

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY**  
**SCHOOL OF GRADUATE STUDIES**  
**INSTITUTE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY STUDIES (IPSS)**

**GOMY: An Investigation of the Traditional Conflict Management System  
among the Gamo People (Gamo Zone), Southern Nations, Nationalities and  
Peoples Region**

**By**

**Endalamaw Kebede**

**Advisor Habtamu Wondimu (Prof.)**

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## **Declaration**

I Endalamw Kebde, Registration Number I.D GSR/ 0246/12, do hereby declaring that this thesis is my original work and that it has not been submitted partially; or in full, by and other person for an award of a degree in any other university/ institution.

**Name** Enalamw Kebede **Signature** ----- **Date**-----

**APPROVAL**

The undersigned certify that they have read and hereby recommend to the Addis Ababa University to accept the thesis submitted by Endalamw Kebede and entitled “GOMY: An Investigation of the Traditional Conflict Management System among the Gamo People (Gamo Zone), Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region,” in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Master of Art in Peace and Security Studies complies with the regulations of the university and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Name of supervisor .....Signature..... Date.....

Name of Internal Examiner..... Signature.....Date.....

Name of External Examiner.....signature .....Date.....

Name of Head of Department .....signature .....Date.....

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This thesis has been submitted to Addis Ababa University, School of Graduate Studies, and Institute for Peace and Security studies, for examination with my approval as a university advisor.

**Habtamu Wondimu (Prof.)**

**Signature & Date**

**Advisor**

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## **LIST OF ACRONYMS**

EPRDF	Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front
FDRE	Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GZCTD	Gamo Zone Culture and Tourism Directorate
IPSS	Institute for Peace and Security Studies
KII	Key Informant Interview
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SNNPRS	Southern Nations and Nationalities Peoples Regional State
TCM	Traditional Conflict Management

## ABSTRACT

*In Ethiopia, the traditional conflict management system has been playing significant role in addition to formal court system for many years. These institutions are supporting the people to manage their conflicts in the places where there is no adequate public service and lack of government legitimacy.*

*The objective of this study is to explore GOMY an Investigation of the Traditional Conflict Management System among the Gamo People (Gamo Zone), Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, qualitative research method and exploratory research design was employed. Key informant interview, focus group discussion, observation and document review were the central data collection techniques. Gamo zone was selected based on purposive sampling techniques in conflict management system. Key informant interviews were made with experts from culture and tourism directorate and elders from different kebeles in the Gamo Zone. Also, purposive sampling technique was employed to select the study participants for the focus group discussion.*

*Gomy as a traditional conflict management system has significantly contributed towards the promotion of peace and security in the Zone. Gomy is served or used as reinforcing bar for Dubbusha and Cima conflict resolution methods. Because, Gomy clearly stated, what is transgression and sanction among the Gamo people. It helps people live in harmonious way through mutual respect and care for each other as gomy contains political, economic and social aspects. On the other hand, Gomy faces a lot of challenges from the urbanization, Christianity and interference from the government. Moreover, it lacks attention from the government institution to preserve and promote the system. The study shows that Gomy as a traditional conflict management system plays significant role in promoting peace and security through handling conflicts before the occurrence of loss of life and material destruction in the zone. Hence, other nations and nationalities could take a lesson from the Gamo people in the time the country is looking for an angle to spread the gospel of peace across the country.*

**Key words** *Gamo people, Gomy, Conflict, Conflict Management*

# CHAPTER ONE

## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

Conflict can be understood as “Encasement in a fight or possible confrontation between two or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or ends (Mengesha, 2016:1). Conflict is a natural phenomenon in the life of human beings which occur in relation of interaction for socio-cultural, economic and political purposes. The universe itself revolve through conflict. Thus, conflict is impossible to avoid from the life of human beings rather treat in a positive way for functional outcomes (Tafese, 2016:1). Conflict is inherent in virtually every aspect of human relationship, from sport to parliamentary democracy, from fashion to arts to paradigmatic challenges in the sciences, and from economic activity to intimate relationships. Yet, it can be among the most serious social problems the human race faces (Wolde, 2018:131).

Throughout history, societies across the world have used different forms of indigenous conflict resolution or management mechanisms specific to their ‘cultural’ contexts. For instance, at least more than 80% of all disputes in Afghanistan are resolved through indigenous dispute resolution mechanisms, principally by community councils called Shuras<sup>1</sup> or Jirgas (Sinha, 2011:4).The Jirga, with its norms, techniques and processes define the indigenous ways Afghans resolve their local and national conflicts. Jirga plays a central role in strengthening social solidarity among Afghans and contributes significantly to the maintenance of social order in Afghan society (Wardak, 2011:7).

In other Asian countries like, the Cordilleras<sup>2</sup>, Philippines; Hokkaido<sup>3</sup>, Japan; India<sup>4</sup>; and Sabah and Sarawak<sup>5</sup>, Malaysia, traditional conflict resolution play “significant” role in resolving conflicts and dispute in the community. The process of indigenous conflict resolution is led by

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<sup>1</sup> Shura (Jirgas) refers to consultation, mutual debate in order that may see another opinion, council advice extract an opinion (Danger, 2003). Jirga is the most closely associated with ritual and process of Pashtun tribal dispute settlement, where people sit in large circle in order to resolve a dispute or make collective decisions about important communal issues and problems( UNDP,2013).

<sup>2</sup> Cordilleras are the traditional conflict resolution institutes that facilitate the resolution of inter-village or inter-regional conflict in the Philippines (Ragandang, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Hokkaido is located in the sub-arctic north Japan and the land of Ainu cover 20% Japan territory.

<sup>4</sup> Sabah is the native court system was set up primarily to deal with breaches of native law and custom in India (Ragandang, 2018).

<sup>5</sup> Sarawak literally it implies the concept of ‘equality and justice’ (Jawan, 1996).

locally trusted elderly people who have socially eminent status and authority granted by customs the indigenous system is more ‘fair, pro-poor’ and easier for local people to access than the formal system. These practices influence the habits, norms, social values, rules and institutions build up across time. The process of indigenous conflict resolution is led by local “trusted elderly people” who have socially eminent status and authority granted by customs (Alemie and Mandefro, 2018:4).

On the other hand, the Constitution of Bolivia of 2009 established the plurinational<sup>6</sup> legal state and gives official recognition to a variety of traditional non-state conflict resolution institutions. Peasant communities like the Ayllus<sup>7</sup> in the high plateau region who have always maintained their own customary law and courts may now officially exercise jurisdiction over their members in specific social affairs. Similar developments can be observed in other Latin American regions (Schilling-Vacaflor, 2010).

As Woko and Osagie (2014), cited in Kpae (2018:1), many African indigenous societies had a well laid down traditional process of conflict resolution. The various communities in Africa had various conventions aimed at mitigating inter-human and intra-communal conflicts. These conventions were backed by taboo which must be observed for peaceful regulation of human activities and, relationships between couples and community; for instance, Ubuntu<sup>8</sup> in South Africa, Gacaca<sup>9</sup> in Rwanda. These traditional methods were built on customs and traditions and culturally effective in resolving conflict within their own communities. Despite the influence of ‘modernization’, traditional mechanism is still being used in most Sub- Sahara African countries, so as to keep communities in ‘harmony and live in peace’. Ethiopia is a country in which various ethnic groups live together for long period of time. As conflict is inevitable, these ethnic groups have experienced conflicts of various types at different times. Each ethnic group has its own

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<sup>6</sup> Plurinational Bolivian constitution (2009). It recognizes the right to increased political participation and recognition of indigenous political system (Vacaflor, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> The Ayllu, a family clan, is the traditional form of a community in the Andes, especially among the Quechuas and Aymaras. They are an indigenous local government model across the Andes region of South America, particularly in Bolivia and Peru (Vacaflor, 2010).

<sup>8</sup> Ubuntu lies at the heart of the African way of life and impacts on every aspect of people’s well-being. Ubuntu means that each individual’s humanity is ideally expressed in relationship with others, Ubuntu is then to be aware of one’s own being but also of one’s duties towards one’s neighbor (Lefa, 2015).

<sup>9</sup> Gacaca is the conflict resolution process in Rwanda. The primary aim is the restoration of social harmony, and lesser extent the establishment of the truth about what has happened, the punishment of the perpetrator, or even compensation through a gift.

mechanisms for solving conflicts (Tafese, 2016:11). Among the sidama's people of southern Ethiopia there are various traditional institutions such as "Woma", "Luwa" "Holla" and "Songo" These institutions are playing significant role in resolving and managing the conflict (Mengesha, 2016:11).The Yajoka and Gordanna assemblies seem to combine legislative and judiciary functions. Representatives of the Constituent units of the Sebat Bet and Kestane, respectively, were assembled to agree on the fundamental rules governing their community. Periodic meetings were also held to revise the laws when such revisions were deemed necessary (Bahru and Pausewang, 2002:45). In western Ethiopia particularly in Metekkel zone, elders developed traditional conflict resolution mechanism known as 'Mitchu' or friendship. In line with this, has argued that the aim of elders in resolving different disputes in the described study area was not to punish the wrongdoers but rather to restore the social harmony (Kariuki, 2015:9). The Mekabon are the Ethiopia Afar elders who are playing a crucial and indispensable role in conflict management, resolution and reconciliation between clans and sub-clans. In the area if there are antagonistic situations happen between clans or sub-clans, clan elders play a key role as mediators (Isi). In the area if there are antagonistic situations happen between clans or sub-clans, clan elders play a key role as mediators (Isi). According to Kwesi Sansculotte-Greenidge and Demessie Fantaye(2012: 89), it is believed that the mediators (Isi) are from neutral clans and are called upon to mediate and reconcile antagonistic clans. They did it based on *Ma'ada* (customary rules) that identified five crimes such as Eido (killings), Aymissiya (injury), Rado (theft, destruction of property), Samo (adultery) and Dafu (insults, affronts). The compensation payment decision is based on severity of crimes. In line with this, Diat and Nefsimiklah are the Afar terms for the compensation payment for homicide crimes and Dekah is the Afar term for the compensation payment for all other crimes. Jaarsa biyaa and Dhaddacha are also one of locally-based conflict management institutions among the Oromiya Regional State (Eskedar, 2010; and Endalcachew, 2015:45).Thus, the focus of this study is to investigate the traditional conflict management system among the Gamo people (Gamo Zone), Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region.

In doing so, the major objective of the thesis is to study the role of indigenous institution, the cause of conflict and management strategy historical development and the challenges it faces in the study area.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Conflict is inevitable among humans. When two or more social entities, for instance, individuals, groups, organizations, and nations, come in contact with one another in attaining their objectives, their relationships may become incompatible or inconsistent. Relationships among such entities may become inconsistent or irregular when two or more of them desire a similar resource that is in short supply; when they have partially exclusive behavioral preferences regarding their joint action or when they have different attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills (Rahim, 2001:1).

According to Zartman (2008:209-210), traditional African societies, the understanding of conflict was based on the disaffection between the humans and the supernatural. For instance, supreme beings, deities and ancestors. The African indigenous methods of dispute resolution place emphasis on the community and parties to the conflict, as opposed to the individuals in conflict. It is also less expensive and based on the principle of maintaining a relationship.

As Nwanko and Nzelibe (1990), cited in Kape (2018:38) the intent of this emphasis on relationship is to restore harmony among the disputants and also provide a means of restitution through apology and compensation, especially where damages have been caused to an injured party, belief that the individual is not alone, but under an “umbrella of the community”. Therefore, the conflict resolution was placed on internalized values which include honesty, openness, empathy, community solidarity and individual loyalty to the group. It was usually believed that individuals who come before the community for dispute settlement should be sincere; otherwise they are seen as having committed an offense against the community rather than the individual concerned.

Alula and Getachew (2008) and Abera, (2003), cited in Daniel (2016:8), noted that indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are prevalent in most part of Ethiopia, at local level and it is the dominant justice system in the country. For centuries, indigenous mechanism for conflict resolution is made by the people not by the state and derives its legitimacy from participation and consensus of the community and its recognition of the same by the “government”. This study will contribute to the understanding of the local knowledge and fill the gap about conflict management practice in the study area. The research can contribute to empowering people in various grass root activities to enable people to maintain peace and security, reduce conflict from “escalating to a full out war”. The findings of this study will expect to benefit both governmental

and non-governmental organizations working on culture, peace building and development. It also helps academicians and researchers to conduct further studies in the area.

The traditional conflict management is part and parcel of the manifestation of people's identity in different parts of Ethiopia. Gomy<sup>10</sup> is one of the traditional conflict management systems among the Gamo people in the Southern Nations, and Nationalities and Peoples Regional States (SNNPRS). Traditional conflict management has been studied and discussed in many academic literatures. It plays a significant role in empowering the people, solve problems, develop a sense of belongingness and bring together the community. Some researchers have been conducted research in the study area. For instance, Pulea Sima, (2020), 'Exploring Making Peace Processes and Reason for why the Government and the People Recognized Gamo Elders as the model peace making case of Gamo zone'. He discusses about the overall conflict management process among the Gamo people between (2018-2020), and did not independently discusses about the traditional conflict management system, he was focused on investigating the existing peacemaking process, the challenge it faces and studying the relationship between indigenous and formal court system. Yewubneh Yemanebrihan (2016), 'Indigenous Conflict Resolution Mechanisms among the Oyda People of Southern Ethiopia: An Exploratory Study. He was exploring the role of indigenous institutions in resolving conflict; identify the cause of conflict handled by indigenous conflict institutions. Zelalem Zewede (2016), 'Woga: An Ethnographic Study of Customary Law among the Gamo of Ethiopia'. He discusses the issue from the customary law perspective as a means of traditional conflict resolution, different categories of customary laws embraced by Woga<sup>11</sup>, social organizations and their role in the enforcement of Woga, and the changes and continuities related to the significance of Woga in regulating human behavior and social relations Esayas Awash (2015). 'Indigenous Conflict Resolution Institutions: A Study among the Gofa<sup>12</sup> People of the Demba Gofa District, in SNNPR. He examined the cause of conflicts prevailing in the study area, explores the procedures and processes for conflict resolution of indigenous institutions for conflict resolution, and examines the interplay among the indigenous institutions and their relations with the formal structures for conflict resolution, and the role and place of women in the conflict management practices in the study area. Hence,

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<sup>10</sup> Gomy refers to a complex taboo institution that embraces several taboos that regulate human conduct including sexual behavior (Mehari and Tadele, 2015).

<sup>11</sup> Woga a traditional religious belief among Gamo people (Awash, 2015).

<sup>12</sup> Gofa people are one the Omotic language speaking people in SNNRS (Awash, 2015).

my study adds the Knowledge gap in Gomy as traditional conflict management system among the Gamo people from the “cultural” and “religious” aspects of Gomy in the study area.

### **1.3 Explication of Conflict Management**

Conflict management in a traditional setting helps to reinforce coercive policy by conforming to dominant social norms. Though tension reduction measures may make the conflict more bearable in the short term, forced compromise, sometimes generates serious conflict that will need to be resolved in the future. The management process is not effective in surfacing and addressing the core concerns with survival and dignity that are root causes of identity-based conflict. As differences over values cannot be solved within an existing order, conflict can be protracted. By favoring the status quo, tension reduction mechanisms only put off changes essential in directly dealing with basic issues at stake. Conflict can be terminated by reasserting dominant power relations (Jeong, 2000:39). The aim of conflict management, whether undertaken by the parties in conflict or whether involving the intervention of an outside party, is to affect the entire structure of a conflict situation so as to contain the destructive nature of conflict process. (For instance, hostility, use of violence), and help the parties possessing incompatible goals to find some solution to their conflict. Effective conflict management succeeds in minimizing disruption stemming from the existence of a conflict, and providing a solution that is satisfactory and acceptable (Jeong, 2000:34).

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

#### **1.4.1 General Objectivise**

The general objective of the study is to investigate the practice of Gomy a conflict management strategy among the Gamo people.

#### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives**

1. To investigate the role of Gomy in resolving conflict in the study area.
2. To identify the causes of conflict and the management strategies through Gomy in the study area.
3. To explore the historical development of the Gomy and the challenges its face as a means to manage conflicts.

## **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What are the roles of indigenous institutions (Gomy) in managing conflicts in the study area?
2. What are the procedures and norms followed by these indigenous institutions in the conflict management process?
3. How has the historical development of the society affected the practice of Gomy in the study area?
4. What are the challenges of traditional conflict management strategy, in the study area especially, to Gomy?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

This study contributes to understand the existing knowledge and fills the gap about Gomy as a traditional conflict management system among the Gamo people, and contributes to improve interventions in conflict management to promote peace and social stability in the study area. It helps development practitioners to more information and to empower the people at the grass root level and preserve their cultural practice and identity. It also helps academicians and researchers to start further studies in the topic.

## **1.7 Scope of the Study**

The study focus on Gomy the traditional conflict management system among Gamo people southern Ethiopia. The study focused on , exploring Gomy as a traditional conflict management system; how it resolved the conflict in the study area, identify the cause of conflict and the management strategies, describe the historical development of the Gomy and the challenges its face as a system to manage conflicts. The studies cover Gamo Zone in Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples Regional states. Moreover, qualitative data collection and exploratory research design were used to get reliable information. The key informant interview and respondent for focus group discussion were selected through purposive sampling methods that help to get people with ‘good’ or ‘relatively’ ‘better understanding’ of the conflict management system.

## **1.8 Limitations of the Study**

This study was concentrated on the Gamo Zone (SNNPRS). So, the data and the findings of the study may not be represent the wider picture of conflict management system among the Gamo people. In addition, the researcher had budget constraints to study extensively and Poor handling of the data in some offices, especially in Gamo Zone culture and tourism office. The other challenges were some, Key informant interview (KII) and members of Focus Group Discussion (FGD) were giving exaggerated response during information gathering process to promote the positive and strong side of the practice.

## **1.9 Thesis Organization**

This study is consisted of five chapters. Chapter one is deal with an introductory part of the study. Chapter two is focuses on a review of related literature. Chapter three, deals with the research methodology. Chapter four focuses on data analysis and interpretation. Finally, chapter five focuses on conclusion and recommendations.

## **1.10 Ethical Consideration**

The study was taking into consideration the ethics of research. Before proceeding to conduct the study, official letter from the university/institution (IPSS) was taken to the concerned bodies to receive or get permission. While contacting respondents, the purpose of the study was explained at the beginning of the conversation. Their full consent was first checked before starting interviews or discussions. Besides, they were informed that their personal name and identity, was kept confidential, and used for the study purpose only. The researcher is committed to present response as it is without misinterpretation or exaggeration.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **2.1 Review of Related Literature**

This section of the thesis has attempted to review the existing literatures related to the research question under study. This chapter has two parts. Part one, deals with General Concept of Conflict, Conflicts Resolution and Conflict Management. Part two, deals with the sociocultural history of Gamo people. It begins with explaining the concept of conflict and conflict management mechanism, major theoretical schools on the causes of conflict, the strengths and weaknesses of traditional conflict management systems.

#### **Part One**

#### **General Concept of Conflict and Conflict Management**

These concepts used as part of the overall process of the analysis to understand Gomy as a traditional conflict management system.

##### **2.1.1 The Concept of Conflict**

Conflict is defined as an interactive manner manifested in incompatibility, the war of words, or dissonance inside or among social entities (i.e., character, institution, corporation, etc.). Calling conflict an interactive kingdom does now no longer forestall the opportunities of intra character conflict, for its miles regarded that someone regularly interacts with himself or herself (Rahim, 2001:18). The battle resulted from a combating or disagreement among one or greater events aspiring toward incompatible or aggressive way to ends. Conflict can be manifested, diagnosed thought movements or behaviors, or latent, where in case it stays dominant for a few times, as incompatibilities are unarticulated or are constructed into structures or such institutional association as government, corporations, or maybe civil societies. On the other hand (Peter, 2013:5), stated that battle isn't always evil; regular instances, it arises from the manner of searching for sustainable development and satisfaction. We neglect our comparable superb intentions, dissipating energies at the contradictory thoughts about the direction to the unusual place finish. Among different things, battle emanates due to misunderstanding, man's superiority complex, and failure to compromise and reconcile thoughts, ideas, cultures and pastimes. If harnessed, it is able to function an effective device for development.

As said through (Jeong, 2010:7), describe the battle from a mental perspective, Anger, hatred, and dehumanization are amplified through demeaning verbal exchange and degrading nonverbal behavior. The preliminary use of violence can be aimed toward reaching constrained targets and demonstrating one's unyielding dedication and could regularly integrate with the manifestation of frustration. The out of control emotional, mental factors of battle may be an impediment to resolving variations in noticeable issues. In general, the psychology of battle drives the attitudes and behaviors of people and agencies towards greater polarized perspectives of the world. It takes location due to the fact humans are interdependent. When humans stay together; they may additionally rely upon one another interdependence does now no longer imply agreeing on everything.

As Thakore,(2009) cited in Jeong, (2010:12), in his component stated that battle way an expression of hostility, bad attitudes, antagonism, aggression, rivalry, and misunderstanding. It is likewise related to conditions that contain contradictory hobby among opposing agencies. It may be described as a war of words among or greater people or agencies with every character or institution seeking to advantage reputation of its view over others. Conflict is a social phenomenon this is generated and supported through some of mental factors. Of these, mind-set formation is absolutely the maximum important. The idea of mind-set is one of the maximum extensively used ideas with inside the social sciences. Broadly speaking, attitudes define the events' evaluative and reaction inclinations in social conditions. Attitudes are particularly enduring dispositions, having 3 simple dimensions: (a) the cognitive, (b) the affective, and (c) the behavioral. The cognitive size refers back to the events' ideals and thoughts approximately their environment, the effective size refers back to the events' emotions and feelings and the behavioral size refer back to the specific readiness to respond. Each of those dimensions is effected through, and influences, a conflict situation. The end result is that attitudes in conflict are made greater bad or extreme, and are so biased as to view the opposite celebration with inside the worst feasible light. To apprehend why this occurs and why attitudes in conflict are so immune to change, we want to recognize how attitudes are shaped or acquired. Perception is the manner through which people obtain and extract statistics approximately their environment. It is a cognitive manner which entails reception of stimulus, Intellectual Corporation and reaction. The final step with inside the manner the reaction – includes an overt act, or the formation of a

mindset. Attitudes are for that reason decided through every person's belief and comply with his picture, or image, of his environment. (Bercovich, Kremenyuk and Zartman, 2009:8).

### **2.1.2 The Concept of Security**

'Security' is generally accepted as the 'contested concept', but is generally about the condition or feeling safe from harm or danger, the defense, protection and preservation of core values, and the absence of threat to acquire values. Security is about survival and the conditions of human existence. The traditional conception of security has largely focused on the treatment and use of force. This largely military conception of security has focused on the state as the 'primary referent object of security'. But, it criticized by various scholars because it does not account for or explain the emerging non-military sources of threat to the security of the individual, society, and state, regional global level. This debate has led to the re-definition of security and the broadening of the conception of security to embrace non-military dimensions such as environment, migration, ethno-religious and nationalist identities, poverty and human insecurity, and diseases (Francis, 2006:23).

### **2.1.3 The Concept of Peace**

Peace is generally defined as the 'absence' of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence, and about peaceful coexistence. It is primarily concerned with creating and maintaining a just order in society and the resolution of conflict by non-violent means. There are six meanings of peace agreed on by many peace researchers, including: peace as absence of war (absence of direct violence), peace as justice and development (absence of structural violence), peace as respect and tolerance between peoples, peace as *Gaia*<sup>13</sup> (balance in and with the ecosphere), inner peace (spiritual peace) and peace as a 'wholeness' and making whole (Francis, 2006:18).

### **2.1.4 The Concept of Conflict Management**

Conflict management is largely seen in terms of social control designed to minimize the challenges to the core values of the system (Jeong, 2000: 34). Interventionist efforts towards preventing the escalation and negative effects, especially violent ones, of ongoing conflicts. Rarely conflicts are resolved, more often; they are reduced, downgraded, or contained. Such

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<sup>13</sup> Gaia theory or Gaia principle, proposes that all organisms and their inorganic surroundings on Earth are closely integrated to form a single and self-regulating complex system, maintaining the conditions for life on the planet(Harvard university,2010)

development can be followed by reorientation of the issue, reconstitution of the divisions among conflicting parties, or even by a re-emergence of past issue or grievance. Conflict management is, therefore, a constant process (Miller, 2005:23).

Conflict management basically refers to the process of containing the conflict to avoid aggravation. Some analysis, actually include prevention as a component of conflict management. In general, however, conflict management is perhaps an admission of the reality that conflict is inevitable, but that not all conflict can always be resolved; therefore what practitioners can do is to manage and regulate them. Conflict management refers to the reduction of the means of pursuing a conflict from violent to politicians or, more broadly, to measures to move a conflict toward resolution (elimination of the incompatibilities in the parties' positions on an issue). Conflict management can be accomplished bilaterally or multilaterally, depending on the type of conflict; that is, a party can manage its conflict with its adversary cooperatively, or it can cooperate with other parties to manage someone else's conflict. In a word, it is a matter of negotiation or mediation. So one can say that all cooperation involves some conflict management but not all conflict management involves cooperation (Zartman, 2016:161).

The significant feature of conflict management is an attempt by the status quo to manage the dispute, or to avoid escalation of the conflict. The purpose of conflict management, whether undertaken by the parties in conflict or whether involving the intervention of an outside party, is to affect the entire structure of a conflict situation so as to contain the destructive components in the conflict process (e.g. hostility, use of violence) and help the parties possessing incompatible goals to find some solution to their conflict. Effective conflict management succeeds in (1) minimizing disruption stemming from the existence of a conflict, and (2) providing a solution that is satisfactory and acceptable (Burton, 1987:9).

Conflict management is the process of reducing the negative and destructive capacity of conflict through a number of measures and by working with and through the parties involved in that conflict. It covers the entire area of handling conflict positively at different stages, including those efforts made to prevent conflicts, by being proactive. It encompasses conflict limitation, containment and litigation. On the other hand Burton, (1987), cited in Best, (2006:95), conflict management may include "conflict prevention" a term he uses to connote containment of conflict through steps introduced to promote conditions in which collaboration and valued relationships

control the behavior of conflict parties. As Best (2006:95), put it conflict management is perhaps an admission of the reality that conflict is inevitable, but that not all conflicts can always resolve; therefore what practitioners can do is to manage and regulate them.

### **2.1.5. Conflict Resolution**

Conflict resolution is a process of managing a conflict and negotiating a solution. It is best understood as a working model with two key elements, conflict management and negotiation. Conflict Management is a communication process for changing the negative emotional states in a conflict to emotional states that allow working out a solution to the conflict. Negotiation is a communication process for enabling disputing parties to achieve an outcome with respect to their differences (Katz & McNulty, 1994:1).

‘Conflict resolution as a situation where the conflicting parties enter into an agreement that solves their central’ incompatibilities accept each other’s continued existence as parties and cease all violent action against each other’. This means, of course, that conflict resolution is something that necessarily comes after conflict. It means that we first need to have concepts and tools for the analysis of conflict (Wallenstein, 2002:8). Conflict resolution, according to Jeong (2000) is defined as a long term settlement of an underlying long-running conflict. It needs the long term commitment of the actors to solve their differences since the deep rooted conflicts arose over non-negotiable issues. The main target of this mechanism is to resolve the main causes of conflict. Conflict resolution requires a more analytical and problem solving approach and needs to pass through complex processes. Hence, it would enable the contestants to understand their differences exhaustively if they are interested to recognize the underlying causes of conflict. Conflict Resolution studies the phenomenon of conflict and analyze ways to bring it under control, bringing their insights and concepts to bear on actual conflicts, be they domestic or international, so as to foster better and more effective relations among states and peoples. Conflict Resolution is about ideas, theories, and methods that can improve our understanding of conflict and our collective practice of reduction in violence and enhancement of political processes for harmonizing interests (Bercovitch, Kremenyuk, and Zartman, 2009:1).

Conflict resolution provides an opportunity to interact with the parties concerned, with the hope of at least reducing the scope, intensity and effects of conflicts. During formal and informal meetings, conflict resolution exercises permit a reassessment of views and claims as a basis for

finding options to crisis and two divergent points of view. Those who organize conflict resolution exercises or meetings usually constitute the third party in a triangular arrangement and consist of traditional rulers (King<sup>14</sup>, Chiefs, etc.). Conflict resolution promotes consensus-building, social bridge reconstructions, and the re-enactment of order in society (Theresa and Oluwafemi, 2014:151-152).

### **2.1.6 Conflict Transformation**

Conflict transformation is to envision and respond to the ebb and flow of social conflict as life-giving opportunities for creating constructive change processes that reduce violence, increase justice in direct interaction and social structures, and respond to real-life problems in human relationships (Lederach, 1995:1). First, a capacity to envision conflict positively, as a natural phenomenon that creates potential for constructive growth. Second, a willingness to respond in ways that maximize this potential for positive change. A transformational approach recognizes that conflict is a normal and continuous dynamic within human relationships. Moreover, conflict brings with it the potential for constructive change. Positive change does not always happen, of course. As we all know too well, many times conflict results in long-standing cycles of hurt and destruction. But the key to transformation is a proactive bias toward seeing conflict as a potential catalyst for growth (Lenderach, 2014:2-3).

Lenderach (1995:95), sees conflict transformation as change. It can be seen descriptively in the changes created by social conflict, and prescriptively in the deliberate interventions by third parties to create change. Conflict transformation takes place at different levels and has a different dimension. At the personal level, it involves emotional, perceptual and spiritual aspect of change desired for individuals. It also affects relationships touching a communication between parties that needs to change also affect the structures that generate conflict through deprivation, exclusion and other form of injustice. It also seeks to understand cultural patterns and values of the parties.

### **2.1.7 Relevance and Characteristics of Traditional Conflict Management**

Macfarlane (2007) cited Tafese1, (2016:24), ‘Traditional conflict managements are playing an important role in resolving conflicts and maintaining peace and stability in a community’. To

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<sup>14</sup> King is the highest leadership position in the traditional African society. They play significant role in the political, economic and social life of the people still “today” (Theresa and Oluwafemi, 2014).

resolve conflicts and maintain peace in a specific community, indigenous knowledge plays a major role. Indigenous Knowledge is run by elders who are well known and respected members of the community and may comprise religious leaders, wise-men and other community leaders. Similarly, according to prominent and old-age groups within a society are the source of indigenous knowledge as they have experience and critical perception about their environment. 'Such old-age's perception is different from society to society'. Traditional practices are deeply rooted in different ethnic groups and arise from 'old-age practices that have regulated the relationships of the peoples in a community'. Therefore, the elders are associated with the cultural norms and beliefs of the peoples, and gain their legitimacy from the community values instead of state (Regassa, et al., (2008:64), and Fiseha, et al., (2011:75).

Consequently, a true and lasting peace requires a culture of peace that is a comprehensive, society wide system of values, beliefs, and attitudes. As Bar-Siman-Tov (2004) cited Tafese, (2016:24), in traditional and relatively undifferentiated society's chiefs, elders, or other leading figures play mediating or judicial roles in bringing injured parties and their kin into normal civility. In this case, there are local actors and traditional community based decision making method to manage and transform conflict within a community. Thus, 'local mediation typically incorporates consensus building based on open discussions to exchange information and clarify issues'. In this understanding, traditional institutions, elders, chiefs and other prominent leaders play critical roles to invest indigenous knowledge to conflict resolution and maintain stability within a community.

Traditional approaches focus on the psycho-social and spiritual dimension of violent conflicts and their transformation. Conflict transformation and peace building are not only about negotiations, political agreements and material reconstruction, but also about "purification", "reconciliation" and "mental" and "spiritual healing". 'Traditional approaches have a lot to offer in this regard'. They do not only deal with material issues, reason and talk, but also with the spiritual world, feelings and non-verbal communication. Traditional methods of purification and healing carried out by customarily healers, priests, and other spiritual authorities are of utmost importance for the mental and spiritual rehabilitation of victims and perpetrators. Traditional approaches are well suited to address this dimension. They take into account that conflict transformation and peace building is not only an issue of reason, rationality and talk, but also the

affects, emotions, imagination and of the spirit, in short, it is a deeply emotional and spiritual endeavor (Vogler, 2011:450).

### **2.1.8 Limitations of Traditional Conflict Management**

In a traditional setting or context, ‘every peace deal that has been achieved is achieved under the proviso that it might be revoked in the near or distant future’ (Vogler, 2011:41). Moreover, certain highly ritualized and thus controlled forms of violence are perceived not as a destructive violation of the rules, but as integral to the societal order and as indispensable constructive elements of conflict resolution. Fighting can be a means of constituting and re-establishing harmony. In addition, violence often permeates the everyday life. Violence against weak members of the community, in particular domestic “violence” against women and children, is a ‘normal’ feature of ‘peaceful’ life in many communities that otherwise practice traditional approaches to conflict transformation (Vogler, 2011:450).

Traditional approaches may contradict universal standards of human rights and liberal democracy. If councils of elders, for instance, broker peace deals between conflict parties and if these councils actually consist of old men only, this type of gerontocracy rule is problematic by liberal democratic standards, and more so if the young and the women who are excluded from decision-making processes become the subjects of these decisions. Women often are the objects of customary conflict resolution processes that are dominated by males in order to resolve conflicts between males. Traditional approaches have a limited sphere of applicability. They are confined to the context of the relatively small community, to the “we”-group of family, clan, village or neighboring communities and forms of face-to-face communication. (Vogler, 2011: 455).

Traditional approaches are preserved. They are geared towards the preservation of the status quo or the restoration of the ‘good old’ order. Disturbances of that order have to be controlled and fixed. Traditional approaches only work in the framework of that order and are only applicable to conflicts that occur within a given community. Traditional approaches are difficult to apply with regard to conflicts against the community, conflicts that challenge the framework of values and relations of the traditional order. Traditional approaches are open to abuse. There are many examples of traditional authorities abusing their powers for their own benefit and to the detriment of the weak members of communities (Volker 2011:453)

### **2.1.9 Traditional Conflict Management Process in Africa**

Most societies have a variety of traditional ways of managing and resolving conflict. These may be informal or formal through respected elders within a family, clan, religious groups, or community that may help people in conflict solve problems themselves, or may impose solutions which are seen to be legitimate because of the elders' wisdom and/or position (Chapman & Kagaha, 2009; Zartman, 2000: 65). However, the uniqueness of traditional institutions, by virtue of being indigenous and the use of local actors, cumulatively enables them to either resist or even sometimes subvert the state. These traditional institutions, also known as endogenous conflict resolution systems continue to demonstrate their relevance in post-conflict states (Chapman & Kagaha, 2012; Zartman, 2000) and (Wolde, 2018:130).

Conflict management in traditional African communities, states and regions include removing the root-causes of the conflict; reconcile the conflicting parties genuinely; to preserve and ensure harmony to set the right setting for societal production and development. Therefore, conflict management using indigenous institutions in various African communities, states, and regions, including contemporary African regional institutions has a chance to embrace this paradigm through the institutionalization of the panel of the wise. (Tafese, 2016:23).

Eghosa Osaghae (2000, 225) cited in Volker (2011) states that “the relevance and applicability of traditional strategies have been greatly disenabled by the politicization, corruption and abuse of traditional structures, especially traditional ruler ship, which have steadily delegitimized conflict management built around them in the eyes of many and reduced confidence in their efficacy [...] The co-optation of traditional rulers as agents of the state, and their manipulation to serve partisan ends, which dates back to colonial times, not to mention the corruption of modern, traditional rulers, has considerably reduced the reverence and respect commanded by this institution and, therefore, the ability of traditional rulers to resolve conflicts”. Whenever the roles of politician, entrepreneur or warlord on the one hand and the traditional roles of elders, chiefs or big men on the other are united in one and the same person, a perversion of custom is imminent. This of course weakens the legitimacy of traditional authorities and discredits traditional approaches in the eyes of community members, and as a consequence, traditional approaches are

weakened in general. Among the Arusha<sup>15</sup> people of Tanzania, there was instituted the Golib Festival, which was a period of the prohibition of all feuds and hostilities between and within families, clans and villages as the emphasis was laid on abundant food, harmony, fecundity, and the common interest of all the people in the community. The Gikuyu<sup>16</sup> elders of Kenya had it impressed on them that their primary responsibility to their people was the prevention of conflict between members of their community and the prevention of violent and deadly conflicts that would involve the use of supernatural powers, open hostilities bloodshed, and destruction of property. In the communities of many African countries, the concept of “African Palaver<sup>17</sup>” is widely used to settle conflicts. However, various communities in Africa call it various names. Among the Kpelle<sup>18</sup> people of Liberia, it is called “House of Palaver” or “moot”. Here, it is an ad hoc committee or council made up of the kinsmen and neighbors of the parties to a conflict (Agbu and Bolarinwa 2006).

In Chad, especially among the Toubou<sup>19</sup> society, the assembly in which conflicts are resolved was called “Cofono”. This is a gathering in which not only the traditional rulers were involved, but customary council members from the surroundings, all interested men (both young and old), as well as women’s groups of all ages (Agbu and Bolarinwa 2006). In the Beti society located in the capital region of Cameroon, the concept is known as “adzo” which means “to say or “to

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<sup>15</sup> Arusha region is located in the north-eastern corner of Tanzania. It lies below the equator between latitudes 2° 0' and 6° 0'. Longitudinally the region is situated between 35° 0' and 38° 0' east of Greenwich. The region has a common border with Kenya in the north, to the east it borders with Kilimanjaro and Tanga regions. To the south it shares a border with Dodoma region and to the west with Singida, Shinyanga and Mara regions (regional commissioner’s office ARUSHA, 1998)

<sup>16</sup> The word, ‘Gikuyu’ stands for both the people and the language. The term is also synonymous with ‘Agikuyu’ (people) and in some scholarly works, ‘Kikuyu’ in Kenya (Karangi, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> The term palaver was recently introduced into philosophical, ethical, and theological discourse by Francophone African scholars as a model to discuss and seek solutions to challenging issues. For these African scholars, palaver means the art and discipline of public discourse within a participative assembly in a public space, in an open courtyard or under a tree. It involves the use of simple words in order to tackle problematic issues touching on all areas of life and to seek relevant and workable solutions. Palaver takes the name “African palaver model” to depict that communicative community spirit, the interactive dialogue that animates many African community’s affairs for holistic interventions on issues of life and the maintenance of relationships within the entire hierarchy of existence. The palaver model has been and is still the medium and process where individual and community life issues are discussed, researched, cultivated, nurtured and actuated in many African communities (Oborji, 2017).

<sup>18</sup> Kpelle is spoken throughout Liberia and in the southeastern part of the neighboring Republic of Guinea, where it is generally known as Guerze. In Liberia, there are almost 800,000 speakers who use Kpelle as their first language, about a third of the population. There are approximately 300,000 speakers of Kpelle in Guinea. National African Language Resource Center, 2003).

<sup>19</sup> The Toubou are an African ethnic minority who inhabit the Tibesti Mountain range and the southern Libyan towns of Sabha, Kufra, Murzuq and Qatrun. In Libya, they account for approximately 0.2% of the population with 12,000 to 15,000 members (Martin and Weber, 2012).

talk”. It means the act of talking things over or the use of dialogue for the settlement of conflict. It usually involves the entire community. All those who feel concerned are invited to participate in the search for an amicable settlement of the conflict. The Palaver system is also used in Mali as a conflict management technique. In Mali society, conflicts are resolved by those that are regarded as the “keepers of the word of authority”. These people render justice in the name of their ancestors. (Agbu and Bolarinwa 2006:12).

Among the Oromo people of East Africa, there was the “Gada”<sup>20</sup> system. Institutions were set up to prevent violent conflicts, but where there is an outbreak of violence, they were quickly checked before escalation. Conflicts were resolved through the establishment of truth, a just and honorable verdict given for the restoration of social harmony in the community. In Nigeria, the indigenous institutions for peace include: family, elders (within a lineage), clan, females born in a family or village, council of elders, village or town assembly, king-in-council, masquerade system, age grades, hunters association, oracles and deities etc. All these serve as institutions for the maintenance of peace and the resolution of conflict (Agbu and Bolarinwa 2006:15).

The following were some of the ways through which conflicts were prevented, managed and resolved in Africa before the coming of the colonialists and still used in some parts of Africa. For instance, socialization and marriage. Socialization, the indigenous African society see human existence as unified, interlinked, and integrated in a web. In most communities of the South of Africa, there existed the concept “Ubuntu” which means “collective personhood” or “member of the human family” This concept is contained in the states, “I am because we are”. From childhood, people were taught to live in harmony with others and avoid a situation of trying to win at all cost in the case of conflict and dispute settlement. Inculcation of Myths the use of proverbs, idioms, folktales and songs to describe the nature of the world and how to live in it was another way of preventing, managing and resolving conflicts in Africa (Ademowo,2015:8).

Use of Traditional Institutions in Conflict Monitoring family, council of elders, clan, and female were used in the task of conflict monitoring and prevention. Each family head is employed and mobilized to prevent conflict through peace education, conflict monitoring and mediation and reconciliation (Ademowo, 2015). Ritual Treaties and Blood Covenant Rituals treaties and blood covenant were used to remove fear, and engender trust, blind families and villages and to avoid

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<sup>20</sup> Gada traditional conflict resolution system among the Oromo people in Ethiopia(Sedeto and Ahmad, 2018)

war. Such treaties and covenants involve powerful deities, which makes it not easy to violate as violation would bring dire consequences (Nwolise 2005).

There were instituted celebrations of festivals during which the virtues of peace, harmonious living, honesty etc. were extolled in songs. Rituals and scarifies were performed to the village deities and ancestors for peace, protection, good works, fertility etc. Use of Sanctions were imposed on families and individuals who were seen to have contradicted the customs and traditions of the people in order to deter others from engaging in behaviors that would engender conflict. Sanctions were meted on such misbehavior as stealing, willful murder, incest, abuse of elders, willful damage to property, lying, bearing false witness, poisoning, rape etc. Such sanctions included those that were imposed by the deities such as accidents, sickness, death, famine, poverty, misery, barrenness and loss of children etc. to the ones imposed by the society in such as exile, ostracism, fines, compensation, restitution, rendering apology etc. (Ademowo,2015).

Use of Marriages is one of the means to the prevention, management and resolution of conflict before slave trader, colonialism and religion changed the societal life of the indigenous Africans. Marriages reduced inter-group wars as children who possessed mixed blood were used to prevent manage and resolve conflict. (Ademowo,2015). Oath Taking One of the approaches used in the pre-colonial days to prevent, manage and resolve conflict was oath taking. This was a practice to establish truth and guilt and discourage dishonest attitude and evil actions in society. Most times this was done at the shrine of a very powerful deity over something that could be an avenue for contacting such deity. People are always warned before taking oath on the consequence of doing so on falsehood in order to avoid shame, or even death (Ademowo, 2015:45 and Oguntomisin 2004:43).

### **2.1.10 Traditional Conflict Management Process in Ethiopia**

In Ethiopia although elders' roles is minimum, they have critical roles in conflict resolution. What makes their roles minimum is; the influence of imported religions such as Christianity and Islamism that hinder traditional leaders to make peace in Ethiopia. Shemgelina<sup>21</sup> is the main indigenous mechanism to make peace in different parts of our country, Ethiopia.

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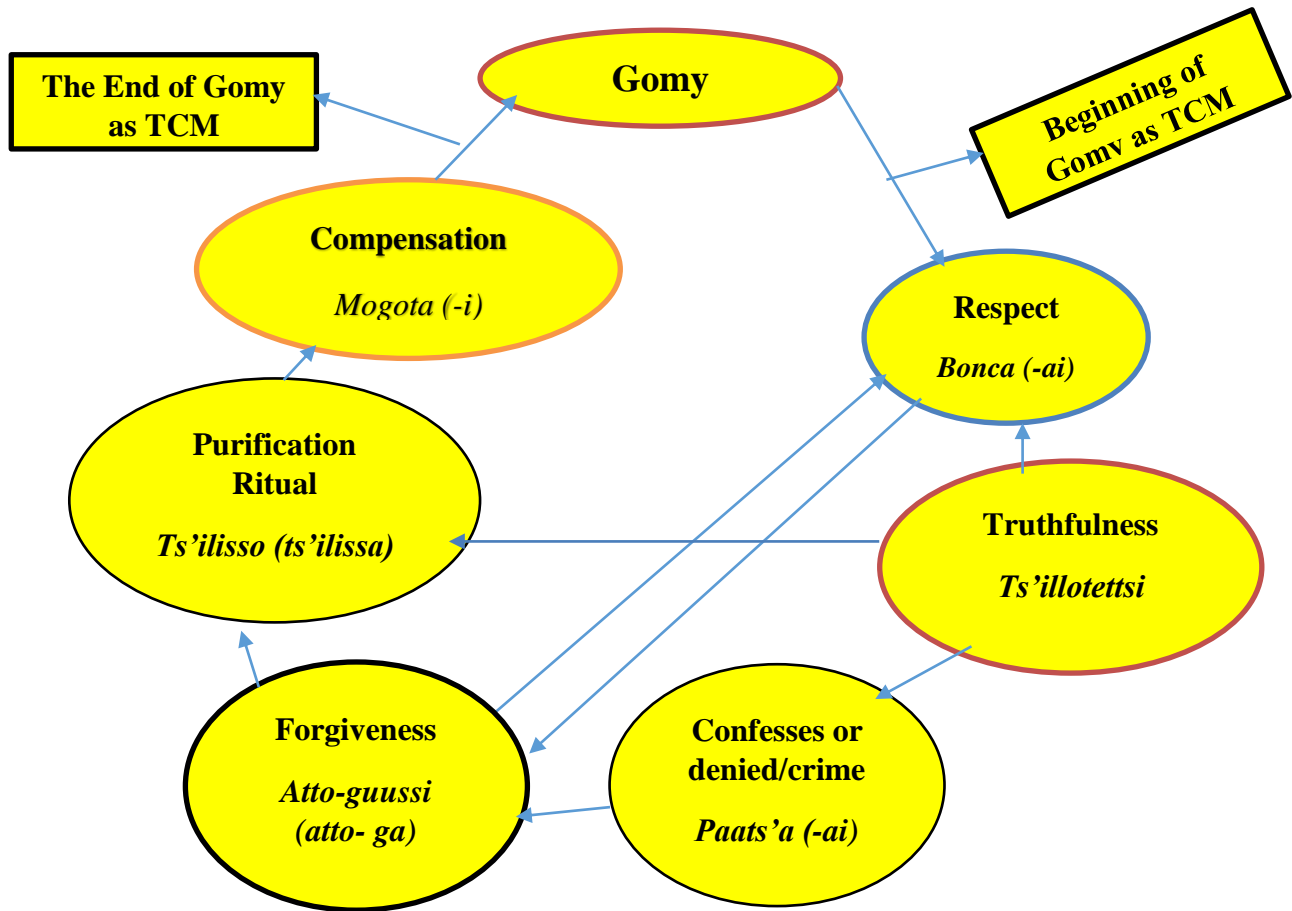
<sup>21</sup> Shemgelina is refers to a group of elders and gather to solve a conflict between the people in many part of Ethiopia (Assefa, 2014).

Shemgelina and other indigenous peacemaking mechanisms have two major features. First: their primary aim is conflict transformation and community peace (i.e. elders' (shemageles') role in this regard is beyond adjudication of disputes rather they have aimed at resolving disputes and transforming the peace of community). Second: they have strong linkage with belief system and morality. Because of its spirituality, faithfulness, wisdom and search for truth behavior, elders' primary function is to reconcile disputes when they have arisen between individuals or communities (Kariuki, 2015:6).

### **2.1.11 Concept of Gomy among the Gamo People**

Gomy is the sum total of political, economic and social issues among the Gamo people. It is composed of religion and culture, directing the way of life between the people, 'god' and the natural world. Dictating what is 'right', what is 'wrong' and what is 'good' and 'bad' actions. It dictates the consequence of those actions for the groups and individuals. According to the Gamo people, without Gomy their social fabrics will be harmed, declined and destroy. Then, the society and its socio-economic activity will be severely affected. Gomy play significant role in strengthening the mental and psychological makeup of the people to be a successful in their life and will help develop a sense of belongingness, social harmony, peace and security (GZCTO, 2012).

**Diagram 1: The Process of Traditional Conflict Management in Gomy.**



**Source Author (2021)**

- Respecting elders, according to Gamo culture respecting elders is the most important religious and cultural value. Elders are respected by the people because of their reach knowledge and experience of Gomy accumulated through decades. They considered as Guardian of the culture.
- Speaking the truth is a way of identifying the guilty party and the crime he or she committed in a situation where there is no evidence. But, if someone denying his guilt elders taking him to a square where ‘Demmera’ (Meskelcel) celebrated every year and ask him to go round, if he committed the sin or a crime, he may refuse to round, because he knows the consequence, if he is not commit the crime he may round the square without fearing of the reprisal. This is the way elders try to know the truth about the incidence if someone refuses to speak the truth.

- Forgiveness is the process by which people accepting apology from a person causing them harm. According to Gamo people forgiveness is the right way to purify one's and promotes social harmony. On the other hand, the person who commits a crime also demand mercy from elders accepts the blessing.
- Purification is a process of cleanup of oneself from Gomy by slaughtering sheep or oxen; they believe that through the blood of animals all problems will go away.
- Compensation is a form of reparation payment for the injured party to compensate losses of human life or bodily injuries and property. It helps to discourage violence in the future.

## **Part Two**

This part of the thesis will be discussed on the theory of conflict. The theory used as part of the analysis to understand and explained about Gomy as a traditional conflict management system.

### **2.2 Theory of Conflict**

In general, conflict theory seeks to scientifically explain the general contours of conflict in society how conflict starts and varies, and the effects it brings. The central concerns of conflict theory are the unequal distribution of scarce resources and power. These resources might be different for each theorist, but conflict theorists usually work with Weber's three systems of stratification: class, status, and power. Conflict theorists generally see power as the central feature of society, rather than thinking of society as held together by collective agreement concerning a cohesive set of cultural standards, as functionalists do. Where power is located and who uses it (and who doesn't) are thus fundamental to conflict theory (Coser, 2003:213).

#### **2.2.1 Biological Theories**

The biological theories have given rise to what conflict is innate in all social interactions, and among all animals, including human beings. It argues that humans are animals, albeit higher species of animals, and would fight naturally over things they cherish. On the other hand, theologians and religious people, who see an inner flaw in humankind by way of sin that brings forth bitterness, violence and conflict. It is believed that conflict is inherent in man, and this can be explained from man's inner properties and attributes, hormonal composition (Best, 2006:46).

As Niehoff (1999), cited in Baker, 1999:307), biologist influences on aggression and violence have been clearly established in studies in humans and other animals. Key biological variables

include genetic predispositions, hormones, physiological under arousal (autonomic-nervous-system functioning), brain function (and dysfunction), and neurotransmitters. These biological variables are not independent from one another and are highly interrelated, often in complex ways. Moreover, the interaction between social and biological factors appears to be of critical importance in understanding human violence. Human violence itself, however, is a heterogeneous phenomenon, and there is no single theory that can explain all forms of violence in all individuals. Most researchers of the biological underpinnings of violence consider that there may be different etiologies, or causes, for varying forms of violent behavior. In fact, there is support from animal studies for distinct biological pathways underlying violence in predatory attack and in defensive behaviors.

### **2.2.2 Psychological Theories**

Theorists of this school share the biological and hormonal origins of aggression and conflict in individuals with realists, theological and others, but add by providing the conditions under which this happens. It may thus, look tautological to include them as a separate category, except that we do it here for emphasis only. According to them, even though humans have the capacity to be aggressive, this capacity remains idle until stimulated by necessity or encouraged by success. The expression of aggression has a lot to do with learning. In essence, the physiological sources of aggressive behavior are function of several factors including human nature and the environment (Ademola, 2006:48). Physiologists share the biological and hormonal origins of aggression and conflict in individuals with realists, but add by providing the conditions under which this happens. The physiological sources of aggressive behavior are a function of several factors including human nature and environment. In essence, humans are naturally capable of being aggressive but do not display violent behavior as an instinct. When violence occurs, there is the possibility that it is being manipulated by a combination of factors within and outside the individual's control (Kebede, 2019:4).

### **2.2.3 Economic Theories**

There is the tendency among economist to provide an economic explanation for the existence and endurance of conflict. This is largely because people in conflict assumed to be fighting over, not about, something that is material. The question becomes: is the conflict a result of greed (intention to corner something) or grievance (anger arising over feelings of injustice) (Faleti

and Ademola, 2006:49). Conflict weakens the economy and leaves a legacy of atrocities. It also creates leaders and organizations that have invested in skills and equipment that are only useful for violence. Disturbingly, while the overwhelming majority of the population in a country affected by civil war suffers from it, the leaders of military organizations that are actually perpetrating the violence often do well out of it. The prospect of financial gain is seldom the primary motivation for rebellion, but for some it can become a satisfactory way of life. This is a further reason why the participants in a civil war should not be left to fight it out among themselves. Some evidence suggests that decade by decade, civil wars have been getting longer. While this may be due to circumstances in individual countries, it is more likely reflects global changes that have made civil wars easier to sustain by allowing rebel groups to raise finance and acquire armaments more easily (Collier et al, 2003:4).

#### **2.2.4 Psychoanalytic Theory**

A perceived threat produces a narrow definition of group boundaries and sharp distinctions between friends and enemies. Unthinkable actions can be induced by a dehumanized image of the enemy reinforced by nationalistic propaganda. From the psychoanalytic perspective, the perception of an enemy is formulated in a way to protect oneself from contamination by the possible boomeranging of psychic content (Jeong, 2000:58). Other people like, Mack, (1990), cited in (Jeong, 2000: 59), stated that the sense of self is formed in the first few months of life and is more firmly established in early childhood. A child develops a positive attitude in response to rewarding experiences with the outside world but a negative attitude after having disappointing experiences. Those feelings associated with pain and fear are attributed to a relationship to the outside world.

#### **2.2.5 Relational Theories of Conflict**

Relational theories attempt to provide expiations for violent conflicts between groups by exploring sociological, political, economic and historical relationships between such groups. Thus, the belief here is that cultural and value difference as well as groups interests all influence relationships between individual and groups in different ways. A number of conflicts grow out of a past history of conflict between groups that has led to the development of negative stereotype, racial intolerance and discrimination. Such a history of negative exchanges between groups may make it difficult for efforts to integrate different ethnic and religious groups within the society to

succeed because their past interactions make it difficult for them to trust one another (Best, 2006:55).

### **2.2.6 Frustration Aggression Theory**

An excessive level of frustration is accumulated when an organism is blocked in its pursuit of a goal. According to the frustration-aggression hypothesis, human beings, as goal-oriented organisms, naturally become aggravated when they are prevented from achieving what they desire. A natural build-up of blocked energy seeks release, and aggressive action is directed to the source of one's frustration. The expression of hostilities and violent behavior are attributed to the interference with a propensity to aggression. If aggressiveness cannot be expressed against the real source of frustration, displaced hostilities can be targeted to substitute objects. Human behavior is affected by a social environment, and frustrated feelings can be controlled through various adaptation mechanisms. People can be educated to behave differently. Cultural settings also influence patterns of behavior as demonstrated by the experiences of non-aggressive societies (Jeong, 2000:58).

Theories on aggression, whether being stimulated by the internal human psyche or externally, propose that, in order to control the conversion of frustration into aggression, destructive impulses need to be channeled into sports and other non-lethal forms of engagement. At the same time, there is a growing understanding that frustration does not automatically translate into violence. In fact, people respond differently to discontent in diverse emotional states of anger arousal and do not select the same methods for discharging (Jeong, 2008:47). The main explanation that the frustration-aggression theory provides is that aggression is not just undertaken as a natural reaction or instinct as realists and biological theories assume, but that it is the outcome of frustration and that in a situation where the legitimate desires of an individual is denied either directly or by the indirect consequence of the way the society is structured, the feeling of disappointment may lead such a person to express his anger through violence that will be directed at those he holds responsible or people who are directly or indirectly related to them (Faleti and Ademola, 2006:47).

### **2.2.7 Relative Deprivation Theory**

Relative deprivation is defined as the actors' perception of discrepancy between their value expectations and their value capabilities. Value expectations are the goods and conditions of life

to which people believe they are rightfully entitled. Value capabilities are the goods and conditions they think they are capable of getting and keeping. (These concepts are more precisely defined below.) The emphasis of the hypothesis is on the perception of deprivation; people may be subjectively deprived with reference to their expectations even though an objective observer might not judge them to be in want. Similarly, the existence of what the observer judges to be abject poverty or "absolute deprivation" is not necessarily thought to be unjust or irremediable by those who experience it (Gurr, 1971: 24).

The disproportionate allocation of benefits combined with poor economic performance generates further anger and emotional frustration. A reference to what other groups brings about a more intense level of dissatisfaction. Unequal opportunities can be blamed for socially inferior status and inadequate material wellbeing. Rapid social change, especially coupled with uneven distribution of wealth and power, tends to generate feelings of a growing gap between unmaterialized expectations and perceptions about existing economic, social and political conditions. In particular, the discrepancy in anticipated and actual need satisfaction increases during a short period of sharp reversal following economic and social development. Resentment results from a belief that the government suppresses opportunities to maintain legitimate gains. Violent uprisings are likely to take place when people's desires and wants grow further away from what they obtain (Jeong, 2000:60),

### **2.2.8 Realistic Group Theory**

Realist theory or realism highlights inherency and traces the root of conflict to a flaw in human nature which is seen to be selfish and engaging in the pursuit of personalized self-interest defined as power. The theory originates from classical political theory, and shares both theological and biological doctrines about an apparent weakness and individualism inherent in human nature. Thus, the starting point for the explanation of conflict is the individual level. One of the prominent realists, Morgenthau (1973) argued that the imperfection in the world, namely conflict, has its roots in forces that are inherent in human nature; that human nature is selfish, individualistic and naturally conflictive (Faleti and Ademola, 2006:45).

### **2.2.9 Basic Needs Theory**

The satisfaction of basic needs is required for human development as well as the survival of human beings in both physical and social terms. The real source of conflict is deeply rooted in

the lives and ontological being of those concerned. Basic needs theories reject the a priori assumption that violence originates in the very nature (i.e. evil, aggressive) of humans or unconscious psychological dynamics. Needs provide factual, objective and rational criteria for analyzing and evaluating an emergent social situation that may contain in its womb the potential for generating conflict. The lack of biological needs causes an imbalance in the individual's life supporting systems and causes death. Food and shelter are important for physical survival, and the satisfaction of the needs does not require large amounts of marketable goods and services. Biological and physical needs are intertwined with mental requirements in the satisfaction of other needs. Basic needs contain more than physiological dimensions and include such primary emotions as fear, anger, depression and happiness. Psychological needs are linked to socially produced wants, desires, or preferences. Thus, people can suffer from damage to self-esteem as much as from a lack of food. Fear, violence, unemployment and marginalization generate conditions of human misery (Jeong, 2000:60).

Human emotions are constructed within the framework of social life, and people's self-esteem is important in finding meaning in life. The source of individual identity can be found in association with the collectivity. The need for security is met with social recognition of identity and effective participation in the decision making processes. More specifically, social needs such as security, self-identity and self-esteem can be satisfied by intellectual achievement, emotional interaction with other people, physical contact, autonomy and participation in community life. Certain social and economic conditions are essential to the fulfillment of human needs. The struggle to satisfy basic needs is a key motivational factor behind human behavior and social interaction. The satisfaction of basic needs, which is crucial for development as human beings, is universally demanded. The needs of individuals are precedent to the requisites of the system. Basic needs are ontological while interests and values are temporal and historically determined. The sources of intractable social conflict originate in a set of unsatisfied existential and other deep-seated needs. Human needs are ontological and essential elements for our subsistence, even though differences in culture and education might lead to diverse interpretations and salience. It is generally accepted, however, that, even though material needs must be met, most intractable sources of conflict are ascribed to perceived threats to identity and security. The denial of these ontological conditions, as well as unmet physical needs, is attributed to the suppression of human fulfillment (Jeong, 2008:51-52).

Rosati et al. (1990), cited in (Faleti and Ademola, 2006:51), described that all human have basic human needs which they seek to fulfill, and that the denial and frustration of these needs by other groups or individuals could affect them immediately or later, thereby leading to conflict. He further elaborates his idea, 'basic human needs' in this sense comprise physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs. In essence, to provide access to one (e.g. food) denies or hinder access to another (e.g. freedom of worship) will amount to denial and could make people to resort to violence in an effort to protect these needs.

### **2.2.10 Identity Formation**

Primordialism<sup>22</sup> and social constructivism explain the process of group identity formation as well as forces driving the need for identity. In primordial theories, a group has turned into a natural community by the common bonds shared by the group members. Individuals belong to a group through primordial ties of blood, kinship, language and customs. As the ethnic division is relegated to predetermined restrictive characteristics, group membership is considered the given of human existence. The sense of self is interwoven with the identity of the group at primitive levels. Belonging to ethnic groups is tinged with raw and primitive affects that pertain to one's sense of self and its protection. According to Primordialism, common history, traditions, language, beliefs and values are objective cultural criteria that distinguish one group from another. Historical continuity is maintained by a shared culture transmitted over generations. Claims of an identity group to an autonomous Status are supported by their cultural and religious concerns. Such elements as myths, memories, values and symbols are used to close ethnic group boundaries. On the other hand, identity boundaries between in-groups and out-groups are established by a subjective group consciousness. A wider self-awareness of their common history and destiny is awakened by social change such as modernization that often leads to competition with other communities (Jeong, 2000: 61).

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<sup>22</sup> The term "primordialism" or "primordial attachment" will be understood in two senses: the hard and the soft. The hard version of the term holds that human beings are attached to one another (and their communities of origin) virtually by mutual ties of blood that somehow condition reciprocal feelings of trust and acceptance. It is the type of attachment that siblings or parents and their off-spring are said to experience, and implies an unquestioned loyalty or devotion purely on the basis of the intimacy of the tie. In this sense primordial attachment is natural automatic and supposedly prior to explicitly social interaction. On the other hand, the soft meaning of the term stresses the social, non-biological bases of attachment and draws attention to the importance of interpretation and symbolic meaning in the individual's social organization of his or her life (Allahar, 2018).

In mobilizing one group against another, identity plays an important role in maintaining boundary functions. Identity is related to the norms, beliefs, practices, and traditions that influence one group's interaction with the surrounding environment. In the constructionist perspective, group boundaries are shaped by a social context; the process of articulating identity with perceptual filters, such as strong feelings of a common fate, takes precedence over an objective, absolute category. A group identity serves as a cultural resource and, being reinforced by emotional attachment, remains a site for mobilizing forces. The dominant themes of a culture can be transmitted into the hearts and minds of people, supplying a powerful political weapon. Various families, primary education, and other socialization patterns contribute to the regeneration of old symbols and myths (Jeong, 2008 55-56).

## **2.3 Approach to Conflict Management**

Conflict is an intrinsic and inevitable part of human existence. It is the pursuit of incompatible interest and goals of different groups (Best, 2006:20). Conflict management is planning measures to avoid conflict when possible, and taking rapid and effective measures when it is made (Madalina, 2016:209). Conflict can be managed and resolved through mutual agreement. In peaceful settlement, a common emphasis has been placed on refraining from the threat or use of force. Once conflict broke out into violence there are different approaches to manage the conflict which manifested in the form of violence. This section of the paper discusses mediation and arbitration as a means to manage conflicts (Jeong, 2000:176).

### **2.3.1 Mediation**

Mediation is a conflict resolution process in which a mutually acceptable third party, who has no authority to make binding decisions for the disputants, intervenes in a conflict or dispute to assist involved parties to improve their relationships, enhance communications, and use effective problem-solving and negotiation procedures to reach voluntary and mutually acceptable understandings or agreements on contested issues. The procedure is an extension of the negotiations. Mediation is commonly initiated when the disputing parties on their own are not able to start productive talks or have begun discussions and reached an impasse. Specifically, mediation and mediators help disputing parties to (a) open or improve communications, between or among them, (b) establish or build more respectful and productive working relationships, (c) better identify, understand, and consider each other's needs, interests, and concerns, (d) propose

and implement more effective problem-solving or negotiation procedures, and (e) recognize or build mutually acceptable agreements. Mediators are generally individuals or groups who are independent, or in some cases somewhat autonomous, of the disputing parties. They generally do not have specific substantive needs; they want met by an agreement between or among disputants. They also commonly do not have predetermined, biased, or fixed opinions or views regarding how a dispute should be resolved, and are able to look at all parties' issues, needs, interests, problems, and relationships in a more objective, impartial, or “multiparty” manner than can the participants themselves. In addition, except on rare occasions and in some specific types of mediation that will be described later on, mediators do not have the power, authority, or permission to make binding decisions for those seeking to resolve their differences (Moore, 2014:24).

Mediation introduces outside participants when those immediately involved are unable to negotiate a successful outcome between themselves. The mediator may do nothing more than provide the space for negotiations between the parties to continue. Mediation as “a process whereby a third party assists two or more parties, with their consent, to prevent, manage or resolve a conflict by helping them to develop mutually acceptable agreements”(UNEP, 2015:11).

According to Miller, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (1999:24), mediation is assistance by a third party where the parties to a conflict admitted that they have a problem which the mediator manages a negotiation process, but does not impose a solution on the parties. It is a voluntary process. He further stated that the objective of mediation is help parties to a conflict within an environment of control communication, to reach solutions to their problem.

### **2.3.2 Arbitration**

This is another type of third party intervention that is step higher than mediation in the conflict management spectrum. The parties to a conflict, who select to use arbitration, even though they choose to non-violent method of settling their disputes, lose more control over their situation than those who select mediation and other lower levels of intervention. By definition, arbitration is the use and assistance of neutral third party in conflict, who hears the evidence from both parties, and then after render a decision, usually called an award, which is expected to be binding on the parties (Best, 2006:108). On the other hand (Jeong, 2000:120), described that arbitration involves an adjudication procedure by which disputants agree to submit a controversy to judges

of their own choosing who render a legally binding decision in the form of a majority vote. Because the third party makes a decision based on legal norms, principles and facts, the outcome of the settlement depends on legal judgment rather than political negotiation. Disputants beforehand agree to the procedure and the scope of authority of arbitration courts. Whereas submission of the dispute is voluntary in most cases, an arbitration tribunal's decision has a binding effect. Though arbitration is voluntary, it is closely related to litigation. Both are forms of adjudication (which the dictionary defines as a "judicial decision") since, in both procedures, a third party makes the final decision. An arbitrator is given the power by agreement of the disputants; our court system vests a judge or jury with the power to make the final decision. Arbitration is less formal than court proceedings, but the decision of the arbitrator is final and binding (Kheel, 1999: 83).

### **2.3.3 Adjudication**

Adjudication is another non- violent method of conflict and it refers to the resolution of conflict by a court. In other words, it is the use of courts to decide conflicts. Adjudication comes in to play when one party goes to a court to demand something from another. In short, adjudication is the conflict resolution mechanism process using courts based on established laws, procedures and structures. In addition, use of adjudication process requires familiarity or knowledge of the established procedures, formality and rules of the system. The other peaceful way of resolving conflict is burying the dispute in the symbolic process. All in all, the concept of conflict and conflict theory are pertinent to the analytical part of this thesis. Hence, they are used in this thesis accordingly (Best, 2006:109).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Introduction**

The aim of this chapter is to reflect on the methodological issues of the study. The chapter deals with the research design, methodology, approach, instruments of data collection, sampling method, sampling technique, method of data analysis and trust worthiness of the study was employed.

### **3. Research Design and Methodology**

A research design is a procedural plan that is adopted by the researcher to answer questions validly, objectively, accurately and economically (Kumar, 2011:94). ‘Methodology refers to the way the researcher deploys his whole research design’, it should be thoughtful and robust enough to withstand critique it should be logical, systematic and consistent with the research questions, it should guarantee valid and reliable inferences based on high-quality data (Symeou, 2008:2). Research design are types of inquires within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design (Creswell, 2014:12).

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

Research approach is the procedure for research that encompasses the steps from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. The overall decision involves which approach should be used to study a topic. There are two basic approaches to research, viz., quantitative approach and the qualitative approach. The former involves the generation of data in quantitative form which can be subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis in a formal and rigid fashion. Qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behavior. Research in such a situation is a function of researcher’s insights and impressions. Such an approach to research generates results either in non-quantitative form or in the form which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis (Kothari, 2004:5). The general methodological approach adopted by the study is a qualitative approach.

### **3.2 Research Design**

Research design are types of inquires within qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research design (Creswell, 2014:12). On the other hand, Kerlinger (1986, cited in (Kumar, 2011:94), a research design is a plan, structure and strategy of investigation so conceived as to obtain answers to research questions or problems. Research designs and plans and the procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis. It is the plan or proposal to conduct research, involves the intersection of philosophy, strategies of inquiry and specific methods (Creswell, 2009:3-5).

According to Yin, (2011:78) exploratory research is a research in to an area that has not been studied and in which a researcher have to develop initial ideas and a more focused research questions. Exploratory research is also aimed at exploring all sources of information based on range of evidences and by discovering new ideas and using qualitative data. Therefore, this particular study focuses on exploring experiences, ideas and perspectives of the Gomy as a traditional conflict management system among the Gamo people in southern Ethiopia.

The general methodological approach adopted by the study is a qualitative approach. Based up on the objective of the research, exploratory research design was used. Because, the data was conducted once to explore deeply the phenomenon, situation, attitude, or issues in the traditional conflict management system among the Gamo people in southern Ethiopia.

### **3.3 Brief Description of the Study Area**

The Gamo people inhabit a fairly extensive territory of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and People's Region, about 500 km south west of Addis Ababa, bounded by Lakes Abaya<sup>23</sup> and Chamo<sup>24</sup> in the East, and by the lands of the Zayse in the South, the Wolaitta in the North, the

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<sup>23</sup> Lake Abaya located about 510 km south of Addis Ababa between 5o 3'19" and 6o 45'11" North latitude and 37o 18'55" and 38o 7'55" East longitude .This Lake is located within the Main Ethiopian Rift (MER), which extends from the southern Afar to the Konso highland in the southern Ethiopia (Belete, 2009).

<sup>24</sup> Lake Chamo is one of the rift valley lakes wholly situated in Ethiopia. Its watershed covers an area of about 2205 sq. km. The lake watershed is situated at an altitude ranging from 1,105 m ASL (lake level) to 3,546 m ASL with in a distance of 39.94 km. In lake Chamo watershed, the climate type varies from semi-arid to afro-alpine. Lake Chamo is among diversified, productive and economically important lakes of Ethiopian rift valley. The lake wetland ecosystem provides services for feeding, nesting, basking, and prey-catching (Hailemichael, 2011).

Gofa and the Male in the west. They inhabit various woredas<sup>25</sup> of the Gofa Zone, namely, Arbaminch-Zuria, Chench, Bonke, Kucha, Kemba, Zala, Boredda, MirabAbaya, Dita and Dara Malo (Woldemariam, 2013:373). According to Gamo zone<sup>26</sup> administration report, the total number of the population is 1, 659,887 (2020). The urban population is 369,138 and the rural population 1,290, 750 respectively (Gamo zone Adm. 2020:1). As (Wondimu, 2010, cited in Woldemariam, 2013:374), the name Gamo is widely used both as a name of the people and of the language cluster, a collective name to which all the Gamo dialects belong. In fact, the people call themselves Gamo and they refer to their language as Gamo ts tso, literally means “the Gamo language or in a more broad sense, ways of doing things of the Gamo people.

From the end of 19th century up to 1974 Gamo people had been administered in the then administrative districts called awrajawoch (a groups of awraja) (GZCTD, 2012:17). From 1974 to 1987 they were reorganized by central government and administered as Gamo Gofa Kifle Hager. But after 1987-2000 the administrative structure included the Omotic speaking people of Dawro, Gamo, Gofa, Gidicho, Wolayta and Zeysie and named as Semien Omo Zone. Omotic<sup>27</sup> language is one branch of Afro-Asiatic language<sup>28</sup> and it is spoken around Omo river valley. From 2000 up to now the Gamo people are under Gamo Gofa Zone with other four Omotic speaking ethnic groups namely: Gofa, Gidicho, Oyda and Zeysie (GZCTD, 2012:18).

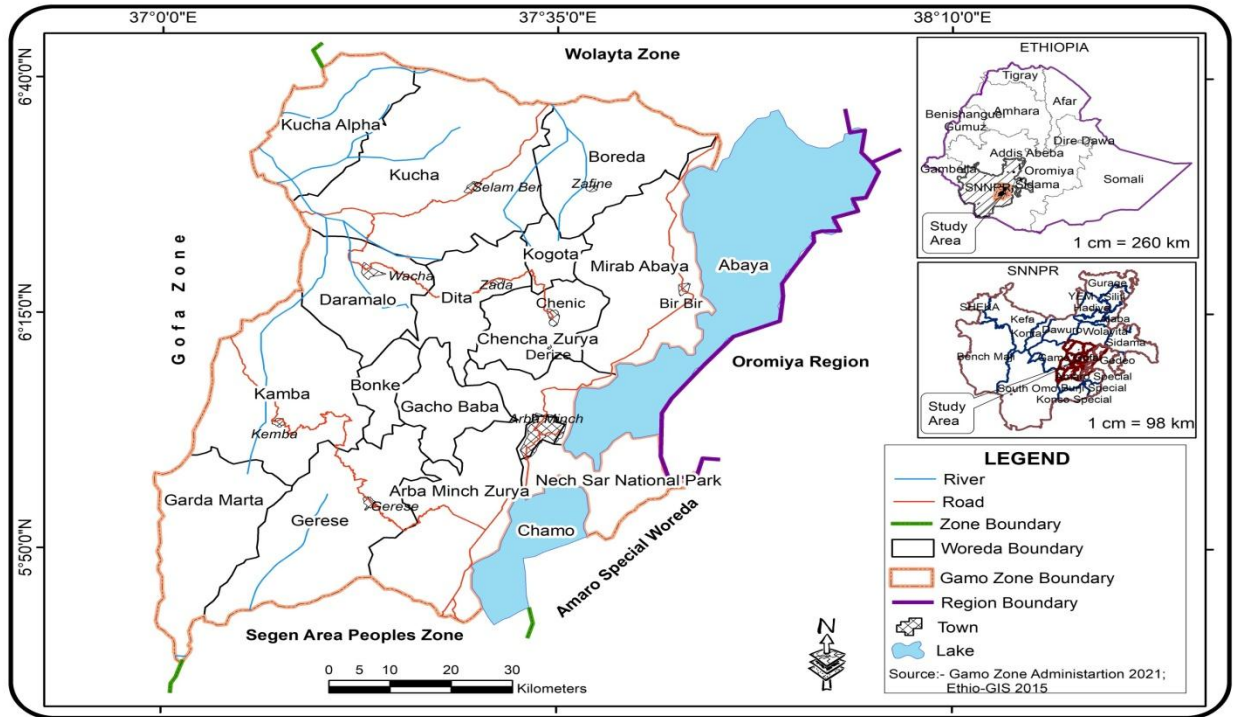
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<sup>25</sup> Woredas or district is the middle level administrative unit in Ethiopia. It is applied in all regions and administrative cities (Gebre-Egzhaber and Gebreyes, 2014). As was indicated earlier, below the regional administration, woreda and kebele woreda is seen as the important local government unit while a kebele is simply an implementing agent of the woreda. A woreda is established on a geographical area in which 100,000 more people reside (Ayele, 2008).

<sup>26</sup> Zone administration (ZA) is an executive body which is organized below the regional administration at zonal level. It holds a number of woredas in it. Zone administration has the responsibility to coordinate, support and follow up the effective functioning of the woredas, other departments and institutions in the zone (Ayele, 2008).

<sup>27</sup> Omotic ‘is one of the six language families within the Afroasiatic phylum. The languages are the following (alternative names in brackets): Anfillo, Aari, Basketo, Bench or Benchnon (Gimira), Boro (Shinasha), Ch’aara, Dime, Dizi (Maji), Gamo, Ganza, Gofa, Hamar, Haro (Gidicho), Hozo-Sezo, Kafa (Kefa), Koorete (Kore, Koyra, Amaro), Kullo (Dawro), Ma’le-Ganta, Maale, Malo, Mocha (Shekacho), Nayi (Nao), Oyda, Sheko, Wolaitta (Welamo), Yemsa (Janjero, Yem), Zayse and Zargulla. Most of these languages are spoken in a contiguous area in the Southern Ethiopian Nations, Nationalities and Peoples’ Regional State (SNNPRS). Outside of this state there are a few enclave languages, namely Yemsa in Oromiya, Shinasha in Amhara Regional state, Hozo-Sezo and Northern Mao in the Benishangul-Gumuz Regional State (Amha, 2018).

<sup>28</sup> Afro-Asiatic language are spoken by some 300 million people in Northern, Central, and Eastern Afroasiatic languages are spoken by some 300 million people in Northern, Central, and Eastern Africa and the Middle East. rica and the Middle East (Franjzyngier and Shay, 2012).



**Map 1: Gamo Zone Administration SNNRS (2021) Ethio-GIS**

### 3.4 Method of Data Collection

In research, there are different methods used to gather information, all of which fall into two categories, i.e. primary and secondary data. As the name suggests, primary data is one which is collected for the first time by the researcher while secondary data is the data already collected or produced by others (Kumar, 2011:140-141).

#### 3.4.1 Primary Data

The primary data collection is one way of getting firsthand information about a situation, person and problem or phenomenon (Kumar, 2011:139). The primary data are those which are collected afresh and for the first time, and thus happen to be original in character (Kothari, 2004:5). The researcher used primary data to collect information from the people who participated in conflict management process and from people who have solved their problem through these methods. Key informant interview, focus group discussion and Observation, was used to collect information about conflict management system among the Gamo people. All these methods used in the data gathering process. They allow the researcher to see/listen the “reality” on the ground. The researcher was applied unstructured interview techniques because, it was allow for deep

understanding of the overall activities of the process. Respondent were selected purposively from the community, that believed to have a “good understanding” of conflict management. Another method the researcher was used field observation in the study area.

#### **3.4.1.1 Key Informant Interview**

Key informant interviews were hold by selecting individuals to gather information about methods of conflict management system in the study area. As part of the primary data, using key informants help full to balance the limitations of other method of information gathering like, focus group discussion and field observation. In–depth interview was used to collect information from experts in the worada administration, culture and tourism office. Unstructured-interview question was used. Because, it helps to collect vital data about the conflict management system and help the respondent to tell their side of the story. Furthermore, the role and responsibility of informant will take in to consideration.

**Table 1: Background information of Key Informant Interview**

No	Name of participant and profession	Age	Sex	Academic background	position	Living in the area
KII 001	Gamo elder(local)	72	M	Primary (grade 4)	Elder	50
KII 002	Gamo elder(local)	76	M	Illiterate	Elder	40
KII 003	Teacher	60	M	Degree	Elder	60
KII 004	Gamo elder(local) Business Man	58	M	Primary (grade 8)	Elder	22
KII 005	Gamo elder(local)	45*	M	High school completed	Elder	25
KII 006	Senior expert	42	M	Degree	Expert (17 years' experience)	42
KII 007	Expert	27	M	Degree sociology	Expert 7year experience	5

\* According to Gamo tradition seniority of age even difference in hours between (births) has its value to be considered as elder. In addition to these, acceptance with good reputation in the community at any age above the age of eighteen can be selected as elder in the community.

### 3.4.1.2 Focus Group Discussion

A focus group discussion was organized to gather qualitative information about the overall process of conflict management in the study area. It allow participant to express their thought, perception, experience and views about conflict management among the Gamo people. Participant was selected based on purposive sampling to get relatively “reliable information” from the respondent, with “better” understanding of the activities from long time experience about conflict management system in the study area. Totally, eight people were participated for FDG to make the activity manageable and to use time efficiently.

**Table 2: Background information of Focus Group Discussion**

No	Name of participant and profession	Age	Sex	Academic background	position	Living in the area
FGD 001	Elder	81	M	No formal education	Elder	81
FGD 002	Elder	74	M	No formal education	Elder	74
FGD 003	Elder	64	M	Grade 8	Elder	64
FGD 004	Elder	50	M	Grade 8	Elder	50
FGD 005	Elder	46*	M	Grade 12	Elder	20
FGD 006	Elder	39*	M	Grade 10	Elder	39
FGD 007	Elder	31*	M	Degree	Observer	10
FGD 008	Elder	29*	M	Degree	Observer	10

\* According to Gamo tradition seniority of age even difference in hours between birth) has its value to be considered as elder. In addition to these, acceptance with good reputation in the community at any age above the age of eighteen can be selected as elder in the community.

### 3.4.1.3 Direct Observation

The researcher was carrying out a direct/field observation to get some first-hand insights on activities related to conflict management in the study area. It helps to gather information on how the community handle the issue, resolve conflict and come up with the solution, as individual and community and People's perception toward the practice. Hence, the researcher attempted his own systematic and critical observation as passive observer in order to avoid manipulation of the conflict management process during the field study in the last two years. Therefore, the information gathered from field observation was present and analyse along with the rest of the data.

### **3.4.2 Secondary Data**

Secondary data collection is the outcomes of the people works that are preserved in the form of publications like, journals article, books, and reports. ‘Secondary data help us to get information about the previous activities, and provide information about other experience’. Moreover, secondary data are those which have already been collected by someone else and which have already been passed through the statistical process (Kothari, 2004:5). Here, the researcher was use government report, manuals, booklets, books, journals articles etc.

### **3.5 Sampling Method and Techniques**

‘Sampling is the process of selecting a few (a sample) from a bigger group (the sampling population) to become the basis for estimating’ or predicting the prevalence of an unknown piece of information, situation or outcome regarding the bigger group (Kumar, 2011:193). Ethiopia is consisting of ten regional states and two self-administration cities, i.e. Addis Ababa and Dire Dawa city. Gamo zone, was selected purposely to study, because the area is less researched with its own unique features in recent time and Gomy is still practiced in the “original sense”. The population of the study was select purposively from the elderly people who believe to have better “knowledge” or “understanding” of conflict management system in the study area, especially for focus group discussion (FGD). Key Interview Informant (KII) was selected for in-depth interviews from experts and government officials from culture and tourism office in Arba Minch city.

### **3.6 Method of Data Analysis**

In order to finalize the research work, data analysis has a significant role. Based on the research approach and objectives of the research, thematic content analysis technique was implemented. Based on the research questions, transcribed data was reduced in to themes and analyzed accordingly. The data analysis begins in categorizing and putting data into theme; the data with regards to conflict management in the study area. Accordingly, thematic analysis was used, if the research is inductive, the themes emerge from the data and are not imposed upon it by the researcher. Data arrangement and writing assignments was made together with data collection process concurrently to reduce data omission and missing of important information. ‘Purposive sampling is successful when data ‘review and analysis’ are done in conjunction with data

collection. Each data source, key informant interview, focus group discussion and observation is treated as one piece of the puzzle' with each piece contributing to the researcher to understand the whole phenomenon and promote a greater understanding of the case. Furthermore, the data gathered from different documents was analyzed in the form of narration. The data gathered through interview is analyzed on how the participants experience on the phenomena under study. Finally, researcher analytically writes the experience he gained during personal observation.

### **3.7 Trustworthiness of the Research**

'Triangulation of data collection techniques, review of data collection instruments, getting approval of the data collection tools' by adviser, researcher's commitment to empirical research which helps the research only depend on the actual life of the research participant, and following scientific, as well as the ethical standard of the research, helped to keep the research valid. Focus group discussion, key informant interview, and in-depth interview was used to triangulate and get holistic information from different sources like officials, expert and the hosting community. In addition, the data collection tool was review by peers and approve by the immediate advisor confirming the fact that the tool address to answer the objective of the research. The other thing the researcher concern to keep the research trustworthy by using empirical research. Every information and literature mention was properly cite and acknowledge. Scientific procedures stating from getting support letter from the Institute for Peace and Security Studies (IPSS) preparing informed consent were contributing factors to get empirical data from the intended research subjects.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretations

This chapter is dedicated to presenting the research findings and discusses about Gomy traditional conflict management system among the Gamo people in Gamo zone SNNPR. It deals with the discussion of findings obtained from primary, secondary sources and observation. In the process of data presentation and analysis, the results obtained through each data collection instrument presented in a mixed way manner. The results of the interview and focus group discussion are presented together with document analysis as it is appropriate.

Moreover, under this chapter, the basic research questions were answered, and the objectives of the study are addressed. The results of the analysis are presented under the topics and sub-topics created in line with the objectives and basic research questions of the study.

#### 4.1.1 The Short History of Gamo People

The Gamo highlands are located some 500 kilometers southwest of Addis Ababa (Freeman 2004:22). Bureau (2012) cited in Zewdie, (2016:17), states that total people of some forty lands Dereta (a group of different neighborhoods) live on the massif of around 2500 square kilometers. From the lake of Chamo and Abaya 1250 meters above sea level to the top Gughe Mountain which 4200 meters above sea level and the vegetation varies extreme. He further describes that Gamo geographical space can be divided into two spaces. The Highlanders inhabit Geze (highland) and favorable for settlement. The lowlanders inhabit Bazo (lowland) this is where the exiles would escape to and it was the favorite grounds of hunters who went there to prove their bravery by killing ferocious animals.

As Donham (1985:32) cited in Freeman, (2004:30-31), towards the end of the nineteenth century, while the communities of the Gamo highlands were fighting each other, the northern Abyssinian Empire came out of a period of decline, and began to nurture expansionist ideas. Under Emperor Menelik II the northern empire started a series of campaigns to expand its influence southwards. Starting with the defeat of Gurage<sup>29</sup> in 1875, Menelik's troops moved

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<sup>29</sup> The Gurage are an ethnic group living in the province of Gurage to the southwest of Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. The region is bordered on the north by the river Awash, on the east by the Lake Zway, and on the southwest by the river Omo. The origin of the population is still a matter of speculation.

southwards, conquering the local peoples and incorporating them into what was to become the nation state of Ethiopia. Some groups submitted peacefully and quickly agreed to pay tribute, while others resisted and were subsequently conquered and pillaged. Gamo Highlands submitted quickly to Menelik's advances in 1897.

According to Freeman, (2004:31), and Tibabu, (1995:124), during the imperial era starting from 1897, Menelik's administration of the south-west relied on a network of garrison towns, manned by northern soldiers and in the Gamo Highlands the small town of Chenchä was built on land taken from the communities of Dorze, Doko and Chenchä to serve as the administrative center in that area, while smaller towns, such as Ezzo, Gulta, Gerese, Baza and Kamba, were founded as local administrative outposts elsewhere in the highlands. The northern governors had to rely on indirect rule through local leaders, whom they appointed to the position of balabbat<sup>30</sup>. In the southern Ethiopian communities that had submitted peacefully to Menelik<sup>31</sup>, the kings were made balabbat. Freeman (2004:35), further describe the historical development in the Gamo area by citing Bureau (1978:279), that the communities of the Gamo Highlands had submitted peacefully, and thus the Dere Kawos were appointed as 'balabbats', intermediaries between their people and the state, whose tasks included collecting tribute and settling disputes. The appointment of kawos as balabbats had two major consequences. On the one hand, it confirmed the traditional legitimacy of the kawo, and on the other, it transformed the role of the kawo<sup>32</sup> so that he took on certain responsibilities and privileges associated with the national government.

The role of the Gamo kawo was radically altered from the senior scarier (*Ekka*) to a political leader, and the role of the average Gamo man was transformed from landowner to tenant farmer. This period came to an end in 1936 when the Italians occupied the country. The Italians abolished the 'gebbar' system and gave much more freedom to the people of southern Ethiopia (Donham 1985:37 and Bureau 1981:35). The objective of abolishing 'gebber' was to undermine the economic and social base of the ruling aristocracy, and undermines its political power and social status (Tibabu, 1995:83).

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<sup>30</sup> Balabats local degnatries (Dunning, 1971).

<sup>31</sup> Menelik, King of Shawa (1865-1889) and Emperor of Ethiopia (1889-1913), was bom from his father Haylä Mäläkot and his mother Ejjigayyähü, in Shawa, on August 9, 1844 at Inqulal Koso, near Angolalla, the second alternative capital of the Kingdom of Shawa (Hassen,2016).

<sup>32</sup> Kawo "the traditional rule among Gamo Gofa people".

In 1941 the Italian occupation came to an end, and Emperor Haile Selassie returned to the throne. For the next thirty years or so he ruled Ethiopia with a firm hand, becoming increasingly autocratic as the years went by. With a strong, centralized government, the provincial governors lost considerable power, and, with their immediate superiors relatively uninfluential, the Balabbats gained more control during this time (Donham, 1985:39 and Baharu, 2002:87).

*One of the KII participant January, 2021 Arbamench City explained as his grandfather told him, during the Italian occupation the power of Amhara nobilities were reduced following the Italians decision to reduce “gebber” collection from the people. But, on the other hand Gomy was allowed to practice, provincial governors never stop or tried to stop the practice as long as ‘balabats’ were paying tribute and ‘gebere’<sup>33</sup>, annually. The nobilities were not that much hostile to our culture. The problem was during the military government, they banned every religious activity. Kebeke’s been in charge of ruling the people and provide justice to the people. Derg<sup>34</sup> consider the elders as treat to their oppressive system.*

This statement described that unlike many politicians claim in the main Ethiopian political narrative, the imperial system was not against for the practice of traditional conflict management in the study area as long as not posing a threat to the political legitimacy and imperial establishment.

On the other hand, the Imperial period was thus marked by a much turbulent change in the lives of the people of the Gamo Highlands. The new political reality meant that there was a massive decrease in their freedom and autonomy and a degree of exploitation that had been unknown in their recent past. And with the opening of the area to new peoples and its connection with the broader Ethiopian state, there were a number of external influences and new religions that were important during this time. The campaigners forced the people of the highlands to stop their ‘backward traditions’ (Donham, 1985:39 and Tibebu, 1995: 95).

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<sup>33</sup> In the Gebere system, the production process, the appropriation process, and the redistribution process formed a systemic whole with the giving and taking of tribute knitting together the entire system (Tibebu, 1995).

<sup>34</sup> Derg was formed by a group of the military that came to be called the Provisional Military Administrative Council/PMAC (or the Derg) (Olinka, 2012).

The EPRDF<sup>35</sup> has also reversed the Derg's policies about traditional practices. In reaction to the Derg's attempts to create a nation of modern 'Ethiopians', the new government is trying to organize the state into a federation of mini-states based on ethnicity. The internal map of Ethiopia has been redrawn along ethnic lines, and a federal state structure that theoretically guarantees the unrestricted right of nations and nationalities to self-determination up to secession has been adopted. Local languages are now being used in schools instead of Amharic, and the process of writing down these previously oral languages is well under way. In this context traditional practices are actively encouraged as an expression of ethnic and cultural identity, and thus those who have not converted to Protestantism are going through something of a cultural revival (Freeman, 2004).

“Realistic group theory’ suggests that hostility between two groups results from real or perceived conflicting goals which generate intergroup competition. When groups are engaged in reciprocally competitive and frustrating activities of a zero-sum nature, each group will develop negative stereotypes, about and enmity toward, the other group the out-group”.

*As one of the FGD participant January, 2021 Chenchu Weredu, explained that the coming of democracy to our area is just promotes ‘hooliganism’ of some sections of our society. People did not understand what democracy means for our culture. Because, they understand that democracy has no limit which is wrong. First, they have to respect their culture and values in the community. Now a day a lot of people develop new habits like dishonest, lie, disrespecting Gomy, adultery and even considering their community as backward.*

This statement indicated that the introduction of “democratic government” in Ethiopia in the post 1991 era “relatively” threaten the traditional norm and values of the Gamo people. Because, other actors are coming to the area and introduce new practice against the culture of the community by NGO, protestant missionaries. Encourage people to adopt the protestant religion in order to get a job and various assistance from these institutions. Preaching people to stop in

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<sup>35</sup> The EPRDF is a coalition formed under the auspice of the TPLF at the end of the 1980s. It took its definitive form at the beginning of the 1990s and comprises four political parties: the TPLF, the Amhara National Democratic Movement, the Oromo People's Democratic Organization and the Southern Ethiopian People's Democratic Front (Bach, 2014).

believing in ‘Gomy’ and ‘Wota woga<sup>36</sup>.’ These results in weakening of the Gamo people social and cultural value, needed for adapting to the new reality that shaking the old cultural and religious establishment (Menewagaw, 2009:85).

#### **4.1.2 The Socio – Cultural Organization of the People**

The social organization and institutions of the Gamo of southern Ethiopia is remarkable for its uniqueness. Throughout the highlands people live in scattered settlement and are organized in different communities or Dere. Dere refers to a political, geographical administrative unit. Each Dere has its own sacrifice (Ekka), its own initiates (Huduga and Haga), and its own assemblies (Dulata) and assembly places (Dubusha). The composition of each Dere is called as Dereta (Menwagawe, 2009:46).

The people of the Gamo Highlands live in communities called Dere. These communities are small, autonomous political units and there is no overall Gamo polity that unites all the people of the highlands. As a result of the patterns of conquest and rebellion in the nineteenth century, most Deres have a fractal-like internal structure so that large Derg are made up of several smaller Deres, which are in turn made up of yet smaller Deres. Now that warfare has ceased, these federations are reasonably stable. And because even the smallest unit of Dere governs its own matters to a very large extent, large federations can today remain nominally intact while the constituent Deres look after most of their own affairs. The social process, every Dere should have a senior scarfier who sacrifices for the well-being of the Dere and symbolizes the unity of the community (Freeman, 2004:47and Menwagawe, 2009:65).

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<sup>36</sup> ‘Wota woga’ is the traditional believe among the Gamo people (Menewagaw, 2017).

**Table 3: Gamo Dere (Gamo Zone) SNNPRS**

No	Name of Gamo Dere								
1.	Qongata	11.	Doqama	21	Bonkye	31	Harynga	41	Martha
2.	Koda	12	Anduro	22	Zame	32	Mallo	42	Kucha
3.	Zada	13	Deta	23	Kamale	33	Shella		
4.	Doko	14	Dayte	24	Geresae	34	Anko		
5.	Borada	15	Zegtye	25	Zargula	35	Choye		
6.	Dorze	16	Ganta	26	Manna	36	Ottolo		
7.	Ochollo	17	Gathe	27	Aylee	37	Kamba		
8.	Shara	18	Garbansa	28	Dara	38	Hanika		
9.	Shama	19	Algudye	29	Guge	39	Balleta		
10.	Webera	20	Kolle	30	Dengamo	40	Gardda		

**Source:** Gamo zone Culture and Tourism Directorate 2012

Dere is the self-administrative territories or autonomous political units governed by their elected officials the Halaka and assemblies (Dulata) (GZCTO, 2012).

“Gomy has been survived through all external odds as small Dere manage to retain many of the practices which are vital to this system and other cultural practices among the Gamo people”.

*Even those elders were respected before, now a day some of them are corrupt and they are political instrumented to rule the people rather than keeping their respected positions as a community leader. Those old day elders are preserving many of the norms, values and practice of Gomy. Unlike, some opportunistic elders shifting alliance with the existing government and politicians to protect personal interests (KII, January 2021, Arbamenche City).*

Therefore, this statement implies that the ‘legitimacy’ and ‘trust’ of the people are eroded from time to time because of abusing of power and mismanagement of their role as elders in managing conflicts’. On the other hand, it implies that the growing of government intervention and politicization of the traditional conflict management institutions like, Gomy undermine their power and role in the community emanated from the perception of government as a threat to the political establishment.

*One of the unique nature being an elder among the Gamo people is that there is no age limit, if someone is above the age of eighteen, and as long as he is respected by the local community with good reputation, he can be an elder. Seniority in terms of age determines the person, social status and the role played in conflict management and other social activity and responsibility (FGD participant January, 2021 Chench Woreda).*

This practice has amplified that in addition to hereditary right to be an elder like (Huduga) hard working and good reputations are also vital criteria to sustain the system. “Gomy, unlike other traditional conflict management system in some part of Ethiopia where age limit is mandatory, if a person won a good reputation and respect in the community he can be an elder”. For instance, in Gujii Oromo<sup>37</sup> Gadaa<sup>38</sup> grades like, Dabbllee (0-8), Qarree Durraa (17-24) and Qarree Duuba (9-16) are passive Gadaa stage. On the other hand, Kuusa (25-28), Raaba (29-35), Doorii (37-40) Gadaa stages are active Political staged. Age flexibility among the Gamo people enables various sections of the community to participate in conflict management process and pave the way for the smooth transitions of conflict management system from generation to generation. Therefore, traditional institutions are generated by the society within a particular community, according to the perceptions of their culture and different groups of people involve within the conflict management process as the audience besides of conflict parties and mediators (Freeman, 2004:47 and Zewde, 2016:46).

*One of the participants in FGD January 2021 Chench Woreda said that still elders are very important plays in our community in handling different conflict management systems. But, in some case they receive gifts in kind or money, which is against our culture and it is Gomy by itself. What is the point if they receive different gifts in the name of conflict management? If you don't have money to give for elders in cash or in kind “no justice”. It is similar to the formal court system. If you don't have money, you will never have the chance to get justice. But, Gomy provide us justice and promote equality by addressing some problems*

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<sup>37</sup>Gujii Oromo is one of the majorities among the communities residing in a large territory found in the southern part of Ethiopia, approximately 470k.m far away from Addis Ababa .The Gujii people belong to the Oromo ethnic group (Wodajo, 2021).

<sup>38</sup> The Gadaa institution involves a system of age-set and generation-set that form and enforce the social, political and cultural norms by which individuals and their collective lives are ordered and governed, by creating sets of ritual status based on age and generation (Wodajo, 2021).

*resulted from conflict because elders never demand fee and other expense, all people are equal and should fairly treated as a member of the community. If someone gives them money they could cover up the crime, and people could take justice in their own hand, this will affect our security, well-being and promote hostility in the community.*

This statement explained that the growing of ‘corruption and abusing of power by elders and the growing tendency of some elders to benefit from a nationwide recognition of Gamo elders skill in conflict management. The ever growing government in the traditional conflict management process from time to time affect the legitimacy of elders.

#### **4.1.3 Conflict Management Process among Gamo People**

The Gamo people have a traditional believe called ‘Wontta Woga’. It is the laws and regulations of the people to handle all social-cultural activities. When people violate these rules, regulations and norms, it is called Gomy. Gomy contains not only religious concept and practice but also political, economic and cultural aspects. Sothat, Gomy is the outcome or the result of violation in ‘Wontta Woga’. Gomy could happen in to two ways. The first one is transgression, when people violate the rules, regulations and norms. For instance, doing something unacceptable, restricted and forbidden by the ‘Wontta Woga’. The second one is sanctioned, failed to implement what ‘Wontta Woga’ demanded to do. For instance, according to Gamo culture children have the obligation to support and look after their parents. But, if the children failed to do these it is Gomy. Generally, violating the rules and the regulation set by ‘Wontta Woga’ is resulting Gomy (Menwagaw, 2016:54).

*According to Gamo people, conflict emerges between people when they are disrespecting each other, broke their promise, taking any one property due to greedy መስገገገገ ጸራስ ወዳድነት (Sowama) behavior or self-interest, lie to Someone, refuse to confess their “crime” or “sin” and showing “unacceptable behavior” toward others, could trigger conflict between individuals, family members, neighborhood and the community. If people are living up to Gomy conflict will never be developed. So that, Gomy play important role in reducing, mitigating, preventing and managing conflict. Because, it sets the rule for every*

*member of the community to follow and must be respect of everyone (FDG, January, 2021 Chench Wereda).*

On the other hand, Relational theories attempt to provide explanation for violent conflicts between groups by exploring sociological, political, economic and historical relationships between such groups. Thus, the belief here is that cultural and value difference as well as groups interests influence relationships between individual and groups' in different ways (Best, 2006:55).

*There is a new development which was not existed in the Gamo area as far as I remember. Like, crop damaged by unknown people that bought in the area with payment from far places, taking away farm land by force, failure to apologize to one another, disagreement over grazing land, created conflict make the situation difficult to solve as fast we can . Some people say “let this land judges” “ግድር ትቀበሉ” /zuman boosan dubushan oycho woykko sa7aynne/ (KII, January, 2021 Arbamench city).*

This phrase implies that the perpetrator is unknown to the people, so that, the power of mother earth is important to mediate the conflict between the people and it shows the strong relationship between indigenous knowledge and the natural world.

*Whenever conflict develops among the Gamo people conflicting Parties ice take their cases to elders rather than try to take revenge. Because, they believe that Gomy could solve all these problems and local elders are there to facilitate peaceful means of managing conflicts. On the other hand, some people taking their cause to formal court, if they are not satisfied with the elders. The interventions of police and the court system in our traditional conflict management system and undermine its legitimacy, affect the trust of the people on elders (FGD, January 2021 Chench Woreda).*

As the above statement indicated that now a day's people have two opinions towards Gomy. First, some group of people still prefers to solve their problems through Gomy. Second, others prefer to take their cause to formal court depending on different reasons. For instance, young, women and educating people prefer formal court system. Because, they belief that court could

handle their case fairly. They are not part of this tradition anymore due to changes in religion to either protestant or orthodox Christians.

According to the constitution of the FDRE (1995) and the regional constitution of the SNNPRS, Article 39 sub-article 2, the nations, nationalities, and peoples have the right to preserve, promote, and develop their culture. Therefore, the Ethiopian constitution's guarantee the right of nations and nationalities to develop their own culture.

*According to KII participants, January, 2021 Arbamnech City described that contrary to this constitutional right, in some case there is illegal intervention and actions taken by the government institution in the decision making process of Gomy and Dubbusha which was creating anger and resentment in the community in recent years. Police interventions further complicate the problem and exposing people for economic and social problems due to extended process in the formal court system. The intervention creating stand still for “no peace” “no conflict” situations among the adjacent communities and ethnic groups that affect the peace and security of the Gamo area. Now a day, thanks to the regional and federal government decisions, a court in the zone accepted the binding decisions of Gamo elders.*

*Therefore, Gome gives us ‘medicine for our problem.’ We give justice to everyone without wasting time and resource’.*

This statement explained that the growing problems of the formal court system in solving conflict on time and the decision given by court lack psychological, ‘moral’ and ‘spiritual support’ for the people who are taking their case to formal court. This shows that the traditional conflict management is less expensive in terms of resource and time, giving back up in which formal court could not provide.

#### **4.1.4 The Meaning of Gomy in the Gamo Context**

Gomy is part of the daily life among the Gamo people for generation. It has been practiced as part of the value, norm and tradition of the people. It forbid individuals and group of people doing wrong things consider as “shame”, “sin” or “harm” to the people. Because, Gomy believe to have brought “misfortune”, “catastrophe” to individuals, family, community and the people in general. According to Gamo elders, ‘Gomy play important role strengthens the psychological,

social, cultural and religious attachments of the Gamo people. It is one way of maintaining social harmony, manage and resolve conflict, promotes peace and security through religious, social and culturally sanctions, norms, rules and regulations'. It sets sanctions that every member the community should follow strictly to help people live harmonies life that balance between the society and the natural world GZCTD (2012:37) and Menwagaw (2016:53).

Primordialism and social constructivism explain the process of group identity formation as well as forces driving the need for identity. In primordial theories, a group has turned into a natural community by the common bonds shared by the group members. Individuals belong to a group through primordial ties of blood, kinship, language and customs. As the ethnic division is relegated to predetermined restrictive characteristics, group membership is considered the given of human existence. The sense of self is interwoven with the identity of the group at primitive levels. Belonging to ethnic groups is tinged with raw and primitive affects that pertain to one's sense of self and its protection. Common history, traditions, language, beliefs and values are objective cultural criteria that distinguish one group from another. Historical continuity is maintained by a shared culture transmitted over generations (Jeong, 2000: 61).

According to constructivist perspective, group boundaries are shaped by a social context; the process of articulating identity with perceptual filters, such as strong feelings of a common fate, takes precedence over an objective, absolute category. A group identity serves as a cultural resource and, being reinforced by emotional attachment, remains a site for mobilizing forces. The dominant themes of a culture can be transmitted into the hearts and minds of people, supplying a powerful political weapon. Various families, primary education, and other socialization patterns contribute to the regeneration of old symbols and myths (Jeong, 2008 55-56).

Gamo people live in the urban area are trying to maintain their strong social bondage through Gomy. Because, in order to continue as a member of the community and avoid isolation with the possible suspension of from any social interaction having regular contact with their families and relatives is mandatory, if not, they have to assign someone from cloth family member as representative on behalf of them to handle various issues and to avoid Gomy'.

*As KII participant January,2021 Arbamench City described that due to intermarriage with a different ethnic group and busy life in urban area some of*

*their attachment with families in the rural area reduced from time pave the way for the family break up in some situations. In another way, some people, especially people living in urban areas are criticizing Gomy as incompatible with the modern ways of life in the era of “reasoning” and “information”, Gomy as a traditional and religious practice difficult to deal with various issues, like, time, place, political, economic and social activities.*

This statement implies that modern education and the development of science and technology have changed the way of life to understand their environment and the society in general.

*These generations does not follow what is dictated by ‘wonta woga’. They don’t have respect (**bonca**) for parents and elders, due to these, our social relationship is in bad shape, and families are breaking up flooded major towns with young boys from the Gamo Zone. It is the result of Gomy. People should respect Gomy as part of their life. It is not ‘worshipping devil’(gene ሰይጣን) as some protestant claims’, what Gomy allowed and forbid are found in Ten Commandments in the New Testament bible (KII Arbamench City January, 2021).*

Gomy is highly relies on “truth” (**ts’illo**), “confess” (**buuts’o**), “forgiveness” (**att-guussi**) and “respect (**bonca (-ai)** to people”. Violation of these basic principles of Gomy will ‘destabilized the people’, ‘production will be declined’, and ‘cattle’s will die’, ‘low productivity in agriculture’, ‘poor health among the people’. On the other hand, if people respect and follow Gomy, ‘productivity will increase’, ‘everybody will be healthy’ and ‘productive in all aspects of life’, ‘children will be healthy and grow well’ (GZCTD, 2012: 37).

*Gomy is the gift of **Thossa** (**‘God’**) for the Gamo people. We belief the existence of Thossa power through Gomy. That is why people respect the law, rules and regulations. It is important for us to live in peace and harmony. People have learned about Gomy since their childhood that enables them to know what is “good” or “bad” “wrong” or “right” according to Gamo tradition and belief. Now you see, Gamo elders are ‘ambassadors’ for peace in Ethiopia, this is the generation efforts by Gamo elders and the people. Gomy can give a lesson for other people, on how to live in peace through “truth”, “respect” and “forgiveness” to others. The younger generation is less interested in Gomy.*

*Because, as elder we did not do enough to teach them like before (KII Chenca Wereda January, 2021).*

This statement shows that like any other traditional conflict management system Gomy is threatened by the development of complex political, economic and social system in the study area. Lack of ‘smooth transitions’ of the practice of Gomy between the old and new generations, intervention of external actors and systematically undermine the practice. Lack of interest from the federal and the zonal administration to preserve the system, exposing Gomy for the most powerful forces like NGOs and Christian institutions in the study area.

*Gomy is the most dynamic and progressive traditional conflict management system as some scholars and Gamo elders stated that Gomy is relied on the general principles of ‘human value’ which is the bedrock of any civilization. Like, ‘Speaking the truth’ (serving the truth), ‘Confession’, ‘Forgiveness’, ‘Respect’ and Purification through ritual a process to continue normal life(FGD Chenca Wereda, January 2021).*

#### **4.1.5 The Structure of Gomy**

Bureau (2012), Freeman (2001) and Freeman (2004), cited in Zewedy, (2016:21), among the Gamo of Southern Ethiopia, there are two ways to gain access to politico-ritual status. The two ways work both in opposition with each other as well as complementary. The first system is by the principle of initiation or election. The title of Halhaqa, Huduga or Maga is acquired through initiation.

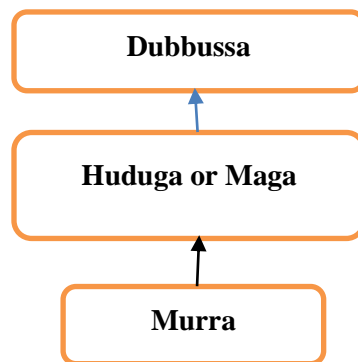
As Freeman (2004:23) points out, this institution varies from one Dere to the next. Specific terms referring to particular elective titles have different names. In some Dereta it is called Halaqa, in others it is called as Huduga or Maga. This title refers to the elected representatives. They have political authority and elected by that is Dulata (assemble). According to Bureau (2012:145), the Gamo society is an egalitarian and essentially this equality consists of a concern to grant everyone a chance to be able to access to the highest elective social status, that the magistrates of the Dulata. All men can become Halaqa, Huduga or Maga. However, this does not mean all male adults acquire the titles.

*As one of the KII participant January 2021 Arbamench City describes, being an elder is not only determined by the age of a person, what is important is his*

*behavior, acceptance of people and the role played in the community makes him preferable to be as elder to serve the community.*

According to there are some requirements that reduce access to the titles. First, one must be married. That marriage as a requirement determines the access to the titles between brothers. Based on Gomy, the younger can only marry after their elder brothers. Second, a man cannot take initiatory title before his father and elder brothers have been initiated. Thirdly, Halaqa or Huduga on the other hand must give expensive feasts. This needs a year of preparation, which influences his chance of acquiring such titles. The second system is the Baira system that is a system of seniority. This system is ascribed and largely based on genealogical seniority according to primogeniture. The Gamo are distributed in agnatic clans and with each clan has a system of individual genealogical hierarchy. The Baira (senior) of the clan has a privilege over lineage members (Bureau 2012:145).

*When the Gamo people elected their elders a lot of things taking intoconsideration. (gita ootsos deren doorettoi aco) Senior elders observe individuals from their background and social status currently. They try to see how the person managed, and take care of his family? What is his relation with other members of the community and neighbor? Is he a hard worker? Because, once he is elected as an elder, a lot of responsibility waiting him and he has to maintain the good image of the community, bring 'fortune', 'peace', help people to be more responsible in their social interactions, live in peace, managing or resolving conflict according to Gomy (FGD, January 2021 Chenca Woreda).*



**Diagram 2: Hierarchies of Gomy developed by the author (2021)**

Gomy is one of the most important conflict management system among the Gamo people. There are three main hierarchies in Gomy. These are:-

### 1. **Dubbusha**

Top judges, and make the last decision. They consist of senior members of elders in the community, living in the area for many years and respected by the community.

### 2. **Huduga**

Halakas had important political, and often become very influential in running the Dere. Their power, though, was always checked by the community assembly, and Halakas who tried to become autocratic were always stopped (Freedman, 2004:86 and Menwagaw (2016:93). ‘According to my key informant and elders in focuses group discussion described, Huduga is the highest position at the kebele level in the conflict management process. They are responsible to arranging the date, palace, and inform conflicting parties to start the conflict management and reconciliation process according to Gomy’.

*If Halaka is well managed and run the system in the community, the crop will grow, cows will have calves, women will give birth, and the Dere and people will live in peace and prosperity (KII, January, 2021 Arbamench city).*

### 3. **Murra**

Murra is a local leader below Hudduga. They are sending messages to the local people about the conflict, identify the damage caused by the conflict.

*One of KII participant January, 2021 Arbamench city explained that all these processes help the people to choose a responsible person who can shoulder the responsibility as community leader and to handle different issues including conflict management. In the community people said "ያለገደብ የፈሰሰ ውሀ አፍንጫ የሌለው እንስሳ ይጠጣል" ordey ogen yeginka mehe ekkeesse “meaning every power should be checked.” This proverb shows the role of Gomy in maintaining people solidarity through caring one another in their daily life. Checking elder’s weather they are properly serving the community or involves in abuse of power and misconduct against the culture of Gamo people.*

This statement described that Gomy as traditional conflict management system play an important role in creating responsible people through regress process of checking individual behavior and their actions before taking responsibility as elder and giving a lesson for other members of the community to follow their seniors foot steep, in one hand, and empowering people to look after their leaders checking them to behave in the right way, similar to the “modern parliamentary system”.

#### **4.1.6 Religious Aspects of Gomy**

The Gamo people have their own traditional religion called ‘Wonta Woga’. ‘Woga’ means it is a provincial administrative law sometimes called ‘Dere Woga’. This law never violates by any member of the community and must respect by everyone. The law believes to be perfect and absolutely true with divine power. ‘God’ sending this law through Dere Dubbsha. The Gamo people believed that the law intentionally or unintentionally violated by members of the community, when these happed they call it Gomy.

Gomy contains not only religious duties and obligations, it include other issues like political, economic and social issues (Menwagaw, 2016:3). Gome can be considered as taboo or it can be considered as curse. It prevails nearly in all aspects of the people’s social life. It is believed that a person who is breaching or acting against taboo of the society considered as a person who bring curses and calamity to himself, family and the society. According to Gamo-Amharic-English dictionary. Gomy is ‘taboo’, ‘abomination’, the ‘violation of conscience/ taboo, committing an abomination, suffering that is consequent upon violating a taboo/ committing abomination and Gomy is seen as both the cause and effects supernatural retribution (Hawarad and Eshetu, 2014:507).

#### **Case 1**

*As one of KII, January, 2016 Arbamenc city participant explain his experience about Gomy as follow...*

*In my home village, my father has marked his compound with wood to mark our border with the neighbors. One of the neighbor remove the wood mark following the death of my father, which was separated the border line. When I ask her why she did this? She said to me ለዶሮ አጥንት መጥረቢያ ያስፈልገዋል? kuto*

*meqethassi beexe koshena. Meaning, is it necessary to use axes to crush chicken bone? I have ten children enough to crash you, you are alone. Before my father passed away, he told me that if our neighbor push the border or change the mark come and cry on my grave place. I decided to remove the wood mark there was a crop on the land. I ask elders to solve the problem, the elders told me that do not remove the post and let her collect the crop, crop is like a bride, if you touch it will revenge you. I said ok and I cried on my father's grave and left for Arbamench. After a few month something happened to her while she was taking cattle's to the field for grazing, fighting broke out between two bulls, they pushed her and filed down to the gorge, instantly she died. Her husband comes to home to mourn the death of his wife, while he was sitting in his home a large Nyala horn, which was hoisted for many years, fall and killed him instantly. After a week, another tragedy was happening that resulted the death of another son when fighting broke out between cattle's. The child failed in two gorges and died. All these happened because of her bad behavior and actions insulting me and taking away my family land illegally.*

*Following these three incidence elders in the area were try to addressing the problem. The elders were asking people to identify someone from these area crossing the rivers and went to another place. They try to figure out, lastly they remember my case. My wife calling me to come to home, elders like to talk to me, and then I told them everything the elders ask me to forgive for the children before all of them died. I don't have any problem with children I will forgive them this is the way I solve all problems. I should have to respect elder's decision because; it is our tradition and one of the pillars of Gomy that is forgiveness. Afterward we live in peace. I need justice and treated with respect.*

As Olmeastead 1997 cited in Awash, (2015:66), Gome would result in misfortunes on the doer as well as on the entire society. For instance, if someone commits serious offenses (possible to say wrong according to the locals 'conception) like homicide, robbery, adultery, incest or bestiality and failed to confess in front of the Hudduga, it is believed that their God (Xoossa) would bring danger on the entire society. Gome can also occur with minor breaking of the social norms such as telling lies, disrespecting the elderly, defamation and the like. Hence, minor

breach of social values which will basically cause misfortune on the doer and major and serious infraction. As it is supposed brings tragedy on the doer and on the entire society has to be resolved by the institutions devised for such demand.

#### **4.1.7 Cultural Aspects of Gomy**

In view of the absence of state-based institutions and mechanisms for the control of violence and the regulation of conflicts people take recourse to non-state customary ways of addressing them. Of course, this only is an option if the custom has not been destroyed but, has survived previous processes of state-building and modernization and is still alive. If so, it can contribute to the establishment of 'islands of peace' even in large-scale protracted violent conflicts in quasi stateless environments. Furthermore, it can also contribute to the termination of violence and sustainable peace building, from the local to the national level, as peace building (Boege, 2004, 103-151). "Like other people in Ethiopia the Gamo people have been using Gomy as an instrument to maintain peace, security, social cohesion and solidarity as well as to manage the conflicts." On the other hand, Gomy is one of the cultural manifestation and values of Gamo people and determines activities or action allowed or forbidden in the community" (GZCTD, 2012).

According to Gamo Zone culture and Tourism office (2012:16), it handles various social issues that bind or create social solidarity among the people. It plays a significant role in promoting peace and security in the community, enables people to have smooth interaction based on the norm and value of the people. Gomy covers all aspects of Gamo people life that cover political, economic and social issues. Gomy transfer from generation to generation to keep the social solidarity among the community. When elders where gathered to resolve the conflict children and young boys were allowed to attend the ceremony and familiar themselves with the process. But, if the elders were unable to facilitate for the children and young boys to attend the ceremony it could be Gomy. These are the way Gamo elders transfer this culture and conflict management system from generation to generation without "too much problems" (Menwagaw, 2016:53). "This practice is more or less is not visible in other traditional conflict management in Ethiopia. Inviting children to attend the ceremony taking as creating chaotic environment for adults. Some community in Ethiopia did not consider children as responsible takers, only playing game and fun. But, the story in the Gamo area is different. Gomy as traditional conflict management has

been practiced and developed for many generations with the close watch full eyes from children”.

*One FGD ,participant January, 2021 Chenca Woreda explained that when elders gather to manage conflict children and young boys are attending the ceremony and learn about Gomy. For instance, the way conflicting parties present their argument, evidence and confessing their guilty, elders making decision and the purification process from ‘sin’. Children are part of the whole process and enable them familiarize themselves with the community, to build up their confidence, develop strong social interaction and guardian of their culture. These particles have inclusive nature by protecting venerable groups like, children, women and people with disability. Even tough, excluding women to participate as elder except presents her case to the elders.*

These explanations by FGD participant shows that Gomy allow different sections of the society to attend the ceremony help young people to have a close look at the process since their early ages giving them a good experience when they reach adolescence and taking the responsibility relatively at early stages of their life. But, in terms of gender issues, girls in the early and women later age were not allowed to attend the ceremony while, the conflict management process is in progress. Paradoxically, women’s were allowed to present their case standing at the corner little bit far away from the elders. But, the final decisions will give equal justice. In some area, if someone abusing women and causing injuries the punishment and compensation will be double. People said “የሌት ልጅ እምባ እግዚያቤር ጋር ይደርሳል.” (*marzhaami xuurey xuuroppo xossa sinthan*).

#### **4.1.8 Implication of Gomy in Maintain Gamo people’s Solidarity**

Primordialism and social constructivism explain the process of group identity formation as well as forces driving the need for identity. In primordial theories, a group has turned into a natural community by the common bonds shared by the group members. Individuals belong to a group through primordial ties of blood, kinship, language and customs. As the ethnic division is relegated to predetermined restrictive characteristics, group membership is considered the given of human existence. The sense of self is interwoven with the identity of the group at primitive levels (Jeong, 2000: 61). According to Gamo elders, Gomy has created strong bondage between

people even they live far away from their birthplace. It shapes the way people live, how to live with coexistence with other communities based on its principles like, serving the truth, respecting other people, forgiveness etc.

*When there is the eminent conflict heard, or surfaced Murra send message to the community members to be cautious and ready to handle the issue before the conflict change its courses. Through this way, people look after each other, exchange information about the peace, security and wellbeing of the community. This is one way of maintaining solidarity with the people to overcome security concerns and challenges (FGD, January, 2021 Chenca Wereda).*

This sentence implies that Gomy created a channel for exchange of information about different issue, including conflict, and instability in the Gamo area. Help them to look after each other, identify trouble makers for conflict taking causations actions to maintain peace, security and social harmony through respect each other. The law of ‘Wonta Woga’ was given by “god” and it is absolutely true and perfect. Every member of the community must respect the law in order to maintain smooth social interaction and harmony among the Gamo people. Violating ‘wonta woga’ or ‘disobedient’, ‘disrespect’ and not fully implemented consider as “shame” those people who commit a shameful act refers as “shameless” people, which result total isolation from the community unless the cleaning ceremony performed.

The violation of some norms or values and committing “sin” could result ‘curse’, ‘calamities’, ‘famine’, ‘hardship’ or death in the community. The influence Gomy is getting fade away from the urban area, but, its presence and practice around big cities and towns like, Arbamench are strong as the legitimacy of the various governmental institutions and structures are eroded from time to time due to its neo-patrimonial nature, involving in undermining Gomy as a traditional conflict management system through its illegal and unnecessary interventions, the politicizations of various aspects of Gamo culture including its conflict management system hijacked by political establishment in the zone and region created suspicions of elders as instrument of the government to buy legitimacy, control and pacify the community (Menwagaw, 2012:107).

#### **4.1.9 Types of Gomy**

##### **1. Bayira Woga Gomy**

According to Menwagaw, 2012:107), Bayira is the highest rank in ‘Wonta Woga’ religion. ‘The leaders are providing different service to people and addressing various issues in the community. Resolving conflict, according to Gomy, helping the Gamo elders to the conflict management processes. They have their own rules and regulation to handle various issues.

##### **2. Laymma Gomy**

It is a type of Gomy related to having sex or adultery outside the legal marriage, having a sexual relationship between families or same clans. It is one of the most serious Gomy. Because, it is one of the most serious assault against family as an institution. Gamo elders handling the issue with high sensitivity and feared, because, they believe it would bring curses and calamity to the community. They give much attention to resolve this conflict as fast as possible.

*“As one of KII explained, January 2021 Arbamench city it is a complex process and time consuming. Because, people involved in this type of Gomy with high caution and in a secretive way hiding themselves as much as possible. This makes the task of identifying the guilty person is difficult and challenging for the elders. The accessibility of audio visual products and cell phone internet service make easy to access porn films has its contribution for people to have sex outside marriage and some take it as modern man even in the semi-rural areas in the zone.”*

This sentence implies that urbanization and modernization has putting its toll on the new generation that eroded their norms and value, promoting unsafe sex among youth, exposing them to criminal activities if they left to access for these products without guardianship of parents. The schools have work to create adequate awareness on the danger about the possible effect of these products for the student.

##### **3. Dhassa Gomy**

Dhassa Gomy is the result of border conflict between neighbors, or between the two neighboring communities. The act involved in removing boarder marks, farming beyond one’s own farm land etc.

*As one of KII participant January 2021 Arbamech city, participant explained that these types of conflict is the most frequent in the area and claims many lives. The problem is some people are greedy and selfish, give priority to their interest not for their family members, friend or neighbors. So that, they will do anything to take a piece of land. It is totally Gomy, they would die their family also perish. The community also isolate you if you are not purify yourself through rituals lead by elders. .*

This statement explained that the growing of computation for scares resource like land. Scarcity of land due to population growth have been surfacing in the Gamo area in the last five plus decades aggravated conflict related to land as people are desperate to claim a piece of land to support themselves and family”. Young people cannot access makes them vulnerable for migration to the urban area involves if informal economic sector for men sometimes they involves in petty crime like stealing, fighting each other and end up in jail. Girls and women involve in prostitution, which is unfamiliar to the Gamo people. The practice is Gomy because having sex outside marriage is a sin.

#### **4. Katha Gomy**

Mismanagement of food items (እሕልግጦ ጡር ከለው *katha xuurey oycho woykko katha gomey gomo nena*) When farmers plow the land in the sloppy land scape they should have to make check dam in order to prevent the seed from washed away by rain.

*According to the participant in FGD, January 2016, this belief help the Gamo high land protected from severe erosion during the rainy seasons and help agricultural production to increase and, promote indigenous knowledge of environmental conservation for many centuries in the Gamo area in the ‘face value support’ the environmental protection from the government side.*

This statement indicated that Gomy play vital role in preserving for the proper use of natural resources. Like, cutting trees from the area where Gamo people perceived as a sacred place, cutting branches and leaf from where Dubbusah gazed or set to manage conflicts are Gomy. Misuse of farm land and natural resources in general.

## **5. Zedhe Gomy**

It related to Gomy on manger. It is committed against cattle's and domestic animals. Milking cow while eating food. Urinating in manger by a young boy/girl. "As some elders explain these activities need proper attention and respect for animals. They are source of milk for our children and family", people expect to respect their jobs and responsibility.

## **6. Woytto Gomy**

It refers to violating the words of a father or old, man death bed confession and fail to implement what he was saying to his cloth family. As one of KII, January 2021 Arbamench city descried, honesty is a pillar of Gomy. So that, the people in charge of handling this type of Gomy should have the highest moral caliber when they pass the message of a person to his family members and relatives not to create conflict, miss understanding between people. Furthermore ones they lose a person they don't have a chance to ask him for clarification of his message. In this case elders have the responsibility to advise family members to stand together and live up to the message of a person.

## **7. Yio Gomy**

It is committed against orphans and their adopters, harming them in various ways by their cloth family members or member of the community.

*As one of FGD participant explains that, some member of the community Gamo people was known for adopting a child in a couple of years ago, but, now economic problem and the decline of family income for the majority of the people undermine this culture ever before and pave the way for the youth to migrate to main towns including Addis Ababa to support their family as petty traders, shoeshine, shemma serra. Parents are unable to provide basic service for their children let alone taking someone and adopting him/her.*

This explanation by FGD indicates that the decline of livelihood at the household level and agricultural production threatened the very social foundation of the Gamo people. Even forced them to abandon the most important values in the society like, sharing and communal life in general.

## 8. Caaqo Gomy

A type of Gomy happened when the two parties broke their promise after settling their conflict.

9. **Bitu Gomy** refers to superstitions and practicing voodoo.

10. **Tuna Gomy** It occurs when someone hide his crime to speak of his family or elders and try to destroy evidence.

11. **Muume Gomy** highly selective crime committed without any trace left behind.

12. **Gene** refers to Gene (ተገኘል) destroy farm, crops and poor handling of food items.

13. **Boossa Gomy** Cutting trees from graveyards and symmetry for fuel or taking away any materials.

14. **Qaxxara Gomy** refers to practicing genital mutilation.

15. **Hadara Gomy** refers to breaking promise neither of parties must keep their promise.

16. **Xooma Gomy** it is a common name for crafts men's blacksmith, this Gomy resulted from the contaminations of these groups of people.

The Gamo elders have developed their own way of criteria to categorize these Gomy depending on the structure of 'wonta woga', contents of Gomy, the places, the degree of Gomy and the person who committed the crime are taken into considerations (Temessegen, 2009), further explained that, Gomy contains not only religious and cultural aspects but, also it handles political, social, economic, philosophy, environmental, legal, criminal code and the most important thing is creating social harmony with the natural, physical and the universe in general (Temessegen, 2009).

*As one of KII Arbamench City January 2021 participants said that unlike, some other traditional conflict management in Ethiopia, Gomy is subsumes a lot of issues and it has a dynamic or progressive nature to cope up with rapid political, economic and social development. Elders can discuss and change different decisions for the benefits of the people without violating the core value of Gomy.*

*Another person from FGD, Arbamench January, 2021 participant described Gomy as the following:*

*Now am 72 years old I know Gomy very well, it is important for the Gamo people you cannot think Gamo without Gomy. It is religion and culture of the people.*

*What makes me sad today is people lost their trust with their culture and adopted alien religion which affects relations between the people, and dividing us with no reason. We need to teach our young's about Gomy. You can find democracy, justice, law in Gomy. This system is binding us for generations, have you seen war or conflict between the Gamo people? The secret is Gomy.*

#### **4.1.10 Causes of Conflict among the Gamo People**

Conflict is manifested through adversarial social action, involving two or more actors with the expression of differences often accompanied by intense hostilities. The conditions of scarcity and value incompatibilities can become a continuing source of contention the conflict resulted from a fighting or confrontation between one or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means to ends. Conflict may be manifested, recognized through actions or behaviors, or latent, in which case it remains dominant for some time, as incompatibilities are unarticulated or are built into systems or such institutional arrangement as government, corporations, or even civil societies (Jeong, 2000:1). Conflict itself is not evil; often times it arises from the process of seeking sustainable progress and satisfaction (Peter, 2013:5).

According to biological theories conflict is innate in all social interactions, and among all animals, including human beings. It argues that humans are animals, albeit higher species of animals, and would fight naturally over things they cherish (Best, 2006:46). Conflict is a social phenomenon that is generated and supported by a number of psychological factors. The concept of attitude is one of the most widely used concepts in the social sciences. Broadly speaking, attitudes define the parties' evaluative and response tendencies in social situations. Attitudes are relatively enduring dispositions, having three basic dimensions: (a) the cognitive, (b) the affective, and (c) the behavioral. The cognitive dimension refers to the parties' beliefs and ideas about their environment, the affective dimension refers to the parties' feelings and emotions and the behavioral dimension refers to the specific readiness to respond. Each of these dimensions is affected by, and influences, a conflict situation. The result is that attitudes in conflict are made more negative or extreme, and are so structured as to view the other party in the worst possible light. (Bercovich, Kremenyuk and Zartman, 2009:7-8).

To understand why this happens and why attitudes in conflict are so resistant to change, we need to know how attitudes are formed or acquired. Perception is the process by which individuals

receive and extract information about their environment. It is a cognitive process which involves reception of stimulus, mental organization and response. The final step in the process – the response – consists of an overt act, or the formation of an attitude. Attitudes are thus determined by each person's perception and conform to his picture, or image, of his environment. (Bercovich, Kremenyuk and Zartman, 2009:8).

*The main causes of conflict in the Gamo zone are competing for grazing and farm land, stealing, adultery, failure to apologize to one another when there is disagreement, intolerance and showing disrespect for a friend, neighbors and the community in general. Now a day, people have also developed a hostile attitude for other clans and ethnic groups in any case due to some bad politicians that benefited from the death of people. (FDG, Chenca Woreda, January 2021).*

As the above statement indicated that ethnic federalism, economic and social problems in the country and in the zone affecting the social fabrics of the society to access land when the new worada or zone restructured from adjacent Dere. Access to fund the federal government among the politicians and mobilize the people in order to achieve their objective. Unemployment and poor infrastructure development complicate the existing situation that could trigger conflict in the study area forced people to abandon the long age practice of tolerance, respect each other, solving problems through indigenous way for the area well known for the peaceful existence of the people.

#### **4.1.11 Gomy in Conflict Management**

Conflict resulted from a fighting or confrontation between one or more parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means to ends. Conflict may be manifested, recognized through actions or behaviors, or latent, in which case it remains dominant for some time, as incompatibilities are unarticulated or are built into systems or such institutional arrangement as government, corporations, or even civil societies (Miller, 2001:22), on the other hand, (Peter, 2013:5), said that conflict itself is not evil; often times it arises from the process of seeking sustainable progress and satisfaction. “When there is a conflict among the people Gamo elders use mediation as a conflict management approach one's they receive information about the problem”. Mediation is a conflict resolution process in which a mutually acceptable third party, who has no authority to make binding decisions for disputants, intervenes in a conflict or dispute

to assist involved parties to improve their relationships, enhance communications, and use effective problem-solving and negotiation procedures to reach voluntary and mutually acceptable understandings or agreements on contested issues. The procedure is an extension of the negotiations.

*Gamo people believe that conflict is always exists between people due to different reasons. But, the most important thing is the way we solve the conflict 'Thxoosa' give us law that is 'Wonta Woga.' If people violate this law defiantly conflict will happen between individuals and people. In this regard elders are playing important role in managing conflicts because they are respected and trusted by the people. First, they gathered and discuss about the problem, start the mediation process between the conflicting parties to settle the problem according Gomy. Then, the two conflicting parties present their case and evidence. Finally, they make a discussion based on the evidence, they ordered compensation to victims. Blessing and advise all people to support each other, forgiving each other and promote social harmony by avoiding conflict. What makes Gamy different here is that all parties must share compensation because, each of them have some role in the conflict from start to end. This is the way of discouraging any kind of conflict among the Gamo people (KII, January, 2021 Arbamench City).*

These practices show the distribution of compensation between the two conflicting parties indicated that either of the conflicting parties has a role in the breakout of conflict. So that, they have to share the burden. On the other hand, it is the way of discouraging people to involve in the conflict and, once they involve they will pay compensation depending on the role play in the conflict.

Conflict management is largely seen in terms of social control designed to minimize the challenges to the core values of the system Interventionist efforts towards preventing the escalation and negative effects, especially violent ones, of ongoing conflicts. Rarely conflicts are resolved, more often; they are reduced, downgraded, or contained. Such development can be followed by reorientation of the issue, reconstitution of the divisions among conflicting parties, or even by a re-emergence of past issue or grievance. Conflict management is, therefore, a constant process (Jeong, 2000: 34).

*According to FGD participant January, 2021 Chenca Woreda Gomy as a conflict management system always trying to maintain a balance between different power groups in the community in order to manage the conflict. Because, conflict management continues process and demanded effort from every member of the community to maintain social solidarity, peace, security and social harmony. As elder we are always involved in preaching about peace. Gomy is all about peace and harmony. If you do these always you can reduce or avoid conflict. Once it happens we will solve through mediation and arbitration by using our status in the community.*

#### **4.1.12 Conflict Management Procedures in Gomy**

Conflict can be managed and resolved through mutual agreement. In peaceful settlement, a common emphasis has been placed on refraining from the threat or use of force (Jeong, 2000:176). “Once conflict broke out into violence there are different approaches to manage the conflict which manifested in the form of violence. Conflict management refers to the reduction of the means of pursuing a conflict from violent to political or, more broadly, to measures to move a conflict toward resolution (elimination of the incompatibilities in the parties’ positions on an issue). Conflict management can be accomplished bilaterally or multilaterally, depending on the type of conflict; that is, a party can manage its conflict with its adversary cooperatively, or it can cooperate with other parties to manage someone else’s conflict. In a word, it is a matter of negotiation or mediation. So one can say that all cooperation involves some conflict management but not all conflict management involves cooperation (Zartman, 2016:161).

*According to KII Arbamench City January 2021, when conflict erupted between adjacent community Uggessa (mediators) were meeting to discuss about the problem from the two kebeles or communities arranging meeting, the elders will send to the victim side as a mediator and finds a way to come up with the solutions. They try to advise the conflicting parties to ease the tension and avoid further confrontation and revenge actions which affect the people. Here arbitration play significant role to manage and resolve the conflict.*

*Gamo elder from FGD, Chenca Woreda January, 2021 explained the conflict management process as the following....*

*If some committed crime likes homicide, he will tell the truth to elders, they isolated him to a safe place until the conflict management process starts, and then*

*elders visited the victim home and explain the crime to the victim's family and demanding mercy from the victim's family. Please give us your judgment, we respect your decision. Elders were trying to mediate between the conflicting parties to resolve their conflict and avoid revenge actions. After that elders deliver oxen or sheep for the victim's family to start reconciliation process, blood taken from the victims of conflicting parties and painted on the skin of oxen. It marks the end of hostility and promise not to kill each other anymore, and solve the problem once for all. If they could not afford to deliver ox or sheep they use toasted Barley, and every one served from the food.*

The above statement indicated that mediation and arbitration are the most important conflict management approach among the Gamo elders to manage the conflict between individuals and community with less cost and time. These processes also help to restore the relation between the conflicting parties once they accepted their role.

#### **4.1.13 Traditional Tools and Food Items in Gomy**

In many African countries and in Ethiopia various traditional instruments, tools and food items like Ox, Sheep and Goat (Goat used in the arid area of Gamo zone) are part of the conflict management and reconciliation process. People are believed that these food items help the conflicting parties to finalize their conflict, and let every bad fortune passes through this animal's blood. These animals are the gift of 'God' and they are the symbol of 'humbleness', 'peace' and 'solidarity'. For instance, Sheep and ox. From food crops, Barley and wheat are the most preferable by Gamo people. In addition, honey and Enset (false banana) are common, when there is conflict resolution and management process. Grains like Barely are the symbol of fertility, and good fortune because one seed can duplicate itself up to 150 seeds.



**Picture 1: Gussay (ጉሴ) Picture taken by author, January 2021 Chench Woreda Gamo zone**

This tool symbolizes the culmination of conflict between individuals; promise not to repeat their action in front of the elders. It's filled with traditional Tella, Tejje or Borddy (a traditional beverage made of barely, wheat). Elders belles all conflicting parties, demanding them for forgiveness and restore their relation. They said እንደዚህ የሞላችሁ ሁኑ (Aacitee purcitee daritee). Then, all attendants were served and the conflict management process started under the leadership of elders FGD, Chench Wereda January, 2021.

#### **4.1.14 Interpersonal and Family level Conflict Management**

According to the biological need theory, biological and physical needs are intertwined with mental requirements in the satisfaction of other needs. Basic needs contain more than physiological dimensions and include such primary emotions as fear, anger, depression and happiness. Psychological needs are linked to socially produced wants, desires, or preferences. Thus, people can suffer from damage to self-esteem as much as from a lack of food. Fear, violence, unemployment and marginalization generate conditions of human misery (Jeong, 2000:60).

Rosati et al. (1990), cited in (Faleti and Ademola, 2006:51), described that all human have basic human needs which they seek to fulfill, and that the denial and frustration of these needs by other groups or individuals could affect them immediately or later, thereby leading to conflict. He further elaborates his idea, 'basic human needs' in this sense comprise physical, psychological, social and spiritual needs. In essence, to provide access to one (e.g. food) denies or hinder access

to another (e.g. freedom of worship) will amount to denial and could make people to resort to violence in an effort to protect these needs.

*According to KII, participant January 2021 Arbamench City described that interpersonal level conflicts are included conflict emerged between the family levels in related to resource allocation especially land. Currently, conflict easily broke out between family members due to unemployment and economic problems. Insulting parents are rampant that created conflict at the family level.*

*Another FGD Chench Woreda, January 2021 explained that now a day's people are lacking discipline, belongings, even my children are too much selfish they don't care about family and the community. People should respect, help each other when they are in the problem. One of the most important aspects of Gomy is demanding people to help each other. Look conflict is everywhere our peace and security is in bad shape. 'The only way out is practice Gomy like before'.*

As the above statement indicated that rapid urbanization, economic and rampant social problem affect the social relationship between family and individuals in the community. Some the problems were emanating from the education system from which basic skills of life for a person lack. Poorly provide civic education to children and youth, lack efforts from the government side to strengthen the family as institution contribute to the problem not only in the Gamo area but also to the state. In order to reduce such people indigenous knowledge of the people could have a positive impact if the government incorporate them to service delivery to the public since, Gomy contain the political, social and economic aspects to regulate the social interaction among the Gamo people.



**Picture. 1**



**picture.2**

**Picture 1: The beginning of traditional conflict management process after elders blessing the process (Left)**

**Picture 2: The end of conflict management process between interpersonal and family level (Picture taken by author, 2021 Chenca) (Right)**

As the pictures show that at the beginning of the conflict management among the Gamo people Tejje, Tella or Bordddye all are traditional alcoholic and non-alcoholic drink prepared home or buying from the place where these drinks sold to people. It will be served as a cultural practice to praise ‘god’ for his blessing and mercy upon them. It is the symbol of togetherness between people. Then, the elders will bless all conflicting parties and participant to settle their problems and demanding them to restore their relations. At the end of the conflict the two parties will drink with Gussay<sup>39</sup> (ጉሴ) symbolized the end of the conflict and the promise never repeat this action again. They show solidarity to each other to restore relations, we live together, and no revenge will take again a new type of relation will presume after these rituals. Therefore, traditional approaches focus on the psycho-social and spiritual dimension of violent conflicts and their transformation. This dimension tends to be underestimated by actors who are brought up and think in the context of ‘western Enlightenment’. Conflict transformation and peace building are not only about negotiations, political agreements and material reconstruction, but also about purification, reconciliation and mental and spiritual healing. Traditional approaches have a lot to offer in this regard. They do not only deal with material issues, reason and talk, but also with the spiritual world, feelings and non-verbal communication (Boege, 2011:25).

<sup>39</sup> Gussay is traditional household equipment used among the Gamo people.

#### **4.1.15 Settlement of Community (Dere) level Dispute**

Relational theories attempt to provide explanations for violent conflicts between groups by exploring sociological, political, economic and historical relationships between such groups. Thus, the belief here is that cultural and value difference as well as groups interests all influence relationships between individual and groups' in different ways. A number conflicts grow out of a past history of conflict between groups that has led to the development of a negative stereotype, racial intolerance and discrimination. Such a history of negative exchanges between groups may make it difficult for efforts to integrate different ethnic and religious groups within the society to succeed because their past interactions make it difficult for them to trust one another (Best, 2006:55).

Realist theory or realism highlight inherency and traces the roots of conflict to a flaw in human nature which is seen to be selfish and engaging in the pursuit of personalized self-interest defined as power. The theory originates from classical political theory, and shares both theological and biological doctrines about an apparent weakness and individualism inherent in human nature. Thus, the starting point for the explanation of conflict is the individual level (Faleti, 2006:45).

*As one of KII participant January, 2021 Arbamench City, participants explained that when conflict emergence between the two Dere elders from the two sides gathered to discuss on how to solve the conflict and managing before things out of control. They meet the place where the two Dere have common boarder, and discuss the cause of conflicts, identify the responsible person or group of people, hearing the evidence finally reach a decision following the intense discussion. Compensation was paid following the ritual process.*

As participants of FGD January 2021 Chench Werda, described that many inter-dere conflicts have occurred between different communities of Gamo zone. Conflict over grazing and farm land, killing of people. Currently, conflict emerged following the restructuring of werada and zone for political administration. Following the political changes—that took place in the country, the Garda and Marta deres updated their old good government agendas such as self-government questions to the zonal and regional governments. Hence, the regional government has given new administrations to those peoples who have claimed self-administration questions (woreda and zone). Old grievance based on historical and social development is the cause of conflict between

various Dere in the Gamo zone. For instance, there were two conflicts between Garda-Kamba<sup>40</sup> and Garvansa -Kole<sup>41</sup> Dereta took place between two Dere in the last four plus years following a wave of political change and unrest in the country.



**Picture 2:** Symbolizing the end of conflict between Garda-Kamba Dereta Conflict (February 2019) Gamo zone culture and tourism office and Lako Pulea (2020).

*One of the KII Arbamench City January 2021, described that conflict between Gamo Dere were normal, because, conflict in always exist between peoples. We need to understand these. Once it happens we have to work towards solve the problem. We should not left problem for our children. Now a day's government intervention between dere creating complex situation to manage the conflict. They told us directly or indirectly to violate the process of gomy. Because, they know what they were doing before conflict emerged, they don't like to see truth comes out and everybody knows their crime. They know how Gomy is powerful. Simply they try to carry out Conflict management process nominal only for political purposes.*

#### **4.1.16 Intra- Communal Conflict Management among the Gamo People**

Ethiopia is a highly complex and colorful social mosaic, comprised of a number of ethno-linguistic groups characterized by a vast spread of cultural diversity and heterogeneity. While on

<sup>40</sup> Garda-Kamba is one of the Dere in the Gamo Zone (GZCTO, 2020).

<sup>41</sup> Garvansa -Kole is one of the Dere in the Gamo Zone (GZCTO, 2020).

the one hand, these people are bound together by strong bonds of culture, multilayered and complex fabric of shared identities that impinge on each other, history, common objectives and destiny; on the other hand, they also have witnessed inter-ethnic tensions and conflicts, particularly in the aftermath of the federal restructuring of the country along ethnic lines (Girum 2011: 81 and 91).

*According to FGD participant January 2021 Chench Woreda, for many years Gamo people have never been in intense conflict with other ethnic group, because they have agreed not to fight each other with few exceptions as far as they know. But, in the last three years they have experienced some pressure and agitating to conflict by Gujje Oromo from the southwest part of the Neche Sarar national park to incorporate some part of the part to Oromia region and evicting people by claiming the land as their ancestral land for centuries. Still, negotiation is underway between the Ormoia regional states, SNNPR and Gamo zone administration to manage conflict between the two communities before things change their directions.*

#### **4.1.17 Current Development in Gomy**

Traditional approaches are preservative. They are geared towards the preservation of the status quo or the restoration of the ‘good old’ order (Mac Ginty, 2008:152). Disturbances of that order have to be controlled and fixed. Traditional approaches only work in the framework of that order and are only applicable to conflicts that occur within a given community. The problematic features of traditional approaches may themselves lead to conflicts. Young women and men – ‘infected’ by ideas from the outside world – often are no longer willing to subordinate themselves to gerontocracy rule. Of course, the severity of this problem depends on the specific circumstances in the given community in communities where young men and women also have a say in community affairs or where custom is adaptable, the situation is more relaxed than in rigidly patriarchal or gerontocracy circumstances. Custom is often pitted against women’s rights and seen to be in conflict with women’s aspirations for more equality and self-determination in many traditional societies (Bogler, 2011:451).

*As one of the participants in KII, January, 2021, Arbamench City described that “Gomy is a less researched topic in the traditional conflict management system in*

*related to Gamo people. Most scholars have been focused Dubbusha the highest level of the decision making organ in the Gamo traditional conflict management system. Currently, the encroachment of modern government institutions, urbanization and politicization of the traditional conflict management system damaging its reputation among the local people due to the inclination of some elders to benefit from the frenzy of lavishly prepared workshop and peace conference in four or five star hotel.*

Traditional approaches are difficult to apply with regard to conflicts against the community, conflicts that challenge the framework of values and relations of the traditional order. The conservative character of traditional approaches does not sit well with new influences either from within the community – young men and women challenging traditional authorities and the ‘good old ways’ – or from outside the community (Mac Ginty, 2008:150).

*As FGD participant January 2021 Chenca Woreda described that unlike, many traditional conflict management system Gomy has inclusive nature, it serves the truth and everyone is equal and should be respected as a human being because we are all sons of God. If someone demanded justice from Gomy he will be equally treated like any other member of the Gamo people. These situations are unusual in many parts of Africa and Ethiopia. While, imperial powers use discrimination as a means to dominate and passive the community, in this regard Gomy can be considered as a progressive system.*

#### **4.1.18 Gomy and Government Institutions**

The research finding from key informant interview, focus group discussion participant from Arbamench city and Chench woreda respectively and government documents shows that there is a border demarcation problems with the adjacent community of Gujji Oromos and Kore ethnic groups following the establishment of Nech Sar National Park in the 1970’s. The establishment of the park disturbed the livelihood of the people whose life depend on pastoralism and mixed farming in the area. After 1991 many people were try to resettle in the park premises that pave the way for small scale conflict between the communities. Until recently elders were solving the problem in the area through tradition conflict management system consisted of elders from all the community around the park. But, the situation is complicated when the then Gamo Gofa zone

administration allowing for a local NGO called African park to rehabilitate and administrate the park after 2000. They were failed to solve the problem, because they did not invite elders to handle the issue, isolated elders from both community including Gamo people, because they don't know about Gomy. The administration had no interest to invite the elders, this is a problem for Gomy, and it undermine its role for the conflict management process in one way or another way. Elders are much better to handle the problem since some of them were eye witnessed when the park was established. Still now the government is try to solve the problem through highest government official with no firsthand information about the issue, people are not invited to discuss the issue in proper way. Generally, the government institution are less interested in handling the conflict through the system like Gomy. Since the Derg period the government institution are try to undermine Gomy and to some extent 'hostile' to the entire process (Bedane, Cassiman and Breusers, 2020:7).

#### **4.1.19 Gomy in Views of Gender and Non- Gamo People**

The Gamo people are patriarchal like many societies in the world.' Patriarchy refers to a set of social institutions that deny women the opportunity to be self-supporting, whereby making them dependent on male relatives for survival and in allocation of resources and power. In patriarchal society men are considered as bread winner and head of household. In this sense providing the basic needs for the household is the responsibility of the male. There is indeed a status differential between men and women among the Gamo People. As argued when a man is initiated to the title of *halaqa*, *maga* or *huduga* titles of dignitary whereas his wife assumes the title called *mishre* (dignitary title for women). So wife and husband assigned together but primarily the power was exercised by the husband (Freeman 2004: 48-49).

*Gomy is standing for everyone. Because, all are created by 'god' (xoossa). We cannot harm his creations include human being, animals, plants and forest. According to Gomy, women's have equal rights like men. She is like "virgin Maryam". She is taking care of us and our children. If some mistreated physically, abused or taking her belongings will face severe punishment. Even any one, including her husband crossing her leg while she sits and stretches her leg, it is Gomy. Her husband should buy sheep and slaughter as a symbol of*

*purification from Gomy. This is how we respect women's they are everything for us (FGD, Chench Woreda January, 2021)*

*If a husband was absent for a number years due to various reasons when he come to the home she gives him Tella (traditional liquor). If he had sexual relation with other women in those years, he refused to drink and say I was wearing someone's clothes የሰው ልብስ ለብሻለው mooridos balintidos. Then, immediately he confesses his 'guilty' in front of elders and buy sheep slaughtered to purify himself. This practice play important role in combating HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases among the community and vulnerable social groups. On the other hand, nowadays we see some practice which is against our culture, if conflict developed between husband and wife some women taking their cause to formal court to appeal for justice. Until a formal court made a final decision, the court order the husband to stay away from home and left men/husband for psychological, economic and social problems and, at the same time it affects family, societal relationship, undermine elder's efforts to solve the conflict (FGD, Chenca Woeda January, 2021).*

These two statements made by KII and FGD explained that on the one hand women are treated equally from religious and social aspects. Paradoxically, they are totally isolated from the conflict management process as elder make them vulnerable for unfair treatments of the decision made by elders in the case like rape. If a girl rape by someone the final decision would be to marry the person who raped her. Ones she lost her virginity no one will marry her that left her psychological, economic and social problems throughout her life. On the other hand, the formal court system focused on the rape case and may not give psychological and social support that traditional conflict management system provided.

*Another KII, participant January, 2021 Arbamench city, described that Gomy is not discriminated women's in conflict management process. But, women's are not allowed to fully participate in Dubbusha only allowed to present her cause a little bit far from the elders, but the final decision is made based on equality. Mostly they played advisory role for their husband about the problem in related to conflicts and other issue. Ironically, Gamo elders acknowledged that women's*

*are smarter in managing and handling the conflict situation and they have the natural ability to mediate the conflicting parties.*

#### **4.1.20 Gomy in Views of Marginalized Groups**

One of the KII participants January 2021 Arbamench city explained that like any other traditional conflict management system Gomy lack some inclusive nature due to religious and cultural beliefs. For instance, it marginalizes and discriminates some groups of the community. Women, Ayle<sup>42</sup> and Mala<sup>43</sup> groups are discriminated by the customary law. Marginalized groups are muted; they are denied access to common public places and the right to intermarry with other Marriage among the three social groups is not allowed to keep the social distance. The voices of groups. Women's right to inheritance, division of resources during divorces, and their reproductive rights may also be undermined and violence against women is common. In either case, these practices contravene the fundamental human rights in the constitution. It needs working in collaboration with the formal government in the area to protect the human rights violations.

*As the statement of KII January 2021 Arbamench City shows that these practices were rampant in the previous years where there is a lack of understanding about human right, modern education. Many people discriminate these sections of the society while they are dependents of their goods and services for centuries. They are a lifeline for the political economy of the Gamo people.*

## **4.2 Advantages of Gomy as a Traditional Conflict Management System**

### **4.2.1 Economic Advantage**

From the discussion with KIIs, FGD in January 2021 in Arbamench city and Chencha woreda respectively, and document assessments, making peace through elders has the following social advantages. It saves people's costs while in searching for the way to manage conflicts which emerged between individuals, family members and the communities. Elders in conflict management are not asking money for delivering service to the communities. Adding that,

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<sup>42</sup> Ayle are decedents of slaves among the Gamo people, intermarriage and other social interactions are strictly forbidden with the other members of the society (GZCTO, 2020).

<sup>43</sup> Mala is the respected members of the community among the Gamo society (GZCTO, 2020).

elders' free services to the society is because they want to show their benevolence and loyalty in the traditional leadership.

#### **4.2.2 Social Advantages**

Elders work for social cohesion. Among the Gamo Dere, traditional leaders are believed to be neutral to the parties in the conflict. They work for communities' durable peace through consensus building. Elders allow all parties in the conflict (except women) that include youth, adult, elders and traditional leaders to debate and discuss until consensus is achieved. Their role in peacemaking is for win-win style rather than to win-lose style like as formal justice institutions. As viewed by KIIs and FGD in January 2021 in Arbamech city and Chenchaworeda respectively including document assessments, all discussed virtues such as accessibility; efficiency and effectiveness make the traditional institutions in the conflict management advantageous to the community. In addition, it promote social harmony and belongingness to overcome problem that resulted from conflict by restoring the previous relation through socially imposed sanctioned. For instance, isolation of people or individuals when they refuse to accept decision made by elders and doing thing which is unacceptable by the majority of the community.

### **4.3 Continuity and Challenges in Gomy**

The dynamics of cultural changes in Gamo highlands are part of some of large scale historical changes that were going on in Ethiopia in the 19th and 20th century. Due to the change among the Gamo, dere/dereta lost their territorial autonomy, the indigenous institutions were banned and became dysfunctional, social stratification was officially abolished, social distancing was criminalized, and the customary law was abandoned and seen as traditional (backward) by the formal state agents. Generally, three factors contributed to the changes in the traditional conflict management in the Gamo area. Changes occurred due to political, religious and social factors (Zewdye, 2018:87).

#### **4.3.1 Political Factors**

The Political causes were linked with the regime change in Ethiopia. The 1974 revolution of Ethiopia dethroned the emperor Haile Sellasie I and ended his long reign. The Haile Sellasie I regime had the longest history of enjoying a better relationships with the local indigenous systems (Freeman, 2004 and Menwagawe, 2009:179).

*One of the KII participants January, 2021 Arbamench city explained that the emperor is respecting the Gomy in particular and Gamo culture in general. Local elders allowed exercising their power as a community leader. Haile Sellasie don't like criticism and any form of opposition. Except that, he was fine for Dere and Gomy as a traditional conflict management, the system was strong in maintaining social solidarity, peace and security.*

But in 1974 Derg took power and that had great impact on the cultural change of the Gamo people. The Derg regime ruled Ethiopia from 1974 to 1991 and its ideology was socialism and was suspicious about indigenous institutions (Baharu, 2002:156 and Freeman, 2004:101).

*One of the KII participants January, 2021 Arbamench City explained that "The Derg was baptized by the Marxist Leninist ideology and the like to control every aspect of the people's and any form of organization without its blessing was considered as a treat for the political establishment." The government denied the existence of 'God'. Who created them? As the people of Gamo we believe in the existence of 'God'. They were stopped as to practice our religion that was a dictator for the Gamo people.*

The government accused the customary law and indigenous institutions for serving as a tool to create social stratifications. Because of this, the government eliminated the former territorial structure and dere was renamed and organized as Kebele. Each dere were divided into two or more than two kebele and administrative effectiveness was the reason given by Derg. Each had its own politico-administrative structure. Similarly, the government banned both the kawo, huduga and maga institutions which had drastic effects on the changes in the customary law (Freeman, 2004:74 and Menwagawe, 2009:174).

*As one of FGD participants January, Chench Woreda 2016, described the situation as follow, the coming of Derg to power was a disaster for Ethiopia. I was remembering all the action they were taken against our institution they were upside down everything overnight. It was a shock for the Gamo people, the Derg officials insulting elders in front of their family and member of the community and ban their practice as useless institution. Some of our people were happy, because they got jobs in the newly arranged kebeles administration this was an insult for the Gamo people. The Derg action was resulted in fragmentation of the social*

*fabrics of the Gamo people. Since, then the younger generation is less interested in its culture and norms, violating Gomy.*

These statements imply that the Derg socialist orientation was severely affecting the traditional conflict management institutions in the country undermine their role in social stability left the country for the court and inefficient government institution to handle issues in the way alien to the local people and the Derg officials itself, affecting the development of the country. Make the government apostle of top down approach for various policies in the country.

#### **4.3.2 Social Factors**

Social factors are another reason that contributed to the changes in the customary law and ‘Gomy as a traditional conflict management system.’ According to Freeman (2004) the revolution introduced zemecha<sup>44</sup>. In the Gamo highlands zemecha taught that everybody was equal including the kawo, farmers, slaves and artisans. That created changes in the existing social structure. In addition to that, the younger generation who had exposure to the formal education failed to follow the strict rules of the ‘wonta woga’ and ‘Gomy’. One elderly man in the focus group discussion stated that:

*According to KII participant January, 2021, Arbamench city most of the Zemecha participants were university students). But, in my view they are not, FGD participants continued, they don't know anything about themselves let alone about Gamo. They were too young and like to change everything overnight. But, they brought some change of course. Some of them have a good income in big cities, but, as we have seen them, they are not happy, no peace of mind, they are greed does not help their parents, they are consuming alcohol and Chat (in the Gamo tradition Chat is reserved for the one who administer superstitions ጠንቋይ). They marry without the consent of their family, practice adultery, fail to respect their elders, and prefer formal court over the customary or traditional institutions.*

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<sup>44</sup> Zemecha refers to a cooperation campaign aimed at teaching the socialist values of the Derg regime (Freeman, 2004)

From the above quotation, it is evident that some of the people believe that the expansion of formal education, urbanization and migration are some of the factors for the decline of Gomy as a traditional conflict management system in addition to Derg policy.

It is true that the young people are moving as compared with their elder generation. The migration occurred due to pull and push factors. One is associated with the desire to follow their high school or college education. They left their home dere and went to a nearby town or elsewhere where they meet multi-cultural. Due to these exposures with other cultures, they brought some borrowed cultural elements home. Secondly, due to the shortages of arable land, they left their home to seek for jobs in urban areas. Brought new culture and practice which is against Gomy”.

The KII participant January 2021 Arbamench city indicated that the government, NGOs and other civil society were not doing enough to protect the indigenous knowledge like Gomy to protect from the dynamic and complex nature of modern government bureaucracy and the invisible actors in the globalization. The introduction of ethnic based federalism is creating no room for independent development of cultures of nations and nationalities in the country, it is used as a smoke screen to manipulate various political actors and demagogues in the name of equality.

### **4.3.3 Religious Factors**

The research findings from KII and FGD January 2021 from Arbamench city and Chenca Woreda respondent explain that the religious factor is also contribute to for the decline of Gomy as a traditional conflict management system in the Gamo area. The expansion of Christianity (both Orthodox and Protestant) caused due to the difference in the world view between the indigenous belief system and Christian belief. For instance, Christian groups do not accept any action as polluting and having the potential to cause the affliction. But, affliction is the backbone for the indigenous belief system. Christians refuse to be initiated as huduga or maga and they fail to owe respect for individuals who are initiated to such positions. Christians also do not hesitate to cut trees from forbidden public places and to cross the traditionally forbidden ritual places. As key informants stated, the concept of Gome has a pivotal role to maintain the group order and control deviant behaviors. But, Christians are violating the elements of Gome.

One of the FGD participant described the current perceptions of Gomy by Christians as follow:

## Case 2

The case of disagreement on the place where the celebration of the finding of the true cross and epiphany Lante and Ochollo area:

*According to KII participants January,2021 Arbamench city explained that the disagreement was developed between orthodox Christians and protestant over the place which is found in front the protestant church in Lanty area in the outskirts of Arbamench city.. The place used by orthodox Christians for “Meskel<sup>45</sup>” celebration and epiphany “Timket<sup>46</sup>.” When the Protestants try to stop this celebration in front of their church, conflict erupted. The case taken to Gamo elders consists of the adjacent Gamo area. There was a serious of negotiations for six rounds, they never come to settle the problem. Because, they never listen and respect each other. They never attempt to compromise their positions. Look here, elders are no more respected like before, meaning no respect for elders that means it is Gomy. I never experienced this kind of conflict management process taking too much time in my life. It is a shame for the institution and the people who follow them. For whom are they praying? While they are fighting for a piece of land? How can God, listen to them while disrespecting each other?*

The protestant religion leaders and followers accuse the traditional faith systems of Gamo as evil ‘spirit’ and ‘pagans’. Educated elites who have lived in urban areas look the traditional leadership as well as peacemaking processes as backwardness and unwanted. The KII and FGD participant, January 2021 from Arbamench city and Chenca Woreda have argued that, the source of this accusation is cultural ethnocentrism. Religious leaders as well as followers need the result of our peacemaking process (i.e. peace) but they resist the oath and animal sacrifices we used to reconcile and transform peace. This is definitely ethnocentrism—that resulted from the influence of westernization.

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<sup>45</sup> Meskele it a place or square where bands of fire wood burn to mark the beginning of New Year among the Gamo people. It is celebrated in the second week of September (GZCTD, 2020).

<sup>46</sup> Timeket is celebrated by Ethiopian orthodox Christians to commemorate the baptism of Jesus Christ in the Jordan River.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **5. Conclusions and Recommendations**

This part of the study deals with the conclusion and recommendation part to finalize the study. It used to give or remind the reader about the research question raised by the researcher to investigate Gomy the traditional conflict management system among the Gamo people (Gamo Zone) Southern Nations, Nationalities Peoples Region. Hence, some of the issues that have been highlighted in this study were, the role of traditional institution in the conflict management process, the causes of conflict and its historical development of Gomy. The researcher used qualitative research methodology and exploratory research design. The chapter of the research organized by five chapters consists of introduction, literature reviews, research methodology, data presentation and analysis and finally conclusion and recommendation.

#### **5.1 Conclusions**

In so far presentation, it was clearly mentioned that conflict is a natural phenomenon and happens in every society across the world. In a similar fashion, the Gamo people of southern Ethiopia also experience different types of conflict between individuals or groups in the society. Such a conflict has its own means to address the problem which was developed by the society. The Gamo people of southern Ethiopia has given due emphasis for the existence of peace and stability and for the maintenance of order. Thus, they often manage their differences or the conflict situation by peaceful means. In other words, the people have their own means to resolve disagreements or conflicts when it arises in the society.

Based on the data obtained from key informant interviews, focus group discussion and observation shows that conflict is activated or erupted by different cause in the study area. Like, violating Gomy, (adultery, accesses to resource, stealing, rape and disrespecting people). Gomy plays a remarkable role in resolving conflicts which arises between different groups and individuals in the community. Gomy as a traditional conflict management system primarily focuses on providing conflict management service to Gamo people based on short and long term results. It helps to restore peace and maintaining harmonious relations among the people. The conflict management system tries to combine truth, confession, forgiveness, compensation and purification through ritual process, and promoting peaceful coexistence, social harmony and

solidarity. Gomy as a traditional conflict management system focuses on the past and the future relationships of the parties in conflict. It is based on managing the current problem and working towards creating a stable situation by discouraging revenge through ritual process, providing compensation with religious and cultural norms and values. The role of individuals and groups of people in the conflict management system is played pivotal to sustain the system. People learn the process since their childhood enable the system to have a smooth transition without losing its core value.

Gomy as a conflict management system covers a wide area of political, economic and cultural aspects of the Gamo people. Elders are the epicenter of Gomy. They have accumulated knowledge for the generation, accepted and trusted by the community. Elders are organized in different hierarchal status from Murra to Dubbusha to manage conflict developed from individual to community level. Respect, truthfulness, confesses, forgiveness, purification ritual and compensation are the main pillars of Gomy and each and every conflicting parties are oblige to pass through these process to manage the conflict among the Gamo people.

Gomy as a traditional conflict management system is less costly, time consuming, and tending to corruption. Moreover, the amount of punishment (absence of detention) or compensation is proportionate to the wrong done. Similarly fulfilling the obligations related to offer sacrifice that emanates from seniority has also a role in maintaining harmonious relations between family and community members. The Gomy is based on collective responsibility for deviant behaviors or actions that are believed as harmful to the community. Unlike, most traditional conflict management, considerations of the role played by two individuals or groups for intensification of conflict and demand compensation depending on their role.

Like any other traditional conflict management system Gomy entertain gender issue differently. Even though, women's are not allowed to enter to the Dubusha (assembly place) and not play active role in a decision making process. It is allowed to go assembly place when they have a case to present. In this case, women are obliged to sit in the edge of the Dubusha. But, the decision made by elders will have extra punishment depending on the crime against women. The same is true for people with disabilities and outcast social groups. Therefore, further study of the management process is vital to promote peace, security and harmonious relation of the Gamo people.

The researcher reached on the conclusion based on the literature review and data collected from informant and filed observation that Gomy is one of the traditional conflict management system in the community to manage conflicts and sustain peace and stability in the community for the millennia. It has cultural and religious aspects or dimension to manage the conflict. Gomy consider as cures or bring bad fortune to the community, every members of the community is respecting Gomy because everyone knows the consequence to the people.

## **5.2 Recommendations**

The writer of this thesis would like to begin with the recommendation that Gomy as traditional conflict management system can help the society to solve its own problem and mange conflicts which arise in the community, and support the formal court system in the place where government institutions are weak and inaccessible for many people. So that, all stake holders in these regard work together to promote the system and using to curb various conflicts before claiming the life of people and damaging infrastructure in the study area.

Based on the study findings, this research makes the following recommendations to the policy makers, government institutions and Non-Governmental organizations.

The traditional conflict management system has been playing a significant role for centuries and becoming an important element in the life of Gamo people. It is the backbone of social solidarity, harmony and peace and security of the people. It is the means to manage conflict at the family, local and community level. To this end, the federal government of Ethiopia, the regional state and zonal administrations should encourage individuals, think tanks, academic and research institutions involve in studying the role of traditional conflict management to promote social solidarity, cooperation and harmonious relationships between people. It can be used as a means to empowerments of the people in the decision making processes in relation to conflict management.

The government of Ethiopia and the regional government give attention to the traditional conflict management system like, Gomy and using them to support the formal court system by enhancing their capacity without politicizing them in order to preserve their legitimacy and trust among the people.

Federal, regional governments and other stakeholders must take measures to protect, preserve and promote its value to another community in order to learn how to solve conflicts without upsetting any established order.

Sufficient attention needs be given to support this kind of research in conflict management system working together with different institutions to disseminations and publications of materials, papers and other results.

Government and Non-Governmental Organizations who works in peace building and conflict resolution should provide moral and material support for individuals and institutions who are participating in studying and reserving the culture.

Incorporating Gomy in the formal educational system can help to create or produce responsible citizens, understand the role of indigenou Knowledge not only in the area of conflict management but, also other dimensions. For instance, political, economic and social aspects. Since, Gomy play important role in the political, economic and social life of the Gamo people.

It can be studied by academic disciplines like, philosophy, Tourism, development, law and other related social science filed by higher education institutions to utilize for the development of social and economy of the Gamo people and for the county in general.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1 Questions for Key Informant Interview

- 1) What is conflict? How do you understand conflict?
- 2) Does Gomy exist?
- 3) What is the conception of wrong or unacceptable practice among Gamo people?
- 4) What are the major causes of conflict that exist in your locality?
- 5) What are the main reasons that trigger people into conflict in your area?
- 6) Where the process of conflict resolution is taking place? Would you describe the setting where the resolution takes place? How do the people perceive the place? If there is any symbolic or ritual meaning attached to the place?
- 7) How do you describe the role of Gomy in supporting other TCM instrument to make balanced decision and accepted by everyone?
- 8) How does the indigenous conflict resolution institution resolve cases which involve homicide? If there is a feuding in your locality, what are the mechanisms to stop the feud? (Probe, for compensation or the ritual of purification to stop the feuding).
- 9) What are the procedures used in resolving conflicts through Gomy in your locality?
- 10) What are the selection criteria for elders in the Gomy conflict resolution institution?
- 11) What are the ways used by these indigenous conflict resolution institutions to enforce the decisions? Are there any religious or social sanctions to enforce the decisions?
- 12) Are there any religious or ritual performances before and after the conflict resolution?
- 13) Is there a collaborative work between the indigenous conflict resolution mechanism and formal court system?
- 14) What types of conflicts are difficult to resolve through Gomy as a traditional conflict management institution?
- 15) What could your institution do in such difficult situations?

**Thank you Very Much.**

## Appendix 1. Questions for Focus Group Discussion (FDG).

1. What is conflict for you?
2. How do Gamo people understand conflict?
3. What is Gomy for Gamo people? As a traditional conflict management instrument? How do you describe its role in supporting other instrument like (Dubashe, Dere Duuleta, lappun cima, gade cima and yaagano) etc., and help elders to make “right decisions” and accepted by all conflicting groups?
4. Does Gomy really exist and do people believe in the practice? What are the perception, attitudes and views about Gomy among the community?
5. What are the major causes of conflict that exist in your locality?
6. How do people describe the role of Gomy in solving the complex conflict situation in the area? Is there unique or new experience or the conflict which was a challenging for elders, and adopt new ways of dealing the situation?

Like:-

- Conflict between two wives in different place (Addis Ababa and Arba Mench) with different ethnic and religious background.
- Rape, if families want to solve through traditional conflict management (how rape handle this issue)? What about someone from family member rape another member of a family? What does imply for the community from cultural or religious point of view?
- Conflict emerged when someone or some group of people violate the social norm, which is unacceptable by the community.

For instance, prostitution, chewing Khat and stealing mobile cell phone?

- Car accident
  - Conflict between followers of orthodox Christianity and protestant?
  - If someone visit some scary place among the Gamo people, cut trees or causing damage to the area or environment? How Gomy is dealing with the issue as instrument for conflict management?
7. Is there a meaning or different interpretation of using firearm or spear to attack or kill someone? How Gomy is dealing with the issue as instruments for conflict management?
  8. Is there any cultural symbol or tools using to resolve conflict like pot or any equipment? (Shape, size and material).

9. Which day is more preferable to solve conflict by elders through Gomy? Why?
10. What is the role of women in Gomy?
11. Can you tell me about the sociocultural development of Gomy?
12. What are the challenges of Gomy as a traditional conflict management instrument? Is it government institution or religious institutions?
13. Is Gomy adaptable with the new social -political development in the area?
14. How do describe the role of Gomy as TCM instrument in the success of Gamo elders in resolving conflict taken as a good example by the Ethiopian government, since it contain religious and cultural aspect in decision making to any conflict?
15. Why people respect Gomy? As TMC institution?
16. How does Gomy survive modernization, urbanization and the advent of Christianity in the region?
17. Is Gomy favorable to minority groups? Are they accepted at the institution if they want to solve their problems?
18. How do you explain the binding force of Gomy? What will happen if someone rejects the decision made by elders in the current trend?

**Thank you very much for your time.**

### **Appendx.3**

#### Observation list

1. Attending the place where conflict management will progress.
2. Observing and collecting traditional house hold equipment used in conflict management activity.
3. Visiting public places where conflict management and conflict resolution activities took place. For instance, (**Dubbusha**).
4. Taking personal observation in the study area that could create or aggravate the existing problems (like road from Arbamench to Chench a total distance 35km). In some case, people associated lack of infrastructure in the study area is the result of discrimination between Dere (small tribal group), fevering one's own area at the expense others.