

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT: EXPLORING EFFORTS OF MEDIA TOWARDS CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND PEACE BUILDING IN CASE OF WOLAITA ZONE, ETHIOPIA.

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## ABSTRACT

Following socio-political, socio-economic, and socio-cultural quests, some violent and nonviolent conflicts were intensified in the Wolaita zone of Ethiopia for nearly consecutive years. In response to these conflicts, a number of attempts were made to resolve conflicts and build peace through different mechanisms available in the study area. Therefore, by assuming the media as one of the best conflict resolution and peace-building tools, this study is highly interested to investigate the efforts of media toward conflict resolution, and peace-building in the given study area.

So in my critical journey of this study, I established four major and several supportive interview questions to explore the case aforementioned. Therefore, epistemology which denotes the knowledge perceived by people, and ontology which denotes the actual knowledge were respectably used as a philosophical basis for this study in order to reflect an understanding of a phenomenon under investigation.

Based on this qualitative research approach, the study followed a Phenomenological research design to explore the efforts of media in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes in the study area of the Wolaita zone of Ethiopia. And a total of ten focus groups from different parts of organizations such as the Zonal Journalists Association, Media and Public communication department, Elders Association, Religions Council, Peace, and Security Department, Attorney Association, Public Prosecutors, high court judges, Police Department, and red cross Association leaders, managers and experts were made to have participated in the study.

The criterion sampling technique of qualitative phenomenological research design is best suited to select participants who meet the researcher's pre-determined criteria for the study and the audiotapes of in-depth conversational interviews or dialogue as primary data sources while journals, poetry, novels, biographies, literature, art, and films were used as secondary data.

A comprehensive content data analysis was carried out by using open and selective coding processes in order to bring about results considered to provide an enhanced understanding of the subject of research. Finally, it is imperative to note that in the process of analyzing the views and perspectives of the participants, pseudonyms have been used to protect their identities and thus the themes that the researcher identified and analyzed to summarize the main and sub-research questions about which the interview made were deeply summarized in the following sections.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The conduct of conflict resolution has been significantly altered by the successive evolutions of communication technologies. Because of this evolution, people around the world today intensely know of the major developments in international relations in comparison to people of earlier ages. Also, globalization paved the way for people through global news networks that broadcast live from all corners of the world and the Internet provides immediate access to the unfolding pieces of information and, influences the method for those occlusions to develop cease.

Therefore, evolutions in communication technologies have altered the meaning of power in international relations, and the number and nature of actors participating in overall international common good activities including conflict resolution and world peacebuilding. However, the critical significance of the roles played by media in those issues of conflict and conflict resolution has been relatively neglected by both scholars and practitioners. That means most existing researches focus mainly on the often negative contributions of the media to the escalation and violent phases of conflict. Only a few studies were undertaken about the actual or potential media contributions to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Therefore the main discouragement to research and analysis of the media's role in conflict resolution is attributed to the difficulties inherent in multidisciplinary research and the absence of adequate tools, models, and frameworks for analysis. As a researcher observed there are serious gaps between theoreticians and practitioners in the fields of conflict resolution, communication, and journalism and to reduce these gaps the current research is aimed to construct a framework for further analysis and practice.

### 1.1.STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The nature of conflict in any part of the world cannot be out of some of its forms such as intrapersonal or oneself conflict, interpersonal or conflict with others, intergroup or conflicts within groups, and inter-organizational or conflict within organizations and regardless of its forms, conflict needs resolution and peacebuilding.

As anything in the world had its own sources, the conflict also is mainly sourcing from three identified areas of nature such as communicational source, structural source, and personal sources as dictated by Robbins (1998) Thus understanding the effort of media towards these forms and sources of conflicts helps us to determine the techniques and methods of conflict management and leads us to effective conflict resolution mechanisms in cooperation with any form of the media sector.

However, in relation to media's impacts on conflict resolution and peace-building activities, different scholars were being contradicted by putting their own thoughts on the positive and negative efforts of media. Some of them argued that the evolution of media and communication technologies seriously escalated the occurrence of different forms of conflict and disturbed society's endogenous and lasting conflict resolution and reconciliation systems.

So they are saying most of the time media played a more negative role than positive efforts for public coexistence. That means the media played only a small extent of its big roles to allow and attract new actors, to actively participate in conflict resolution and peace-building processes through its mission of public mobilization.

On the other hand, some other researchers disclosed that contemporarily, the media played a critical role in conflict resolution at almost all levels by maximizing its supportive coverage. Therefore, the researchers in the field have not yet adequately addressed the media's role in the conflict, and the growing importance of media to conflict resolution and peacebuilding via their common stand.

Especially there is no extensive research on the roles and effects of media, especially in Wolaita Zone; Ethiopia. Even though some exist, most of the studies critically explored the negative impacts of the media on conflict and ignored to study and uncover its positive efforts through their short-sized journal articles in the form of a summary.

Particularly, in our contemporary worldwide condition, the power and magnitude of media were multi-dimensionally developed and its importance to the community has expanded from the mere communication transmitter and information disseminator and it was conceived as a fourth branch of democratic government.

Therefore, this study targeted to fill the gap of absence of findings on the current research topic through already developed research design and data analysis tools in collaboration with theories, and models from several scholarly fields. Also, this phenomenological qualitative research makes multidimensional searches to understand the actual and potential positive and negative contributions of the media in conflict resolution and peace-building in the current study area.

Finally, I am so happy that this study may contribute its own fair and lion's share in bridging the gaps of media involvement for the sake of public peace and building a conducive world of life in the study area through the existing bodies of knowledge from this thesis and it also can serve as a means designed to promote successful conflict resolution and sustainable peace-building efforts in Wolaita Zone of Ethiopia.

## ***1.2. GENERAL OBJECTIVES***

The main objective of this thesis is to explore the efforts of the Media toward conflict resolution and peace-building undertakings in the case of Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia.

### **1.2.1. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

- ☞ To examine the roles of media in conflict resolution and Peacebuilding in Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia.
- ☞ To analyze experiences of a media application in the conflict resolution and peacebuilding process of Wolaita zone; Ethiopia.
- ☞ To identify the media peace mainstream functions in conflict resolution and peacebuilding process in the Wolaita zone; Ethiopia.
- ☞ To identify the challenges and prospects envisaged by media in conflict resolution and Peacebuilding in the research area.

### **1.3. THEORETICAL ORIENTATION**

In our sphere of everyday life, the term conflict has no positive implication and is usually associated with its negative characteristics of dispute, and fighting. Thus, as a result of its behavior of wherever existences, it is not a new thing to hear that people debating about the definition of conflict. Thus, Bonacker & Imbusch, (2005) confessed the absence of a universally agreed exact definition of conflict thus the term is still a controversial term all over the world.

For example, Correlates-of-War-Project (COW) defined conflicts as violent disputes in which at least one of the combatant parties is a state. Dwan & Holmqvist (2005), again defined conflict as the use of armed force between the military forces of two or more governments. Wallenstein & Sollenberg (2005); also defined conflict as a contested incompatibility between governments. Still another definition by Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research defined conflict as the clashing of interests or positional differences on national values of some duration.

Therefore, because of conflict's controversial behavior, different scholars tried to understand the term conflict from its very nature by categorizing conflict based on different specific facts. From an ontological point of view, the sources and categories of conflict have usually rotated around two conflict approaches which are the subjectivist and the objectivist approach. That means as dictated by Schmid (1968), the objectivist stand of the source of conflict is the social and political makeup and structure of society while in

the subjectivist approach the perceived incompatibility of goals and differences is accepted as a source of conflict as studied by Deutsch (1991).

Based on the above thoughts and as studied by Diez, Stetter, and Albert (2004), the levels of conflict sourced from the subject incompatibilities approach, distinguished four levels of conflict episodes; issue conflicts; identity conflicts; and power conflicts. According to Pfetsch (1994), types of conflict are again classified into five forms which are latent conflict; manifested conflict; crisis, severe crisis; and War. Irrespective of their forms these five types of conflict are generally categorized into Non-violent or manifested; crisis conflict & violent or severe crisis; and War conflicts.

### Theory of Conflict Resolution

Pablo Garcia (2022) recognized that the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI) and the Interest Based Relational (IBR) approach as the two main conflict resolution theories in the world.

Metrics	Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)	Interest-Based Relational (IBR) Approach.
	Where similar modes of conflict dealing are suited to different kinds of disputes.	Set precise conflict resolution rules to be used With any dispute.
Mode Of Dealing	One sized of strategy fits all theory	One sized strategy doesn't fit all theory
Focus Areas	Emphasized the way the participants themselves handle conflict situations.	Apply six rules applied equally to all participants in the dispute
Rules	Used five principal modes of approaching conflict	Participants behave civilly and understand the rivalry positions.

Table 1.a. Difference between TKI and IBR (structured by current author)

The other critical issue that should not be forgotten during conflict resolution is an individual's behavior which has a significant impact on conflict resolution. Thus to this end, Thomas-Kilmann examined an individual's behavior in conflict situations along with two dimensions of assertiveness, & cooperativeness. That means the extent of a person's attempting to satisfy his/her own concerns and the other person's concerns respectably.

<b>Assertiveness</b>	<b>Competing:</b> (Assertive and uncooperative)		<b>Collaborating:</b> (Assertive and cooperative)
		<b>Compromising:</b> Moderate in assertiveness and cooperativeness	
	<b>Avoiding:</b> (Unassertive and Uncooperative) <b>Cooperativeness</b>		<b>Accommodating</b> (Unassertive and cooperative)

Table 1. b. Two dimensions of human behavior in conflict situations (authors own design)

**Conflict management, settlement & resolution Theory**

According to Reimann (2005), there are three forms of dealing with conflict which are conflict settlement, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. In conflict management, the third party called a mediator is used to assist the conflicting parties or eventually one of them to warm and solve the problem. And as pointed out by Reimann (2005), conflict settlement includes all conflict resolution strategies extending from ending direct violence to necessarily coping with the basic causes of the conflict.

While according to Burton (1968), conflict resolution approaches are all about finding the strategies that could help to exit from the conflict’s destroying dynamic and aims toward achieving satisfying solutions for all parties involved in a conflict.

**Conflict transformation & Conflict prevention**

As mentioned by Galtung (2000), conflict settlement/ conflict resolution is a temporary process. To this end, Lederach (1999), has found three conceptual gaps such as interdependence, justice, and process-structure gaps in the traditional conflict resolution process. Therefore these gaps should be fulfilled by using any mechanisms including media enrolment.

Also as stated by Meyers (1994), since peace is not simply the absence of violence and is a so-called positive peace, scholars designated six structural principles for sustainable and longlasting peace-building programs. Thus these conflict resolution structural principles such as deprivatization of aggression, control over

the state violence-monopoly, the establishment of the rule of law, social justice, democratic participation of citizens, and constructive conflict culture should be implemented as important as necessary through the active involvement of media.

As a pillar for this research, I have to talk about conflict resolution, as equal to media because it is mandatory to talk about media roles in conflict resolution and peacebuilding so that mediated and non-mediated communications take part in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the study area. Because by doing so we can clearly understand the impacts of mediated and nonmediated communications in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities. Thus, as defined by Davis et al (1989), mediated communication is the use of any technical medium for the transmission of a conflict resolution message across time and space in the absence of facial expressions. Lund (2009), found the three forms of mediated communication named mediated interpersonal, interactive, and mass communication which can help us in our conflict resolution programs.

Except for their interpersonal coordination, mediated communication has vast differences and limitations compared with face-to-face communication. One of the differences is, no nonverbal cues can be sent through mediated communication, and the received information can be harder to understand. That means only verbal or textual cues are used instead of nonverbal ones to convey the same messages. Here individuals can send more information at a time through computerized media than any other form of communication, including face-to-face communication, especially in conflict prevention dealings.

Therefore as noted by Nardi and Whittaker (2002), face-to-face communication is the best form of communication for the purpose of conflict resolution. However mediated communication is preferable in situations where time and geographical distance are an issue.

Especially, in maintaining long-distance communication, face-to-face communication is the fourth most common means following mediated communication tools of telephone, email, and instant messaging. Here, what we should not forget is, all the issues of communication researchers raised were still following the clue or the central point of the research which is the efforts of media toward conflict resolution in the Wolaita Zone of Ethiopia.



### ***Defining Peacebuilding and its Elements***

According to the UN Secretary-General Policy Committee (2007), peacebuilding is a range of measures targeted to reduce the risk of entering into a conflict. Therefore as directed by the general secretariat the critical method that should be used is primarily strengthening national and local capacities at all levels for conflict management and laying the foundations for sustainable peace and sustainable development.

Thus peacebuilding includes a wide range of efforts to address the root causes of violence and ensure civilians have freedom from fear or negative peace, freedom from want or positive peace, and freedom from humiliation before, during, and after violent conflict by the participation of diverse actors in government and civil society at the community, national, and international level.

### ***Understanding Common Terms Related To Conflict Resolution***

- Peacemaking: involves stopping an ongoing conflict, while peacebuilding involves before and after the conflict.
- Peacekeeping: prevents only the resumption of fighting following a conflict; while
- Peacebuilding address the underlying causes of violence or works to create societal change.

Generally, as defined by United Nations Peace Operations (2000), Peace-building is a recent term that defines activities undertaken on the far side of the conflict to reassemble the foundations of peace, and conflict resolution provides the tools for building peace foundations. And totally peace can be categorized as Negative peace or direct violence which is the absence of direct or hot violence a condition and Positive peace or structural violence is the absence of both direct violence and structural violence.

However, the third form which is just peace or cultural violence is the absence of all three types of violence enumerated above, and to assure the needed sustainable peace media role ought to be a lion's share.

#### **1.4. RESEARCH GAPS**

As witnessed by Chatfield and Ilukhina (1994), avoiding tyrannies and conflicts; then finding alternative ways to avoid violence from the world became the headache of the 1770s intellectual leaders of Europe and North America. They put their own cornerstone for the peace of the contemporary world, and they played their lion's share role as they assured the relevance of popular participation through their fundamental research.

Thus, since that time, the people of the world are actively participating in almost all undertakings of the government including conflict resolution and peace-building programs that enable the achievement of perpetual peace in the world. According to Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), to achieve perpetual peace in the world, the state itself should be constitutional and that by itself can respect the value of liberty and freedom of ideas. However, contrary to their thoughts, during the time government-led wars and oppression were absolutely continued as a result, many trials for those social ills were obviously put forward. To solve such problems of conflict of the period, Karl Marx (1818-1883), Lenin (1870- 1924), and Vladimir Ilyich were scientifically struggling for radical societal transformations to advance justice and oppose war-making.

In collaboration with their idea, religious thought and practice have emerged in ways that prove the relevance of conflict resolution rather than war and worldly conflicts. In addition to this, various forms of organized engagement for peace such as anti-war reform efforts of the peace societies from North America, Britain, and elsewhere in Europe became manifested as pointed out by Brock (1968). Mohandas Gandhi who is a famous leader of India at the time also drew from his Hindu traditions and other influences and developed a powerful strategy of popular civil disobedience as studied by Bondurant (1965). Also, African National Congress (ANC), adopted nonviolent strategies for its struggle against Apartheid to counteract the severe discrimination imposed upon South Africans and also became a part of the engagement of the fight for the importance of conflict resolution in the world. Therefore, as we can infer from afore information, many scholars had sacrificed even themselves for our contemporary cheaper value of peace and tranquility.

Based on these ideas, the evolution of contemporary conflict resolution (CR) can be expressed in four major periods of preliminary developments (1914-1945), laying the groundwork (1946- 1969), expansion and institutionalization (1970-1989), and diffusion and differentiation since (1989).

By leaving a detailed exploration of each evolution period and its characteristics, the current researcher will try to show efforts contributed to the building process of current world peace. Cortright (2008), in his way of exploring the counterparts of the First World War, also uncovered the constructive facet of the conflict because of which most countries of the world willingly renewed their efforts to peace movement organizations and integrated for their common coexistence. Also, the governmental and non-governmental organizations built their new transnational institutions and fostered reconciliation between their former enemies to prevent future wars.

Therefore, for the sake of institutionalization, the world's first International Peace Research Institute (PRIO), was established in Oslo, Norway, and the Centre for Intergroup Studies was again established in Cape Town of South Africa, Not only that but also the International Peace Research Association, the Peace Science Society International, and professional Conflict Resolution networks in the form of national and international associations were formulated for a strong stand on conflict management. Amazingly, just after its establishment of institutionalized associations, it started the civil rights struggle and other social movements that were mainly magnified by the power of non-governmental actors all over the world.

Thus many people started to demonstrate to advance justice and equality, and improve the human condition. Interestingly, because of these movements' rapid conflict resolution expansion and institutionalization, alternative dispute resolution (ADR) practices quickly expanded. By using this opportunity, Community dispute resolution centers with volunteer mediators were established across the world and numerous interactive problem-solving workshops were conducted. Also, peace and conflict studies centers were established via professional associations.

Finally, because of such efforts, the world environment was profoundly changed and critical actions have been taken to stop conflicts from escalating destructively, consequently, wars that had been perpetuated as proxy wars were settled. Many other developments such as increasing economic integration of the world and the intensification of global communications have contributed to limiting destructive international and domestic conflicts. Thus, the former arrogant government officials in the world, Africa, Ethiopia, and even national regions become more attentive to the significance of participatory administration in managing conflicts and in peace-building undertakings. Thus public engagement and participatory governance have got increased attention in this approach. But, according to the above-detailed facts of the conflict resolution process, the efforts of the media cannot be neglected and the current thesis will mainly assess the efforts of the media toward conflict resolution and peace-building in Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia. Even Rachel Luberda (2014), defined media as a fourth branch of the government following the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of the government.

However as pointed out by some of the literature on media, highly disagree on the degree and magnitude of its influence in conflicts. Especially, the absence of any conflict resolution research in Wolaita; Ethiopia again agitated the current researcher to deal with the issue as the area is full of several forms of conflicts that can shack not only the given community but also the government itself.

Therefore, the researcher intended to perform brilliant research that can solve the actual problem of the study area and also can be a reference material for further researchers and so forth

On the other hand, the conflict situations are an inalienable part of the history of any people in any country in the world. So media have a special relationship with conflict situations because conflict has major news value and constitutes a major area of operation for the media. However, according to certain research, some parties in conflict try to use the media to further their own agenda, and therefore the media comes heavily under all sorts of irrelevant influences. Thus this fact of media to conflict situations contrasts sharply with the defined role and discipline of the media.

Therefore, in actual or potential conflict situations the media should not account for itself for contributing directly or indirectly to the creation of conflicts or situations which breed conflicts and should avoid any action which may inflame conflict passions of the people. Because the media has the advanced power to reach a wide arena of people in a short period of time span it may yield positive or negative results for the overall public. If not managed according to its pre-determined ethical rules, the media can be the oxygen of publicity for terrorism as practiced by India; Kashmir as well as in some parts of Ethiopia.

In Ethiopia, media have practically participated in most of the local conflicts raised and played their part in aggravating conflict so that a number of media lost their loyalty to a media organization. Especially social media became a timing bomb for any governmental undertaking as its management system is out of national control. This fact is also true in one of the local areas of Ethiopia called the Wolaita Zone. However, the media's positive impact cannot be forgotten as it disseminates necessary developmental programs including the peacebuilding processes of a nation. For example in the situation, of the Wolaita conflict of state formation for the last three years especially social media became the site of proxy war but other media are slit-bit balanced announcers of peace and tranquility from which a majority can be benefited. Therefore, as written by some kinds of literature, most of the media of the time failed to perform their very basic role of being an honest, objective, and fair purveyor of information to the public. Because the output of a media outlet depends on the moral and intellectual caliber of the persons owning and managing it as much as on their personal emotions and outlook on life.

However, the products of the media are being sold like any other commodity in the market, and those who run the media, do it only for purely their commercial interests. For example, according to the Wolaita zone police report

(2022), there were about 5596 conflict cases reported to be investigated and the police investigated a total of 4964 completely. In the process of these no media is likely to participate in capacity-building and awarenesscreation programs. Sometimes the media themselves were a place of conflict and negatively affected by some collogues media enterprises.

That is why there is a lack of proper management, training, and understanding among media persons of different conflict situations, their sensitivities, complexities, and other related issues involved. Therefore, training about the freedom of information or the right of the public to know and the obligation of the government to inform, and journalistic ethics, which has evoked tremendous media outcry, needs further researches and follow-up for the common good of the world and especially in the study area.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1. RESEARCH PHILOSOPHY**

The philosophical basis of this study helps to determine appropriate strategies to achieve research results that are reliable to cognize the people-oriented nature of current research. As dictated by Toren and Pina-Cabral (2009), there is a necessity to acknowledge engagements with epistemology and ontology which are "what it is to know" and "what actually exists" respectably in order to illuminate understanding of phenomena under investigation.

In relation to Ontology, Marilyn and Rawnsley (1998), dictated that ontology is mainly concerned with the nature of knowledge that was directly connected with claims as regards the nature and structure of being as well as theories of what actually exists. Bryman (2012), in his stand, again stated that ontology referred to looking at a social reality through the perspectives of either objectivists or constructions. Here from the objectivist standpoint, a social entity has a reality that is external to the actor's control while from the constructionist's standpoint, the social reality is a product of the perceptions, experiences, opinions, perspectives, and actions of the actors involved in the social process.

Thus, based on this philosophical background, the constructionist ontology has been adopted in carrying out the current investigation. In relation to epistemological issues provide answers to concerns in respect of which principle and perspective to use in studying social phenomena. According to Bryman, (2012), the epistemological position recognizes what should be studied using the principles, procedures, and ethos of natural phenomena as positivism.

And as assured by Bryman (2012), interpretive epistemologists believe that the subject of people and their institutions are fundamentally at variance with natural science, and therefore require a different logic of research procedure. Thus, epistemology is nevertheless mostly concerned to address probabilities of necessary conditions to justify beliefs and rejecting criticisms.

Thus the study was conducted in a qualitative research paradigm and within the interpretive theoretical framework of phenomenology that focused on determining participants' perspectives on the meaning, they attach to particular aspects of their social situations and understanding of cause-effect processes as assigned by Deuchar (2012). Therefore, the implication of this theoretical tradition on the research questions is that high importance is placed on the active involvement of people in reality construction.

As ascertained by Bryman, (2012), the meaning-centered ontological and epistemological positions have influenced and determined the research design and strategies for the collection of data for this study, and the qualitative research approach with phenomenological research design has been adopted to appropriately serve the purpose of this kind of approach.

## **2.2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

According to Bhattacharjee (2012), a Research design is a comprehensive plan for data collection in empirical research that is aimed at answering specific research questions or testing specific hypotheses. Therefore, since the main objective of the current research is to explore the roles of media in conflict resolution and Peacebuilding in the case of the Wolaita zone, a qualitative research approach that follows a Phenomenological research design is used as appropriate. Because phenomenology is one of the most popular qualitative research designs that was used in most doctoral dissertations.

In relation to this Christensen, Johnson, and Turner (2010), stated that phenomenology is primarily intended to explicate the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experiences of a person, or a group of people, around a specific research topic. Thus, this research design attempts to understand people's perceptions and understanding of a particular research phenomenon. And it also mainly studies the lived experience of research participants; a specific phenomenon is the central research question in a phenomenological study.

Therefore, due to its philosophical and methodological strength, the current researcher assigned a phenomenological research design for the current thesis. Also as defined by Berg and Howard (2012), qualitative research is a concept, a definition, metaphors, symbols, and a description of things. And the study used all necessary qualitative research instruments such as field observation, open-ended questions, focus group in-depth interviews, and field notes data collected from participants in their natural settings.

Therefore, under the umbrella of a qualitative research approach, this study explores the efforts of media in conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes through phenomenological research design. The researcher determined to use this design based on the requirement of a profound understanding of human experience common to a group of people. Also as assured by Aaker ET. Al (2007), the researcher also can explore an area where little is known or investigate the possibilities of undertaking a particular research study by using such a research approach and design.

### **2.3. TARGET POPULATION**

According to Trochim (2006), the target population is the whole set of individuals to which a study is interested in generalizing data for conclusions. Therefore, different focus groups from different organizations in the study area were selected purposely to be the target populations of the current study.

Therefore, the current researcher mainly made an in-depth interview session with ten Focus groups that cumulatively hold sixty-two (62) participants at an individual one-on-one level held at the respective venues determined by their respective choices. And these all participants were interviewed, using unstructured or open-ended forms of fourteen sub-questions under four major questions to get their respective views, perspectives, sentiments, and opinions on the subject under study.



No.	Code (FGD)	Affiliation	No of Pr.t
1.	FGD-01	FGD with the Wolaita Zone Journalists Association	6
2.	FGD-02	FGD with the Wolaita zone Administration Media and Public communication Directors	6
3.	FGD-03	FGD with Wolaita, zone elders Association	6
4.	FGD-04	FGD with the Wolaita Zone religions council	7
5.	FGD-05	FGD with the Wolaita Zone peace and Security Department, Conflict Resolution Directorate	6
6.	FGD-06	FGD with the Wolaita sodo Attorney Association	6
7.	FGD-07	FGD with the Wolaita Zone Public Prosecutors	6
8.	FGD-08	FGD with the Wolaita Zone high court Judges	6
9.	FGD-09	FGD with the Wolaita Zone Police Department managing Directors	7
10.	FGD-10	FGD with the Wolaita Zone red cross Association	6
Total Number of participants			62

Table 2a. Focus Group Discussion participants (source: current researcher)

Firstly, for the purpose of the data from focus groups the researcher purposely selected participants from the aforementioned in the table above based on their intimate experiences with the research objectives and questions. To these facts, Mbrown (2013), assured that focus group interviews are interviews a researcher conducts with a small group of participants to collect a variety of data.

According to his suggestion, or recommendation, keeping a focus group interview between four and eight participants makes the researcher effective so the present study tried to confirm this idea. Therefore the researcher intentionally selected these aforementioned organizations based on their affiliations, knowledge, experience, and concern about specific issues around media connection to conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Thus, purposive sampling is the best sampling criterion in the phenomenological study. Also, some existing kinds of the literature suggested that open interviews are best used by most phenomenologist. And in-depth interviews are a common method used by a phenomenologist for gaining access to an individual's life world.

## 2.4. SAMPLING SIZE AND TECHNIQUE

Polit & Beck (2017) established different sampling strategies that fit qualitative research. Thus, Sampling is the process of selecting or searching for situations, contexts, and/or participants who provide rich data on the phenomenon of interest.

In qualitative research, the researcher samples deliberately, not at random, and from the under-mentioned forms of sampling strategies, phenomenology uses criterion sampling, in which participants meet predefined criteria. Thus the most accepted criterion to select the participants is their experience with the phenomenon under study.

No	Qualitative Sampling Techniques	Definition
1.	Purposive sampling	Based on the researchers' judgment
2.	Criterion sampling	Based on researchers' pre-determined criteria
3.	Theoretical sampling	Based on the emerging findings
4.	Convenience sampling	Who are easily available
5.	Snowball sampling	Through referrals
6.	Maximum variation sampling	Based on variations in backgrounds
7.	Extreme case sampling	The most unusual cases
8.	Typical case sampling	Most special average participants

Table.2b. sampling strategies (source: Amended works of literature)

Therefore, the researchers look for participants who have shared an experience but vary in characteristics and in their individual experiences. Therefore, this study used a non-probability qualitative criteria sampling technique to select representative FG participants from different aforementioned organizations in the study area.

## 2.5. DATA TYPES AND SOURCES

The research study is about exploring the efforts of media on conflict resolution and peacebuilding as expressed in the views of focus groups selected from the Wolaita people. According to Charmaz, K. (2006), there are two descriptive levels of the empirical phenomenological model that arise from the data collected:

In level one, the original data are comprised of participants' self-descriptions obtained from participants through open-ended questions and dialogue. And at its second level, the researcher described the structures of the experiences based on reflective analysis and interpretation of the research participant's perspectives.

Therefore, to collect data for these two levels of analysis, the primary tool the researcher used is the in-depth personal focus group interview of open that collects non-forced answers, with the following three main kinds of questions:

During the time the researcher preferred the initial question which is an open or pre-written question, designed carefully to inquire into the participant's lived and everyday experience of the phenomenon under investigation. Then the researcher asked follow-up questions to tease out deeper or more detailed elaborations of the earlier answers or clarify unclear statements or ask about non-verbal gestures. And finally, the guiding questions are asked to help the respondents return to the topic of the interview when they stray or digress.

Therefore, the major goal of all aforementioned questions is to allow the respondent the maximum freedom to respond from within his or her lived and every day, non-reflective experience for the sake of undergoing study. By exercising such questions the researcher achieved his goal to collect data that are profoundly descriptive or rich in detail and introspective, through his lengthy interviews, sometimes lasting as long as an hour or more.

Although other less personal data sources such as letters, official documents, and news accounts are seldom used as direct information about the lived experience, the researcher used them in a particular case that is useful either in illuminating the participant's story itself or in creating a rich and textured background description of the contexts and settings in which the participant experienced the phenomenon of the study.

Therefore based on light of these issues and concerns, the research instruments adopted to collect the primary data for this study are focus group discussions via individual in-depth interviews. So as stated by the researcher the established focus groups from a total of 10 groups, one focus group discussion with 6 journalists recruited from the Wolaita Zone Journalists Association, the other focus group discussion with 6 media and communication directors recruited from the Wolaita Zone Media and Public communication department and the else focus group discussions with 7 police managing director recruited from the Wolaita Zone police department.

Not only this but also one focus group discussion with 6 conflict resolution experts recruited from the Wolaita Zone peace and security department, another focus group discussion with 6 public prosecutors recruited from the Wolaita Zone and justice department respectably, and the sixth focus group discussion with 6 judges recruited from the Wolaita Zone high court.

Similar to this one focus group discussion with 6 red cross Association leaders recruited from the Wolaita Zone red cross Association, one focus group discussion with 6 Attorneys recruited from the Wolaita Zone Attorneys Association, and one focus group discussion with 7 religious fathers recruited from the Wolaita Zone religions council, one focus group discussion with 6 cultural elders recruited from the Wolaita Zone elders Association and the last one focus group discussion with 6 cultural journalists recruited from the Wolaita Zone Journalists Association.

Therefore, the inclusion criteria were mainly focused on participants who were over 18 years of age and were able to give informed consent independently. In addition, the participants were either community group members and/or public offices. This recruitment strategically yielded a total of 62 participants for the current study.

## **2.6. DATA COLLECTION STRATEGY AND APPROACH**

According to Tyldum (2012), qualitative researcher mostly seeks information that shows the relevance of cases and variations of issues in order to understand the facts of the study. It is important at this stage to explain strategies involved in the collection of data for the study in order to enhance understanding of the extent to which the necessary information was gathered. In relation to this, there were collections of secondary data relevant to the subject of investigation.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, this qualitative research is concerned to investigate how the participants of the study were making sense of the impacts of media on conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Correspondingly, the study is concerned with how the stakeholders in local areas carry out the creation and management of conflict based on their shared experiences. Therefore, the researcher approached the groups of respondents and other individual persons, in their respective communities, as the case may be, at various times by appointments booking with their respective leaders and members, letters of notification, visits, phone calls, and emails. This strategy was considered cheaper, quicker, time-saving, and convenient with respect to the conduct of the empirical aspect of this investigation.

However, in the light of this study, the participants were decided upon and drawn not on criteria of representativeness but on their respective roles in the community and their knowledge of conflict resolution and peace-building issues given the overall purpose of the investigation.

The research instruments that are planned to be used for data collection are focus group discussion and in-depth interviews with key informants as well as document review. As mentioned by Genise (2002) using interviews as a data collection method helps to obtain rich and detailed information about the issue and direct contact with the users often leads to specific, constructive suggestions.

## 2.7. DATA CODING, TRANSCRIPTION, AND ANALYSIS

It is important to note that the data were coded in accordance with various themes that emerged from the empirical engagements with participants. A comprehensive analysis of data themes was carried out by using the open and selective coding processes in order to bring about results considered to provide an enhanced understanding of the subject of research.

The research themes identified and analyzed in this study were: Beliefs about the roles of media in conflict resolution and the peacebuilding process, identifying best practices of media in solving conflict and building peace, understanding the negative and positive impacts of media in peace-building, and looking for challenges and prospects envisaged media in the process of conflict resolution and peace-building in the given study area.

And, these themes reflected the collective views and perspectives of focus groups that participated in this empirical study. It is imperative to note that in the process of analyzing the views and perspectives of those focus groups, pseudonyms have been used to protect their identities. Hence, those names mentioned in the analysis as regards empirical data are not reflections of the real names of these participants.

In relation to data transcription, the collected data were carefully transcribed and the transcribed primary data were blinded on the researcher's pass-worded laptop. Thus, in addition to ensuring that no third party was privy to the stored data and in order to avoid identity disclosure, further, the precautionary mechanism was made to ensure that recorder was cleaned up at the completion of the study. Hence, those names mentioned in the analysis as regards empirical data are not reflections of the real names of these participants. Thus the themes that the researcher identified and analyzed to summarize the main and sub-research questions about which the interview made were summarized here:

So the interview primarily touched on the thought of participants about what roles media plaid to resolve conflict and build peace in the study area; in Ethiopia. And based on this major question, other subquestions such as the merits and demerits of media in relation to the study title, the influence of media to change people's

perceptions and actions towards their peaceful full coexistence, and examined the value of the roles of media in comparison to other conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area.

Following this, the researcher interviewed the best practices and experience of media in relation to conflict resolution and peace-building in the given study area in its second major question. So under the umbrella of this question, the researcher again evaluated the Media's experience of peace-building efforts and facilitation of nonviolent solutions to conflicts, the media in relation to its peace promotion and mobilization of the communities for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the area, the Media's content of news, analysis, and discussion of domestic conflict resolution and peace conferencing issues in the area and entertainment and advertising programs of media in relation to conflict resolution and peace-building promotion.

Thirdly, the researcher evaluated the overall impacts of media on peace-building processes in the Wolaita zone; Ethiopia by rising some sub-questions such as how media supported social skills development of people to get together through its productions and programs in the study area, the Media in relation to its all-embracing effort to act against the injustice, oppression, misdeeds, and partiality of our society that are some causes of conflict and the Media build harmony amongst the people via its circulation to avoid fake news

Last but not least, the researcher also tested the challenges and prospects envisaged for media in conflict resolution and peace-building in the given study area. So the researcher evaluated the independence of media from any business and political interests that can affect the fact-based, independent, transparent, accountable, and impartial reporting about the conflicts in the area, the media action as a peace-building machine rather than a volatile and fragile behavior of conflicting parties that fuels conflict, the media in terms of its effort to reveal truths of conflict resolution and peacebuilding rather than some false propaganda purposes and evaluated the media on side of political leaders, media managers, and media professionals in connection to the ethical use of Media to build peace and tranquility in the study area.

The findings based on these themes were explored in chapter five, while chapters six, and seven, formed the conclusion and recommendations aspect of the study respectively.

### 3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The previous chapter was concerned with discussing the procedures involved in data collection in order to fulfill the empirical parts of the investigation. This chapter in its turn focuses on analyzing the range of different FG interview participants about the impacts of media on conflict resolution and peace-building undertakings in the study area called Wolaita Zone of Ethiopia. The analysis is based on feelings of media involvement in conflict resolution and peacebuilding as expressed by the interview participants of the current study as follows:

#### 3.1. FOCUS GROUP IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS

FGD 1 comprised six participants selected from the Wolaita Zone Journalists Association. Their selections were on the basis of the inclusion and exclusion criteria earlier mentioned. The researcher was able to identify and access these participants.

The researcher approached participants at their respective locations and they were very much aware of the research agenda. This was in addition to personal contacts earlier made by the researcher, based on familiarity with the study environment and the perceived importance of the study and its key asset to the current interest in exploring the impacts of media in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the Wolaita Zone of Ethiopia. On this basis, a series of appointments were arranged with the participants at various times. I initially invited a total of six participants including one female, and they all attended the group discussion session held on 21st, June/ 2022.

Although in this study, as stated by Tyldum (2012), there were also possibilities that the researcher lacked an adequate overview of the potential consequences, the researcher directly relied on the information received from the participants during interviews and the content of consequent analysis preceding it.

Hence, the researcher in this case started the focus group discussion session with an introduction stating specifically the name, university of affiliation, and a brief on the nature of the doctoral research program and investigation. It was then followed by giving them the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form.



As the experience of the researcher has suggested, the participants were overwhelmingly comfortable with the contents and expressed willingness to participate in the discussion session, and agreed to the use of a voice recorder during the session. The FGD 1 lasted for about one hour and it was conducted in the English language. Light refreshments were provided as a token to the participants and we enjoyed it together in a peaceful atmosphere.

Similarly, FGD 2 session for the Wolaita zone Administration Media and Public communication Directors was held at one of the best meeting halls by 4.30 pm on the 21st of June/ 2022. A total of six communication Directors, comprising four males and two females volunteered to participate in the session.

The choice of the meeting hall as the venue for the session was at the request of the participants, informed by my resolve to offer them light refreshments and soft drinks during the session and the strategic nature of the location in terms of access. During this time in the first phase, again the nature of the study was explained to them, in addition to the issuance of the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form as well.

The discussion proceeded with open-ended questions in line with the research schedule designed earlier for the focus group discussion. They all consented willingly to participate in the discussion session and with the use of a voice recorder. The participants responded to questions asked in a relatively relaxed atmosphere.

FGD 3 sessions for the Wolaita zone elders Association was held at Wolaita Sodo town on 22 June/ 2022 with six male representative participants, as females are culturally deprived to be a member of the elders. In a similar manner to others, I was able to access them through their respective association and their responses suggested that they were elated and found it an opportunity to share and make their views about the subject of investigation known given the perceived importance of the study to the conflict resolution concerns of the nation.

FGD 4 sessions for the FGD with the Wolaita Zone religions council were held at the Wolaita police department meeting hall on 22 June 2022 with seven participants representing seven religious institutions in the study area. So I was able to access them through their respective council and their responses suggested that they were elated and found it an opportunity to share and make their views about the subject of investigation known given the perceived importance of the study to the conflict resolution concerns of the nation.

FGD 5 sessions for the Wolaita zone elders Association was held at Wolaita Sodo town with six representative participants, comprising five males as females are culturally deprived to be a member of the elders. In a similar manner to others, I was able to access them through their respective association and their responses suggested that they were elated and found it an opportunity to share and make their views about the subject of investigation known given the perceived importance of the study to the conflict resolution concerns of the nation. Similarly, the

FGD 6 session for the Wolaita Zone Peace and Security Department was held on 25 June 2022 at Wolaita Sodo town with six Conflict Resolution Directors, comprising five males and one female. During the time I was able to access them through their respective department and their responses suggested that they were elated and found it an opportunity to share and make their views about the subject of investigation known given the perceived importance of the study to the conflict resolution concerns of the nation.

On June 26, 2022, the FGD 7 session was done with the Wolaita Zone Public Prosecutors held at the Wolaita administration hall with six participants. During the time I was able to access them through their respective department and their responses suggested that they were elated and found it an opportunity to share and make their views about the subject of investigation known given the perceived importance of the study to the conflict resolution and peacebuilding concerns of the nation in the study area.

FGD 8 sessions for the FGD with the Wolaita Zone high court judges were held at Wolaita Sodo high court meeting hall with six judge participants, comprising five males and one female on 26 June 2022. Thus I was able to access them through their respective association and their responses suggested that they were elated and found it an opportunity to share and make their views about the subject of investigation known given the perceived importance of the study to the conflict resolution concerns of the nation.

FGD 9 sessions for the FGD with the Wolaita Zone Police Department managing Directors was held at Wolaita Zone Police meeting hall with seven participants comprising five male and two female total of seven participants on 27 June 2022. Therefore, I was able to access them through their respective department and their responses suggested that they were elated and found it an opportunity to share and make their views about the

subject of investigation known given the perceived importance of the study to the conflict resolution concerns of the nation.

FGD 10 sessions for the FGD with the Wolaita Zone Red Cross Association were held at the Wolaita Sodo town Gutara meeting hall with six participants, on June 28, 2022. So I was able to access them through their respective association and their responses suggested that they were elated and found it an opportunity to share and make their views about the subject of investigation known given the perceived importance of the study to the conflict resolution concerns of the nation.

Therefore, as recommended by Hennink, M. M., Kaiser, B. N., & Weber, M. B. (2019), the current researcher minimized the sample size for each FGD to 06 to 10 participants since large groups are difficult to maintain, and they throttle a participant's chance to contribute views on the topic of interest. According to the view of Walliman (2011), FG interviews are known as one form of face-to-face interviews in research.

So the current researcher made an in-depth interview session with ten Focus a group that cumulatively holds sixty-two (62) participants at individual one-on-one levels held at the respective venues determined by their respective choices. And these all participants were interviewed, using unstructured and open-ended forms of fourteen sub-questions under four major questions to get their respective views, perspectives, sentiments, and opinions on the subject under investigation.

### **3.1.1. The Research Participants' Beliefs about Efforts of Media towards Conflict Resolution and Peace**

#### **Building in the case of Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia**

During her speech at the Global Peace Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, Lisa Schnellinger (2012), said that If a journalist is doing well, they are helping to make peace. That means during conflict and crisis, journalists can convey people essential information for their survival and can help people to get medical treatment, shelter, and basic human needs. In the same manner, Media also can mitigate ethnic and religious tensions.

And journalists are also vital even after crises and conflicts. By distributing critical information Media can empower citizens to make informed daily essential decisions. Also, Sanjana Hattotuwa (2003) who is a research associate at the center for policy alternatives in Columbo, Sri Lanka, assured that the news media can have four inputs on any peace process such as.

- ☞ First, they define the political condition in which the peace process takes place.
- ☞ Second, the media has an active influence on the strategy and behavior of the stakeholders in the conflict.
- ☞ Third, the media has an important influence on the nature of the debate about a peace process.
- ☞ And fourthly, the media can buttress or weaken the public legitimacy of the stakeholders involved in the peace process.

Based on the above thoughts, I made an in-depth interview discussion with my FG-1 which comprises six leaders of the journalists association in the Wolaita Sodo town of Ethiopia.

During the session, about four main and fourteen sub-interview questions were respectably raised to be answered by these participants. Therefore, the researcher in his first line mainly tried to understand the journalist leader's perceptions in relation to the critical roles that were plaid by Medias to achieve the peace and conflict resolution goal of the Wolaita Zone of Ethiopia.

Under this main quest, some specific issues such as the merits and demerits of media regarding conflict resolution and peacebuilding, the influences and actions taken by media towards the improvement of people's perceptions of their peace and full coexistence, and the extent to which the roles plaid by media in comparison to other conflict resolution mechanisms in the study area were seriously and specifically interviewed and discussed. The six journalists association leaders, six Media, and Public communication Directors, six cultural peacebuilding elders, seven religious fathers, six public conflict resolution directors, six attorney representatives, six Public Prosecutors, six high court judges, seven police department managing directors, and six Zonal red cross representatives the total of 62 participants from different experience categories interviewed have shared positive perceptions towards the roles of media for conflict resolution and peacebuilding undertakings of the Wolaita Zone.

They commonly agreed that the media space in Wolaita Zone improved the governance, make transparent public administrations, and enabled citizens to become active participants who understand policies and use the information to exercise their overall rights. And they also assured that the media transformed the people of Wolaita from polarization to positive relationships with its neighboring nations.

On the other hand, they also uncovered some defects of media related to increasing disinformation and uncertainty in society. As they said currently some negative forces are getting an equal chance to work on their evil agenda and rumors and phobias are on rising due to these restless horses. The media has become the top trendsetter.

It is eliminating boundaries of local cultures, languages, and values that the Wolaita people used for a long period of time as a tool for their conflict resolution and peace-building practices. For instance, Wolde (this is a pseudonym), one of the public conflict resolution directors in the individual interview recounted his personal experience of the media's role to solve and or escalate conflict and building and or dispersing peace in the area. His views are illustrative:

*Our Media is volatile and double-phased. During the Wolaita & Sidama conflict in Hawassa, on Jun 22, 2018, some of our media reported the news that can aggravate and fuel the conflict between these long-lived peace full neighboring two nations. Because of the Media's emotional announcement from both sides, all the people of Wolaita and Sidama totally started to fight against each other not only in Hawasa but also in all directions of their location. For example, Fana Broadcasting Corporation officially reported that 10 people died in the violence, 89 were injured and 2,500 were displaced, including many Wolaita, so the people of Wolaita rearranged themselves to revenge against the nation of Sidama. However thanks to the cultural elders and religious fathers of the two sides, the Media again reported the good news of the Sidama & Wolaita relation and reconciliation program on Dec 9, 2019. Thus, this is the fact that why I said that our media is volatile that talks about peace and conflict through its single mouth emotionally. (Interview transcripts, June 26/ 2022; 37, male, and high court judges)*

To this end, the World Bank Blogs (2018) also extended the role of media in conflict resolution and peacebuilding to include its bridge builder, watchdog, information provider, early warning system, an emotional outlet, and Peace motivator roles. In its peace promotion scenario, media is used to build public confidence, facilitate negotiations or break diplomatic dead blocks to create a climate conducive to peacebuilding. Also, Media is a bridge builder that promotes a positive relationship between groups via showing the other in a similar light to self and helps to build a bridge of common empathy.

### **3.1.2. Participants Beliefs about the best practices and experience of media in relation to conflict resolution and peace-building in the Case of Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia.**

After the completion of the first question including its sub-questions, the researcher asked sixty-two participants including six journalists, six Media, and public communication directors, six cultural peacebuilding elders, seven religious fathers, six public conflict resolution directors, six attorney representatives, six Public Prosecutors, six high court judges, seven police department managing directors and six Zonal red cross representatives about the second question that explores the best practices and experience of media in relation to conflict resolution and peace-building processes to understand their thought in the given study questions.

During this interview, they collectively manifested that the Media's experience of peacebuilding efforts and facilitation of nonviolent solutions to conflicts in the zone was very weak. The Media's experience with peace promotion and mobilization of the communities for conflict resolution and peacebuilding, as well as the content of news, analysis, and discussion of domestic conflict resolution and peace conferencing issues in the study area under the yolk of other issues such as political agendas, other public-social matters, and the so-called security events.

And it was absolutely not seen the Media's content on conflict resolution and peacebuilding promotion elements in its entertainment and advertising programs in the study area. Beyond the media, the conflict resolution and peace-building undertakings were seriously done through formal law enforcement organizations and sometimes religious fathers and selected cultural elders entertained the conflicts and other security issues that endangered the people of the area. Utmost the government of the area was trying to solve the security

problems of the area by taking the issue as its primary purpose of leading the people via its maximum capacity stretching.

For instance, Gashei (this is a pseudonym), one of the administrative Media and communication Directors in his individual in-depth interview revealed his personal thought about the best practices and experience of media in relation to conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes in the given study area.

His views are illustrative:

*As a communication director, I have some specific duties including building the department's comprehensive communications plans that share objectives, timelines, customer information and data, and key performance indicators, reviewing and sometimes writing newsletters, brochures, press releases, and other media-related documents, and overseeing the media's website and social media accounts to ensure they align with the media's established communication guidelines. By taking this position as an opportunity to understand some weak and strong sides of the media, I observed that our media is still in the young enough stage.*

*Especially social media namely Face book become the most dangerous weapon that disturbs, displaces, and kills a number of people through its fake news. Some media through fake news or false or misleading information often damages the reputation of a person or entity or makes money through advertising revenue. We can understand frankly our Media's weakness in reference to conflicts that emerged in connection to the Wolaita people's quest for autonomous regional statehood. During that time the fake news shackled and destroyed the overall peace of the zone and made the area become a jealous battle place between the people and the government.*

*Therefore, the media in the study area holds much more homework to act as a fourth estate both in its explicit capacity of advocacy and implicit ability to frame peace and tranquility under the sphere of political issues that can wield a significant indirect social influence to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the study area. (Interview transcripts, June 21/ 2022; 32, male, and administrative Media and communication director*

In relation to this, Balkishan Tiwari (2019), in his literature named "fake news impact on society", defined fake or fabricated news as a type of yellow journalism or propaganda that consists of misinformation spread via social media or news channels.

According to this definition, fake or fabricated news misleads the masses in order to damage someone's image or take it to next level for their benefit. So it often has eye-catching headlines to lure an audience, increase its readership and make money

Generally, fake news creates chaos in our societies, as people put fake news in order to conspire against others. Therefore, many people are losing their trust in media as sometimes news channels cover this news to increase their ratings. It is altering the decisions of youth and letting them believe something which is not true.

Also, the publishers and distributors of these fake news websites are aware that people would be blindly attracted to their catchy titles and images. Therefore, it is our responsibility not to trust this popping news blindly and to use legitimate and authentic sources to read and share news, as well as the lack of uniform guidelines, regulations, and policies regarding such fabricated content need to be addressed urgently.

### 3.1.3. *Participants' Beliefs about Efforts of Media Peace Mainstreamization functions toward conflict resolution and peace-building process in the case of Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia.*

In addition to the above questions, the aforementioned research participants were also interviewed about the overall impacts of media on peace-building processes in the Wolaita zone of Ethiopia as the third main question through some sub-detailed questions such as the media impact terms on social skills development of people to get together through its productions and programs in the study area, the Media effort to act against the injustice, oppression, misdeeds, and partiality that may cause some conflicts and the capacity of media to build harmony amongst the people via its circulation.

For the purpose of this concept all the research participants were interviewed one by one and gave their similar sense by saying that the media in the zone are still youth to address the public need for peace and security. That means they said that there was a lack of regular program productions that can capacitate the society's social skills in conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities. Also, they commonly agreed that even though it occasionally produces some reports by the initiation of relevant public organizations, it was still not free from biases and impartiality.



So they commonly criticized the media's performance to be reviewed in the light of 21st century needs for conflict and peace. For instance one of the study participants, Ashui (a pseudonym), illustrated his idea here:

*I have the hobby of listening to the media that can feed me some hot news that can energize my soul and grasp new daily information from different channels and forms of media. For your information, some of the old aged Media out of Wolaita have some regular programs that can develop and advance the capacity of people to keep themselves from the dangerous life of conflict and foster their peaceful life.*

*However, I didn't hear of any such program in my zonal Media such as Wolaita TV, Wogeta community radio, Fana broadcasting radio, and any Social Media in the area. But most of the time they regularly report some political, economical, social, and cultural events by neglecting the baseline agenda of the current world which is conflict prevention and peacebuilding.*

*Of course, I didn't forget that the other issues are necessary and otherwise all movements of life cease because of latent conflict I am so worried about their negligence in the program and mainstreaming their reports in relation to the issue at hand. (Interview transcripts, June 27/ 2022; 41, male, and Police department crime prevention directors)*

To support this thought, I wanted to touch on the idea set by Sarah Genner and Daniel Süß (2017), who defined media for socialization as a lifelong process in which individuals learn and interact with their social standards, rules, and values through Media communication which play a key socializing role among other major agents of socialization.

Also as some findings from some works of literature about Media effects on socialization, media exposure has the potential for learning cognitive, social, or cultural skills and long-term implications for behavior pro-social or violent and the cultivation of worldview and values political views, gender stereotypes, body images. Thus Media literacy is considered a developmental task and a goal of media socialization.

However, the media in the zone didn't work hard to support peace-building activities as they best. In addition to this, as said by Madhuparna Mishra (2018), Media in the Wolaita zone doesn't plaid a sword-arm role in conflict resolution, and its watchdog duty is to protect the public interest of peace and security.

At the same time as assured by Ahmadabad (2019), although the media is recognized as the fourth pillar of democracy, it was not worked hard for public safety in comparison to its other undertakings performance.

### **3.1.4. Participants' Beliefs about the challenges and prospects envisaged by the media towards conflict resolution and peace-building in the case of Wolaita Zone, Ethiopia.**

Last but not least the current researcher on the other hand touched on some facts in relation to challenges and prospects envisaged by the media regarding conflict resolution and peace-building in the given study area. Under the umbrella of this fourth main question, I raised some important additional subquestions for all sixty-two participants who are mentioned above and they all clearly assured me that the media in the Wolaita zone is absolutely not independent of impartial business and political interests that can affect the fact-based, independent, transparent, accountable, and impartial reporting about the conflicts in the area, and the status of the media in the study area is also not notoriously a peace-building machine and is an administrator of a volatile and fragile behavior of conflicting parties that may fuel conflict and finally.

Also according to the research participants revealing about political leaders, media managers, and professionals' ethical use of Media to build peace and resolve conflicts in the study area was under considerable fit falls that needs improvement as they reported in their one talked words. For example one of the respondents, technically named Mesi (a pseudonym), illustrated her idea as follows:

*I have been working for about five consecutive years as a journalist in my organization. During these years I have not observed any NGE who donate and support the peace-building programs through media. The small amount of the public budget is supporting us to perform only the small pieces of news and programs in relation to conflict resolution and peacebuilding programs in our zone. Also, there are not only NGOs but also higher education colleges that graduate journalism and conflict management disciplines were not working on peace and conflict resolution via media programs.*

*For example, Training for journalists: professional and issue-based, as well as for media managers, media production of news, reports, production of specialized programs conflict resolution, etc needs budget however there were no donors who can support the issue in the area.*

*The other challenging factor that limits the quality of media performance in the area is logistics limitations. Not only this but skilled manpower, public policies, political and media managers, and other similar drawbacks were highly tied to the vision of peace undertaken by journalism in the study area. Here is what an underlined sentence is there was absolutely no proactive conflict prevention and peace-building media strategy at all in the area. (Interview transcripts, June 21/ 2022; 27, Female, and journalists)*

In relation to the aforementioned perspective the Swiss Peace Foundation (2002), stated the ability of professional media to execute a positive influence on peacebuilding by their mere existence. Because being able to provide non-partisan news and reports, and can contribute to the knowledge of mechanisms, people, and causes about politics, local issues, and conflictive issues,

At the same time they can build a well-informed and unbiased opinion, as well as can enable people to take care of and decide on their own issues of peace. On the other hand, these techniques developed media are able to contribute additionally towards peacebuilding by addressing issues concerning peace and conflict by improving the knowledge of people in peace and conflict-relevant issues such as elections, causes of conflict, inter-ethnic understanding, discrimination, truth commissions, and war crimes.

Therefore by providing incentives for changing behavior or attitudes, countering false images or propaganda from biased media, and enabling societies to deal with the past and build a common future this role of media establishes the trust of the people in the respective media. Thus, supporting and enabling the media of the study area became a hot spot to grasp the above advantages.

#### **4. DISCUSSION**

As clearly analyzed in chapter five of the above, a total of 62 participants who are from different governmental and nongovernmental organizations and associations respectably were clearly put their own concerns about the efforts of media towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding undertakings in the Wolaita Zone of Ethiopia.

For the purpose of participants' experiences reflection, the core subjects of data collected (focus group members) were purposely selected from the study area high court judges, police managing directors, public prosecutors, administrative media and communication directors, conflict resolution experts, religious fathers, famous cultural elders, zonal red cross directors, and known attorneys,' local media journalists were dully selected based on the predetermined criterion by the researcher.

To end, the local high court legally bested the power to entertain some high-level conflictual cases in the area. Thus the researcher frankly selected the representative as a valid source of factual information that can make the thesis strong enough. In the same tone, the public prosecutor as a legal body government representative accuser has experience with the criminal case handling process and the researcher still chose its part as a crucial source of information in relation to the study.

Because of the police day to day activity without any hesitation and suspension its focal body was selected and interviewed as needed by the thesis. In the same manner, the researcher also used some of the attorneys who are representing their private case customers and from these aforementioned organizations, we can infer that the researcher seriously collected the data from the majority of the criminal justice systems which were major legal conflict resolution and peacebuilding bodies in the study area.

The other groups who were used as data sources were journalists from some local broadcasting media sectors such as Wolaita TV, Fana Radio, Wogeta Radio, and Wolaita Times Social Media so as Zonal administrative media and communication department have pioneer responsibility to announce and address relevant facts of conflict resolution and peacebuilding to the people of Wolaita. Some but not least, the researcher also used some necessary study data from local religious fathers, famous cultural elders, and Red Cross directors who were domiciled near the study area.

Although the participants were chosen from different social and legal structures their goal of participation in the study was to explain and illustrate their perspectives and concepts about the impact of media on the peace process of the Wolaita Zone of Ethiopia and they did this in confirmation to the goal of the study.

During their in-depth interview, the researcher presented four main research questions to assess some efforts of media such as efforts of media best practices, efforts of media general roles, efforts of media peace mainstream nation functions, and efforts of media challenges and prospects towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the Zone. Thus these main research questions in their turn comprised some interesting sub-concerns as observed in the study. For example:

In relation to efforts of media best practices towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding, sub-questions such as experience of media towards community mobilization practice, conflict resolutions agency action, social marketing practice, and application of basic journalism principles i.e. truthfulness, accuracy, objectivity, impartiality, fairness, and public accountability during their duties were deeply interviewed.

For the second question on efforts of media roles towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities in the study area, the researcher interviewed some interesting questions such as the extent of media's bridge builder, watchdog, information provider, early warning, and peace motivator roles of media towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding activities of the study area.

Thirdly, under the question of efforts of media peace mainstream nation functions towards conflict resolution and peace-building activities, the researcher seriously interviewed the participants about the public persuasion function, entertainment function, culture transference function, and information functions of the study area.

Last but not the least, under the question of efforts of media challenges and prospects towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding, the study also assessed some facts about the impacts of conflicting parties' behavior, budget, journalist capacity, and media regulations in relation to the study. Therefore, these research themes became the researcher's pillars of the upcoming conclusion.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In my long journey, I observed multiple pros and cons related to the efforts of media toward conflict resolution and peace-building processes in my study area. During this time I have identified some orientation problems of media toward conflict resolution and peace-building activities in the study area.

That means the media owners because of their economic interests, want to sell their stories and programs to a public who will buy their newspapers or watch their programs rather than issues about conflict resolution and peacebuilding. As identified mostly in the study area the media owners and professionals decide what they think the public or some target audience wants to see and hear beyond their security issue.

Also, there was an increasing corporate control over media in the area also plays a role in controlling the types of stories that get covered and the way stories get framed and reported. That means journalists commonly follow the principle of “if it bleeds, it leads” through which the violent conflict became headline news, rather than news of cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

The other finding observed was that even in rare cases, the media in the study area mostly covers conflict, not peacebuilding. This approach to covering conflict and violence distorts reality and leads many people to think that conflict is pervasive and that peace is abnormal in the area. It is also assured that several studies have that the impact of the media on conflict is greater than the impact of the media on conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

According to Gadi Wolfsfeld (2004), in terms of the nature of a peace process and news values, the media often play a destructive role rather than attempting to play constructive peace. That means the media in the study area mainly focused on specific short actions and events, violence, crisis, or conflict, so as extremist behaviors outrageous acts, clear-cut simple opinions, images, major personalities, and two-sided conflicts.

However they abandoned and or minimum working for long-lasting processes and policies such as in ongoing peace processes, dialogue, or mediation, calm, controlled, moderate people coexistence such as those participating in a dialogue, and complex opinions or explanations, institutions, identification of root causes, a multi-sided conflicts resolution and peacebuilding undertakings in the area.

Therefore as a conclusion for those phenomena, the media in the area ought to restart its soul to keep the peaceful environment in the area. Because there is no peace, there will be no life is the message of the researcher. The second point the researcher needed to raise was assessing the media in relation to its functions and performance towards conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

As we observed from the aforementioned points of view, the media in the study area played a wide range of roles in its overall missions. Thus some of these roles are constructive while some others are destructive. More specifically, the media in the study area, as information providers and interpreters, provided the people with some important information about the issue of the study; still, it remained with additional assignments to work hard.

Because the researcher seriously recognized that the diversity among media professionals critically disturbed the analysis of how best to use the media to support conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the zone. Also Media in its watchdog role by acting as a third party likely provided feedback to the public on local problems of conflicts. However, there were some limitations in relation to bringing some hidden stories out to the public by investigating a piece of reports that can surface public problems of peace.

Although Media played its gatekeeper role to some extent, such as setting agendas for peacebuilding, issues filtering, and maintaining a balance of views, as identified by the research still there were shadowed concerns about its effectiveness. Therefore, as disclosed by this study the role of media as a policymaker, diplomatic initiator, bridge builder, and peace promoter including the aforementioned provided its parts to a small extent, and it helped to build confidence, facilitate negotiations or break resolution deadlocks to create a climate conducive to conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the study area can't be denied.

Finally, as we all viewed from the above walkways bringing about radical constructive change in a conflict is a challenge. Therefore supporting changing people's beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors requires in-depth knowledge about the conditions that enable people to make these changes. Thus the media's role in contributing to that cognitive, attitudinal, and behavioral change on a large scale is uniquely important to the conflict resolution and peace-building undertakings in the study area called the Wolaita Zone of Ethiopia.

## 6. RECOMANDATIONS

The findings in this study reflected that the efforts of the media toward conflict resolution and peacebuilding and to reinforce attitudes in society cannot be underestimated. Therefore, I have a saying about restrictions on freedom of the press and of expression that should be clearly and narrowly defined to ensure that they do not infringe on legitimate speech or go beyond the scope of harmful speech that can cause conflict. Suggested measures to prohibit the abuse of media freedom and promotion of peaceful co-existence include:

1. A review of Ethiopian media legislation, the effective performance of the media during periods of crisis requires harmonization of laws on hate speech to protect against the infringement of media freedom. As media requires collaborative efforts from governmental and nongovernmental organizations it is important to improve some media-related legislation enacted. Thus the media and government together must find ways to respond to abuses of media freedom conflict resolution and peace-building activities.
2. Another issue that the researcher urged to comment on was capacity-building activities for journalists and self-regulation initiatives in collaboration with local, regional, al and national partners. There should be a consistent dialogue between the media stakeholders to identify and rectify the weaknesses recognized as a result of the violent coverage.
3. Also the media organizations should strive to improve their weaknesses in relation to peace issues and ethics and promote effective self-regulation.
4. Although the local language and mainstream media played an important role in calming the violent situation and promoting dialogue, still there is a need to strengthen that role by supporting genuine and independent media which form a critical contribution to lasting peace in the area. .
5. Training in conflict-sensitive journalism is another issue that media practitioners need to be equipped with conflict-sensitive reporting skills. Thus the areas news media should invest in and develop a journalism practice that can cope with and address critical issues underlying conflict situations. Training and capacity building is very crucial for conflict resolution and peacebuilding professionals who use the media in harmony with their everyday undertakings. To achieve this purpose they have to know when, why, and how to use the media for the most strategic impact in lessoning to minimize the polarization among groups of conflict.



6. In the same manner, as identified by the study media professionals still have many gaps about how, why, and when to contribute their part to preventing violent conflict and building peace between conflicting rivals. Thus both media and peace professionals have their limitations and share their own interests in the dynamics of conflict.
7. So cooperation between agencies, donors, civil society, peacebuilding organizations, and media practitioners is absolutely essential to achieve peaceful and conducive life.
8. Therefore meetings, seminars, and work groups were needed models and best practices that can build shared capacity for the study issue.
9. As using media in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the study area is a new practice, everyone has to learn from the exchange of experiences from such structures. Based on a careful assessment of whether the media is likely to play a positive or negative role in achieving the goals of conflict resolution and peacebuilding requires greater insight into effective ways the media can help and harm the path toward the constructive change of conflict calls for both peacebuilding and media professionals still to have a great deal to learn on their future journey.
10. Also improving and motivating the working conditions for journalists by improving their poor remuneration and lack of safety for journalists that can hamper a free media notion should be unforgotten. Because substantial progress in strengthening the media for peacebuilding cannot be possible unless the working conditions of journalists are improved.
11. Finally, recognizing the importance of the media as a system of checks and balances, the researcher suggests that innovative funding schemes to strengthen the sector are very crucial. Because of such kinds of support, the media industries can advance and sustain their resource and technical capacity to attain their predetermined goal of the organization. Thus these indispensable capacities and initiatives of media help them to be self-reliant and breakthrough them from political and ethnic shackles so that they can play their roles as gatekeepers and agenda setters for conflict resolution and peacebuilding in the study area and are recommended to be effective media precautions.

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