UNIOFFA JOURNAL OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES (U-OJIS)
A Multidisciplinary Journal of Science, Management and Social Sciences
Website: www.unioffajis.com
ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

WOMEN IN CONFLICT PREVENTION AND PEACEBUILDING IN NIGERIA: LESSONS'S FROM KWARA STATE

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Volume 2:1

Abstract

This study examines the role of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Ilorin Metropolis, of Kwara State, Nigeria. With a focus on their contributions, strategies, and the barriers. Guided by the Gender and Peacebuilding Theory, the research adopts a quantitative survey design and collects data from 363 respondents across Ilorin East, Ilorin South, and Ilorin West Local Government Areas. Findings reveal that women plays a pivotal role in grassroots peacebuilding through community education, early warning systems, interethnic and interreligious harmony promotion, dialogue, negotiation, and reliance on traditional conflict resolution methods. Collaboration with NGOs and religious organisations further enhances their peacebuilding impact. However, their involvement is constrained by male-dominated leadership structures, lack of formal mentorship, and domestic responsibilities, though cultural and religious stereotypes appear to be less significant barriers than previously assumed. The study concludes that women's peacebuilding roles are both impactful and indispensable, recommending gender-sensitive policies, institutional support, and mentorship programs to enhance their participation. This research contributes to the understanding of women's agency in conflict prevention within multicultural urban contexts and offers policy-relevant recommendations for inclusive peace processes.

Keywords: Peacebuilding, Woman, Participation, Conflict, Prevention

Introduction

Generally, woman are been postulated to be a weaker gender and are considered to act below men in all facet of life. They are considered as a different gender who cannot resist or endure some natural and manmade challenges in the environment due to their stratifications; but these are all based on social construct. Although, war hits women harder, and their experiences are not the same as men's (Kastrup, 2006). Even though women often bear more of the burden during wars, their insights and skills are often ignored when trying to solve conflicts. As a result, they are still underrepresented in many leadership roles globally (Buvinic et al., 2012). In the past, those in charge have left women out of peace talks, and women often face discrimination when they try to have a say in resolving armed conflicts. Sadly, women (and kids) are often the primary victims in wars. Rape and sexual violence are used as weapons in these conflicts (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2015). Also, because so many husbands and fathers die in war, there is a significant reliance on women in the aftermath, which goes to show how much armed conflicts affect them (McGuinness, 2007).

Because war is so brutal on women and girls, peacemakers need to involve women in efforts to end war and keep it from happening again. Any attempts to fix the harm done to

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

women because of war should include them in the peace process. The role of women in preventing conflict and building peace has gained significant recognition, particularly in formal and informal peace efforts. In the past, peace and security plans were often devised by men, with women frequently excluded from crucial decision-making processes. However, there is a growing understanding of the pivotal role women play in making lasting peace a reality. This recognition was formalized with the adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 in 2000, which underscored the vital role of women in preventing conflict, building peace, and protecting people in war zones (United Nations, 2000). The resolution highlighted that when women actively participate in peace talks, the resulting agreements are more robust, more inclusive, and more successful.

Bulus et al. (2020) note that in Nigeria, a country with a diverse mix of ethnic, religious, and cultural groups, women are undertaking significant work to build peace, often within their communities. Ilorin Metropolis, the capital of Kwara State, is an interesting place to study how women contribute to preventing conflict and building peace. The area has seen some ethnic and religious conflicts, which have caused tensions in the community. In this area, what women do is often shaped by traditional roles, which might limit their involvement in official peace efforts. Still, they make a big difference through informal, community-based actions. Women in Ilorin, like those in many parts of Nigeria, are actively working to resolve conflicts, promote unity, and facilitate dialogue between different groups. They often lead the way in promoting peace through community projects, such as organising meetings, mediating conflicts, and assisting with recovery after conflicts. However, their roles in building peace are often overlooked in policy discussions and formal peace processes. This lack of recognition is exacerbated by social and cultural issues, like traditional male dominance, which limit how much women can participate in resolving conflicts and building peace.

Women have long been recognised as crucial to building peace and preventing conflict, particularly at the local level. Around Ilorin, Kwara State, women are getting involved in trying to head off and fix problems in their areas. Even though they are doing a lot, everyday conversation about what specific things women do to help make or keep peace in society is not engaging (Sinulingga, 2022). Therefore, this study identifies the various ways women are contributing to peacebuilding, primarily in Ilorin, where gender disparity is taken into account in societal affairs.

The following is guided by the following research objectives.

Examine the various roles women play in conflict prevention in Ilorin, Kwara State.

Investigate the strategies and methods employed by women in preventing conflicts within the Ilorin community.

iii. Identify the socio-cultural and institutional barriers that hinder women's active participation in conflict prevention and resolution.

Conceptual Review

The Concept Conflict

Conflict typically refers to a significant disagreement or argument over a matter that is important. It occurs when people, groups, or organisations clash over their interests, beliefs, or actions. This can manifest in various ways, such as yelling at each other, holding different views, or even getting into physical fights. Essentially, it involves situations where people believe their goals or needs do not align, which can create tension and sometimes exacerbate the issue (Marsella, 2011).According to Nisa et al. (2024), Conflict is a regular part of human interaction and can occur at different levels, such as between individuals, groups, or even countries. It typically arises when people notice a discrepancy in their interests, values, or goals, which can create tension or sometimes escalate into violence. Dealing with conflicts is crucial for maintaining peace and stability in society.

This study underscores the pivotal role of women in averting conflicts and fostering peace in Ilorin, Kwara State. Conflict, a complex issue, often stems from discord among individuals. In Ilorin, as in many parts of Nigeria, disputes frequently arise due to differences in ethnicity, religion, or political affiliation. The struggle for resources, identity, and power further inflames these conflicts. When communication breaks down,

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

misinformation spreads, and trust diminishes, the community becomes fragmented and unstable. Women, with their unique perspectives and strategies, play a crucial role in preventing these conflicts from escalating.. These things can make things even more tense. Fights do not always involve violence, but you might see protests, strikes, or other forms of unrest, which disrupt how well people get along (Ray & Esteban, 2017). For example, you might see different ethnic groups fighting over who gets to be in charge or who gets what, which can cause conflict within the community.

Types of Conflict

Conflict can take on a multitude of forms, depending on the parties involved, the stakes at hand, and the dynamics of their interaction.

Interpersonal Conflict

This type of conflict arises between individuals who hold differing views or interests. It often arises due to personal disagreements or conflicting goals. In Ilorin Metropolis, you may observe interpersonal conflicts within families or small community groups. Disputes over family issues, money, or social roles can create tension. Women often step in as mediators, utilising their roles in families and communities to help resolve conflicts before they escalate (Fritz, 2020).

Intergroup Conflict

Intergroup conflict involves clashes between different groups, like ethnic or religious communities (Fisher, 2011). In Ilorin, tensions between groups such as the Yoruba and Fulani might lead to disputes over land or cultural practices. These kinds of conflicts can get intense, especially if one group feels left out or treated unfairly. Women can play a crucial role as peacebuilders by fostering dialogue between groups and advocating for fair governance that considers the concerns of all stakeholders.

Societal or Structural Conflict

This conflict stems from deep-seated societal inequalities and unfair systems. It often encompasses issues such as social and economic disparities that favour some groups over others (Cramer, 2003). In Ilorin, these conflicts may manifest as economic inequality or gender discrimination. Women, especially those from marginalised backgrounds, play a crucial role in addressing these issues by engaging in activism and advocating for policies that promote social justice.

Political Conflict

Political conflict comes from the fight for power or control over governance. It often relates to competition for political positions or resources. In Nigeria, these conflicts can occur at both local and national levels, resulting in unrest. Women contribute significantly to resolving political conflicts in Ilorin. They rally communities to support peaceful elections and encourage more women to participate in political discussions, thereby creating a fairer governance system (Abdullahi & Bello, 2020).

Religious Conflict

Religious Conflict occurs when different religious groups clash over beliefs or practices. In places like Ilorin, where Islam and Christianity coexist, misunderstandings can sometimes lead to conflict (Tamsir, 2020). Religious tensions affect community harmony. Women have been instrumental in mending relationships between religious groups in Ilorin. They organise dialogues and promote shared values to support peaceful living together.

The concept of Conflict Prevention

Conflict prevention is not a passive process; it involves the strategic deployment of measures to prevent disputes from escalating into violent confrontations. This strategy includes early detection systems, proactive diplomatic measures, and dialogue facilitation, alongside community-based programs that focus on resolving core issues such as inequality and poor governance (Muggah & White, 2013). The conflict prevention strategies of Ilorin Metropolis require cultural sensitivity to serve all social groups, as this area exhibits significant ethnic and religious diversity.

According to scholarly research, the specific position of women within families and communities gives them a unique role in conflict prevention. Women's involvement in informal peace processes, combined with grassroots mobilisation and early warning systems, enables women to mitigate tensions that could have escalated into open conflict (Dayal & Christien, 2020). In heterogeneous societies, such as Ilorin Metropolis, the effectiveness of conflict prevention depends on the inclusivity of the process, particularly the participation of marginalised groups, including women.

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

Women's social networks detect changes in community relations before official institutions do, allowing them to intervene at the right time. The strategic importance of including women in formal and informal structures proves essential for achieving long-term stability (Dayal & Christien, 2020). Conceptually, conflict prevention shares a conceptual foundation with sustainable peacebuilding, as it focuses on proactive steps rather than reactive solutions (Melander & Pigache, 2006).

Conflict Prevention Mechanisms

Conflict prevention mechanisms incorporate institutional structures and community-based strategies to forecast and minimise or eliminate factors that trigger violent conflict before it intensifies. Structural and operational mechanisms form the basis of these preventive strategies (Nathan, 2019). Structural prevention methods require sustained, long-term activities that combine inclusive governance systems with equitable resource distribution methods and development policies which target the core elements causing conflicts. Early warning systems, together with mediation efforts and preventive diplomacy, represent operational short-term responses to address immediate threats (Ackermann, 2020; George, 2000). The pluralistic nature of Ilorin Metropolis, with its ethnic, religious, and socio-economic diversity, demands localised prevention mechanisms that align with local cultural values. The most effective mechanisms to prevent conflicts comprise three key elements: peace committees operating within communities, traditional dispute resolution processes, interfaith dialogue programs, and public awareness campaigns.

These systems operate without formal organisation but achieve considerable power because they derive from legitimate community trust (Galtung, 1996; Van Tongeren, 2013). Conflict prevention approaches employ multiple strategies that integrate top-down state institutions with grassroots community programs. Women's special position in community life and social domains provides them with valuable resources needed to make significant contributions to peacebuilding initiatives. In Ilorin, the inclusion and institutionalisation of women in peace prevention programs becomes vital because it leads to sustainable peace.

Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding represents a multifaceted approach that focuses on establishing long-lasting peace through direct conflict resolution solutions and post-conflict assistance, while developing institutions alongside social cohesion. Peacebuilding exists as both an ongoing development and a final objective, which requires the elimination of violence alongside the establishment of justice, equality, and operational governmental systems (Lederach, 1997; Galtung, 1996). The activities of peacebuilding encompass reconciliation, justice reform, and infrastructure development, alongside psychosocial services and inclusive political participation. The peacebuilding approach in Ilorin Metropolis needs to adapt to local cultural traditions, community religious norms, and social structures.

The global community now recognises that women play central roles in peacebuilding operations, as they move beyond the status of conflict survivors to become drivers of transformative change. Peacebuilders undertake tasks that include community dispute resolution, alongside political activism and post-war reconstruction activities (Anderlini, 2007; Paffenholz et al., 2016). Women in Nigeria and other African societies practice peacebuilding through time-tested traditional institutions, including market women's groups, mothers' unions, and interfaith coalitions. Despite limited recognition, these important roles function as essential elements for maintaining peace among local communities (Tripp, 2015).

Peacebuilding is a dual process that features international agencies and state institutions working from above, as well as community members, primarily women, who activate social networks to bring about reconciliation and social healing (Mac Ginty & Richmond, 2013). The bottom-up approach is now gaining more acceptance because it allows for local ownership while maintaining cultural ties and promoting long-term sustainability. Women in the Ilorin context support peacebuilding through their work in facilitating religious dialogues, as well as providing trauma healing services and conducting civic education programs.

Women in Nigerian Peacebuilding Efforts

The essential peacebuilding roles performed

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

by women exist in informal community-based networks throughout Nigeria. Women in Nigeria who face formal exclusion have consistently demonstrated activism for justice, alongside efforts at reconciliation and community restorative initiatives. These efforts transcend ethnic boundaries, overcoming religious differences and regional barriers, as Nigerian women demonstrate both resilience and innovation (Alaga, 2011; Tripp, 2015).

Women throughout Nigeria take active roles in post-conflict reconciliation activities during ethno-religious crises which have occurred in Jos, Kaduna, Niger Delta regions and across Nigeria. The Women Without Walls Initiative (WOWWI) and the Federation of Muslim Women's Associations in Nigeria (FOMWAN) organise interfaith dialogues and peace education, along with trauma-healing workshops, to support communities affected by violence (Fahm, 2017). Through non-violent demonstrations and peace negotiations with militant groups in the Niger Delta women demonstrate their moral leadership and community approval (Ibeanu & Momoh, 2008).

Women play only a marginal role in participating in national peacebuilding processes. Most peacebuilding institutions, along with security sectors in Nigeria, maintain a male-dominated structure without genuine participation from women beyond tokenistic representation. Nigeria implemented the National Action Plan (NAP) in response to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325; however, weak implementation occurred due to funding limitations, insufficient political support, and traditional male-centred resistance (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2017; UN Women, 2020). Peace processes involving women yield sustainable and fair outcomes in addition to being more inclusive, according to Paffenholz et al. (2016) and Gizelis (2011).

Roles of Women in Conflict Prevention and Peacebuilding

Early Warning and Community Surveillance

Women often detect warning signs of emerging conflicts because they spend most of their time in markets, attending schools and religious institutions, and monitoring their family networks. Women recognise tensions which stem from resource conflicts, youth disturbances, and religious disagreements, and then either share these concerns with community leaders or organise local responses. The warning systems, which operate through social networks, function as unofficial conflict detection systems (Gizelis, 2011).

Mediation and Informal Dispute Resolution

Women hold primary roles as peacekeepers during interpersonal conflicts that arise within African culture and familial structures. The women of Ilorin who perform religious or traditional duties serve as mediators between quarrelling groups, facilitating peaceful conflict resolution through dialogue and reconciliation processes. Women earn credibility as intermediaries because of their moral standing and their preference for relationship-based mediation (Anderlini, 2007).

Peace Education and Sensitisation

Women utilise their motherhood responsibilities, teaching positions, and roles in religious instruction to teach respect for peace, tolerance, and non-violence principles. Peace education programs delivered by these educators teach children and youth essential values, including tolerance for others, respect for cultural differences, and empathy. Through their group initiatives, women lead programs to train communities about peacebuilding techniques and non-aggressive communication methods (Lederach, 1997).

Advocacy and Policy Influence

Women's advocacy groups and networks actively support the development of inclusive policies while defending the rights of victims and promoting women's rights during peace negotiations. Women across Nigeria have united to increase their political involvement and peacebuilding roles, which contributed to the creation of the National Action Plan based on UNSCR 1325 (Federal Ministry of Women Affairs, 2017).

Reconciliation and Social Healing

Women take the lead in healing the gaps which form between ethnic groups, religious affiliations, and political factions following warfare. The organisation arranges interfaith prayers together with community dialogues and support networks, which promote forgiveness, empathy, and social unity. Their approach to promoting healing relationships, as opposed to political settlements, leads to enduring peace, according to Tripp (2015).

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E-ISSN:3141-558X

Post-Conflict Reconstruction and Community Development

Women participate in community reconstruction after conflicts through initiatives that advance economic empowerment, healthcare delivery systems, and social infrastructure development. The essential role of women is to guarantee that post-conflict rebuilding serves vulnerable groups while preventing future conflicts (UN Women, 2015).

Psycho-social Support and Trauma Healing

Women act as both caregivers and community leaders who initially respond to all forms of violence-induced trauma. Victims receive emotional support and sessions, including mental health services, through their organised efforts, which specifically target children and other women. The emotional work performed by women during long-term recovery plays a vital role in achieving successful outcomes (Paffenholz et al., 2016).

Bridge Building and Intergroup Dialogue

Women serve as vital connections to bridge communities that exist in isolation. The women of Ilorin bring together Christian and Muslim women's groups through conversations and dual events to champion religious harmony and social unity.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gender and Peacebuilding Theory

The theoretical framework of Gender and Peacebuilding Theory was developed through integration between feminist theory, peace studies, and development studies. The international community developed this approach during the 1990s and early 2000s, recognising that peacebuilding initiatives typically overlooked women's perspectives (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002). Peacebuilding efforts remain incomplete and unsustainably flawed, according to Carol Cohn, Cynthia Cockburn, and Dyan Mazurana, unless they address gendered conflict aspects (Cohn, 2013; Mazurana & Proctor, 2013).

According to this theory, women and men approach conflicts through distinct perspectives because of how society expects them to perform their roles, which in turn provides unique, beneficial peacebuilding methods. The theory opposes traditional militaristic and hierarchical approaches to peace by advocating for inclusive, gender-aware processes that allow women to lead peace activities (Cockburn, 2007). The people of Ilorin Metropolis recognise women as essential figures who contribute, through informal means, to community mediation, as well as to religious harmony and social support networks, despite the region's cultural and religious diversity. The valuable work done by women in peacebuilding remains systematically undervalued within established formal peace structures. The application of Gender and Peacebuilding Theory enables researchers to highlight these important roles while assessing their contributions to conflict prevention and peace restoration.

A region with inter-communal or political tension can benefit from women's involvement in religious and cultural institutions, which serve as a strong peacebuilding force. Women from Ilorin serve as dispute mediators between families and communities, but do not find inclusion in security planning or local conflict resolution groups. Through this framework, researchers can identify the factors that block women from taking active roles in peacebuilding due to gender norms, patriarchal systems, and institutional barriers. In Ilorin, educational opportunities, together with traditional cultural values, create distinct gender-related dynamics. Educated and active women experience empowerment, but other women face restrictions due to prevailing norms that suppress their leadership capabilities. Gender and Peacebuilding Theory demonstrates how to identify and analyse both deterrents and potential avenues for female engagement in community-based peace initiatives.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design employed in this study is survey research. The Population of the Study consist of Ilorin Metropolis comprises three major local government areas, namely, Ilorin West, Ilorin East, and Ilorin South Local Government Area. Due to the nature of the research topic and its objectives, the

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X
study's population will comprise only women in the three major local governments of Ilorin Metropolis.

S/N	Name of Local Government Area	Population
1	Ilorin West Local Government Area	184,834
2	Ilorin East Local Government Area	102,661
3	Ilorin South Local Government Area	105,645
	Total	**393, 140**

Source: National Population Census (2006)

The population of the study is **393,140**.

This study employed the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sampling technique to determine the sample size. To ensure that each local government area in Ilorin Metropolis is represented in the data collection, a cluster method will be employed.

S/N	Name of Local Government Area	Sample Size	No of Respondents
1	Ilorin West Local Government Area	(184,834 / 393,140) × 384 =180.5	181 Respondents
2	Ilorin East Local Government Area	(102,661 / 393,140) × 384 = 100.3	100 Respondents
3	Ilorin South Local Government Area	(105,645 / 393,140) × 384 = 103.2	103 Respondents
	Total		**384 Respondents**

Presentation, Discussion and Interpretation of Results

This section presents, analyses, and interprets data collected from the respondents. However, Three Hundred and eighty-four (384) questionnaires were distributed to the residents of Ilorin Metropolis. From the above number, three hundred sixty-three (363) questionnaires were returned, thus yielding a response rate of 94.53% for the study. For this analysis, the researcher converted the 363-questionnaire to 100%. Therefore, the 363 questionnaires will be considered 100% complete in all data presentations.

Presentation of Results

Table .1 Gender of Respondents

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	112	30.85%
Female	251	69.15%
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The table above shows that the majority of the respondents, 251 (69.15%), are female, while 112 (30.85%) are male. This gender distribution ensures the study is representative of the community.

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E-ISSN:3141-558X

Table .2 Age of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage
21 - 30 years	118	32.51%
31 – 40 years	106	29.20%
41 – 50 years	80	22.04%
51 - 61 years	45	12.40%
61 years and above	14	3.86%
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025

The above table shows that 118 (32.51%) respondents are between 21-30 years, 196 (29.20%) respondents are between the ages of 31 - 40 years, 80 (22.04%) respondents are between the ages of 41 - 50 years, 45 (12.40%) respondents are 51 - 60 years, while 14 (3.86%) respondents are between 61 years and above. The majority of the respondents are between the ages of 21 and 30 years.

Table .3 Marital Status

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Single	119	32.78
Married	213	58.68
Separated	31	8.54
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025

The above table shows that 119 (32.78%) respondents are single, 213 (58.68%) are married, and 31 (8.54%) are separated.

Table .4 Educational Qualification

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
O' Level	66	18.18
OND/NCE/A Level	87	23.97
HND/BSc	167	46.00
Masters/PhD	43	11.84
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The table above shows the educational qualifications of the respondents. Sixty-six (18.18%) respondents hold O' Level qualifications, 87 (23.97%) hold OND/NCE/A Level qualifications, 167 (46.00%) hold HND/BSc qualifications, and 43 (11.84%) hold MSc/PhD qualifications.

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E-ISSN:3141-558X

Table .5 Local Government Area of the Respondents

Educational Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
Ilorin West Local Government Area	171	47.11
Ilorin East Local Government Area	95	26.19
Ilorin South Local Government Area	97	26.71
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows the local government of the respondents. 171 (47.11%) respondents are residents of Ilorin West Local Government Area, 95 (26.19%) respondents are residents of Ilorin East Local Government Area, and 97 (26.71%) respondents are residents of Ilorin South Local Government Area.

Research Question 1

How do women contribute to conflict prevention in Ilorin, Kwara State?

Table .6 Women educate community members on peace and conflict prevention

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	87	23.97
Strongly Agreed	221	60.88
Disagreed	16	4.41
Strongly Disagreed	39	10.74
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows that 87 (23.97%) respondents agreed, 221 (60.88%) respondents strongly agreed, 16 (4.41%) respondents disagreed, while 39 (10.74%) strongly disagreed that women educate community members on peace and conflict prevention. Based on the above analysis, the majority of respondents agreed that women should educate community members on the prevention of peace and conflict.

Table . 7 Women participate in early warning and response activities

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	98	26.99
Strongly Agreed	190	52.34
Disagreed	39	10.74
Strongly Disagreed	36	9.92
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows that 98 (26.99%) respondents agreed, 190 (52.34%) respondents strongly agreed, 39 (10.74%) respondents disagreed, while 36 (9.92%) strongly disagreed that women

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X
participate in early warning and response activities. Based on the above analysis, the majority of respondents agreed that women participate in early warning and response activities.

Table . 8 Women promote interreligious or interethnic harmony

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	93	25.62
Strongly Agreed	184	50.69
Disagreed	47	12.95
Strongly Disagreed	39	10.74
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows that 93 (25.62%) respondents agreed, 184 (50.69%) respondents strongly agreed, 47 (12.95%) respondents disagreed, while 39 (10.74%) strongly disagreed that women promote interreligious or interethnic harmony. Based on the above analysis, the majority of respondents agreed that women promote interreligious or interethnic harmony.

Research Question 2

Which strategies do women employ in conflict prevention in Ilorin?

Table. 9 Women use dialogue and negotiation to prevent conflicts in the community

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	118	32.51
Strongly Agreed	208	57.30
Disagreed	12	3.31%
Strongly Disagreed	25	6.89%
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows that 118 (32.51%) respondents agreed, 208 (57.30%) respondents strongly agreed, 12 (3.31%) respondents disagreed, and 25 (6.89%) strongly disagreed that women use dialogue and negotiation to prevent conflicts in the community. Based on the above analysis, the majority of respondents agreed that women use dialogue and negotiation to prevent conflicts in the community.

Table . 10 Women rely on traditional methods (e.g., family elders, storytelling, local proverbs, and cultural practices) for conflict prevention

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	99	27.27
Strongly Agreed	243	66.94
Disagreed	7	1.93
Strongly Disagreed	14	3.86

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

Total	363	100

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows that 99 (27.27%) respondents agreed, 243 (66.94%) respondents strongly agreed, 7 (1.93%) respondents disagreed while 14 (3.86%) strongly disagree that women rely on traditional methods (e.g., family elders, storytelling, local proverbs, cultural practices) for conflict prevention. Based on the above analysis, the majority of respondents agreed that women rely on traditional methods (e.g., family elders, storytelling, local proverbs, cultural practices) for conflict prevention.

Table. 11 Women collaborate with NGOs and religious organisations for peace efforts

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	94	25.93
Strongly Agreed	218	60.05
Disagreed	21	5.79
33	30	8.26
Total	363	100

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows that 94 (25.93%) respondents agreed, 218 (60.05%) respondents strongly agreed, 21 (5.79%) respondents disagreed, while 30 (8.26%) strongly disagreed that Women collaborate with NGOs and religious organisations for peace efforts. Based on the above analysis, the majority of respondents agreed that women collaborate with NGOs and religious organisations for peace efforts.

Research Question 3

What are the socio-cultural and institutional barriers that limit women's involvement in conflict prevention?

Table . 12 Male dominance in politics and leadership reduces women's influence in conflict prevention

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	76	20.94
Strongly Agreed	134	36.91
Disagreed	65	17.91
Strongly Disagreed	88	24.24
Total	363	100

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows that 76 (20.94%) respondents agreed, 134 (36.91%) respondents strongly agreed, 65 (17.91%) respondents disagreed, while 88 (24.24%) strongly disagreed that the male dominance in politics and leadership reduces women's influence in conflict prevention. Based on the above analysis, the majority of respondents agreed that male dominance in politics and leadership reduces women's influence in conflict prevention and resolution.

Table . 13 Religious practices in Ilorin, such as the belief that women should not lead prayers or speak in mixed-gender religious gatherings, discourage women from taking leadership roles in public affairs

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	36	9.92
Strongly Agreed	87	23.97
Disagreed	85	23.41
Strongly Disagreed	155	42.70
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The table above shows that 36 (9.92%) respondents agreed, 87 (23.97%) respondents strongly agreed, and 85 (23.41%) respondents disagreed. In comparison, 155 (42.70%) strongly disagree that Religious practices in Ilorin, such as the belief that women should not lead prayers or speak in mixed-gender religious gatherings, discourage women from taking leadership roles in public affairs. Based on the above analysis, the majority of respondents disagreed that Religious practices in Ilorin, such as the belief that women should not lead prayers or speak in mixed-gender religious gatherings, discourage women from taking leadership roles in public affairs.

Table. 14 Societal perception that women are too emotional affects their acceptance as peace actors

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	33	9.09
Strongly Agreed	89	24.52
Disagreed	90	24.79
Strongly Disagreed	151	41.60
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows that 33 (9.09%) respondents agreed, 89 (24.52%) respondents strongly agreed, 90 (24.79%) respondents disagreed, while 151 (41.60%) strongly disagreed that the societal perception that women are too emotional affects their acceptance as peace actors. Based on the above analysis, the majority of respondents disagreed that the societal perception that women are too emotional affects their acceptance as peace actors.

Table . 15 There are no formal mentorship programs to support women in conflict prevention roles

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	96	26.45
Strongly Agreed	229	63.08
Disagreed	11	3.03
Strongly Disagreed	27	7.44
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows that 96 (26.45%) respondents agreed, 229 (63.08%) respondents strongly agreed, 11 (3.03%) respondents disagreed, while 27 (7.44%) strongly disagreed that there are no formal mentorship programs to support women in conflict prevention roles. Based on the above

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X
analysis, the majority of respondents agreed that there are no formal mentorship programs to support women in conflict prevention roles.

Table . 16 Women are overburdened with household responsibilities and cannot attend conflict prevention activities

Category of Response	Frequency	Percentage
Agreed	89	24.52
Strongly Agreed	201	55.37
Disagreed	22	6.06
Strongly Disagreed	51	14.05
Total	**363**	**100**

Source: Researcher's Field Work Survey Report, 2025.

The above table shows that 89 (24.52%) respondents agreed, 201 (55.37%) respondents strongly agreed, 22 (6.06%) respondents disagreed, while 57 (14.05%) strongly disagreed that women are overburdened with household responsibilities and cannot attend conflict prevention activities. Based on the above analysis, the majority of respondents agreed that women are overburdened with household responsibilities and are unable to attend conflict prevention activities.

Discussion of Findings

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

The demographic analysis reveals that the majority of respondents were female (69.15%). In comparison, males accounted for 30.85%, indicating that more women participated in the study, which aligns with the focus on women's roles in conflict prevention and resolution. In terms of age distribution, the most significant proportion of respondents (32.51%) fell within the 21–30 age bracket, followed by 29.20% aged 31–40, which reflects a predominantly youthful population. Marital status data shows that 58.68% were married, 32.78% were single, and 8.54% were separated. In terms of educational qualification, most respondents were well-educated, with 46.00% holding HND/BSc degrees and an additional 11.84% possessing postgraduate degrees. This educational background lends credibility and informs the perspectives presented in the responses.

Geographically, the respondents were fairly distributed across the three local government areas within Ilorin Metropolis. Ilorin West accounted for the highest proportion with 47.11% of respondents, followed by Ilorin South with 26.71%, and Ilorin East with 26.19%. This distribution enhances the representativeness of the data across the metropolitan area.

Women's Contributions to Conflict Prevention

The first research question explored how women contribute to conflict prevention in Ilorin, Kwara State. The findings reveal that women are active participants in promoting peace through community education, early warning interventions, and fostering social harmony.

Educating Community Members: A total of 84.85% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that women play a vital role in educating community members on peace and conflict prevention. This supports the view that women are agents of awareness and grassroots conflict prevention and peacebuilding.

Early Warning and Response: 79.33% of respondents affirmed that women actively participate in early warning and response activities. This shows their alertness and preventive role in mitigating the escalation of conflict situations.

Promoting Intergroup Harmony: A combined 76.31% of the respondents agreed that women promote interethnic and interreligious harmony, confirming their bridging role in maintaining peaceful coexistence in Ilorin's diverse sociocultural environment.

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

Strategies Used by Women in Conflict Prevention

The second research question investigated the specific strategies employed by women to prevent conflict in their communities. The results indicate a potent blend of cultural, interpersonal, and collaborative techniques.

Dialogue and Negotiation: A striking 89.81% of respondents agreed that women use dialogue and negotiation to resolve disputes, showing a preference for peaceful resolution methods rooted in communication and empathy.

Traditional Conflict Resolution Methods: 94.21% of respondents confirmed that women rely on traditional mechanisms such as storytelling, elders' mediation, proverbs, and other cultural practices. This reflects the continued relevance of indigenous knowledge in resolving community tensions.

Partnerships with NGOs and Religious Bodies: 85.98% of respondents agreed that women collaborate with non-governmental and religious organizations in advancing peace efforts, showing that women are not only grounded locally but also connect with broader institutional networks for impact.

Barriers to Women's Involvement in Conflict Prevention

The third research question focused on identifying the socio-cultural and institutional challenges that hinder women's full participation in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. While some obstacles were widely acknowledged, others were less unanimously accepted.

Male Dominance: A total of 57.85% of respondents agreed that male dominance in politics and leadership limits women's influence in conflict prevention. This confirms the persistent gender imbalance in power structures.

Religious and Cultural Constraints: Notably, a majority of respondents (66.11%) disagreed that religious practices prevent women from taking leadership roles in public spaces, and 66.39% also rejected the notion that women are too emotional to be effective peace actors. This suggests evolving community perceptions and a shift toward more gender-inclusive thinking.

Lack of Mentorship: A significant 89.53% of respondents acknowledged the absence of formal mentorship programs to support women in conflict prevention roles. This reveals a significant institutional gap that requires addressing through policy reform and program development.

Domestic Responsibilities: Lastly, 79.89% of respondents agreed that women's household responsibilities limit their availability for peace activities, confirming that the burden of unpaid domestic labour remains a barrier to public engagement for many women.

In conclusion, the findings from this study confirm that women across Ilorin Metropolis, encompassing Ilorin East, South, and West, play crucial roles in grassroots conflict prevention through education, cultural mediation, and collaboration with civic institutions. However, despite their contributions, their effectiveness is often constrained by structural gender inequalities, the absence of institutional support, and domestic workload. Addressing these challenges through gender-responsive policies, mentorship initiatives, and shared family responsibilities will be crucial in enhancing the long-term impact of women in conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts.

Conclusion

The research concludes that women are vital to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Ilorin Metropolis. They play active roles in community sensitisation, conflict resolution, and promoting social harmony through culturally grounded and collaborative approaches. However, their involvement is hindered by systemic challenges, including limited leadership opportunities, inadequate institutional support, and the burden of domestic responsibilities. To enhance their participation, gender-sensitive policies, mentorship programs, and practical interventions that address these constraints are urgently needed. This study has provided valuable insights into the existing dynamics of women's roles in conflict prevention, but there is still room for further exploration. Future research could adopt a qualitative or mixed-methods approach to capture the lived experiences of women peacebuilders in more

ISSN:3141-5571
E-ISSN:3141-558X

depth. Suggested areas for further study include "The Impact of Religious Institutions on Women's Peacebuilding Roles," "A Comparative Analysis of Urban and Rural Women in Conflict Prevention," and "Evaluating the Long-Term Outcomes of Women-Led Peace Initiatives in Northern Nigeria." Such studies would enrich the literature and inform more holistic and inclusive peacebuilding strategies.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance women's contributions to conflict prevention and peacebuilding in Ilorin, Kwara State.

Government agencies, NGOs, and community organisations should create structured mentorship and leadership training programs to support and build the capacity of women in conflict prevention roles.

Policymakers at the local and state levels should design and implement policies that ensure the inclusion of women in political and peacebuilding decision-making processes, thereby reducing the effects of male dominance.

Community leaders and development partners should provide practical support, such as child care services or flexible participation hours, to reduce the burden of household responsibilities that prevent women from engaging in public peace efforts.

Since traditional methods remain widely used, local governments and religious bodies should integrate these practices into formal peacebuilding frameworks and recognise women as key actors in these spaces.

Efforts should be made to increase women's participation in community dialogues and interfaith collaborations, mainly through partnerships with NGOs and religious institutions.

Awareness campaigns should be conducted to dismantle persistent stereotypes, such as the belief that women are "too emotional" for leadership, through advocacy, media, and community-level education.

Regular training and civic education programs should be organised to equip women and community members with skills in negotiation, mediation, and

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