

The Role of *Hiikkannaa* Peacemaking Practice in Conflict Resolution among Macca Oromo, Ethiopia

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Abstract: This thesis explores the role of “hiikkannaa” peace making practice in conflict resolution and sustaining peace among Macca Oromo of Eastern Wallagga Zone. It aims at discussing the customary procedure of “hiikkannaa” practice in settling disputes and rebuilding peace in the area. During data collection, we employed ethnographic methods such as observation, focus group discussions and semi-structured interview. In data analysis, we used interpretive method to discuss the collected data. The analyzed data shows that, “hiikkannaa” peacemaking practice has vital role in resolving conflict and perpetuating peace of the study area. The “hiikkannaa” practice helps disputing parties to come to one stage and give forgiveness to each other. It could uproot conflicts stayed in the community for decades or century that passed from generation to generation. The “hiikkannaa” peacemaking practiced at the center of Akke Risa since the Oromo started to live in the area. At the center of Akke Risa, there are actors such as salgee or shanee and Abba Sida facilitate the procedure of “hiikkannaa” practice. The thesis concludes that, the “hiikkannaa” practice is the peace making procedure in which the conflict parties pardon each other for the past offenses whenever it happened.

Keywords: Hiikkannaa / Peacemaking practice / Limmu Oromo / Macca branch / Ethiopia.

1. INTRODUCTION

African customary conflict resolution mechanism is participatory process and it create opportunities for the victim, the offender, their families and the community to be involved in defining harm and potential restoration of peace and resolution of the conflict (Elechi 2006:18). Conflict resolution practices are also important for making peace in society (Matyók, et al 2011). Traditional leaders and customary dispute resolutions systems do have clear advantage in their ability to provide a cheaper and more accessible peacemaking mechanism (Joireman 2011).

Among the Oromo, the mechanism of conflict resolution in which the neutral third party involves to mediate between disputants is known as *jaarsummaa* system. In this system, the role of a third party as a mediator varies in degree from case to case and the nature of the relationships of persons in the dispute (Dejene 2007). Additionally, (Desalegn 2007) also discussed *jaarsummaa* is a system in which the group of *jaarsaa* (elders) involve in the process of reconciliation between conflicting individuals or groups.

In Oromo culture there are situation in which disputants settle their case by negotiation without involvement of neutral third party. This type of conflict resolution is *ilaaf-ilaamee* (Dejene 2007). Additionally, among the Oromo, there are other conflict resolution institutions. The institutions used to avoid conflicts and sustaining peace within themselves and among communities, they live with. From these, *micchu* and *harma hodha* institutions are few of them (Tsega 2002). *Guma* is also another conflict resolution mechanism among the Oromo. It refers to blood price or compensation that follows homicide or serious bodily injuries (Dejene 2007). Additionally, *qalluu* courts also used to settle dispute and

making peace in Oromo. As (Dejene 2007) stated, among Macha Oromo, every *Qalluu* center is the center of conflict resolution and litigation. As the Author, all *qaalluu* have their own courts that deliver the services of settling disputes and maintaining social peace.

2. METHODS

The first ethnographic method we employed for collection of data for this research is observation. We have observed the case of customary conflict resolution in the area. During our stay in the field, we observed four peacemaking practices. We also observed the center of peacemaking practice, the cultural materials used during '*hiikkannaa*', as well as practices performed by participants. During the observation, we received video, image and sound of the participants as much as possible by asking permission. We also had received field notes.

The second method employed is semi-structured interview. We selected Twenty (20) key informants purposively. We interviewed people who settled their dispute before six months up to a year. This helped us to understand level of present practicability of the peacemaking performance. We gave freedom for our informants to express their attitude, behavior, beliefs and knowledge openly in wording and answering questions for us. We also allowed them to bring up new ideas during the interview depending on what the interviewee said. We formulated basic guidelines and a framework of themes to be explored to help our informant to raise issue of the study; but depending on the situation, the guideline were changed and reformed during the procedure of interview. To confirm the persuasiveness of information, the informants discussed about the '*hiikkannaa*' peacemaking practice with us until saturation point.

The third method of data collection for this study is focus group discussion. We also purposively selected informants who know about '*hiikkannaa*' peacemaking practice as well as active participants of the practice. Depending on this, we formed six Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) which contains eight to ten individuals. We conducted four FGD at Haro Limmu district of East Wollega and the remaining two FGD at Limmu District. By this method, we received the necessary data by using audio recorder and digital camera. Additionally, we have taken field notes during the discussions. Lastly, we also used document analysis. The minutes of customary conflict resolutions at local level, written agreements, and documents of decisions passed on the '*hiikkannaa*' peacemaking practice analyzed and used.

We analyzed the data collected from the field qualitatively. The data obtained from field were transcribed, sorted, sifted and their types, classes, sequences, processes and patterns were searched. Then the data were assembled or reconstructed in a meaningful or comprehensible fashion. In the process, the data were also arranged, structured and organized by their similarities. After that, the data were described, expressed and articulated qualitatively.

3. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

3.1 Concept of Peace:

Different scholars expressed peace in a number of ways. Matyók et al (2011) argued that peace is to violence what health is to disease, and it can exist within a person or group. Peace is a positive relation between parties, of union, togetherness and its condition is mutual respect, dignity, equality, and reciprocity. Addition to this, Rweyemamu (1989:378) explained that peace is fundamental and essential to the very idea of "being" and "living" both in the qualitative and quantitative sense. It is also the quality of being or living-well-together, through which human existence unfolds and develops its spiritual and social wealth shared and extended to produce and develop the optimum welfare and happiness for the maximum of one's own relatives and neighbors.

Individuals engaged in peacemaking may apologize, seek forgiveness, offer compensation, and accept punishment (Nan 2012). Some names carry the meaning of peace; elsewhere people meeting greet one another mentioning the word of peace; all the wishes for health, prosperity, blessings include the word "peace"; before parting or taking leave, the word "peace" is said in the meaning of farewell (Rweyemamu 1989:379-380). As Schilling (2012) stated peace, have great role for human security, human rights, development, democracy, and the rule of law. Similarly, Webel et al (2007) added that strong peaceful cultures and societies instinctively promote personal harmony and satisfaction in their relation and cooperation.

As (Manila declaration 2000) stated in (Ginty 2013) indigenous people themselves advocate for 'new system and institutions of peacemaking that are sourced in indigenous values and that co-exist with existing bodies such as the international court of justice' to peacefully resolve disputes. Sometimes, peacemaking rituals employed during the peacemaking process, which join the parties to peace accords and signify the restoration of harmonious relations (Nan 2012). According to Ali (1996:125), since the ancient time Oromo is a democratic nation and its democracy depends on equality, mutual respect, freedom and national liberation. For them it is morally unacceptable to derive peoples of their basic human rights. Therefore, the Oromo practices a policy of peaceful co-existence with its neighbors. *Nagaa* (peace) is the most important concept in the every daily life of Oromo. They express it in their daily greetings, songs, prayers and blessings they offer, in the speeches and narrations they deliver, in the administrative and legal actions they perform and in the proverbs, folktales and stories they tell (Tsega 2012:61).

Oromo traditional court has great role in reconciliation of the disputant parties and restoration of peace and order among the Oromo and their neighbors (Dejene 2007). The concept of *nagaa* Oromo (peace of the Oromo nation) explained that it based on the indigenous values and beliefs enshrines in the gadaa system, it is a universal principle and encompasses everything (Tsega 2012:61). Particularly, among the Oromo of Waliso, the presence of common Gada and common law which symbolized by common *bokkuu* maintained the unity and peaceful co-existence of Waliso clans (Dejene, 2007).

3.2 Oromo Attitude towards Peace:

For Boran to quarrel is not only a disturbance of the peace of the Boran, but also of the peace of Waaqaa (God) (Tsega 2012:63). Among the Waliso Oromo, Gula as legislators are responsible, to restore peace and harmony in the community and they believed to have the knowledge of the Oromo law (Dejene 2007). As Mario Aguilar has stated about Oromo attitude towards peace in Tsega (2012:64), the peace of the Boorana (*nagaa* Booranaa) is not only absence of war, but it refers to the complete unity of people among themselves, their union with nature and their union with God. With the disruption of peace, there is a complete disruption of the world around them. Without *nagaa* animals cannot give birth to offspring and the grass cannot grow. Naga is a gift from Waaqaa and they pray for peace every day, in the morning and in the evening. *Nagaa* Oromo (Oromo peace), which is a universal principle among the Oromo, sanctioned violence among them. The *nagaa* concept characterized the inner rhythm of Oromo communal life everywhere (Mekuria 1996:51). Similarly, Markakis (2011) discussed that peace of Borana maintains order and resolves internal conflict preserves peace among them and it also extended to strangers who accepted their *aadaa seeraa* (custom and law).

4. HIIKKANNAA PEACEMAKING PRACTICE

4.1 Concept of "Hiikkannaa"

The etymology of word "*hiikkannaa*" derived from Afan Oromo ¹ word, "*hiikuu*" literally meaning 'untying or straightening out.' This word has different meaning in cultural, religious and social conversations and contexts of Oromo nation. For instance, when a woman gives birth, it said to be, "*hiikamteetti*", which literally means 'she has gave birth in peace.' When people visit the women who gave birth for congratulation, they say to her, "*baga waaqayyo si hiike*" which means, 'thanks to Waaqa (God) in helping you when you give birth.' They say this to show their joy for the women who gave birth. Therefore, in this context "*hiikuu*" means 'giving birth in peace.'

The second meaning of "*hiikuu*" is 'finding the solution for a problem.' In this context, when a problem comes to the society, they pray Waaqaa (God) by saying, "*Yaa Waaq rakkanneerraa hiika nuu kenni*" which means, 'oh God we are in problem and please give us a solution.' In this statement, "*hiika*" means 'a solution for problem.' The third meaning of "*hiikuu*" is 'divorce.' In this context, when husband and wife divorce each other, it said to be "*walhiikan* or *inni haadha manaa isaa hiike*" which means, 'they divorced each other or he divorced his wife.' Therefore, in this context, the words '*walhiikan*' and '*hiike*' have the meanings of 'they divorced each other' and 'he divorced his wife.' The fourth meaning of "*hiikuu*" is giving or praying mercy for cursed person to make peace between two parties and Waaqa (God). This practiced at Qallu ² center through the procedure known as "*hiikkannaa*." If someone cursed the other person at Qallu

1 Afan Oromo is the third largest Afro-Asiatic language in Africa after Arabic and Hausa. It is the widely spoken language in Ethiopia (Samatar 1992).

2 Qallu is a high priest who was spiritual leader of Oromo traditional religion. Qallu was as "eldest son" of all Oromo, the national myth confers upon him the father, the source of customs and traditions, "the prophet of the nation" who guarded the laws of Waaqa (the

center, and then he/she can remove the curse only after reconciliation through “*hiikkannaa*” practice. In this case, it means praying the Waaqaa (God) and making peace between conflicting parties and the God as well.

4.2 Aseennaa (Curse)

The word “*aseennaa*” is Oromo word literary meaning ‘entering.’ However, in this context, “*aseennaa*” is the procedure of entering or coming into the center of Akke Risa and cursing the offender. If the defendant refused to come to the Qallu center, the “*shanee*” or “*salgee*” passes the issue to the Abbaa Siidaa for “*aseennaa*” (curse) procedure. They ask the accuser that he/she told the defendant about the appointment three or two times as decided by the “*salgee*” depending on the distance from the center. The plaintiff takes oath in front of Abbaa Siidaa and “*salgee*” that he told the issue to the defendant. If the plaintiff is lying for he did not tell it, the consequence of the curse will be up on him. After the confirmation of informing the defendant, the Abbaa Siidaa and plaintiff curse the defendant.

Before starting cursing, the Abbaa Siidaa asks the plaintiff that he will practice “*hiikkannaa*” when the defendant is punished for the curse and regret for his offense. When the offender comes to the center to display his wrongdoing, the accuser has obligation to come to the center and practice the “*hiikkannaa*.” Therefore, Abbaa Siidaa asks the plaintiff, “*Yoo namtichi gaabbee dhufee yakka isaa ifa baase, dhuftee irraa hiiktaa?*” which means, ‘if the offender regret for his wrong action and came here to display the offense, would you come here and practice *hiikkannaa*?’ then the plaintiff says, “*Eyyee nan hiikkadha.*” which means, ‘yes I will practice *hiikkannaa*.’

4.2.1 Materials Needed During Aseennaa:

There are cultural materials used during the “*aseennaa*” practice. These are *soogidda* (salt bar), *filaanjoo* (pepper), fire and *eeboo* (spear). Symbolic meanings of *soogidda*, *filaanjoo*, fire and *eeboo* discussed as follows. If the salt bar is added to the water, it dissolves to the water and its physical existence disappears gradually. Therefore, during the curse they say, “*yaa’ii dhumi akka soogiddaa*” which means, ‘disappear as the salt.’ It means that the cursed person may die or be harmed by punishment from Waaqaa, which is long lasting, unseen, and gradual. In case of *filaanjoo* (pepper), the Abbaa Siidaa adds it to the fire and curses the offender. Pepper can cause burning feeling to the mouth and stomach. If used in overdose, it can harm human health. Therefore, as the pepper burns the human body, they believe that the Waaqaa would burn the life of the cursed person through punishment. The fire also burns the human body or any other. Therefore, they thought that the Waaqaa could burn the life of the offender as the fire burns things. The last, not the least is *eeboo* (spear). A spear can also hurt the human body. They believe that as the spear pierces the human body, the Waaqaa would punish him in harmful cases like disease, poverty, fire incident, lightning and other fatal incidents.

By holding these materials, Abbaa Siidaa speaks statements of curse and the plaintiff follows him. For instance, if someone killed the other in hide and refused to come to the center to confess his action, the relative of the diseased curses the killer as:

Abbaa Siidaa

Baalfinno Aayyole
Oh Balfino and Aayyole
Waaqni Akkee Risaa
God of Akke Risa
Nama nama koo miidhe
He who killed my relative
Gumaa koo naa baasi
Revenge for me
Ari’ii naa qabi
Chase and arrest him for me
Fiiigii naa qaqqabi
Run with him and arrest him
Rasaasa keetiin naa dha’i

Relative of the diseased person

Baalfinno Aayyole
Oh Balfino and Aayyole
Waaqni Akkee Risaa
God of Akke Risa
Nama nama koo miidhe
He who killed my relative
Gumaa koo naa baasi
Revenge for me
Ari’ii naa qabi
Chase and arrest him for me
Fiiigii naa qaqqabi
Run with him and arrest him
Rasaasa keetiin naa dha’i

sky god) and their tradition. The Qallu institution and its relation with Waqa were the core of traditional Oromo religion (Muhammaed 1994).

Shoot him/her by your bullet	Shoot him/her by your bullet
<i>Goraadee keetiin naa qali</i>	<i>Goraadee keetiin naa qali</i>
Slaughter him by your blade	Slaughter him by your blade
<i>Shukkaa keetiin naa qali</i>	<i>Shukkaa keetiin naa qali</i>
Slaughter him by your knife	Slaughter him by your knife
<i>Alangaa keetiin naa garafi</i>	<i>Alangaa keetiin naa garafi</i>
Strike him/her by your alanga	Strike him/her by your alanga
<i>Qaccee keetiin naa garafi</i>	<i>Qaccee keetiin naa garafi</i>
Strike t him/her by your whip	Strike him/her by your whip
<i>Muraa kaatiin naa muri</i>	<i>Muraa kaatiin naa muri</i>
Cut him/her by your chainsaw	Cut him/her by your chainsaw
<i>Gubaa keetiin naa gubi</i>	<i>Gubaa keetiin naa gubi</i>
Burn him/her by your burner	Burn him/her by your burner
<i>Shookkisaa keetiin naa shookkisi</i>	<i>Shookkisaa keetiin naa shookkisi</i>
Grind him/her by your grindstone	Grind him/her by your grindstone
<i>Abbaa qabdee ilma hin dhiisiin</i>	<i>Abbaa qabdee ilma hin dhiisiin</i> Punishing father, do not pardon his son
Punishing father, do not pardon his son	
<i>Ilma qabdee abbaa hin dhiisiin</i>	<i>Ilma qabdee abbaa hin dhiisiin</i>
Punishing son, do not pardon his father	Punishing son, do not pardon his father
<i>Haadha qabdee intala hin dhiisiin</i>	<i>Haadha qabdee intala hin dhiisiin</i>
Punishing mother, do not excuse her daughter	Punishing mother, do not excuse her daughter
<i>Intala qabdee haadha hin dhiisiin</i>	<i>Intala qabdee haadha hin dhiisiin</i>
Punishing daughter, do not excuse her mother	Punishing daughter, do not excuse her mother
<i>Amma jilba torbaatti</i>	<i>Amma jilba torbaatti</i>
Up to seven generation	Up to seven generation
<i>Biraa hin hafiin</i>	<i>Biraa hin hafiin</i>
Do not stop your punishment	Do not stop your punishment

Small part of the salt bar is broken in piece and added to fire. Grinded pepper also added to the fire. After that, it shouts; which symbolize the Waaqa might shot the offender and make him cry. After the cursing practice is finished, the accuser brings another salt bar and puts it at especial place prepared for it in the Siidaa Hall. The salt bar used as “*gulantaa*” or “*daangaa*” (boundary). That means, the “*gulantaa*” blocks the curse not to be passed to the accuser. It believed that, the salt bar blocks the curse not to harm the plaintiff in the future. After he/she put the salt bar on ground, he/she pray the God that the curse should not harm him/her. The following statements are the praying to the Waaqa not to harm the accuser. The Abbaa Siidaa helps the accuser to say words of praying as the following:

Abbaa Siidaa

Waaqni Akkee Risaa
 God of Akke Risa
Gulantaa kaawwadheera
 I putted boundary
Daarii kaawwadheera
 I placed the boundary
Daarii soogiddaa kaawwadheera
 My boundary is salt bar
Daarii darbee sanyiin facaanaan
 If his seed scattered on my farm land
Horiin caffeetti wal yaabnaan
 If cattle mounted each other in the field
Wallaalaan wal keessa nyaatee dhugnaan
 If children eat and drink with each other

the accuser

Waaqni Akkee Risaa
 God of Akke Risa
Gulantaa kaawwadheera
 I putted boundary
Daarii kaawwadheera
 I placed the boundary
Daarii soogiddaa kaawwadheera
 My boundary is salt bar
Daarii darbee sanyiin facaanaan
 If his seed scattered on my farm land
Horiin caffeetti wal yaabnaan
 If cattle mounted each other in the field
Wallaalaan wal keessa nyaatee dhugnaan
 If children eat and drink with each other

Na hin ga'iin

Do not harm me

Aannan qoraasumaa naa godhi

Make sweet as milk for me

Taliila baddeessaa naa godhi

Make my life pure as spring water

Waaqni Akkee Risaa

God of Akke Risa

Hafuu naaf jedhi

Make mercy for me

Na hin ga'iin

Do not harm me

Aannan qoraasumaa naa godhi

Make sweet as milk for me

Taliila baddeessaa naa godhi

Make my life pure as spring water

Waaqni Akkee Risaa

God of Akke Risa

Hafuu naaf jedhi

Make mercy for me

Waaqa (God) can punish the person who made crime and cursed. The Waaqa (God) hears the curse and punishes the offender. The cases that results curse are murder, theft, disloyal for loan, land conflict, sexual harassment and others.

4.3 Actors and Procedure of “Hiikkannaa” Practice:

4.3.1 Abbaa Siidaa (Father of Sida):

As the law of Akke Risa center, there is spiritual leader who is responsible for guiding the procedure of the cursing and the “hiikkannaa” practice. The person named as Abbaa Abaarsaa and/or Abbaa Hiikkannaa (father of curse and/or father of ‘hiikkannaa’). He leads procedure of the practices that performed at the Siidaa Hall. Siidaa is the sacred or special place identified for cursing and “hiikkannaa” practice. Other than these two acts, no other spiritual practices performed there. It found in the compound of Qallu Akke Risa and the fence built to identify the Sida within the compound.

4.3.2 “Salgee” (The Nine):

As the center of Qallu Akke Risa, shanee and salgee are the same. It is naming the same thing by different names. However, these names are different by their meaning. Shanee means ‘five’ and salgee means ‘nine.’ However, according to Akke Risa, they have the same meaning. The shanee or salgee are the persons who are identified and responsible for work at the center of Qallu Akke Risa. They serve the center in resolving conflict and leading the procedure of the ceremonies. Their number can be range from five up to ten. They selected from every clan of the Oromo that inhabited in Haro Limmu District. When they investigate the issue to give decision, their number should be at least five. When they are bellow five, they cannot give decision. It said to be not full. When they are five and above in number, they hear the case and passes corrective punishment on the offender if needed. If the offender refused to accept the decision, they pass the issue to Abbaa Siidaa for appeal to Waaqa (God).

4.3.3 “Da’ii Dhaabachuu” (Praying for Mercy):

“Da’ii dhaabachuu” is from two Oromo words “da’ii” and “dhaabachuu.” Da’ii literally means ‘shield’, ‘protection’, ‘hide’ and “dhaabachuu” literally means ‘standing.’ Therefore, when the two words combined, “da’ii dhaabachuu,” it means standing for respect of Waaqa (God) to get shield, protection and mercy against the previous curse. It also means to get hide from the curse. To get mercy, the offender stands for respect of Waaqa by giving service for Waaqa at the center. Depending on the complexity of the case, there are cases that settled through “da’ii dhaabachuu” or not. In this case, “hiikkannaa” practice is took place in two ways, it is “hiikkannaa” which proceeded by “da’ii dhaabachuu” and which practiced without “da’ii dhaabachuu.” The salgee and Abbaa Siidaa decides whether the case needs “da’ii dhaabachuu” or not. They decide it depending on the complexity of the issue.

Therefore, there are two types of “da’ii dhaabachuu.” The first is when the curse resulted punishment of Waaqa. The punishment could be death of someone or demolish of property from the offender. To perform “hiikkannaa” for such kind of issue, it needs “da’ii dhaabachuu” (serving Waaqa at the center). For this issue, the person serves the center for one weak up to one month. If the issue is complex, he or she stay at the center for one month maximum and on the last day, he/she practices “hiikkannaa” and goes back to his/her home. If the issue is not complex, “da’ii dhaabachuu” can take one week or seven days. It also can take two weeks.

The days of “da’ii dhaabachuu” starts from Sunday and ends on Friday. Even if it takes one week, two weeks or a month (four weeks), it starts at Sunday and ends on Friday. Then the procedure of “hiikkannaa” ends at Friday morning. As “da’ii dhaabachuu” finished, the “hiikkannaa” practice follows. On these days of “da’ii dhaabannaa”, the cursed

person prays a Waaqa every time in every day. He or she prepares coffee ceremony at every morning, mid-day and evening. Every day, they also hang yoke to their shoulder and pray the Waaqa for mercy. The yoke at their shoulder and neck symbolizes that, they tie and hang their neck because of their sin, action of hiding truth; they are under punishment of Waaqa. They hang the yoke to their shoulder when they pray Waaqa for mercy. They do this most of hours of every days of “*da’ii dhaabachuu.*” Then at the end of days of “*da’ii dhaabachuu*”, Abbaa Siidaa unties the yoke from their shoulder. It symbolizes that, he or she is relieved from the yoke and the tie of the curse is going to be untied during the “*hiikkannaa*” practice. Then “*hiikkannaa*” practice followed.

4.3.4 Actions of “*Hiikkannaa*” Practice:

The place where “*hiikkannaa*” practiced is at the center of Qaallu Akke Risa. Qaallu Akke Risa mediates the community with Waaqa (God). He communicates between human being and Waaqa (God). He mediates conflicting parties as well as human beings with the Waaqa (God). “*Hiikkoo*” and curses are two sides of one coin. If curse do not exist, “*hiikkannaa*” would not been practiced.

The “*hiikkannaa*” practiced after the offender confessed his/her offense. It practiced after the offender displayed his/her crime before the salgee and Abbaa Siidaa, who is the mediator between Waaqa and human beings. “*Hiikkannaa*” practiced when someone confessed his crime and display what he hide. The accuser makes mercy for offender against the curse. At this center of Akke Risa, the conflicting parties do not afraid man, but they afraid Waaqa (God). Because, taking oath or curse falsely results death, disease, demolish of property and others. All these consequences continue up to seven generations. Therefore, the conflicting parties afraid the consequences of taking oath and curse falsely.

Among the society, everyone sees or knows the consequences of the oath and curses taken place on others. They knows those who died by the consequence. They know who caused dangerous disease by the consequence of the curse and oath. Therefore, the conflicting parties or the harmed person because of the curse tells the truth during the “*hiikkannaa*” practice. He/she displays what he/she done in the hide. During the “*hiikkannaa*” practice, the *salgee* can pass decision on the offender. They punish him/her depending on the complexity of the offence. The “*hiikkannaa*” practice follows after they punished the offender and reconcile the conflicting parties. The *salgee* punishes the offender and after she or he paid the punishment in cash or in kind, they pass the issue to Abbaa Siidaa to practice “*hiikkannaa.*”

4.3.4.1. Materials Needed During “*Hiikkannaa*” Practice:

There are different cultural materials used on the “*hiikkannaa*” practice. They are “*biqila*³”, “*farsoo*” (local beer), “*soogidda*” (salt bar), and “*buddeena*” (traditional bread). These materials have cultural symbolisms. The Oromo son born by bless given with “*biqila.*” When Oromo bless each other he/she says, “*Biqila dhalaa siif haa laatu; biqila horii siif haa laatu; biqila jireenyaa siif haa laatu*” which means, ‘may the God give you the offspring; may God give you property; may God give you a life.’ The “*biqila*” symbolizes offspring. They also bless each other by saying, ‘may the God give you water, food, love and have good test as salt.’ The bread symbolizes the food the person eats throughout his life. It is a symbol of peace and prosperity. The offender prepares these materials during the “*da’ii dhaabachuu.*” After all these materials are prepared at Siidaa Hall, the “*hiikkannaa*” praying started. The “*hiikkannaa*” praying performed at presence of two conflicting parties in the Siidaa Hall. First, Abbaa Siidaa says the words of praying and the person who cursed the offender follow him.

Abbaa Siidaa

Yaa Uumo yaa Seeqa
Oh Creature oh Seqa
 Yaa Aayyole yaa Baalfinno
Oh Ayyole oh Balfinno
 Waaqni Akke Risa
God of Akke Risa
 Hafuu nuu jedhi
Please pardon us
 Qonnaan hafuu nuu jedhi

the plaintiff

Yaa Uumo yaa Seeqa
Oh Creature oh Seqa
 Yaa Aayyole yaa Baalfinno
Oh Ayyole oh Balfinno
 Waaqni Akke Risa
God of Akke Risa
 Hafuu nuu jedhi
Please pardon us
 Qonnaan hafuu nuu jedhi

3 Barley mixed with the water to prepare local beer.

Pardon us in our agriculture
 Cirraan hafuu nuu jedhi
Pardon us in our farm land
 Adeemnaan hafuu nuu jedhi
Pardon us in our journey
 Nagannaan hafuu nuu jedhi
Pardon us in our trade
 Dubbannaan karaa nuu laadhu
Pardon us in our talking
 Rakkadhee abaareera
I cursed because of offense
 Amma immoo araameera
Now I settled the case
 Hin dhaqiin
Do not punish him/her
 Yoo dhaqxe ta'e irraa deebi'i
If you started to punish, please pardon
 Irraa gali
Come back from him/her
 Ateetiin hiika godhiif
Pardon his/her marriage
 Itilleen hiika godhiif
 Pardon his/her *itille*⁴ (leather mat)
 Dallaan hiika godhiif
Pardon him/her by cattle breeding
 Dhalaan hiika godhiif
Pardon him/her by offspring

Pardon us in our agriculture
 Cirraan hafuu nuu jedhi
Pardon us in our farm land
 Adeemnaan hafuu nuu jedhi
Pardon us in our journey
 Nagannaan hafuu nuu jedhi
Pardon us in our trade
 Dubbannaan karaa nuu laadhu
Pardon us in our talking
 Rakkadhee abaareera
I cursed because of offense
 Amma immoo araameera
Now I settled the case
 Hin dhaqiin
Do not punish him/her
 Yoo dhaqxe ta'e irraa deebi'i
If you started to punish, please pardon
 Irraa gali
Come back from him/her
 Ateetiin hiika godhiif
Pardon his/her marriage
 Itilleen hiika godhiif
 Pardon him/her *itille* (leather mat)
 Dallaan hiika godhiif
Pardon him/her by cattle breeding
 Dhalaan hiika godhiif
Pardon him/her by offspring

In the above praying, the plaintiff prays Waaqa for offender to show him mercy. He/she approve that they are reconciled to each other and peace rebuilt between them. The peace built between the two parties built between Waaqa and the offender too. Therefore, the accuser prays Waaqa for the offender to give him peace. After the plaintiff prayed Waaqa for the offender, by his turn the offender prays Waaqa (God) to give him mercy for his/her own offence. He/she prays with Abbaa Sidaa by saying what he informed him as the following:

Abbaa Siidaa

Yaa Waaq hafuu naa jedhi
 Oh God give me mercy
Qonnaan hafuu naa jedhi
 Give me mercy by agriculture
Cirraan hafuu naa jedhi
 Pardon me in my farm land
Adeemnaan hafuu naa jedhi
 Pardon me in my journey
Balleesseeraa naa dhiisi
 Pardon me for my offense
Hiika naaf godhi
 Give me mercy
Araara kee naaf buusi
 Give me mercy
Nagaa kee naaf buusi
 Give me your peace
Naaf araarami
 Give me mercy
Horraan hiika naa godhi

Offender

Yaa Waaq hafuu naa jedhi
 Oh God give me mercy
Qonnaan hafuu naa jedhi
 Give me mercy by agriculture
Cirraan hafuu naa jedhi
 Pardon me in my farm land
Adeemnaan hafuu naa jedhi
 Pardon me in my journey
Balleesseeraa naa dhiisi
 Pardon me for my offense
Hiika naaf godhi
 Give me mercy
Araara kee naaf buusi
 Give me mercy
Nagaa kee naaf buusi
 Give me your peace
Naaf araarami
 Give me mercy
Horraan hiika naa godhi

4 The leather mat on which someone lies on for sleep. More than its importance as a material, it has cultural meaning. It symbolizes offspring.

Give mercy for my property
Waaqni Akke Risa
 God of Akke Risa
Dhalaan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy by offspring
Gaa'elaan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy by my marriage
Itilleen hiika naa godhi
 Pardon me by *itille*
Maaddiidhaan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy by food
Maasiidhaan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy by agriculture
Maatiidhaan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy my my family
Hormaataan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy by property
Yoo dhufte ta'e narraa deebi'i
 If you come, please pardon me
Yoo na qabde ta'e na gadhiisi
 If you are punishing me, please pardon me
Waaqni Akke Risa
 God of Akke Risa
Hiika naaf godhi
 Please, pardon me

Give mercy for my property
Waaqni Akke Risa
 God of Akke Risa
Dhalaan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy by offspring
Gaa'elaan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy by my marriage
Itilleen hiika naa godhi
 Pardon me by *itille*
Maaddiidhaan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy by food
Maasiidhaan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy by agriculture
Maatiidhaan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy for my family
Hormaataan hiika naa godhi
 Give me mercy by property
Yoo dhufte ta'e narraa deebi'i
 If you come, please pardon me
Yoo na qabde ta'e na gadhiisi
 If you are punishing me, please pardon me
Waaqni Akke Risa
 God of Akke Risa
Hiika naaf godhi
 Please pardon me

Then after this practice, the conflicting parties come to each other in one “*maaddii*” (feast). They bring prepared traditional bread and eat with each other. They feed each other; they give the “*farsoo*” (local beer) in to each other’s mouth and pour it to the ground from their mouth. When they spit the “*farsoo*” from their mouth, the defendant says, “*Si tufeera; hafuu sii jedheera*” which means as ‘As I spited this “*farsoo*”, I also spited the curse and no more conflict between us.’ They exchange for each other the local beer and the bread turn by turn. This symbolizes, the conflict is disappeared and the peace rebuilt. Holding the salt bar, Abbaa siidaa blesses the conflicting party by saying, “*Akka soogidda kanaa walitti miyaa'aa,*” which means ‘be testy to each other as this salt bar.’ The statement implies that, since the salt has good test, the Abbaa Siidaa wishes good relationship of two parties in their life. The test of the salt bar symbolizes the good partnership of the party.

Then they take oath from salgee to prepare the ceremony at their respective home. This oath said to be “*kakuu nagaan*” (oath of peace). No one breaks the oath. They prepare the feast accordingly. Then, they come to each other on the feast. The feast also prepared at the home of defendant. The family and relative of two conflicting party come together and participate on the feast. This builds peace between these two bodies.

4.4 Types of “*Hiikkannaa*”

There are two types of “*hiikkannaa*.” They are “*hiikkoo jaalalaa*” (love *hiikkannaa*) and “*hiikkoo bitaa fi mirgaa*” (right and left *hiikkannaa*). “*Hiikkoo jaalalaa*” is when the conflicting parties come to the center and practice the “*hiikkannaa*” with each other. It practiced when the parties come together at the center and settled their dispute to practice “*hiikkannaa*.” “*Hiikkoo bitaa fi mirgaa*” is when the defendant refused to come to the center to practice “*hiikkannaa*.” In this case, the offender tells the “*jecha*” to the defendant three times to come to the center to practice “*hiikkannaa*” or remove the curse from him. If the defendant refused the three or two round “*jecha*”, the offender can practice “*hiikkannaa*” without the existence of the defendant.

The “*hiikkannaa*” practiced between conflicting parties in two ways. One is the “*hiikkannaa*” which practiced by the cursed person and the defendant. This is possible when two parties are alive. If accuser is not alive, the cursed one can practice “*hiikkannaa*” with the relative of the accuser to rebuilt peace for the sake of the existing and future generation. For instance, if the death of persons happened recurrently in a given family, they got to “*jaarsa hoodaa*” (prophetic elder) and ask him the cause of the deaths. Then the “*jaarsa hoodaa*” may tell them that they had cursed by someone else. He tells the offence done by the cursed family. He also tells the time in which the transgression was occurred and identifies the person who done the offence.

The “*jaarsa hoodaa*” gets the information from the spirit of the dead person. The dead person become alive in spirit and tells the information to “*jaarsa hoodaa*.” This is when the person who did the crime has passed away and the curse passed to the generation. Then the existing generation goes to “*jaarsa hoodaa*” and gets information about the crime. The “*sojoo*” (spirit of the dead) tells the issue to “*jaarsa hoodaa*” and then he tells it to the relatives of the dead.

The spirit of the dead tells crimes he done when he was alive. The spirit also tells the people or the person whom he/she offended. After they got information from the spirit of the dead, the existing generations practice “*hiikkannaa*” with the offended group. If the offended person is not alive, they practice it with his/her close relative. If relative of the offended person could not be known or do not exist, they practice it with his/her clan. If they do not know his/her clan, they practice left and right “*hiikkannaa*”. In this case, the cursed party present salt bar to center of Akke Risa and put it in the Siidaa Hall. No one use the salt bar for any purpose. Even cattle do not eat it. It should be disappeared gradually from the hall. This symbolizes the curse will be disappeared from the cursed group or person.

Every conflict can be resolved through “*hiikkannaa*” practice. Even, the case of murder can be resolved through “*hiikkannaa*” practice. If relative of the dead cursed the slaughter, then the murderer pays (*gumaa*) blood price and practice “*hiikkannaa*” to make everlasting peace between relatives of the dead and Waaqa (God) as well. After the practice of “*hiikkannaa*”, the two reconciled parties take oath not to raise the conflict again. They take the oath by name of Waaqa (God) by standing in front of Abbaa Siidaa. They take the oath by great fear of Waaqa and take care not to break the oath in their future life. In taking the oath, they say:

Abba Siidaa

Har'aa Kaasnee

Starting from today

Namni haaloo garaatti qabate

He who organized for the revenge

Namni dhoksaadhaan wal miidhe

He who harm each other in hide

Namni walitti malee argame

Who restart the conflict again

Namni debi'ee dubbii kana kaase

He who raised the case again

Eeboon haa waranu

May the spear penetrate him/her

Waraanee keessaa hin buqqa'iin

May the spear kill him/her

The reconciled parties

Har'aa Kaasnee

Starting from today

Namni haaloo garaatti qabate

He who organized for the revenge

Namni dhoksaadhaan wal miidhe

He who harm each other in hide

Namni walitti malee argame

Who raise the conflict again

Namni debi'ee dubbii kana kaase

He who raised the case again

Eeboon haa waranu

May the spear penetrate him/her

Waraanee keessaa hin buqqa'iin

May the spear kill him/her

The above oath is very hesitating and no one is responsible to break the oath for he/she punished by Waaqa (God). Therefore, no one can raise the conflict again after the “*hiikkannaa*” practice. This is the last stage for the conflict. After “*hiikkannaa*” practice, everlasting or sustained peace come between the two parties and the Waaqa (God) as well.

5. CONCLUSION

The “*hiikkannaa*” practice is the Oromo peace making practice to remove curse that performed in the previous time. It practiced at the center of Akke Risa. The center is the place at which the curse, oath taking performed with the accuser and/or conflicting party. According to Megersa (2014), oath and curse believed to be dangerous if it taken wrongly; therefore, no one is ready to bear the consequence by hiding the truth. Therefore, according to Akke Risa, the wrongly taken oath and curse can removed only through the “*hiikkannaa*” practice at the center. Purpose of this “*hiikkannaa*” is making conflicting parties free from the consequences of wrongly taken oaths and curses. This taken place when the parties forgive each other in the procedure of *hiikkannaa* practice. After the forgiveness, the peace rebuilt between them and the Waaqa (God) as well. Generally, the ancestors and the present generation have been using the “*hiikkannaa*” practice as the peace making performance. At this time, it has vital role in resolving conflict and sustaining peace of the study area. The people are going there from different areas to resolve their conflict through the “*hiikkannaa*” practice. Since the center is open to serve every human being, the people are coming there regardless of their ethnicity and any other identity.

6. RECOMMENDATION

The *hiikkannaa* peacemaking practice have vital role in the conflict resolution and sustaining peace of the study area. This study is the first research conducted on the issue. Therefore, scholars should consider this issue and conduct more detailed and broad investigation on the topic. Additionally, Oromia Culture and Tourism Bureau should consider the role of the *hiikkannaa* in perpetuating peace of the area and conserve the *hiikkanna* center for future use. Additionally, legal court should work hand in hand with the *hiikkannaa* procedure to resolve conflict and sustain peace.

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