

FACTORS FOR MISUSE OF SMALL ARMS AND ITS IMPACT IN EASTERN GOJJAM ZONE OF AMHARA REGIONAL STATE, ETHIOPIA

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Abstract

Misuse of small arms is one of the serious human security and development challenges for communities in the world whether in the time of peace or conflict/war. The central objective of the study is to assess the reasons misuse of small arms its impact in the study area. The study is basically qualitative case study -using both primary and secondary sources of data. The sampling technique used is non-random sampling technique which includes convenience, snowball and purposive sampling. Accordingly, the data were collected through in-depth interview with key informants and informants as well as illegal brokers, and focus group discussion organized from elders. Document analysis was also used as a source of data. According to the findings of the study, the major reasons for misuses of small arms are: cultural (pride, revenge and emotional music and poetry), easy availability of small arms, alcohol and lack of skills to manage guns. As a result, misuse of small arms in the study area brings socio-economic, cultural and psychological impact in the community. In addition, the findings show that misuse of small arms in the study area is not well regulated. Therefore, adoption, sensitization and implementation of law as well as continuous awareness raising and education to bring attitude change towards of small arms and some harmful cultures is required to monitor small arms problem in the study area.

Key Words: Regulation, Small Arms, Light Weapons, Culture, Misuse

Introduction

The possession and misuse of small arms and light weapons is a worldwide, progressively complex and multifaceted problem (Quilop, 2007). Thus, misuse of small arms is adjudged as the most significant security challenge to individuals, societies, and states worldwide, fuelling civil wars, organized criminal violence and insurgency posing great obstacles to sustainable security and development (Malam, 2014). Civilians are the principal victims of gun violence, with an estimated 200,000- 270,000 people losing their lives to gun homicide or suicide in countries 'at peace' each year (Lumpe, 2005). Regarding the small arms problem, Kofi Anan (2000) stated as follows;

The death toll from small arms dwarfs that of all other weapons systems and in most years greatly exceeds the toll of the atomic bombs that devastated Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In terms of the carnage they cause, small arms, indeed, could well be described as "weapons of mass destruction" ... Small arms proliferation is not merely a security issue; it is also an issue of human rights and of development (Anan, 2000 :52).

Small arms afflict countries in conflict and those in peace (African Council of Religious Leaders Guide, 2014). So, there are few places left in the world where people can live unhindered by the dangers posed by armed violence (Garcia, 2004). Since small arms are simple to use, durable, and easy to conceal they are especially prone to misuse and their misuse directly and indirectly affect hundreds of thousands of people and severely undermines sustainable development around the world (Stohl and Hogendoorn, 2010). Small arms have a disproportionate, far-reaching and long-lasting impact that extends well past their immediate use in conflict.

However, proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) has in recent years become recognized as a principal element of ongoing regional instability in various parts of the world (Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan for South East Europe, 2001). Thus, As a result, since the mid-1990s, a myriad of national, regional and international legally and politically binding documents have been designed to set standards and norms to deal with the problems associated with the spread of small arms. But, the scope and implementation of these instruments varies tremendously (Stohl and Hogendoorn, 2010).

Now, many countries have legislation designed to control the trade and possession of small arms despite there are also states which have no still now. What differs is the ability of governments to enforce these laws (Killicoat, 2006). But, states especially most African governments have failed in fighting the proliferation of small arms.

So, despite various international and regional frameworks some of which are legally binding set agendas, call for or require concrete actions, and encourage best practices in this area and faced implementation challenges as political will, capacity and training funding and equipment (Small Arms Survey, 2013). The absence of baseline information also frustrates attempts to evaluate small arms controls. Here, illegal arms traders are significant to the erosion of small arms control by virtue of their ongoing role in fuelling the widespread availability of small arms, particularly in those areas in which armed violence occurs (Rogers, 2009).

In short, small arms are in a real sense weapons of “mass destruction”, and the scale and costs of small arms proliferation are staggering (Stability Pact Regional Implementation Plan for South East Europe, 2001). Therefore, the issue of small arms is a complex and multifaceted phenomenon touching on all levels of society and efforts to address the small arms problem require comprehensive strategies involving governments and the civil society at national and international levels (Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA) Workshop Report, 2006).

According to Stohl and Hogendoorn (2010), Horn of Africa is characterized by proliferation of small arms, particularly Ethiopia, Somalia, Sudan, and Uganda, and all of these countries have seen long periods of unrest and internal armed conflict. Thus, Ethiopia and other Horn states ratified Nairobi Protocol for Prevention, Control and Reduction of Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region and the Horn of Africa , which compels signatories to dispose of confiscated and unlicensed small arms and light weapons (SALWs) (Arms Management Programme (AMP), 2008).

In Ethiopia and across the Horn of Africa, small arms have been used to kill thousands of people in conflict, cattle rustling and criminal activities. Thousands more are injured, terrorized or are displaced making them Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) or refugees (Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA) Workshop Report, 2006).

As a result, Ethiopia had taken various measures to control small arms and light weapons proliferation in many parts of the country. According to the Ethiopian Police, between 2003 and 2004, there were 9,531 arrests and prosecutions for illegal arms transfers and possession. In addition, Ethiopia destroyed more than 11, 700 small arms, 3 000 hand grenades and 170 000 rounds of assorted types of ammunition in 2006 and 2007 (Muggah and Bennett, 2009). These arms and ammunition had either been confiscated by the police or had been voluntarily surrendered in Arms Management Programme (AMP), 2008). Despite these and other efforts employed, crime statistics show that small arms are the preferred instruments of violence in robberies, homicide and incomplete or inchoate offences in many parts of the Country.

East Gojjam Zone, which is located in the Amhara regional state, is one part of Ethiopia by which misuse of small arms is going to be serious problem. It is often assumed that there is a relationship between small arms proliferation, their misuse, and levels of armed criminality. That means, the proliferation SALW is said to be partly responsible for the rise in criminal acts (Mogire, 2004). In confirm with this argument the area has been characterized by different criminal activities in relation to small arms. As a result, many people have been killed, injured and displaced in every year. For instance, according to the zone police office, more than 60 peoples were killed and 9 injured in 2007. In average between 40- 60 peoples have been killed every year. This does not include peoples that killed in relation to other crimes. In addition, many people have also been injured and displaced from their community to other parts of Ethiopia.

However, regardless of the magnitude of the consequences of SALW in the country, significant researches were not conducted that could explore the basic reasons for misuse of small arms in detail and propose policy level solutions. Mekkonen (2011) conducted a research titled ‘the challenges in the governance of small arms circulation and its effect on the security of Addis Ababa’. In addition, Molla (2013) assessed the management and controlling system of SALW (focusing on registration and licensing of small arms) of Amhara Regional State. Here, researchers did not give emphasis for the reason why people misuse small arms and its impact. Moreover, despite the magnitude of

small arms problem in East Gojjam Zone, no research was conducted in the study area. Hence, the purpose of this paper is to fill the gap by investigating why people misuse small arms and its impact in East Gojjam Zone.

Methodology

The researcher employed a qualitative research approach with case study research design. According to Hancock (2002), qualitative research is best to express social phenomenon. It is effective in obtaining culturally specific information about the values, opinions, behaviors, and social contexts of particular population. That is to say, it aims to help us to understand the world in which we live and why things are the way they are. It is concerned with the social aspects of our world and seeks to answer questions about: Why people behave the way they do, how opinions and attitudes are formed, how people are affected by the events that go on around them, how and why cultures have developed in the way they have and the differences between social groups (Hancock 2002). Here, semi quantitative method is also used to analyze numerical data which is found from documents.

Bhattacharjee (2012) stated that case research is an in-depth investigation of a problem in one or more real-life settings (case sites) over a period of time. Data may be collected using a combination of interviews, personal observations, and internal or external documents. Thus, more or less descriptive case study research is used with the supplement of explanatory method to conduct the study.

The researcher has employed non-probability sampling technique which includes purposeful, convenience and Snowball sampling methods to select samples. The researcher purposefully selected key informants from the Zone Militia Office (two), Zone Police Office (three), Debre Markos Police office (one), Zonal High court (two) and Debre Markos University school of Law (two). Totally, 10 key informants were participated in the study. The researcher also selected Seven Woredas (EnebeSarMider, GonchaSisoEnese, ShebelBerenta, DebayTilategen, BasoLiben, Gozamen and Bibugn) and one administrative city (Debre Markos) which are assumed to face more SALW problem in the Zone. This is because purposeful sampling method is useful if a researcher wants to study a small subset of a larger population in which many members of the subset are easily identified but the enumeration of all is nearly impossible, and expected to provide reliable and sufficient evidence for the study (Babbie, 1990).

Civilians selected for interview with convenience method from some purposefully selected Woredas. As a result, 3 civilians from each woreda and from Debre Markos City, totally 24 informants were selected through convenience technique. This is because convenience sampling helps to include participants who are readily available and agree to participate in a study and convenience sampling is often called accidental sampling (Nealy and Sue, 1999). It is difficult to use other techniques of non-probability sampling such as purposeful sampling to select civilians since the researcher is not well aware about who could give sufficient and reliable data. In addition, since the issue is somewhat sensitive in the study area mostly civilians were not willing to give data. So, the researcher used convenience sampling technique to select participants who are volunteer and convenient to the researcher.

The researcher has selected 3 illegal brokers by using snow ball sampling technique which is very important to get members of a population that cannot be located easily by other methods. This is because snowballing is sometimes the best way to locate participants with certain attributes or characteristics necessary in a study. Snowball samples are particularly popular among researchers interested in studying various classes of deviance, sensitive topics, or difficult to reach populations (Pearson, 2010). The basic strategy of snowballing involves: first identifying several people with relevant characteristics and interviewing them or having them answer a questionnaire. These subjects are then asked for the names of other people who possess the same attributes as they do (Berg, 2001).

The researcher has used both primary and secondary sources. To collect primary data key and informant interview, Focus Group Discussion and document analysis were employed. Books, journals, articles, reports and other sources are also used to collect secondary data. The interview method of data collection instrument involves oral stimuli and response. So, semi-structured interview method is used. This is because; semi- structured interview gives a chance for both the researcher and respondents to freely discuss the issue without restriction. Hence, 10 key informants and 27 informants were participated in the study.

Six community elders from Debre Markos City were selected for Focus Group Discussion for two main reasons. First, the elders can discuss and describe aspects of their attitudes, beliefs and culture of using small arms in the study site. Second, as Debre Markos a center of the Zone, to select elders in Debre Markos helped to get elders who can fairly know the problems of small arms in the study Woredas.

In addition, secondary data has been collected from books, articles, Journals, reports, thesis papers. Militia and police office reports and cases presented to East Gojjam High Court were also assessed.

Once the data was collected, it was analyzed using content based analysis. This include a descriptive approach of data presentation, categorization, description and triangulation methods of interpret data qualitatively.

Study Site

Gojjam originally goazzam, was a kingdom with its capital city, Debre Markos, surrounded by Abay River. The name Gojjam was given to the inhabitants due to their resistance in accepting the doctrine of the Alexandrian Church in the past, keeping their own version of the ancient testament (Abebaw, 2002).

East Gojjam Zone is one of the Administrative Zones in the Amhara Regional State. The area is boarded with South Wollo, Wollega, West Gojjam and South Gonder. East Gojjam Zone Communication Office sated the Zone consists of 16 woredas and four administrative cities (Debre Markos, Mota, Bichena and Dejen). Here, Debre Markos is the capital city of the zone. The names of Woredas are: 2 Eju Enese, Goncha SisoEnese, Enebse Sar Mider, Enarge Enawga, Enemy, Shebel Berenta, Debay Tilategen, DejenZuria, Awabel, Aneded, Baso Liben, Gozamen, Senan, Bibugn, Machakel and Debre Elyas.

According to the 2007 Census conducted by the Central Statistical Agency of Ethiopia (CSA), this Zone has a total population of 2, 153, 937 of whom 1,066,716 are men and 1,087,221 women; with an area of 14,004.47 square kilometers. East Gojjam has a population density of 153.80 per kilometer. A total of 506,520 households were counted in this Zone, which results in an average of 4.25 persons to a household, and 492,486 housing units. The largest ethnic group reported in East Gojjam was the Amhara (99.82%); all other ethnic groups made up 0.12% of the population. Amharic is spoken as a first language by 99.81%; the remaining 0.19% spoke all other primary languages reported. 97.42% of the population said they practiced Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, and 2.49% are Muslim.

Results

Reasons for misuse of Small Arms

Culture of pride

Therefore, the issue of pride/respect is one aspect of culture of the people for both possession and misuse of small arms in the study area. That means, people are interested to carry guns for pride but they also use guns in wrong and unnecessary conditions. As literatures indicate small arms are subject to misuse. Not only in times of war but, in 'peace time', the presence and availability of arms often intensifies crime and violence (Amnesty international Oxfam international report, 2003).

Culture of Revenge

According to Kiflemariam (2001), something that we might call a culture of vendetta or a warrior culture is quite noticeable in the highlands of Ethiopia, for example, when a person is killed, revenge as we would call it, or justice as they understand it, must be carried out by the victim's family, often before the burial ceremony takes place. One FGD participant of the study area stated about the relation between revenge and possession & misuse of small arms in the following way;

Revenge is a serious culture and acceptable by the members of the community. If one family's member killed another member of a family, the response of the victim family is already known. Whatever the place, the revenge action will be taken. There may be even police, without fear

and hesitation the revenge can be taken. Even in the presence of police revenge can be taken without fear and hesitation. I remember when I was in Enebse Sar Mider Woreda, one Family member killed the husband of another Family's mother. At that time there is no anybody who is able to revenge the action. But, she was a pregnant while her husband killed. So, fortunately, the chilled born was male. The children grow up and arranged preconditions to take revenge. As a result, when he was age of 26, he killed his father's killer.

Furthermore, an informant from Baso Liben Woreda said there are families that had killed many people from each other's family. What he remember is that from two families six people were killed (three people each family). When Family 'A' killed, Family 'B' also kills in response. This has been continued until now, and he feared that it could be continuing like this in the future. Surprisingly, what the researcher surprised of is that, when the community elders tried to negotiate and resolve the conflict between the killer and the victim family, the first precondition is forcing the killer to leave his residence area for a time being.

Furthermore, based on the cases reviewed from Zone High Court from 60 peoples killed in 2007 about 18 were in relation to revenge. Therefore, culture of revenge is one of the major aspect of cultural reason for the possession as well as misuse of small arms in the study area. That means, since there is a culture of revenge people want to have small arms. On the other hand, people also misuse their guns in unnecessary condition for revenge purpose.

Emotional music and Poetry

Emotional Music and Poetry are other cultural factors for misuse of small arms in the study area. Music is a widely available form of media with the ability to influence attitudes and manipulate emotions (Karon, 2013). Despite they have their own advantage and function of refreshment and expression of the culture of the area but some of them initiate and motivate people for aggressive actions. For instance, according to one informant from Debre Markos City some emotional music and poetry in the study area have a meaning about taking immediate and serious action if somebody gets into quarrel with one's own wife or girlfriend. In general, some music implies one can bring justice with forceful means instead of legal means.

In addition, one respondent from Shebel Berenta woreda expressed the role of music and poetry for possession and misuse of small arms as follows;

For me music is good and important in the communities' daily life. It used to refresh our minds and expresses our culture. The people have a great love and connection for music. However, the traditional music sometimes instigates illegal actions and unnecessary decisions. For example, once upon a time many people were listening traditional music in a traditional lodge in our town during a market day. The music was a mixture of 'qarrarto' (war chants) & 'fukkara' (heroic recitals)¹. Unfortunately, there were two individuals who have disputes before. So, initiated by the music, 'fukera' and 'qarrarto' they heard, one of the individuals shot and goes out with his gun.

Some poem narrates how an individual kills a number of people using gun and he is alive without any problem. Thus, from this one infer that understand that the some contents a poem may initiate people for further actions such as revenge, insult and so on.

Gete (2001) stated when the people performed 'qarrarto' (war chants) and 'fukkara' (heroic or patriotic recitals) recitals, they accompanied this with their favorite stick, or gun, so as to display their "manhood." Indeed, performers of 'qarrarto' and 'fukkara' appear aggressive and war-like and are full of praise for the glorious deeds of the past.

¹**Qarrarto&Fukkara:** War Songs and Heroic Recitals which are Expressions of Praise Poetry.

These genres are very much respected by the people. For instance, one informant from Goncha Siso Enese woreda expressed as follows;

Qarrarto can be an instrument to express ones gratitude and respect for a certain person, community, family or country. However, at the same time it can also be a mechanism to show low respect or attitude towards a certain person, community, family or country.

Furthermore the informant said that if somebody becomes silent while he is insulted, he will also become silent when he is hit. This also implies that anybody who tries to be peacefully resolve conflicts without taking force, that person becomes subject to bullying and insult. As a result of fearing of insult by other peoples he may get into violent action. According to one informant from Bibugn Woreda, most qarrartos begin with a word **ገዳጅ** (meaning killer). The informant further stated some 'qarrartos' has a message that an enemy can stay without a problem until one took effective action while he gets an opportunity to kill. However, the action of killing is an inevitable. The consequence also touches many people. In other words, whatever the time could be long enough but the response is violent, and the consequence touches many people. Moreover, regarding how 'qarrarto' and 'fukkara' instigate violent conflict, one informant from Enebse Sar MiderWoreda also described as follows;

One day we were celebrating a wedding ceremony in our village. Every one drank alcohol and performing music, qararto and fukkara holding with guns. While people were performing fukkara they became emotional and aggressive. Then after, one individual insulted the person who is performing fukkara emotionally. Soon after the one who performing fukkara shot to the individual who insult him. The situation changed to inter-personal violence. As a result, the wedding ceremony changed into funeral ceremony.

In addition, during fukkara careless people misuse small arms because of careless management. For example, the zone militia office key informant stated the following statement about the case presented above;

One of the challenges to regulate small arms in our zone is misuse of guns during chanting of fukkara in various ceremonies. These ceremonies include, wedding and funeral ceremonies. Performing fukkera with guns is very common culture in our zone. While people chanting fukkera they become emotional and are not able to manage their guns properly. So, unfortunately the gun shots one or more participants of the wedding ceremony. In addition, during funeral ceremonies people also misuse small arms to express their mourn. At this time, the bullet may kill individual from the participants of funeral ceremony.

Therefore, the culture of the community in the study area encourages people to hold Guns. In other words, most traditional music encourages peoples to possess small arms, especially when people perform qarrarto and fukkara. As a result, in East Gojjam Zone holding guns during cultural holidays/ ceremonies like wedding has caused misuse of small arms. Because, during the ceremonies people became emotional and unable to manage guns while they perform qararto and fukkara.

Alcohol

In addition to the above cultural reasons **alcohol** is one motivating factor for misuse of small arms in the study area. The presence of alcohol might cause the individual to become violent when they otherwise would not do so (Leonard, 2005). In fact, alcohol is not a cause for possession of small arms. In the study area, there is a strong link between alcohol and violent crime. According to the informants, in East Gojjam Zone, the consumption of traditional alcohol such as **tela** (local beer) and **areki** (traditional /local wuski) is common and high, especially during a market. During a market day people killed each other initiated by alcohol. Moreover, high consumption of alcohol is one of the fertile conditions for misuse of small arms. One key informant in Debre Markos city stated the role of alcohol for misuse of small arms as follows;

Alcohol is one major factor for misuse of guns in our zone. The peoples' consumption of alcohol is very high. People drink alcohol during traditional ceremonies and especially market days. Because of drinking much amount of alcohol people misuse their arms when they return back to home. When they drank alcohol they will memorize past disputes/conflicts and act aggressively

with the people in relation with. For instance, if a person is in conflict with another individual for different reasons (may be land related conflict, insult, etc) and met with that individual after he drank alcohol, he might shot at him. So, for me alcohol is one major stimulator to commit crime in this zone.

In addition, one interviewee from Gozzamen Woreda explained the role of alcohol for misuse of small arms as follows;

I am sorry; peoples killed each other initiated by alcohol. For instance, one day in our woreda town, I, and my friends and other individuals were drinking alcohol which was 'areki' (local wuskhi) in a small traditional Bar. Behind I and my friend there were three individuals. From the three individuals one of them carried a gun. They drank too much alcohol and began to speak loud. One of the three individuals speak to the person who carry a gun as, "I think the government made a mistake to give a license for your gun. I am sure you did not manage well this gun". Then, the person who carries a gun replied, "How do you say like this? If it is necessary I will show you". Gradually, the situation changed in to inter-personal violence. At the end, the person with gunshot on a person who quarreled with him uses one bullet on the person who gets into a quarrel.

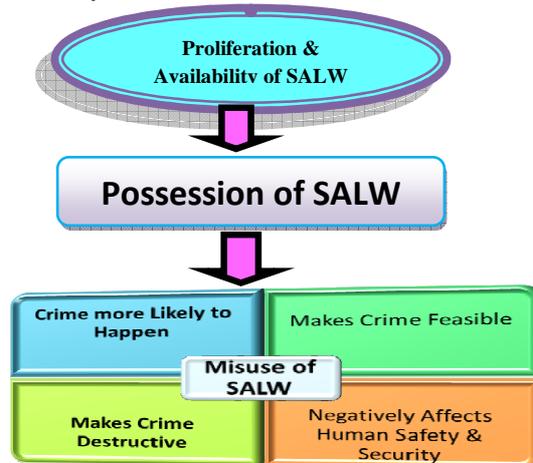
Therefore, according to many of the informants, in East Gojjam Zone drinking alcohol causes aggressive behavior and in turn leads to violent acts/violence. In short, alcohol is one major motivating factor for misuse of small arms in the study area.

Easy Availability and Proliferation of Small Arms

Wherever arms flow, violence follows (Michael Douglas, Actor and Disarmament Advocate cited in McIntyre and Weiss, 2003). It is often assumed that there is a relationship between small arms, their misuse, and levels of armed criminality. Small arms availability, ownership, and portability are linked to a greater incidence of violent death (e.g. homicide, suicide, and unintentional death), interpersonal violence, intimidation, and criminality. Accordingly, more firearms equal more violent crime (UN Economic and Social Council, 1997). What is clear is that gun use intensifies violence and increases the case-fatality rate in assaults. Armed criminality is particularly violent in post conflict countries where small arms and light weapons are still readily available (Cook and Ludwig, 2006).

In the study area as multiple sources of data collected indicated, there is a relationship between small arms availability and misuse. In short, the relationship between small arm proliferation & availability and misuse is shown in the following figure:

Figure 4.1. The Relationship of Availability and Proliferation of small arms and its Misuse



Source: Organized based on the Data Obtained from Fieldwork, 2016

Base on the above figure (figure 4.1), the proliferation and easily availability of small arms are one of the reasons for possession of small arms in the study area. At the same time, it is also one of the factors for misuse of small arms. In other words, based on respondents it is assumed that when the availability of arms increases, the level of misuse also increases.

As the East Gojjam Zone Police Office official report on crime confirmed in relation to small arms, there is a misuse of small arms in the study area. According the report the number of people killed and injured in relation to small arms has been increasing. As shown on the table below, the researcher tried to assess the number of people killed in relation to misuse of arms from 2004 up to 2007 E.C.

Table 4.1 The Number of People Killed from 2004 to 2007 by Guns in East Gojjam Zone.

| Year (E.C) | Number of People Killed | Number of People Injured |
|------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 2004 | 43 | 7 |
| 2005 | 49 | 12 |
| 2006 | 38 | 8 |
| 2007 | 60 | 9 |
| Total | 190 | 35 |

Source: Organized from East Gojjam Zone Police office

Based on the above table (table 4.1), in the four consecutive years (2004-2007 E.C) a total of 190 and 35 people were killed and injured respectively due to misuse of arms. Based on the data the highest and lowest numbers of killings by gun recorded in 2007 and 2006 respectively. The numbers of killings are increased in 2007. In 2006, the numbers of people killed were 38 but in 2007, it increased to 60. However, due to lack of proper official record and report, the researcher is unable to include the number of killings in the year before 2004 E. C. In other words, the above data did not include people killed with other traditional tools and other means. So, relatively in average the problem is becoming serious in every year.

Furthermore, small arms are also a business in the study area. Some people want to possess small arms to make a profit in the future. One informant from Bibugn Woreda described about the issue as follows;

In our society, small arms become a big business. In the Zone, there are illegal arm dealers and brokers. The arm dealers/brokers brought a number of small arms from outside of the Zone. Then, they sold a number of guns to the people with a big profit. After some time, the people also sell their arms for others with some profit. This is cyclical. Moreover, there are some occasions by which some police officials also sell the government guns after they reported its disappearance, as thief steals it.

Therefore, based on many of the informants, the contribution of arm dealers and brokers to possess and misuse arms is very high in East Gojjam Zone. How small arms are becoming a big business for those arm dealers and brokers, one arm broker from Debre Markos City described as follows;

I can say that now brokering of arms become one major job opportunity for many people in East Gojjam Zone. I have been working for years, until I did not face any problem. I have high profit. For instance, by selling one Makarov pistol, I can get a profit about a minimum from 5000 - 10,000 Ethiopian Birr. Based on the profit I have got from this business, I have bought a house and three- wheeler Bajaj auto. I have a plan to buy cars in the near future. However, I believe that illegal arm brokering is a threat to the peace and stability of the Zone. Because, people misuse arms and many of them injured and lost their life.

This means that the profit people get from small arms encourages further possessing of small arms. At the same time small arms are also prone to misuse while their number increases and mostly preferable instruments.

One key informant from the Zone Police office also added that in East Gojjam Zone small arms become parts of a big business like other business types. Moreover, the price of small arms has been increasing from time to time.

Currently, small arms are sold with a high price. For instance, in the current market, the price of one Makarov pistol and Kalashnikov is around 50,000 and 60,000 Ethiopian Birr respectively. Therefore, the people bought small arms and sold back after some time to get profit.

Lack of skill and Knowledge to manage Guns

According to respondents, peoples also misuse small arms due to lack of skill and knowledge to properly manage guns in East Gojjam Zone. For instance, key informant in the Zone militia office expressed as follows;

Small arms need their own unique skills and knowledge to be managed. But, many people in our zone do not have the required skill and knowledge to manage guns. In fact, there are also some other people who have special skill and quality of management of small arms even more than security forces. Due to this there are people who killed and injured themselves as well as other people, even their members of a family. I remember in this zone in Shebel woreda one person killed his wife when he carelessly clean his gun.

In addition, one informant from Debay Tilategen woreda added many times in our woreda people were killed and injured due to lack of skill and knowledge as well as carelessness of the owner of small arms. As the informant said, for instance, in his woreda once upon a time an individual carelessly manage explosive and killed himself as well as his families (four) and injured (two). So, simply some people bought guns without having the necessary skill and knowledge which resulted to bad consequences.

Impacts of Misuse of Small Arms

According to researches small arms proliferation and misuse directly and indirectly affects peoples in the world. Direct effects of small arms occur as deaths, injuries, and disabilities, as well as direct costs that result from the treatment of injuries and disabilities. Development studies have identified the indirect effects of small arms by pointing to the link between SALW and instability and insecurity, which, in turn, are seen as responsible for a number of socioeconomic effects (reduced productive economic activities, limited possibilities for education, malfunctioning health structures) that hinder a nation's or community's development (Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, 2005). So, there are various impacts of misuse of small arms in the study area.

Economic Impact

Africa loses around \$18bn per year due to wars, civil wars, and insurgencies (Oxfam, 2007). On average, armed conflict decreased an African nation's economy by 15 per. The real costs of armed violence to Africans could also be much; much higher. Income from valuable natural resources ends up lining individual pockets rather than benefiting the country (Oxfam, 2007).

In countries at peace, the indirect effects of gun violence are also significant, if less multifarious. Victims and witnesses of such violence experience a decline in physical and mental health, resulting in inflated costs for society in terms of treatment for firearm-related injury and lost productivity through disability or premature death. A survey in the US estimated the annual cost of gun violence to be \$80 million (Integrated Regional Information Networks (IRIN), 2006).

Respondents replied that misuse of small arms causes economic loss on many families in East Gojjam Zone. For instance, informant from Enebe Sar Mider Woreda narrated the impact of small arms misuse the situation as follows from his experience;

Misuse of guns had negatively affects the economy of many families of East Gojjam Zone. Many families have been left without father because of 'revenge' and counter revenge when someone kills the other. When fathers or other members of a family kill, members of a family are forced to leave their residence fearing revenge. So, the economy of many families seriously affected. When a father killed a person he left his children and goes to another far area, not to be killed. So, children have become unable to eat and learn". On the other hand,

when families get into gun violence, they may also prepared further action by buying additional guns which have negative impact on their economy.

In addition, one informant from Baso Liben Woreda stated that the people prefer to buy guns than other materials and properties like house, cloth, cow, and sheep and so on. This in turn adversely affects the economy of many families.

Social impact

The linkages between the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, globalization and social disintegration have been greatly under-researched. The dearth of serious enquiry into these relationships is all the more significant because small arms and light weapons continue to be commonly used in many of the violent civil and ethnic conflicts of the post-Cold War era (Louise, 1995). Social disintegration linked to gun culture is most clearly reflected in areas severely affected by militarization. It can be argued that widespread social trauma is, therefore, a result of weapons proliferation in an unstable environment (ibid).

Thus, gun violence seriously affected the social life of many families and communities in East Gojjam Zone. According to one informant from Goncha Siso Enese, in our woreda many families get into conflict in relation to gun violence. The culture promote traditional norm of revenge which seriously damaged the social life of many families. Families that get into gun violence are not able to work as well as enjoy other aspects of community life. Even children's of such families are not permitted to play and talk to each other. That means children are the main victims of misuse of small arms. In addition, the zone militia office said that misuse of guns may directly affect the social life of children.

Displacement is also another social impact of misuse of small arms in the study area. According to respondents due to armed violence many people have been displaced from their community to other parts of the country. This also has its own negative impact on the social, individual and families life.

Another social impact of small arms misuse is its psychological impact. Key informant from Debre Markos City Police stated the psychological impact of misuse of small arms as follows;

Take an individual planned to work hard and enhance the quality of life in the community. But, unfortunately his/her brother killed a person. So, after that this person might face psychological impact as he/she thinks when he/she will be killed because his brother kills instead of thinking about how to work and enhance his/her life. This is because in this community's culture, the killer's brother has the greater probability to be killed.

Culture of Violence

In fact, the impact of the availability and proliferation of SALW varies in each country and conflict situation. In some (post-conflict) cases, the presence of SALW often perpetuates a 'culture of violence' where guns are used as problem-solving tools or are used to exert power and influence over others. Their presence and misuse can lead to a cycle of violence in which people acquire guns out of fear, which increases the likelihood of more SALW violence and insecurity. This, in turn, causes people to arm further (SALW Control Training Manual for West Africa, unknown).

This is also true for the study area. One informant from Debre Markos Town expressed the culture of violence in the study area as follows;

In my opinion and observation, in Debre markos Town many people had at least one gun. And beyond our town in our Zone, East Gojjam, the majority of the people are with guns. So, in this zone various crimes have been committed in relation to Small Arms in almost all woredas. For me, the main reason is the result of uncontrolled proliferation of small arms on the hands of civilians. When the number of small arms increases, the number of crimes committed also increases. Even in the future, I feared that the situation could continue as it is.

Therefore, culture of violence is the other major impact of small arms misuse in the study area.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary and Conclusion

Everyone has the right to feel secure in every aspect of life, especially protection from the threat that affects the well-being of the individual and their communities in general. At present small arms witnessed to be the major threat for the security of human society throughout the world. The community of the world, no matter whether they are in war or peace, are not secure from the threat and violence of small arms due to the easy availability and proliferation of small arms outside the jurisdiction of the state. The easy availability of small arms when accompanied with the culture of violence, retribution and intake of stimulant drugs like alcohol leads the misuse and impose a serious challenge on the well-being of the society. Thus, regulating this serious problem is the responsibility of the international, continental and national community, including NGOs and IGOs.

In Ethiopia, the problem is self-evident in different parts of the country. As the finding of the study displays, there are reasons/factors for the misuse of SALW in the study area. Culture of revenge is one of rampant cultural practices for both the possession and misuse of small arms in the study area. In this regard, small arms are the prime and easily available option to take the act of revenge. Moreover, emotional music and poetry like fukkara and karrarto is the other cultural cause for both the possession and misuse of small arms. This means, despite most music and poetry critically expresses the positive cultural aspects of the area but some music culture of the community encourages individuals to possess small arms in turn, misuse it. The bad thing is when people become emotional and aggressive encouraged with heroic music, fukkara and karrarto, they misuse it in a way that can inflict death and other causalities. It is obvious that the easy availability of small arms encourages people to possess misuse small arms. Most of the time, one can harm anyone at anywhere without considering whether there is police or not, especially for revenge case in the study area. As a result, the people have no full confidence on the security sector, especially in relation to revenge. Even, in areas which have strong security institutions, people possess guns with the name of self-defense. Alcohol and lack of skill on properly utilizing small arms highly contributes for the misuse of small arms. Alcohol is major stimulator factor for misuse of small arms. In the area there is high consumption of traditional alcohol, especially *areki* and *tela*. So, even for silly reasons people kill each other through arms. Furthermore, despite there are many peoples who can manage guns very well but some also possessing small arms without knowledge and skill. As a result, lives have also been lost frequently due to this skill gap and it in turn becomes a cause for another cycle of revenge.

According to the findings of the study, the people of the area is well known in defending external enemy as it was witnessed during the period of Italian occupation. But, internally they mostly misuse Guns and killed each other. The social life of many families and communities are seriously affected due to this fact. In addition, it resulted for displacement of the people to different parts of the country and encouraged culture of violence. The family can face economic problems when their father killed by someone or leave the community to escape from the practice of revenge when life is lost on his hand. Moreover, some people also encountered psychological problems in various ways. For instance, when a person is unable to take revenge while his father or brother is killed, the community bulled and insults him.

The findings show that despite the seriousness of the problem the government is not taking appropriate measures to control misuse of small arms in East Gojjam Zone. The militia office, except confiscating finger counted guns, have done little in changing the attitude of the people on misuse of small arms. Therefore, misuse of small arms is not well regulated in East Gojjam Zone.

Recommendations

Based on the finding of the study, the researcher recommended the following basic points for the concerned body in order to take appropriate measure:

- Fostering good governance and strong institutions of justice can enhance the confidence of the community on government institutions. In this regard, the government expected to provide sufficient protection to the

lives and properties of the community. The justice institutions required to have the necessary skills and ability to punish offenders proportionately. This raises the confidence of the people on the government institution and they began to rely on legal instruments instead of taking the justice on one's own hand. At this time, the gun no longer perceived as a means of executing justice by the individual and the community as well.

- Traditional conflict resolution mechanisms have to be reinforced to solve conflicts peacefully instead of taking action/justice on one's own hand.
- In addition, the government has to conduct continuous awareness creation activities on the bad consequences of guns, traditional culture of revenge, and reinforce music and poetry which promotes positive aspects of life of the community. Moreover, the concerned body has to provide sufficient skills for those people who register arms so as to help proper management of guns. So, the government has to work to alleviate the root causes of possession and misuse of small arms.
- At institutional level the government did not take that much effective measure to control small arms problem as one expects in the study area. In fact, the militia office tried to confiscate some illegal arms from civilians and illegal brokers. But, this is not long lasting action to control small arms problem in the study area. Therefore, the government should work towards capacity building strategy of the security sector. Here, civil societies can play a great role to regulate small arms proliferation and misuse by educating the people. The government can change the issue of small arms to development aspect of life of the people. For example, when individual voluntarily surrender his/her Gun an incentive could be given. So, reinforcing continuous education is very crucial. In general, the government should give emphasis for attitudinal change of the society towards possession of small arms and some bad cultures as revenge.

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