

Exploring Communication in Conflict Resolution: A Case Study of the ‘Amhara and Qemant’ Ethnic Groups in the Amhara Region, Ethiopia

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Abstract

Due to the complex nature of the issue, a qualitative research approach with a case study design was employed. Purposive and snowball sampling used and focus group discussions, document reviews, and in-depth interviews employed. The role of communication was found to be inadequate. The major conclusion drawn from the study is that while reconciliations have occasionally been achieved, tensions and conflict escalation persist in the study area. These findings highlight the urgent need for timely interventions and grassroots-level initiatives involving all relevant stakeholders.

Keywords: Communication, Ethnic, Conflict resolution

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Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Conflict arises among people in all types of human relationships and social settings due to significant differences in interests, values, and perspectives. A conflict situation typically involves two or more interdependent parties who are emotionally engaged and perceive a threat or harm to their interests or well-being. As Muhabie (2015, p. 30) notes, "conflict involves various actors: governments, nationalist groups, religious groups, and community or identity groups with significant backing from external forces." Africa has long been a hotspot for conflict, experiencing some of the highest incidences of civil wars and political instability compared to other regions of the world (Theodros, 2017). According to Aall (2015), conflicts in Africa are often complex and multifaceted. In particular, many African nations have experienced deep-seated tensions and violent confrontations. The Horn of Africa (HOA)—which includes Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda—has been especially prone to such conflicts.

Ethiopia, one of the most populous and ethnically diverse countries in Africa, is often described as a "nation of nationalities." It is home to a wide range of ethnic groups and exhibits a rich plurality in language, religion, culture, and socioeconomic activities. Within Ethiopia's federal structure, the Amhara National Regional State ranks as the second largest in terms of both population and geographic size. Historical and scholarly literature reflects varying interpretations of the origins and identity of the Amhara people. Meanwhile, the ‘Qemant’ people are considered among the original inhabitants of central-northern Ethiopia, particularly residing in areas such as ‘Chilga’. Since the introduction of ethnic federalism into the Ethiopian political system, identity-based conflicts have become more pronounced (Birhanu, 2018). The conflict between the Amhara and Qemant ethnic groups is a case in point. Various sources suggest that the roots of this conflict are complex and multifactorial. These tensions have had damaging effects on the everyday lives of communities, undermining social cohesion and eroding long-standing relationships. While conflict is an inevitable part of human interaction, effective conflict resolution remains essential. Conflict resolution refers to the process of managing disputes and negotiating mutually acceptable solutions. Communication plays a crucial role in this process, as it facilitates the exchange of meanings and fosters mutual understanding. Effective communication can promote peace and reconciliation, whereas poor or inflammatory communication can escalate tensions (Atta, 2009, p. 9). Given the scale and significance of the conflict between the ‘Amhara and Qemant’ communities, as well as the pivotal role of communication in either resolving or exacerbating such disputes, studying this topic is both timely and critically important.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

As long as people live and work together, conflict is inevitable. When individuals or groups interact, differences in goals, attitudes, emotions, or behaviors can lead to disagreement or opposition. Conflict is also dynamic, meaning that its causes, consequences, and actors can vary significantly across time and space. In contemporary Ethiopia, various conflicts are occurring in different parts of the country. Studies have shown that these conflicts are predominantly ethnic-based, although the specific causes and demands vary from one case to another. While numerous studies have been conducted and solutions proposed, ethnic conflicts continue to intensify over time (Getachew, 2018). For instance, using a qualitative case study approach, Getachew (2018, p. 64) investigated the

impact of Ethiopia's ethnicity-based federal system on ethnic conflicts and found that “the root cause of the Amhara–Afar conflict was the politicization of ethnic identity.”

Although considerable research has addressed ethnic conflicts in Ethiopia focusing on historical roots, causes, and socioeconomic dimensions, in particular, there is a noticeable lack of research on how communication strategies affect the conflict between the ‘Amhara and Qemant’ ethnic groups. Given that communication is widely recognized as a vital tool for managing and resolving conflict (UNESCO, 1994, p. 2), it is essential to explore its role in the context of the ‘Amhara–Qemant’ conflict. Therefore, this study seeks to address this research gap by investigating how communication influences conflict resolution between these two communities.

1.3. Research Objectives

1.3.1. General Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to explore the communication in conflict resolution: with a focus on the ‘Amhara and Qemant’ ethnic groups in the study area.

1.3.2. Specific Objective of the Study

- To identify the types, causes, and impacts of the conflict between the ‘Amhara and Qemant’ ethnic groups.
- To examine the role of communication in the conflict resolution process.
- To investigate the communication strategies used in the reconciliation efforts between the ‘Amhara and Qemant’ communities.
- To propose possible measures for mitigating the conflict, with consideration for both community and government roles

1.4. The significance of the study can be outlined as follows:

Practical Contribution: The findings of this study will serve as a valuable resource for communication offices, government bodies, and related institutions operating in the study area, providing them with evidence-based insights to inform their practices. Addressing a research gap by exploring an under-researched topic, this study fills a critical gap in the existing literature on ethnic conflict and communication in Ethiopia. It has academic value which means the results of this research will contribute to the academic discourse and serve as a foundation for future studies on the role of communication in conflict resolution, especially in ethnically diverse societies. Moreover, community and professional relevance is paramount. The findings will not only benefit the researcher’s academic and professional development but also offer practical guidance for communities engaged in or affected by conflict, supporting peace building and reconciliation efforts.

1.5. Delimitation of the study

Geographically, this study is focused on Gondar Town and its surrounding areas. Thematically, it centers on the role of communication in conflict resolution, specifically examining the conflict between the ‘Amhara and Qemant’ ethnic groups within this region.

1.6. Limitations of the Study

The researcher encountered several limitations during the course of this study. These include the following: One of the major challenges was faced during data collection. There was a noticeable lack of detailed and reliable reports on the impacts of the conflict between the ‘Amhara and Qemant’ people. It was particularly difficult to obtain accurate data on sensitive issues such as the number of deaths, injuries, property destruction, and related consequences. Additionally, the researcher was often perceived by participants and some institutions as a government agent or journalist, which led to distrust and hesitation. This perception significantly hindered open communication and access to crucial information. Furthermore, a general lack of willingness among some informants to share information posed another considerable challenge to the research process.

2. Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks of the Study

2.1. Conceptualization of conflict and ethnic conflict

2.1.2. Concepts and definition of conflict

Conflict has been described and defined in various ways by different scholars in books, journals, and research studies over time, and there is no universally accepted definition. However, it is widely acknowledged that conflict is an inevitable part of human interaction, especially when people live or work together. Katz and McNulty (1994) described conflict as a situation involving two or more groups with differing ideas, strong emotional responses, and conflicting goals or perceptions. Since individuals possess unique behaviors, traits, and interests, it is natural for diverse and sometimes opposing objectives to arise among different parties or individuals.

2.1.3. Ethnic conflict

An ethnic conflict is a specific type of conflict in which the goals of one or more parties are defined along ethnic lines, and the primary source of confrontation stems from ethnic differences. Ethnic conflict is often rooted in

tribal or identity-based divisions. It typically arises when multiple ethnic groups coexist within a single political or geographic entity, leading to competition over resources, representation, or recognition (Getachew, 2018).

2.2. Theoretical frameworks of conflict

In general, conflict theory seeks to scientifically explain the underlying patterns of conflict within society. According to various scholars, the core focus of conflict theories lies in the unequal distribution of scarce resources and power. These concerns are further grounded in Weber's three dimensions of social stratification: class, status, and power. This study draws on several conflict theories to provide a theoretical framework for analyzing the causes and sources of conflict. Specifically, it incorporates perspectives from human needs theory, structural conflict theory, social conflict theory, and psycho-cultural conflict theory. These theoretical approaches help to explain the root causes, dynamics, and intensity of the conflict between the 'Amhara and Qemant' communities.

2.2.1. Psycho-Cultural Conflict Theory

According to the psycho-cultural conflict theory, identity is the most important need in the hierarchy of human needs and, when denied, results in violent conflict. The satisfaction of one's basic needs is intricately related to his/her identity. The Psycho-cultural Conflict Theory is similar to the Primordial approach to ethnicity which emphasizes the fact that peoples ethnicity (identity) is deeply rooted in their past (UKEssays, 2018). Ethnic groups which have been discriminated against and stratified into lower class citizens always harbor a feeling of marginalization of their identity and this produces strong feelings of hatred and resentment towards the other group which did the discrimination. Therefore, any marginalization of an ethnic group or discrimination against it based on ethnicity will receive strong resistance (conflict). According to UKEssays (2018) this is particularly seen in the mobilizing role of ethnic identity. The psycho-cultural theory of conflict argues, therefore, that resolving this type of conflict is usually very difficult and tends to defy any resolution mechanism. There is always constant outbreak of violence with such conflicts despite attempts at resolving the conflict. Their resolution takes long and sometimes, it is not possible to talk of resolution, but management. This is because the issue of ethnic identity is uncompromising and its denial is a complete affront to the group's very existence. The outbreak of consistent violence as a result of this type of conflict makes life and security fragile, thereby affecting human well-being and development. Thus, the link between ethnic conflicts, their resolution and development is clearly seen. Due to the deep-seated, protracted and intractable nature of conflicts based on identity (ethnic conflict), their resolution remains very difficult and takes very long, and this produces strings of violence thereby affecting meaningful development.

2.2.2. Human needs theory

According to Maslow, human behavior is related to his needs. It is adjusted as per the nature of needs to be satisfied. In hierarchy of needs theory, Maslow identified five types / sets of human need arranged in a hierarchy of their importance and priority. He concluded that when one set of needs is satisfied, it ceases to be a motivating factor. Thereafter, the next set of needs in the hierarchy order takes its place. These needs in hierarchy can be compared to a pyramid. At the lowest level, there will be first set of needs which can be described as basic needs and are universal in character.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental needs at the bottom and the need for self-actualization and transcendence at the top. In other words, the crux of the theory is that individuals' most basic needs must be met before they become motivated to achieve higher level needs. The most fundamental and basic four layers of the pyramid contain what Maslow called "deficiency needs" or "d-needs": esteem, friendship and love, security, and physical needs. If these "deficiency needs" are not met – with the exception of the most fundamental (physiological) need – there may not be a physical indication, but the individual will feel anxious and tense. Maslow's theory suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire (or focus motivation upon) the secondary or higher level needs. Maslow also coined the term "meta motivation" to describe the motivation of people who go beyond the scope of the basic needs and strive for constant betterment (Anjanaben, T., & AMIT, M. 2019). Needs have a definite hierarchy of importance as soon as needs on a lower level are fulfilled; those on the next level will emerge and demand satisfaction. This suggests that bread (food) is essential and is a primary need of every individual. There are other needs (security / safety, social, esteem and self-actualization which influence behavior of people (employees) to work. This is the basic feature of Maslow's need hierarchy. Attention to all human needs is essential for motivation of employees. Attention to the provision of bread alone is not adequate for motivating employees. Bread can act as motivating factor when there is no bread but when it is available, its use as motivator comes to an end.

The Maslow's Pyramid of Human Needs is explained below

Physiological Needs: Physiological needs are the basic needs for sustaining human life. These needs include food, shelter, clothing, rest, air, water, sleep and sexual satisfaction. These basic human needs (also called biological needs) lie at the lowest level in the hierarchy of needs as they have priority over all other needs. These needs cannot be postponed for long. Unless and until these basic physiological needs are satisfied to the required extent, other needs do not motivate an employee. A hungry person, for example, is just not in a position to think of

anything else except his hunger or food. According to Maslow, 'man lives by bread alone,' when there is no bread. The management attempts to meet such physiological needs through fair wages.

Security/Safety Needs: These are the needs connected with the psychological fear of loss of job, property, natural calamities or hazards, etc. An employee wants protection from such types of fear. He prefers adequate safety or security in this regard i.e. protection from physical danger, security of job, pension for old age, insurance cover for life, etc. The safety needs come after meeting the physiological needs. Such physiological needs lose their motivational potential when they are satisfied. As a result, safety needs replace them. They begin to manifest themselves and dominate human behavior. Safety needs act as motivational forces only if they are unsatisfied.

According to Agnes (2011), the art of communication encompasses facial expressions, attitudes, gestures, tone of voice, spoken and written words, as well as technological means such as printing, telephones, and telegraphs. At its core, communication is the meaningful exchange of information between two or more living beings, and it plays a vital role in building Social Needs: An employee is a human being is rightly treated as a social animal. He desires to stay in group. He feels that he should belong to one or the other group and the member of the group should accept him with love and affection. Every person desires to be affiliated to such groups. This is treated as basic social need of an individual. He also feels that he should be loved by the other members. He needs friends and interaction with his friends and superiors of the group such as fellow employees or superiors. Social needs occupy third position in the hierarchy of needs.

Esteem Needs: This category of needs include the need to be respected by others, need to be appreciated by others, need to have power and finally prestigious position. Once the previous needs are satisfied, a person feels to be held in esteem both by him and also by others. Thus, esteem needs are two fold in nature. Self-esteem needs include those for self-confidence, self-respect, competence, etc. The second groups of esteem needs are those related to one's status, reputation, recognition and appreciation by others. This is a type of personal ego which needs to be satisfied. The Organization can satisfy this need (ego) by giving recognition to the good work of employees. Esteem needs do not assume the motivational properties unless the previous needs are satisfied.

Self-actualization Needs: This is the highest among the needs in the hierarchy of needs advocated by Maslow. Self-actualization is the desire to become what one is capable of becoming. It is a 'growth' need. A worker must work efficiently if he is to be ultimately happy. Here, a person feels that he should accomplish something in his life. He want to utilise his potentials to the maximum extent and desires to become what one is capable of becoming. A person desires to have challenges and achieves something special in his life or in the area of his specialization. Though everyone is capable of self-actualization, many do not reach this stage. This need is fully satisfied rarely.

2.2.3. Social conflict theory

Conflicts vary in their bases, their duration, and their mode of settlement, their outcomes, and their consequences. This book is about such variations. The focus of concern is upon the development of specific social conflicts, of fights and struggles, rather than upon the role of conflict in social life. It is about contentions between groups of people, and not within specific groups or between individuals acting alone. Finally, we are more concerned with struggles in which coercion and violence are likely or possible, than with ones which are so highly regulated that coercion and violence do not occur (Louis, K. 2008)

2.3. Conceptualization of communication

Communication has been defined and interpreted in various ways by numerous scholars, highlighting the absence of a single, universally accepted definition. It can be approached from multiple disciplinary perspectives. However, for the purposes of this study, communication is considered in the context of conflict resolution. The word "communication" originates from the Latin term communis, meaning "common" or "shared understanding." It refers to the intentional effort to create mutual understanding between a sender and a receiver. Communication is both a understanding and resolving conflicts.

2.4.1. The two-step flow of communication

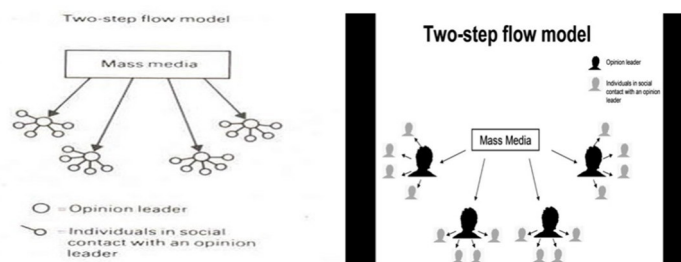


Figure 1. Pictures that show the two-step flow of communication

This theory received significant attention at a time when strong media-effect theories were dominant those which argued that the media had a direct and powerful influence on audiences. The two-step flow theory emerged during a period when mass media served as the primary channel for accessing information. The core idea of the

two-step flow of communication is that information first flows from the media, government, or other central sources to opinion leaders, and then from these opinion leaders to the general public.

3. Methods

3.1. Research design

The researchers employed a case study research design due to its potential to offer a deep and comprehensive understanding of the event or situation under investigation. A case study involves a thorough examination of an individual, a group, or a specific context (Marczyk, DeMatteo, & Festinger, 2005). The primary goal of this approach is to provide an accurate and detailed description of the case.

3.2. Research method

The nature of this research is best suited to qualitative methods rather than quantitative approaches. One of the key strengths of qualitative research is its ability to offer rich, detailed textual descriptions of how people experience and interpret a given issue (Mack, Guest, & Namey, 2005).

3.3. Sampling design and procedure

In research methodology, there are two main types of sampling techniques: probability sampling and non-probability sampling. This study employed a non-probability sampling technique. According to Michael (2011), non-probability sampling is a subjective method used to determine which elements are included in the sample. In this approach, participants are purposefully selected based on their ability to provide rich, relevant information that contributes to an in-depth understanding of the research topic. For this study, the researchers deliberately selected participants using both purposive and snowball sampling techniques.

3.4. Sampling size determination

The researchers collected relevant data related to the study until the point of saturation was reached. In this context, purposive sample sizes are often determined based on the principle of theoretical saturation.

3.5. Instruments of data gathering:

In the data collection process, the researchers employed both primary and secondary data collection methods. Primary data were gathered through interviews, in-depth interviews, and focus group discussions, while secondary data were obtained through document review. Document review involves the systematic examination of existing records or written materials as sources of data. In this study, various documents were analyzed to support and validate the findings obtained from primary sources.

3.6. Unit of analysis and analysis technique

Qualitative analysis was employed in this study. The researchers used categorization and thematic analysis techniques to systematically analyze and interpret the qualitative data.

3.7. Trustworthiness

To ensure the quality of the research, several measures were taken to enhance the trustworthiness of the study's findings. For example, the researchers conducted a thorough assessment of the study area and the availability of relevant sources prior to beginning the actual research. The use of focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews, and document analysis together served as a form of data triangulation. Additionally, the researchers regularly consulted with experts to ensure the validity and reliability of the study.

3.8. Ethical considerations

All ethical considerations were strictly maintained throughout the entire research process. Key ethical standards, including informed consent, privacy, confidentiality, and anonymity, were carefully upheld.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the main findings of the study. The analysis is organized according to the research objectives. Primarily, the study aims to examine and identify the role of communication in conflict resolution between the Amhara and Qemant people.

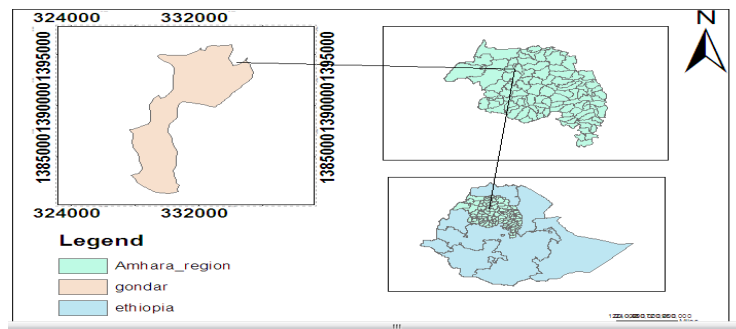


Figure 2: Map of the Study Area with respect to Amhara region and Ethiopia.

4.2. Types, causes, and impacts of the ‘Amhara and Qemant’ people’s conflict

"The majority of respondents in this research confirmed that the most common types of conflict were interpersonal, group, public, and violent. Although the conflict was initially incited by a few political and other individuals pursuing their interests, it later escalated and spread, involving the public, groups, and individuals."

Causes of the conflicts

There are both direct and indirect causes of the conflict between the ‘Amhara and Qemant’ people. The direct causes include political and external influences by a few political elites both within and outside the region, feelings of marginalization among the ‘Qemant’ community, territorial demarcation disputes, and identity-related issues. These factors are considered the primary and immediate triggers of the conflict. According to the majority of participants and documents that revealed indirect causes of the conflict include economic concerns, such as disputes over the fair distribution of resources and access to infrastructure like water, roads, schools, and hospitals. Additionally, issues related to poor governance and dissatisfaction with government compensation or reimbursement has also contributed indirectly to the conflict.

Impacts of the conflict

The findings highlight several negative impacts resulting from the conflict between the ‘Amhara’ and ‘Qemant’ people. Both the FGD and interview respondents asserted that these include significant socioeconomic consequences, such as disruptions to social and economic activities like mourning, trade, weddings, traditional savings groups (ekub), funeral associations (edir), and other cultural ceremonies. Additionally, according to one Police key informant KCI-01 the conflict has led to widespread displacement, loss of human and animal life, destruction of property, and the burning of homes. These are identified as the major adverse effects of the conflict.

4.3. The Role of Communication in the Conflict Resolution Process

The role of communication in the resolution process of the ‘Amhara–Qemant’ conflict is limited in the study area. According to a key informant in communication head office GOI-04 implied that as the communication office operates as a governmental institution, it faces several challenges, including constraints related to government policy enforcement. Although some efforts have been made through various approaches, these have not been effective in addressing or resolving the conflict. Communication efforts related to the ‘Amhara–Qemant’ conflict is heavily intervened by the government. The communication structure in the office lacks adequate strategies aligned with conflict resolution frameworks. Instead, its primary focus remains on broader governmental agendas. According to the study’s respondents and analysis of news reports, journalists often lack the freedom or courage to refer to the conflict explicitly. Instead, they use vague or politically charged terms such as ‘bandits’, ‘terrorists’, or ‘anti-unity forces.’ Furthermore, there is no space for in-depth investigation or comprehensive reporting on the ‘Amhara–Qemant’ conflict. Based on the data obtained from key informants and FGD respondents while the communication office does not directly contribute to the escalation of the conflict, its role in promoting resolution has been largely ineffective and minimal. Therefore, based on the rich data obtained the role of formal or modern communication in the study area is found to be ineffective in both the escalation and resolution of the conflict.

4.4. Strategies of communication/styles of conflict resolution employed in the reconciliations of “Amhara and Qemant” people

The research finding identified several dominant communication strategies and conflict resolution styles used in the ‘Amhara–Qemant’ conflict. These include avoidance, collaboration, mediation, facilitation, and arbitration. According to one key informant QCI 01 (Committee of Qemant ethnic group) strategies have been implemented by various concerned stakeholders with the goal of fostering reconciliation between the two communities. Among these approaches, arbitration particularly through the involvement of religious leaders and local elders organized into joint peace committee has proven to be more effective than the efforts of other stakeholders. However, these reconciliation efforts have lacked consistency and sustainability over time. According to all evidenced collected

data revealed that regarding the role of media platforms in conflict resolution, the study revealed four distinct patterns: mass media played a positive role (promoting resolution), a neutral role (minimal or no impact), a negative role (contributing to escalation), or a mixed role (involving both resolution and escalation). Several factors contribute to the inconsistencies observed in the conflict resolution and reconciliation processes between the 'Amhara and Qemant' communities. These include government negligence, interference by third parties, tribal behavior, the establishment of illegitimate or ineffective committees on both sides, the exclusion of key conflicting parties from the reconciliation process, lack of coordination among security agencies, and the negative or unhelpful role played by some mass media outlets and communication offices in the study area were a contributor in this regard.

4.5. Possible measures to alleviate the conflicts between 'Amhara and Qemant' people

The study has identified several potential measures that could help resolve the ongoing conflict between the 'Amhara and Qemant' communities. Among the key stakeholders, the government plays the most critical role. It should prioritize the creation of job opportunities for the large number of unemployed individuals in the region. Furthermore, the regional government must limit excessive external interference in local affairs. Legal action should be taken against those responsible for violence and instability, and efforts must be made to ensure the fair distribution of resources and infrastructure such as roads, schools, hospitals, and water access across both ethnic groups. The next vital stakeholders are religious leaders and local elders. These figures should use their influence to promote peace and educate communities about the destructive consequences of conflict. Importantly, they must remain politically neutral, refraining from aligning with any political party or agenda. Another crucial stakeholder is the community itself. Both the 'Amhara and Qemant' peoples should reject vengeful attitudes and strive to preserve and strengthen traditional social institutions such as Ekub, Edir, Senbete, and other indigenous mechanisms of conflict resolution. Communities must also condemn those who incite violence and actively participate in reconciliation efforts and local peace conferences. On an individual level, members of both communities should avoid acting on emotion and instead adopt wise, rational, and thoughtful approaches to resolving tensions.

Governmental and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) also have a significant role to play. These institutions should offer both financial and material support to displaced individuals and others who have been adversely affected by the conflict. Finally, mass media and communication platforms hold a powerful position in shaping public opinion and fostering peace. The shared histories and cultural ties of both communities should be accurately presented and promoted through the media. In this regard, media outlets must take on a leadership role in building mutual understanding. Rather than limiting airtime to government officials, media platforms should invite respected elders, religious leaders, and exemplary community members to share their perspectives. Media outlets must remain neutral, avoiding the spread of propaganda or false and sensationalized news. In addition to their advocacy role, media platforms should also engage in investigative journalism to uncover the root causes of the conflict and expose the individuals or groups behind it, along with their hidden agendas. The exclusive focus on developmental journalism should be balanced with critical reporting that serves the public interest. Ultimately, mass media should contribute to changing societal attitudes by fostering a more positive and respectful image of both communities. The more the media promotes mutual understanding and shared identity, the greater the potential for long-term peace and reconciliation.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

A study was conducted to explore the communication in conflict resolution, focusing on the case of the 'Amhara and Qemant' peoples in the area surrounding Gondar town. The findings addressed both the general and specific research questions. To investigate these questions, the study employed a qualitative research methodology using an exploratory case study design. Data were collected through various instruments, including in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis. The conflict was provoked by a few individuals and some political elites, and the identified types of conflicts are interpersonal, group, and public conflict. The findings related to the causes of the conflicts include direct and indirect causes for the conflict between the 'Amhara and Qemant' people. The direct causes or factors that are responsible for 'Amhara and Qemant' conflicts are political/external influence by a few political elites in and out of the region, minority or inferiority feelings of the 'Qemant' communities, territorial demarcation, and identity-related questions are direct and provoking causes of the conflict. Indirect causes include economic issues such as the unequal distribution of resources and infrastructure, including access to water, roads, schools, and hospitals. Additionally, problems related to governance and dissatisfaction with government compensation or reimbursements contributed to the conflict. As the result of a study depicted, there are findings related to negative impacts or consequences that are accounted for in the 'Amhara and Qemant' people's conflict. The negative impacts, such as socioeconomic impacts such as, impacts on mourning, trading activities, weeding, "ekub, "edir, and other cultural ceremonies of the society), people displacements, losses of

human and animal life, destruction of material, and house devastation, are the major identified negative collisions of the 'Amhara and Qemant' people conflict.

The role of the communication office in the conflict resolution process between the 'Amhara and Qemant' peoples is considered adequate within the study area. However, as a governmental institution, the office faces several challenges, including strict government policy enforcement. Although some efforts have been made, they have not effectively resolved the conflict. Communication efforts related to conflict resolution are heavily censored by the government. Furthermore, the communication office lacks specific strategies focused on conflict management and resolution. Instead, its primary communication strategies address other governmental matters. The study confirmed that journalists and reporters often lack the courage to directly name the 'Amhara-Qemant' conflict in news coverage, instead used vague terms such as 'Banda,' "terrorists," or "anti-unity forces.'

Moreover, there is little room for investigation or in-depth reporting on the 'Amhara and Qemant' conflict. Overall, while the communication office does not contribute to escalating the conflict, its role in the conflict resolution process is largely ineffective and inadequate. Consequently, communication in the study area neither fuels the escalation nor effectively facilitates the resolution of the conflict. Findings related to dominant communication strategies and conflict resolution styles are the traditional or local based communication that includes strategies like avoidance, collaboration, mediation, facilitation, and arbitration. These approaches have been implemented by various stakeholders aiming to reconcile the two groups. Among these, the arbitration efforts led by religious leaders and joint peace committees of local elders have been more effective than those of other stakeholders; however, the reconciliations achieved were inconsistent.

Lastly, possible measures to end the conflict have been identified. The primary stakeholder is the government. The government should create job opportunities for the large unemployed population and the regional government must prevent too much external interference in the region's affairs. It should also take lawful action against criminals and ensure the fair distribution of wealth and infrastructure for both ethnic groups. The next key stakeholders are religious leaders and local elders. These institutions and individuals should educate and advise their communities about the harmful effects of the conflict while remaining neutral and distancing themselves from any political parties or agendas. Furthermore, the 'Amhara and Qemant' ethnic peoples should avoid harboring vindictive feelings and preserve cultural practices such as 'Ekub, Edir, Senbete' and other socio-cultural institutions and indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms. Society should condemn those who incite conflict. Other important stakeholders include governmental and non-governmental organizations. These stakeholders should provide financial and material support to those displaced or victimized by the conflict. Finally, mass media outlets and communication platforms should hold a critical role. The histories of both peoples should be responsibly preserved and shared. The communication outlets should play their investigative roles besides their advocacy roles. Therefore, communication platforms in the study area should expose or uncover the actors of the conflict as well as their hidden agendas to the people. Lastly, the communications outlets and other aforementioned stakeholders should work on changing the attitudes of society. The more enhancing the relationship of the two ethnic people; the more positive attitude change in the society's mind would be secured.

5.2. Recommendation

For the town and zone communication office, it is better to apply participatory communication approaches instead of one-way communication. Applying participatory types of communication allows both people to participate in conflict resolution issues responsibly. Moreover, the interaction between the religious leaders, local elders, and government should be further strengthened. The government interference should not be in the way of imposing and manipulating communication works and freedoms, and the representatives of both peoples should be recognized and well known by the communities they represent. Interpersonal, group, and public communication are better and more effective than one-way communication, especially in the conflict resolution process. So, it is very advisable that the communication strategies (in the study area) be reshaped by these types of communication. In the study area, indigenous conflict resolution methods are more effective than other conflict resolution mechanisms. Therefore, the communities as well as the government should fortify and support this type of communication. The government or Ethiopian broadcast authority should take lawful measures towards mass media outlets those who are working for conflict aggravations.

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