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Nature of Gender-Based Activities Toward Cross-Border Conflict Management Between Kisumu and Nandi Counties, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Conflict management has a gendered dimension whereby both men and women play an important role through various activities in cross-border conflict management programs. However, the potential of women's activities in influencing cross-border conflict management remains unrecognized. The study sought to discuss the contribution of gender-based activities toward conflict management along the border of Kisumu and Nandi Counties. The Feminist Conflict Resolution Theory guided the study. The study was conducted in Kisumu and Nandi counties; a Descriptive survey research design was utilized during the study. The target population included household heads, government officials and civil society organizations including community-based and faith-based organizations. Both primary and secondary data were used during the study. Primary data was collected through questionnaires, Interviews and Focus Group Discussions. The study had a sample size of 453 respondents selected through simple random, Convenience and purposive sampling. Qualitative data were analyzed by use of thematic analysis and the results presented in a narrative form and through verbatim quotations, while quantitative was analyzed by using Statistical Packages for Social Scientists (SPSS) to obtain both descriptive and the findings were then be presented in form of charts, graphs and Tables. The study found that there were several gender-based activities in the area that were key to social cohesion and conflict management along the borders of the two counties. These activities included micro-finance institutions at the community level, saving and lending groups, cash transfers, youth programmes, religious peace organizations, and intermarriages among other activities. The study concluded that there are a number of gender-based activities in the study area some of which escalated the conflicts while other were helpful in managing the conflicts.

Keywords: Gender-based activities, Conflict management, Border conflicts, Cross-border, women's involvement in conflict

INTRODUCTION

Border disputes have been around since the beginning of recorded history. Conquering kingdoms was a typical event during the pre-state era. Aggression on the part of world leaders against other countries as a consequence of territorial disputes caused both major wars of the

twentieth century. Tensions arose in part because of the growing nationalism in European countries of the time, as well as because of economic and imperial competition, the collision of Western and non-Western cultures, and the dread of war. (Cavalcanti, 2007).

In peace and conflict studies, gender analysis is essential since it is likely to emphasize the needs of both men and women, as well as give recommendations for suitable responses and interventions. As such, both men and women can be easily mobilized, recognized, and be more economically, socially, and involved in socio-cultural dealings. However, that isn't always the case, and these venues are biasedly controlled by men, leaving women out, thereby obliterating gender equality from the agenda of conflict management (Khodary, 2016). Despite the obvious advantages derived from women's involvement in activities influencing cross-border conflicts and management programs, there is a paucity of focus on women and cross-border conflict management (Benardatte & Poipoi, 2015), which is reflected by the limited role gender has played in the institutionalized cross border conflict management in Kenya and more so in the context of cross border conflict management between Kisumu and Nandi Counties. Fundamentally, both men and women can influence conflict management within the study area of Muhoroni and Tinderet sub Counties. Accordingly, studies show that having both men and women participating in influencing cross-border conflicts and peace programmes improves the chances of obtaining an agreement and the agreement's sustainability (O'Reilly *et al*., 2015).

Conflict management has a gendered dimension whereby both men and women play an important role through various activities in cross-border conflict management programs. However, the potential of women's activities in influencing cross-border conflict management remains unrecognized (Goldsten, 2001). Indeed, emphasizing females primarily in the role of conflict victims strengthens the long-held belief that females should play no active role in politics or other spheres of public life. (Benardatte & Poipoi, 2015).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was anchored on Feminist Conflict Resolution Theory. Bailey's publication, Feminist Conflict Resolution Theory, focuses on women's nonviolent peacemaking initiatives around the globe and provides theoretical frameworks for comprehending the relationship between women and peace-related activities, males and conflict, and sexism and militarism. (Bailey, 2002). The concept seeks to identify the components of a woman's voice, the perspective of reality, and insights. According to the concept, centuries of exclusion, subjugation, and discrimination have equipped women with social perceptions that are more perceptive than men's in uncovering the world's underlying structures and participants. Numerous feminist academicians argue that to unearth and transform inter-group and boundary conflict involving unequal power relations, one must examine the situation from the perspective of the subordinate, rather than the master, which is particularly relevant to the study and practise of conflict management (Bailey, 2002). Femisnist ideas focus not only on women but also on males; thus, the gendered perspective.

The concept of gender in feminist writings and other sociological discourses, in its most basic form, describes the societal distinctions between men and women in terms of what men can do and what women can't do (Sharoni, 2010). Therefore, gender is a socially constructed analytical category used to recognise the biological differences between genders. Differences in behaviour between men and women are sometimes referred to as masculine and feminine, respectively,

and this is another way in which gender is used to categorize people. This is a central theme in feminist literature, which argues that gender distinctions are cultural rather than innate. It has been theorised that men and women are fundamentally different, both mentally and physically, due to their biological distinctions. In their view, men are inherently more capable than women in all areas of intellectual and physical development. There are others who argue that the supposed biological differences between the sexes are overstated. The patriarchal system of society, in which men are viewed as superior to women, is a major social factor contributing to these disparities. This results in women being treated as second class citizens by society at large.

Ann Oakley defines gender in her 1972 work titled "s*ex, gender and Society.*" According to Oakley, women in the West are expected to be stay-at-home moms. This is because, biologically speaking, women are predisposed to take on such tasks. Any attempt to alter the established roles of men and women in society is seen as potentially damaging to western culture. According to Oakley, this perspective on the proper responsibilities of men and women contributes to the upkeep of patriarchal society (Oakley, 1972).

According to Simone de Beauvior's book The Second Sex, "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman." She argues that men are privileged in society because of their economic contributions. Because of this, he will be in a position of authority within his family and community. As a result of this gender hierarchy, women are considered inferior to men. Women are always the ones on the fringes and in the "other" role. At its core, civilization was a very male thing. She elaborates that, contrary to popular belief, gender does not refer to biological or physical differences between sexes, but rather to the socially constructed roles that are assigned to each. Among the many other factors that influence gender roles are economic, political, cultural, and demographic ones, such as age, social class, and ethnicity. Gender roles are socially constructed and often challenged. They can so undergo transformations. In addition to the gender gap, there is also diversity in the roles played by different groups of women and men, and both sexes may combine or occupy multiple roles at once. Despite their stereotypical role as victims, women in war zones frequently play active roles as moms, breadwinners, warriors, or peace campaigners. Gender as being associated with women's and men's roles is still a very narrow and reductionist perspective.

Therefore, Gender is a social organising principle that impacts not just individuals but also groups, institutions, and cultures. Gender functions on multiple levels, one of which is the level of the individual's (subjective) identity (wherein we accept, or oppose, and negotiate affiliation with specific concepts of femininity and masculinity). It is also during this stage that people begin to take on (or reject, or negotiate) traditional gender roles. Limiting the concept of gender to women and men as individuals and their gender roles ignores the phenomenon of gender on other levels: The institutional level, which produces and is produced by particular masculinities and femininities; the ideological and doctrinal level, with its (gender-based) values and norms; and the symbolic level (not only female and male bodies as symbols of nations and states, or victims or heroes, but also meanings that are at first sight not seen as gender, such as sovereignty). In addition, processes gender reality (on the basis of particular gendered beliefs), and growth also genders itself. It is clear from this use of gendered or gendering language that gender is understood in relation to other social relations of power.

The theory posits that strategic discourses and military language are the primary source of inspiration for the prevalent interpretations of peace and security, limiting the former to the absence of war and the latter to the fulfilment of national security imperatives (Kriesberg, 1991). Common notions of safety and security are generally developed in male-dominated environments, with resulting biases toward men, governments, and the powerful. Feminist peace scholars, researchers, and activists have argued that the historical, cultural, and sociopolitical contexts of a conflict, as well as the conceptual framework one employs to investigate the gendered dimensions of a conflict, determine the extent to which women play a role in either the escalation or de-escalation of that conflict (Peterson, 1992).

Feminist conflict resolution theory promotes women's lived experiences and ways of knowing as enablers to articulate effective conflict management solutions, going beyond calls for basic inclusion in current social and political frameworks. Further, the theory centres on the unique feminist perspective, which is rooted in the realities of men's and women's lives. From a feminist theoretical vantage point, this perspective is well-known. Feminist conflict resolution theory, grounded in these beliefs, provides the theoretical grounding for this research by emphasizing the unique contributions of women to conflict resolution. Furthermore, the theory contributes to this study by shedding light on the study's central distinction between genders in terms of both the exploratory and descriptive dimensions of conflict management. Despite its applicability to the research at hand, the feminist theory provides only a surface-level understanding of the issue by focusing solely on gender roles. The stakeholder conflict theory was applied to this situation

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design used in the study was a descriptive survey research design. The data was collected through a mixed approach from both primary and secondary sources. The target population for the study included Household heads, Deputy County Commissioners ,senior police officers the In-charge Rapid Deployment Unit (RDU), Chiefs, National Intelligence Officer, Local CBOs in-charges, Male and Female Members of Local Peace committees, Leaders of Sugarcane Outgrowers; Leaders of Market Traders and religious leaders in the two sub-counties. The study had a sample size of 453 respondents selected through simple random, Convenience and purposive sampling. Qualitative data was analyzed by use of thematic analysis and the results presented in a narrative form and through verbatim quotations, while quantitative was analyzed by using Statistical Packages for Social scientists (SPSS) to obtain both descriptive and the findings were then be presented in form of charts, graphs and Tables.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Types of Gender-based activities along the Nandi-Kisumu counties border

The study sought to establish the existence of various gender-based activities along the Nandi Kisumu counties border. The results as shown in Table 4.1. The findings revealed that there exist a number of cross-border gender-based activities in the study area. According to the household heads, Community based micro finance Program exists as shown by who 236 (61.5%) agreed, however, 117 (30.5%) disagreed, while 31 (8.1%) not aware about them; Savings and lending groups for women exists by 308 (80.2%) agreement, 68 (17.7%) disagreed while 8 (2.1%) not aware; Cash transfer programs exists by 204 (53.1%) agreement 147 (38.3%) disagreed while 33 (8.6%) not aware; Youth programs exists by 266 (69.3%) agreement, 100 (26%) disagreed while 18 (4.7%) not aware; religious peace activities exists by

308 (80.2%) agreement, 51 (13.3%) disagreed while 25 (6.5%) not aware; Cross border development projects exists by 257 (66.9%) agreement, 93 (24.2%) disagreed while 34 (8.9%) not aware; grass root peace organizations existing by 209 (54.4%), 110 (28.6%) disagreed while 65 (16.9%) not aware; Women entrepreneurship for economic empowerment and social change existing by 183 (47.7%) agreement; 175 (45.6%) disagreed while 26 (6.8%) not aware; and intermarriage existing by 278 (72.4%) agreement, 90 (23.4%) disagreed while 16 (4.2%) were never aware of the cross border gender based activities in between Nandi and Kisumu Counties. The analysis, therefore, reveals that Savings and Lending Groups For Women and men, Religious Peace Activities, Inter-marriage, Youth Programmes and Cross-border Development Projects were therefore rated highest by the household respondents as in existence as the cross-border gender-based activities between Nandi and Kisumu Counties.

Table 4. 1: Existence of Cross border Based Activities

Variable	Agree		Disagree		Not Aware	
	N	Per cent	N	Per cent	N	Per cent
Community-Based Microfinance Programmes	236	61.5	117	30.5	31	8.1
Savings and Lending Groups For Women and men	308	80.2	68	17.7	8	2.1
Cash Transfers	204	53.1	147	38.3	33	8.6
Youth Programmes	266	69.3	100	26.0	18	4.7
Religious Peace Activities	308	80.2	51	13.3	25	6.5
Cross-border Development Projects	257	66.9	93	24.2	34	8.9
Grassroot Peace Organizations	209	54.4	110	28.6	65	16.9
Women's entrepreneurship as a vehicle for economic empowerment and social change	183	47.7	175	45.6	26	6.8
Inter-marriage	278	72.4	90	23.4	16	4.2

Source: Field Data, 2022

Community Based Micro Finance Programs

Based on the results in Table 4.1, Community based microfinance Programs exists in the study area as shown by 236 (61.5%) of household heads agreed. Therefore, findings indicated that majority of the household respondents agreed that there exist community-based microfinance programs in the study area which not only serve as platforms for economic empowerment but are also important for cohesion among members of the community. According to the participants from the various FGDs in Muhsub-County in Kisumu County, some community-based microfinance's identified as mostly used by the residents are Saccos. Some of the Saccos as identified are Agrochemical Sacco, Chemelil Bussiness Community Sacco and Muhoroni Women Sacco among others. Some of the Microfinances in the Tinderet Sub County In Nandi

County as identified by the participants in various FGDs are Tinderet Sacco and Tinderet Tea estate Limited among others. However, the study learnt that most of the respondents were not willing to reveal whether they are members of the existing Micro finance's in the study area.

The results back up the claim made by Morduch and Hashemi (2003), who offer a great overview of the results that may be achieved through microfinance. Microfinance can offer "social benefits on an ongoing, persistent and huge scale," which go beyond helping people stabilise consumption and protect themselves from economic shocks. Families may be able to escape poverty in the long run if, for instance, microfinance clients are able to send their children to school and keep them there. Considering that poverty contributes to ethnic conflicts, this is a smart strategy for managing tensions within communities. The use of microfinance to increase women's economic independence is another topic investigated by Cheston and Kuhn (2002). Group lending approaches used in microfinance are often held up as a key to the sector's positive social impact because of the lauded ways in which they promote social capital, trust, empowerment, and leadership. This model was pioneered in Guatemala by FINCA, and it entails a group of 15-30 low-income business owners, most of whom are women, forming a village bank to borrow a large quantity of money. Leaders of the village bank are chosen democratically and are responsible for overseeing the distribution of loans to individual villagers. FINCA encourages its microfinance clients to become involved in the community by working together in groups. As a result of their collaboration, members of the village bank form lasting social ties with one another. In order to foster members' personal, social, and professional development, FINCA seeks to establish "community-run, community-focused" clubs. It is through the cultivation of such social capital that communities free of ethnic hostility can be established.

Savings and Lending Groups for Women and men

With regard to Table 4.1, Savings and lending groups for women exists in the study area as shown by 308 (80.2%) of household heads who agreed; The findings therefore affirm that the household respondents agreed that they exist in the study area. According the various participants from different FGDs, some of the Savings and lending groups are table banking and Meri go round. It emerged that most of these groups are started by men separately from the women but with time most men groups fail. The participants from men FGD confirmed that currently there are very few if not none of the men groups for savings and lending. However, it emerged that most men have joined the existing women started savings and lending groups and are very strong members where some are even officials in the said groups. Some of the savings and lending groups as identified by the participants in Muhoroni are Manyala group, Tuungane, Handshake Savings and lending groups among others. Equally, in Tinderet there are exist a number of savings and lending groups for both men and women. The study learnt that in Tinderet not so many men participate in the savings and lending groups but just women. It therefore means that there were none of the groups purely started by men and those which existed were dominated by women unlike in the cross border groups in Kisumu County.

The model of saving and lending groups some time referred to as table banking has been called village banking in Latin America where it has played an important role in creating social capital with the community and hence help in cohesion within the society. Westley (2004) provides additional context regarding who engages in village banking and what methods are most effective. One of the most "down-market" forms of local finance is the village bank. Well-known

village banks in Latin America serve an estimated 410,000 customers, nearly all of whom are women, lending an average of $150 apiece. It is estimated that 29% of village bank members are located in rural areas. Westley says that attending village bank meetings can be inconvenient, but that there are many advantages to doing so. Clients can learn about new job and business prospects, get emotional and practical support from other members, make new friends, handle large sums of money responsibly, and broaden their social circles. Even borrowers who have "graduated" to larger loans acknowledge the "value very highly" of these non-monetary benefits, he says. Traditional banks in smaller communities often provide more than just banking services, including training and other non-monetary aid. Male customers are welcome at several previously women-only or coed banking establishments in rural areas. He points to aspects of village banking that are particularly powerful, such as the ability to manage one's own funds, guarantee each other's loans, and choose one's own leaders. These features may make village banks effective catalysts for broader societal transformation.

Cash Transfers

Table 4.1 shows results from household respondents indicating the existence of cash transfer programs in the study area. Cash transfer programs exists by women exists in the study area as shown by 204 (53.1%) of household heads who agreed. According to focus group discussions conducted, some of the programs are directed to the most vulnerable members of the society in the study area. According to the participants, the vulnerable groups who have ever benefited from the cash transfer program are the children, elderly and women. The cash transfer programs are to cushion the individual beneficiaries from poverty where for example there is “pesa ya wazee” (Cash Transfer for the Elderly people). The study was informed by a key informant who is a social protection officer in Muhoroni that the cash was meant to be given to the elderly who are 65 years and above, poor and vulnerable and must not be receiving any pension from any source. Other cash transfer programs are for orphaned children who equally must be poor and have no alternative support. Additionally, the key informant also identified a cash transfer program for persons living with severe disabilities in the study area. The programs are government and non-government sponsored to help the most vulnerable to poverty and any form of risk from adverse impacts.

The provision of social safety nets has the ability to contribute positively to fostering social cohesiveness (Slater & Holmes, 2012). Social cohesion includes embracing variations in society but guaranteeing equity so that differences and inequities do not undermine stability and produce conflict (Idres, 2016). Because of its potential to alleviate poverty, strengthen the financial footing of the most vulnerable, expand their access to essential services, and guarantee fundamental protections to previously marginalized populations, social protection is often seen as a means to foster greater social cohesion (Babajanian & Hagen-Zanker, 2012). Assumptions about the role social protection can play in building social cohesiveness are ‘largely based on arguments about its state-controlled redistributive role and the levels of social unrest in the absence of social protection

Youth Programs

Referring to Table 4.1, Youth programs exists in the study area as shown by 266 (69.3%) of household heads who agreed. Therefore, most household respondents interviewed indicated that there exist various youth programs in the study area. This view was confirmed by the researcher from social affairs officers as a key informants in both Tinderet and Muhoroni sub

Counties in the study area. Additionally, during various FGDs in both Sub counties, participants confirmed that youths have programs that have kept them engaged hence barring them from being idle. From the FGDs, some of the programs identified by the participants are ball games tournaments. The study was informed that various football tournaments have been organized running across the border involving both boys and girls.

Another youth program as identified by the FGD participants is the Youth peer educators such as Tinada youth program. The study learnt that the program has outreach activities in various institutions within the boundaries of the study area on issues of mental health promotion and behavioural change. The study was also informed of youth empowerment programs on environmental protection and rehabilitation in Tinderet sub-County where the youths are engaged in activities of developing and nurturing seedlings for planting in degraded environments. The study also learnt that it from the program that youths get engaged and some earn a living from there.

The results are consistent with those of USAID research from 2005, which found that community-based youth programming is an important component of social cohesion and conflict management in neighbourhoods where many young people live. The research suggests that youth service organizations should provide supervised group activities (such as sports, community service, and education) that help young people develop a good sense of self, a sense of belonging with others, and the ability to take charge of their own lives. There should be well-defined spaces for healthy rivalries, group cohesion, and romantic interaction between the genders. However, it is often easier for adolescents to meet their own needs within the context of positive relationships they have built with others in the programme and with the community at large. For youth programmes to be truly effective, they need to incorporate youth leadership at every level. Youth learn crucial leadership skills and are more invested in a programme when they have a hand in designing it. Accordingly, it's important to incorporate youth perspectives from the get-go when crafting programmes. In addition, young people should be provided with the education and experience they need to work effectively with adults. Skills like public speaking, negotiation, lobbying, budgeting, and so on could be incorporated into this curriculum.

Pavol (2005) adds that when planning and assessing youth programmes, it is important to consider participants' gender. Generally speaking, young men are more prone to engage in violent behaviour than young women, however there are notable exceptions such as Nepal and Sri Lanka. To add complexity, young men and women often participate in violent acts for quite different reasons. When it comes to providing for their families basic needs, young women in most underdeveloped nations bear the brunt of the work. As a result, young women are significantly less likely to engage in formal and informal learning, vocational and leisure opportunities, and political activities. Therefore, programmes need to be adaptable in terms of time, venue, and content to fit the needs of girls.

Religious Peace Activities

The study sought to establish the existence of religious peace activities. Table 4.1 shows various responses from the household heads confirming that majority are in agreement with their existence. The findings revealed that religious peace activities exist in the study area as shown by 308 (80.2%) of household heads who agreed. This view was also confirmed from various

focus group discussions in the study area where various participants discussed a number of activities by different religions most dominantly Christianity and Islam. According to a key informant who was a Catholic Priest in Muhoroni sub-County, different religious leaders including the traditional leaders have programs where they have set aside some time during service to talk about conflicts and alternative ways of managing cross-border conflicts.

Additionally, the study was informed that various religious leaders occasionally organize from peace caravans a long and across the border between Nandi and Kisumu to advocate against conflict and the importance of peaceful coexistence between the two dominant ethnic groups. The key informant however reiterated the need for concerted efforts through more support from other stakeholders so that they could reach every part while they had plans to form a conglomeration of religion on peace and peaceful coexistence.

The findings of the study are consistent with Klopp (2007) Who claims that the Roman Catholic Church's Catholic Commission for Peace and Justice in Kenya and the National Council of Churches in Kenya have been promoting peacebuilding and healing in ethnic conflict zones across Kenya. Additionally, Chepkorir (2019) argues that religious institutions are active in promoting civic education, conflict resolution, and democracy and that the CJPC and NCCK representatives collect information about conflicts and other issues and relay it to the national office, where humanitarian aid is provided to those in need.

Cross border Development Projects

Table 4.1 shows that the majority of the household heads 257 (66.9%) agreed that there exist various cross-border development projects in the study area. Accordingly, various FGD participants also confirmed that they exist between Nandi and Kisumu Counties boundaries. The participants identified the cross-border development projects as water projects such as the Kibigori borehole, various institutions such as Nyaangore primary, shared markets built at the border, health centres such as Soba River and Mombwo health centres among others.

According to participants in an FGD in Songo Soba location, the cross border development projects were mainly put in place to enhance a share resource that would bring together residents across the border. They added that it was expected that the shared resources would instill a sense of belonging so that they are not affected as critical facilities to both ethnic groups. Other cross border development projects that has been recently put in place is dairy plant by the County government of Kisumu around Fort ternan in Koru which also in disputed boundaries by the residents of the two Counties of Nandi and Kisumu.

Grass root Peace organizations

With reference to Table 4.1, household heads confirmed of the existence of certain grass root peace organizations. According to the findings Grass root peace organizations exists in the study area as shown by 209 (54.4%) of household heads who agreed. This was confirmed by a key informant who was one of the Peace committee members in the cross border conflicts in the study area. The informant identified Women for peace and development as one of the grass root peace organization in the study area. The study was informed that the grass root organizations have support from other organizations such as Mercy Corps and Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. A CBO named Shallom has been at the center of conflict management and peace advocacy in the area. For example, shalom works closely with local peace committee

members to ensure that tension and conflicts that is likely to come from disagreements in the area are managed in good time.

Some of the activities that these organizations undertake to improve inter-community relations in the area include; peace meetings and dialogue in various hotspot areas within the border; Peace tournaments which include various sporting events, among many other activities.

Additionally, the "Nyumba Kumi" initiative was also identified as a grass root network that has played a great role in fostering peace when they work together with the local residents of the study area to provide information to the relevant authorities for action in case of any tension or suspicion.

Intermarriages

Table 4.1 shows results that the majority of the household heads were in agreement that intermarriage exists between the counties of Nandi and Kisumu. The findings revealed that Intermarriage exists in the study area as shown by 278 (72.4%) of household heads who agreedIntermarriage as the marriage between different people in terms of ethnicity exists across the Nandi - Kisumu border where Luo and Nandi sub ethnic group of Kalenjin marry each other as the dominant groups along the border. From the FGDs conducted in Kibigori, Songhor, Kopere, and in Chemeli areas which are dominated by the Luo, majority of the participants agreed that intermarriages exist and that was evidenced by the presence of women who are Nandis that formed part of the focus group discussions. The situation wasn't different from the FGDs conducted in area a long the border line that were dominated by the Nandi like Nyangore and Kapkoywa where there were presence of the Luo women that also formed part of the FGDs. There was a confirmation of intermarriage by a key informant who was a local administrator in Muhoroni who confirmed that his own mother was a Kalenjin while the father was a Luo.

The findings are in line with Kioko & Bolling (2015) whose study titled Poverty *and Livelihood Strategies at Lake Naivasha, Kenya: A Case Study of Kasarani Village revealed as a means of fostering unity between the two groups, marriages between Kikuyu women and Maasai men were common.* A variety of Kikuyu women, he implied, marry Maasai men. The majority of Kikuyu brides from mixed-race marriages came from Naivasha and Narok. Most women who work in Naivasha's cut-flower industry marry males from the neighbouring *area (*Kioko & Bolling (2015). It is more common for close ties between Maasai and Kikuyu to develop in areas where both groups have a strong social and economic presence, such as Maiella, Kinangop, Naivasha town, Maai Mahiu, Ndabibi, and Ng'ondi. Many Kikuyu settled in Narok County after migrating there in the 1950s and 1960s. They originally migrated from the Nairiegie Ngare area.

Whether men are in Support of Gender Based Activities

The study sought to establish whether men in the study area were in support of the gender-based activities. The findings revealed that 277 (72.14%) of the household heads agreed that indeed men supported women's activities while 107 (27.86%) disagreed as illustrated in Figure 4.1.

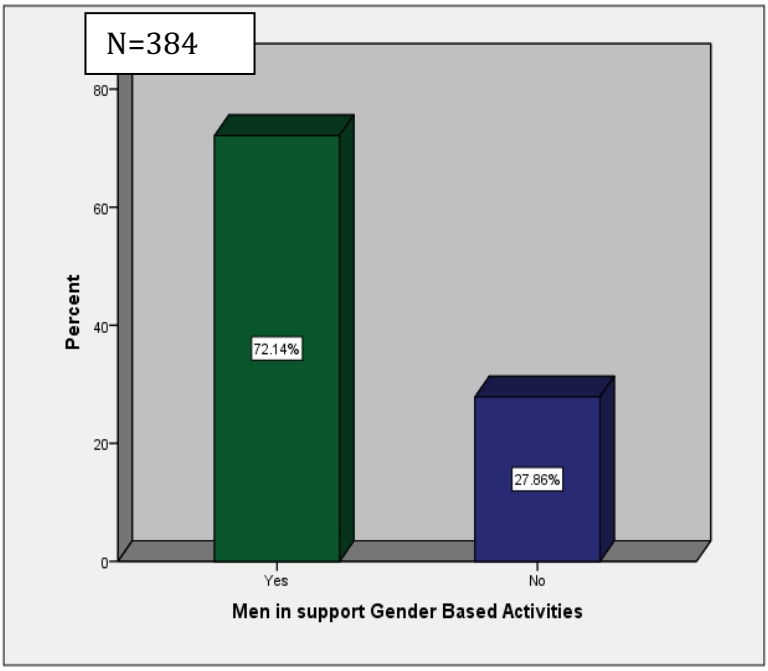


Figure 4. 1: Men in support of gender based activities
Source: Field data, 2022

It therefore shows that majority of the respondents agreed that men are in support of the activities between the Counties of Nandi and Kisumu. Based on a Key informant views, as a local administrator in Kopere, Muhoroni sub County, that in culturally, men are known as the head of the household and it means that before any member of the family is engaged in any activity then he or she must get permission from the man of the house. When the household interviews results show that majority are in support then it means that any member find permission from the men.

According to participants in an FGD in Chemelil, the study confirmed that the men are in support because some of the activities such as those that are economic based have an effect to the whole family if there is success or if there is failure women entrepreneurship for economic empowerment given as an example. They added that there are a good number of house units that are supported from the economic based gender activities in the study area in terms of paying school fees to their children. Socially, it emerged that men are the key players in the gender based activities such in intermarriages across the boundaries so they have indicated support of the activities. However, there are some small percentage in the study area who are not in support such as the issue of intermarriage and to specific ethnic groups who they regard as the community's enemies and indicated that they were not willing for any of their family members to participate on such.

Level of Women's involvement in Cross-border Conflict Management

The study sought to establish the level of womens involvement in cross border conflict management along the Nandi-Kisumu border. The the findings revaled that that women are very involved in cross border conflict management as indicated by 172 (44.79%), marginally involved as stated by 92 (23.96%); as not involved as atated by 102 (26.56%) of household

heads and marginalized and sidelined as shown by 18 (4.69%). The findings are as indicated in Figure 4.2.

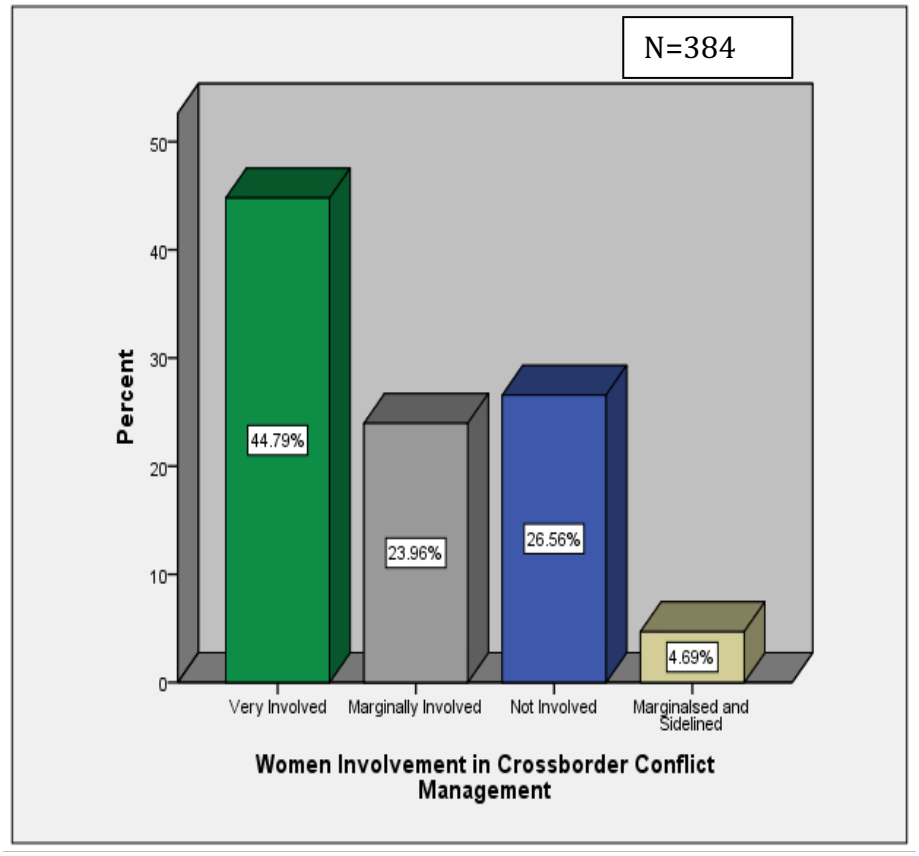


Figure 4. 2: Women involvement in cross border conflicts management
Source: Field Data, 2022

Cross border management encompass a spectrum of approaches that are not limited to negotiations, reconciliations, peace educations, peace advocacy and cultural exchange activities. Women are regarded as one group within communities that have a lot of daily activities that cut across social and economical spheres. Its therefore evidenced that incase of conflicts then they may suffer more than any other groups in the community. Founded on that, its prudent that their active participation on the management of conflicts is highly encouraged so that they reduce the risk of conflict occurrence, effective response and better strategies implementation to reduce any chances of it occurring in a given location.



Plate 4. 1 : Researcher at the Office of the Deputy County Commissioner in Muhoroni Sub-county
Source: Field Data, 2022

Regarding the cross border conflicts in Nandi and Kisumu Counties, women are engaged in an array of social and economic activities that are done a cross the border hence during conflict, their activities are negatively impacted on and hence need to be part of the solutions to the occurrence and recurrence of conflict management. According to an FGD in Kibigori location in Muhoroni Sub County, Kisumu County, majority of the participants unanimously agreed women are adequately involved in the cross border conflict management. This was attributed to the number of the women in the peace forums that many times when there are peace meetings that are always representative of the women enough that is the third representation. Majority of the participants agreed that however much there is law that require a third representation of women in community activities, there is always the urge and willingness of women in being incorporated in the cross border conflict management.

According to a participant:
Hata kama iko sheria yenye inahitaji wanawake wahusishwe kwa kutatua migogoro ya mipaka, wanawake wetu ni watu wa kujisukuma na wameonyesha nia ya kuhusishwa. Hii imefanya wengi wako kwa komiti tofauti tofauti ya kuleta na kudumisha amani kati yetu na wenzetu wa ngambo ile. Tuna hitaji wamama wengi wakue kwa mstari wa mbele kudhibiti migogoro wa mpaka kwa sababu ni sisi ndio tunaumia zaidi wakati shughuli zetu za kila siku zinasitishwa kutokana na vita
(The Role of women in conflict management is recognized by law and that is why women are part of the membership of Local Peace committes, women have also shown a lot of interest in these activities. We need more women to be actively involved in cross-border conflict management because when these conflicts occur, they interfere with our day to day activities thus causing a lot of suffering for the local community members (FGD Participant in Kibigori Sub location, 12th January, 2022)



Plate 4. 2: Researcher with FGD Participants in Kibigori, Muhoroni Sub-County
Source: Field Data, 2022

Compared to a KII in Kapkoywa location in Tinderet Sub County, Nandi County, the informant who is a Peace committee member, agreed that women are involved but marginally. He attributed the low self involvement of women in cross-border conflict management to the culture. The Nandi sub-ethnic group culture traditionally never allowed women to be involved in peacemaking forums. He added that if they were to be involved then it would be passive where they were just to attend but may not be allowed to talk and participate actively on matters of conflict resolution and management in general. However, he added that the current laws have encouraged involvement of women in the management of conflicts through a third representation.

From the KII:
A third representation is meant to empower women to be part of the solutions to issues that affect their lives and that of the community as a whole but the culture seems to be still a hurdle that hinder the majority of the women in actively participating in cross border conflict management. This is evidenced by the number of peace forums that I have attended where most women still shy away from contributing and also very few attend the forums consistently but we are sure that with time they will change for active participation (Interview with Peace Committee member in Tinderet Sub location, 15th January 2022).

The study, therefore, identified a difference in terms of women involvement in cross-border conflict management based on other contributing factors like cultural differences and practices. This can hence affect the overall progress and efforts of managing conflicts across the border because of the inaction of the other women counterparts in the cross-border activities to bring sustainable peace between Nandi and Kisumu Counties.

Some of the cross-border conflict management measures that the study identified are mediation, reconciliation, cross cultural exchange activities, Peace advocacy in shared markets and peace education in the Nandi – Kisumu cross border conflict management by women. Among these women are involved in where like in a case of peace committees that have fifteen (15) members, five (5) are normally women.

The study also found out that none formally, women have also involved themselves in other activities that are geared towards fostering peaceful coexistence across the border. Some of the activities are related to cross cultural exchange activities where women from the two dominant ethnic groups Luo and Nandi organize activities at the border and communities from both sides of the border meet and share their diverse culture. In this, one ethnic group to another get to learn from one another on the differences and similarities culturally. From a KII with the chairman of one peace committee, the study was informed that the communities are meant to maximize on the similarities and minimize on the differences. He added that the main aim of the cultural exchange was to identify those cultures that are contributing factors to the cross-border conflicts and the two communities to get to find amicable solutions. Additionally, the chairman from the peace committee reiterated the importance of the cultural exchange activities as a platform too for sharing views on suitable measures in management of the cross border conflicts buy all from the youths to women and to the old men plus all relevant stakeholders.

The findings were consistent with a study by Justino, Mitchell & Müller (2018) which suggested that despite women's engagement in local peace-building activities across the countries covered in the study, research respondents reported facing substantial barriers when trying to become involved in such processes. This was particularly where high levels of decision-making, beyond their immediate social relations, were concerned. This finding mirrors a broad literature on the barriers women face to their inclusion in political decision-making processes, including peacebuilding, across the world. For instance, before the recent Taliban take over, Afghanistan's government had imposed a 25 per cent quota for women in parliamentary elections and had recognized equal rights for women and men in its constitution. These had not, however, always been translated into significant improvements in gender equality in peace-building processes. Many women faced a backlash from men who perceived as inappropriate reforms that allow women greater freedoms and voice (Rubin, 2012).

Additionally, According to (CARE, 2010) in Nepal, despite high levels of engagement in the conflict, women were not involved in formal peace talks, nor had they been involved in formal decision-making processes. Women were organized mostly in small NGOs, community groups and as peace activists, which limited their opportunities to shape and influence formal peace-building efforts. Similarly, In Sierra Leone, women played active roles during the conflict, but were largely excluded from disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation programmes (Mazurana and Carlson, 2004; Richards *et al*., 2004).Women play central roles in peace-

building activities. These include setting up formal and informal groups involved in, for instance, demobilizing and reintegrating former soldiers, demilitarization and disarmament, and peaceful political development. These activities take the form of direct action, protests and negotiations between different groups (Justino *et al.,* 2012). They tend to emphasize areas that are neglected in more militarized international peace-building missions, such as the role of local-level peace building, and the communities' psycho-social, relational and spiritual needs (Justino *et al*., 2013).

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that there are a number of gender-based activities in the study area some of which escalated the conflicts while others could help in managing the conflicts. The conflicts in the border of Nandi and Kisumu counties was caused mainly by activities like cattle rustling, political incitement, and land-related problems. These conflicts were brutal in nature and totally interrupted life in the border area whenever they occurred. Generally, when conflicts occur in the area, markets would be empty and cross-border trade would cease, hence hampering both social and economic activities in the study area. These conflicts would affect everything in the study area including church attendance, school attendance, the work of peace committee members and various community programs involving youths, women and men within the borderline areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends that there should be a more proactive approach towards conflict management in the study area, aimed at ensuring that conflicts are averted before they occur. This can be done by strengthening the gender-based approaches that have been identified in the study area. The engagement of all members of the society in preventive efforts can go a long way toward averting a crisis that is normally experienced when conflicts erupt.

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