

Ethiopia: *Asha* Indigenous Conflict Resolution Apparatus of the Me'en Community

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Abstract: Every community has its own indigenous institutions meant to deal with its social, political, economic and peacemaking endeavors. Focus of this article is *Asha* indigenous conflict resolution institution of the Me'en community. For the studied community, *Asha*, signifies a payment for 'blood' and exhibits ritual restitution. Ritual restitution within *Asha* is administered by ritual chiefs known as *Komoruts*. Objective of this article is exploring the *Asha* approach for conflict resolution. To realize this objective, the researcher employed qualitative research design enhanced with twelve key-informant interview and two Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Built up on such data, findings of the study revealed four conclusions. First, irrespective of the fact that *Asha* is an approach owned by Me'en communities, adjoining communities abide by it. Secondly, *Asha* is the only approach potent to solve conflicts that end up with human demise. Thirdly, notwithstanding the endeavor by local and regional governments to make *Asha* compatible with notion of human right principles, there is trivial acceptance by the study community members, especially by lowlanders. Fourthly, the research finding unpacked that *Asha* has weakness when it comes to promoting human right of the teenage girl given for reconciliation. Additionally, *Asha* also botched to respect due process of law. Generally speaking, the article concluded that *Asha* is as a doubled edged sword, vivacious and viral. On one side, *Asha* is the only approach for restoring broken social relationships and reconciling conflict cases that end up with human demise. On the other side, *Asha* is an approach that contravenes human right of the teenage girl. In glimpse of these, the researcher recommends neither deserting nor romanticizing Ethiopian indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms such as *Asha* without further research and remedial measures to make them compatible with Universal Human Right principles.

Keywords: *Asha*, conflict, conflict resolution, Me'en, indigenous conflict resolution.

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1. Introduction

All societies across the globe have both indigenous and endogenous values, resources and institutions (Murithi, 2008). Murithi, further goes to assert that the difference between them is subtle. Here, indigenous processes argued as being articulated for centuries and can thus be seen as “inherent, innate and instinctive to a society”, while endogenous processes are those, seen as “temporal process of continuously reformulating and crafting additional ways of doing things” (Murithi, 2008, p. 18). The foremost emphasis of this article is indigenous values, resources and institutions for conflict resolution, in general, and *Asha* indigenous conflict resolution, in particular. Henceforth, the principal discussion in this article will focus on *Asha*’ indigenous conflict resolution apparatus of the *Me’en* community.

As it is acknowledged by various literatures, in most parts of Africa, indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms are widely practiced. With this regard, Yakubu, who observed most African indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms, defined them as conflict resolution mechanisms “guided by the principles of consensus, collective responsibility and communal solidarity (cited in Murithi & Murphy, 2007). As part and parcel of Africa, the various Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples have their respective indigenous conflict resolution mechanisms (Tagel, 2021). Here, the well-known Conti Rossini’s’ expression of Ethiopia, as ‘museum of peoples’ can also be useful in expressing the prevailing diversity on indigenous conflict resolution within the country (Assefa, 2017). To substantiate this assertion, we may look into the *Gadaa* system of Oromos, *Shimagelle* adjudication of Amhara, *Reda*, *gogata* and *ilammo* of Kambata, *Ye tib dana*, *Shengo* and *Yejoka* of Gurage, and others (Tagel, 2021).

All these being mentioned, the focus of this article is not an extended discussion on the prevailing multiplicity of indigenous conflict resolution within Ethiopia, but it is about an indigenous conflict resolution in Southwest Ethiopia, namely *Asha*. Thus far, there are dozens of studies on indigenous conflict resolution within the region, in general, and that of *Me’en* community, in particular. For instance, Bisrat (2018), who studied the Kaffa community of the region, identified Eqqo (*Kalecha*), *Tommo*, *Shimgelena* and others. Adinew (2017), who studies the immediate neighboring of *Me’en*, named the Dizi people, recognized the *Dofie* approach. Based on Adinew’s observation, *Dofie* indigenous conflict resolution mechanism works through ritual slaughtering of sheep/goat.

Furthermore, he noted that the *Dofie* apparatus is supplemented with subsequent examination/reading of its intestine by ritually skilled clan leaders named *Geima*. Similarly, my recent work on indigenous conflict resolution among ethnic Benč Communities of the same region, revealed how the traditional or old style *Tomo* accent morality as the basis for adjudication (Tagel, 2021).

When it comes to research focused on *Me’en* community, Abbink (1988, 1992, 1997) could be cited as significant for the very research issue, given the fact that he nuancedly

studied the funeral myth of the Tishana-Me'en. Yet, none of these reserches explored the *Asha* indigenous conflict resolution mechanism of the studied community. To that end, this article endeavors to fill the prevailing knowledge gape on indigenous conflict resolution within the study community, in general, and the *Asha* indigenous conflict resolution, in particular. To do that, the following research questions were raised:

- What is the basic nature of *Asha* indigenous conflict resolution?
- Who are the beneficiaries of *Asha* indigenous conflict resolution?
- What are the merits and demerits of *Asha* indigenous conflict resolution?
- What might be done to decrease demerits of *Asha* indigenous conflict resolution?

2. Literature Review

Indigenous conflict resolution denotes to the institutions and methods that seek to resolve conflict and reestablish balance between members and groups (Lundy, Collette, & Downs, 2022). As dozens of researchers reveled, indigenous conflict resolution function excellently within communal societies who exhibit a collectivist approach to conflict and conflict resolution in which members keep each other informed on conflict situations (Barnes, 1994 cited in Walker, 2004). Walker (2004) furhter goes to assert that, in collectivist cultures, the primary purpose of resolving conflict is to bring harmony to the group. Thus, conflict is viewed holistically, not analytically or broken into parts; it is embedded in the networks of the community. When it comes to conflict resolution, collectivist cultures emphasize the restoration of relationships within the network of interconnections that defines the community, which contrary to the conventional western model.

From the perspectives of most African societies, Tafese (2016) argued that “indigenous conflict-resolution mechanisms as part of a well-structured, time-proven social system geared towards reconciliation, maintenance and improvement of social relationships” (quoted in Duri, Marongwe, & Mawere, 2019, p. 350). Moreover, in the history of indigenous communities, in general, and Africa, in particular, the indigenous institution of traditional leadership has succeeded in retaining its position and continues to play a role as guardian of the culture, customs, origins, and history of its people (Mboh, 2021). In such context, the roles of traditional authorities as custodians of the values of society of custom and tradition and as moral authorities are vitally important, lending traditional authorities social legitimacy (Marrengane, Sawyer, & Tevera, 2021). In terms of effectiveness built upon their comparative on the overall effectiveness and applicability of indigenous conflict resolution approaches to managing, resolving, and transforming conflicts, Lundy, Collette and Downs, (2022) concluded that “indigenous conflict management strategies are more effective than non-indigenous conflict management strategies in indigenous contexts” (p. 9). These being noted, in this article we will examine *Asha* indigenous conflict resolution of the Me'en community so as to

answer the aforementioned four research questions. To do that, the researcher has conducted a total of twelve qualitative key-informants' interviews with selected Me'en rituals leaders and government officials combined with two FGDS and along with critical document analysis on the very research topic.

3. Me'en Communities & their Indigenous Conflict Resolution Apparatus

The Me'en community dwells formerly within Benč-Maji Zone along with other indigenous peoples of the area, specifically Benč, Sheko, Dizi, Suri and Zilmamu on one side and with various non-indigenous Ethiopian nations, nationalities and peoples within Benč-Maji Zone (Central Statistics Authority [CSA] , 2007). In terms of administrative abode, the Me'en community mainly dwells within Menit Shasaha and Menit Gobdiaya *Woredas*. Currently, Benč-Maji Zone has devolved into Benč- Sheko and West Omo Zones, given that the Me'en community dwells within the jurisdiction of West Omo Zone, which one of the numerous zones within Southerner Nations Nationalities Peoples Regional State (SNNPRS).

In terms of ethno-history, the Me'en community are a group of about 130,000 to 140,000 agro-pastoralist (CSA,2007). According to Abbink (1988), the Me'en are located within northwest of the Lower Omo and Sharma River. In terms of naming there is variation on identifying the study community. For instance, Abbink (1988) calls the study community as Me'en, formerly they were known as the Mekan. Abbink further defined the name *Me'en* implying the word *people* or *human*. On his letter publication entitled 'The Myth of the Tishana-Me'en "Kingship" (Southern Ethiopia)', Abbink (1997) calls them as *Tishana* and *Tishana-Me'en*. Yet, outsiders call the Me'en community as Me'enit and Menit. Hitherto, the name Me'en is preferred by the studied community, as it is their self-name. In terms of residency, the study community predominantly dwell within Me'enit Golyid and Me'enit ShAsha *Woredas* of West Omo Zone, which is some 720 KM from Addis Ababa towards South-West Ethiopia. Due to the prevailing affluence indigenous knowledge that speculates inevitability of conflicts, the Me'en community has established their own indigenous and age-old institutions known as *Oneh*, *Tusha*, *Asha* and others. According to our key informants, each of these indigenous approaches have their own case and context specific procedure and purpose in solving conflict within and between Me'en community.

For example, the *Oneh* approach, is used to resolve rape cases. Ethymologically speaking for the *Me'en* community *Oneh* denotes *purification by blood*. If a married women bump into a rape incident, her husband recives justice by the *Oneh* adjudication apratus. Through *Oneh*, the raper purifiies the women he raped assisted by *Me'en* ritual chies designated for purifing such cases through lamb blood while, the *Tusha* approach is used to settle conflict issues that dearth credible eye-witness and the *Asha* apparatus is used to resolve conflict dyad(s) that end up with intended or unintended human

demise. As indicated on the introductory part of this article, the focus of this study is unpacking *Asha's* indigenous conflict resolution apparatus of the Me'en community.

4. The Anatomy of *Asha* Indigenous Conflict Resolution

If a man kills a man, he should be brought to justice by passing him over to the government ... if the government cannot catch the killer to punish him by law, [then] the following will apply ... the family of the killer should give 30 cattle and a girl to the family of the dead man.

The above quotation is a speech made by the Suri representative on UN OCHA Pastoralist Communication funded Pastoralist Peace Gathering (2007, p. 21). Such sort of indigenous conflict resolution apparatus is used by Suri, Hamar and the Me'en, most importantly. As it is clearly comprehended, the representative from Suri insists that, if the justice system by the government fails, then customary justice has to be made and the proposed communal conflict resolution has two sorts of restitutions. These are restitution paid in the form of cattle and restitution paid in the form of a girl. The proposed conflict resolution resembles the *Asha* apparatus of the Me'en community. The question is what does *Asha* mean? How does it work? What are its components? Etymologically *Asha* refers to a 'blood payment'. The FGD discussants and ritual leaders assert that "if a person kills someone, then he/she has to pay *Asha* to prevent retaliation. There are different types of *Asha* or 'blood payments'. The most commonly known *Asha* are *dog Asha*, *weapon Asha* and *family Asha*. Unpacking these bunch of 'blood payments', key informants elucidated the *dog Asha* in the following manner:

... if your dog attacks someone else and then the bitten person dies due to the incident then you, as the owner of the dog, will be liable to pay Asha for the victims' family/clan. Otherwise, there will be retaliatory killing from the victim's family/clan on you or your family/clan/group.

The same rule applies for other incidents as well. Of these of *Asha* typologies, this section will focus on *Asha* remunerated for inter clan/group/ethnic conflict dyad with human death. According to key informants, for the Me'en communities located both within highland and lowland, *Asha* reconciles hostile groups through restorative compensation of cattle and a teenager girl. For the studied community, any interpersonal conflict with human fatality transforms into inter-clan conflict. That being the case, *Asha* is seen not as an approach meant to solve interpersonal conflicts, rather, it is seen as an approach meant to transform a conflictual group relation into a cordial one. Whatever the causes within any conflict dyad, if it ends up with human fatality, then *Asha* has to be paid so as to curtail retaliatory killing to restore social cohesion, but also for his family/clan or else extensive retaliatory killing will follow. For the Me'en community, interpersonal conflict, if it causes human causality then, swiftly, the conflict will transform into an

intergroup conflict. One of my key informant assets that:

... in our community, if you kill someone who is different for your clan and if you fail to resolve the incident through Asha, then the feud will be twofold on one side and the conflict transform from interpersonal into inter-clan on the other ... for example in terms of retaliation, if the diseased is a teenager, the retaliation will not be on another teenager, as a replacement it will be on reputed village /clan chief. Nonetheless, if Asha is rewarded or at least initiated, it can restore peace.

Within the studied community, conflict incidents that end up with human death must be resolved through *Asha* on one side and formal institutions on other. Irrespective formal state institutions' capacity on investigating, persecuting and pardoning wrongdoer, *Asha* is nonnegotiable. In other words, if formal institutions became capable on the prosecution of the wrong doer, then he/she will not be exempt from *Asha's* adjudication, hence the wrong doer will be punished both by the state as well as the *Asha*. In this regard, *Asha* is resemblant with the way the Gypsies use their traditional conflict resolution system and other traditional communities in the world (Sandu, 2018). In confirming this, one of key informant asserted that:

... in our [Me'en] community, if you kill someone else from a clan, which is different from yours and as perpetrator you were sent to custody by government for your offense, you will pay at least the initial Asha, payment while being in detention so as to make peace for your clan in general and family in particular ...

Which intern fits with what, Ife (2007), calls 'peace from above and peace from below'. Ife argues that peace achieved only from above will only be a partial peace that can leave many conflicts and tensions unresolved. True peace can only be achieved if peace from below can be realized along with peace from above. When it comes to the Me'en community, peace has to be served at the local level through indigenous institution of *Asha* and at official level through formal courts. That is why a perpetrator, even arrested by the government, is responsible to pay at list the initial *Asha* payment, which is one cattle to prevent strife's against his family/clan. If the killer pledged such culturally induced *Asha* commencement, he/she will finalize it after his/her release from custody.

Overall, within the studied community, following a conflict dyad that end up with de-
cease, the offender discharges two cases and context specific culturally built responsibilities. These are:

- I. The first task is sending early warning message for his family/clan/group to alert them for the forthcoming retaliatory measure from the victims' family/clan/group, and
- II. The second task is, supplementary with the first, disclosing the victims' identity by pronouncing the victims' family/clan/group.

According to my key informants, in the Me'en community, if interpersonal conflict end-up with human death, then it will transform into inter-group/clan conflict. Thus, following such incidents, the offender not only hides for himself/herself, but also warns his family/clan/ to evacuate from their accustomed abode. The warning is accompanied by meddling of neutral clan ritual leaders, known as *Komoruts* for adjudicating the situation through *Asha*. According to Abbink (1992), the *Komoruts* are:

ritual chiefs without coercive powers, who were acting as guardians of the land and as rain-mediators with Turna [Tuma], the Sky-God, who is seen as responsible for the fertility of land, livestock and people. The Komoruts were active in blessing the land, asking for rain in drought periods and as mediators in inter-lineage murder cases and other conflicts (p. 224).

In line with the first duty of informing, the perpetrator is also expected to disclose the victim's identity in terms of family/clan for two purposes. The first and foremost, it is meant to inform potential sources of threat for his/her family/clan/group due to the incident. Secondly, disclosing the victims' identity is helpful for conflict prevention intrusion of neutral family/clan party. The logic is that following a conflict incident that end up with human fatality, within the study community, everyone from the victims' clan will be the enemy of the perpetrator's clan, regardless of age, gender, social and cultural status. Above all, anyone from the perpetrators' clan will be prey for the victim's' family, clan/group on the spot he/she was found, until justice is served via *Asha* (Andualme, 2012). Given that, the special neutral third-party chief, in its turn, will approach the victims' clan by acknowledging the guilty committed by perpetrators' clan and by rendering culturally accustomed dialogue for *Asha* commencement. All in all, for *Asha* adjudication instigation case and context, the neutral third party will command the victims' clan by the axiom "the offending clan has acknowledged their guilty hence please forget your revenge and let us resolve this issue through *Asha*".

Following such deliberation, neutral third party elders, together with third party ritual chiefs chosen by the victim's clan, facilitate the ritual burial of the deceased. Here, it is vital to realize that, within the study community, burial of a deceased person on conflict incident will not be commenced until the initial *Asha* payment is made or retribution action was taken. Once *Asha* initiation restitution of a single cattle is given due to the intrusion neutral third party chief's, then *Asha* payment will be accomplished and the burial will be done by given cattle. To that end, the third party ritual will bring one cattle for this purpose from the perpetrators' clan and such move commence the conflict resolution process. Following the ritual funeral ceremony, natural elders from both sides will decide the date, time and venue for the final *Asha* reconciliation which will be accompanied by the arrival of stakeholders. These are the offending clan, the victim clan, the teenager girl and neutral parties.

Generally speaking, built upon the information from key informants and FGD, the *Asha* approach for conflict resolution within Me'en community has the following five steps:

- I. The first step for *Asha* among the studied community is a conflict incident with human death, be it intentional or unintentional.
- II. The second step is early warning information dissemination from the killer to his family/clan.
- III. The third step is the involvement of third party ritual *Komorut*. The *Komorut* has to be from a neutral family/clan and his first task is conflict containment by becoming the channel of communication between the two families and rendering *Asha* commencement, which is one cattle.
- IV. The fourth step has two activities; these are the burial ceremony through fresh leather /skin of the ritually slaughtered cattle and settling *Asha's* due date, which in most case lasts from 20 to 30 days.
- V. The last step is *Asha's* payment phase. At this stage, the *Komorut* facilitates the entire ceremony for *Asha* and a teenage girl will be given.

Following this steps, starting from the second step, the *Asha* approach gears towards effective conflict containment, conflict management, conflict resolution and transformation within the study community.

5. Merits of *Asha* indigenous conflict Resolution

Following any conflict dyad that end up with human decease, the conflict transforms into inter-family/clan conflict. One key informant narrates the situation the following manner:

... in a conflict context that end up with intended or unintended human death, everybody from the killer family/clan will be hunted until justice is served through Asha. Moreover, the victim's clan not only hunt down members of the killer family/clan, but also possessions and wealth's belonging to the killer family/clan. In such situation, belonging to the killer family/clan will be destroyed, tents will be turned into ashes via fire, cattles will be slaughter if not they will be looted so it is chaos ...

As the above quotation can entail, the retaliatory attack is harsh. Furthermore, key informants elucidated that following such incidents and the subsequent hostility, members the victim's and killer's family/clan, will not trade together; will not share the same market and will not share the same road and so on. In such context, *Asha* gears towards healing and reconciling the conflicting parties through restorative compensation. According to FGD participants,

Restorative compensation of seven cattle, each having its own meaning along with a teenage girl or unmarried women. The cultural ramification behind this

teenage girl given for Asha connotes' is the resurrection of the deceased due to the skirmish. For Me'en community, a teenage girl given for Asha is believed to grow up and become adult and subsequently give a birth and replace the deceased. Owing to such culturally defined consequential value of the teenage women, the victims' clan receive here with Ululation. Moreover, the victim's clan will contribute a sheep for sacrifice, signifying the union of the two clans.

As indicated previously, the first cattle is given for funeral purpose while the rest are meant for reconciliation. Key informants clarified that the teenage girl given as *Asha* signify the resurrection of the deceased. Hence, family's/clan members of the deceased accept her through *ululation*. In short, she is the one that transform the conflict situation into a cordial one.

6. Demerits of *Asha* indigenous conflict Resolution

Indigenous conflict resolution, in general, and indigenous conflict resolution in African are not spared from criticism. They have often been criticized for being arbitrary and disproportionate in passing sanctions. It is also argued that customary institutions that represent dominant interests may pass judgments that are against the interests of vulnerable groups like women, children and minorities (Tsegai & Rammala, 2018). In light of this observation, *Asha* has its shortcomings. To understand the drawback, let us see the speech forwarded by Meseret Kala, a Humar Student (The UN OCHA Pastoralist Communication, 2007, p. 21):

... I am a high school student ... as I am a daughter of a pastoralist. I do not want a girl to be given as a replacement for a dead person. All girls from pastoralist communities are interested in learning and changing the life of our communities ... It makes me sad to hear the idea of giving a girl to replace someone who is dead. I beg you once again to send your girl to school, thus they can change their life as well as changing their country ...

The speech of Meseret Kala on the Peace gathering at South Omo Pastoralist Gathering, indicated the girl's reaction on being given for *Asha*. Regardless of this pursuit and aspiration, if there is conflict incident within agro pastoralists of the extreme southwestern fringe of Ethiopia in general and Me'en community in particular, a teenage girl is being given for victim's family /clan so as to prevent retaliation on one side and restore the broken social peace on the other. Yet as rightly argued by Meseret Kala this will loss her right to education, her right with who to make marriage and when to get marriage.

Furthermore, Andualme (2012), who studied the Me'en community ethnography for his master's thesis, proclaims that:

In the past ... if the teenager girl given for Asha and if she is sort of toddler, the members of the victims' clan apply corporal punishment; they even beat here

in the name of the deceased family member. Moreover, males from the victims' clan in some circumstances' also try to rape her. However, nowadays there is no such violation of human right of the girl.

Contrary to Andualme's observation, one FGD participant recalls a recent epoch human right violation on a teenage girl given through *Asha*:

... a teenage girl given for Asha is not seen as human rather as an enemy. In some cases, she might be stabbed with knife or raped ... for example when I saw, a 45 years old adult, who raped a 7 years old girl given for Asha. And we sued him and the formal justice system sentenced him for 14-year custody.

Furthermore, the key-informant also complain the Andualme's observation of recent time improvement for a teenage girls given for *Asha* as false. The key informant challenges that:

... a teenage girl compensated for Asha, will be a lifetime asset of the victims' family/clan. Moreover, as a norm, she will make marriage only from the victims' family /clan and within such marriage she has no say. With this regard, a teenage girl given for Asha will lose her marital rights cherished within international women right documents and that of 'Federal Democratic republic of Ethiopia (FDERE)' Constitution, especially those stated on Article 34(2).

According to Article 34(2) of the FDERE constitution, *Asha* is injustice due to the fact that *Asha* approach has contradictory norm with the constitution. In simple terms, the constitution stipulates that, "marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses". Yet, a teenage girl given for *Asha* enter into the marriage not because of her free and full consent, rather due to the conflict incident and the subsequent cultural norm. According to FGD participants, these culpabilities of *Asha* forced the local, zonal and regional government to label *Asha* as one among top 142 Harmful traditional practices.

7. What could be done to make *Asha* compatible with Human rights

The *Asha* approach for conflict resolution is a quite interesting restorative justice mechanism in Africa. As we have seen it from the above discussion, *Asha* restores broken relationship between conflicting parties and the communities. Notwithstanding this, the *Asha* approach is criticized for failing to respect the human right of the teenage girl. In glimpse of this shortfalls, the regional government labeled it as one the prevailing 142 harmful traditional practices within SNNPR. In line with this, one key informant added that:

Given the fact that there is a serious of human right violation on the teenage girl given for Asha, the government has labeled it as a harmful traditional practice.

Similarly, we [Me'en community] noted the suffering on the teenage girl given for *Asha* and labeled it as harmful.

These being the case, the local government, tried to modify the *Asha* approach by replacing the teenage girl with additional cattle's. With this regard one FGD discussant elucidated that:

These days, we [the Me'en community] have modified Asha. We modified it by substituting the teenage girl with additional seven cattle. We raised the total number of cattle's give for Asha into fourteen. Plus, recently, the community has made a discussion and agreed that fourteen cattle's for Asha restitution to be the right decision.

Yet, some FGD participants noted that this is functional only on highland areas of the study community, while the lowlanders didn't abide by it due to the fact that they are transhumant pastoralists. In addition to violation of the human right of the teenage girl given for *Asha*, the FGD noted the need for further community wide discussion on human right issue of the condemned. They noted that he/she is liable to double punishment. One is the peace making from below through *Asha* and the other through state institution and courts, which, in turn, is contrary prohibition of double jeopardy stated on Article 24 the Constitution. All these binges considered further public discussion focused on promoting the right of the teenage girl and that of the convicted person right to prohibition on double jeopardy is need. In addition to that, the *Asha* approach requires further policy oriented research so that it can be used in critical circumstances, just like *gacaca* and *Ubuntu*.

Concluding Remarks

The *Asha* approach for conflict resolution is extensively employed by the Me'en community, also known as the Menit, Mekan and Tishana. Seldomly their neighbors (Suri and Hammer) also use it. The Me'en are a numerically minority agro-pastoralists located within southwestern fringe of Ethiopia. The Me'en has numerous indigenous conflict resolution approaches, nevertheless, the most widely accustomed indigenous approaches for conflict resolution are *Oneh*, *Tusha* and *Asha*. Each one of these approaches has its own cultural defined issues. For example, the *Oneh* approach is meant to solve rape cases. When it comes to *Tusha*, it is an approach preordained to manage conflict incident that lack eye witness while *Asha* is an approach meant for solving conflict dyads that end up with human decease.

In Me'en language, *Asha* signifies a payment for blood. To accomplish such a thing, the *Asha* approach requires culturally predetermined seven cattle's and a teenage girl. In terms of effectiveness, *Asha* is an effective approach for conflict containment, conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation. Hitherto, it has drawbacks with respect to issues of human rights, in general, and women's human right, in par-

ticular. In other words, the teenage girl given for *Asha* adjudication loses her right to education, marriage and movement. Likewise, occasionally, she encounters enduring physical violence, including rape. These demerits of *Asha* forced the regional government to label it as a harmful traditional practice rather than a favorable indigenous conflict resolution. The *Asha* approach for conflict resolution is not only contrary to the human right of the teenage girl alone, but also the perpetrator who committed the killing, be it deliberate or accidental, as he will be punished both by state institution, on one side, and inside the cultural institution of *Asha*. Once again, these makes *Asha* contrary to contemporary notion of human rights in general and the principle of prohibition of double jeopardy. In both contexts, *Asha* requires modification to fit with contemporary notion of human rights, hitherto the existing experience shows an impasse.

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