Blumer (1969), objects do not possess their means, but rather the meanings of derived objects arise from social interaction. People know what objects mean when they interact with each other. In doing so, they attach great importance to the language and communication processes that it facilitates. Through these processes, people learn to identify and act upon the objects, events, and experiences that make up their environment. Essentially, they learn to see and respond symbolically to mediated realities – socially constructed realities.

According to Udeze (2005), the sender and receiver of information must operate on the same frequency in terms of sharing meaning in the same language and symbols used for effective communication and conflict resolution. Likewise, the elders of community of Degem District use different symbolic interactions and effectively resolve conflicts and ensure lasting reconciliation. There is a relationship between communication, symbols and shared meaning. Attention to symbols result in the need to share meaning. Where there is shared meaning, we say that there is effective communication.

In this study, symbolic interactionism theory provides the basis for understanding and describing the restorative nature of conflict resolution through 'Guma', the indigenous communication practice, in Degem District. The theory helps to understand how 'Guma' uses different symbolic communications to bring about reconciliation, reintegration, peace and stability. All things used for symbolic communications have symbolic meaning, convey critical messages, and have their own social value in the community.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3. Research Methodology**

#### **3.1. Introduction**

The main aim of the study was to explore and describe the nature, process and practice of ‘Guma’ as an indigenous means of communication in conflict resolution in Oromia, North Shoa, Degem District community. The methodological approaches are discussed below in detail on research design, study location and community, sampling techniques, source of data, data gathering tools, data collection procedure, techniques of data analysis and the ethical considerations.

#### **3.2. Research Design: Qualitative Case Study**

In this study, the qualitative descriptive research method is used because the qualitative method is a typical research approach that allows the researcher to find data that cannot investigate the phenomenon that is difficult to quantify mathematically, such as norms, beliefs and values of a given society. Moreover, the qualitative method is an area of special interest because it brings qualities such as warmth, involvement, compassion, humanism and commitment (Rubin & Babbie, 2009). This means that the researcher must be actively involved in disclosing detailed participant data. To do this, the case study method is used as a way to describe participants’ perspectives on the practice, nature and strategy of ‘Guma’ as indigenous communication mechanism in conflict resolution. By its nature, the case study is a qualitative research method used to study data with a contextual analysis of the phenomenon, a detailed understanding of individuals and groups within their environment (Sturman, 1997).

Therefore, the objective of research in such a field is achieved through the active involvement of the researcher with a given group of people. This design allows the researcher to dig into detailed information about a given problem and actively participate in the research situation. In doing so, researchers become involved for a while in people's daily lives, listening to what is said by asking questions and collecting all available data by shedding light on the research issues (Banister et al., 1994). In essence, this design paves the way for the researcher to find a complete and meaningful answer to the stated research objectives. Therefore, the case study is most practical to describe and

explain the nature, practice and strategy of the ‘Guma’ in conflict resolution within the community of Degem District.

### **3.3. Study Location and Community**

The location that the study is undertaken in is Oromia Regional State, North Shoa Degem District. Degem is one of the districts in North Shoa Zone of Oromia in Ethiopia. It is bordered on the north by Amhara Region, on the east by Yaya Gulele District, on the south by West Soa Zone, on the west by Kuyu District, on the northwest by Hidhabu Abote District and on the northeast by Gerar Jarso District.

The District is located at a distance of 123 km from Addis Ababa capital city of Ethiopia to North-Western and 10 km from Fitcha capital of North Shoa, Oromia. Its astronomical position extends from 38°25'0"E-38°45'00E and 09°03'0"0N-10°30'0"N longitude and latitude respectively.

There are 18 rural Peasant Administrations, one village town (Ali Doro) and Hambisso, capital of the District. Based on the information obtained from Labor and Social Affairs Office of the District, the district has an estimated total population of 123,319 of which 60,427 are male and 62,892 female; 5,464 or 4.4% of its population are urban dwellers while 117,855 or 95.6% are rural. Degem District has an estimated population density of 174.2 people per square kilometer with an estimated area of 674.85 square kilometers.

According to scholars and Oromo elders, Borana and Barentu are the two branches of Oromo as a nation and Shoa Oromo (Tulama) including Degem District community, is one sub-branch of Borana. Degem District is sometimes called the land of Saglan Igguu Aabuu (Nine of Iggu Abu). According to the oral history, Iggu Abbu came to settle in this land with his nine children and ritually occupied the land. The Saglan Igguu (nine of Iggu) are Illaammu, Dhanqaa, Aannoo, Bonayaa, Saggu, Raaso, Iyataa, Annaa-Jirruu and Dooroo. Currently, there are clans named after all children who mainly live in the district.

The Degem District community has its own indigenous practices such as ‘dabo’, ‘jigi’ and ‘edir’ to help each other. Indigenous communications are used in all practices. The community has its own rules and regulations called ‘Seera Iggu Aabuu’, which means the rule of law of Iggu Abu that orally declared to the members of the community. Likewise, ‘Guma’, the indigenous

communication mechanism is one of the rules and regulations of Iggu Abu, which deals with conflict resolution followed by homicide.

There are many tourist attractions in the Degem District. Gara Gudda Selale, the mountain that is the highest point of the zone is one of them. Its height is 3,541 meters. The mountain is covered with manmade trees and natural forests. Due to its height, a few districts of West Shoa Merrebite in Amhara Region and many districts of Oromia Regional State of North Shoa can be seen from the top of the mountain. Additionally, the mountain is home to wild animals such as rabbits, wild goats, wild dogs, apes, monkeys, hyenas, and various species of birds. The air of this mountain is conducive to human life. The Degem District community go on to the mountain to pray and irrecha/thanksgiving.

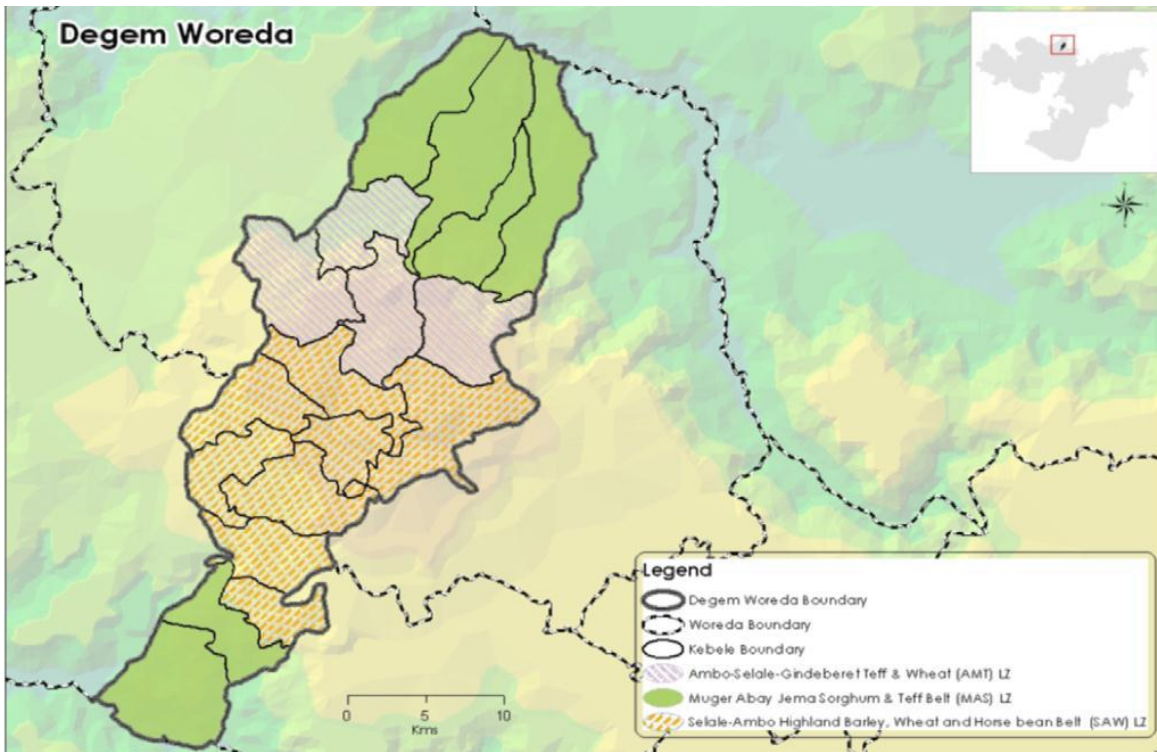


Figure 2: Map of Degem District (Tesemma, 2016, p. 26)

### 3.4. Sampling Techniques

The study applied purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Study participants were selected from Degem community elders, experts from Degem District Culture and Tourism Office, Selale University and others, who are familiar with the subject in depth.

In this study, the selection of key informants was done by purposive sampling. The researcher has carefully selected the relevant respondents from the target group, in order to seek relevant, rich and reliable data. Silverman (2000) stated that purposive sampling is a technique commonly used in qualitative research that allows the researcher to carefully select participants because it illustrates a characteristic or process that the researcher wished to describe. Consequently, informants should be experienced and knowledgeable about the nature and practices of Guma in the study area. To qualify this purpose, the snowball sampling technique was used.

In this study, snowball sampling was used to find the right people who were knowledgeable to describe the indigenous communication mechanism, i.e. 'Guma'. According to Ahmadzadehasl and Ariasepehr (2010), snowball sampling is a convenience sampling method that is applied when it is difficult to access subjects with the target characteristics. In this technique, the researcher first identified contact persons from the Culture and Tourism Office of the Degem District and was able to reach those knowledgeable and experienced people about 'Guma', its nature, practices and rituals in the study areas. Therefore, through the expert from the Degem District Culture and Tourism Office, the researcher contacted the community elders who perform the 'Guma' processes from the beginning to the ceremony of ritual purification for many years. The first key informant reached was Iggu Abbu senior elder who is the chief elder of the community that 'Guma' cannot be executed in his absence. Then, after he told the researcher other community elders who often participate in 'Guma' and the researcher conducted interviews and FGD. These community elders are drawn from different kebeles in the district however, their selection is not based on location but on their seniority and experience.

Additionally, the researcher contacted the North Shoa Culture and Tourism Office for further rich information in which nothing was obtained. The expert from the office sent the researcher to Selale University, telling him that the university was conducting action research on traditional conflict resolution mechanisms, especially on 'Guma' in Degem and neighboring districts. Hoping to get the information, he walked to the university and knocked the door of Afan Oromo department thinking it was the relevant department. The department has not yet done anything on 'Guma' but advised the researcher to ask the anthropology department if necessary. Again, with hope, the researcher went to the anthropology department. The head of the department told the researcher that some of the lecturers have been involved in research that the university has been funding and

conducting for two years, which the sociology department coordinates. Therefore, the head advised the researcher to contact the department. Finally, the researcher met with the head of the sociology department and undertook FGD and interviews with the group of academicians who have been conducting research on ‘Guma’ and other indigenous knowledge in the district.

Hence, the selection of study participants was based on their knowledge and experience of ‘Guma’. The researcher selected community elders, experts, university lecturers and a judge as key informants. The informants were those who have comprehensive experience on ‘Guma’ in one way or another. The idea behind qualitative research is to deliberately select participants who best help the researcher to understand the research objective and question. In support of this, Creswell (2014) explains that qualitative research does not necessarily suggest random sampling or selection of large numbers of participants.

### **3.5. Source of Data and Data Gathering Tools**

In this study, the data source was primary data, which was collected directly from the study population by selecting key informants such as community elders, university lecturers, culture and tourism experts, and judge. Therefore, data on the historical foundations and concepts of ‘Guma’ practice, the symbolic communications used, the conflicts resolved by this indigenous communication mechanism, its ritual and procedure during reconciliation were collected. Moreover, data regarding its advantages, limitations and challenges are generated from primary data, which was then analyzed according to the theme to obtain the solution to the identified problem.

Important data was collected using different types of qualitative data collection techniques such as in-depth interview, FGD and participant observation. In-depth interviews and FGD were conducted in Afan Oromo language. The English language was not used in the field. The researcher prepared the questions for the English version, to make it clear to the reader what types of questions were used in the field. The researcher used in the field works supportive materials such as, audio recorder, camera, pen and notebook. The data collection tools used are briefly described below.

### **3.5.1. In-depth Interview**

In-depth interview was the main data gathering tool in this study. A qualitative research technique involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to describe their perspectives on a particular idea or issues. Alan (1984) states that in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit a vivid picture of the participants' perspective on the research issue.

The researcher engaged with participants by asking questions in a neutral way, listened carefully to participants' responses, asked follow-up questions, and probed based on their responses to obtain needed information. He did not direct the participants in an attempt to misrepresent but encouraged the participants through non-verbal communications to talk more.

Hence, the researcher chose the interviewees who have experience, detailed and ample information about the study objectives. Therefore, ten respondents were interviewed in the in-depth interview, i.e. one chief of community elders, five community elders, one culture and tourism expert two university lecturers and one judge. The duration of each interview session range from 45 minutes to an hour. The researcher gave compliments and got the consent of the participants before collecting data.

### **3.5.2. Focus Group Discussion**

FGD is another data gathering tool that was employed in this study. It helps to have an open individuals' discussion on issue to clarify it. It also helped to have a deep understanding of cultural practices by way of a qualitative research. A FGD is advantageous to understand participants' knowledge, attitudes, experiences, feelings, perceptions and opinions within a short period. It is effective to access a broad range of views, opinions and ideas on specific topics. It is a data gathering tool which helps see and understand the issue under study from the participants' point of view. Rana (2013) reveals that when it comes to FGD, characteristics of participants, it is generally believed that participants may share common characteristics so that interaction can occur at an optimal level. Hence, this study utilized five FGD, six participants in each four groups and eight participants in a group. It was conducted with 32 individuals by grouping those who have the same experience together. For instance, community elders in one group and university lecturers

and experts accordingly. According to Morgan (1997), a focus group discussion can have 6 to 10 participants per group.

The focus group discussions with different group who may have different experience helped the researcher get information on meaning of 'Guma', its communication strategy, effectiveness of 'Guma' in conflict management, power of 'Guma' to bring lasting solutions to conflicts and the role of elders in 'Guma'. The discussions were held at where all informants agree with and feel comfortable. Afan Oromo language was used with the consent of the participants. The role of the researcher here was, giving compliments for the participants, leading the discussion by raising different questions, giving chance for participants to participate and taking notes, pictures and recording the discussion.

### **3.5.3. Participatory Observation**

Participatory observation was also the data collection tool used for the study. It serves to understand a phenomenon by participating with them. Bruyn (1966) argues that it was only through outright participation as a member of the group that the cause of the phenomenon could be fully understood.

It offers chances to participate and get an insight into the practice. This allowed the researcher to gain enhanced experience and see the actual practice as it is as the communities interact and perform the 'Guma' ritual purification ceremony in the natural setting. Through participant observation, the researcher crosschecked the data collected using interviews and focus group discussions. This was a better way to fill the interview and FGD gap. It also allowed the research to interact with the participants.

This study applied participant observation while the researcher was motivated to describe 'Guma's nature, its communication strategy and to get full picture of it. The researcher was lucky to be in Degem District and was able to participate in the 'Guma' ritual purification ceremony on May 31, 2022. He observed the whole process from its beginning to its end. As a communication practice is something that can be observed, recorded, documented, analyzed and written down, participant observation is a very important tool. Therefore, the researcher observed the practice while participating with members of the participants and documented what he witnessed in the field.

### **3.6. Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher initiated the data collection with having a letter of support from Addis Ababa University, School of Journalism and Communication. After getting the letter, he first submitted the original letter to the Degem District Administration Office. Then the copy of the letter to the Office of Culture and Tourism of Degem District. As the Office of Culture and Tourism was the most relevant body for the research, the experts provided great emphasis and support the researcher, giving information and assisting the researcher during interviews and FGD. Additionally, the researcher also submitted the copy of the letter to North Shoa Culture and Tourism Office, North Shoa Attorney General and when sent to Selale University following a snowball, he submitted the letter to the University too.

The researcher has not started data collection at the time of letter submission. Instead, he did the introduction with all the organizations to whom the letter was addressed and spent about a week for the introduction. This actually creates fertile ground for the data collection work.

After the introductory time, the researcher first attempted to contact community elders for interviews and FGD. Experts from the Degem District Office of Culture and Tourism were of great help in linking the researcher with the community elder. However, it was so difficult to reach them, especially the leader of the community elder who is very busy doing many tasks including ‘Guma’ issue. In addition, everyone was suspicious because of the security situation in the area. In general, the fieldwork was so difficult for the researcher

Finally, the researcher met with the chief of the community elder, contacted other community elders, held interviews, and FGD with Afan Oromo and also made observation. Then the information collected in Afan Oromo was translated into English by the researcher, as he is a native speaker of the language and someone else who has a language qualification qualified it more.

### **3.7. Techniques of Data Analysis**

Thematic analysis was used to analyze the raw data collected through interviews, FGD and observations to answer the research questions as well as to achieve the stated objectives. (Braun and Clarke, 2006) explain that the thematic analysis method is a useful method for examining the perspectives of different research participants, highlighting similarities and differences by

generating unforeseen insights. It is useful for summarizing the main features of a large data set, as it encourages the researcher to take a well-structured approach to processing that data, helping to produce organized and clear final report (King, 2004).

The researcher started data analysis right after interviews, FGD and observation took place. Data collected through interviews, FGD and observations were merged and analyzed. In doing so, the audio and video recorded during the interview, FGD and observation were carefully transcribed and the interpretation of meanings and content was organized and summarized according to the objective of the study. Then the researcher reads, repeatedly, to encapsulate and search for patterns or themes in coded data through interviews, group discussions, and observations. After transcribing the raw data, depending, on the objectives and research questions to be answered, the researcher categorized and coded the data into manageable and meaningful sets of subtopics such as features/nature of ‘Guma’ fleeing home, steps of reconciliation processes such as prayer of reconciliation/ ‘izgoota’, formation of luba’ and ‘luka’, imposing sanction on the murderer and ritual cleansing ceremony, advantages of ‘Guma’ over state court, limitations of ‘Guma’ and challenges that ‘Guma’ currently facing were identified. Then the responses were ranked accordingly. Themes that emerged from the responses were examined and physically identified by sorting them into piles of similar meaning. Since participants were interviewed in the Afan Oromo language, transcribed interviews and focus group discussions were translated into English to capture themes and patterns in the data. Translations take place with collaboration of two people, the researcher and another person with extensive experience in conducting research. An effort has been made to maintain the originality and clarity of the information while translating the transcribed and coded data into the English language. In the process of presenting and analyzing data, the direct voices of study participants are used where necessary. The themes generated and identified according to the research question and the analysis were based on the theories selected from the conceptual frameworks of symbolic interactionism in which ‘Guma’ practice can be clearly understood under this concept.

### **3.8. Ethical Consideration**

The Researcher first received the letter of support from Addis Ababa University, School of Journalism and Communication and submitted to all pertinent bodies as stated under 3.7 above to avoid any illegal activities. In this case, the purpose of the study was explained to the research

participants to get their consent. Then after, oral approval of their consent to participate and provide information about 'Guma' practice and related issues available. In all processes of this study, the confidentiality of the data and the anonymity of informants were kept and a code that represents participants was used. In every step of the data collection process, the researcher built a good rapport to make them feel comfortable and give detailed information about 'Guma'. Data collection materials such as voice recorder, camera, and notebook used by informing participants for there is no potential harm to their privacy in any means.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **4. Data Analysis and Discussion**

#### **4.1. Introduction**

In this chapter, the presentation, categorization, thematic analysis and interpretation of the collected data are discussed. The presentation and analysis of the study were drawn from data collected through interviews, FGD and observations. The qualitative research approach was employed for a deeper understanding of events and contexts in order to make sense of the practice. The collected data was presented and discussed using thematic analysis to achieve the objective of the study

The researcher gave clear codes for the purpose of anonymity. The codes referring to key informants who participated in the in-depth interview are I1, I2, I3, I4, I5, I6, I7, I8, I9 and I10. Regarding the FGDs, codes were given to each group and to each discussant in the groups. Group codes are GA, GB, GC and GD while discussants' codes are GA1, GA2, GA3, GA4, GA5, GA6, GB1, GB2, GB3, GB4, GB5, GB6, GB7, GB8, GC1, GC2, GC3, GC4, GC5 GC6, GD1, GD2, GD3, GD4, G5D, GD6. GE1, GE2, GE3, GE4, GE5 and GE6,

The main objective of the study was to explore and describe 'Guma' as indigenous communication practice in conflict resolution in Degem, North Soa Zone of Oromia regional state in relation with the research questions. A qualitative inquiry that better assists the researcher in understanding and deepening the community's indigenous communication mechanism practice was applied using various data collection tools to answer the research questions. The following sections have interpreted and discussed the analysis under the different themes.

#### **4.2. Features/Nature of 'Guma'**

'Guma' is one of the traditional conflict resolution processes widely used by the Oromo people, including the Degem District community. It is an ancient indigenous communication mechanism practiced to resolve conflicts, which has its own characteristics and nature. Through observing the habits, beliefs and actions of a certain society, culture can be observed and understood. These practices of indigenous communication mechanisms have their own characteristics that help to identify them. Additionally, the nature of the practice helps to see what the practice incorporates

and from what. Accordingly, ‘Guma’ can be characterized as an indigenous communication mechanism that is practiced to resolve the conflict from its root and bring justice by compensating the victim through punishing the criminal. In this perspective, different definitions are given to ‘Guma’ by the participants of the interview and discussants of the FGD. GC5 defined ‘Guma’ as follows.

*‘Guma’ is a mechanism to settle disputes between different Oromo clans as well as those that arise within clans and families that come into conflict with each other, especially when lives are lost. It is a mechanism that restores peace and stability on the basis of justice and truth. ‘Guma’ is a social institution based on justice to compensate the victim by punishing the criminal. He argued that ‘Guma’ is a ritual in which the murderer is not only reconciled with the individual, family and clan, but it is also a reconciliation with ‘Waaqa’ (God) (FGD).*

A better understanding of ‘Guma’ may require some familiarity with the Geda system. The Geda system is a complex and holistic system that permeates the political, social and economic aspects of the life of the Oromo people. It is a complex and comprehensive institution that the Oromo people have invented since time immemorial to deal with the obstacles and intricacies of their community life. The Oromo people have one of the most democratic cultures among Ethiopians. Their system of African democracy known as Geda is a well-known indigenous African political system that governs social order, politics, as well as the peaceful resolution of disputes. ‘Guma’, an indigenous communication practice is an important aspect of the Geda system, which resolved conflicts from its root. When the Geda system weakened, toppled in parts of Oromia including Degem District due to government repression and modern religion, ‘Guma’ has been in place for centuries in Degem District community.

One of the FGD discussants (GC5) said that ‘Guma’ proceedings in homicide cases are categorized into three based on the cause of the act and other circumstances surrounding the offence. All the members of the FGD approved it. Here are the types of ‘Guma’

- I. ‘Guma Adii’ (Intentional Homicide ‘Guma’)*
- II. ‘Guma Barruu’ (‘Guma’ of negligent homicide)*
- III. ‘Guma Gurrattii’ (‘Guma’ of homicide other than the two cases above) (FGD).*

### **I. 'Guma Adii'**

This occurs when the murder is committed deliberately by one of the rival individuals/groups against another. In this case, already existing conflicts lead to loss of lives. This type of murder is called 'ajjechaa gadoo' (revenge killing). The murderer kills a person who was once his enemy to be known as a victor. In this kind of 'Guma', the murderer is required to pay more indemnities. Since it is a deliberate act of murder, the penalty for the murderer is higher. This type of 'Guma' procedure is different from the rest mainly because it is handled quickly because the stakes here are very high.

### **II. 'Guma Barruu'**

This is a 'Guma' applicable to cases of homicide, but to which the perpetrator's negligence contributed in some way. For example, if a gun, spear, knife, arrow, etc. thrown for hunting misses its target and kills a person, it is called 'Guma barruu'. In this case, there is no feeling of enmity between the killer and the killed. The person killed and the killer may not even know each other. However, the killer is considered guilty because he used lethal weapons without sufficient precaution. The person who killed another person in self-defense is also considered a killer who committed 'Gumaa Barruu'. Tolerance and patience are highly expected from the victim's family or clan.

### **III. 'Guma Gurrattii'**

This kind of 'Guma' occurs when a person kills another friendly person without using any kind of deadly weapon. In this category, homicide is committed by unforeseen situations, but the offender acted under normal circumstances or undertakes practices accepted as customary in society. For example, if a murder is committed in one of the traditional public sports such as 'gombisaa' (horse riding). There is no enmity in such cases. However, 'Guma' takes place to purify and declare the killer innocent.

In terms of initiating a 'Guma' process, the 'Jaarsa Biyyaa' (community elders) are responsible. The elders who usually deal with 'Guma' cases are neutral groups and led by 'Abbaa Qunnaa' (Chief community elder). There are also elder groups formed temporarily on both sides (the criminal and the victim) to handle conflict resolution activity. In all communications between

elders, attentive listening is always present. Nobody interrupts and the conversation is calm. Similarly, Nigussie (2017) stated that the rewards of effective listening are numerous. In 'Guma', the elders communicate and are able to reconcile very emotional anger between individuals, family and clans.

Interview, FGD and observation ensured that in 'Guma' the elements of communication, sender, receiver, message, channel, environment/setting, context and feedback are incorporated.

### **4.3. Fleeing Home**

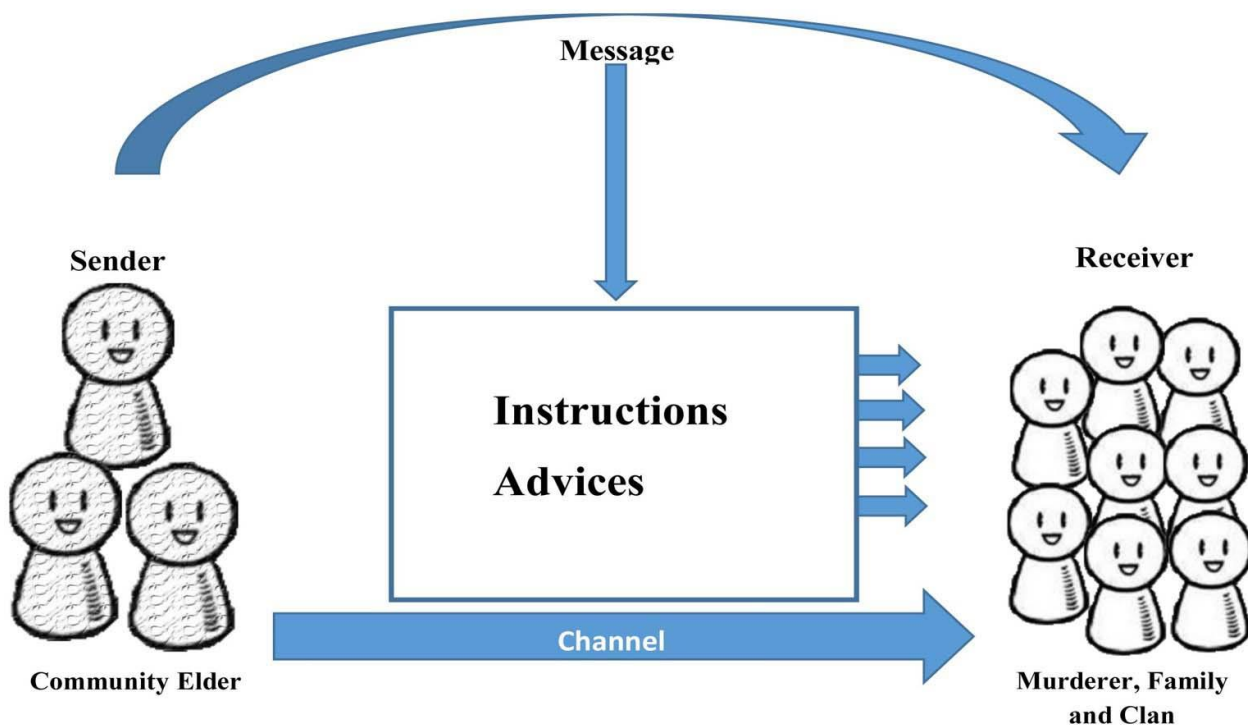
When a death is committed, it must be hastily reported to the nearby community elders (Jaarsa Biyya) in the neighborhood, either by a killer or by witnesses. Anyone who kills someone supposed to report it for fear of 'daba' (sin passes from generation to generation). Then the first elders who heard the matter report directly to the next elders. Quickly, the elders appoint someone who can hide or protect the killer for four purposes. First, murderer and his family must be hidden from revenge by family or relatives of the victim. Second, the murderer is socially sanctioned until the purification is done. Also, to show regret for the lost life. Finally, hiding is not only for fear of revenge but also to show the respect and sympathy that the victims deserve.

Community elders force the killer and his family, including extended family, to flee their home and move away. I1, I2 and I6 elaborated this as follows.

*When leaving their house, each family closes its door with 'muka qoree' (thorny tree). The closed door with 'muka qoree' (thorny tree) represents that they regret that casualties occur and at the same time it shows that they are sinners. If the parents of the victims go out in anger to take revenge or to burn their property and their houses, they will turn back without doing anything if they see their houses and their gates closed with thorns. Because closing the door with thorns and running away expresses the regret and pain of the family. In this process, the elders of the community communicate appropriately with all the families so that everything is done correctly. When community elders say and advise what needs to happen, each person takes orders, there is no objection or response (interview).*

All the family and the relatives of the murderer must flee the place where the family or the clan of the murdered person lives. This is called ‘laga ce’uu’ (going away). Until the purification is done, they are not allowed to come into contact in case of ‘dabo’ (cooperative work), wedding ceremony and feed their cattle from the same river or field. In addition, sharing the same market is also prohibited. About this, the elders correctly explain to the family of the murderer and warn them to do these things appropriately.

According to the information got from interview, at this stage, the communication used in ‘Guma’ is almost one-way. Community elders give instructions, advice, warnings, and the murderer, the family and the clan accept and apply.



*Figure 3: Communication Model of ‘Guma’ in Fleeing Home*

This model is quite similar to the linear communication model that was first introduced by Shannon and Weaver in 1949. As discussed above, in communications between community elders and the slayer, his/her family, and clan, the probability of feedback is limited. Community elders give face-to-face instructions, advice and/or warnings most often and rarely through messengers while the murderer, and his /her family and clan accept and act accordingly.

#### 4.4. Steps of Reconciliation Process

'Guma', an indigenous communication practice, has its own steps and processes for resolving conflicts and reconciling conflicting bodies. There are systematic means employed in which different methods of communication are implemented. Information obtained through interviews and FGD shows that the secret behind the efficiency and effectiveness of 'Guma' in bringing about a lasting solution to conflicts lies in its efficient steps. According to I5 the steps of reconciliation process takes months and sometimes a year to arrive at the final reconciliation. The steps of 'Guma's reconciliation process are as follows.

##### 4.4.1. Prayer of Reconciliation/ 'Izgoota'

The interview and FGD participants explained that the prayer of reconciliation/'Izgoota', the first stage of the reconciliation process, does not begin before two weeks to wait for the victims to calm down, but it should not be more late. It is time for the elders on the side of the murderer to cry out to the victims for reconciliation and forgiveness. The step is very important and a process of opening the door to the final resolution of conflicts which is carried out with care. According to information from interview participants (I2, I5, I6 and I1), the prayer of reconciliation / 'Izgoota' is performed as follows.

*The elders on the side of the murderer get up in the morning, go to the top of the hill, and cry out to the victims. This place of crying must not be the land of the victims. If possible, it should be a communal area and should not be too close to the victims' village. However, it also should not be too far away as it will not be heard if it is.*

*The elders on the side of the murderer cry out to the victims as follows. :*

*Isinitti iyyannaa yaa gooftolii*

*Waaqa uumaa Oromoo*

*Saglan Booranaa tii jedhaa*

*Sadeen Tuulamaa tii jedhaa*

*Saglan Igguu Aabbuu tii jedhaa*

*Odaa Nabee tii jedhaa*

*We cry out to you, Sirs,*

*For the sake of Waaqa (God) of Oromo,*

*For the sake of the nine of the Borana,*

*For the sake of the three of Tulama,*

*For the sake of the nine of the Igguu Abu,*

*For the sake of the Oda Nabee,*

*Caffee Tumaa tii jedhaa*  
*Booruu Awaashii jedhaa*  
*Siwaammannaa nuu owwaadhu*  
  
*xinnaan keessan haa guddatu*  
*Guddaan keessaan haa bulu naa owwaadhaa*  
*kormi isiniif yaa baroodu*  
*Dhaltiin isiniif yaa mar'attu*  
*Jammaa dullachaa ilaalaa*  
*Mogor kormaa ilaalaa*  
*birraduun mataa ol qabnaa, birraduu*  
*mataa ol naqabsiisaa.*  
*Ibidda harka mirgaatti baannaa*  
*Qoree harka bitaatti baannaa*  
*Kallachi fi Caaccuun ba'eet*  
*dhaabbata yaa gooftolii*  
*Waaqaa jedhaa, lafaa jedhaa,*  
*birraduun mataa ol qabnaa birraduu*  
*mataa ol naqabsiisaa*  
  
*Xinnaan keessaa yaa guddatu,*  
*Guddaan keessan yaa bulu*  
*Sanyi sadeen isiniif yaa margu*  
     *Sanyiin namaa isiniif yaa margu*  
     *Sanyiin midhaanii isiniif yaa margu*  
     *Sanyiin loonii isiniif yaa margu*  
*Birraduu bade sanan mataa ol qabaa*  
*birraduu mataa ol nuqabsiisaa*  
  
*Kan du'e sun yaa deebi'uufi miti*  
*Kan jiru walitti makamee akka fira ta'uufi*  
*Hirmii of gudduudhaa balleessufi*  
*Yoo gooftaa nu dhagayaa*

*For the sake of the Chaffie Tuma,*  
*For the sake of the Awash (river),*  
*We are calling and crying out to you please*  
*hear us,*  
*Let your little ones grow,*  
*Let your greatness stay, please hear us,*  
*Let your bulls roar,*  
*Let your cows moo,*  
*For the sake of cows of Jamma (River),*  
*For the sake of Bulls of Mogor (River),*  
*We must raise the lost soul,*  
*please allow us to do,*  
*We carry a fire in our right hands,*  
*We carry a thorn in my left hand,*  
*The Kallacha and Chachu are here, Sirs*  
  
*For the sake of God, for the sake of earth,*  
*We must raise the lost soul,*  
*please allow us to do,*  
  
*Let your little ones grow,*  
*May your greatness remain,*  
*May the three seeds grow for you,*  
     *May the human race flourish for you,*  
     *Let the seed of the grain grow for you,*  
     *May the seed of the cattle grow for you,*  
*We must raise the lost soul,*  
*please allow us to do,*  
  
*Not that the dead may return,*  
*But existing to be merged into harmonized,*  
*To purify the sin among us,*  
*Sirs, hear us,*

*Waanjoodhaan of camadneerraa*  
*Abidda harka mirgaattii baannaa*  
*Qoree harka bitaatti baannaa*  
*Fardi luugamameet dhaabbata*  
*Hayyuun ba'eet dhaabbata*  
*Qambaras narraa buusi*  
*Abiddaa nurraa dhaamsa*  
*Qoree nurraa buqqisi*  
*Fardis yaa hiikamu*  
*Igzoon sinitti jenna*  
*Birmaduun mataa ol qabaa birmaduu*  
*mataa ol nu qabsiisaa*  
*Waaqni fi lafti isiniif yaa araaramu*  
*naa araaramaa*  
*Sin waammannaa nuu owwaadhaa*

*We are yoked and yokes are on our shoulders,*  
*We carry fire our right hands,*  
*We carry thorn in our left hands,*  
*The horse is lugged and stands,*  
*The elders comes out and stand,*  
*Please take off the yoke from us,*  
*Put out the fire from us,*  
*Remove the thorns from us,*  
*Let the horse be freed,*  
*We are crying out to you,*  
*We must raise the lost soul,*  
*please allow us to do,*  
*May God and earth have mercy on you,*  
*please forgive us,*  
*We are calling and crying out to you,*  
*please hear us.*

*These cries have their own style. All the elders stand in a row and shout 'izgoo abeet'. When they utter their cries, the elders who have good voices are chosen and take turns raising their voices and uttering the above cries. The cries also have their own melody. The crying continues every Saturday morning until the victims give feedback. In most cases, feedback is given after three round cries. However, if there is no feedback, it continues for more rounds (Interview).*

*During the cry, the elders have 'hiddi' fruit, thorn, two yoked men, fire, a lugged horse, a tied up cow and a virgin girl with them. All of these things have symbolic meaning and convey critical messages. Moreover, they have their own social value in the community (Ibid).*

As discussed above, there are many traditional symbolic communications used. The elders bear 'hiddi' fruit to show that their life is sour like the fruit because of their evil action of killing someone while the thorn implies they are stabbed by sin. The two men under the yoke represent that the family and clan are unable to move due to the sins/bad things done against an innocent

individual. Fire signifies that family and relatives are burned by a murderous sin. The smoke from the fire also helps them be seen by family and relatives which are been crying out to. In addition, fire and smoke signify a sacrificial soul. A lugged horse means that they are not allowed to talk or eat. The representation of a tied up cow is the sanction imposed on the family of the murderer not to share the same market, ceremonies and anything else with the community until the purification takes place. A virgin girl is believed to be free from sin, so the elders have her with them to be heard by God.

It is undeniable to say what important roles indigenous communications play in the overall development and stabilization of a people's way of life before the era of modern communication. Certainly, there is a relationship between communication, symbols and shared meaning. Attention to symbols result in the need to share meaning. Where there is shared meaning, we say that there is effective communication. This evokes the place of symbols in communication. According to Udeze (2005), the sender and receiver of information must operate on the same frequency in terms of sharing meaning in the same language and symbols used for effective communication and conflict resolution. Likewise, the elders of community of Degem District use the aforementioned symbolic communications and effectively resolve conflicts and ensure lasting reconciliation.

All families and relatives of murderer are considered guilt by association and believed that they all are prisoned in front of God. Thus, the crying out is not only to the family of murdered but also to 'Waaqa' (God). They believe that when atonement comes, they wash away sins. Communications via cries and symbols are made to strive for reconciliation with the murdered and 'Waaqa' (God) as well. The more the families and loved ones of the murderer cry out, the more the families and loved ones of the murdered calm down and show compassion.

At this stage, 'Jaarsa Biyyaa'/community elders who are neutral on both sides are not directly involved. However, they supervise the process; give the necessary instructions and advice from the back. After a series of cries, the murdered side sends a messenger to the crying elders and opens the door to reconciliation though long processes are yet to come.

#### **4.4.2. Formation of 'Luba' and 'Luka'**

Jaarsa Biyyaa/community elders begin to engage actively by first facilitating the selection of 'Luba' and 'Luka'. In this regard, I5 stated the following.

'Luba' is a committee of three members from the slain side who are potentially the uncles of the slain while 'Luka' is a committee of three people who are potentially the uncle of the slayer. 'Luba' serves as a communication bridge between the 'Jaarsa Biyyaa'/community elders and the murdered side. It receives messages from 'Jaarsa Biyyaa'/community elders and forwards them to the families and relatives of the murdered and vice versa until the 'Guma', process is completed. In addition, it sometimes makes minor decisions on behalf of its side. On the other hand. 'Luka' serves as a communication bridge, linking 'Jaarsa Biyyaa'/community elders to the murderous side. It receives messages from Jaarsa Biyyaa/community elders and forwards them to the families and relatives of the murderer and vice versa until the end of the 'Guma' process. In addition, it sometimes makes minor decisions on behalf of its side as well. 'Luka' and 'Luba' never meet or communicate directly until the end of the 'Guma' ritual ceremony. However, they communicate with each other through 'Jaarsa Biyyaa'/community elders pending the process (Interview).

The above discussion can be diagrammatic and summarized as follows.

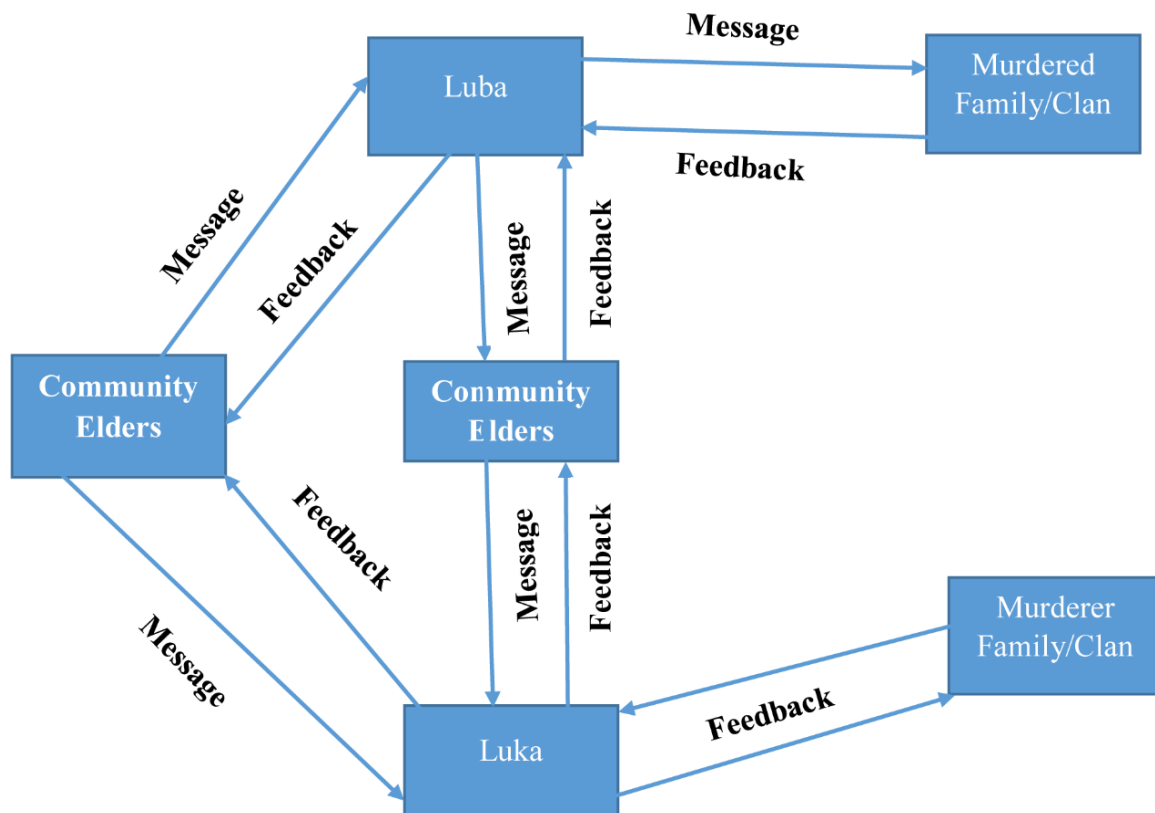


Figure 4: pictorial of 'Luba' and 'Luka'

Communications are complicated as shown in the diagram above to achieve lasting reconciliation. Community elders are key actors who take the lion's share of building peace and taking out the fire of conflict. They constitute good bases, which lead them towards reconciliation, lasting peace and stability.

As the discussion and diagram above show, community elders manage the crises through systematic communications. They mainly communicate with 'Luba' and 'Luka'. via 'Luba' and 'Luka', they reach out to the murderer's family/clan and the victim's family/clan respectively. They message each side via 'Luba' and 'Luka' and receive feedback accordingly. Moreover, the community elders receive the message, pass it on to 'Luba' or 'Luka' and pass on feedbacks each part. As a result of these fruitful communications, they go through, conduct ritual ceremonies and ensure unshakeable reconciliation, social integration of the community, and finally contribute a lot to peacebuilding and stability.

#### **4.4.3. Imposing Sanction on the Murderer**

Once the elders on the murdered side are willing to reconcile, the alleyway is to final reconciliation and the ritual purification ceremony. I5 clarified the following.

*There are several things to do before ritual purification ceremony. The slayer first appeared from where he/she escaped in front of 'Jaarsa Biyya'/community elders. Then they impose a sanction on him/her. They command him/her saying the following (Interview):*

*Want ati raawwatte badduudhaa*

*What you did is very immoral thing*

*Daabaa nuttii fiddee*

*You have brought sin upon us*

*Ijji gabaas sagalii si haa rukutuu*

*May the eyes of the nine markets strike you*

*Deemii gabaas sagal naannayii kadhaddhu*

*Go and beg round nine markets*

Community elders who say, "You have brought sin upon us" show that sin is not only limited to the murderer but also to the whole family/clan. Moreover "Let the eyes of the nine markets strike you" is to punish the killer for being a criminal.

GD1 added that:

*From there the slayer binds him/herself with chain and begs around the nine markets. To bind with a chain is to show that he/she is a prisoner before 'Waaqa' (God) for his/her sin of murder. When he/she begs, he/she says:*

*Gumaan baasaa maaloo na hirphaa      I have to pay 'Guma' please help me  
wanti narra gahe sin irra hin gayin      Let not what happened to me happen to you  
Ijji gaba na rukute sin hin rukutin      May the eyes of the markets that hit me not hit you*

Begging is not for money but it is a punishment. Therefore, even if the slayer has money, it is impossible for him/her to pay him/herself without begging. When he/she begs around the nine markets, many people who come to these markets learn that he/she is murderer. Moreover, begging itself is very taboo and very shameful in the community that is why he/she says “May the eyes of the markets that hit me not hit you”.

Additionally, I4 explained the following.

*People who come to the markets give him/her money, in most cases pennies. When he/she has finished begging around the nine markets, he/she collects all the money obtained and reports to the community elders. The money should be used to compensate the murdered family/clan, although this may not be enough. Therefore, the remaining money is collected from the members of the murderer's clan (Interview).*

From the above statement, it is understandable that in the community of Degem everyone does not only belong to his/her family but also to his/her clan. When someone dies, the loser is the whole clan and on the other hand, when someone from a given clan kills someone, his/her family/clan is considered a criminal. Accordingly, the indemnity payer is the family/clan of the killer while the indemnified body is also the family/clan of the murdered.

#### **4.4.4. Ritual Purification Ceremony**

Ritual purification ceremony is central to the process of 'Guma', an indigenous communication practice for conflict resolution. According to Schirch (2005), rituals are understood as symbolic physical actions that require understanding. The messages conveyed by the rituals are not addressed directly to people. Instead, they communicate indirectly through symbols, legends,

metaphors, and emotions. For example, the handshakes do not communicate a direct message, but symbolize friendship. Symbolic acts that repeat themselves within a tradition come to be seen as rituals. These rituals often take place in unique spaces that stand out from everyday life and aim to transform people's worldviews and relationships. Their profound impact lies in their ability to penetrate the seemingly inscrutable, overwhelm the defensive, and convey complex messages without saying a word.

As noted in 4.4.1 above, in the Degem District community in particular and among the Oromo people in general, murder is seen not only as a heinous act against the value of society, but also as a violation of the law of the 'Waaqa' (God) that obliges ritual reparation. Homicide is a morally reprehensible and mystically dangerous sin. A killer who has not yet undergone the 'Guma' ritual must not eat with his/her right hand. More exactly, he/she must not eat with the hand that he/she shed blood, because his/her hand is believed to be polluted. For the Degem community, human blood deserves great respect and has the power to penetrate deep into the soul of the killer. It cannot be washed away by water like simple dirt, but by the blood of the killer, which is, of course, could be replaced by the blood of the ram by the 'Guma' ritual. Likewise, I6 explained the following.

*It is believed that the ritually impure would suffer a similar death or repeatedly commit a similar crime. Moreover, the 'Waaqa' (God) would withdraws from him/her in all respects in response to the sin he/she committed. His/her family/clan also remain sinners (Interview).*

In support of this, Bartels (1983) explains that killing a person is a violation of the world order as given by the creator. Therefore, regardless of the circumstances of the murder, any act of shedding human blood involves rites of atonement as supernatural requirements. Even a murder, which might not require restitution, requires a purification ritual as the only way to avoid the grave danger that otherwise follows homicide. Any neglect of this ritual is meant to harm the murderer and his/her family including extended families.

Oromo as a general and Community of Degem District in particular the point of view of the homicide lead the killer to confess the culprit. I1, I8 and I4 said:

*Confession is thought to favor the killer and his family/clan, as an unacknowledged homicide allows a killer's family/clan to break a taboo about certain social contact with the victim. The two parties never eat or drink together and even the murdered family should not be seen by the murdered family. They should refrain from all social contact until the purification ritual is complete. If these laws were violated, spiritual contamination would be exacerbated. The Degem District Community also believe that the neglect of the purification ritual also affects the agnates of the slain. The blood of the dead is said to resent the neglect of his/her agnates who are expected to either take revenge or accept compensation and perform the rites of atonement (Interview).*

Once the 'Jaarsa biyya'/Community elders communicate with the murderer side and the victim, make the necessary arrangements and when the preparation is complete, they make an appointment for the ritual purification ceremony. According to I6, the day of the ceremony is not just random, but should be either Saturday or Monday, as these days are considered 'Guyyaa Milkii' (days of good fate). Moreover, it also does not take place every month except May and October. These months are the months of the 'Arfaasa' (autumn) and 'Birraa' (spring) seasons. In May, a last month of 'Arfaasaa' (Autumn), all the fields and mountains of Degem are covered with greenery as there are light rains that fall in season. On the other hand, in October, the second month of 'Birraa' (Spring), all the mountains and fields of Degam bloomed with yellow flowers. Therefore, it is believed that everyone has positive moods in these seasons and best for reconciliation. In support of this, Montes, Rodríguez, & Serrano (2012) reveal that positive moods and feelings are linked to the preference for more accommodating strategies. On the other hand, it is well known that the seasons are also when 'Irreecha' (thanksgiving) takes place. However, any process prior to the ritual purification ceremony can be performed at any time.

On the day of the ritual purification ceremony, early in the morning, all the people from both sides gathered by the river and stand face to face, away from the 'Jarsa Biyya' (community elders) who perform the purification process. I8, I2, and I3 elaborated as follows:

*The 'Jarsa Biyya' (elders of the community) are cautious and come to the spot before anyone comes to make sure bad things do not happen. This is the first time that the two conflicting parties are allowed to come face to face after the death has*

*occurred. Therefore, the community elders arrive before everyone else to manage in case the anger of the murdered side escalates seeing the murderer side, carry out the processes and connect the parties gradually not quickly. The murdered side be on one side of the river while the murderer side be on the other side. The elders of the community are between both sides and perform the ceremony step by step. A person who committed death should be kept unseen behind the group of people on his/her side until the 'Abba Qunnaa' (the chief elder of the community) leads the 'Guma' to call both sides to purification. The community elders ensure that all the necessary materials for the ritual purification ceremony are presented near the river where the processes are taking place. The materials are; 'irraafii' (a piece of new cotton cloth, knife, 'Kallacha' and 'Chachu' (ritual objects for peace and reconciliation in Oromo society), tobacco cake, knife, ewe, 'hiddii' fruits, 'eeboo' (spears), 'alangee' (whip), honey, milk, bread, water and pot (Interview).*

As can be understood from the above explanation, community elders who are highly respected by the community are careful and make a good basis before starting the purification ritual process. They arrive early before everyone else and place themselves between the two sides to catch up in case tempers escalate and specifically order to hide the killer until his turn stage, to keep the victims calm. However, the possibility of escalation of anger from seeing the killer is very rare because of the previous stages that have taken place. They also make sure that all the materials needed for the ritual purification ceremony are ready as it is not possible to conduct the ceremony successfully without the materials. The take on the ceremony riverside is to have different sides for each party and make everyone think of the God who created the river. It is known that the Oromo people including the Degem District community go to the river/lake for 'Irrecha'/thanksgiving to think about God deeply.

In addition to the researcher's observation of the ritual purification ceremony, I8 and I3 explained that first, the community elders begin the process with prayers and blessings saying:

*Waaqni nagaan nu bulche,  
nagaayaan nu yaa oolchu  
Tola isaa wajjin nuyaa oolchu*

*As gave us peaceful night,  
May God give us peaceful day,  
Save us with his grace*

*Hamaa addaan nuyaa oolchu*

*Lubbuu bade waaqni nuuf yaa maaru*

*Kan jiru aannanii fi garaa yaa ta'an*

*Nama karaa wal dabarsu isaan yaa godhu*

*Kan jennee hanqachuu hin qabne hamtuudhaa*

*hamtuun isaan yaa hanqattu*

*Save us from evil*

*May God have mercy on the lost soul*

*Let the conflicting groups be friends,*

*May God make them care for each other.*

*What we do not have to miss is evil and*

*may evil miss them*

Among the Oromo, every gathering begins and ends with blessings and prayers with which the elders pray and give thanks to God. Blessings are made on occasions such as reconciliations like ‘Guma’, appointments, festivals, weddings and campaigns. Elders who are senior in age or lineage give the blessing. Similarly, community elders give blessings at the start of the ritual cleansing ceremony of ‘Guma’. It is believed that blessings and prayers call God to bless and help all that human beings do. For example in the blessings above the community elders said "May God have mercy on the lost soul", line 5, and "Let the conflicting groups be friends" line 6, to think of the lost soul first and pray to God to make the conflicting bodies more friends. Moreover, each saying in the blessing and prayer has meaning and cultural values in the community.

When community elders make blessings people from both side be apart and do not come closer until they are allowed. Since the death happened this the first time, they gathered at the same place. Hence, community elders do not allow them to meet each other as they come. However, there are steps to be employed in which they get closer to each other. The gathered people here from both sides are in two layers. The ‘Luba’ and ‘Luka’ accompanied by elders of their side bit closer to community elders and other gatherings be apart some 350 feet away. Everybody there stand keeps silent and follows what happening in order.

*The community elders, especially ‘Abbaa Qunnaa’ (chief community elders), are responsible for enforcing the process of the ceremony according to the stage already known. ‘Abbaa Qunnaa’ (chief community elders) calls the ‘Luba’ and ‘Luka’ in the center where the community elders are. He orders them to stand face to face closer at a distance of less than a meter, ‘Luba’ to the south and ‘Luka’ to the north. They lay ‘irraaffii’ (a piece of new cotton cloth) on the ground between them. Then the chief community elders orders them to put ‘Kallacha’, ‘Chachu’,*

*'alangee' (whip), dried tobacco cake and changes on it. Then the 'Luba' is ordered to sleep 'eeboo' (spears) and 'ulee zangii' (thin straight stick) to the east while 'Luka' is ordered to sleep eeboo (spears) and ulee zangii (thin stick well straight) to west direction next to the 'irraaffii'. All members of the group kneel to take an oath on behalf of their side. However, before taking the oath, representing the murderer family/clan, members of 'Luka' cry out directly to 'Luba' and members of 'Luba' agree, respond to the cries and declare acceptance of reconciliation on behalf of the murdered family/clan.*

*First, two men who are the members of 'Luka' cry out as follows in turn (Participatory Observation).*

<i>Yaa Lubaa, lubbuu baddee ol qabnaa</i>	<i>O' 'Luba', we have to raise the lost soul,</i>
<i>Waaqaa jedhaa, lafaa jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake of God, for the sake of Earth,</i>
<i>Waaqa Tumaa Caffee tii jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake Chafe Tuma,</i>
<i>Waaqa Saglan Igguu Abuuuti jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake of Nines of Iggu Abu,</i>
<i>Waaqa Guyyaa har'aatii jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake the sake of God gives this day,</i>
<i>Lubbuu bade mataa ol nu qabsiisaa</i>	<i>please allow us to raise the lost soul.</i>
<i>Yaa Lubaa, lubbuu bade mataa ol qabuufii</i>	<i>O' Luba, we have to raise the lost soul,</i>
<i>Waaqaa jedhaa, lafaa jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake of God, for the sake of Earth,</i>
<i>Gosti bahee,</i>	<i>Clans came,</i>
<i>Kallachi fi Caaccuun bahee</i>	<i>Kallacha and Chachu came,</i>
<i>igzootan jedhamee</i>	<i>We cried out to you,</i>
<i>Waaqa Caffee tumaatii jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake Chafe Tuma,</i>
<i>Waaqa Odaa nabeetii jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake Oda Nebe,</i>
<i>Waaqa saglan igguutii jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake Nines of Iggu Abbu,</i>
<i>lubbuu bade mataa ol nu qabsiisaa</i>	<i>let us raise the lost soul.</i>

In their cries, the members of 'Luka' call out to God, the earth and other things that have great cultural values among the Oromo. They say “for the sake Chafe Tuma”, line 2, because it is a place where the Tulama Oromo met and made laws, including the rules and regulations of 'Guma'. In addition, “Nines of Iggu Abu”, line 3, indicates that respect for the elderly, as Iggu Abu is the first

person who settled in Degem District. "Kallacha and Chachu", line 10, are mentioned in the cry because they are ritual objects for peace and reconciliation and in fact have great cultural values. "Oda Nebe", Line 13, also named in oaths and cries because it is well respected in Tulama Oromo in particular and among the Oromo in general. Oda is the tree that has a special place among the Oromo while "Oda Nebe" is where Tulama Oromo meet for assembly. Additionally, the members of 'Luba' respond to the members of 'Luka' similarly calling on God, the earth, and other culturally respected things to accept the apology.

'Luba' respond as follows.

<i>Waaqaa jennee lafaa jennee</i>	<i>For the sake of God, for the sake of Earth,</i>
<i>waaqa Caffee Tumaatii jennee</i>	<i>for the sake Chafe Tuma,</i>
<i>Waaqa Odaa Nabeetii jennee</i>	<i>for the sake of Oda Nebe,</i>
<i>Waaqa Saglan Igguu Aabbuutii jennee</i>	<i>for the sake of Nines of Iggu Abbu,</i>
<i>Waaqa Kallaachaa fi Caaccuu baheetii jennee</i>	<i>For the sake of Kalacha and chachu here</i>
<i>Waaqa Gosa Baheetii jennee</i>	<i>for the sake of Clans here</i>
<i>Waaqa Oormootii jennee</i>	<i>for the sake of God of Oromo</i>
<i>Lubbuu bade mataa ol isin qabsiisnee jirra.</i>	<i>We allowed you to raise the lost soul.</i>

As discussed above, members of 'Luka' come closely to 'Luba' and cry. This gives the 'Luba' members and the elders on their side behind them a chance to watch the facial expression, the tears and the regression on their face and the tone of their voice. Ohbuchi (2010) suggests that an apology often accompanies non-verbal behavior such as facial expression and body movement, and that the offender's emotion can only be conveyed to the victim party when accompanied by a non-verbal behavior suitable for words of apology. Besides, Brinke and Adams (2015) describe that a display of sadness as a sign of sincerity increased the effectiveness of apologies, as opposed to smiling. Similarly, Tamura (2009) reveals that expressing sadness reduced the anger of the victimized part compared to a happy appearance, and anger increased when happiness was manifested, even if accompanied by words of apologies. Physical manifestations of remorse such as kneeling or crying received positive ratings from the transgressor and satisfaction with the apology (Hornsey et al., 2019). Common findings from these studies were that apologies accompanied by nonverbal displays of sadness or remorse reduced negative feelings of the victim party and facilitated a positive evaluation of the offender.

The 'Guma' ritual purification ceremony is not only carried out in a simple and unique practice. It goes through many stages to connect the conflicting bodies face to face and allow them all to shake hands and hug each other. After the direct crying outs and responses are done, 'Luba' and 'Luka' take turns and take the oath.

In addition to the researcher's participatory observation of the whole process of the 'Guma' ritual purification ceremony, GE3 confirmed that the members of 'Luka' take an oath as follows.

<i>Guyyaa har'aa akkaa waadaa walii galluuf</i>	<i>Today when we are taking an oath of loyalty,</i>
<i>Eeboon gidduu keenya ciisee,</i>	<i>The spear is between us,</i>
<i>alangeen gidduu keenya ciisee</i>	<i>The whip is between us,</i>
<i>Jaarsoliin biyaa bahanii dhabbatanii</i>	<i>The elders of the community are here,</i>
<i>Kallachi fi Caaccuun bahee</i>	<i>Kallacha and Chachu are here,</i>
<i>Gumaa isin nyaachisne jennee</i>	<i>Because we paid you 'Guma' compensation,</i>
<i>hamaan isin irraan hin geenyu.</i>	<i>We will not hurt you.</i>
<i>Hamaa yoon isin irraan geenye,</i>	<i>If we hurt you,</i>
<i>Waaqni alangee bahee,</i>	<i>May the God of alangee (whip),</i>
<i>waaqni Eeboo ciisee.</i>	<i>May the God of Eeboo (spear),</i>
<i>waaqni Kalachaa fi caaccuu bahee</i>	<i>May the God of 'Kallacha' and 'Chachu',</i>
<i>qa'ee keenyatti daabaa haa galchu.</i>	<i>Bring daggers into our homes.</i>
<i>Gumaa nyaachisne jennee</i>	<i>Because we paid you 'Guma' compensation,</i>
<i>waan hin taane yoo isin irraan geenye</i>	<i>if we do something wrong to you</i>
<i>alangeen kun Waaqayyo fulduratti</i>	<i>let this alangee (whip) beat us before God,</i>
<i>nu ha garafu</i>	
<i>eeboon kun Waaqayyo fulduratti</i>	<i>let this spear strike us before God,</i>
<i>nu haa waraanu</i>	
<i>Waaqni Kallachaa fi caaccuun kanaa</i>	<i>Let the God of this 'Kallacha' and 'Chachu'</i>
<i>hamaa nutti fida</i>	<i>bring us evil,</i>
<i>kanaafuu garaa qulqulldhaan</i>	<i>so with a pure heart,</i>
<i>isinitti araaramuuf waadaa galleerra.</i>	<i>We promised to be reconciled to you.</i>

*At the end of the swearing of the members of 'Luka', the members of 'Luba' take their turn and take the oath as follows.*

*Guyyaa har'aa araara yemmuu buusnu,  
seera caffetiin,  
seera oadaa nabeetiin,  
seera alange ciisetin  
seera eeboo ciisetiin  
seera kallacha fi Caaccuu baheetiin  
araara buusuu keenya waadaa galla*

*har'aa eegalee  
waliin gabaa tokko oolla  
waliin cidha tokko oolla  
Obbolaa ta'uu keenya waadaa galla  
waadaa ciise hin tarkaanfannu  
yoo waadaa ciise tarkaanfanne,  
eeboon fi alangeen ciise  
kallachi fi Caaccuun bahe  
daabaa nutti haa fidu.*

*Waadhadha!*

*When we make reconciliation today,  
by the law of the 'Caffee',  
by the law of the 'Oda Nabee',  
by the law of the whip,  
by the law of the spear,  
by the law 'Kallacha' and 'Chachu',  
we promise to make peace.*

*from now on,  
we spend the same market together,  
we spend a wedding together,  
We promise we are brothers,  
we will never break the promise,  
if we break the promise,  
May the spear and the whip,  
May 'kallacha' and 'Chachu',  
Bring us the 'daaba' (the sin passes from  
generation to generation).  
Promise!*

As stated above, 'Luka' and 'Luba' members take oaths in the name of 'Waaqa'/God and materials that have culturally special place and spiritual meanings in the community. For the fact that oaths could be the area of study exclusively, in this study, what should be clear is not the oaths but the idea of oath in 'Guma'. In the community of Degem District, it is believed that one should keep his promise after taking an oath and in case of breaking it the 'daabaa' happens to him/her and his/her ancestors. In support of this Nana (2020), explained that religion and oath are vital in African tradition and taking oath makes one remember his/her promise and try to keep it.

After taking an oath and swearing, where both parties kneel, the 'Luba' group receives the compensation from the 'luka' group. According to I6:

*The current 'Guma' compensation amount is ETB 40,000. The two groups then get up and break the dried tobacco cake together, leave it on the 'irraafii' with changes and each group goes back to their side (Interview).*

This breaking up of dried tobacco cake is seen as breaking the hatred, resentment and enmity between them.

*The chief of the community elders orders the people gathered on both sides to come a little closer. Then the slayer appeared for the first time in front of the slain family/clan, puts down a knife and lies down in front of them. He/she says, "I hurt you, kill me with this knife!" The slain family/clan respond, "We forgive you!" However, the slayer does not keep silent rather he/she continues apologizing as follows (Observation of researcher).*

*Safuu cabsee, haama hojjedhee,  
Waaqa jedhaa lafaa jedhaa  
waaqa kallachaa fi caaccuu baheetii jedhaa  
Waaqa Jaarsa baheetii jedhaa  
Waaqa Saglan Igguu Abbuu  
Waaqa Caffee Tumaatii jedhaa  
Dhiifame naa godhaa*

*Namni nama ajjeesun barbaachisaa mitii  
seexanatu na dogoggorse,  
seexana gaafa san waliitti nu fidee  
na dogogorsiise san  
Nu gidduudhaa balleessudhaf  
Jaarsi bahee  
kallachi fi caaccuun bahe  
Waaqa uumaa jedhaa  
Waaqa uumamatii jedhaa  
Dhiifama naa godhaa!*

*I broke moral; I did evil thing,  
for the sake of God, for the sake of Earth,  
for the sake of kallacha' and 'Chachu',  
for the sake of Elders here  
for the sake of Nines of Iggu Abbu  
for the sake of Chafe Tuma  
Forgive me!*

*I know homicide is very evil thing,  
But, the devil has deceived me,  
the devil brought us together that day,  
that made me unruly;  
to destroy it from among us,  
elders have come,  
the kallacha' and 'Chachu' have come,  
For the sake of God of creator,  
For the sake of God of creature,  
Forgive me!*

*All the gathered people from the slain side accept the apology saying the following together.*

<i>Waaqa jennee, lafaa jennee,</i>	<i>for the sake of God,</i>
<i>Lafaa jennee,</i>	<i>for the sake of Earth,</i>
<i>Kallaacha fi Caaccuu bahe jennee</i>	<i>for the sake of 'Kallacha' and 'Chachu',</i>
<i>Uumadhaa jennee</i>	<i>for the sake of Creator,</i>
<i>Safuudhaa jennee</i>	<i>for the sake of 'Safuu' (the indigenous Oromo thought)</i>
<i>Jaarsa dhabbatee jennee</i>	<i>for the sake of Elders stand here,</i>
<i>dhiifama sii goone</i>	<i>we forgive you!</i>

*In their turn, the gathered people from slayer give blessings to the gathered people from the slain side as follows:*

<i>Dhiifama isinii ha godhu</i>	<i>May God always forgive you!</i>
<i>Kan du'e lubbuu haa maaru</i>	<i>May God have mercy on the soul of the deceased!</i>

As the killer him/herself appears and lies down in front of the victims and apologizes, the gathered people from the killed side accept the apology, and the gathered people from the killed side give blessings to the killer side, the reconciliation is almost complete at this stage although there are still fundamental activities.

In addition to the information obtained through the researcher's participatory observation, interview participants (I3 and I5) explained the following.

*Following the approval of all the people gathered on the side of the killed, on his/her side and the neutrals (elders of the community), who perform the ritual purification ceremony, the slayer gets up and kills a ewe. The ewe to be slaughtered must be a retired breeding ewe that will no longer lamb due to age. This means that there will be no more enmity between the two parties (Interview)*

*Then the ewe is slaughtered and its small intestine stretched in a circular manner. The killer and the closest blood relative of the slain shake hands through this intestine to signify the passage from hostility to peace. Other relatives of the*

*murderer and the murdered also continue to hold hands on their side and make like a chain, which symbolizes all the gatherings, shake hands through the slayer. Once again, the leader of the community elder orders the killer to apologize through tears saying the following.*

<i>waaqa jedhaa, lafaa jedhaa</i>	<i>For the sake of God, for the sake of earth,</i>
<i>Waaqa Kallachaa fi Caacuu baheetii jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake kallacha' and 'Chachu',</i>
<i>Waaqa Jaarsa baheetii jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake of elders stand here,</i>
<i>Waaqa Saglan Igguu Abbuu tii jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake Nine of Igguu Abbu,</i>
<i>Waaqa Caffee Tumaatii jedhaa</i>	<i>for the sake Chafe Tuma,</i>
<i>Dhiifame naa godhaa jedhaa</i>	<i>forgive me!</i>

<i>waaqa jedhaa lafaa jedhaa</i>	<i>For the sake God, for the sake of Earth,</i>
<i>faloo naaf godhaa</i>	<i>please wash away my sins</i>

*The gathered people from slain side express their forgiveness by saying the following.*

<i>Waaqa jennee, lafaa jennee</i>	<i>For the sake of God, for the sake of earth,</i>
<i>Waaqa Kallachaa fi Caacuu baheetii jennee</i>	<i>for the sake kallacha' and 'Chachu',</i>
<i>Waaqa Jaarsa baheetii jennee</i>	<i>for the sake of elders stand here ,</i>
<i>Waaqa Saglan Igguu Abbuu tii jennee</i>	<i>for the sake nine of Igguu Abbu,</i>
<i>Waaqa Caffee Tumaatii jennee</i>	<i>for the sake Chafe Tuma,</i>
<i>Dhiifama siif goone</i>	<i>we forgive you!</i>

<i>har'aa eegallee</i>	<i>Starting today,</i>
<i>chidha tokko waliin olla</i>	<i>we spend the same wedding together,</i>
<i>gabaa tokko waliin olla</i>	<i>we spend the same market together,</i>
<i>Sibira dhabanna</i>	<i>we will stand by you,</i>
<i>kanafis waadaa siif galla</i>	<i>and we promise you this!</i>

The cutting and bleeding of a ewe symbolizes the bleeding of the slain man. As revealed above, each party gradually manages to shake hands after going through many stages. The hatred, hostility and enmity between them are over. The ewe meat is not eaten; the knife that cuts the ewe is also

left there. 'Hiddi' fruits are added to the dead ewe and all the material are left there. These represent that all revenge and hatred between the conflicting families/clans are gone forever.

I5 and I6 explained handwashing as follows and the information obtained through the researcher's participatory observation was enriched.

*First, the killer fills the pot with clean water and washes the hands of the family/clan of the slain. In turn, the close blood relative of the slain fills the pot with water and washes the hands of the family/clan of the murderer starting with the killer. Washing hands refers to the final purification ritual of 'Guma'. It is a ritual by which the Oromo declare the purification of the killer from the blood he/she has shed and declare the reunification of the two parties. The phrase 'harka dhiquu' means washing away the blood of the slain which is said to pollute the hand of the killer and his/her family/clan. Moreover, it is also undertaken to wash away, vendetta, hatred and enmity between the two parties. When all hands are washed, both parties fill the pot together, hold it upright, throw it away, and break it. Breaking the pot symbolizes breaking the bridge of the criminal and the 'daba' (sin passes from generation to generation) between the murdered family/clan and the murderer family/clan (Interview).*

*Then both parties sit on the ground a little away from the slaughtered ewe. The traditional large domed bread is presented by the murderer's family in front of the victim's close relative. He/she cuts the bread and feeds the killer first while sitting down, but the slayer has to stand and bend over and receive the bread with his mouth. In addition, people from the side of the slayer come to the closed blood relative of the slain and receive the bread from his hand. On the other hand, the slayer goes around and feeds everyone on the slain side where they are sitting. After he/she finishes feeding the bread, he/she continues to feed them honey and milk respectively (Ibid).*

As described above, washing hands represents washing away the sin while breaking the pot signifies destroying the vendetta, hatred and enmity between the two parties. Eating, drinking together, feeding each other is ratifying reconciliation as the types of food, drinks and processes

have their own meanings and convey messages. The feeding of honey and milk symbolizes the exit from a stressed, anxious and scary life and the entry into a calm, harmonious and peaceful relationship. It also indicates the end of hatred and enmity and the revival of love and symbiotic relationships, which in turn restore the socio-psychological relations between the parties. The rituals of this phase symbolize the social, psychological and physical reintegration of the parties in conflict. The whole process symbolizes forgiveness and reunification of the two polarized parties and their families. After this performance, all parties are believed to be fully reconciled and reintegrated.

I2 described that finally, after all processes of ‘Guma’ end, the chief of community elders declares peace upon the conflicting party members as following.

<i>Gumaa isif Baasnee,</i>	<i>We have accomplished ‘Guma’.</i>
<i>Haloo waliitti hin qabattan</i>	<i>there would be no revenge between you</i>
<i>Jibbiinsi gidduu keessan hin jiru</i>	<i>there would be no hostility</i>
<i>Essumattuu wal midhuu hin qabadan,</i>	<i>you should not attack one another,</i>
<i>Gumaaa isiif baasee</i>	<i>we have accomplished your ‘Guma’</i>
<i>Gumaan raawwateeraa</i>	<i>the ‘Guma’ is concluded.</i>
<i>Dhagayaa!</i>	<i>Hear it!</i>
<i>Waan kana wallin gahaa</i>	<i>take the news up and down,</i>
<i>Hawwan araarsinee Gumaa baase,</i>	<i>We have reconciled among mothers and paid ‘Guma’.</i>
<i>Abbootii araarsinee Gumaa baase,</i>	<i>We have reconciled among fathers and paid ‘Guma’.</i>
<i>Obbolaa araarsinee Gumaa baase,</i>	<i>We have reconciled among brothers/sisters and paid ‘Guma’</i>
<i>Eessummaan araarsinee Gumaa baase,</i>	<i>We have reconciled among uncles and paid ‘Guma’.</i>
<i>Soddootii araarsinee Gumaa baase,</i>	<i>We have reconciled among fathers-in law and mothers-in-law and paid the ‘Guma’.</i>
<i>Gosa araarsinee Gumaa baase,</i>	<i>We have reconciled among clans and paid ‘Guma’.</i>
<i>Isin warra magayaati,</i>	<i>Here after you would be peaceful people</i>

*Intala walii fuuudhaa,  
Ilma waliitti heerumsisa,  
Fundhaa-heerumni keessa tokko,  
Du'aa-jiruun keessa takkoo,*

*Marry daughters of one another,  
Marry sons of one another,  
Your wedding would be one and the same,  
Your deaths and lives would be one and the same.*

*Jaarsollin biyya fixan kanatti  
yoo deebitan,*

*If you turn back to the state of enmity against what is  
solved by community elders,*

*isin hamaa taate,*

*You would be evil,*

*Igguu Abbuu hin qabdan,*

*The Igguu Abbu would never stand by you*

*Gosa bin qabdan,*

*Your Clan would never be beside you.*

*Soddootii bin qabdan,*

*You would never get father and mother-in-laws*

*Lagaas tulluus bin qabda*

*You would never get rivers and mountains.*

*uumaa uumamsa bin qabdu*

*You would quarrel with the creator and the creatures.*

*Tulluun isiniitti haa jigu*

*Let the mountains fall on you*

*Daabaan isin hin dhabin*

*Don't let the 'Daabaa' (sins pass from generation to  
generation) lose you*

In the declarations of peace above, there are also words of curse. Curse is one of the techniques of 'Guma' decision enforcement tool. Curses are often associated to the spiritual dimension, which the entire community greatly fear, and respect the verdict to escape the curse. It takes place at the end of the processes after the two conflicting parties take an oath not to escalate the conflict between them as a means of revenge.

Finally, all attendants move forward from the river/stream to where the next stage is. In this regard, I8 stated as follows.

*First, all the gathered people from both sides go to the murderer's house and enjoy the party together. Likewise, when they are done enjoying the party, they head to the house of murdered family and enjoy another party together. At each party, people from both parties take seats randomly mixed with each other. They all enjoy*

*the party freely as friends and that would be the end of the 'Guma' ritual purification ceremony.*

The conflicting bodies eventually end in parties together at the murderer's and victims' homes respectively. Sitting randomly and mixed with each other shows that they have fully reconciled. To see that close relatives such as mother, father, siblings or children of the slain totally expel revenge, enjoying parties with the killer and his/her family and eating out of each other's hands, could be very surprising to those unfamiliar with 'Guma' and the culture in which it is practiced.

As vividly described in the discussions above, the ritual purification ceremony is full of traditional symbolic interactions. Communication is said to be effective when the meaning, as intended by the source of the message, has been shared with the recipient. Thus, the community elders of Degem District make significant use of the traditional communicative symbols in 'Guma' to share messages that have impact and change the minds of the receivers. Likewise, William (1989) filed similar sentiments that because each culture has a unique way of communicating with symbols, meanings need to be shared if effective communication is to take place and conflicts resolved. In the community of Degem District, the elders use different styles of communication incorporated with traditional symbolic communications phase by phase to resolve conflicts and reconcile the conflicting bodies successfully. Consequently, the two parties, who are eager to kill each other because of vendetta and revenge, end up shaking hands, eating and drinking from each other's hands, and become more friends.

'Guma', the indigenous communication practice, used in Degem District has three main phases, namely conflict de-escalation, conflict resolution and reconciliation. The system involves many formalities and is completed within months' time. The communication, however complex, finally ends in an unshakable reconciliation. If there had not been community elders, their use of different communications at different stages, including rituals and symbolic communications, there would be no reconciliation, reintegration, no peace and stability at the community level in particular and in the country at large.

#### **4.5. Advantages of 'Guma' Over State Court**

Indigenous communication mechanisms play an important role in conflict resolution. They provide lasting solutions to serious conflicts. Regarding 'Guma', the indigenous communication

mechanism, it plays an irreplaceable role in resolving homicide related conflicts in the community of Degem District in particular and among the Oromo in general. Based on the information obtained from interview and FGD, ‘Guma’'s advantages over the state court can be summed up as follows.

- I. Family Reintegration
- II. Restorative capacity
- III. Restores and Strengthens Relationships and Rebuilds Mutual Trust
- IV. Serves as a Rehabilitative Psychotherapy

### **I. Family Reintegration**

Conflicts especially homicide leads to family disintegration. GA2 revealed the following.

*Among the Degem District community murderer automatically transforms the identity of the group (family/clan) to which he/she belongs; and causes the group of the murdered one to take up the responsibility to revenge. The target of revenge, if any, is the family/clan of the murderer. The responsibility to take revenge on behalf of the murdered person rests with the family/clan to which the deceased belongs, and the protection of the murderer and his/her family/clan members from possible retaliatory attacks is a concern of this family/clan. Even when the individual slayer is imprisoned under the state legal system, other family/clan members who are innocent and left behind are required to flee their homes. The situation then leads disintegration of the family of the murderer (FGD).*

In case that the murdered family/clan could murder a member of family/clan of murderer in response to revenge, the war between the two family/clan obviously opened up. This is the worst because the situation becomes uncontrollable and problematic for both parties in conflict. Chaos will then be hard on the entire community, including non-families/clans of the conflicting parties. There is no way for the state courts to ensure that this does not happen. However, if the conflict is handled by ‘Guma’, indigenous communication mechanisms, no more conflict prolonged rather the relationship between conflicting parties be more closer after reconciliation. Consequently, there will be certain family reintegration, harmony and conviviality.

## **II. Restorative Capacity**

In collective societies such as the Oromo including community of Degem District, an individual's criminal act is to be attributed to the entire family/clan to which he/she belongs. In contexts like this, modern state intervention may not work, and therefore 'Guma' is a more reasonable solution. I7 reasoned out this as follows:

*State interventions focus mostly on punishing or correcting only the offender, thus placing the problem solely on the individual. In doing so, state interventions fail to reach and heal the social and psychological capital that the homicide incident has destroyed. Reconstructing and strengthening social relationships and harmony between the parties involved seems to be more essential than punishing or correcting the wrongdoer as a separate entity. State court systems lack or have little capacity to reach the emotional, cognitive and behavioral processes of citizens at all levels involved, making it difficult to implement restorative justice (Interview).*

In accordance with this, Meron (2010) affirms that state legal systems lack a focus on reconciliation and the reestablishment of social harmony between the litigants. 'Guma' manages to heal the victims and the killer on psychological and social levels that state legal systems fail to manage. In other words, state legal systems strive for retributive justice by simply punishing the criminal person, while 'Guma' strives for restorative justice by focusing on restoring the psychological and social capital destroyed in a homicide case. In doing so, the 'Guma' among the Oromo represent a unique model of restorative justice that state courts and legal professionals cannot afford to ignore. Therefore, it can be considered as a possible alternative of an exclusively retributive nature, since it allows managing the cycles of revenge after the homicide.

## **III. Restores and Strengthens Relationships and Rebuilds Mutual Trust**

Any peacebuilding and conflict management effort must include healing of the social and psychological aspects of conflict, as complete healing of the injuries inflicted by conflict is impossible when these aspects are neglected. I4 elaborated this as follows.

*The psychological aspect of healing is imperative because those who have experienced the pains of violent conflict are often emotionally wounded and traumatized. In addition, healing at the psychological level makes it possible to*

*repair broken relationships and rebuild and restore lost mutual trust, which is necessary for human society to remain an integral and functional unit. For the Oromo, life is a web of relationships and life without community and relationship is considered meaningless and empty. Thus, the conflict resolutions and reconciliations that 'Guma' achieves heal psychological wounds, mend broken relationships, and rebuild and restore lost mutual trust.*

'Guma' operates in accordance with the Oromo belief that crime, including homicide, is basically a violation of relationships in a community. Likewise, in Degem District community a homicide committed not only against the individual but also against the family/clan to which the victim belongs. Thus, 'Guma', strives to address the problem at the community level. Contrary, the Western derived state legal interventions often tend to individualize the conflict as well as its resolution. In support of this, Meron (2010) explains that the ideology of the Ethiopian state legal system is mainly drawn from western legal philosophy, which is highly influenced by an individualistic orientation and does not fit with the strong social orientation in where it is being implemented. According to Christie (2001), restoring interpersonal, intergroup, or intercommunity relationships and reintegrating offenders into their communities are important goals of any sustainable conflict resolution, justice doing and peacebuilding. However, these goals are not attainable by individualistically oriented legal systems and other conflict management methods that function within such frameworks.

#### **IV. Serves as a Rehabilitative Psychotherapy**

As well explained under 4.4.4, when a murderer goes through a ritual purification ceremony, it helps him/her not only to reconcile with the murderous side but also with 'Waaqa' (God). Besides, the purification ceremony is believed to wash away the sin from murder and his/ her family/clan. However, the state court is totally out of those traits. In this line, I4 described the following:

*It is obvious that committing homicide causes psychological distress on the slayer and his/her family/clan. Feelings of guilt, fear of revenge, family disintegration or worry about family members being left behind, traumatic events stemming from the incident, worrying regret about being imprisoned and having sinned, and remorse are some of the likely repercussions of a homicide. In societies such as the*

*community of Degem District where any misfortune that befalls an individual who has committed homicide is taken for granted as wages for evil, the killer still lives under the shadow of fear of 'daabaa'. This firm belief makes committing homicide very painful for a murderer and his family. In brief, a person who has committed a homicide, regardless of the type of homicide and whether the matter was the subject of state intervention or customary settlement, needs rehabilitation counseling (Interview).*

Indeed, undergoing the purification of the 'Guma' rites in itself is a counseling of rehabilitation for the person and the family/clan, for several reasons. Since reconciliation is reimbursable, 'Guma' dispels the fear of revenge on the side of the victim. Following a ritual purification ceremony, it removes a sense of guilt and sin that afflicts the individual and the family/clan. In addition, it announces the reconciliation and integration of the slayer with the community, which leads to the improvement of the feeling of belonging. Finally, it avoids traumatic experiences related to the homicide incident. Therefore, it is reasonable to propose 'Guma' as a model for rehabilitative counseling or psychotherapy because it offers valuable psychological healing necessary for the rehabilitation of murderers and homicide survivors.

#### **4.6. Limitations of 'Guma'**

Although indigenous communication mechanisms for resolving conflicts have different merits and strengths, they also have undeniable limitations. According to information obtained through interviews and FGD, 'Guma', the indigenous communication mechanism for resolving conflicts, is much better than the state court. However, it also has some limitations.

According to I2 'Guma's major limitation is gender inequality. He explained it as follows:

*Decision makers are always exclusively male. Women are generally excluded from the decision makers. There is no way for women to be members of community elders and there is no acceptable reason for it (Interview).*

According to Mengistu (2018), women play an important role in traditional conflict resolution activities in Africa. Even though women are expected to be more problem solvers, in 'Guma', indigenous communication mechanism, they are not allowed to participate as communicators.

Lack of communication documentation is also Guma's limitation. At the time of data collection, the researcher observed that there are no organized and manageable documents of this indigenous communication mechanism. The decision of the community elders when reconciling the conflicting parties depends only on the rule and regulation transmitted orally by their ancestors. Lack of record existed in many respects including rules and regulations, payment of standardized compensation and its actors or stakeholders. There are no written records of 'Guma' practice at any level. As a rule, the decision of 'Guma' is based on the quality of people who can simply understand and often participate in the problems. Due to the lack of an organized written document, researchers are unable to obtain enough information for further examination. Some sometimes, some articles are published in newspapers and magazines. However, the media has framed it as they see fit and the articles do not articulate it well. Radio and television also broadcast documentaries on the 'Guma', which tell of its practice in the Degem community. Again, there is no way they are a useful document when it comes to 'Guma's practice, neither rules and regulations nor procedures. There are no communication documents stored for the generation to read/watch and know.

The inability to fully enforce its verdicts is another limitation of the 'Guma'. However, this practice has many options to enforce its verdict, but there remains a challenge to secure the decision made regarding the conflicting parties. I3 explained the following in this regard.

*For the fact that many individuals fear the 'daabaa', they accept all the decisions of the community elders. However, few of those who disagree take their case to state court. They never worry about possible expulsion from cooperative life. This as a result comes with the elevation and increase of modernity (Interview).*

For the future, if this thought develops, the 'Guma' will be in danger because the elders of the community have no law enforcement bodies rather than curses.

#### **4.7. Challenges that 'Guma' is Currently Facing**

As discussed above, 'Guma', the indigenous communication mechanism, has enormous advantages in resolving conflicts related to homicide. However, nowadays it is being challenged

due to different factors. There are parts of Oromia where it is about to withdraw as it could not overcome the challenges.

One of the challenges currently facing 'Guma' is modern religions. GC6 explained the following.

*Modern religions generally oppose traditional practices for no substantial reason. They associate all the practices as sins without identifying the evil things because in fact there are harmful traditional practices in the community. As we come to 'Guma', there is not a single thing that can be wrong. However, the religious fathers complain about the symbolic communications used for the rituals undertaken in the 'Guma' process (FGD).*

On the other hand, one of the participants of GC (GC5) argued with the idea of GC6 explained above. He reasoned out that the majority of the community in Degem District have been Orthodox Christian followers for many centuries and practice 'Guma' without problems. He added that religious fathers/priests sometimes accompany and support the community elders who perform the 'Guma'. Nevertheless, the rest of the GC discussants are in a GC6 position. They claim that the Orthodox Christian followers of the community are partially 'Wakefata' and that is why they maintain 'Guma'. They further argue this by explaining that other modern religions such as Protestant oppose it very blindly. In support of this, I7 explained that the more people are exposed to modern religions, the more they expel their golden traditional practices such as 'Guma'. According to him, the so-called modern religions are toxic for the most indigenous knowledge.

The symbolic communications used in the rituals at different stages, the materials used, the rituals themselves are seen as evils and preached to people to remove these things by the religious fathers of modern religions. Surprisingly, there is nothing wrong and anti-religious about 'Guma's processes. Religious fathers teach their followers about peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, not taking revenge, etc. Certainly, 'Guma' accomplishes all of these in the community of Degem District. Religious fathers have no compelling reasons to oppose certain traditional practices. In fact, there is no way in which 'Guma' clashes with the tenets of modern religions, rather it is complementary.

The role and effectiveness of ‘Guma’, the indigenous communication mechanism for conflict resolution, has been significantly eroded, marginalized and diminished by modern civilization and development thinking. The system is considered archaic, barbaric and an outdated mode of arbitration. The state justice system marginalizes it. Article 34(5) of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia limits the mandates of customary and religious institutions to private civil and family matters. This clearly shows that the community elders are not allowed to handle the homicide issue through ‘Guma’. In Degem District, community elders struggle to continue ‘Guma’ in two ways. I7 stated this as follows:

*When community elders learn of a homicide case, they deal with it immediately and the case does not go to court. Second, they approach the court and the police station and go through the ‘Guma’ process even if the killer is imprisoned to reconcile the family/clan and wash away the sin of the killer as well (Interview).*

However, this risks the effectiveness of reconciliations because it is a double penalty for the killer. As described under 4.4.4, after the ritual purification ceremony, the slayer and his family/clan fully reconcile with the slain side and enjoy the parties together. They are certainly closer friends than before. Therefore imprisoning the killer makes no sense.

Under the influence of modernization, indigenous knowledge such as ‘Guma’ are not accepted by the new generation. I4 confirmed that the new generation might not understand and respect indigenous cultural values, followed by society with a low level of understanding of its societal values. Moreover, it could also be the effect of westernization and brainwashing. These seem that pertinent bodies such as the culture and tourism office, community elders and schools, lack education and promote ‘Guma’, the indigenous communication mechanism of conflict resolution, for the younger generation.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations**

#### **5.1. Introduction**

Summary, conclusion and recommendations are presented in this chapter. The main results are briefly presented in summary. In addition, general conclusions of the study are also provided. Finally, the researcher's recommendations are suggested based on the results of the study in the chapter.

#### **5.2. Summary**

The main aim of the study was to explore and describe ‘Guma’ as indigenous communication practice in conflict resolution in Degem District, North Shoa Zone of Oromia regional state. A descriptive research design was employed to carry out this study. A qualitative research approach was used. Data collected through in-depth interviews, focus group discussions and observations composed in different localities of people from the Degem District community. In total 42 people participated as the primary data collection source. The researcher used purposive and snowball sampling techniques to generate rich information. The main results achieved through the above techniques were summarized as follows:

- ‘Guma’ is one of the traditional conflict resolution practices widely used by the Oromo people, including the Degem District community. It is an ancient indigenous communication mechanism practiced to resolve conflicts. ‘Guma’ is an important aspect of the Geda system, which resolves conflicts from its root. When the Geda system weakened, toppled in parts of Oromia including Degem District due to government repression and modern religions, 'Guma' has been in place for centuries in Degem District community.
- ‘Guma’ in community of Degem District is categorized into three based on the cause of the act and other circumstances surrounding the offence namely, ‘Guma Adii’ (Intentional Homicide ‘Guma’), 'Guma Barruu' (‘Guma’ of negligent homicide) and ‘Guma’ Gurraattii’ (‘Guma’ of homicide other than the two cases).

- In the Degem District community, when a death is committed, it is hastily reported to the elders of the community (Jaarsa Biyya) in the neighborhood, either by a killer or by witnesses. Then the community elders force the killer and his/her family, including extended family, to flee their home and move away. When leaving their house, each family closes its gate with 'muka qoree' (thorny tree) to show that they are sorry that death occurred and that they are sinners. When community elders say and advise what needs to happen, everyone takes order; there is no objection or response. In the process of fleeing home, communications between community elders and the killer and his/her family are almost one-way.
- 'Guma's efficiency and effectiveness in bringing about a lasting solution to conflicts lies in its effective steps. The stages of the reconciliation process take months and sometimes a year to arrive at the final reconciliation. When death occurs, the murdered side are believed to be in a strong anger in which they are supposed to accept nothing. Therefore, silence takes place for up to two weeks from the time the death occurred. Then the elders on the murderer's side cry out to the victims for reconciliation and forgiveness using different symbolic communications every Saturday morning until they get feedback from the murdered side. In most cases, feedback is given after three round cries. The place of crying should be a communal area. All the families and relatives of the murderer are considered sinners and believe that they are all imprisoned before God. Thus, the cries are not only addressed to the family/clan of the murdered but also to 'Waaqa' (God).
- 'Luba', a committee of three members who are potentially the uncles of the slain and 'Luka' a committee of three members, who are potentially the uncle of the slayer are selected with facilitation of community elders. During conflict resolution and reconciliation process, they serve as a bridge of communication between their sides and the elders of the community while they do not communicate directly with each other until the ritual purification ceremony but via the community elders.
- On the will of the murdered side to reconcile, the slayer first appeared from where he/she escaped in front of Jaarsa Biyya/community elders. Then they impose a penalty on him/her

by ordering him/her to go to about five markets, bind him/herself with a chain and beg for money.

- In the Degem District community, murder is seen not only as a heinous act against the value of society, but also as a violation of the law of the ‘Waaqa’ (God) which requires ritual reparation. A killer who has not undergone the ‘Guma’ ritual purification does not eat with his/her right hand because his/her hand is considered polluted. For the community, human blood deserves great respect and has the power to penetrate deep into the soul of the killer. It cannot be washed away by water like simple dirt, but by the blood of the killer, which, of course, could be replaced by the blood of the ram through the ‘Guma’ ritual purification.
- The Guma ritual purification ceremony takes place either on Saturday or Monday or in May or October. The ceremony is central to the ‘Guma’ process. Community elders, especially the ‘Abbaa Qunnaa’ (Chief Community Elders), are responsible for enforcing the ‘Guma’ ritual purification ceremony process. During the ceremony, both parties take an oath and receive blessings. In the community of the Degem District, the elders use different styles of communication incorporated into the traditional symbolic communications phase by phase. Therefore, the two parties, eager to kill each other because of vendetta and revenge, end up shaking hands, eating and drinking from each other's hands, and becoming more friends.
- ‘Guma's current compensation amount is ETB 40,000. The compensation money is collected from all the members of the family/clan of the slayer and distributed to the members of the family/clan of the slain.
- Community elders play incredible role in ‘Guma’ process. If there had not been community elders, their use of different communications at different stages, there would be no reconciliation, reintegration, no peace and stability.
- ‘Guma’, the indigenous communication mechanism, practiced in the Degem District community, has significant advantages over state courts. First, it reintegrates the families that disintegrated due to the homicide-related conflicts. Second, it restores capacity by

rebuilding and strengthening social relations and harmony between the parties involved in the conflict. Third, it restores and strengthens relationships and rebuilds mutual trust. Finally, 'Guma' serves as rehabilitation psychotherapy.

- The exclusion of women from decision makers, the lack of communication documentations and the inability to fully enforce its verdicts are the main limitations of 'Guma'.
- Nowadays, 'Guma' is challenged due to different factors in the Degem community. The main challenges are modern religions, the state justice system and the influence of modernization.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

Indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are rooted in the cultural, historical, social and political life of any community. There are rich and multifaceted cultures, traditions, religious practices, tolerance and ways of life in Africa. The history of traditional conflict resolution in Ethiopia, especially among the Oromo, explicitly shows us the usefulness of traditional conflict resolution mechanisms. There are different indigenous communication mechanisms used to resolve conflicts. Notably, conflict management mechanisms in the Geda system such as 'Guma', 'Jaarsummaa', 'Siinqee' and others play a crucial role in reconciliation, restoring good relations, restoring justice, building peace and other different roles in the community.

'Guma' is the only indigenous communication mechanism used to resolve homicide related conflicts in the community of Degem District. It is a mechanism that restores peace and stability via different communication styles. In the process of 'Guma', communication elements, sender, receiver, message, channel, environment/setting, context and comments are incorporated.

The 'Jaarsa Biyyaa' (community elders) who are highly esteemed in the Degem District community take responsibility for initiating the 'Guma' processes. The community elder system is not just what happens spontaneously. However, there is a systematized arrangement in place. 'Abbaa Qunnaa' (chief of the community elders) leads them. Each community elder has his own responsibility. The elders who deal with 'Guma' cases are neutral groups on the side of the murderer and the slain and are highly trusted to do everything in the 'Guma' processes impartially.

The 'daabaa' (sin passes from generation to generation) is much feared in the community of Degem District. No one is supposed to hide in case death is committed. Therefore, the killer himself reports to one of the elders of the neighboring community or his/her family, even in the absence of witnesses. This culture of fear of 'daba' creates fertile ground for the community elders to move forward with conflict management and reconciliation. In addition, deliberate murder is very rare in the community because of the fear of 'daba'.

Whenever the death is committed, the killer's entire family/clan flee their home less likely out of fear of revenge on the murdered side and more to show sympathy for the casualty that has occurred. In the culture of the Degem District community, no one on the murderer's side thinks of self-defense rather than escaping by closing their gates with a thorny tree. The thorny tree used to close gates means many things like the killer's family/clan are sinners and regret. In case the people on the slain side go to the home on the slayer's side to take revenge and damage the properties, they do not get their hands on anything if they see the gates closed by a thorn tree. Therefore, the culture in which the community interacts through symbols helps ensure that conflicts do not escalate further.

Within the Degem District community, the loss of a loved one to murder has left the family/clan in deep anger and sadness. No communication is operative in relation to reconciliation or the management of conflicts during the first two weeks rather than encouraging to give them strength. Even later it is not possible to interact face to face with the family/clan of the murdered side. They are reached by cries and traditional symbolic communications. Persistent cries supported by symbolic interaction through different objects that have special meaning in the community calm them down.

The 'Jarsa Biyya' (community elders) of Degem District are so mature and tactical. They systematically make good bases, which lead to reconciling the most difficult conflict, the homicidal conflict. They first facilitate the lines of communication that lead them to fruitful reconciliation. Communicating with everyone on each side could be difficult, that is why they form committees called 'Luba' on the side of the murdered, and 'Luka' on the side of the murderer that serve as communication bridges until the end of the 'Guma' process. Committee members are kept to no more than three to make conversations manageable.

In the community of Degem District, homicide is a morally reprehensible and dangerous sin. The sinner is not only a killer but also his/her family/clan however he/she is considered more infested. Accordingly, the 'Guma' ritual purification ceremony is undertaken to wash away the sin and polluted hand of the killer. On the day of the ritual purification ceremony, early in the morning, all the people on the side of the murderers and the murdered gathered at the riverbank and stand face to face, being on the other side of the river and 'Jarsa Biyya' (elders of the community) to be among them. Being by a river has its own meaning for the community. The Oromo in general and the Degem District community in particular go to the river for 'irrecha'/thanksgiving to think more about 'Waaqa'/God who created the river. In addition to having two different sides for the slain and murderer sides, to undertake 'Guma' by the riverside is also to make reconciliation by thinking highly of 'Waaqa'/God.

During the purification ceremony, a ewe is slaughtered and its small intestine stretched in a circular manner. The slayer and the closest blood relative of the slain shake hands through it to signify the transformation from hostility to peace. Additionally, oaths and blessings take place step-by-step and are enforced by the chief elders of the community. Conflicting bodies eat and drink from each other's hands and enjoy parties together. After all the processes are over, the chief elder of the community declares peace to the conflicting parties. At this point, the ceremony, its setting and physical attachments surely rehabilitate the spirit of the conflicting bodies and ensure true reconciliation.

Conflict management and reconciliation through 'Guma' could not be achieved without traditional symbolic communications. Symbolic communications using materials such as 'irraafii' (a piece of new cotton cloth), knife, 'Kallacha' and 'Chachu' (ritual objects for peace and reconciliation in Oromo society), tobacco cake, knife, sheep, 'hiddii' fruits, 'eeboo' (spears), 'alangee' (whip), honey, milk, bread, water, pot and etc. have meanings, impact and change the minds of the community.

Generally, 'Guma', the indigenous communication practice, the only means by which homicidal conflicts are set in the community of Degem District, has three main phases, namely conflict de-escalation, conflict resolution and reconciliation. The system involves many formalities and is completed in months' time. The communication, as complex as it is, ultimately leads to an

unshakeable reconciliation. Had it not been for community elders, their use of different communications at different stages, including rituals and symbolic communications, there would have been no reconciliation, reintegration, no peace and stability at the community level in particular and in the country in general.

#### **5.4. Recommendations**

Based on the findings stated so far, the researcher came up with the following recommendations:

- ❖ **Empowerment:** The Oromo indigenous cultural communications such as ‘Guma’ for the prevention and resolution of conflict have been in operation for centuries. Besides, Article 78(5) of the Constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia gives power to the House of the Peoples' Representatives and State Councils to establish or give official recognition to religious and customary courts to rule on conflicts relating to personal and family law. Nevertheless, Oromo indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms such as ‘Guma’, has not been given this official recognition yet. Some state officials even forget that this indigenous cultural communication assists the regular court system to reduce court caseloads and contribute to saving of public money. Rather they look on this indigenous communication as competitor, not as complimentary. This attitude has to be changed, and indigenous cultural communications for the prevention and resolution of conflict should be given official recognition and be empowered. The ‘**Guma Federation**’ should be established with a good structure and equipped with personnel and materials. Policies that encourage it should also be advocated.
- ❖ **Preservation:** ‘Guma,’ indigenous communication mechanism, creates peace and stability among Degen District community by providing lasting solution to homicidal conflict. Hence, concerned bodies should give great emphasis so as it will be preserved and continued to the future generation as it is.
- ❖ **Documentation:** ‘Guma’ indigenous communication mechanism for conflict resolution is not studied well as needed especially by communication scholars and still lacks communication documentation and other important resources. This has a potential effect on it and the similar practices since the new generation have not any information on it. Therefore, ‘Guma’ practice with its historical foundation, the process of conflict resolution,

ritual activities, and other important activities of it should be researched by communication scholars and recorded, and documented in written and audiovisual forms without losing its originality and reserved for new generations. Therefore, communication scholars from like Addis Ababa and Selale Universities should give their attention so that ‘Guma’ systems survive longer

- ❖ **Encouraging reform of ‘Guma’ particularly regarding gender equality:** Women should take part in ‘Guma’ as role players in equal position with men. This could be enhanced through dialogue with organization such as Ethiopian Women’s Lawyers Association and other women groups.

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# Appendixes

## Appendix I

### Interview Questions and points for FGD, English part

#### 1. Interview Questions

The purpose of this interview is to gather information related to 'Guma' the Indigenous Communication mechanism for Conflict Resolution. This interview is prepared for MA thesis titled: "'Guma' as Indigenous Communication Strategy for Conflict Resolution: A Case Study of Degem District in Oromia Regional State." The data that will be collected from this interview will only be used for educational purposes. Your response will remain confidential. Therefore, I kindly ask you to participate voluntarily in this study. The quality of this study will greatly depend on your genuine answers. Therefore, I would like to ask for your consent to record your voice through the voice recorder, as it is difficult to write down the entire of your answers.

Thank you very much for your full cooperation!

1. What is 'Guma' and how do you define it?
2. How is 'Guma' practiced in the community of Degem?
3. What are the procedure and steps to solve the conflict in "Guma"?
4. What are the ritual processes held in the practice of "Guma"? What does it represent and how does the ritual cleansing ceremony begin and end?
5. How do you explain the power of 'Guma' in conflict resolution?
6. Who participate in 'Guma' and what are their roles?
7. What is 'Guma's communication strategy to reconcile individuals, families and groups in conflict?
8. How does 'Guma' provide lasting solutions to conflicts?
9. Do you think 'Guma' has advantages over state courts? Explain
10. What is the contribution of 'Guma' to peacebuilding and security?
11. What are the Limitations of 'Guma'?
12. What do you suggest to improve the efficiency of 'Guma' in resolving conflicts?

13. What are the current challenges 'Guma' is facing?

**2. Points for Focus Group Discussion**

- A. Meaning of 'Guma'
- B. 'Guma's communication strategy
- C. Compensation paid in 'Guma' system
- D. Advantages of Guma" over State Courts
- E. Effectiveness of 'Guma' in conflict management
- F. Power of 'Guma' to bring lasting solutions to conflicts
- G. The role of elders in 'Guma'

## Appendix II

### Interview Questions and points for FGD, Afan Oromo part

#### Qajeelfama

##### 1. Af- gaaffii

Kayyoon Af-gaaffii kanaa dhimma Gumaa fi walldhabdeele kanneen gumaan furaman irratti ragaalee funaanudha. Af-gaaffin kunis qorataa kanaaf “Aanaa Dagam keessatti, ga’ee Gumaan walitti bu’nsa hiikuu irratti qabu qorachuuf danddeesisa. Odeeffannon isin irraa argamus dhimma qorannoo qofaaf kan oolu yoo ta’u, haala kamiinu mirgi keessan qoranno kana keessatti ni kabajama. Kanafuu deebiiwwan isin naaf laattan qulqullina qorannoo kanaaf murteessaa waan ta’eef, amanamummaan akka na deegartan jechaa, deebiiwwan maraa yaadachuu akkan danda’uuf waraabduu sagalee fedhii keessan irratti hundaa’ee akkan fayyadamuu danda’u isin gaafadha. Guddiseen isin galateeffadha.

##### Gaaffilee Af- gaaffii

1. Gumaan Maali; akkamitti ibsitu?
2. Sirni Gumaan haala kamiin Dagamitti Shaakalama jira?
3. Gumaa keessatti walldhabdee jiru furuuf adeemsi fi tarkaanfiiwwan jiran maal fa'a?
4. Sirna Gumaa baasuu keessatti tarkaanfileen fi adeemsi jiru maal fa'aa? Akkamitti calbame xumurama?
5. Wal-dhabdee kiikuu keessatti humna Gumaan qabu akkamitti ibsitu?
6. Gumaa baasuu keessatti eenyuifaatu hirmaata? gaheen isaanii hoo mali?
7. Tarsiimoon qunnamtii Gumaa namoota dhuunfaa, maatii fi garee walldhabdee keessa jiran araarsuuf gargaaru maali?
8. Gumaan walldhabdee uumamaniif furmaata waaraa kan kennu akkamitti?
9. Gumaan manneen murtii mootummaa irra faayidaa qaba jettanii yaaddu? Mee ibsaa
10. Gumaachi Gumaan nageenyaaf fi tasgabii uumuuf qabu maali?
11. Dadhabbiin Gumaa maal fa'i?
12. Gahumsa Gumaan walitti bu'iinsa furuu keessatti qabu fooyyessuuf maal yaada kennitu?
13. Qormaatni yeroo ammaa Gumaa muddachaa jiru maal fa'i?

## 2. Marii Garee

Kayyoon Marii Garee kanaa dhimma Gumaa fi walldhabdeele kanneen Gumaan furaman irratti ragaalee funaanudha. Marii Garee kunis qorataa kanaaf “Aanaa Dagam keessatti ga’ee Gumaan walitti bu’nsa hiikuu irratti qabu qorachuuf danddeesisa. Odeeffannon isin irraa argamus dhimma qorannoo qofaaf kan oolu yoo ta’u, haala kamiinu mirgi keessan qoranno kana keessatti ni kabajama. Kanafuu deebiiwwan isin naaf laattan qulqullina qorannoo kanaaf murteessaa waan ta’eef, amanamummaan akka na deegartan jechaa, marii gaggeessinu mara yaadachuu akkan danda’uuf waraabduu sagalee fedhii keessan irratti hundaa’ee akkan fayyadamuu danda’u isin gaafadha.

Guddiseen isin galateeffadha.

### **Qabxiilee Marii Garee**

- A. Hiikaa Gumaa
- B. Tarsiimoo qunnamtii Gumaa
- C. Beenyyaa sirna Gumaa tiin kaffalamu
- D. Faayidaa Gumaan Manneen Murtii irra qabu
- E. Bu’a qabeessummaa Gumaan walldhabdee furuu keessatti keessatti qabu
- F. Human Gumaan walitti bu’iinsaaf furmaata waaraa fiduuf qabu
- G. Gumaa keessatti gaheen jaarsolii biyyaa.

## Appendix III

### Profile of Interview Participants

No.	Name of participants	Sex	Age	Code	Role	Address	Date of Interview
1.	Beharu Desta	M	54	I1	Community elder	Hambiso 01	16, 06, 2022
2.	Nigus Shimellis	M	34	I2	SU Sociology Lecturer	Fitche	17, 06, 2022
3.	Bekele Wedajo	M	51	I3	Chief community elder	Anno Degem	22, 06, 2022
4.	Birhanu Gudissa	M	36	I4	SU Sociology Lecturer	Fitche	17, 06, 2022
5.	Badhane Kebede	M	56	I5	Community elder	Eferso	18, 06, 2022
6.	Tullu Bayi	M	42	I6	Degem District Culture and Tourism Office Expert	Hambiso 01	17, 06, 2022
7.	Chesisa Legese	M	31	I7	Judge	Bishoftu	25, 06, 2022
8.	Kebede Lemma	M	54	I8	Community elder	Gende Sheno	16, 06, 2022
9.	Mul'ata Tesfaye	M	54	I9	Community elder and Degem District Security officer Head	Hambiso 01	16, 06, 2022
10.	Hailu Kiltu	M	65	I10	Community elder	Tumano	18, 06, 2022

## Appendix IV

### Profile of FGD Participants

Group Code: GA

No.	Name of key Participant	Sex	Age	Code	Role	Place of Discussion	Date of Discussion
1.	Kebede Lemma	M	54	GA1	Degem District Cooperative Office Expert	Degem District Culture and Tourism Office	15, 06, 2022
2.	Tulu Beyi	M	42	GA2	Degem District Culture and Tourism Office Expert		
3.	Woinishet Taye	F	28	GA3	Degem District Culture and Tourism Office Expert		
4.	Zinash Tesfaye	F	27	GA4	Degem District Culture and Tourism Office Expert		
5.	Mabrate Tamena	F	50	GA5	Degem District Culture and Tourism Office Expert		
6.	Fikru Reta	M	30	GA6	Degem District Culture and Tourism Office Expert		

## Appendix IV

### Profile of FGD Participants

#### Group Code: GB

No.	Name of key Participant	Sex	Age	Code	Role	Place of Discussion	Date of Discussion
1.	Ijara Mamo	M	59	GB1	Community elders	Eferso	31, 05, 2022
2.	Girma Tolosa	M	52	GB2	Community elders		
3.	Beharu Dori	M	56	GB3	Community elders		
4.	Gizachew Abagidi	M	53	GB4	Community elders		
5.	Lemma Fayye	M	64	GB5	Community elders		
6.	Bayisa Wakjira	M	57	GB6	Community elders		
7.	Tadesse Bekele	M	55	GB7	Community elders		
8.	Abebe Merga	M	63	GB8	Community elders		

## Profile of FGD Participants

Group Code: GC

No.	Name of key Participants	Sex	Age	Code	Role	Place of Discussion	Date of Discussion
1.	Birhanu Gudissa	M	36	GC1	SU Sociology Lecturer	Selale University	17, 06, 2022
2.	Mul'isa Bekele	M	32	GC2	SU Sociology Lecturer		
3.	Eldalkachew Teshome	M	32	GC3	SU Sociology Lecturer		
4.	Enchara Godessa	M	32	GC4	SU Anthropology Lecturer		
5.	Nigus Shimellis	M	34	GC5	SU Sociology Lecturer		
6.	Mabrate Gergiso	M	31	GC6	SU History Lecturer		

## Profile of FGD Participants

**Group Code: GD**

No.	Name of key Participant	Sex	Age	Code	Role	Place of Discussion	Date of Discussion
1.	Mengistu Deme	M	60	GD1	Community Elder	Family Hotel, Hambiso	19, 06, 2022
2.	Tamiru Negese	M	38	GD2	Community Elder		
3.	Teshome Feye	M	50	GD3	Community Elder		
4.	Kefale Tefera	M	55	GD4	Community Elder		
5.	Feyisa Tolesa	M	48	GD5	Community Elder		
6.	Kebeda Fesho	M	47	GD6	Community Elder		

## Profile of FGD Participants

Group Code: GE

No.	Name of key Participant	Sex	Age	Code	Role	Place of Discussion	Date of Discussion
1.	Tesfaye Geleta	M	72	GE1	Community Elder	Family Hotel, Hambiso	26, 06, 2022
2.	Tolcha Tarrie	M	53	GE2	Community Elder		
3.	Wedajo Galatu	M	69	GE3	Community Elder		
4.	Tolesa Hundie	M	62	GE4	Community Elder		
5.	Girma Tulu	M	49	GE5	Community Elder		
6.	Gemeda Asfaw	M	51	GE6	Community Elder		

## Pictures



**FGD (Group Code: GB)**



**FGD (Group Code: GA)**



**FGD (Group Code: GC)**