

Impact and its Associated Factors of Inter Ethnic Conflict Between Afar and Somali Communities the Case of Amibara, Gewane and Mille Woredas, Zone Three Afar Region

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Abstract

The main objective of this study was to examine the impact and associated factors of ethnic conflict between Afar and Somali communities in the case of Amibara, Gewane and Mille Woredas, Afar Regional State. To achieve this objective, the study employed a qualitative research approach with a case study design. The study used primary and secondary sources. Primary data was collected through in-depth interviews, FGDs and personal observation. To select key informants and FGD discussants, non-probable sampling, particularly the purposeful sampling technique, was employed. The study's findings indicate that competition over control and access to natural resources such as pasture, water, and land, politicization of ethnicity, territory claims and the proliferation of SALWs have been major causes of violent conflict. Moreover, the finding also revealed that the major impact of Afar and Somali violent inter-ethnic conflict has manifested itself in ways like human and livestock deaths,

depletion of financial assets, destruction of infrastructure, degradation of natural resources, forced migration, loss of biodiversity, inaccessible health services, low food production, trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder. Finally, to bring lasting and durable peace, there is a need to adopt constructive and long-term solutions through inclusivity, cohesion and cultural tolerance among two communities.

Keywords: Afar and Somali Community; Ethnic groups; Inter- Ethnic Conflict; Impacts; Associated Factor.

Introduction

The Horn region, a region comprising countries like Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Somalia, and parts of Sudan and Kenya, is among the conflict-affected territories in Africa (Kalib, 2007). The Horn region has faced numerous intra- and inter-state wars, terrorism, piracy, and resource competition. In the past ten years, various countries from the Horn of Africa, such as Sudan, Eritrea, Somalia, and Ethiopia, have been

involved in major conflicts. Equally, wars have been witnessed in Djibouti, though at a lower scale. The conflicts experienced across the Horn of Africa have been aggravated by inter-state conflict in many countries, with varying frequencies and intensities. Throughout its history, pastoral conflict has grown rapidly in the Horn of Africa in the last three decades and among the most vulnerable areas in Ethiopia is the Eastern Region (Tigist, 2014).

In the Horn of Africa, inter-ethnic conflicts have become major impacts, which perhaps explains why there are reduced economic activities, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity, weakening of political institutions of governance, incapacity to provide essential services, destruction, depletion of existing resources, low food production, poor communication and transportation infrastructure, lack of markets for products, displacement of people, stalled development projects, and an amplified number of children dropping out of school, which has resulted in widespread poverty in the country (Odhiambo, 2012).

Like in other parts of the horn of Africa, in Ethiopia, Ethnic conflict is now widespread in the arid and semi-arid zones. In pastoral society in Ethiopia, conflict is usual because of their lifestyle and culture (Odhiambo, 2012). Most Ethiopian regions are haunted by either intra- or inter-ethnic conflicts. This is partly due to the fact that

different communities continue to knowingly rely on their ethnicity to perpetuate their dominance. Particularly pervasive violent pastoral conflicts in the Horn of Africa have detrimental effects on people's livelihoods there. Ethiopia has also experienced a number of inter-communal conflicts, including the Guji-Gedio conflict, the Meda Welabu-Kersa-Dula pastoralist conflict the Afar-Issa conflict (Asnake, 2013), the (Bekele, 2010), Dizi-Surma conflict, the Alle-Konso conflict (2016), the Afar-Karrayu conflict (Ayalew, 2001), Bekele 2010, Asnake, 2011, and similar conflicts. Likewise, the Afar and Issa of Ethiopia have long been interlocked in protracted violent pastoral conflict since the turn of the twenty-first century. The conflict has involved various causes, actors, and impacts at different periods. Changes in the context of conflict have been contributing to the nature and dynamics of the conflict and leading to human, material, environmental, and social damage (Yaynshet, 2004).

Over the past three decades, the issues that drive inter-ethnic conflicts cannot be easily explained simply because there are numerous complex and multifactorial causes. The literature, however, points out that competition over control and access to natural resources such as pasture, water, and land, poor governance, poverty, politicization of ethnicity, and proliferation of SALWs can cause inter-ethnic conflict (John, 2003); Asnake, 2013). The impact of violent pastoral conflicts has manifested itself

economically, physically, and psychologically, going beyond the material and affecting the lives of thousands of women, children, and men. In fact, for many in Afar and Somalia, this is the form of violent inter-ethnic conflict they most worry about (Asnake, 2013).

The inter-ethnic conflicts have economic, socio-cultural, and political implications that contribute to the lowering of economic productivity, reduced economic activities, environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity, inaccessible health services, weakening of political institutions of governance, incapacity to provide essential services, destruction and depletion of existing resources, and an amplified number of children dropping out of school, which has resulted in widespread poverty in the country (Odhiambo, 2012).

Moreover, the problem of the border dispute between the Afar and the Somalis is mainly motivated and influenced by these post-1991 political developments and changes that marked a turning point in the political history of the modern Ethiopian state (Bekele, 2010; Mesfin, 2006). In the past decade, a number of large-scale clashes have occurred among Ethiopian pastoralists, resulting in major losses of life and displacement (Yasin, 2002). The Afar and Somali incident is among the many clashes between groups that have been publicized. The relationship between Afar and Somali clans has been characterized by competition and conflict.

Besides the violent resource conflicts existing between and within the Afar and Somali pastoral groups, the issues of where the administrative boundaries between the two regional states should be drawn in areas of mixed cultural, linguistic and ethnic affiliations have resulted in boundary disputes (Mu'uz, 2009). In February 2018 alone, some 30,000 people were driven from their homes by the conflict between the Afar and the Somali region over a contested piece of land. Displacement was triggered by conflict between different ethnic groups over access to political power or scarce resources such as water and pastoral or agricultural land.

This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the impacts of inter-ethnic conflicts between the Afar and Somali pastoralist communities in the case of Amibara, Gewane, and Mille Woredas in Zone three of the Afar region during the period between 1991 and 2023.

1.2 Materials and Methods

The methodology used for the study was qualitative, which belongs to a particular class of qualitative research approaches since it was more descriptive and case study-based in nature. A subset of scientific inquiry known as qualitative research focuses on explaining human lived experiences and interpreting social reality. Qualitative research approaches are defined differently by different experts. For example, (Willis, 2007) states that the goal of qualitative research is to create explanations for social

occurrences. It aims to comprehend a particular study issue or topic from the viewpoint of the community it affects locally. However, qualitative research is a "umbrella term," with several distinct methodologies falling under its larger umbrella (Denzin., 2005). It is a type of social science research that focuses on how individuals understand and make meaning of their lives and the world around them. When gathering culturally specialised data about the beliefs, attitudes, actions, and social environments of specific people, this kind of research is very useful.

The people who lived in the two places and were impacted by the conflicts served as the main source of information. In addition to the victimised local community, these include local security personnel, leaders, elders, religious leaders, women's affairs, public servants, experts in peacekeeping and administration from both of the district's ethnic groupings, and the head and vice head of each proposed kebele. Regarding this, secondary data have been gathered from a range of published and unpublished sources, such as agreements, books, newspapers, journals, articles, and public records. As supplementary data sources, audiovisual resources including institutional and organisational reports and television interview scripts were also used. The study collected proof and correct, pertinent source data to verify its originality. Secondary data were examined to address the study's issues

based on the primary data and as a supplement to talks on primary data, in order to assure the accuracy and dependability of the data acquired from primary sources. Thus, in order to accomplish the study's goals and respond to the research questions, the investigation and solution of the problem involved the utilisation of both primary and secondary sources of data. Finally, the data has been interpreted and the research analysis developed while incorporating both primary and secondary data. The entire data set was then analyzed and interpreted using the thematic analysis technique.

1.3. Conceptual and Theoretical Perspectives

1.3.1. The Concept of Conflict

It is hard to come up with a single definition for the notion and social phenomenon of conflict that all researchers and societies agree on. This is because different schools of thought and experts interpret the phenomenon differently. varied societies around the world also have varied perspectives on conflict. Some see conflict as a social phenomena caused by everyday societal situations, while others see conflict through religious and spiritual lenses. As a result, numerous definitions of conflict exist (Abdella, 2002; Jeong, 2008) However, many commonalities can be found throughout the many definitions.

Eriksen, 2001 conceptualised conflict as a permanent part of life that occurs because of the incompatible goals of human beings. It means

that conflict is the struggle in which the aim is to gain objectives while simultaneously neutralising, injuring, or eliminating rivals. Therefore, conflict is not without objectives; it is a normal and functional part of human life. People used the conflict as a potential process for combating inconsistencies or misuse of individual or group differences. For the purpose of this study Conflict is therefore a serious social problem that directly reduces the quality of life of individuals and communities, in which the aim is to gain objectives while simultaneously controlling, frustrating, or doing away with rivals. It can also be argued that conflict occurs when two or more groups engage in a struggle over values and claims to status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to remove the rivals.

For this study, interethnic conflict refers to clashes among two or more ethnic groups due to demand for power, resources, identity, social status, and the like. It refers to situations where people mobilise against others on the basis of ethnic identity.

1.2. Theories of Conflict

There are several theories of the causes of interethnic conflict, and no single theory can fully describe the complexities of interstate relations (Kalib, 2007). According to Muhabie (2015), no single approach can capture all of the intricacies of the causes of interethnic conflict because the causes of conflict are numerous and complex,

thus creating problems in the analysis of specific conflict situations.(Muhabie, 2015). However, the main theoretical perspectives that have been used to explain the causes of interethnic conflict between Afar and Somali communities in Ethiopia. The theories explaining causes of conflict include structural theory of conflict, economic theory, and psychological theory of conflict. These theories enable a researcher to analyse the findings based on the explanations of the aforementioned theories.

1.2.1. Protracted Social Theory

Protracted social theory is defined as a long-term violent confrontation between parties in order to achieve their basic demands. The long-standing social theory emphasises how structural factors contribute to the persistence of disputes. According to Azar, long-term social disagreements arise when states fail to address the structural reasons for conflict at their base. These factors include social exclusion for specific groups in society as well as economic, political, and cultural inequality. These essential concerns must be considered while seeking a long-term resolution to protracted conflicts. According to the idea, four factors might contribute to prolonged social conflict. The requirements included a lack of access to needs, inadequate government, the functioning of states, and links to other countries. The first component of communal content is community identification based on links between races, religions, and ethnic groups, which is used to promote

communal interest. Second, deprivation of wants is concerned with individual basic needs whose fulfilment determines whether a group succeeds or fails. These demands include politics, security, and acceptance. Third, political institutions, or governments, are legally obligated to control and protect citizens for the common good. Finally, international links focus on economic and political relations that bring governments together to achieve a common purpose.

The prolonged social theory can help explain why Afar and Somalia have had such long-standing disagreements. Poverty and marginalisation are widespread in the area, fueling competition for limited resources and allowing politicians to capitalise on ethnic tensions. Conflicts can be avoided by addressing structural concerns such as promoting economic growth and reducing inequality. One of the shortcomings of long-term social theory is that it ignores the role of agency and individual individuals in perpetuating disputes. Although the theory emphasises structural factors such as economic and political inequality, it may underestimate the importance that individuals and organisations play in maintaining disputes. The theory also fails to provide a consistent framework for understanding the precise mechanisms by which structural variables contribute to disagreements.

1.3. Results and Discussion

The Impacts of the Conflict on the Local Communities

The magnitude of the impacts of an ethnic conflict is determined by the nature and scope of the conflict (Brown, 1997). The researchers sought the opinions of the interviewees on severe conflict and the causalities of Afar and Somali inter-ethnic conflict. The two pastoralist ethnic groups witnessed severe conflict following the ethnically-based federalism of 1991–2023. Due to the aggravation created by ethnically-based federalism, there was a peak stage of conflict between these two ethnic groups. During this time, both Afar and Somalia in general and the region in particular failed under high causalities. According to the elders, FGD participants, and government officials, the conflict resulted in political, socio-cultural, economic, physical, and psychological impacts on the community. The researcher discusses the main impacts of the ongoing inter-ethnic conflict on Afar and Somali communities in general and the town in particular as follows:

1.3.1. Economic Impacts

Impacts are expected in conflict situations (Asnake, 2013). Inter-ethnic conflicts have had several impacts in many sub-Saharan African countries. It impedes socioeconomic growth in areas such as investment, capital flight, health, education, employment, quality of life, poverty, human rights, gender equality, and migration (Alemmaya, 2005). Not only that, but they also

had an impact on key developmental concerns such as working conditions and organisational structure. Ethnic conflicts affect the socioeconomic development of border settlements in several ways (Bantayehu, 2016). For millennia, there have been ethnic clashes in numerous parts of sub-Saharan Africa. Violent conflicts have posed a significant danger to development and stability in many communities.

In Ethiopia, the inter-ethnic between Afar and Somali dismisses the very bases of development and discourages the playing field for sustainable development. the inter-ethnic conflict between Afar and Somali damaged the economic resources of the area (Asnake, 2013). A business person interviewed noted that in the 2012 and 2023 conflicts several individual properties were looted and damaged. In the 2019/20/21 conflict social services such as markets, health center and mills were destroyed. Moreover, individual houses of both Afar and Somali were burned, individual properties (houses, animals and crops) were looted and the people displaced from their home/residence.

In addition, many of key informants and FGD participants underlined that the Afar and Somali ethnic conflict affected the investments activities (such as agriculture and trade) of the study area. Because of the investors may lose confidence in the regions stability and security, leading to a decrease in both domestic and foreign

investments in the region the economic activities of the community hindered. Uncertainty about the future can deter potential investors from committing capital to projects in the area. This in turn negatively impacted the existing investments and discourage new investments in the conflict area.

According to data collected from respondents, most of the respondents stated that the recurrent Afar and Somali ethnic conflicts severely impacted the development activities of the Zone as well as the Regional government. Many young men and women depend on trade for their livelihoods, whether as transporters, traders or suppliers. The disruption of trade can lead to loss of income and economic hardship for these young men and women as well as their families. According to data gathered from interview with this elder: -

Many young men and women also lost their means of earning an income. Previously, they would engage in business related to transportation, coffee, and the splitting of building materials. There was a disruption of links to the markets for this produce. Market center along the Ethio-Djibout highway such as Adaytu, Gedamytu, and Qundafoo towns, ceased to provide a large pool of customers on the highway. The discontinuation of economic transactions between the pastoralists of Afar and Somalia youths from both communities, who have been engaging

in micro-trade in small ruminants, mineral licks, clothes, and food stuffs, have been disrupted due to inter-ethnic conflict. The towns of Adaytu, Gedamytu, and Qundafoo were no longer free to take livestock, milk, small ruminants, mineral licks, clothes, and food stuffs to markets. Thus, the fact that some of the youth have lost their means of earning an income makes them vulnerable to manipulation by politicians in the area (IKI-4, Semera, February 17, 2022).

Besides to this, according to FGD participants of the two sides stated that during conflicts of the two, the agricultural activity of farmers was interrupted because of insecurity situations. For example, the 2019 conflict broke out during cultivation season of the farmers of the area. As a result, the farmers of the area did not prepare their land for cultivation. Apart from the interruption of agricultural activities, the trade relation between Afar and Somali terminated due to fear of moving from place to place. Consequently, it endangered the flow of agricultural products and goods that profoundly reduced incomes of merchants and farmers. According to interview with Ahmed Ali, elder of Gedamytu):-

Ethnic conflict happens during summer and harvesting seasons when farmers started to produce agricultural activities. As the result, farmers of the study area faced great

economic crises because production or harvesting materials and oxen were robbed, the seed that was ready for sowing was not sown or the land which was sown and got fertilizer was not cultivated. Therefore, the families of the ethnic groups who were feeding their children by agricultural output exposed to critical socio-economic problems such as hunger forced to migrate and changed their living places (IKI-4, Semera, February 17, 2022).

Moreover, during the fieldwork, the researcher witnessed the shortage of food faced by people in the study area. This is primarily due to the destruction of their assets by the conflict and their inability to harvest crops because the conflict began during the summer and harvesting seasons.

1.3.2. Destruction of Property

According to interviewees with officials, local elders and religious leaders' pointed that they had lost much property, such as homes, businesses, infrastructure, and public facilities in the period 2018/2019. Many of the victims have had their houses burnt businesses, infrastructure, and public facilities on several occasions. For example, interview with Somali interviewed responded that inter-ethnic conflict induced destruction of critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and utilities. This not only disrupts essential services but also impedes the delivery of humanitarian aid

and the resumption of economic activities. Abdela Ahmed (elder from Somali who living in Undufo kebele of Gewane woreda) elaborated that:-

Many of those who had invested in business in Adaytu, Gedamyt, and Qundafoo areas suffered heavy losses as most of the centers were burnt during the violence. Adaytu, Gedamyt, and Qundafoo were all burnt during the violent conflict between Afar and Issa. The ruins of some of the destroyed buildings were still visible when this research was being done. Many of the business premises such as shops and food Kiosks were first vandalized before being set on fire (EKI-3, Mille, February 17, 2022).

Similar to this, an interview with the Zone 3 security department and police officers stated that more than thousands of civilians also lost personal and household possessions such as jewellery and valuables, electronic devices (e.g., laptops, smartphones, tablets), personal documents (e.g., passports, identification cards, academic certificates, birth certificates, photo albums), bicycles, radio sets, television sets, sofa sets, clothing, and shoes. The eastern Ethiopian, particularly Awash, areas are conducive to dairy farming. As such, sheep, cows, and camels were common on almost every homestead. The sudden and unexpected attacks during the violence meant that those with cattle were unable to move with them. In the ensuing confusion, they were

compelled to abandon. When some of the victims of violence were able to move with them, they sold them cheaply once they got to towns such as Adaytu, Gedamyt, and Qundafoo.

1.3.3. Educations

Education is affected by inter-ethnic conflict between Afar and Somali communities in two major ways. The presence of conflict limits access to education facilities, thereby retarding the human development of the two communities. This is occasioned by disruptions to learning facilities, sometimes leading to the closure of schools. This violent ethnic conflict also leads to dropout, as many of the young's children's opt to engage in conflict. Education in the pastoral areas of eastern Ethiopia is low compared to other regions. Education suffered in the presence of inter-ethnic conflict from 2014 to 2023. After 2014, when the rate of conflicts was seen to be exacerbating, most of the conflict areas had resulted in the closure of schools since 2014 and much earlier since hardly any learning could take place as the community experienced high tension in the area as a result of conflicts. Moreover, during the fieldwork, the researchers witnessed that Amibara woreda was the most hit with more than four closures of schools, Gedamayetu had more than three, and Mille four public schools were closed.

According to the elders, FGD participants, and government officials, the conflict leads to the destruction of educational facilities and the

fleeing of education personnel, further hampering the provision of education services to community members. The phenomenon of school dropouts was promoted by inter-ethnic conflicts, particularly amongst the youth who enlisted support as some warriors in the conflict. The conflict that was also established has affected formal education directly, as it has led to teachers abandoning schools due to insecurity. This has resulted in the closure of some of the schools in eastern Ethiopia, particularly Amibara, Gewane, and Mille woredas, where this battle broke out. The conflict has subjected more community members to poverty and destitution, further diminishing the already scarce economic resources and excluding many from accessing education.

1.3.4. Land Degradation and Loss of Biodiversity

According to this report, resource conflicts have significantly exacerbated environmental degradation in eastern Ethiopia. This is demonstrated by the fact that livestock are typically concentrated in safe locations, particularly those close to their home camps, which disrupts migratory patterns and results in the unsustainable use of natural resources. Overgrazing can lead to soil degradation and erosion, which in turn can result in the loss of essential minerals necessary for plant growth and ecosystem health. According to data gathered from an interview with a biodiversity expert:

Nutrients like nitrogen and phosphorus are among the valued perennial forages that have reportedly lost essential minerals vital for plant growth and overall ecosystem health as a result of local overgrazing. On the other hand, improved fodder conditions can be found in the no-go zones, which are areas where violence has been resolved and livestock are often present. Reducing insecurity is necessary to shift grazing demand to areas that are now overused and underused but have room to recover in order to prevent this situation from occurring (EKI 1, Addis Ababa, 28 April, 2022).

Mobility is essential for the rotational use of rainy and dry-season grazing areas, which is necessary for the sustainable use of pastoral rangelands. Because of the ensuing instability, which leads the group to concentrate cattle within a small portion of its previous territory, mobility is the first and most significant casualty of conflict. The pastoral system is strained and eventually becomes less self-sufficient as grazing land and water sources are lost. This overgrazing not only affects the productivity of grazing lands but also has far-reaching consequences for ecological degradation and biodiversity, water quality, and the sustainability of ecosystems.

1.3.5. Social Impacts

According to Asnake, 2013; Bekele, 2010; Mu'uz, 2009, the social impact that results in ethnic conflict can be homelessness, landlessness, death,

and so on.(Asnake, 2013; Bekele, 2010; Mu'uz, 2009). The conflict also has potential and real consequences for interethnic marriage, family, and social life. Regarding the economic aspect, being homeless, being deprived of the right to access land, poverty, injury, and death are some consequences that may be mentioned from marriages of couples of a different ethnic group. Data gathered from an interview with Adayetu Wedda, former Head of the Administrative and Security Office, Ato Johar, shows:

Inter-ethnic conflict affected socio-cultural lives through cultural violations and the physical displacement of local people from their original residential environment. Hence, the forceful displacement of local people from their usual environment deteriorates local people's socio-cultural institution and its components, such as language, marriage system, religion, and other cultural practices (SKI-1, Adayetu, February 26, 2022).

Similar to this, some of the Afar interviewee informants responded that inter-ethnic conflict has the most visible impact on the socio-cultural development of both ethnic groups. This means that all members of the two communities understand the disadvantages of inter-ethnic conflict for cultural practice and social movement. Regarding the questions that the interviewee asked if inter-ethnic conflict leads to

displacement, most of them argued that Afar and Somali cultural practices and social relations have great disparity before and after the conflict. Accordingly, before 2018, Afar and Somali were frankly related to each other, while after the conflict, it was controversial. Regarding such broken and survived marriages, one Somali key informant stated:

Since the past, we Afar and Somali have married each other based on our clan system. We have brothers and sisters from each ethnic group. Our relationship does not only depend on marriage; we also have intermarriages, participating in similar cultural rituals, sharing traditional shrines, and joint community celebrations of important seasonal activities and events such as weddings and funerals, among others. However, during the conflict between the two, most of these relationships were broken. These factors have eroded social capital, undermined customary rules, increased mistrust and mutual suspicion, and weakened the cultural ties of the communities (KKI-5, Karat, February 23, 2016).

Generally, the above analysis shows that these days, the intensifying of the conflict has broken such bonds, hence the animosity and persistent conflict. Fear and mutual suspicion characterised relations between the Afar and Somali. Inter-communal relations particularly deteriorate

when broken marriages have an adverse impact on the psychological and social wellbeing of children with mixed identities, i.e., children born from Afar and Somali parents. The hostile and frequent attacks had led to retaliation, which further fueled the conflict.

1.3.6. Political Impacts

Political impacts are other impacts of the conflict between Afar and Somalia. Some respondents from both sides responded that the inter-ethnic conflict not only had economic and social impacts but also made political impacts a reality. Because of the recurrent Afar and Somali inter-ethnic conflicts, politicised and manipulated ethnicity has become evident in regional, zone, and Woreda government offices. This in turn diminished the accountability and responsibility of government officials in making decisions related to managing and resolving the inter-ethnic conflict. In addition, most of the people interviewed responded that in the peace conferences organised at Jigjiga and Semera, both regional and zonal government officials showed their indirect support to their ethnic group members rather than being impartial and addressing the conflict at the grass-roots level. Moreover, other interviewees also stated that, during the zone meetings organised by the minister of peace, there was a confrontation between Afar and Somali ethnic group politicians and representatives. The two ethnic group politicians run their hidden agenda of supporting

their own ethnic group rather than being responsible government officials.

Besides this, according to FGD participants from the two sides, the ongoing inter-ethnic conflict caused the breakdown of the rule of law; serious violations of human rights and peace and order in the towns were disrupted for a week. Moreover, the government lost trust in the people. The community does not have to trust the government; rather, they trust their arms (guns) and their ethnic groups for their security. Because of this, a huge number of arms flow to the town through illegal arms trafficking from different directions. It caused a threat to future security, and it will be a means of violence and conflict in the future. Also, the two ethnic groups are mobilised more strongly than ever. It may be difficult to manage them for the government in the future. According to the Commander Haji Aliyi Zone security department and police officers stated:

Due to the interruption of administrative activities, many tasks were stopped from starting. The conflict also had its own impact on the reform. Inputs a black pot on the reform. The administrative capacity of the local government was highly affected because many administrative documents of the local government were burned and looted, including computers. The local government officials are overloaded by rearranging those documents rather than

performing administrative activities (IKI-5, Semera, February 17, 2022).

Generally, according to data gathered from both interviews and literature, because of the suspicion and mistrust that have been created between Afar and Somali corrupt businesses, politicians, educators, police, and community leaders who benefited from them, there is a lack of political support, a lack of conflict mitigation policies and guidelines, and contextualised policies by the county government on handling pastoral conflict. In general, the violent and ongoing ethnic politics created between Afar and Somalia endanger the institutional capacity of the zone to respond to the conflicts in the study area, including Afar and Somalia.

1.3.7. Impacts on Women and Children's

Generally, in conflict-prone areas of Adaytu kebele in Mille woreda, Undufo kebele in Gewane woreda, and Gedamaytu kebele in Amibara woreda, women and children are seen more as victims than perpetrators. According to data gathered from interviewees from both sides, participants noted that women and girls were most commonly reported as victims of conflict, as many are unleashed with sexual violence such as rape, genital mutilation, indecent assault, and other barbaric acts and abuses. In this regard, the interview with the businessman stated as follows:

Women and children's experiences experienced negative effects as a result of

their 2018–19 inter-ethnic conflict. The responses given indicated that women lost many families, livestock, and pets, as well as being carried away during the war. There were also displacements between the two communities. Many Somali young women and girls who were displaced from Amibara, Gewane, and Mille Woredas, Afar Regional State, got settled in Shenli Zone and Jigjiga. Likewise, the FGD participants from both Afar and Somali indicated that many Afar women who were displaced from Amibara, Gewane, and Mille Woredas settled in Bure Mudaytu and other parts of Teru, Dalol and Afdera woredas. The displaced families settled in urban centres, where they received food aid from the UN, governments, and other well-wishers (Businessman, KI-2, Jigjiga, March 11, 2022).

Generally, according to data gathered from both interviews and literature, women also suffer the painful loss of their husbands and sons as men are killed in combat conflicts. Women further suffer from orphaned children as they become widows's family bread earners, are displaced and lose the protection of their deceased husbands. This agrees with the UNDP report of 2021, which indicated that in the inter-ethnic conflict between the Afar and Somali communities, pregnant women from both communities died from injuries after rape, and survivors left with psychological, emotional, and physical injuries.

1.3.8. Psychological Impacts

In addition to the above socio-economic and political impacts, the conflict affects the two communities psychologically. Sometimes conflict, which starts between individuals, will follow the ethnic conflict of each of the conflicting individual ethnic groups (Yasin, 2010). The inter-personal conflict between Afar and Somali individuals will change to inter-ethnic group conflict immediately due to misinterpretations of causes. This caused stress for youth and women in their day-to-day activities (Bekele, 2010). Youths and women are afraid of the conflict that will be caused by their name because they saw the damage and impacts of the inter-ethnic conflicts from 2014 to 2023. In connection to this, Anuar Yesuf, now Head of Semera Hospital, said that:

Individuals who experience or witness violence, displacement, or who have lost loved ones during inter-ethnic conflicts are at risk of developing trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder. victims and perpetrators of the inter-ethnic conflict between Afar and Somali Symptoms may include anger, feelings of hopelessness, and depression. These psychological wounds can persist long after the conflict has ended and can severely impair functioning (MKI-2, Semera, June 8, 2022).

Generally, according to data gathered from both interviews and literature, many young people and women are afraid of conflict. In addition to

this, before the conflict, the Amhara and Afar communities respected each other; however, in post-conflict times, it was eliminated, especially among the youths of the two communities; rather, they fear each other until the two communities come to reconciliation. The above analysis shows that the mutual connection between the two ethnic groups is being eroded. This can create a sense of isolation, distrust, and hostility, even among those who were not directly involved in the conflict. Moreover, women and children saw the assassination of their families, such as their fathers or younger brothers, directly; they heard the voice of high arms. It created fear and terror in their minds and affected the psychological well-being of their women and children, leading to the intergenerational transmission of trauma. Moreover, until now, the two communities have mistrusted each other.

Conclusion

The following conclusion is drawn from the study: the negative impact of violent and ongoing inter-ethnic conflict between the Afar and Somali communities on the political, social, and obstructive development milestones of the area (2014–2023). The destructive nature of protracted inter-ethnic conflict among Afar and Somali pastoralist communities, which is causing economic damage and making the social relationship very fragile among themselves, The pending economic development leads to unstable

political development. Besides, social impact that drove inter-ethnic conflict, such as family disintegration, ethnicity, and retribution, homeless, landless, death, and so on, Whereas, the economic impact of inter-ethnic conflict between two communities leads to underdevelopment, food insecurity and housing, unemployment, lost cattle, declining livestock populations, and others. Moreover, politically, it may result in insecurity, disharmony, protests, and violations of basic human rights. Therefore, inter-ethnic conflict hinders societal development via political, economic, and social wellbeing.

Moreover, the analysis revealed that the previous mutual relationship between the two ethnic groups is being eroded; senses of mistrust prevailed. Besides, free movement of the people in the conflicted Woredas is restricted, and simmering tension prevails.

Recommendations

Based on the results of the study, the following possible recommendations are forwarded, including those to the Afar National Regional State, the Somali National Regional State, and the Federal Government, which attempted to put forth possible solutions by using formal and informal mechanisms of conflict resolution. planning, allocating finance for giving training to the community, controlling the existing problems, and giving punishment for those who illegally act on human lives and properties. But

the role of LGS in making the Adaytu, Undufo, and Gedamaytu cities share common social services, physical borders, and natural resources is very limited. This means they tried to discharge their responsibilities during the conflict rather than before and after the raising of the problems. Therefore, the general direction being taken by the government was conflict management rather than conflict resolution.

Elders in the community and the local government should promote a culture of peace and tolerance among the populace. Community leaders should play a leading role in providing moral instruction, reporting and informing the public about attacks, and ending destructive habits like livestock rustling. Moreover, to address the inter-ethnic conflict in the study area, any future attempt by the concerned body may be to work on the advancement of the economic and social development of the two ethnic groups. Since all ethnic communities residing on the border of the study area have a history and culture that link them, establishing common social services in their border area can facilitate the trends of global citizenship. This may require an independent institution that has the power to investigate the border issue in the study area, provide compensation for the damaged property, and build love, integrity, peace, and harmonious relationships within diversity. This may be used to fill the gap that paved the way for political instability.

The analysis revealed that the inter-ethnic conflict between Afar and Somali in the study area stems from a lack of good administration. The rapid escalation of inter-ethnic conflict has violated human and property rights in the studied area. As a result, the pattern of eviction, death, social breakdown, and property devastation intensifies year after year. As a result, both the Afar and Somali governments must consider how to effectively apply the rule of law in order to protect everyone's right to life and property.

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