

# Inter-Ethnic Conflicts Between the Hadiya and Halaba of Ethiopia: Major Factors, Resolution Mechanisms and Current Trends

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## *Abstract*

Inter-ethnic conflicts become a pervasive and salient dimension of socio-political discourses in several countries of the world. Most of such conflicts are linked with resource management at the mosaic boundaries of ethnicities. In the present study populations, violent conflicts have been experienced in the years 2012-2014 and peaceful co-existence in border areas has been affected since then. The two communities had a long history of close relationships. The major objective of the study was to investigate the underlying causes and consequences of inter-ethnic conflicts between the Hadiya and Halaba ethnic groups, SNNPR, Ethiopia. The study also targeted to explore the triggering factors of conflict and institutions involved the conflict resolution process. Methodologically, the study employed a qualitative research approach with purposive sampling method. The tools used to collect data were in-depth key informant interview, focus group discussion, case study and relevant documents analysis. Data analysis was made thematically and narratives were included. The major findings of the study indicated that economic, political and socio-cultural factors have played a great role for inter-ethnic conflicts in the study area. Furthermore, the ethnocentric actions of exclusion and marginalization of a minority group (Muslim Halaba) adjacent to Halaba Zone by a majority group (Christian Hadiya) in Hadiya Zone led the conflict to antagonistic featured competitions. Efforts that have been made so far by local system of conflict resolution mechanisms to curb these conflicts through formal and informal institutions have been useful. However, sustainable peace-full co-existence among the two groups couldn't be maintained.

*Keywords:* inter-ethnic conflict, ethnic group, Hadiya people, Halaba people, Ethiopia.

## 1. Introduction

Conflict is a situation in which two or more actors pursue incompatible goals, whereby one of the actors' experience damage and the other actor causes this damage intentionally, or ignores it (Wolf, 2006). According to Gololcha (2015), conflict is a common phenomenon among human beings. Groups and individuals experienced it in their day-to-day life while they are interacting among themselves. Conflict is a worldwide reality that knocks at the door of developed and developing nations (Jalali & Lipset, 1992). Conflict takes its origins in economic differentiation, social change, cultural formation, psychological development and political organization. Ethnic conflict is one particular type of such conflicts that the goals of at least one

conflicting party is defined in ethnic terms, and in which the primary fault line of confrontation is one of ethnic distinctions (Wolf, 2006). In ethnic conflict whatever the concrete issues are there over which conflict erupts, at least one of the conflicting parties will explain its discontent in ethnic terms (Nguyen, 2010).

Ethnic conflict is now a pervasive and salient dimension of political and social conflicts in several countries of the world. Wimmer (2004), cited in Jinadu (2007), has observed “Over the past decades, ethno-nationalist conflict has become the dominant form of mass political violence. The overwhelming majority of civil wars in the post-cold war era were fought in the name of ethno-national autonomy or independence.” Since the end of the Cold War, the number of ethnic conflicts continued to increase.

It is true that, in Africa, since the mid-1960s there have been prolonged and protracted ethnic-related violent political conflicts (Jinadu, 2007). Similarly, Abdala (2002) stated that since the end of the Cold War the majority of conflicts in Africa are internal conflicts; in other words, conflicts between social groups. Furthermore, the UN General Secretary Report on Africa (1999) stated the multi-ethnic character and politicization of ethnicity in Africa as a cause to conflict. Yatiani (2015) also stated that African societies, like other developing nation societies, have been undergoing a crisis due to inter-ethnic conflicts since pre-colonial times. This trend did not break even after colonization. From the inception of colonization, the range and magnitude of these conflicts have escalated to different shapes and dimensions posing serious conflict challenges in the world today. Multi-ethnic Africa is troubled by such ethnic conflicts. Together with other factors, the recent waves of democratization in continental Africa have added a momentum to the conflicts and have highlighted the salience of ethnicity and ethnic identities in both the political arena and other areas of national activity (Asebe, 2007).

Ethnic conflicts have been a long and pervasive problem in Ethiopia. There is a consensus among scholars (Bantayehu, 2016; Bahru, 2008; Dagne, 2014) that the inter-group conflict, particularly in recent times, is on the increase. The country has gone through a long history of ethnic suppression, discrimination and ignorance (Sara, 2003). Accordingly, in the imperial system, the defining features were the exclusion of the mass of the population from the process of government activities, and the economic exploitation of the producers by an ethnically defined ruling class. The successor of the regime, the military government, had made an effort to build a unitary nation out of many with rhetoric and military actions.

The military regime failed due to massive resistance from wide range of forces and replaced by transitional coalition government power. The transitional power was replaced by the ruling party Ethiopian People’s Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), with the quest for ethno-cultural justice, equality and self-determination of ethnic groups. While EPRDF assumed power, the politicized ethnicity arguably was securitized and the FDRE Constitution has chosen to concentrate on federalism with the positive elements of ethnicity: its ability to provide a group of people that share language and cultural values with a sense of common identity, collective purpose, advantages which it believes can be usefully harnessed for social, economic, and political development (Sara, 2003).

The frequency and magnitude of inter-group conflicts have been increased and the causes of conflicts and the actors involved have become more complex in the world (Asnake et. al., 2013). According to Eriksen (cited in Abraham Asnake, 2015) for instance, between the years 1990-2002 there were 58 major armed conflicts in the whole world. Among those violent conflicts, the ethnic ones comprised the greater part, Africa hosting the lion share of all (19 ethnic conflicts) followed by; the Asian, Middle East region, Europe and America continents which witnessed 17, 9, 8, and 5 ethnic conflicts, respectively. These conflicts have been directly responsible for increased deaths, destruction of property, poverty, hunger, starvation, disease, fear, suspicion, mistrust, insecurity and general hopelessness within the warring communities (Crawford, 1998).

Hadiya and Halaba have co-existed in a complete peaceful and harmonious way in different governmental rules (Alebachew & Samuel, 2010). Despite such earlier situation, the relationship between these two ethnic groups has basically changed following the downfall of the Derg (military) regime and with the succession of EPRDF to power. The frequent occurrence of violent ethnic conflict since then and its devastating effect on human security made this problem an important topic for the present study.

Several researches on conflict have been done at the regional state contexts, SNNPR (Abraham, 2015; Bantayehu, 2016; Asnake et al., 2013). Different researchers and experts believe that still ethnic conflict researches are not properly addressed. The persistence of inter-ethnic violence suggests that there is still much work to be done in terms of understanding why such violence arises, what is their effects on socio-economic activities and how it can be resolved. The same holds true for the Hadiya and Halaba case, which so far was not exhaustively addressed. Thus, the following emerging issues required further investigations: (1) what are the underlying causes that lead to conflict between the Halaba and Hadiya ethnic groups in SNNPRS? (2) What have been the socio-economic effects of the conflicts existed between the two communities? (3) What are the roles played by governmental bodies (regional and local governments) and local customary conflict management institutions in controlling and managing inter-group (inter-ethnic) conflicts in the study area?

## 2. Methodology

Considering the ontological dimension of the topic to be investigated, considering social reality is subjective fact (constructivism), the researchers utilized a qualitative research approach to apply in-depth considerations of socio-political realities. Both primary and secondary data sources were utilized to obtain relevant information required to carry out the study. The primary data were collected through key informant interview, focus group discussion, case studies and casual conversations. A key informant was selected on the basis of the diverse knowledge background they have on their respective professions and institutional representations. Accordingly, those individuals who are well versed in the culture, tradition, and history of their respective groups were selected as key interviewees. Case interviews were incorporated in connection with earlier violent conflict situations. Secondary data from different sources (published journal articles and books, unpublished *Kebele* archives and *Woreda* police reports) pertinent to the conflict and its resolution endeavors were used. Collected data was analyzed thematically and narrations were incorporated.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1 *The pre-conflict relationships between the two groups*

The Hadiya and Halaba peoples have social and economic ties and shared various cultural practices. These common elements have made their resemblance far much stronger, deeper and ample than their dissimilarities. These two people have a long history of friendly relationships, as per elders. Hadiya and Halaba have lived together peacefully under different governmental rules. During the imperial regime, both ethnic groups belonged to the then *Kambata Awuraja Gizat*. Consequently, in the course of time both ethnic groups, like any other ethnic groups, were subjected to heavily centralized administration from the ruling political centre. In effect, the relations of both ethnic communities with central ruling authorities were thus more or less similar. Although the Derg military regime carried out an administrative restructuring within the former province, the two adjacent communities continued to live within the same provincial administrative structure.

Correspondingly, in the present study, the interviewees and FGD participants of both groups indicated that both of the group had collaborated with each other during good and bad times when they were administered under the same administrative structure. They also used to participate in different forms of social institutions and events of one another, such as funerals, weddings and inter-marriage ceremonies. Their strong bond also goes to the extreme of wishing good fortunes to one another in proceedings like rituals and yearly holidays and collaboration in times of external threats.

### *3.2 Contributing factors for inter-group conflicts*

From our discussion in the preceding section, we can comprehend that there were concrete social inter-connections and cooperation among the two ethnic groups. We didn't observe any significant violent conflicts among the two groups that can be considered as inter-ethnic conflicts. Therefore, if ethnicity by itself is not the fundamental cause for the violent conflict existed in the recent years among these two groups, the question becomes, what caused their contemporary contention and inter-group conflicts? It is elusive to find a single factor that accounts for every conflict. A number of interwoven and intercepted causes contribute to conflict in one way or the other (Sisay, 2007). Likewise, as the results from key informants, case studies and FGD participants indicated, a blend of factors can be considered the causes inter-ethnic conflict between Hadiya and Halaba. Accordingly, the contributing factors of Hadiya-Halaba inter-ethnic conflicts can be classified as structural and triggering factors. The structural factors include subsistence economy, ethnicity based political system, and socio-cultural issues.

#### *3.2.1 Economic factors contributed to inter-ethnic conflicts*

The study found out that the land use issue is a central conflict problem in the area. Based on the data obtained from FGD participants, key informant interviewees and case study participants, the major factor is linked with land use. Related to progressive increase in population size in the study area, share of land to be used by each house hold decreased progressively and led to smaller land holdings. This problem is acute in *Misrak Badewacho Woreda* where the total population practices farming as subsistence economy. The population size pressure sped up the competition over the land resource that led to conflict between the two groups. The results of such land resources limitation become vibrant in conjunction with the subsistence agricultural practice of the area on which the livelihood of the total population depends. One of the key informants stated that, both the Hadiya and Halaba led their economic activities and earned their means for living through agricultural activities. They are agrarian people whose economic activity dominantly depended on farming. In effect, most of their cordial and conflictual relationship revolved around the land resource. The land resource is used for both crop production and animal husbandry, the mixed agricultural practices.

#### *3.2.2 Political factors contributed to inter-ethnic conflicts*

The Halaba informants at *Gegera Kebele* state that, in our joint existence we have experienced a long history of harmonious relations. The Hadiya-Halaba conflict was not produced by the existence of ethnic differences or ancient hatred. Instead, it was the result of modern ethnic manipulation of administrative issues for political interests and other instrumental features. The new political system put in place the ethnic difference as a politicized existing difference and added a dimension of "us" and "them" between the two groups. "Us" and "them" polarity surpassed the elements of similarities (shared socio-cultural features) and magnified the differences. In this regard, the existing empirical fact in the study area shows that there is a trend of institutional

exclusion and marginalization of a minority ethnic groups by a majority (Hadiya) ethnic group in the study area. In this connection, not only ethnic minority group exclusion but also religion-based exclusion and marginalization was observed within the Hadiya ethnic group.

Likewise, many Halaba ethnic group informants reflected their deep dissatisfaction of being dominated and discriminated during their historical relation with Hadiya. As a result, there is an uneven job opportunity and unfair power distribution, unfair distribution of natural resources, and prejudiced administrative treatments. The *Halaba* minority ethnic group members, who are living in the same *Woreda* (district) with Hadiya have no representation in administrative structure. The Halaba who are living in Hadiya Zone are treated as secondary citizens; hence marginalized in all benefits related to social, economic and political spheres. As to them, it was these ethnocentric actions of the Hadiya authorities, which lead to antagonistic featured competitions, then questions of self-administration and latterly, to ethnic related conflicts between the two groups of people. Thus, the border districts are in a continuous stress related to power relations among the ethnic group members.

### 3.2.3 Socio-cultural factors contributed to inter-ethnic conflicts

Information obtained from key informants, FGD participants and case study members revealed that dominative actions and attitudes upon language, culture and traditions was another underlying cause of conflict between two groups. Dissatisfaction of the Halaba ethnic group members grew to an increased demand to exercise their own language, culture and traditions, particularly following the promulgation of the new constitution in 1995. The constitution of the country gave the right to education through the mother's tongue; but as of 1995 the Hadiya have planned to give education to all children in the zone by *Hadiyissa*, regardless of the children of other ethnic groups living in the Zonal administrative structure. The children of the Halaba ethnic group members in *Misrak Badawacho Woreda* were forced to learn in *Hadiyissa*. It had a significant negative impact on their educational development related to the future of the children. Thus, medium of learning in education and the mother tongue issue become the major conflict issue. Most of children from the Halaba ethnic group households gave up the learning process. The Halaba group dissatisfied with the language issue in the education system and confronted the administration by claiming "the right of children to learn with their mother tongue".

The people of Halaba in Misrak Badwacho District did not have access to judiciary, administrative and public services due to the language barrier. As a result of this, the Hadiya and Halaba who were allying or having friendly relations altered automatically to competitive relations. Thus, some of extreme competitions among the group members ended up in a conflict.

In sum, in the present study, we have seen a kind of different but interrelated justifications and causes for the rise of ethnic based conflict between the Hadiya and Halaba. These three major contributing factors and other related factors have been re-enforcing one another leading to current violent conflicts. Therefore, it would not be necessary and appropriate to choose only one of them and consider it as the basic cause of the hostility among these people. The conflicts have created insecurity, devastated economic development and increased abuses. The people have experienced violations of human rights in the study area.

### 3.3 Repercussions of the conflict

Where ever it occurs, ethnic conflict is characterized by negative impacts (Dagne, 2014). Likewise, the findings of the present study revealed that the conflict between the Hadiya and Halaba has affected people in different ways. The Halaba ethnic group case study respondents confirmed that the conflicts which took place in 2012-2014 resulted in displacement of people,

loss of many lives, disruption of family ties, destruction and looting of properties. The destructions include damages of houses, damages of farms, and looting the cattle and the households. Information obtained from FGD participants from both groups revealed that, effect of the 2012 ethnic conflicts had resulted in a deeper social, economic, psychological and political repercussions in the area.

As per the Hadiya Zone administrative structure report on Hadiya and Halaba ethnic conflict, loss of human life was the first of all social impacts in the study area. Even though accurate data is not mentioned regarding the exact number of displaced people, the Zonal administrative structure report indicated that in the 2012 violent conflict many people were injured, left homeless, displaced and killed. In the conflict, most of the victims were women aside from youth and adults (front fighters). Moreover, during the conflict women who gave birth and who were pregnant were forced to move from their home. The conflict destroyed social cohesion between the Hadiya and Halaba. Inter-ethnic marriages and familial ties between the two ethnic groups were broken and traumatized as animosities and questions of identity replaced love, romance and rapport. The interviewees from different government bodies confirmed that the ethnic conflict between Hadiya and Halaba damaged the economic resources of the area. For example, in the 2012 and 2014 conflicts, several individual properties were looted and damaged. In the 2012 conflict, social services such as markets and health institutions were destroyed. Moreover, individual houses particularly Halaba ethnic groups were burned and the people displaced from their home/residence.

The conflicts created psychological anguish, perplexity and discouragement in the area, that resulted various negative effects in addition to the revealed and unravelled conflict. As data obtained from the interview confirmed, because of fear and stress people lost their identity, assimilated and changed into Hadiya. Therefore, a number of Halaba communities who were living in the area were forced to change their residence to their own ethnic identity. Halaba ethnic group FGD participants stated that the ethno-linguistic division served as base for the growth of unusual ethnocentric outlooks between the two conflicted groups. The conflict also created a new categorization of “us” and “them”.

Political effects are other impacts of the conflict between Hadiya and Halaba. As many of the informants stated, the conflict not only had socio-economic and psychological impacts but also made political impact a reality. According to both FGD discussants and interviews with affected individual respondents, political anxieties were extremely intensified as the result of the 2012 violent conflict between the two groups. From the 2012 conflict onwards, there is a trend to politicize any dispute between an individual Hadiya and Halaba. Most of the clashes among Hadiya and Halaba individuals or groups are inferred in terms of ethnicity, no matter what the cause (boundary of farm land, dispute arisen over marital affairs, etc) and where the disagreement or dispute occurred (in the market, play field, in schools, etc). People opt to enter into the fighting immediately by joining their respective ethnic fellow men in the dispute.

#### *3.4 Formal conflict resolution efforts*

It is the prime responsibility of a particular government structure to keep peace and stability of its citizens. Due to lack of proactive leadership and preventive measures in the study area, a loss of many lives and damage of properties occurred in the past years. However, the military intervention ‘stopped’ the 2012 conflict after the enormous loss to life and property. There were various attempts at various levels, in regional and local governments, to alleviate violent inter-ethnic conflict between the two groups. The Hadiya-Halaba inter-group conflict management process started amid conflict tensions, which required military interventions of the responsible government organ. The primary responsible government organs to intervene in the conflict and made ceasefire possible are the regional government security forces. To this end, the

regional government sent regional peacekeeping armed forces; the violent actions between the groups were immediately put under control. The armed force managed to control the violence by arresting some pioneer leaders of the violation acts, robbers and other criminals related to the conflict process. The security forces created stability for continued discussion between the two group representatives. The Halaba ethnic group members in some villages of the Hadiya District started to return to their home that were forced to flee from their native localities for safety at the time of violation.

To stabilize the peace process, the armed force remained in the area for a year. However, after a year the armed peace keeping force left the area before creating a peaceful co-existence situation. The conflict situation remained unsolved. This gap opened the way for the violation to be re-erupted in 2014, after two years. Therefore, again the regional peace keeping force came to settle the problem in the conflict area until the final resolution was established in 2015. As the key informants from Zonal government structure offices stated, local and regional government established peace committees after the 2012 Hadiya-Halaba bloodshed violent conflict to manage the conflict. The committee was organized from regional security forces, administration office, police commission; Hadiya Zone police and security department; Halaba Zone security and administration office; and *Misrak Badawacho* District security and administration office. The composition of the peace committees also comprised representation of different sections of the communities. As such, elders, women, religious leaders and the youth constitute the membership of the committees. These joint committee members were led by the Regional Justice and Security Bureau representative and the SNNPR Council of Nationalities representative. The committee members were trying to handle problems in time, before they escalate and expand to other areas. The committee, therefore, was overlooking, assessing and investigating as well as managing the conflicts occurring between the two ethnic groups.

### 3.5 Customary conflict resolution efforts

In 2015, the regional government at last has taken a measure of integrating a customary structure known as *Seera* to mediate the two groups through council of elders and made reconciliation between victims of the recurring clashes. This shared customary mechanism of the Hadiya and Halaba people was very important in resolving conflicts of any level to ensure social stability and maintain peaceful co-existence (social relations) among the two peoples. For instance, if conflict has taken place between two individuals, small groups of people or amid ethnic groups traditional elders of the two people intervene and sort out the problem following their traditional conflict management regulations. The same was done by elders of both groups during the conflicts which erupted among them.

The council of elders (*lommanna*) recruited from Hadiya, Halaba and other neighbouring communities got involved and made great efforts towards achieving sustainable peace. Particularly, both regional states and local governments' peace committee, organized elders (*lommanna*) from the Hadiya and Halaba ethnic group members and other neutral representations, such Oromo and Kambat-Tambaro. In such cases, the council totally comprised fifteen members, to mediate the conflicted groups through their own native conflict resolution system. As Hadiya and Halaba informants explained, the committee of these elders first gathered together and talked about the way they settle the conflict in a typical and harmonious manner. Then, they made promises not to side or demonstrate ethnic preferential treatments at the time of their arbitration and reconciliation practice.

According to the interview with key informants with regards to *Seera*, the conflict settlement and reconciliation process by the traditional system has been started following discussions among the elder group members. Then what follow was council of elders' influenced people from their respective sides to come together, and discuss on the issue of disagreement and

eventually arrive at consensus as to how to resolve the problems. They then conclude their agreements with the oath under the *Hidiil seera* ritual. The process in general took about two solid months to come to a peaceful end. Then “*Xiigguula*” (purification ritual) was performed to clean the killers for having bloodshed in the conflict. At the presence of both ethnic groups together, first one black sheep was slaughtered then, one white as well. Elders facilitated oath performance procedure, by tying the killers’ and deceased group representative thumbs and toes with intestine of the killed black sheep. Finally, the elders encouraged the conflicting parties to cut by themselves.

Culturally, this Oath performance procedure implies that the bloodshed type of conflict recognized the final resolution. Then, after this purification act, families of the victims and criminals from both groups joined together to signify their reunification and finalised with a big feast. As a final phase, the elders declared that if any one of the two groups tried to avenge or kill one another again, they would be alienated and face rejection from the society. This social sanction is considered legal according to the oral law of *Hidiil Seera*. Through such an indigenous conflict resolution mechanism, the two sides formally declared that the conflict was over and promised not to fight against each other in the future. Following this assertion, it was agreed not to enter into conflict any more against one another.

#### 4. Conclusion

The Hadiya and Halaba people shared a common social and cultural practice, cradle land, ancestral myth, economic relations, and intermarriage alliance. They have experienced peaceful co-existence for long period. Following the succession of EPRDE regime into power in 1991, inter-ethnic tensions and rivalry began to be a common experience between the two groups. They have faced unprecedented violent conflict first in 2012 and again for the second time in 2014 which adversely impacted the image of long-standing cooperative relations among the two peoples.

The major contributing factors for the inter-ethnic violent conflicts between the Hadiya-Halaba found to have economic, political, and socio-cultural dimensions. Among the economic factors, land use for subsistence livelihood contributed to the major position. Among the political dimensions, the divide “us” and “them” contributed to the greater extent which resulted in the breakdown of the usual traditional conflict resolution process by the elders. Similarly, among the socio-cultural factors, the education system and the mother tongue issue by the Hadiya that resulted in marginalization of minority group members contributed most important.

From the present study, we have learned that political elites of both groups in using ethnicity as an instrument in mobilizing the people in order to immerse them into violent conflicts. The political elites of both the Hadiya and Halaba ethnicity had immensely contributed to the Hadiya-Halaba violent conflicts of the 2012. The second-round violent conflict of 2014 has been the result of negligence from the political elites of both sides. These violent conflicts that took place in 2012 and 2014 caused several civilian casualties, large numbers of human displacement and other diversified forms of social, political, psychological and economic repercussions.

From the present study, we have also studied that there were attempts to resolve the conflicts at various levels, by both regional and local governments. The measures from government side have been initiated after the first violent inter-ethnic conflict of 2012 between the two groups. Thus, the intervention of the government in managing conflict in the study area was after much bloodshed and destruction of properties. Furthermore, the local and regional government structures failed to finalize the formal conflict resolution process immediately after the first-round violent conflict. The security forces from the regional government (SNNPR) who have managed to



stop further bloodshed among the two peoples in the first-round conflict left the conflict zone and the second-round violent conflict happened in 2014, after a year.

The second-round violent conflict was similarly made under control by the efforts of the regional security forces. Following the second round conflict of 2014, formal efforts by both the regional and Zonal government bodies facilitated the mediation and reconciliation process among the two groups. Mediation and reconciliation process was done via customary conflict resolution mechanism. The council of elders (*lommanna*) were recruited from Hadiya, Halaba and other neighbouring communities. With the assistance of political elites in the formal government structure, the council of elders got involved in conflict resolution process and made great efforts towards achieving sustainable peace and co-existence. Finally, a traditional purification ritual ("*Xiigguula*") was performed to clean the killers for having bloodshed in the conflict process and to build the broken peace among the two peoples. Culturally, the purification ritual implies that the bloodshed as a result of violent conflicts have got recognition and the final resolution is set by both parties.

Even though the collaborative efforts of local elders and the formal system ended the conflict, the study has revealed that the efforts were not totally able to solve the inter-group conflicts among the two groups of people. The government structures didn't give a lasting solution to the fundamental causes of the conflict. There are still some sorts of grievances and ethnic tensions among both parties. Halaba ethnic group affiliated Muslim minorities who are living in border villages (*Kebeles*) of the *Misrak Badewacho* District (Hadiya Zone) are tirelessly raising the issue of integration with their fellow Halaba ethnic group government structure (Halaba Zone), of SNNPR State. Thus, the present study confirmed that ethnicity based government structures in the country, used as instrument of political power, structurally affected the co-existence of at least the border area peoples and the present Hadiya-Halaba conflicts can be taken as a typical example.

##### 5. The way forward

Based on the result of data analysis and presentation, the following suggestions are forwarded as a way to address the existing challenges of managing and resolving the conflict and effectively building long lasting peace between Hadiya and Halaba.

Most of the time, ethnic conflicts lead to violence; social strives and convert into felonious crimes and civil wars. Thus, if there is any, it should be handled properly from the very beginning. If it is treated well, it might not have led to destruction of property, loss of human life and threats to development. A proactive early warning and response system is needed to identify conflict risks at an early stage and take action to prevent the escalation of tension into violent conflict. Early warning involves a systematic collection of information, analysis and reporting which should then trigger proactive early response.

Interventions by the government will not only be a fire brigade service rather there should be a long lasting solution to the problem by the concerned bodies which require a holistic and integrated approach. Such an intervention can create an obstacle in resolving conflict sustainably. Such measures might be possible to control the tension. But it doesn't end in a positive peace, but negative peace. At this time, it looks that there is comparative amity in the Hadiya-Halaba neighbourhood's and normal relations among the groups regained. However, complete stability is not yet secured. Therefore, supposed to be priorities for community-based local peace building endeavours. It is crucial that these interventions are designed through dialogue with local communities to ensure that they reflect community needs and priorities and they do not exacerbate conflict or mistrust between communities by fuelling perceptions of unfair advantage to some groups.

People in the area should be thought of about the values of tolerance in order to eliminate the possibility of occurring of conflict. The concerned bodies should give to the people in the area continuous training to create awareness about the benefits and advantage of peaceful co-existence and vice versa. Fraternity of people should be promoted in order to maintain peaceful co-existence between the two conflicting societies.

The SNNPR state, Hadiya and Halaba Zonal administrations should involve themselves and attempt to radically solve problems thereby participating elders from both sides and using customary mechanisms of conflict settlement. In order to benefit from the customary methods and to make a meaningful link between the two systems, the government should work in the direction of integrating and strengthening the indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution into the conventional legal system. Commitment on the part of the local elders, and local government authorities from both sides could no doubt help to handle the situation. It is also very important to encourage the role of women, youth, NGOs and the media in peace making processes. More, all members of the societies should be involved in peace building procedure.

The two Zonal administrations should work hand-in-hand in order to identify the conflict provokers and take corrective actions against them in such a way bothers can learn a lesson. In the study area, competition over natural resources (i.e. farm land) is one of the underlying causes of the conflict. Majority of the competitors over farmland and front fighters during the conflict are youth and adults. Therefore, to alleviate the problem, the Regional and Zonal governments should create alternative income generating economic activities for the youth and adults through enhancing job creation and job opportunity.

The questions raised by the people should require timely response as delays may lead to devastation of property and human lives. It is clear from the research findings that fundamental cause for Hadiya-Halaba friction is related to social, political and economic institutional discrimination and relatively marginal position of the Halaba resulting from the new state restructuring. Throughout the study, it was displeasure over uneven distribution of financial resources, trade benefits, political power, job opportunities, schools, health centers, and other forms of infrastructures, which has led the two groups into violent conflicts. Thus, through increasing impartial delivery of the above mentioned resources and infrastructures it is possible to resolve the problem.

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