International Journal for Social Studies
Available at https://edupediapublications.org/journals

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

Scrutinize Sub-National Formal Conflict Resolutions Institutions: The Case of Council of Nationalities

Yideg Munana Negah
Bahir Dar University, Faculty of Applied Social Sciences Bahir Dar, Ethiopia
Email address-m.yideg@yahoo.com

Abstract

After the collapse of the dictatorial regime in 1991, Ethiopia developed, in its essence, its first Federal Democratic Constitution in 1995. Since then Ethiopia is declared as a federal state encompassing various ethno-linguistic groups. Accordingly, the federation has comprised nine regional states and two city administrations. One among the member states of the federation the SNNPR, are composed of several of multi ethnic communities. The SNNPR witnessed inter ethnic disputes such as identity, border and resource conflicts that caused unnecessary consequence. In the constitution, adopted by the Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples of the SNNPR, the Council of Nationalities was institutionalized with a number of constitutional mandates of which dispute management and resolution is the prominent one. Thus, the Council, which has different constitutional functions, is constitutionally empowered to deal with disputes for the main reason that to ensure full respect of the rights of NNPs enshrined in the constitution and hence, the house of nationalities with this power was thought essential. It is in light of this power that the article entitled 'Scrutinize Formal Conflict Resolutions Institutions in Ethiopia: The case of Council of Nationalities of SNNP region. For the accomplishment of the objective of the study, largely secondary data and primary data obtained through unstructured interviews were used. In doing so, some cases entertained by the Council of Nationalities were analyzed. To achieve its goals the Council of Nationalities has designed strategies. But during the processes of conflict resolutions, the CoN has not been carried out as it supposed to resort. Deploying security force has taken as a viable option to find out resort for conflicts emerged in the region. As a result, many of conflict cases in the region remain either unsettled or prolonged to violence. In fact the CoN had brought some remarkable achievements that reinforce its future endeavor. As institution which found in conflict prone areas, the CoN should strengthen its instructional frameworks, skilled human power, modern technology and desire to work with indigenous conflict resolution institution to get things done.

Scrutinize Sub-National Formal Conflict Resolution Institutions in Ethiopia: the Council of Nationalities of the South Nations, Nationalities and People Region

1. Introduction

The name Ethiopia has come to signify different things to different people. For some it is oldest country with cradle of civilizations and pride of Africa in which any freedom fighter will take immense inspiration. Nationalist political forces, on the other hand, regarded it as a narration of ruthless colonial. 1960s and 70s dominant

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

multinational movements which crystallized from Ethiopian Students Movement re defined the country as a multi-cultural and multi-religious that should be accommodate diversity to make peace happen in it. Here the question is why people apprehended the history of the country differently? Assefa, Fesiha argued that the writing history of the country sowed the seed of diversified political ramification into political crisis. In terms of coverage, dominant approach has been portrayed it as "a story of succession of rulers and dynasties and as a result, because of the dominant position of the Amharas and the Tigrayans, it was equated with what the *ferengis* call the Abyssinian culture[1]." It pays little or no attention to understand the other ethnic group's culture.

On the other hand, historians and politicians of the new generation have brought different approach of writing Ethiopian history. Thiers characterization focused on undermining the shared values and reconstruction of the past history for the purpose of mobilizing the people based on ethnic affinity. Some Ethiopian youth political activists (dominantly Eritreans and the Oromos), guided by primordial reasons, developed a perspective of colonization and subjugation to intensify struggle for self determination (Zahorik, 2011). For example, the rise of Eritrean movement which stretched on the basis of ethnic affinity served for other movements as a signal to mobilize the people. In a similar fashion, the Oromos, Somalis and Tigrayans picked up ethnicity as the heartland of their political struggle (Bahru, 2007 cited Bereketab 2013).

Ethnicity has been salient feature of Ethiopia's political struggle from the mid 20th C. Since then dominate opposition political forces (both nationalist and multi nationalist) overtly criticize the imperial regime of Haile slasse over the alienations and marginalization of ethnic groups of Ethiopia. The quest for self determination and social justice which was raised during the events of the1960s 1970s were particularly crucial and still have repercussions on the present state structure and the ideology behind it. But these political forces came on board had somehow different orientation in terms of the vision they wanted to realize.

[1] Asefa Fiseha, 2007

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

The Discourse of ethnicity remains unanswered even after the Dergue took the political post of the country. Aalen (2006) noted that ethnic groups during the regime became gradually more suppressed and less empowered than previous. As such, ethno nationalist struggle intensified ever before. Tigray People Liberation Front (TPLF) formed on 18 Feburary 1975(Aregawi 2009 cited in Bereketab 2013) with idea of establishing democratic republic of Tigray, towards the end of Dergue`s rule, however, it played dominate role in creation of multi coalition, the Ethiopian People Liberation Front, which was formed in 1989.

The other ethno notational dominant political force was, Oromo Liberation Front, laid its foundation in 1973 with the quest to have self administration up to and including session of the Oromo people. The OLF joined the EPRDF coalition as partner and participated in the EPRDF led transitional government in 1991(Bereketab, 2013). The cumulative efforts and momentum of different political forces (Ethno nationalist and Non –ethnic political force) deposed the military regime and changed the political landscape of the country.

Following the collapse Dergue regime, the country established a federal system in the form of granting regional autonomy, self-determination up to including secession, started in 1991 and lasted for about four years of transition period, and it was fully formalized in the 1995 FDRE constitution. This is evident in the first article of the constitution that stipulates the establishment of a federal state. The Preamble taken together with other provisions of the constitution may be considered as an indication to prove the considerable importance that ethnicity and the accommodation of diversity have in contem-porary Ethiopian politics. The member state of the federation comprise on the basis of the settlements pattern, language, identity and consents of the people concerned[2].

This article aims at assessing the potential of Ethiopia`s formal conflict resolution institutions which established to work with conflicts. Dealing with the whole formal conflict resolution institutions in the Country would not be manageable in many respects. Accordingly, a more specific focus is to explore the efforts being made by the Council of Nationalities of South Nations,

[2] Article 39/5, 1994/5 FDRE constitution

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

Nationalities and People`s Region (Ethiopia) to mitigate conflicts. The article organized into three sections. The first section deals with theoretical assumptions of ethnic conflicts and conceptualization of the nature of conflicts in South Nations, Nationalities and People`s Region. The second briefly reviews institutional arrangement, policies, strategies and methods the Council of Nationalities designed to deal with conflicts. Third section raises achievements and failures of the Council of Nationalities in the endeavor to work with conflicts sustainably.

1.2. Theories/Models/ of Ethnic Conflicts

Scholars in the field made distinction between "ethnicity and nationalism". Some, for example, Wubshet (2015) closely relates ethnicity as sociological concept, where as nationalism associated to political science. He further goes on to argue ethnicity is a foundation for the formation of nationalism. On the other hand, the transitional charter of Ethiopia/which had formulated in1991/ characterize ethnicity equivalent to race. Many academicians in field still use terms such as clan, tribe and nationality to describe ethnicity.

Political scientists and sociologist categorized the notion of ethnicity in to three groups, namely Primordial approach, Instrumental view and Social construction. The Primordialists viewed ethnicity is as natural (biologically inherited), eternal and confided by common and consistent cultural elements. To the contrary, Instrumentalists version of ethnicity is a social entity which manipulated by political elites whenever they want to claim political power. As such nor ethnicity and ethnic identity has natural existence. On the other hand, the social construction perspectives hold ethnicity something neither existed naturally nor artificially formed. It would rather be created based on the consent of the members of the ethnic group. The formation of such ethnic identity is driven by historical incidence associated to the group[3] (Wubshet, 2015).

Most of the time political elite maneuver ethnicity as a way to claim political power. For instance earlier European colonialist's image of African identities as example of primordial approach; as divided into clearly

[3] Wubshet, 2015, argued the Amahara ethnic identity has been constructed based on the consent of constituent groups(Wollo, Gondare, Gojam,Shewa)

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

separated 'tribes' defined on the basis of objective cultural markers(Pritchar, 1999 cited in Aalen, 2010). In the mean time, their policy of indirect rule demonstrated official definition of ethnicity based on compatibility to their political arrangement (Bayar, 1993 cited Aalen, 2010). As result, Horowitz, 1985; Azar, 1990, Gurr, 1994 all noted that the ethnic conflicts that have been emerged in Africa stimulated by elites under the cover of race, religion, language and identity.

In Ethiopian, the1995 FDRE constitution definition of ethnic groups as clearly distinguishable cultural groups is the same kind to primordial ideas of ethnicity.

Article 39/5 of the constitution stipulated that:

> *a Nation, Nationality or People is a group of people who have or share a large measure of a common culture, similar custom, mutual intelligibility of language, common related or related identity, a common psychological makeup, and who inhabit an identifiable, predominantly contiguous territory.*

A rival explanation for the above argument contends that the theory hardly corresponds with the specific characteristics and definition ethnicity and ethnic identity in Ethiopia. Despite the constitution defined ethnic groups akin to primordial approach to ethnicity, on the ground the political arrangement made in the country conceptualizes ethnicity and ethnic groups descend to instrumental view points. As a result, the federal experiment witnessed many conflicts in the country underpinned by issues related to identity (Markakis, 1998; Wubshet, 2015). In a similar vein, Beyene[4] argued that the main reason behind conflicts in federal Ethiopia since 1991 is that the artificial arrangements of ethnic groups identity by the EPRDF. For instance, the making of South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Region concluded by pull different ethnic groups together[5].

A number of explanations of ethnic conflicts and models attempt to predict them are available. For example, Horowitz

[4] Voice of America: Amharic Service, Interview held with Prof, Beyene Petros (Opposition political leader) on 20/6/2017 edition.

[5] There was an attempt made by the government by merging four languages together: Wolayita, Gamo, Gofa, and Dawro into a single language called Wogagoda.

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

forwarded three major theories to explain ethnic conflicts, namely class theory, modernization theory and cultural difference theories. Modernization theory characterizes mere sentimental value to 'outmoded traditionalism' causes ethnic conflict. This theory underlined that get to escape away from ethnic conflicts could possible if modernization penetrates the domain of ethnic existence. Whereas, Class theories of ethnic conflicts hold that belief in a particular ethnic identity is part of an ideology that masks class interests and diverts the working class from pursuing their interests. As such most ethnic demands have been emerged as part of the response and resistance to different classes of oppression, namely exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, violence, and cultural imperialism (Young, 2000 Cited in Tsegaye, 2010). On the other hand, cultural difference theory underlined that conflict among ethnic groups arises out of incompatibilities among their cultures. It further holds that plural societies are defined by dissensus and pregnant with conflicts (Horowiz 1985 Cited in Tsegaye 2010).

Some more theories, for example grievance and justice seeking model, explain ethnic conflicts burst by relative deprivation defined as a gap between the social group believes it deserves and what it actually gets (Gurr, 1970 cited in Kidane 2013). As such ethnic conflict emerges when conflicting groups who wanted either to improve their disadvantages socio economic position or preserve their hegemonic position. A research finding, for example Stewart (2000), shows a positive relation between inequalities and occurrence of ethnic conflict.

1.3. Ethnicity and Conflicts in Federal Ethiopia: An overview

Scholars in the area of federal studies firmly figure out two pre conditions to mitigating ethnic conflict in federal states; building democratic government and developing common citizenship. Coercion undermines basic principles of federalism (Self rule and shared rule and division of power of member states). Likewise the idea of federalism without common citizenship, granting the right to self determination for ethnic groups' likely turn to claims of secession and finally leads to disintegration of federal states (Burges and Gagnon, 1993;

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

Aalen, 2006). The development over reaching identity could be a remedy to ethnically based self-rule from leading to parochialism and fragmentation (Ghai, 2000; Aalen, 2006). In doing so, in times of disagreement between ethnic groups, the appeal to the idea of an overall citizenship may prevent the conflict from escalating into open ethnic fighting.

Ethiopia was at the brink of total collapse and disintegration because of the social, political and economic policies adopted by the previous regimes[6]. Principally uneven ethnic relations in the country considered as foundation for problems that degenerated to conflicts. Subsequently, the country has never known either a democratic political system or an administrative culture to accommodate the ethnic group's demands (Merera, 2003; Alem, 2004). As a result, ethnicity is taken seriously in the endeavor to reconstruct the state as a multi-national, multicultural federal polity since 1991. The restructuring of the state since then was the response to build suitable system that could be used as an instrument of managing the complex ethno-linguistic diversity in turn, reduce conflicts (Aalen, 2006; Tsegaye, 2008; Asnake, 2009).

Federal arrangement widely believed to be a panacea for a nation with multi-ethnic society if and only if the following preconditions fulfilled. First, in the endeavor to mitigate conflicts, readiness in terms of putting in place a systematic set of policies, institutions, strategies, and methods for handling conflicts should be carried out. Because the extent the policies, strategies and institutional framework address the quest rise from member states of a federation indicates the functionality of a federal system (Aalen, 2006). Worthwhile these benefits, EPRDF vowed to build democratic norms and institutions capable of holding the principle of federalism.

The question is, therefore, did the federal experiment proved to be a panacea for the country's deep rooted socio-political problems as it opted? Many scholars have been regarded it short to the expectation. For example, Aalen lovies argued the new political arrangement of Ethiopia did not brought durable peace as EPRDF promised to bring about. He further noted that, firstly, the EPRDF regime is semi authoritarian in

[6] See the EPRDF Political Program, 2005, p:1

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

nature; it did not build strong democratic institutions. Given the fact that democratic institutions are instrumental to ensure self rule and shared rule, a federal system with democratic institution is not better than symbolic. In light of this, the question of political equality and self administration were the driving force that led the country to political crackdown since 2015[7]. Subsequently, the new federal experiment has been emphasized at the risk of undermining the concept of citizenship[8]. Citizenship and values attached with it overridden by ethnic issues (Alem, 2006). As a result, the process of seeking solutions for old problems has born new conflicts: conflicts for new power, new resource, the quest to have self administrative status, identity, political empowerment, and the demand to ensure local economic justice (Tsegaye, 2010).

Apparently, the federal system of Ethiopia established several institutions both at the federal and regional levels to deal with conflicts. Some of them are explicitly established by the constitution and proclamations at a federal and regional unit while others are mostly organized based on formal and informal bilateral and/or multilateral agreements. House of Federation and Ministry of Federal Affairs at the federal level, and Council of Nationalities (SNNPR) and the like have been created at regional levels to deal with conflicts[9].

The House of Federation is established with mandates supposed to keep the balance of the federal arrangement. It was explicitly granted the power to adjudicate disputes within the federation. In addition, the Ministry of Federal Affairs has been established, by virtue of Proclamation No. 256/2001, with a special mandate to get involved in the affairs of the regional states when (1) regions request the federal government involvement (2) the issue(s) is/are violent that endanger the constitution. The engagements of such institutions in conflict management and resolutions have supported the country's effort to ensure sustainable peace.

[7] For example the Oromo protest since 2015 and Amhara resistance since 2016

[8] For example, Addis Ababa is a federal city. But official identification requires ethnic identification, although ethnicity is irrelevant in a federal city

[9] First National Conference on Federalism , conflict and peace building organized by Ministry of Federal affair and German technical cooperation held on, May 5-6 , 2003 Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

Owing these benefit of formal conflict resolution institutions, member regional governments cascaded the federal conflict resolutions institutions mandates and organizational structure to realize in their respective regions. Given the fact that the South Nations, Nationalities and People region is the home of various ethnic groups (more than 56), establishing conflict resolutions institution was more demanding than any other regions. Hence, by the virtue of 1994 SNNPRS constitution, Council of Nationalities came into being having the goal of addressing matters of nationalities.

2. Nature of Conflicts in South Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' Region

Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional (SNNPR) State is located in the southern part of Ethiopia bordering Kenya, Gambela regional state in the west and Oromia regional state in the north and east. The total area of the region is 113,539 square kilometres i.e. 10 % of the national area. It is also the home of more than 56 different Nations, Nationalities and Peoples[10].

Following the collapse of Dergue regime in 1991, the transitional government of Ethiopia made fourteen regions. Five among of the fourteen regions were found in geographic south of Ethiopia. These were Region seven,[11] Region eight[12], Region nine[13], Region ten[14] and Region eleven[15]. Meanwhile, in February 8, 1993[16] these regions descended to one and established 'The Southern Ethiopia Transitional government''. The government justified the new political arrangement as a response to the request of Nations, Nationalities and Peoples presented. With regard to the local administration arrangement, initially the region established eleven zones and five special ***Woreda*** administrations. Meanwhile, as part of the efforts to create conducive

[10] Strategy for conflict resolution in SNNPR (2011) prepared by the Council of Nationalities
[11] Region 7 consisted Guraghe, Hadiya, Kambata, Halaba and Yem
[12] Region 8 holds Sidama, Gedeokore, Borji, and Gidicho
[13]Region includes Gamo Gofa, Dawro, Wolyta, Zayse, Ozyda, Konta, Ale, Mosiye, Derashe, Mashole and Konso
[14] Region eight contains Male. Arsi, Hammer, Bana, Tesemay, Dasench, Gnaygatom
[15] Incorporates Kafficho, Shakicho, Bench, Nao, Chara, Dizi, Surma, Meinet, Sheko and Zilmam).[15]
[16] [16] Strategy for conflict resolution in SNNPR (2011) prepared by the CoN

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

administrative system, two additional zonal administrations have been established[17].

The Government claimed the new arrangement intended to managing nations and nationalities human and material resources, overcoming their common enemy, poverty, democratization process, thereby establishing single strong political and economic community. Opposite to the government's claim, some scholars, for example Vaughan, argued the decision that has made by EPRDF in South region to claw back control over what some calls as ethnic 'free-for-all' in political and administrative organization provoked conflicts.

As stipulated in the 2001 revised constitution of SNNPR, the regional state has three organs namely; the legislative (State Council& the Council of Nationalities), the executive and judiciary body. The State Council, the Executive and Judiciary organs have organizational structure at zones, special ***Woredas*** and ***Kebeles*** levels. But the Council of Nationalities has not organizational structure at lower level governments[18].

As Fisher (2000) noted, diversity by itself is not a problem but it is lack of proper handling of the existing objective reality that makes it worse (Fisher, 2000). In this regard, despite the SNNPR has been trying to resolve some of the major conflicts, still several intra and inter-regional ethnic conflicts have been emerged in different part of the region (Dereje, 2010). Given the fact it is wealthy in terms of natural resource coupled with its diversity makes the region highly sensitive. On top of that asymmetric relations among/between ethnic groups within and out of region driven by factors related cultural and economic reasons feed into crisis of the region.

Therefore, the conflicts ravaging the region are underpinned by historical, socio-economic and environmental issues can be classified in to the following categories: border issues, identity and quest to have self administrative status, lack of good governance, cultural miscommunications

[17] The Revised Constitution of Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples Regional state(2001)

[18] The Revised Constitution of Southern Nations Nationalities Peoples Regional state(2001)

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

and resource based conflicts[19]. Furthermore, the conflicts have been compounded by the federal government and inter regional interventions. Ostensibly, such interventions have been motivated by dominantly economic factors. This section offers an overview of conflicts in the SNNPR focusing on major causes of conflicts.

2.1. Border Conflicts in the Region

Among the several triggering causes of conflict, conflict over border issue is the most potent. Predominantly, along the boundary of two neighboring ethnic groups, disputes are apparent in the demarcation of their respective territory. Border related conflicts the region experienced so far have two dimensions namely; inter and intra regional state boundary conflicts.[20] Many of inter regional conflicts the region experienced in different course of time have been alongside Oromia regional state[21].

The region has also been suffered by potent intra state conflicts emerged between/among different ethnic groups over their border side. Since 1991 there had been violent conflict between Wolyta -Sidama around ***Blatte River***, Zaise - Derashe, Konso-Derashe and Konso- Burji. There were border related conflicts in some part of the region, for example, Konso - Amarro, *Beta* - Durka ***kebele,*** Zellba – Zalla and Keddida - Baddiwochu. Furthermore conflicts emerged between Mereko – Manskan and Ixie - Bemuhr over border issues are not resolved yet[22]. Scholars, notably, Vaughan and Tronvoll justified the reason why many of border conflicts burst up more than ever before in region. They argued that many of the dormant conflicts were provoked and became open by the new constitutional order as EPRDF urged them to draw boundaries based on ethnic and linguistic criteria's. As a result the new political arrangement since 1991 put on legitimacy to pre-existing competition and antagonism.

[19] An interview held with Tekle Diedu: the former heads of conflict management and resolution division in Council of Nationalities(2001-2008), November 11/04/2011, 4:37
[20] Ibid
[21] For exa,mple Guji-Sidama conflict, Guji-Gedeo conflict, Guji-Burji conflict, Arsi –Halaba conflict e.t.c
[22] An interview held with Zelleke Belayneh working in the Council of Nationalities; Nationality common values promotion and dispute resolution core work process owner October, 24/2011

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

In general, the issues of border in Ethiopia and in the SNNPR in particular have become the major causes for violent conflicts following the restructuring of the Ethiopian state and the policy adopted by the regime. But the government blamed local government leaders and the people misinterpretation of federal system degenerated to border conflicts in the region.[23]

2.2. Cultural Miscommunication and Conflicts in the SNNPRS

According to the theory of cultural miscommunication, culture does much to determine the way we think about and perceive the events happening around us and the way we act and the manner in which we relate to others. Many conflicts between and within nations are in one way or the other rooted in cultural differences, the lack of respect for cultural diversity, and the resulting misunderstandings and tensions between peoples. Stein (2005) contends that cultural miss- communication contribute a lot to the occurrences of ethnic conflicts by sharpening ethnic identity and by producing condition of uncertainty. In a similar vein, Mattew Arnold, on his piece entitled culture and conflict underscores, given the fact that peoples honor their own culture, and often seek to maintain it in the face of outside influences, it have been root causes of some conflicts in the multiethnic society.

In the SNNPR too, cultural miscommunication has been a cause for many conflicts. Most of such conflicts appear when one party considers itself as being traditionally betrayed by the other has resulted in distrust among the parties[24]. Characterizing and labeling the others ethnic groups culture as inferior and uncivilized caused to suspicious and hostile ethnic relations among/ between ethnic groups of the SNNP region. For example, ethnic groups of the south west part of region regarded Mejenger and Menja as inferior, as a result, theirs resentment and disappointment is high.

2.3. Identity Conflicts in SNNPRS

Ethnicity or identity has been the driving force behind many of the demands for a measure of self-rule in a well-defined territorial level of local government either

[23] An interview held with Zelleke Belayneh working in the Council of Nationalities; Nationality common values promotion and dispute resolution core work process owner October, 24/2011

[24] ibid

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

with the status of a zone or ***Woreda*** (Alemanyehu, 2009). Hence, identity deprivation or oppression is the motive behind the demand to have their own defined territories and administrative and in a situation where such a demand is not succeeded, identity become triggering cause for conflicts.

Although the government claimed identity and the quest to have self administrative status as less frequent cause of conflicts, several numbers of conflicts had been appeared in the region. Merging of ethnicities and the right to self determination which made scared constitutionally encouraged various ethnic groups to assert their own ethnic identities. On the other hands, the patterns of relationships between ethnic majorities and settler communities experienced change as a result of the overall changes in the political structures of the country and its underlying ideologies (Tsegaye, 2001).

2.4. Conflict over Natural Resources in the Region

Resource conflicts usually exacerbated because of dwindling of resources, population pressure, change in livelihood strategies of communities. Changes in political structures and processes within the country have been attributed to environmental conflicts (Medhane, 2004). Dwindling of land resources as a result of development interventions (large scale mechanized farms); continuous and cyclic droughts induce acute resource conflicts between users of natural resources. There had been conflicts in South Omo and Bench-Maji zones of the SNNP region over grazing land and cattle raids (Almayehu, 2009). Beside this, changes in the livelihood strategies and mode of production of pastoral communities (particularly transformation from pastoralist to agriculture and agro-pastoralist) intensify resource conflicts in the region[25].

3. The Council of Nationalities

3.1. Selection and Composition

As mentioned elsewhere in this article Sothern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples regional states is a home diverse ethnic and linguistic groups. As such each Nation and Nationality had to be represented in a peculiar institution to enshrine theirs interest. For this reason, the SNNPR

[25] An interview held with Zelleke Belayneh working in the Council of Nationalities; Nationality common values promotion and dispute resolution core work process owner October, 24/2011

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

constitution has created an encouraging atmosphere so as to enable all nationalities to actively participate in decision making on public affairs directly and indirectly i.e. through their representatives in the two organs of government, particularly in legislative organ of the state, not only issues relating to their special interests but also on all matters affecting the wellbeing of the regional state.

The SNNPR Constitution guarantees the right of each Nation, Nationality and People to equitable representation in regional state governments. It stipulates:

> *In accordance with the provision the constitution, every Nation, Nationality and People in the region has the right to a full measure of self-government which includes the right to establish institutions of government in the territory that it inhabits and to equitable representation in the regional state governments"*[26].

Peculiar to SNNPRS, in a unique provision which echoes the House of Federation at the national level, the 2001 revised constitution of the SNNPR state provided for the establishment of a Council of Nationalities in 12 November 2001[27]. The deemed to have one more legislative organ required to accommodate much-diversified characters of the SNNPR society. It is with these objectives that the constitution clearly provides for the representation of each Nation, Nationality and Peoples in the Council of Nationalities.[28]

This constitutional provision does not put any minimum demographic requirement to the Nations, Nationalities and Peoples' represented in the CoN. Thus, each Nation and Nationality entitled to have one representative in it. They are also constitutionally granted to have more representatives as their population size cross to one million.[29] Hence, The Council of

[26] Article 39/4/ of the revised constitution of southern nations nationalities and peoples regional state(2001)

[27] Strategy for conflict resolution in the SNNPR, prepared by the Council of Nationalities, 2011

[28] It is hoped that the representation of all these nationalities, especially minorities, will create harmony and peaceful relation among nationalities and strengthens the unity of the regional state, which they inhabit. In addition to representation role, the House promotes their identity, culture, history, and so forth.

[29] The essence of representation of Nations, and Nationalities representation necessitated to not be

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

Nationalities, as one of the institutions established to respect constitutional rights of the people, is responsible for and plays an important role in enhancing the democratic unity of the regional state[30].

3.2. Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies of the CoN

As it has been clearly pronounced in this article, the gravity of the above mentioned conflict cases deemed to establish conflict resolution institution at sub national level like, Council of Nationalities. Accordingly, it is extremely important to have a clear policy and strategies to discharge duties effectively. Hence, CoN has designed strategies of conflict management and resolution as per the mandate given by the region's constitution. In this section, the article scrutinize list and nature of the strategies of conflict management and resolution formulated by the CoN, and how it execute those strategies to able to control conflict cases appeared in the region.

Council of Nationalities has designed the following strategies to address conflict cases and ensure peace and stability in the region. Making all- rounded participation on conflict resolving tasks, performing capacity building activities, identifying and strengthen social organizations, extending peace education and working on the youth continuously. It has been exerted efforts related to empowering women and making them participants in conflict resolution processes, and correlate development plans with conflict resolving tasks.[31]

3.2.1. Making All Rounded Participation on Conflict Resolving Tasks

The CoN rationalizes the involvement of various societal organizations as a corner stone for conflict management and resolution[32]. Sustainable conflict resolution could be attainable, if and only if, various social institutions are encouraged to participate in the process[33]. Community elders, religious leaders and clan leaders believed to have big potential to use their

become Council of Nationalities as a means of restraining 'the large Nationalities from having improper advantage over the small ones' interview held with Lema Gezu, November, 2011

[30] Ibid

[31] See Council of Nationalities, Conflict Mapping document, 2011, P 42-46

[32] Strategy of conflict resolution of the SNNPR, 2011 prepared by the Council of Nationalities

[33] Ibid

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

wide spread recognition and respect in several social issues[34]. Nonetheless, informants approached to this study claims that though the elders have potential to manage and resolve conflicts, those who supposed as elders and working with the CoN were not a real figure of the community[35]. The informant further noted that, in many conflict resolution processes, the government manipulates elders to hold position that it wanted ultimately.

Moreover, some elders whom recruited as a cooperative partner to the Council of Nationalities were highly emotional and partial to their respective community. For instance, during conflict settlement process of Sidama –Wolyta, they were elders who put salt on the wound and degenerate the conflict to violence[36]. Undeniably, the effectiveness of a dispute settlement system depends up on the selection and training of credible participants and their impartiality or the perception of impartiality. Therefore, conflict management and resolution could be creative, when institution working with conflict is critical in recruiting key personalities who are figure for that particular community so that process of conflict management and resolution could be more participatory.

3.2.2. Extend Peace Education

Culture of peace has to be identified in the socio-political and economic dynamics of the society that could either sustain the culture of violence thereby hindering the achievement of a culture of peace or create a condition for the entrenchment of a culture of peace (Baron and Pillay, 2006). There may also be a tendency that the socio-economic and political dynamics may sustain the culture of violence and the culture of peace in different areas of life or even in the same areas in different context.

The process of entrenching the culture of peace in the SNNPR via the Council of Nationalities in collaboration with NGOs and bilateral cooperation has done core tasks; transmit and peace conference to the public through mass medias and preparing a training manual in collaboration with partner organization working in the area of peace

[34] An interview held with Zelleke Belayneh , whom working in Council of Nationalities, as Nationality common values promotion and dispute core work process on October 21, 2011
[35] An interview held with anonymous informants on October 27, 2011
[36] Ibid

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

and conflict resolution[37]. In this regard, it is GiZ which takes the lion's share by facilitating the peace conference and training the manual preparation. In a similar a vein, an interview held with the coordinators of the GiZ [38]in the South district corroborate that they have been busy of preparing stages to create awareness in different areas of the region. He further shed light on the effort being made by the GiZ in South district that peace culture, peace education, and conflict management and resolution techniques were priority areas in which the organization worked out. In general, in the processes to entrench the culture of peace, the CoN in collaboration GiZ has been trying to put forth efforts; however, it falls somehow short to meet the expectations.

3.2.3. Reducing Damage and Creating Suitable Information Networks for Conflict Resolution Tasks

Conflict assessment is the process of systematic collection of information about the dynamics of a conflict and open-ended, participant-based data as the path to specifying conflict processes[39]. Well designed information system is particularly useful for third parties such as intervention agents and institution which are mandated to investigate a particular conflict.

Some key informants stated the CoN has used systematic ways of collecting and obtaining necessary information. He further claimed that it has strong network with zonal, ***Woreda*** and ***Kebele*** leaders, to collect information which shall be used as impute[40]. In opposite to what has been said above, anonymous informant approached to this study noted that, the CoN did not establish channels of communication to exchange information with stakeholders. As such, there is no trained expert, in the CoN, to process information systematically. Undeniably well trained human resource and

[37] An interview held with Zelleke Belayneh , whom working in Council of Nationalities, as Nationality common values promotion and dispute resolution core work process owner on October 21, 2011
[38] An interview held with David Fuechtjohann November, 27, 2011
[39] Conflict Resolution and Negotiation Skills manual, prepared by International Network for Capacity Building in Integrated Water Resources Management 2008
[40] An interview held with Zelleke Belayneh , whom working in Council of Nationalities, as Nationality common values promotion and dispute resolution core work process on October 21, 2011

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

smooth line of communication are necessary to be able work cooperatively with stakeholders, and transform conflicts towards positive. The researcher had the opportunity to see the CoN filing and information management systems and found it poor and disorganized. However, effective conflict settlement requires sufficient filing system i.e. availabilities of information to be used as input for the purpose of case investigation.

Moreover, interview held with anonymous informant, portrayed "the Council of Nationalities as tooth less dog in discharging its responsibilities" due to the following reasons. First and foremost, the CoN does not have early warning system. Secondly, there is no body assigned to collect information on behalf it about the day to day activities goes on in the region. What it has been doing so far, is forming committee(s) when cases presented to it. Most cases were submitted to it after the conflicts escalated to violence[41].

[41] An interview held with anonymous informants on October, 27, 2011

3.3. The Council Nationalities Intervention Systems

The intervention mechanisms that the Council of Nationalities takes to settle conflicts has conducted in manner that consider the context of the political, social and economic situation of the conflicting parties[42]. The first phase is conceptualization and diagnosis of the nature and characteristics of conflicts, actors, history of the conflicts and efforts being made to resolve conflicts so far. Following the mapping of conflicts, discussion would be held with concerned government officials and security institutions to decide on the intervention mechanisms[43]. Despite intervention mechanisms the CoN employed so far were characterized by several misconceptions about its nature, characteristics and dynamics of conflicts.

3.3.1. Military Interventions in the Region

Interventions the CoN made so far have two dimensions. Peace full reconciliation (for cases that are not violent by that particular context) and fire brigade approach (military

[42] An interview held with Zelleke Belayneh , whom working in Council of Nationalities, as Nationality common values promotion and dispute resolution core work process on October 21, 2011
[43] Ibid

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

intervention). Given the fact that it has not a command to administer security force, military intervention carried out in collaboration with the executive council of the region to contain violent conflicts.[44] But military interventions made so far were not successful as some members of the security forces sided with their respective ethnic groups[45]. There was such experience during the 2008 clash emerged between ***Konso*** and ***Derashe***, in which some members of the South police special force took side and intensified the conflict to the worst level[46]. The 1995 ***Sidama-Wolyta*** conflict was contained through deploying security force. But it still remains tense and has likelihood to erupt when there is triggering issues[47].

3.4. Challenges of the Council of Nationalities (SNNPRS)

Challenges CoN has been facing are multifaceted. Most of them emanated from shortage of budget, lack of skilled man power, lack of good governance and absence of systematic strategies to deal with conflicts. Furthermore, weak horizontal and vertical interaction, absence of clear structure that takes to grass root population, confusion in clearly setting the role of the Council and delay in handling have been the shortcomings of the CoN so far[48].

3.4.1. Lack of Good Governance in the SNNPR

Tekle Deidu, figure out issues like structural instability, low level of recognition of the traditional conflict resolution system, misunderstanding between political parties and their role in conflict resolution and aggravation, and lack of political will and commitment are some of the visible features of mal-administration in the region[49]. Undoubtedly, mal-administrations induce conflicts and instabilities. Such issues are not unique to the CoN as many of conflict cases in the region are driven by bad governance related problems; marginalization, deep rooted

[44] An interview held with Zelleke Belayneh , whom working in Council of Nationalities, as Nationality common values promotion and dispute core work process owner on October 21, 2011
[45] An interview held with Tekle Deidu whom worked in CoN conflict management and resolution division (2001-2009) November 20, 2011
[46] An interview held with Anonymous informant on November, 16, 2011
[47] An interview held with anonymous informant on ,October , 29, 2011
[48] An interview held with Tekle Deidu who worked in CoN conflict management and resolution division (2001-2009) November 20, 2011
[49] An interview held with Tekle Deidu whom worked in CoN conflict management and resolution division (2001-2009) November 20, 2011

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

discrimination, domination of ethnic groups over minorities. [50]

On the other hands, Zelleke, claimed that absence of good governance has not been main cause for conflicts in the region. The people and local government officials' misinterpretations of the new political arrangement (ethnic based federal system) would rather be a driving force to degenerate ethnic groups to conflicts.

3.4.2. Financial Constraints and Shortage of Skilled Manpower

Financial constrain is a big quandary the Council of Nationalities encountered. Government support, it could be both from federal and regional level, is not sufficient. As a result, it faced stern of problems to deal entered cases in place and it exposed to delay. At the moment, however, CoN budgetary problem is not fully set on; partners like GiZ supports it both finance and material[51].

As it has been said earlier, well trained human resource is the most important issue for institutions working in the areas conflict management and resolutions. Hiring staff members who are relevant to the fields highly determine successes and failures of the institutions. In this regard, the CoN, has no sufficient staffs members who are trained in field of conflict studies and communication. For that matter, staffs who are working as expert in the CoN are few (only two) in number. For the institution which established supposedly to manage the ethnic relations of various ethnic (more than fifty six) groups, having only two experts is not more than showing the existence of nominal institutions. However, the regional government claimed staffs highly qualified and pretty enough to coordinate the activities of the CoN[52].

3.4.3. Absence of Systematic Strategy to Deal and Handle Cases

Conflict handling is an expensive and demanding task. As such, it requires institutions working in the areas of peace

[50] Ibid
[51] An interview held with Zelleke Belayneh , whom working in Council of Nationalities, as Nationality common values promotion and dispute core work process on October 21, 2011
[52] Ibid

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

and conflict to be patient, creative and methodical (Fisher, 2000). In the study areas, stakeholders (government agencies, practitioners and religious groups) conceptualization of conflicts: nature, dynamics and intervention mechanisms and the art to approach conflicting parities are not systematically designed. Participants of the resolution processes involved without having proper knowledge more or less coincidentally, because they have neither the science nor the art of conflict resolution. As a result, there is no integrated and comprehensive approach to deal with conflict cases scientifically. As different scholars noted the art and science of conflict resolution is not something that end up over night.

Well studied plan of actions and strategies in each steps of the resolution process should be putted in place. Successful conflict resolution strategies and practices require integration of both external and local knowledge, transparent procedures, an accessible judicial system, and the like (Tsegaye, 2008). With this regard, cases which their resolution processes were carried by the CoN showed, once it involved in the resolution process, it did not check out to transform it to the next level. As conflict is a never ending social process, then things we learned from our experience is very useful to handle other conflicts[53]. On top of that, most of conflict resolution trends in the region witnessed that the processes is under sphere of influence of the ruling party. Most of conflicts resolution processes were concluded neither in way that empirical data showed nor based on rationales presented.

Instead top leaders of the regional state decide on conflicting issues and the way it resolved as per the command given by top leaders, middle and lower leaders enforced to convince conflicting parties to accept the resolution. If both or one of the conflicting parties refuse not to accept the resolution, intimidation and torture would follow. Religious leaders and clan leaders played marionette role to give the resolution processes legitimacy[54].

[53] An interview held with Anonymous informants on October, 27,2011
[54] Ibid

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

3.4.4. Unlawful Horizontal and Vertical Intervention

In federations interdependence between the federal government and constituent units has been a fact and both level of governments needs to respect the powers each level exercises (Ronald, 2007). However, for any reason, sometimes disputes may arise between the federal and regional governments. For instance, the two levels of governments may experience disputes over divisions of powers and so forth. For such circumstances, there has to be a constitutional mechanism to deal with vertical conflicts.

In Ethiopia, the FDRE constitution says nothing how to deal with vertical conflicts i.e. the federal government versus regional state(s) conflicts (Kalkidan, 2009). In a similar vien, Tekele noted that despite there is segregation of authorities between CoN and HoF in their vertical relationship, practically in some cases HoF meddled on cases being entertained by the CoN unconstitutionally. Gamo Gofa and Debub Omo conflict over their border side, ***Arasaki,*** the resolution process can be taken as best case to show the unconstitutional intervention of the HoF on the CoN authority[55].

3.5. Prospects of the Council of Nationalities

The CoN adopted some remarkable trends; working with different stake holders, design a strategy of conflict resolution, researching the history, cultural practices and core values of Nations and Nationalities and Peoples of the region and preparing conflict analysis reader which includes the situation of each nation, nationality and people of the region.[56].

3.5.1. Preparing Strategy to Resolve Conflicts and Conflict Analysis Reader

The CoN has carried out assessment that shows the prevailing situation starting from its establishment to 2007 so as to prepare a strategy for resolving and managing conflicts. In the process to prepare a reader, government bodies, civil society organizations and resource person were participated. Moreover, discussions were held at different level to enrich and develop

[55] Ibid
[56] An interview held with Zelleke Belayneh , whom working in Council of Nationalities, as Nationality common values promotion and dispute resolution core work process owner on October 21, 2011

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

the document[57]. In similar a vein, interview held with Zeleke, the regional Council of Nationalities has also delved into the community behavior: the community thought, perception and cultural system has carried out. Accordingly, a behavior of different Nations and Nationalities has recorded in a file form so that the tasks of conflict management and dispute resolution will not be longer difficult[58].

4. Conclusion

The Ethiopian federal system has been struggling to devise mechanisms to prevent inter and intra-regional controversies. Because of the serious danger that ethnic conflicts pose to multiethnic states, and the seemingly inevitable periodic disputes arising among ethnically identified communities and so forth, together obliged the federation to develop method of conflict resolution. In federation, an organ or institution to resolve both vertical and horizontal disputes was thought essential. Accordingly, the 1995 FDRE constitution established a permanent institution, the House of Federation and Ministry of Federal Affairs, for this purpose.

Recognizing the inevitability of disputes among/ between the various nationalities, the SNNP regional constitution also realized the establishment of the Council of Nationalities. The drivers of ravaging conflicts in the region underpinned mainly by the political surgery EPRDF used to create sub national governments. Some of the commonly alluded causes are merging of diverse ethnic groups together; counter straggle of ethnic groups to reserve their identity and self administrative status, border issues, natural resource utilizations coupled with mal administrations.

In the endeavor to fulfill its mandate, the CoN designed the following strategies of conflict resolution. Accordingly, extending peace education, making all round participation on conflict resolution tasks, creating suitable information network and reducing damages were included. The CoN also endorsed mechanism of intervention when ever violent conflict appeared under its authority. As such peace full

[57] Strategy for conflict resolution prepared by council of nationalities(SNNPR),may 2011
[58] Strategy for conflict resolution prepared by Council of Nationalities(SNNPR),may 2011

ISSN: 2455-3220
Volume 03 Issue 09
August 2017

reconciliation and military interventions have been used to settle conflicts burst. Quite understandably any conflict resolution institution faces challenge in the effort to make peace happen. The absence of early warning system, financial constraints, the absence skilled man power, poor information systems, failure to utilize social agents and indigenous conflict resolution techniques are among the challenges the CoN faced so far.

On the other hands, there are a couple of things that are promising to the CoN. Just to mention a few, working with various institutions like GiZ and Dilla University, preparing trainings in conflict prone areas, peace education using mass medias and mapping actual and potential conflict cases in region. It has also been working to reshape the societies' understanding of conflicts. Given the fact conflict is a social phenomenon; it would have positive synergy if conflicting parties worked out cooperatively by understanding each other's concern and interests.

5. Reference

[1] Alem Habtu, (2007) "Multi Ethnic Federation in Ethiopia: A study of the Secession Clause in the Constitution" Publius, Vol.35 No.2 Published by:Oxford University Press StableURL;http://www.justor.org/stable 4624714 .Accessed: 30/30/2012.

[2] Alemayehu, Fantaw (2009) *Conflict Management in the Ethiopian Multi-national Federation*.

[3] Asnake, Kefale (2010) Federal Restructuring in Ethiopia: Renegotiating Identity and Borders along the Oromo–Somali Ethnic Frontiers, *Development and Change*, International Institute of Social Studies, Blackwell Publishing, 41(4): 615–635

[4] Assefa Fiseha (2003) *Multiculturalism and Federalism*, " in First National Conference onFederalism, Conflict and Peace Building (Addis Ababa: United Printers Plc.): 299-319.Austria, European University Center for Peace Studies, unpublished

[5] Bahru Zewdie(2015) A History of Modern Ethiopia from 1955-1991, Addis Ababa University Press, Addis Ababa

[6] Dereje, Feyissa. (2010) Conflicts within the Ethiopian Federation: A Reappraisal, in AlemHabtu(ed.) (2010) *Ethiopian Federalism: Principle, Process and Practice*, prepared for the 5th International Conference on Federalism, Addis Ababa.

[7] Horowith, Donald, (1985) *Ethnic Groups in Conflic*t, Berkeley: University of California Press.

[8] Kidane Mengistab (2013) *Poverty, Inequality, State Identity and Chronic Inter State Conflict in the Horn of Africa*, in Redie Bereketab eds, The Horn of Africa Intra- State and Inter State Conflict and Security, London, Pluto Press

[9] Lovis Aalen (2006) *Ethnic Federalism and Self administration for Nationalities in semi- authoritarian state: the case of Ethiopia*, International journal on Minority and Group Rights V 13: 243-261.

[10] Markakis, John (1998)*The Politics of Identity: The Case of the Guraghe in Ethiopia," in Mohamed Salih and John Markakis eds*., Ethnicity and the State in Eastern Africa, Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet: 127-146.

[11] Merera Gudina (2003) Ethiopia: *Competing Ethnic Nationalism and the Quest for Democracy, 1960-2000*, Shaker Publishing, 2003.

[12] Proclamation No. 1/1995, Proclamation of the Constitution of Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Federal Negarit Gazeta, 1st Year No. 1, Addis Ababa-21st August, 1995, adopted on 8th of December 1994 and came into force on 21st August 1995.

[13] Redie Bereketab (2013) the Horn of Africa Intra- State and Inter State Conflict and Security, London, Pluto Press

[14] Stein, Janices Gross. (2005) "*Image, identity and resolution of violent conflicts"* in Crokerchester Fen Osler Hampson and Pamella all (eds.) turbulent peace" challenge to international conflict; Washington D-C: USIP press.

[15] Tesfa, Bihonegn(2009) Ethnic Conflict Resolution by the Federal Government of Ethiopia: A Study of Institutions and Mechanisms, MA thesis submitted to the Institute for Peace and Security Studies, unpublished.

[16] The Revised Constitution of the Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State(2001), Hwassa

[17] Tsegaye Regassa(2010)*The making and legitimacy of the Ethiopian constitution: towards bridging the gap between constitutional design and constitutional practice,* Afrika focus Volume 23, Nr .1, 2010 — pp. 85-118

[18] Tsegaye, Regasa (2009). Learning to Live with Conflicts: Federalism as a Tool of Conflict Management in Ethiopia, unpublished material

[19] Vaughan and Tronvoll (2003) *the Culture of Power in Contemporary Ethiopian Political Life,* Sida Studies No. 10 , Sida, Stockholm.

[20] ZÁHOŘÍK (2011) *Ethnicity and Nationalism in Ethiopia: Some Recent Reflections*. The Annual of Language & Politics and Politics of Identity, Vol. V. p. 91- 108**.**