



## THE ROLE OF GADA INSTITUTION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION AMONG GABRA, GUJI AND BORENA OROMO, SOUTHERN ETHIOPIA

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### Abstract

*Like different ethnic societies across the world, Oromo, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, has an indigenous institution called 'Sirna Gada' denoted hereafter as Gada System. It reported as best democratic governance institution innovated hundreds of years before the inexistence of modern democracy, more acceptable and effective up to date than formal institution within Oromo community in ruling their overall socio-economic and political courses of life. Despite the more than 83 ethnic and linguistic based groups in Ethiopia, there is a need to look for and promote the most effective and community-acceptable conflict resolution mechanism in an effort to maintain sustainable peace and security internally in the country; which could be using Indigenous informal institutions. Thus, a role of Gada institution in conflict resolution among the Gabra, Guji and Borena Oromo communities in Southern Ethiopia are one that can deserve attention in this paper. The biggest challenge of today confronting humans is not about the occurrence of conflict, but how these conflicts are fully resolved whenever they occur to prevent them from further escalating. However, this Gada institution in Gabra, Guji and Borena Oromo areas has been overlooked and received less research attention. Thus, the present paper delineates the role of Gada institution in conflict resolution among Gabra, Guji and Borena communities. The paper recommends that the indigenous values of the Gada System of Gabra, Guji and Borena Oromo are viable and needs to be recognized and encouraged. The modern efforts of promoting and protecting the Oromo indigenous Gada system cultural values of the religious, economic, social and political aspects. The political aspect of Gada system deals with the, peace building, democratic, indigenous governance values etc. Therefore, there is a need to reconsider and create space for harmonizing indigenous cultural values of this indigenous Gada institution among Gabra, Guji and Borena Oromo communities in Southern Ethiopia in line with the modern administration.*

**Keywords:** Gabra, Guji and Borena Oromo, Gada Institution, Conflict Resolution

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the biggest challenges of confronting humans is not about the occurrence of conflict, but how these conflicts are fully resolved whenever they occur to prevent them from further escalating on elsewhere in the World. In Africa Continent, particularly in Ethiopia all ethnic groups have their own indigenous institutions which they developed to order and govern their own way of lives (Jemal, 2020). The Gada indigenous institution

among Oromo is one of the well-known and respected by the Oromo society at large in the Ethiopia country. Similarly, Tuma and Kumar (2021) argue that, Gada is a system of generational classes (*Luba*) that succeeded each other every eight years in assuming political, military, judicial, legislative, and ritual responsibilities. It is an egalitarian socio-political and cultural system of governance not only among the Oromo but also in the

other Cushitic peoples, like the Sidama, the Konso and the Gedeo (Jemjem and Gololcha, 2011). The Oromo, the largest ethnic group in Ethiopia, has exercised this system as a core and fundamental institution of governance through which they organize and lead their social, cultural and economic lives across long centuries of time. *Gada* system is one of the interesting ways of conflict resolution institution and well respected among the Oromo community in Ethiopia (Muleta and Irshad, 2018). The Oromo *Gada* System values are significant in preventing conflict and anything that violate peaceful interaction and post conflict reactive mechanisms that the *Gada* system employs to maintain peace in society (Debisa, 2022). Hence, there is a need to discuss that the *Gada* system has embedded in itself a peaceful means of peace building approaches both proactively and reactively. Furthermore, incorporating the *Gada* system's peace-building values, customary laws, and approaches into any peace-building effort has to be well enlightened. Therefore, the present paper is an attempt to delineate the role of *Gada* institution in conflict resolution among *Gabra*, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromo communities in Southern Ethiopia to bring sustainable peace with their neighbors that they have common borderlines together.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The present study is qualitative in nature to delineate the role of *Gada institution* in conflict resolution among *Gabra*, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromo communities in Southern Ethiopia. Both primary and secondary source data were collected through following qualitative design methodology. Purposive sampling was used for selection of key informants who were knowledgeable, experts or experienced in the area of *Gada* institution. The semi-structured interview schedule, in-depth interviews method and focus group discussions were employed to collect data from the key informants in different governmental organizations such as *Gabra*, *Guji* and *Borena* Zones Culture and Tourism offices, the Oromia culture and tourism, Ministry of Ethiopian Culture and tourism.

Key Informant Interview were employed with four well experienced experts that purposively selected from *Gabra*, *Guji* and *Borena* zones Culture and Tourism offices, the Oromia culture and tourism, and Ministry of Ethiopian Culture and tourism. These individuals who selected as participants of key informant interview were two female and two male who have the experiences for long time on this study areas.

Four focus group discussions, one for each community, were conducted to gather primary data for the study. The two groups are classified on the basis of their stage in *Gada* system life cycle; as participants and non-participants/ nominated parties in *Gada* System cycle. Thus, participants are parties who directly participated in *Gada* power; and thereby expected to have practical and sufficient experiences on the subject matter. They further grouped as: *Gada*, currently leading party; *Batu*, former *Gada*; and *Yuba*, two parties that gave power consecutively before the eight and sixteen years. Accordingly, five well experienced elders (four male and one female) were selected purposively from each group to form one FGD that constitutes thereby 15 members from the different experience ages for each community.

Non-participants are the two parties, namely *Dori* and *Raba*, consecutively upcoming generations in the *Gada* system life cycle. Accordingly, 5 expected future leaders were selected purposely to employ the second FGD for each community. Both male and female participants were involved, the elders and adults were selected on the basis of their knowledge and experience in the area

of *Gada institution* in conflict resolution among *Gabra*, *Guji* and *Borena*.

The secondary Data source was collected from published books, monographs, journals, documents, records and videos on *Gada* institution from the office of Culture and Tourism found in *Gabra*, *Guji* and *Borena* zones. Method of Data analysis employed, thematic description analysis, and the content analysis was made from the gathered data *Oromo* areas.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present paper is an attempt to delineate the role of *Gada* institution in conflict resolution in the *Guji Oromo* and *Gedeo*, *Guji Oromo* and *Gabra Oromo*, *Guji Oromo* and *Konso*, *Guji Oromo* and *Garri*, *Guji Oromo* and *Marihan*, *Guji Oromo* and *Burji*, *Guji Oromo* and *Kore*, *Guji Oromo* and *Sidama*, *Guji Oromo* and *Borena Oromo*, *Guji Oromo* and *Arsi Oromo*, *Borena Oromo* and *Garri*, *Konso* and *Borena Oromo*, *Borena Oromo* and *Gabra Oromo*, *Borena Oromo* and *Marihan*, *Borena Oromo* and *Burji* areas of Southern Ethiopia.

### 3.1. The origin of the *Gada* Institution

There is no one who knows the exact time when the *Gada institution* was started but there is some evidence from the social perception of the *Gada institution* is coping from the children at the place of *Gose fora* (mobile movement by cattle) in the *Borena* area (Jatani, 2015). There was a man called Ali Guracha before the establishment of *Gada* institution for long period who led Oromo people who was known as Ali an Omora. This institution of being ruled under one leader for long period of time made Oromo ethnic group more uncomfortable which led to despotism. It is believed that Oromos have been ruled by *Gada institution* for about 25 *Abba Gada* after *Gada* was instituted but no one knows the exact coherence even though they know the name of this *Abba Gada* that rule *Borena* for about 25 *Gada* period which is interpreted to 200 years since the term for one *Abba Gada* is eight years to rule community (Biratu and Kosa, 2020). In *Borena* the circle of handing over power by eight years period is resulted from the creation of human being since they belief that two thing are created next to human being during the period of creation i.e. something from the sky locally called *Bakalcha* and something from the land known as *woddesa* tree. The *Bakalcha* has eight angles from that they create eight years of period to rule community under *Gada* system and *woddesa* is respected and used for several ritual purposes or *Jila* (ceremonies) in *Gabra*, *Guji* and *Borena* communities. Even though, *Gada* system institution was followed by these communities for about 25 *Gada* periods which is 200 years of period there is some evidence that the *Borena Gada* institution is totally extinct for a period of 72 years due to the influence of religious issues especially the Muslim religion. In this connection, a man called *Gadayo Galgalo Yayya* revitalize *Gada* institution around 1448 years ago. Later on Dawwe Gobbo who systematically formulated the *sera* (law) for all the *Borena* Oromos.

### 3.2. The Significance of *Gada* Institution

The *Gada* institution has several relevance to the development process of society such as agriculture, animal husbandry, traditional medicine, saving and lending, community development, poverty alleviation, and peaceful coexistence (Balli, 2015). The ideological foundation of *Gada* institution is based on the principles of security and identity, unity, equality and egalitarianism (Mekonnen, 2016). According to *Gada* ideology, all

Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromos have the duty to protect those principles regardless of any political difference among the five *Gogessa* and different clans or moieties. The image of equality and egalitarianism among Oromo is essentially an image of political and administrative power, the fair distribution of resources and economy, and equality. There is economic egalitarianism that every male members of the Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* communities are equal in terms of power and economy; and there are no class differences in Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* peoples. There is political egalitarianism since every male member of these communities are equal standing in terms of political office regardless of their clan, kinship and political belief (Uddesa, 2014). In Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromo, the legal egalitarianism principles consider every members of the society as equal under the law. The moral egalitarianism also involves in *Gabra, Guji* and *Borena* communities that each person is of equal moral worth, and the *Gada* System of *Gabra, Guji and Borena* as a democratic egalitarianism institution considers each and every male member of these communities has an equal voice in public affairs. However, as an egalitarian society both men and women are supposed to be equal in all types of egalitarianism. Fairness for both men and women supposed to be for both sexes (Aliye, 2019). Therefore, the *Gada* system institution in Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* governs its people without any bias.

According to key informants and focus group discussants, the major causes for conflict in pastoral and agro-pastoral areas are territorial expansionary moves, competition over declining resources, cattle raiding and counter raiding. After the introduction and implementation of ethnic based boundaries, the issue of administrative boundaries of these three Oromo regions in general *Guji-Oromo* and *Gedeo, Guji-Oromo* and *Burji, Guji-Oromo* and *Sidama, Guji-Oromo* and *Gabra-Oromo, Guji-Oromo* and *Arsi-Oromo, Guji-Oromo* and *Garri, Guji-Oromo* and *Marihan, Guji-Oromo* and *Kore, Guji-Oromo* and *Konso, Borena-Oromo* and *Konso, Borena-Oromo* and *Burji, Borena-Oromo* and *Gabra-Oromo, Borena-Oromo* and *Guji-Oromo, Borena-Oromo* and *Marihan, Borena-Oromo* and *Garri* clans from Somali in particular has become another source of conflicts in the area. The *Gada* class in power through its *Abba Gada* looks after the well-functioning of the *Gada* system among the Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena*. The ruling performance of *Abba Gada* during his term not to forget his people and core values of *Gada* institute for his own personal benefits (Debele, 2018). The *Abba Gada* has mandate to refrain from involving in the business of the *Qallu* institution. *Qallu*: institution by which disputant parties present their case to the spiritual leader known as *Abba Qallu*. Similarly, there is also *Jarsuma* where three parties bring the case to the village elderly called *Jarsa*.

### 3.3. The Role of *Gada* Institution in Conflict Resolution

The conflict resolution aims at identifying the main causes of a conflict so as to put an end to the conflict to ensure sustainable peace and a set of techniques for resolving conflict with the assistance of third party. Accordingly, the *Gada* institution embedded the indigenous knowledge of conflict prevention and resolution. It operates neither through the institution of *feud* nor through a single person. The Institutionalized and multiple leadership of *Gada* political institution makes the conflict prevention and resolution completely by ordered anarchy system. In contrast to its political institution, *Gada* conflict resolution mechanism is highly hierarchal and its process is unique from other traditional and modern institutions of conflict resolution (Diriba,

2008). The institution by itself involves an institution of avoiding the cause of conflicts through norms and institutional formulation. The *Gada* approach is based on promoting an institutional problem solving in collaboration with different divisions of *Gada* institution. Therefore, the Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* are not mere witness of conflict resolution principles rather the objective is to restore social order. The request of guilt or fault is important for trial in case of criminal and civil matters. Unlike modern judicial proceedings where denial of guilt is possible even if it is relatively known who committed or omitted. In Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena*, the traditional conflict management institution cannot proceed to trial institution without securing the admission of the offence since the purpose of *Gada* customary trial institution is in principle not to determine who committed the offence rather why the offence is committed and how it can be corrected. And there is deeply rooted norm of forgiveness among the Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* communities which is a part of their customary law brings the offender and victim face to face and it encourages the family of the victim to forgive the family of the offender. This has a power of healing the wound and ultimately it restores the peace and the people believe in beyond the modern courts' reasoning and adjudication. Hence, by all means people prefer to settle their disputes in an amicable manner to build the peace together.

According to the Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena Gada* justice institution there is no need to imprison an offender even if he was found guilty rather he or she shall remain in the community and pay compensation for the damage caused. In cases of serious offenses, however, an offender shall banish from the country. The effect of expulsion of an offender from the society is for reaching which is an insult to his or her family and embarrassment to his or her clan. It is deeply rooted norm among the Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* that as good deeds of a member of certain beautify the image of his or her clan, and failure to norms of Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* damages the reputation of his or her family and clan. Moreover, crime is considered as a break down in social bonds that connects individuals and communities. It is a public matter which deals with members collectively and take part in recovering damaged relationships since this mechanism of indigenous conflict management followed in the past as well as present which is well taken by these communities than earlier.

### 3.4. The steps of *Gada* institution in conflict resolution

According to the Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromo communities, clansmen are expected to settle their disputes harmoniously at clan meetings. Decisions are made by consensus, and reference is constantly made to the body of customary law called *Aadaa Gabra, Aadaa Guji* and *Aadaa Borena*. The decisions and penalties are made by *Gada* councils or assemblies (Bassi and Tache, 2011). If a consensus decision is impossible, or one of the parties does not accept the decision, then the case can be referred to a clan assembly locally known as *Kora Gosa*. If the matter is not settled at clan level, the issue is taken to *Gada* institute, then finally it goes to the ultimate assembly of appeal which is the assembly of all *Gumi Boko* and *Gumi Gayo* that held every eight years at *Me'e Boko* and *Gayo*. Edosa et.al (2007) mentioned that inter-clan matters were resolved by the *Gada* and *Qallu* councils. The councils rely mainly on persuasion and the rhetorical threat of sanctions including fines and corporal punishments, however, which are not usually implemented. The ultimate sanction is exclusion from the *Nagaa Gabra* (the peace of Gabra), *Nagaa Guji* (the peace of the *Guji*) and *Nagaa Borena* (the peace of the *Borena*) and that person will not be greeted or blessed and will not



receive social and ritual support and may be cursed (*Abaarsa*). However, admission of guilt and the public humiliation of asking forgiveness involving using ritual formulas and or/ridicule can lead to the sentence being reduced or even waved (Moore, 2005). Unlawful and civil wrongs are punishable pursuant to the provisions of the *Seera Aadaa Gabra*, *Seera Aadaa Guji* and *Seera Aadaa Borena*. The punishments include death penalty; payment of blood price with or without a reconciliation ceremony; expatriate; exclusion from association and participation in the communal socio-economic activities; corporal punishment; condemnation of the wrongdoer; and asking for apologies depending on the severity of the offences. However, with the exception of death penalty and corporal punishment, the emphasis is on the Oromo administration of justice is on restitution and not retribution. Apart from the death penalty, all crimes are dealt with an institution which resembles mediation or arbitration rather than punishment since its seriousness and the nature of its commission.

### 3.5. The role of Qallu institution in conflict resolution

*Qallu* institution is one of the mechanisms of conflict resolution and maintains the social order. The *Qallu* institution also resolves often difficult conflicts through the process of mediation and adjudication in Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromo *Gada* System. Traditionally, *Qallu* plays main role in the spiritual matters believed to communicate with the God and still this *Qallu* has greater role in facilitating the *Gada* members to make decisions. In addition to this, *Qallu* has the power to decide any case presented or invited by the parties. *Qallu* institution works parallel to present *Gada* members in all Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromo *Gada* System. Except disputes concerning *Waarra Qallu* like *Oditu*, *Karrayyu Qallu* of the *Borena* area and *Obbitu Qallu* clan in the *Guji-Oromo* area, the *Gada* institution can be considered as the outcome of Oromo cultural process and *Oromo Qallu* institution. The *Qallu* institution can be viewed as root cause for the emergence and continuity of *Gada* institution in all *Gabra*, *Guji* and *Borena* areas.

### 3.6. Jarsuma indigenous conflict resolution in Gabra, Guji and Borena Oromo Gada System

The elders are locally known as *Jarsa* in Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* areas who are involved in resolving disputes. According to Hebo (2006), the term *Jarsa* means elders is used more as a symbol who are involved in conflict resolution and reconciliation process is called *Jarsa* regardless of his actual age. The knowledge of *Jarsa* is the most important for preventing, resolving and managing disputes of different scale and level. The *Jarsa* resolve disputes through negotiation and achieve peace agreement among the community. The *Jarsuma* consists of not only elders but also any adult male member of the community. Similarly, the same performance of *Jarsa Biyya* knowledge is found among Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromo people in the process of dispute management. The *Jarsa Biyya* involves in dispute settlement on its own initiatives and free will. The members of *Jarsa Biyya* are highly respected for their knowledge of customary laws and are considered as symbol of wisdom, peace, security and reconciliation in all Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* communities (Skinner, 1998). The *Jarsa Biyya* is mainly characterized by the presence of a neutral third party who mediates between the disputes. The role of a neutral third party as a mediator varies in degree from case to case and the natural of the relationship of person in the dispute. Most of the time the dispute ceases to be a matter between a few individuals, but latter developed in to a dispute between group of people on each side. Under such circumstance, there is a multitude

of plaintiff and defendant; and the *Jarsa Gosa* (elder of clan) is invited to help in solving the problem. The *Jarsa* asks both disputant to sit down and tell their problem to the *Jarsa Biyya* who understands easily the source of dispute. Therefore, the *Jarsa* settle the dispute based on the law and custom of Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* locally known as *Seera Aadaa Gabra*, *Seera Aadaa Guji* and *Aadaa Seera Borena*. Generally, the *Jarsa Biyya* solves disputes by referring norms and values of the communities.

### 3.7. The diversity and shared values of the Gada institution

The people practice a type of marriage when the girl loves the boy without his consent and this process is not told the boy. She comes to the boy's home by holding her *Sinqe* and she sits behind the entrance of the *kral* which is considered as the boy married the girl without his consent as per the *Gada* institution of Oromo and *Luwa* system of Sidama. Both Sidama and Oromo have similar local calendar. Similar to the Oromo and *Guraghe* ethnic group has sessions both opening and closing with blessing. Like the *Oromo* the *Guraghe* has also appeal to the court when dispute occurs (*Gefeche seera*) to the higher court (*Gutache seera*) to the General Assembly (*ye-Gordena seera*) that gives final judgment.

### 3.8. The political, administration and power schedule of Gada Institution

The political, administration and power schedule of *Gada* institution represents the order by which power is equally distributed, balanced, checked and transferred from *Gogessa* to *Gogessa* for every eight years of tenure. In addition to this institution, the ethos of equality and egalitarianism among Oromo endorse to restore unity which in turn strengthens the social process of security and identity involved in the sequence of power transfer and coordinates a kinship free institution within the three centralized *Gada* pillars. While the five political lines (*Gogessa*) are politically separated from each other, but they are institutionally, administratively and ideologically integrated. Secondly, the unique feature of *Gada* institution is that it is dual organization moieties such as *Kontoma* and *Darimu* of *Guji*, *Sabbo* and *Gona* of *Borena*, and *Sikko* and *Mando* of the *Arsi* Oromo, *Qalloo* and *Anniyyaa* of *Humbannaa*, *Yejjuu* and *Raayyaa* of *Wolloo*, *Kuraa* and *Galaan* of *Ituu*, *Baassoo* and *Dullachaa* of *Karrayyuu*, *Maccaa* and *Tulama* of *Wallaga*, *Shawaa* and *Jimmaa* etc. of their social structures work as a source of identity and stability by creating a sense of belongingness among clans and the Oromo families of *Arsi*, *Shawaa*, *Wallaga*, *Jimmaa*, *Wolloo*, *Ituu*, *Humbannaa*, *Karrayyuu*, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromo communities. Thirdly, the uniqueness and complexity of *Gada* is that no matter which political line (*Gogessa*) is on power, its common ideology consists of security and identity, equality, unity and egalitarianism. These non-kinships based integrating institutions helped Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromo to avoid the problem of tyrants in their culture. Fourthly, the *Gada* political process employs both participatory and representative democracy institutions. It involves representative democracy on the cabinet level through its *Ya'a Gada Sadeni* (triple institutional pillars) *Me'e Bokko* Assembly (*Gumi Me'e Bokko*) of *Gujii-Oromo Gadaa* System, and *Gumi Gayo* Assembly (*Gumi Gayo Assembly*) of *Borena and Gabra* Oromo *Gada* System serve as the General Assembly of *Gada* system of in areas of the *Gabra*, *Guji* and *Borena* Oromo at *Arda Jila* known as sacred place. This makes *Gada* democracy a holistic democratic institution.

### 3.9. Encroachment, endangerment and drivers affecting the *Gada* institution

Nowadays, the indigenous knowledge of conflict resolution of *Gada* System is not transferred to current generations properly since the expansion of modern education that discourages the younger generation from the tradition. Some administrators are not interested to promote this *Gada* institution which would assist the regular court system to reduce court caseloads and contribute to saving of public money. Rather they look on these mechanisms as competitor, not as complimentary. At present, unlike in the past, due to different reasons the people are unable to host the local peacemakers who travel from place to place to make peace. The expansion of different religious sects has triggered the serious role for the decline of *Gada* institution. Different religions consider *Gada* institution as evil practice. Thus, the expansion of both Islam and Christianity ideology converted their followers to their doctrine and marginalized the people not to follow and perform their social practices. Decisions made by the council of elders in *Gada system* were officially dissolved by the authorized military government of Ethiopia during Minilik, Haiylesillasse, and Dirge regime which resulting in the decline of the *Gada* institution, communal rangeland management, and mutual support institutions. Recent rigid demarcation of boundaries between regional states and zones has created tensions for the existence of the *Gada* institution. For instance, one of the contentious issues and potential sources of conflict in the area is the loss of the *Borena* their traditional institution and sacred place to the Somali Regional State owing through administrative reshaping policy interventions of Ethiopia country used by changing or demarcating boundaries of the local structures of the administrations are separated the *Gumi Simbira Balayi (Senbre Balaye Gumi Assembly)* sacred land by reducing from *Borena Oromo to the Somali regional State Government* by the process of the referendum that past governments allotted the Oromo lands for other communities in Ethiopia. The same happened between the *Guji-Oromo* and Sidama people of the Southern Ethiopia which separated the *Guji-Wondo* by reducing from the *Guji-Oromo* people of in the both *Guji zones* administration to give them with land for the Sidama regional state government administration of the Southern Ethiopia.

### 3.10. Resilience and resurgence of *Gada* institution

*Gada* system has still an immense influence on Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena Oromo* communities although the power of *Gada* system has been eroded due to introduction of different cultures and successive supplantation by outside political systems, and the government officials are unable to make use of *Gada* system of Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena Oromo* to resolve the local conflicts. Even today, there are regular meetings and discussions among the *Gada* elders to improve and harmonize the social relationships of these Oromo communities. In spite of the persistence of conflict in the pastoral areas of Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena Oromo* areas, the local institution known as *Korba Borena* continues their lives within the limited resources. Their traditional institutions and institutions of mutual social support provide the main framework for coping with the situation.

### 3.11. Available protection policy instrument

According to Article 90 of the Constitution of Ethiopia, the human right is compatible with custom since there is no culture that basically contract with individual and human rights despite the Constitution of the country restricts customary conflict resolutions found other provision of the Constitution which imposes duty on the government to support on the basis of equality, the growth and

enrichment of cultures and traditions that are compatible with fundamental rights, human dignity, democratic norms and ideals, and the provision of the constitution. The local customary law played an unprecedented role in the resolution of disputes by virtue of their resilience, in the face of the blanket repeal by Article 3347 of the Civil Code. Commenting on the efficacy of indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, William stated that emotional wounds and injured relationships are healed within the context of the emotional unity of the community. Opposed interests are resolved within the context of the community interest in peace. Quarrels over rights are sorted out within the context of overall community norms. Power struggles are contained within the context of overall community power.

The effectiveness or strength of *Gada* institution is timesaving and minimizing processing charges, harmonizing the society after settling disputes. The decision of the elders is not a win-loss it is win-win mechanism as court and other types of conflict resolution respectively; rather, it is a way of bringing the parties to where they are in the first time, and even in more peace than expected. Less rigidity of procedures. After decision, the upset party has the right to appeal without limitation on time and body. The parties are free from any oppression to elect the elders who are going to deal with; where one party selects the elders, there is no rule which prevents him or her from being adjudicated. With regard to discretionary power of victim for forgiveness, the victim has a power to forgive or not the other party on the decision given. For example, if two cows are decided for compensation, the elders may say leave one cow, seeking forgiveness. The presence of appeal in the system indicates that there are enough roles for appeal which can be taken to *Me'e Bokko Gumi* assembly of *Guji-Oromo* and *Gumi Gayo Gumi* assembly of *Borena and Gabra Oromo* if the individuals are dissatisfied with decision of any level of elders with judicial power. They give access to many people who do not find the modern system of conflict resolution comfortable, affordable to their need. These mechanisms give a chance to the parties to actively participate in handling their affairs and the disputants are satisfied with their operation and view their out comes as fair. It is alternative for the people and they quickly respond to the crisis. This mechanism is fair and free from corruption which resolves the conflicts in all Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena Oromo* communities of Southern Ethiopia.

## 4. CONCLUSION

The *Gada* indigenous institution is an Oromo egalitarian which governs and orders holistically the society around political, economic, social, cultural, and religious institutions. For Oromo, *Gada* institution is a reference for all acquired knowledge though the indigenous conflict resolution is one of its activities through generations. This traditional conflict management is playing an important role in resolving conflicts and maintaining peace and stability in a Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena Oromo* communities areas. Their indigenous knowledge encompasses the skills, experiences and insights of people that are applied to improve their livelihood, and to resolve conflicts in their areas. Similarly, Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena Oromo* communities have their own methods of conflict resolution system which is emanated from *Gada* institution. They have been used at the grassroots level to settle disputes over land, water, grazing-land rights, marital problems, inheritance, ownership rights, crime, bride price, cattle raiding, theft, rape, banditries, and inter-ethnic conflicts. The traditional conflict resolution process encourages the conflict parties to use words of

forgiveness or rituals and facilitate reintegration into the communities. Therefore, this indigenous conflict management mechanism works parallel to modern judiciary system and plays a vital role at local level in resolving disputes in a harmonious manner with tolerance.

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In line with the above findings, it is recommended that the of procedures of *Gada* institution in conflict resolution in Gabra, *Guji* and *Borena Oromo* area need to be taken into consideration in the modern judiciary system of Ethiopia to resolve the conflicts. The cultural values and norms of peace building of this indigenous system and the mechanisms need to be promoted by the formal organizations like Police Department and Judiciary Department to cool down the conflicts among individuals. And further studies are recommended to investigate the conflict resolution mechanisms to protect the Oromo border line of their territory from different conflicts and peace needs to be maintained with the help of Oromo *Gada* System. Therefore, there is a need for recognizing the Oromo *Gada* system legally under the Constitution of Ethiopia to deal with peace keeping issues nationally in particular and globally in general.

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