

Women's Participation in Interethnic Group Conflict Management in Wajir East in Wajir County, Kenya

Muna Omar Somo
Kefa O. Nyandoro (PhD)

Abstracts: Globally, violent conflicts have had a profound impact on societies throughout history. It often has devastating consequences for individuals, communities, and entire societies, including loss of life, displacement, destruction of infrastructure and property, and long-term social and economic instability. The effects of conflict are often felt more acutely by women, who are more likely to experience gender-based violence, displacement, and economic and social marginalization. Women are underrepresented and marginalized in conflict management processes, despite their significant contributions to peace-building efforts. Despite some research on women's participation in peacebuilding in Kenya, there is still a significant knowledge gap on levels of women's participation, the barriers, and challenges that women face, the role of women's initiative, best practices and lessons learned from women's participation in conflict management in Wajir County. The study sought to identify the current levels of women's participation and conflict management in Wajir East in Wajir County. The study is based on social learning theory and institution theory. The research utilized a mixed method design using quantitative data and qualitative data from interviews with Key informants. Descriptive research was used in Wajir County, Kenya. The study was conducted in Wajir East a constituency located within Wajir County targeting a sample of 177 participants which was drawn from a target population of 24,620 women above 18 years of age in Wajir East Sub County. This study used a questionnaire and interview schedule. Construct validity and content validity were both used in this study. The reliability of the study tool was determined using Cronbach's alpha and evaluated at 0.70. The data collection procedure involved obtaining informed consent from participants. The data collected was cleaned and entered in SPSS for analysis. Data analysis was conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics. The qualitative data was analyzed using a thematic approach. The findings suggest the existence of recognition of women's active participation in decision-making processes and engagement in peace activities, challenges persist regarding the integration of their perspectives, representation in leadership roles, and access to resources. However, varied responses reflect the complex socio-cultural context and underscore the importance of addressing barriers to ensure more inclusive and effective peace-building efforts.

I. Introduction

1.1. Background to the study

Globally, violent conflicts have had a profound impact on societies throughout history. These conflicts can arise due to a variety of factors, including territorial disputes, ethnic or religious tensions, ideological differences, economic disparities, or struggles for power and resources. The consequences of violent conflicts are far-reaching, affecting not only the warring parties but also neighbouring regions and the international community. Frequently, it brings about severe outcomes for individuals, communities, and whole societies, which encompass the loss of lives, displacement of people, damage to infrastructure and property, and enduring social and economic instability (Duffield, 2001). In addition to the immediate physical and material costs of violent conflict, there are also significant long-term social and economic costs, including the disruption of social networks, the breakdown of trust and social cohesion, and the erosion of human capital and economic development (Collier et al., 2003). According to the World Bank, between 1990 and 2015, the cost of violence to the global economy was estimated at \$14.3 trillion, equivalent to 13.4% of the world's gross domestic product (GDP) (World Bank, 2017). Moreover, the effects of conflict are often felt more acutely by women, who

are more likely to experience gender-based violence, displacement, and economic and social marginalization (UN Women, 2018).

Violent conflict has significant implications across various dimensions, as emphasized by recent scholars. In terms of humanitarian impact, conflicts result in devastating consequences such as loss of life, displacement, and human rights abuses (Østby et al., 2019; Themnér & Wallensteen, 2018). These conflicts also have far-reaching economic implications as they disrupt trade, damage infrastructure, and hinder overall development (Hegre et al., 2019; Koubi et al., 2021). Politically, conflicts often give rise to governance challenges, state fragility, and power struggles, further complicating the path to peace (Buhaug et al., 2021; Kalyvas, 2018). On a social level, violence contributes to the deepening of social divisions, trauma, and obstacles to the process of reconciliation (De Juan et al., 2018; Langer, 2017). Additionally, conflicts can extend their reach beyond national borders, resulting in regional and global spillover effects such as refugee flows, terrorism, and cross-border instability (Hultman et al., 2019; Salehyan, 2017). In light of these multifaceted consequences, recent scholars emphasize the critical importance of comprehensive peace-building approaches that encompass dialogue, justice, and institutional reforms to effectively address the implications of violent conflict (Autesserre, 2020; Richmond, 2020). By doing so, sustainable peace can be fostered, and the long-lasting effects of conflict mitigated.

In Africa, violent conflicts have had a profound and enduring impact on the continent's history and development (Koren, 2018). From colonial struggles for independence to post-colonial power struggles, resource disputes, ethnic tensions, and ideological conflicts, Africa has experienced a wide range of violent conflicts. One of the significant factors contributing to violent conflict in Africa is the legacy of colonialism. Arbitrary borders drawn by colonial powers often divided ethnic groups and created tensions between different communities (Michalopoulos, & Papaioannou, 2016). When African nations gained independence, these borders became sources of contention and competition for resources, leading to violent clashes. Resource conflicts, particularly over land, water, and minerals, have been prevalent in many African nations. The competition for these valuable resources often exacerbates existing social, ethnic, and political tensions. Armed groups may emerge, seeking control over resource-rich areas, leading to protracted conflicts and humanitarian crises (Sefa-Nyarko, 2016). Ethnic and religious differences have also been significant drivers of violent conflict in Africa. The continent is home to diverse ethnic groups, each with its own cultural, social, and political identities. When political power and resources are unevenly distributed along ethnic or religious lines, it can ignite conflicts as marginalized groups fight for inclusion and equal rights (Kimemia, 2021).

Women bear a significant burden during conflicts, experiencing higher rates of gender-based violence, displacement, and trauma, as demonstrated by studies such as Kishi et al. (2020). Acknowledging women as victims of conflict underscores the urgency of their participation in peace-building efforts to address their specific needs and experiences. Additionally, recent research by Paffenholz and Spurk (2020) and Reilly (2021) emphasizes the remarkable resilience and agency of women in conflict-affected societies, highlighting their crucial roles in community support and post-conflict reconstruction. Studies by Klot et al. (2019) and Buhaug and Urdal (2021) reaffirm the positive impact of women's inclusion in peace processes, leading to more inclusive agreements, increased implementation, and longer-lasting peace. Harnessing the agency and perspectives of women is therefore crucial for effective and sustainable conflict management, promoting social cohesion, addressing underlying causes of conflict, and ensuring gender equality and human rights. Therefore, involvement ensures that the conflict management process addresses the specific needs of women, fosters social justice, and promotes comprehensive and lasting solutions to conflict.

The involvement of women in conflict management is essential to promoting sustainable peace and security. Evidence shows that when women are included in peace processes, there is a greater likelihood of success and a reduction in the recurrence of conflict (UN Women, 2018). Moreover, the inclusion of women in peace-building efforts can lead to more comprehensive and lasting solutions, as women bring unique perspectives and expertise to the table (UNDP, 2011). For example, a study conducted in Liberia found that women's groups played a significant role in advocating for peace and disarmament during the country's civil war. These groups mobilized women across ethnic and religious lines and used nonviolent methods to push for peace (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2016). The inclusion of women in the peace process in Liberia also led to the adoption of a gender-sensitive disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration program, which recognized the specific needs of female ex-combatants (UN Women, 2018).

According to an analysis by Hudson et al. (2012), when women participate in peace negotiations, there is a higher likelihood of addressing structural issues and promoting social justice. Additionally, the participation of women in peacebuilding enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of such efforts. Research by Svensson and Öberg (2017) has

shown that peace agreements with women's involvement are more likely to be implemented, leading to sustainable peace. Women's participation also contributes to building social cohesion and reconciliation within communities. The Women's Initiatives for Gender Justice (2018) emphasised the role of women's networks in bridging divides and promoting dialogue, trust, and healing processes. Peace-building processes adhere to human rights principles and foster fairer and more inclusive societies by advocating for gender equality and empowering women.

According to the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolution 1325, which was implemented over 15 years ago, the protection of women and girls from sexual violence in conflict and their equal involvement in conflict prevention and resolution should be strengthened. However, the involvement of women in peace negotiations, where they have a voice and influence, is still the exception rather than the norm. The international community recognizes this participation gap and the lack of comprehensive research on the subject (UN 2015). It is crucial to address this gap because peace negotiations provide an opportunity to enhance women's political participation in post-conflict countries (Anderson 2016). For instance, African countries that have experienced conflicts tend to have higher rates of female representation in legislative bodies and faster progress in adopting women's rights reforms compared to non-post-conflict countries on the continent. This is because women's groups seize the opportunity for political reform (Tripp 2015).

Generally, countries with greater gender equality, allowing for women's political participation, have a higher chance of achieving lasting peace (Gizelis 2009). A comparative study suggests that women's involvement in peace processes contributes to both the likelihood of reaching a peace agreement and its successful implementation (O'Reilly et al. 2015). Additionally, the security of women, as well as their socioeconomic and political status, directly affects the probability of renewed conflict (Caprioli 2005; Hudson et al. 2012, 2009; Melander 2005). This study seeks to assess the current levels of women's participation, the barriers and challenges that women face, the role of women's initiative, best practices and lessons learned from women's participation in conflict management in Wajir County, Kenya.

1.2. Problem statement

In the context of conflict dynamics, women frequently bear a disproportionate burden, facing heightened exposure to violence, forced displacement, and the profound loss of family members, as evidenced by empirical studies conducted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 2015). This lack of inclusion is largely due to deep-rooted cultural norms and practices that limit women's participation in decision-making and leadership roles (Njenga et al., 2020). Research indicates that women's participation in conflict management is crucial to sustainable peace and development (UN Women, 2020). However, in Wajir County, women are often excluded from formal peace processes and relegated to informal roles such as mediators and peacemakers within their communities (Njeri, 2021). This limits their ability to influence policy and decision-making processes, resulting in a lack of gender-sensitive approaches to peacebuilding and a failure to address the specific needs and experiences of women in conflict situations (Majid & Ismail, 2019). Wajir County has previously witnessed women-led efforts in conflict management such as the Wajir Women Association for Peace (WWAP)

Despite some research on women's participation in conflict management in Kenya, there is still a significant knowledge gap on levels of women's participation, the barriers and challenges that women face, the role of women's initiative, best practices and lessons learned from women's participation in conflict management in Wajir County. There is limited literature on the obstacles faced by women when it comes to their involvement in peacebuilding within the county. Additionally, there is a lack of literature on how cultural practices and gender norms affect women's engagement in decision-making processes. Hence, the purpose of this research is to examine the extent of women's participation in conflict management specifically in Wajir County, Kenya.

1.3. Purpose of the study

The general objective of this study is to investigate the influence of women's participation on interethnic group conflict management in Wajir County, Kenya

1.4. Scope of the study

It pertains to the boundaries within which the investigation takes place (Miller & Stebbins, 2020). This involves establishing the research area and precisely specifying what the investigator is studying, as well as the variables that are considered acceptable (Leedy & Ormrod, 2019). This may involve defining the participants, the level of ideological inclusion in the research objectives, and the timeline to provide a perspective on the study's extent. In this context, the scope of the survey refers to the description of its breadth, depth, and specific details to ensure that it encompasses the

necessary range, complexity, and thoroughness required to address the research goals outlined within the allocated time and in a manner that optimizes resources.

- i. On the geographical scope, the study targeted women citizens living in Wajir East
- ii. On-time scope, the study was conducted from July 2023 through August 2023.
- iii. The study investigated women's participation in conflict management in Wajir County. The study assesses levels of women's participation, barriers and challenges, the role of women's initiatives and best practices and lessons learned from women's participation. Data was collected using a structured questionnaire targeting a sample of 175 citizens living in Wajir East.

II. Empirical review

Sampson (2020) carried out a study aiming to investigate the extent of female involvement in the processes of conflict management and the establishment of peace. The study adopts a qualitative research approach, employing interviews, focus group discussions, and document analysis as its primary methods. The research findings shed light on the challenges and issues surrounding women's participation in these processes. It identifies barriers such as patriarchal norms, limited access to resources, and institutional constraints that hinder women's involvement. Moreover, the dissertation brings attention to the endeavours of non-governmental entities, specifically women's associations and civil society organizations, in tackling these obstacles and advocating for the inclusion of women. The study further emphasizes the beneficial outcomes of women's involvement, such as the acknowledgement of gender-related issues, enhanced peace agreements, and the establishment of enduring post-conflict rebuilding initiatives in Nigeria.

Rabbitt, Tibbetts, Albert, and Lilley (2022) examined the levels of women's participation in conflict management through community-based resource management. The research utilizes a quantitative approach, employing a model to assess women's inclusion and participation in this context. The findings shed light on the existing gender disparities and challenges faced by women in community-based resource management, highlighting limited access to decision-making processes, unequal power dynamics, and social norms that hinder their meaningful involvement. The study emphasizes the importance of addressing these barriers and promoting women's active participation to achieve more inclusive and effective conflict management outcomes in the Solomon Islands.

III. Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework demonstrates the grasp of concepts and theories related to the study investigation. A theoretical framework's purpose is to supply enough support for the research. This, in turn, helps other readers to appreciate the scholar's point of view (Simon & Goes, 2013). The social learning theory and the conflict transformation theory are the foundations of this study.

3.1. Social learning theory

Social learning theory provides valuable insights for promoting women's participation in conflict management. By emphasizing role modelling, shared experiences, learning from others, and challenging societal norms, this theory highlights the importance of women's active involvement in these processes. Women's engagement can serve as a powerful model, inspiring other women to get involved and break gender stereotypes. Learning from the experiences of women already engaged in peace building and creating networks and support systems can foster collective learning and empowerment. Moreover, addressing cultural beliefs and social norms through education and advocacy can create an enabling environment for women's increased participation. By applying social learning theory, inclusive and gender-responsive approaches to peace building can be developed, incorporating the unique perspectives and contributions of women.

3.2. Conflict Transformation Theory

Conflict transformation involves the process of transitioning from systems characterized by conflict to systems characterized by peace. This process differs from the commonly used term "conflict resolution" because it emphasizes the need for changing entire systems. When social conflicts are deeply ingrained or difficult to resolve, they acquire these labels because the conflict has created patterns that are ingrained in the social system. By analyzing the social system as a whole, the term "resolution" becomes less suitable. Transforming deeply rooted conflicts involves more than simply resolving specific issues; the primary focus is on systemic change and transformation. Systems cannot be

"resolved" outright, but they can be fundamentally altered, which is why the term conflict transformation is employed (Notter and Diamond, 1996). Conflict Transformation Theory provides a framework for understanding the complexities of conflicts and offers strategies to promote women's participation in conflict management. It recognizes the unique perspectives and contributions of women and underscores the need to address systemic issues and transform relationships to achieve sustainable peace.

3.3. Conceptual framework

The investigator's viewpoint regarding the matter forms the basis for the study's conceptual framework (Kaplan 2002). A conceptual framework is a proposed model aimed at organizing the elements utilized in a study and their interconnections. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a conceptual model serves as an audience's quick guide to the expected relationship between the predictor and predicted variables.

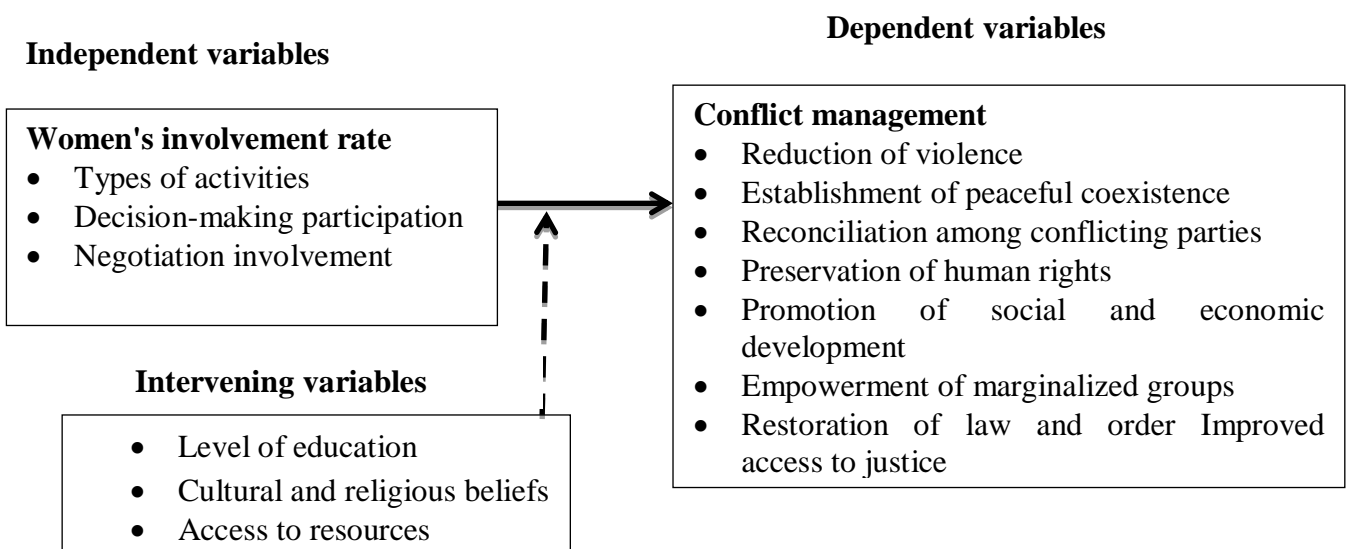


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Figure 2: Conceptual framework

3.4. Knowledge gap to be researched

There is a lack of research specifically focusing on the levels of women's participation in conflict management in Wajir East, Wajir County. Although the aforementioned research offers valuable perspectives on the involvement of women in conflict resolution and peace establishment across various settings like Nigeria, NATO missions, and community-driven resource management in the Solomon Islands, there is no specific research available on the levels of women's participation in Wajir East. This knowledge gap limits our understanding of the challenges, barriers, and opportunities for women's engagement in conflict management in that specific region. Further research is needed to address this gap and provide context-specific insights to inform policies and interventions for promoting women's participation in Wajir East, Wajir

IV. Methodology

The study employed a mixed methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data collection methodologies to investigate the involvement of women in conflict management within Wajir East Sub County. This methodological fusion facilitated a comprehensive exploration of the multifaceted nature of women's participation in conflict resolution endeavours. The investigation was a descriptive research design, which served to delineate the contextual intricacies surrounding women's engagement in conflict management activities, thereby contextualizing the study within the socio-political milieu and historical backdrop of Wajir East. Wajir East, situated proximate to the Somalia border, confronted a plethora of challenges, including interethnic strife, competition over resources, and security vulnerabilities. Grasping the idiosyncrasies of this locale was imperative for elucidating the roles assumed by women in conflict resolution efforts. The study directed its focus towards elucidating insights from women actively immersed in conflict resolution and peace advocacy initiatives in Wajir East, cognizant of their potential contributions to peace building endeavours and their disproportionate vulnerability to the impacts of conflicts. Sampling methodologies were meticulously implemented to ensure the representative inclusion of participants from the target demographic, with sample size estimation conducted through Slovin's formula.

$$n = N / (1 + Ne^2).$$

Whereas:

n = no. of samples N = total population

e = error margin/margin of error which is approximated at $\alpha=0.075$

$$n = 24,620 / [1 + 24,620 (0.075^2)]$$

$$n = 24,620 / [1 + 24,620 (0.005625)]$$

$$n = 24,620 / [139.4875]$$

$$n = 176.50 \sim 177$$

Data **collection** instruments encompassed structured questionnaires and key informant interviews, tailored to encapsulate both quantitative metrics and qualitative narratives of women's involvement in conflict management. Analytical **endeavours** entailed thematic and quantitative analyses, furnishing a holistic comprehension of women's roles in conflict management dynamics in Wajir County. Throughout the research **endeavour**, paramount emphasis was accorded to ethical precepts aimed at safeguarding the rights and dignity of participants, as well as fostering cultural sensitivity. Ethical tenets, inclusive of informed consent acquisition, confidentiality preservation, and mitigation of potential harm, were rigorously upheld. By meticulously adhering to ethical protocols and employing methodological rigour, the study engendered invaluable insights into the intricate tapestry of women's contributions to conflict management in Wajir County, whilst upholding the cardinal principles of scholarly research ethics.

V. Research Findings

5.1. Response rate

The study achieved a response rate of 77%, indicating that 77% of the total targeted participants or entities responded to the survey or study. This percentage highlights the level of engagement or participation in the research. A higher response rate is generally considered favourable as it suggests a more representative sample and increases the reliability of the study's findings.

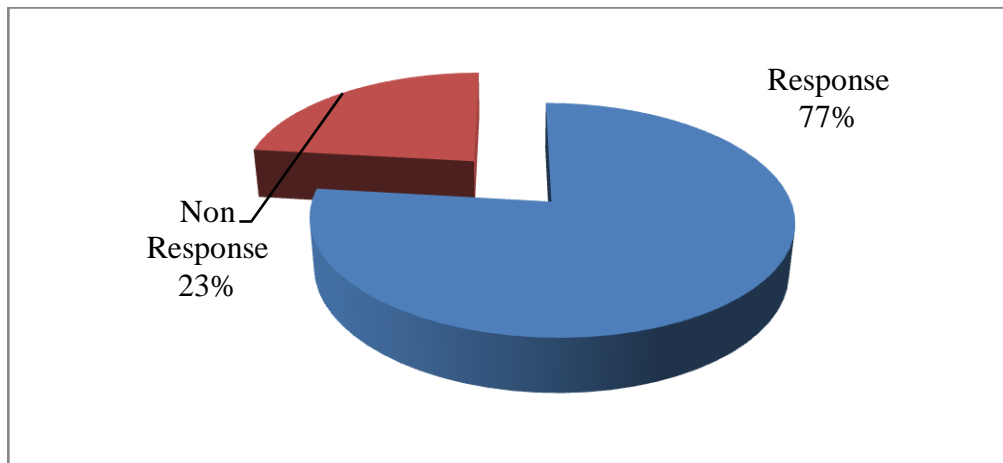


Figure 3: Response rate

5.2. Respondent's basic information

This section introduces basic demographic data of study participants, focusing on age distribution and educational backgrounds. Understanding these factors provides insight into the respondent sample, influencing perceptions on conflict management, and setting the context for further analysis of barriers and perceptions.

Table 1: Respondents' basic information

		n	%
Age of the participants	21-30 Years	19	14.0
	31-40 Years	90	66.2
	41 Years and above	27	19.9
	Total	136	100.0
Education	Primary school	13	9.6
	Secondary School	17	12.5
	College	62	45.6
	University	44	32.4
	Total	136	100.0

In terms of age distribution, the majority fell within the 31-40 age group, constituting 66.2% of the total, while the 21-30 age group was the smallest, accounting for only 14.0%. The 41 years and above group comprised 19.9% of the total. Looking at education levels, a substantial portion of the individuals have attended college (45.6%), followed closely by those with university education (32.4%). Primary and secondary school-educated individuals make up smaller percentages, at 9.6% and 12.5%, respectively.

5.3. Women's Involvement Rate

Under women's involvement in conflict management activities in Wajir North, the study assessed the extent to which women actively participate in decision-making processes related to conflict resolution, including mediation and negotiation. Additionally, the study examined the degree to which women's voices and perspectives are considered and

integrated into peace-building initiatives, ensuring a comprehensive approach to addressing underlying tensions and promoting sustainable peace.

Table 2: levels of women's participation in conflict management

	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Women actively participate in decision-making processes related to conflict management in Wajir North in Wajir County.	17	12.5	0	0	51	37.5	68	50.0	0	0
Women are actively involved in peace-building activities, such as mediation and negotiation, within the local communities of Wajir North.	17	12.5	17	12.5	34	25.0	51	37.5	17	12.5
Women's voices and perspectives are effectively taken into account in conflict resolution initiatives in Wajir North.	34	25.0	55	40.4	27	19.9	20	14.7	0	0.0
Women have equal access to resources and opportunities for engagement in conflict management activities in Wajir North.	16	11.9	41	30.6	24	17.9	52	38.8	1	.7
Women are well represented in leadership positions within organizations or initiatives dedicated to conflict management in Wajir North.	0	0.0	47	34.6	35	25.7	54	39.7	0	0
Women-led initiatives have been successful in promoting peaceful coexistence and resolving conflicts in Wajir North.	6	4.4	4	2.9	40	29.4	36	26.5	50	36.8
Societal norms and cultural practices do not restrict women's active participation and influence in conflict management efforts in Wajir North.	42	30.9	18	13.2	22	16.2	54	39.7	0	0.0

The survey results shed light on the perceptions surrounding women's involvement in conflict management in Wajir North, Wajir County. Generally, most respondents recognized women's active participation in decision-making processes related to peace building, with approximately 50% agreeing and 37.5% remaining neutral. However, opinions were more divided regarding the effectiveness of integrating women's perspectives into conflict resolution initiatives, with 40.4% disagreeing and 19.9% remaining neutral.

Regarding women's active engagement in peace-building activities like mediation and negotiation, around 37.5% of respondents agreed, while 25% remained neutral. Despite this perception, there were uncertainties regarding women's representation in leadership positions within conflict management organizations, with 39.7% agreeing, 34.6% disagreeing, and 25.7% remaining neutral.

Furthermore, while 38.8% agreed that women have equal access to resources for engagement in conflict management, 30.6% disagreed. The success of women-led initiatives in promoting peaceful coexistence and resolving conflicts received varied responses, with 36.8% strongly agreeing, 26.5% agreeing, and 29.4% remaining neutral. A notable portion of respondents, 30.9%, strongly disagreed that societal norms restrict women's participation in conflict management efforts, while 39.7% agreed. These findings underscore the importance of addressing challenges and promoting more inclusive approaches to women's involvement in peace-building initiatives in Wajir North.

The qualitative response from the interview tool found that the women's participation was generally low, this was associated with a lack of access to sufficient resources and cultural barriers as noted from the following verbatims,

..... "Women lack access to significant resources. They also encounter cultural barriers which eventually limit their involvement in conflict management." ~ Women leader

....."the women leadership is not strong in this region and generally challenged by the dominance of men" ~ government official

5.4. Conflict management outcomes

The study comprehensively investigated various aspects of conflict management efforts within the community, as reflected in the responses provided. It delved into the perceptions of respondents regarding the effectiveness of peace-building initiatives in reducing violence, establishing peaceful coexistence, fostering reconciliation among conflicting parties, preserving human rights, contributing to social and economic development, empowering marginalized groups, and restoring law and order. Through a thorough analysis of these areas, the study aimed to gain a nuanced understanding of the outcomes and impacts of peace-building efforts in the community, thereby informing future interventions and strategies aimed at promoting sustainable peace and development.

Table 3: Reduction of Violence

		n	%
To what extent do you believe the peace-building efforts have significantly reduced violence in the conflict-affected areas?	Slightly	34	25.0
	Moderate	102	75.0
	Total	136	100.0

A significant majority (75.0%) perceive moderate reductions in violence as a result of peace-building efforts, while 25.0% believe the reduction has been slight.

Table 4: Establishment of Peaceful Coexistence

		n	%
How much progress do you perceive in the establishment of peaceful coexistence between conflicting parties as an outcome of the peace-building initiatives?	Moderate progress	68	50.0
	Significant progress	51	37.5
	Full establishment of peace coexistence	17	12.5
	Total	136	100.0

A combined 87.5% of respondents perceive progress in the establishment of peaceful coexistence, with 50.0% reporting moderate progress and 37.5% indicating significant progress. This indicates a positive trajectory towards fostering peaceful relationships between conflicting parties.

Table 5: Reconciliation among Conflicting Parties

		n	%
To what degree do you think the peace-building efforts have successfully achieved reconciliation among the conflicting parties, fostering understanding and healing?	Partial	34	25.0
	moderate	68	50.0
	Large	34	25.0
	Total	136	100.0

Perceptions of reconciliation efforts are evenly divided, with 50.0% perceiving moderate achievement, 25.0% perceiving partial achievement, and another 25.0% perceiving large achievement. This suggests some success in fostering understanding and healing, albeit with room for improvement.

Table 6: Preservation of Human Rights

		n	%
How effectively do you believe the peace-building initiatives have ensured the preservation of human rights?	Not effective	17	12.5
	Somewhat effective	51	37.5
	highly effective	51	37.5
	Fully effective	17	12.5
	Total	136	100.0

The majority of respondents (75.0%) perceive peace-building initiatives as effective or highly effective in ensuring the preservation of human rights. This indicates a positive impact on upholding human rights standards within conflict-affected areas.

Table 7: Contribution to Social and Economic Development

		n	%
On a scale of 1-5, to what extent do you perceive the peace-building efforts as significantly contributing to the promotion of social and economic development in the conflict-affected areas?	Not significant	17	12.5
	Moderate	17	12.5
	Significant	68	50.0
	Extremely significant	34	25.0
	Total	136	100.0

A significant majority (75.0%) perceive peace-building efforts as significant or extremely significant in contributing to social and economic development, indicating recognition of their broader impact beyond conflict resolution.

Table 8: Empowerment of Marginalized Groups

		n	%
To what degree do you think the peace-building initiatives have empowered marginalized groups, particularly women and minority communities?	Minimal empowerment	34	25.0
	Moderate empowerment	51	37.5
	Substantial empowerment	34	25.0
	Substantialempowerment	17	12.5
	Total	136	100.0

Responses indicate a moderate level of perceived empowerment of marginalized groups, particularly women and minority communities, with 37.5% reporting moderate empowerment and another 37.5% reporting substantial empowerment. This suggests that peace-building initiatives have had a meaningful impact on empowering marginalized groups.

Table 9: Restoration of Law and Order and Access to Justice

		n	%
How much improvement do you perceive in	minimal improvement	34	25.0

the restoration of law and order and the accessibility to justice as outcomes of the peace-building efforts?	Moderate improvement	68	50.0
	significant improvement	17	12.5
	Complete restoration and improvement	17	12.5
	Total	136	100.0

A majority of respondents (62.5%) perceive moderate to significant improvement in the restoration of law and order and accessibility to justice, with 50.0% reporting moderate improvement and 12.5% reporting significant improvement. This indicates progress in enhancing security and justice mechanisms within conflict-affected areas.

VI. Summary of the findings

The study assessed women's involvement in conflict management activities in Wajir North, focusing on their participation in decision-making processes, integration of their perspectives into peace initiatives, and engagement in mediation and negotiation. Most respondents recognized women's active participation in decision-making (50% agreed, 37.5% neutral). However, opinions were divided on integrating women's perspectives (40.4% disagreed, 19.9% neutral). About 37.5% agreed women actively engage in peace activities, while 25% were neutral. Uncertainty existed on women's representation in leadership roles (39.7% agreed, 34.6% disagreed, 25.7% neutral). Similarly, opinions varied on women's access to resources (38.8% agreed, 30.6% disagreed). The success of women-led initiatives received mixed responses (36.8% strongly agreed, 26.5% agreed, and 29.4% neutral). Concerning societal norms, 30.9% strongly disagreed they restrict women's involvement, while 39.7% agreed. These findings highlight the need for inclusive approaches to women's participation in peace efforts in Wajir North.

VII. Conclusion

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of women's involvement in conflict management activities in Wajir North, Wajir County. While there is recognition of women's active participation in decision-making processes and engagement in peace activities, challenges persist regarding the integration of their perspectives, representation in leadership roles, and access to resources. The varied responses reflect the complex socio-cultural context and underscore the importance of addressing barriers to ensure more inclusive and effective peace-building efforts.

Recommendations

Recommend establishing initiatives to provide women with greater access to resources and opportunities for leadership roles in conflict management efforts. Also, efforts should be focused on identifying and removing the barriers that prevent women from participating fully in conflict management activities. Addressing sociocultural obstacles, such as discriminatory practices and gender stereotypes, is necessary to achieve this. Furthermore, it entails guaranteeing women's fair access to opportunities and resources.

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