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SOCIO-ECONOMIC DYNAMICS AND IMPLICATIONS ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN GRASSROOTSPEACEBUILDING IN NAKURU EAST SUB-COUNTY, NAKURU COUNTY, KENYA

TRIZZAH ABUYA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL SCIENCES IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF DEVELOPMENT STUDIES (CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION AND PEACEBUILDING) OF ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

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JUNE 2026

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DECLARATION

This dissertation is my original work and has not been presented for any academic award in any learning institution.

Signature:…….. Date: ……

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SUPERVISORS DECLARATION

We confirm that this proposal has been reviewed and approved by us as the students' university supervisors. It represents the student's independent work and is being submitted with our endorsement for consideration.

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the resilient, courageous, and steadfastly peaceful women of Nakuru County, whose unwavering commitment to equality, justice, and peace, even in the face of adversity, continues to inspire profound respect and admiration. This research is humbly offered in recognition of their strength and perseverance, and as a tribute to the countless women around the world who tirelessly champion these fundamental principles.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CBO	Community Based Organization
CBO	Community Based Organization
CEC	Chief Election Commissioner
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
CEC	Chief Election Commissioner
CFR	Council on Foreign Relations
FGDs	Focus Group Discussions
NACOSTI	National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Enacted Resolution
WPS	Women, Peace, and Security

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ABSTRACT

Women across the globe have been at the forefront of peacebuilding, especially at the grassroots level. However, there are factors that often make their active participation visibly excluded or peripheral in the peacebuilding process. This study, therefore, examines socio-economic dynamics and their implications on women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya, focusing on gender roles, education, income, and cultural perceptions. Guided by Feminist Theory, Conflict Theory, and bottom-up peacebuilding principles, the study employed a descriptive survey research design. The target population comprised women affiliated with 10 peace-focused organizations, and a sample of 380 respondents was selected through two-stage stratified random sampling. Quantitative data collected using a structured survey questionnaire and analyzed using SPSS (descriptive statistics, regression, and factor analysis), while qualitative data from key informant interviews were analyzed thematically. Triangulation integrates insights from both methods, enhancing validity. Ethical standards were upheld throughout the study. Findings show that gendered economic roles and cultural norms remain key barriers to women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding. Male dominance in community leadership significantly limits involvement ($\beta = 0.693$ and 0.264, $p < 0.001$). Education enhances participation ($\chi^2 = 16.734$, $p = 0.001$), while stable formal employment improves financial security ($\beta = 0.318$). Engaging in multiple income activities weakens it ($\beta = -0.359$). Household income and income stability have little effect on overall participation ($R^2 = 0.004$, $p = 0.684$). Persistent cultural constraints, including restricted mobility, continue to hinder women's active engagement despite apparent community support. The study concludes that women's participation is constrained by economic precarity, limited education and training, and entrenched male-dominated norms. Recommendations include targeted economic empowerment, improved access to education and training, stable income support, and measures to challenge male-dominated leadership structures to enhance women's consistent and meaningful engagement in grassroots peacebuilding.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Chapter Overview

Women are key stakeholders in global, regional, national, and local peacebuilding. This chapter examines the dynamics of women's participation, especially at the grassroots levels. It mainly focuses on the socio-economic dynamics and their implications for women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya. Equally, outlines women's roles in local conflict mediation and community cohesion, highlights structural, cultural, and economic barriers, and presents the study's objectives, research questions, justification, delimitations, and scope. Key terms necessary to clarify the purpose of the study, including socio-economic dynamics, grassroots peacebuilding, and the roles of women in mediation, are defined to frame the basis on which women engage with and define their own strategies for inclusive, sustainable peacebuilding.

1.1 Background to the Study

While women have carried out essential functions as informal mediators, caregivers, and mobilizers to help maintain peace at a global, regional, national, and local levels, their formal involvement in peacebuilding continues to be exceptionally low, particularly in low-income and war-torn areas such as Nakuru East County, Kenya. This exclusion has persisted despite growing evidence from around the world that the involvement of women enhances the durability and quality of peace outcomes (Chitando, 2021; Mueller-Hirth, 2019). This is especially because although women made up only 13% of negotiators and 6% of mediators from 1992 to 2019 in the most significant Cessation of Hostilities (CoH) processes globally, there has never been a women's organization that has signed an agreement to restore peace by 2023 (United Nations, 2024). The worldwide inability to achieve positive change by building inclusive coalitions without authority and protection is evident in Colombia's 2016 peace agreement, which included many gender-specific recommendations yet proved ineffectual due to poor implementation and insecurity for women peacebuilders (Phelan & True, 2022). These patterns illustrate a widespread gap between the rhetoric surrounding policy-making and the actual impact of those policies on women's decision-making abilities, empowerment, and security as participants.

International frameworks such as UNSCR 1325 and complementary resolutions (1820, 1888, 1889, 1960, 2106, 2122, 2242) have repeatedly emphasized the need for women's participation in peace and security (Chitando, 2021). Yet, Machakanja (2016) notes that these frameworks often result in rhetorical engagement rather than substantive inclusion, as women remain constrained by male-dominated negotiation spaces and entrenched cultural hierarchies. Even in high-income contexts where Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agendas are embedded in foreign policy, meaningful translation to local or grassroots contexts is uneven, leaving women to navigate socio-economic constraints, caregiving responsibilities, and exposure to gender-based violence (GBV). Across Africa, women experience this duality: formal underrepresentation juxtaposed with extensive informal contributions at the community level.

Women's informal peacebuilding in African contexts is beginning to show the potential for significant change, even in environments that present significant barriers. For instance, in Liberia, large-scale women's mobilizations played an important role in persuading the factions involved in conflict to come to the negotiating table, through which a relatively stable peace (Larmin & Banini, 2022) was ultimately achieved. South Sudanese women's grassroots activism (for example, community rebuilding, peacebuilding, and early warning) is documented in the research of Kezie-Nwoha and Were (2018), although women continue to be excluded from the formal peace process. Furthermore, Musisi (2019) cites the local performance of political, economic, and social authority by women in East Africa's history to illustrate the persistence of women's grassroots agency, despite otherwise male-dominated systems. On the other hand, Mbowura (2022) observes the fact that the patterns of persistence of women's agency clearly demonstrate a need for local engagement to create sustainable communal cohesion within African conflict zones. Similarly, this is because women have been subject to ongoing political exploitation, ethnic divisions, and continuous cycles of violence. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that the power of women's agency is significant but is limited by multiple ingrained socio-political barriers.

Patriarchal norms, militarization, and social hierarchies continue to limit women's peacebuilding roles. Chitando (2021) argues that women are often defined by reproductive and maternal capacities, obscuring recognition of their strategic contributions. Conflict-specific contexts intensify these limitations: in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, sexual violence destabilizes communities and restricts women's leadership; in South Sudan, high GBV rates constrain participation in village-level forums; in Nigeria, Boko Haram abductions and forced marriages limit women's civic engagement (Abe & Agbalajobi, 2024; Kezie-Nwoha & Were,

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2018). Even when progressive policy frameworks exist, uneven implementation and limited resources mean that local realities ultimately determine women's engagement far more than global directives.

Despite these barriers, some African contexts reveal how women can exert influence. Somalia's "sixth clan" initiative created political space for women in national dialogue (Ahmed & Hajimumin, 2022), while Ethiopia's community-led reconciliation forums increased women's visibility and influence (Waktola, 2023). Rwanda's post-genocide recovery involved women, including disciplined ex-combatants, in shaping legal reforms and national gender policies (Mwambari et al., 2021). Uganda provides similar examples: leaders such as Betty Bigombe mediated conflicts with the Lord's Resistance Army, and First Lady Janet Museveni led peacebuilding in Karamoja (David & Ayegba, 2021). Liberia's earlier case complements these insights, highlighting that coordinated grassroots activism can overcome structural exclusion, though such cases remain exceptional rather than normative.

Most importantly, in Kenya, women's engagement at the grassroots level is both persistent and multifaceted. Mueller-Hirth (2019) explains that, following post-election violence, women were actively involved in facilitating mediation processes and fostering economic co-operation and the resources necessary to support their capabilities. More so, women are not only placed into gendered positions because of this activism but also face significant challenges in realizing their potential. However, while grassroots activism by women represents essential social restoration in local communities, it is often neither acknowledged nor officially supported. Similarly, Kezie-Nwoha and Were (2018) support this notion, pointing out that despite the local efforts by women that affect formal processes, they are vastly underrepresented in official negotiations at different levels. These studies highlight the underlying structural and socio-cultural barriers that limit the extent to which women's agencies can be utilized.

In Nakuru County, particularly Nakuru East Sub-County, women confront complex socio-political and economic challenges. The Rift Valley's ethnic diversity, historical election-related conflicts (1992, 2007/2008), and competition over resources have shaped recurring tensions, affecting community cohesion and peacebuilding opportunities (Owino, 2019). Muia (2020) notes that sustainable peace in Nakuru County requires attention to deep-rooted grievances, contested resources, and ethnic polarization, and that locally grounded initiatives, including those led by women, are crucial for durable outcomes. Grassroots women's groups, informal

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networks, and faith-based forums provide avenues for mediation, reconciliation, and early warning, reflecting patterns observed across African conflict-affected contexts.

Most importantly, scholarly works focus a great deal on the informal contributions of women to peace. However, there are many gaps concerning socio-economic dynamics related to these women's contributions and specifically to addressing issues experienced by women residing in rural, conflict-affected areas such as Nakuru East, Kenya. Moreover, while some studies provide insight into women's contributions to formal, urban-based peace efforts (Kamau, 2016; Iteyo & Mumbi, 2020), there remains insufficient exploration of informal, grassroots peacebuilding initiatives. For instance, Kenya's National Action Plan for the Implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) includes the promotion of the inclusion of women in peacebuilding, but there are inconsistencies in its implementation at the local level (Kilonzo, 2021). Furthermore, there are also significant knowledge gaps, including how gender roles, educational levels, income levels, and cultural norms affect women's inclusion and visibility. Similarly, focus on how women view their legitimacy as actors in their communities, for instance, when they participate in peacebuilding efforts. Furthermore, there is limited research into how women negotiate various socio-economic barriers they encounter, how they navigate competing social expectations, and how they navigate institutional structures that support their participation in community peacebuilding efforts. Given these gaps, the study examined socio-economic dynamics and their implications for women's engagement in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite ongoing global and national efforts to promote inclusive peacebuilding, women remain underrepresented and insufficiently visible in key peace efforts, particularly at the grassroots level. Furthermore, recent evidence shows that women constitute a small fraction of those formally recognized in peace efforts, with local actors noting that over 60% of grassroots women's initiatives operate without adequate institutional support or visibility. Their exclusion is not due to a lack of contribution since women often serve as informal mediators, advisors, and mobilizers. This is mainly due to persistent barriers that remain deeply embedded in local contexts. These include traditional gender roles, low education levels, financial hardship, and cultural norms that constrain women's public engagement.

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Frameworks such as UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and Kenya's National Action Plan on WPS emphasize women's full and equal participation. Yet in conflict-affected areas such as Nakuru County, especially Nakuru East Sub-County, this vision remains far from reality. The region has experienced recurring ethnic and political violence since the early 1990s, most notably during the 2007/2008 post-election crisis, which exposed deep community divisions and governance gaps. More recently, the August 2025 clashes along the Nakuru–Narok border at Tipis and Mwisho wa Lami, marked by loss of life, displacement, and destruction of property, underscore the continuing fragility of local peace structures (Nyambura, 2025). While several community-based peace initiatives have since emerged, most continue to sideline women or engage them only in peripheral roles.

This study investigates how such socio-economic and cultural constraints actively shape women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County. It addresses a gap in both research and policy by focusing on informal, community-level dynamics that remain overlooked in national frameworks. In doing so, it aims to produce context-sensitive insights that can inform more inclusive peacebuilding strategies and bring the lived experiences of local women into policy conversations where they are often missing.

1.3 Main Objective of the Study

This study aimed at investigating the socio-economic dynamics and implications influencing women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

1.3.1 Specific Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following objectives, which were to:

(i) Assess the influence of gender roles on women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

(ii) Determine the role of education in shaping women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

(iii) Examine the influence of income levels on women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

(iv) Analyze the impact of cultural norms on women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

The following inquiries served as the study's guide:

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(i) In what ways do gender roles shape women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya?

(ii) How do women's educational attainment shape participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya?

(iii) To what extent are income levels associated with women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya?

(iv) In what ways do cultural norms shape women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya**?**

1.5 Justification of the Study

Many people have lost their lives, property worth millions have been destroyed, and thousands have been displaced during recurrent tensions and conflicts in the Rift Valley (Muchiri et al., 2022). These episodes of violence have left deep social fractures, disrupted livelihoods, and weakened trust between communities. Nakuru East Sub-County reflects these wider Rift Valley dynamics, with periodic political violence and ethnic tensions continuing to complicate efforts to rebuild social cohesion and sustain peace at the local level.

When studying local and national contexts where peacebuilding activities occur, one notes an environment in which fear, mistrust, and unresolved grievances have created a highly unstable situation. Resources continue to be competed for; historical injustices remain unaddressed or partially addressed, and local political processes are often highly polarised. This complicates issues regarding facilitation to dialogue, reconciliation, and collaboration. Most importantly, while there are some examples of community-based activities related to peacebuilding, often they are not all equally effective. The local capacity of individuals and communities is weak, which creates challenges for many of the support systems; and therefore, they have very limited resources. The continued existence of unstable environments demonstrates that we need to conduct our analysis based on reality and local environments instead of making sweeping assumptions based on generalized policy perspectives.

Women globally, regionally, nationally, and locally, more so in Nakuru East, the focus of this study, are a critical part of the overall social stability within a community. Nevertheless, women are often constrained socio-economically, and their efforts to take an active role in grassroots peacebuilding are also limited. Equally, their contributions are often overlooked and rarely supported. Thus, in order to ensure that peacebuilding initiatives are more than just 'tokenistic' inclusion, there is a need to find out the factors that affect women, such as income insecurity,

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access to education, workloads created by domestic responsibilities, and imposed cultural expectations that could affect women's active participation in peacebuilding, specifically, women of Nakuru East.

Previous research on peacebuilding in Kenya has focused on national and urban perspectives (Kamau, 2016; Kang'ung'u, 2023). However, this has little relevance to the socio-economic barriers experienced by women at the local level, especially in Nakuru East Sub-County, the focus of this study. Despite adopting progressive frameworks such as the National Action Plan regarding UN Security Council Resolutions concerning women, peace, and security (UNSCR 1325) and the gender pillar within Vision 2030, there is still an inadequate number of women engaging in grassroots peacebuilding. Evidence also suggests that over 60% of women-led local peace initiatives operate without institutional support/visibility (Kilonzo, 2021), leading to uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of these policies at the community level.

Therefore, this research examines how economic/socio-economic factors affect women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding within Nakuru East Sub-County, which is experiencing ongoing conflict and a fragile recovery process. Women's involvement in peacebuilding is acknowledged in the 2010 Constitution (Article 27) and in Kenya's National Women, Peace, and Security Frameworks. Therefore, failure to address the structural/socio-economic constraints that limit women's ability to engage will further solidify their exclusion and hinder peacebuilding efforts locally. The goal of this study is to engage with context-specific evidence to inform policymakers, practitioners, and community members about realistic, locally appropriate ways to enhance women's involvement in peacebuilding initiatives.

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1.6 Significance of Study

This study demonstrates how gender roles, education, income, and cultural norms influence women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding within Nakuru East Sub-County. The findings clarify the main socioeconomic barriers that restrict women's engagement and leadership in peace processes, offering a grounded understanding of how structural and cultural factors interact to limit inclusion.

At the policy level, the evidence informs county and national decision-makers seeking to build gender-responsive peace and security frameworks. The results provide practical entry points for policy and program design, such as integrating gender-sensitive budgeting into county peace initiatives, expanding women's representation in decision-making committees, and

linking livelihood support with peace leadership training. These insights align with Kenya's obligations under the 2010 Constitution, the National Action Plan on UNSCR 1325, Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) 5 and 16, while contributing to broader regional goals under Agenda 2063.

The findings also serve Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), donors, and women's networks involved in local peacebuilding. They use the results to design programs that strengthen women's visibility, safety, and authority in mediation and community dialogue. The study deepens academic understanding within the fields of Development Studies and Peacebuilding by providing empirical evidence from a local Kenyan context, thereby filling a critical gap in gender-focused peace research and supporting replication in other Sub-Saharan settings.

1.7 Scope of the Study

This research examined socio-economic aspects that inform women's involvement in peacebuilding at the grassroots level in Nakuru East Sub-County, specifically gendered roles and responsibilities, educational backgrounds, income levels, and the influence of cultural practices. This research investigated how women's involvement and leadership in local peace initiatives could be understood in conjunction with gendered behavior related to traditional roles/expectations, access to leadership opportunities, domestic responsibilities, and a specific degree of educational success and employment or alternative access to financial resources.

The research used 380 women aged 18-60 years, providing data across a sample of 10 local peace organizations; 38 respondents from each organization were randomly selected using a two-stage stratified random sampling technique. Each organization was treated as a stratum; then individual respondents were selected from the existing lists of participants using simple random sampling. This design allowed for women's representative participation, but with the emphasis on grassroots-level characteristics. The key informants for this study included community leaders, local government officials, international development organizations (NGOs) representatives, churches, and local peace committees. The descriptive survey research design was employed in establishing patterns of women's participation and experience across the different socio- economic status but did not extend to women outside organized peace

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structures or to comparative sub-Counties, which should be considered when interpreting the findings.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The study focused on socio-economic drivers of women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County. It faced several limitations affecting interpretation and generalisability. Response bias and social desirability may have influenced self-reported data, but these were mitigated through triangulation of survey and interview findings, the use of neutral questioning, and assurances of confidentiality. Logistical constraints limited access to some respondents, yet coverage was improved by engaging multiple organizations across different wards. The age cap and organization-based sampling introduced bias toward formally engaged women, excluding younger or unaffiliated participants. This was partially addressed by including diverse socio-economic groups and triangulating data from key informants familiar with informal actors. The sensitivity of the topics also constrained openness during interviews, though the researcher mitigated this by ensuring anonymity, using female interviewers where appropriate, and conducting sessions in safe, private settings.

1.9 Delimitations of the Study

This study is delimited in geographical coverage, thematic emphasis, population focus, and methodological design. This is aimed at maintaining analytical depth and feasibility within available time and resources.

The study does not use longitudinal tracking or cross-country comparison methods; instead, it relies on descriptive survey design and cross-sectional data, which limits its ability to examine how change occurs over time or causal pathways. Furthermore, an alternative longitudinal or comparative methodological approach could have enabled a more in-depth analysis of sustainability and variation across communities. However, they would have required a longer commitment than is available for this study. These delimitations are reflective of the researcher's intent and, therefore, do not represent any weakness in methodology. Instead, they reflect a deliberate narrowing of focus, enabling an in-depth examination of the socio-economic dynamics that influence women's participation in grassroots-level peacebuilding, within a specific conflict-affected local context.

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The study's population consists only of women. The reason is that men are the national-level decision makers and international actors. This is due to the fact that including them in the study would have limited the focus on community-level women's experiences of participation in the peace process. Thus, these delimitations reflect an intention on the part of the researcher to privilege the voices and realities of women at the grassroots level. However, this is done with the understanding that it limits their ability to assess gender relations or power-negotiation processes between women and male actors directly.

Thus, the results are primarily context-based and are not intended to be statistically generalized beyond Nakuru East Sub-County, Kenya. The delimitations represent a purposeful narrowing of scope to provide in-depth analysis of the social and economic dynamics influencing women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding within a specific, conflict-affected local context.

1.10 Definition of Key Terms

Cultural Norms: In this study, cultural norms encompass the shared beliefs and practices within the community that influence women's roles and their participation in grassroots peacebuilding efforts in Nakuru East Sub-County, Kenya.

Education: In this study, education refers to the systematic process of receiving or providing instruction that shapes women's knowledge, skills, and overall engagement in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County.

Gender Roles: As used in this study, gender roles refer to the socially constructed expectations regarding the behaviors and responsibilities of women and men, which can affect women's involvement in peacebuilding efforts within the community.

Grassroots: This refers to community-level Peace interventions that were and remain embedded in everyday life in Nakuru East Sub-County and outside any formal or elite state-based or state-sanctioned peace structures. Community members have performed and continue to perform peace interventions at all levels, including the village, ward, and sub-county levels, using local knowledge, voluntary participation, and community groups, informal committees, faith-based forums, and women's networks.

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Income Levels: For this study, income levels refer to the financial resources available to women and households, which affect their capacity to participate in grassroots peacebuilding activities.

Peacebuilding: This refers to active community-based actions that prevent conflict, manage disputes, and strengthen societal bonds in Nakuru East Sub-County. Examples of these activities include women's participation in mediation, dialogue, and reconciliation forums; early warning and prevention of violence; and post-conflict recovery activities, excluding military, policing, and strictly humanitarian actions unless they are directly related to reconciliation.

Socio-Economic Factors: In this study, socio-economic factors are the social and economic elements that influence women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County.

Women: This includes Kenyan women over the age of eighteen, as stipulated by the Constitution.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews the literature on socio-economic factors that affect women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya. It is divided into four sections: the theoretical review; the empirical review; research gaps (including intersectional and intra-household analyses; the invisible and informal peace work of women; links between livelihoods, income stability, and leadership pathways, local implementation and financing of gender-responsive policies; and protection and safety for women peacebuilders); and the conceptual framework outlining key variables and their relationships. The chapter provides a focused foundation for understanding how socio-economic factors shape women's roles in grassroots peacebuilding.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored in a robust theoretical framework that encompasses Feminist Theory, Conflict Theory, and Bottom-Up Peacebuilding Theory. These theories provide essential lenses for analyzing the socioeconomic factors that influence women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives, particularly in Nakuru County, Kenya. By integrating these perspectives, the study aims to illuminate the complexities of women's roles in peacebuilding, addressing both gender-specific issues and the intersecting factors that shape their experiences. At the same time, theories complement one another. For example, the Bottom-up Peacebuilding fails to illuminate women's place in the processes, but it is complemented by the Feminist theory that puts emphasis on women's roles, while the Conflict Theory gives a more nuanced perspective that captures the role of women within the confines of the society they operate from.

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2.2.1 Feminist Theory

Feminist Theory was founded by Mary Wollstonecraft in the 18th century. Her key focus was on the education of women as a way of addressing misogyny. The theory developed in the 20th and 21st centuries explore how systems of power and oppression interact (Nkansah, 2023).

It functions as both an intellectual and political project, engaging knowledge, method, and practice to understand and transform inequality (Allen, Goldberg, & Jaramillo-Sierra, 2022). Core principles include advancing gender equality, critiquing patriarchal structures, and recognizing women's agency in decision-making and societal participation (Benstead, 2021;

Brubaker, 2021). The theory emphasizes how social norms, institutions, and cultural practices sustain women's marginalization, while advocating for social justice and structural change.

Benstead (2021) conceptualizes patriarchy as multi-dimensional and intersectional, highlighting mechanisms such as the "patriarchal bargain" and distinguishing between private and public patriarchy. Brubaker (2021) further expands feminist theory by reconceptualizing gender and power, showing how gendered hierarchies intersect with social, economic, and political processes to shape women's opportunities and constraints. These perspectives provide a nuanced lens for analyzing barriers that limit women's formal and informal participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County. Intersectionality is also critical, recognizing that socio-economic class, ethnicity, and other factors compound inequality (Allen et al., 2022).

Feminism emphasizes that in understanding conflict and the peace and reconciliation process, these notions are highly gendered. This reality manifests in the fact that women are most often negatively affected by violence. Equally, while they experience the large majority of the negative consequences of violence, they are absent from the political arena where the process of decision-making exists. Thus, excluding women, especially from decision-making before, during, and after peacebuilding processes, undermines sustainable peace. Thus, women must be included in the entire peacebuilding process because they bring a unique perspective, local knowledge, and community-based approaches to reconciliation and conflict resolution (Musisi, 2019). This is directly related to the study's specific objective of assessing how gender roles influence women's involvement in local peacebuilding activities while recognizing their agency and contributions to creating peace at the local level in the Nakuru East Sub-County Context.

Feminist theory also has its limitations, including the possibility of overemphasizing gender relative to other intersecting social factors and its reliance on contexts that may not adequately reflect local dynamics. In the case of Nakuru East, the unique socio-cultural and political circumstances may influence women's experiences of social and political power in ways that may not be adequately addressed in a traditional feminist framework (Allen et al., 2022; Benstead, 2021; Brubaker, 2021).

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2.2.2 Conflict Theory

Complementing the shortcomings of the Feminist theory, such as its potential overemphasis on gender relative to other intersecting social factors. Similarly, its origin in contexts may not fully capture local dynamics. The Conflict Theory provides a broader lens for highlighting the socio-economic and power structures that shape women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding. Integrating conflict theory allows the study to examine how social hierarchies, competition for scarce resources, and power struggles influence women's engagement in peace initiatives. This theoretical combination enables a more nuanced analysis of the structural, economic, and cultural barriers affecting women in Nakuru East Sub-County, situating gendered experiences within wider patterns of local conflict and resource-based rivalries.

Conflict theory, initially proposed by Karl Marx in the mid-1800s, suggests that social behaviour is shaped by conflicts between competing groups over scarce resources (Poole & Germov, 2023). Marx's ideas were later expanded by Max Weber, who emphasised that power and status, alongside wealth, play critical roles in societal conflicts. Both theorists highlighted how groups compete for control of resources, resulting in social, political, and economic changes, such as revolutions or policy shifts. The theory asserts that power struggles, which may not always involve physical violence, contribute to social order and, ultimately, social change (Orsini, 2024). This framework sheds light on the structural obstacles that women encounter in these settings, making it especially pertinent for analyzing socio-economic issues affecting women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding projects.

The core assumptions of conflict theory hold that societies are composed of groups with differing interests, often competing for limited resources such as wealth, power, and status. This unequal distribution of resources leads to social tensions and conflicts, as subordinate groups fight for access to these resources while dominant groups seek to control institutions and resources to maintain their standing (Marx, 1867). Such power dynamics perpetuate social inequalities and societal structures that benefit dominant groups, often at the expense of marginalized communities. Given its focus on power dynamics, conflict theory is especially useful for understanding how socioeconomic factors such as education, income levels, and cultural norms shape women's access to and participation in peace processes.

However, this theory is not without its limitations. One significant critique is its tendency to oversimplify complex social interactions by framing them primarily as struggles between

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competing groups. Critics argue that this viewpoint may overlook the nuances of cooperation and consensus, which are also essential for maintaining social order (Kühne, 2020). For instance, functionalists such as Durkheim contend that social stability often relies on a consensus of norms and values rather than conflict alone. Additionally, Feminist theorists critique Conflict Theory for frequently sidelining gender-specific issues, failing to adequately account for the intersections of gender, ethnicity, and class that are crucial for a comprehensive understanding of social inequalities (Allen et al., 2022).

Conflict Theory allows for a coherent analysis of power dynamics and structural inequalities specifically affecting women's involvement in peacebuilding. The strengths of Conflict Theory lie particularly in its comprehensive framework for assessing the socio-economic factors impacting women's involvement in peacebuilding. Within the context of this research, the theory exposes the extent to which traditional gender roles limit women's participation, as patriarchal systems often place them in subordinate positions (Orsini, 2024). Furthermore, it highlights the role of education in empowering women to challenge these limitations and engage meaningfully in peace processes. Additionally, economic factors such as income levels and economic empowerment are central to enhancing women's agencies in peacebuilding, as access to financial resources affords them greater opportunities and autonomy. Cultural norms also significantly influence women's participation, either restricting or enabling their involvement based on societal beliefs that shape access to resources and opportunities.

The study focuses on socially constructed cultural rules and traditional gender roles with an emphasis on Conflict Theory as a way of explaining the competition for resources with regard to women's involvement in the peace process. Conflict Theory is particularly important for explaining social inequalities and social development in Nakuru County, Kenya. Equally, it provides a strong foundation for creating useful knowledge for women's participation in local peace processes. Furthermore, this may be applied by community leaders and policymakers to enhance women's roles in building peace.

Apart from these two theories, the Feminist Theory and the Conflict Theory, the Bottom-Up Peacebuilding Theory advanced by Lederach sheds more light on the importance of engaging all the actors at the different levels of the peacebuilding process. Paying attention, therefore, to the importance of engaging people's agency and, in this study, the women's agency, especially, on their active involvement in grassroots peacebuilding.

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2.2.3 Bottom-Up Peacebuilding Theory

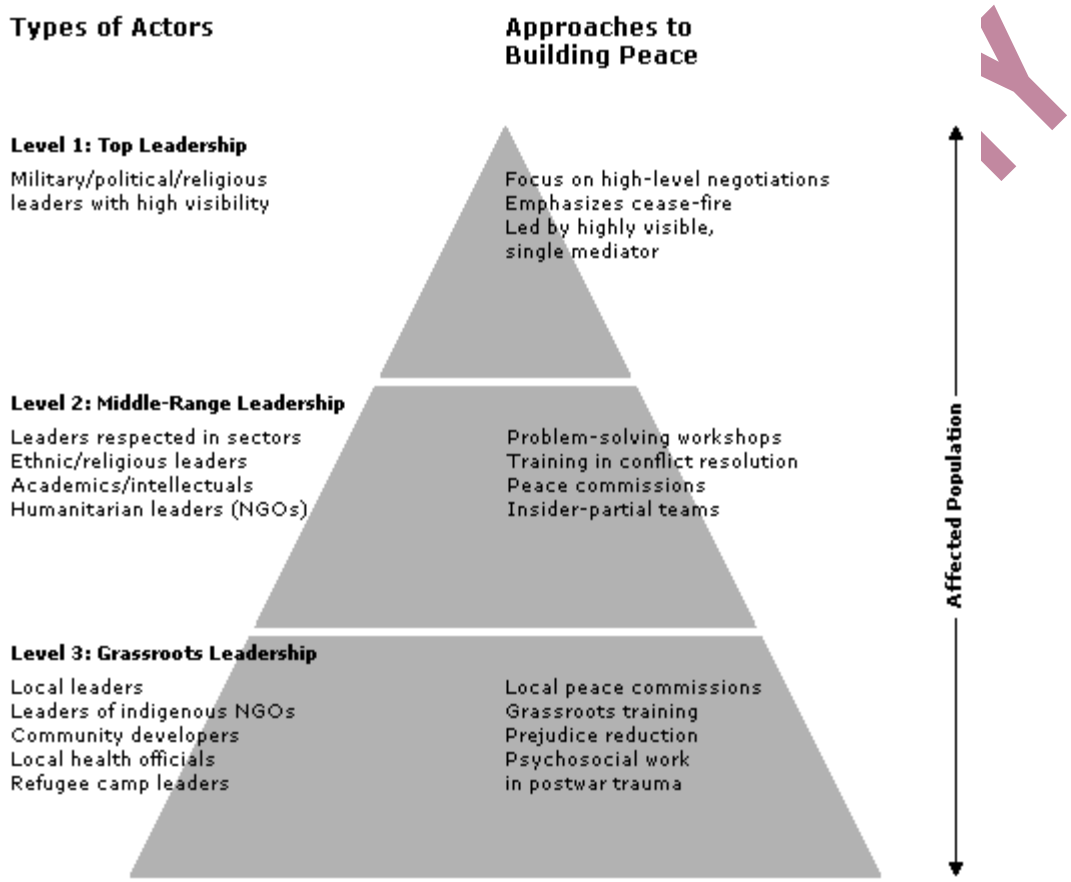
The Bottom-Up Peacebuilding Theory, developed by John Paul Lederach in 1997, highlights the importance of grassroots communities in resolving disputes and promoting long-term peace. Lederach contends that local communities must voluntarily engage in the peace process in order for enduring peace to be actualized. This contrasts with top-down strategies, in which the State or outside parties impose peace initiatives. The choice of the Bottom-Up Peacebuilding Theory was informed by the fact that it places importance on inclusion and local agency, giving preference to the inclusion of marginalized groups, such as women. According to the theory, peace-building initiatives will produce positive results if they have local ownership, are culturally relevant, and have taken into account the social realities of the receiving country. Most importantly, peacebuilding that is community-driven is necessary to foster long-lasting peace (Mutahi & Ruteere, 2019). Therefore, by concentrating on the role of community-based actors, Lederach's theory emphasizes the importance of all, including grassroots actors, in the long-term peacebuilding process.

Furthermore, the theory operates on key assumptions, including that local communities possess deep insights into conflict dynamics, that sustainable peace is best achieved through community ownership, and that excluding grassroots actors weakens peace efforts (Kalenychenko, 2023). These assumptions align with the study's objectives by demonstrating how women's participation in peacebuilding is shaped by socio-economic factors. For instance, a woman's capacity to participate in peace initiatives may be influenced by her income and educational attainment, while gender roles and cultural norms may either help or impede her participation. In order to ensure that women's voices are heard, and their contributions are appreciated in community-led peacebuilding initiatives, this study examined these issues and evaluated how women's engagement in peace processes may be strengthened within current grassroots structures. In addition, its emphasis on local participation aligns with the realities of Nakuru East Sub-County's grassroots-based peacebuilding, where women actively resolve conflicts that affect them. This happens within their social, economic, and cultural boundaries, but there is a need to recognize and engage women more in the peacebuilding process at all levels.

Supporting this theory is Lederach's own Peacebuilding Framework of Actors (Peacebuilding Pyramid). In this framework, he emphasizes the importance of active engagement of actors at the different levels (top (Track One), middle (Track II and bottom (Track III). Most important

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are the unique roles played by the actors on each track, their interactions, and their importance in building sustainable peace. Women are among the players at each of these levels. Therefore, the importance of inclusion of women at all these levels of the peacebuilding process. Thus, the framework supports the need to empower those engaged in grassroots peacebuilding and, in the context of this study, the women in Nakuru East Sub-County. Kenya. Below is Lederach's Peacebuilding Pyramid of Actors, which advocates for inclusive approaches to peacebuilding.



Derived from John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace Press, 1997), 39.

Despite its strengths, the Bottom-Up Peacebuilding Theory has notable limitations. First, it assumes that all local actors have equal voices, yet women are often marginalized within traditional community structures, limiting their ability to influence peace efforts (Noonan and Kevlihan 2018). Second, the theory relies heavily on local institutions, which may lack the financial resources or legal frameworks necessary to sustain peace initiatives (Vesga and Mejía 2025). Additionally, while local ownership is crucial, grassroots peace efforts often struggle to scale without external support, policy reinforcement, and institutional backing (Opongo,

2020). Grouping stakeholders in a particular Track could also overlook women's intersectionality and gender biases that have marginalized women's agencies for decades. Additionally, reliance on under-resourced local institutions may hinder sustainable peace initiatives, while grassroots efforts struggle to scale without external support. Therefore, the study will draw on the strengths of these theories while acknowledging the limitations of each. Therefore, by focusing on the role of community-based actors, especially women, the Bottom-Up Peacebuilding Theory serves as a legitimate framework for highlighting the impact of the socio-economic context on women's ability to be involved in grassroots-based peacebuilding, especially in Nakuru East Sub-County, the focus of this study. Their involvement in peacebuilding processes will also ensure that they own the process in their day-to-day living.

2.3 Empirical Literature Review

2.2.1 Gender Roles and Women's Participation in Grassroots Peacebuilding

The majority of survivors of conflict and humanitarian crises worldwide are women. However, women continue to be excluded from decision-making processes (UN Women, 2021). From 1992 to 2019, women were only involved in peace mediations as 6% of mediators, 6% of signatories, and 13% of negotiators - demonstrating a lack of structural and cultural support for women's inclusion in peacebuilding. Furthermore, women's contributions to peacebuilding are recognized through international frameworks such as the United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000). Furthermore, research indicates that peace agreements that include women are 35% more likely to last for 15 years or longer (UN Women, 2023; Council on Foreign Relations, 2019). However, major gaps still exist in implementation. For example, the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition has shown how women's involvement can lead to better bargaining outcomes and aid community rebuilding after conflict. Unfortunately, global narratives continue to position women primarily as victims or supporters of peacebuilding, which distracts from their capacity as leaders, local experts, and negotiators. More so, women's participation in formal peace processes is still limited by entrenched gender norms, ongoing resistance by organizations, and by their unequal access to political and economic resources. This demonstrates the need for structural reforms that go beyond symbolic inclusion (UN Women, 2021).

Most importantly, Mansab (2024), while studying grassroots women's participation in peacebuilding and also the issue of countering terrorism in Pakistan's newly merged Districts, highlights their mediation roles and support for community security. However, she also shows

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women's systemic exclusion in formal decision-making Processes. Therefore, this study provides vital insights into how gender roles shape women's involvement. Similarly, it touches on the socially prescribed roles, cultural expectations, and institutional barriers. Theoretically, Mansab emphasizes cultural and religious determinants, providing limited insight regarding how other intersecting factors, including education, economic status, and broader social hierarchies, impact women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding. While this study illustrates women's agencies and gendered constraints, the results are context specific.

The relationship between women's involvement and the longevity of peace accords is further supported by data from Krause et al. (2018), which show that peace agreements with female signatories are associated with better provisions, higher implementation rates, and more lasting peace. This is mainly because of the close ties between women negotiators and civil society networks, which enhance inclusivity and advocacy after a conflict. Their findings were based on a comparative analysis of 13 peace agreements with female signatories from six different peace processes in the United Kingdom (UK)/Northern Ireland (1998), Guatemala (1996), and El Salvador (1992). They blended qualitative case studies, descriptive statistics, and quantitative statistical analysis using a mixed-methods approach. They examined the statistical relationship between the longevity of peace and women's involvement as signatories. Additionally, they evaluated the connections between female signatories and women's civil society organizations using case studies. The study emphasizes how women actively participate in drafting agreements and seeing to their execution, highlighting the fact that their involvement in peacebuilding goes beyond formal negotiation.

These results highlight how women's relationships with civil society can improve the quality and longevity of peace agreements, underscoring the significance of inclusive peacebuilding initiatives. However, on critical analysis, several limitations are realized, one being the reliance on outdated agreements, with the most recent one from 2003. Given the evolving nature of conflicts, peacebuilding frameworks, and gender inclusion policies, findings drawn from older agreements may not fully capture contemporary peace processes, shifting gender dynamics, or the increasing institutionalization of women's roles in peacebuilding. Furthermore, the study predominantly focuses on elite-level negotiations, overlooking grassroots women's contributions to conflict resolution, community mediation, and post-war reconstruction. Additionally, the narrow coding of women's participation excludes indirect but crucial roles such as advisory positions and community mobilization. These discrepancies underscore the necessity of the present research on gender roles and women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding in Kenya's Nakuru County, which aims to explore how women navigate local

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peace efforts, the socio-cultural barriers they face, and the effectiveness of their strategies in fostering long-term stability.

Due to ingrained cultural norms and societal expectations, gender roles frequently restrict women from taking active roles in peacebuilding programs. In Somalia, research by Qubane (2020) highlighted how gendered barriers limited women's peacebuilding roles, with only 4% participating in peace negotiations and 24% represented in parliament. The study attributed this to cultural norms that confined women to domestic responsibilities, negative perceptions of their abilities beyond household tasks, and political marginalization, all of which greatly impeded their full participation in peacebuilding efforts. Nevertheless, women's engagement increased during the post-conflict period, as they participated in community-level peacebuilding, negotiations, and the establishment of advocacy groups. These findings are important for understanding how gender roles shaped women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru County, Kenya. As in Somalia, women in Nakuru faced challenges stemming from cultural and social expectations that restricted their roles in peacebuilding. However, the Somali case also demonstrated that women's involvement could expand under certain conditions, offering useful insights into how social norms and structural barriers influenced participation at the community level. The Somali study was limited by its reliance on secondary data and the absence of primary fieldwork, which restricted the depth of analysis of women lived experiences. This limitation underscored the importance of examining women's direct experiences in grassroots contexts such as Nakuru East Sub-County, where cultural and socio-economic dynamics strongly shaped participation in peacebuilding.

Building on these concerns, an examination of women's grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in South Sudan, including the Beam of Hope, Women for Peace, and Portals to Peace projects, underscores the transformative potential of gender-inclusive efforts (Ensor, 2022). These initiatives demonstrate that training in peace activism and livelihood support enhances women's resilience to violence while expanding their economic independence and representation in leadership. Notably, the inclusion of female payam chiefs and women in traditional courts contributed to meaningful improvements in conflict resolution and gender equity. Despite these positive outcomes, the study lacks quantitative assessments of the precise impact of gender roles on women's participation. Without clear data on the strength of these dynamics, it remains difficult to assess the full extent of women's contributions to peacebuilding efforts. To close this gap, the present study uses a mixed-methods approach,

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combining quantitative indicators with qualitative narratives to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how gender roles affect women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding Research on peacebuilding in Kenya further highlights the critical role of non-state actors in promoting gender-inclusive peace initiatives. A study focusing on the North Rift region illustrates how women actively engage in grassroots peacebuilding through advocacy, participation in village peace committees, and efforts to negotiate with patriarchal structures (Kilonzo, 2021). Despite these contributions, women's efforts remained undervalued in formal peace processes. The study emphasized the need for policy recognition and integration of women's voices in both local and national peace frameworks. However, its reliance on case studies limited generalizability, and its focus on high-level interventions left grassroots challenges underexplored. In Nakuru County, women faced similar socio-economic and cultural barriers that hindered their full participation in peace initiatives, underscoring the need for deeper inquiry into the lived realities of grassroots actors.

Even though previous research provides insightful information about how gender roles affect women's efforts to promote peace, it has some drawbacks, such as an excessive dependence on secondary data, antiquated paradigms, and a dearth of empirical quantification. This calls for a robust, context-specific analysis that captures diverse socio-economic realities and employs measurable indicators to assess women's roles in grassroots peace initiatives.

2.2.2 Education and Women's Engagement in Peacebuilding

Women's effective engagement in peacebuilding depends on education, but obstacles to their access to it keep them at the margins and restrict their ability to contribute to long-term peace. According to Mulalić and Jelešković (2022), educated women play a major role in the post-conflict transition by empowering female academics in Bosnia and Herzegovina and encouraging their leadership. Their research highlights the active involvement of educated women in efforts to promote gender equality and peacebuilding. However, the study's exclusive focus on female academics limits its broader applicability by ignoring the experiences of women actively participating in grassroots peacebuilding across diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. This narrow focus presents a gap in understanding how education influences peacebuilding efforts among non-academic women. The present research sought to address this limitation by exploring the role of education across a wider demographic spectrum

Moreover, the lack of education remains a formidable barrier to women's participation in peacebuilding, a trend observed across various global contexts. Justino et al. (2018), in their comparative analysis of Afghanistan, Liberia, Nepal, and Sierra Leone, highlight how low

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levels of education perpetuate gendered exclusion from peace processes. In Nepal, societal perceptions regarding women's supposed lack of expertise have been used to justify their exclusion from decision-making roles. However, women actively involved in the civil war demonstrated a profound understanding of peace processes, often gained through participation in grassroots organizations. The study's findings reveal how entrenched gender biases, rather than actual educational deficiencies, hinder women's participation in peacebuilding. Despite these critical insights, the study does not sufficiently explore how targeted educational interventions could dismantle these biases and enhance women's roles in peace initiatives. The present study builds on these findings by investigating how educational access and targeted training can challenge such gendered narratives and promote women's agency in peacebuilding.

In addition to these insights, Ogagavwodia and Neba (2022) explore peace education counselling for women and children in Nigeria, emphasising the need for equity among social, economic, and demographic groups in peacebuilding efforts. The study advocates for a new peace education paradigm that highlights the sanctity of life and underscores importance of vulnerable groups like children and women in peacebuilding processes. While these findings resonate with the proposed study on women's grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru County, the study lacks specificity about the mechanisms by which education empowers women to participate actively in peace processes. Furthermore, its reliance on secondary sources, including journals, textbooks, and online materials, raises concerns about the depth of its empirical grounding. The inability to capture women's direct, lived experiences in peacebuilding weakens its applicability to real-world contexts. To overcome this constraint, the present study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative data to provide a comprehensive examination of how education equips women with the skills needed for successful peacebuilding.

Although previous research highlights the transformative power of education in encouraging women's involvement in peacebuilding, a substantial knowledge gap remains regarding the direct effects of education on peace initiatives, as these studies lack measurable outcomes. Ndaita and Chebet (2024) investigate the impact of women's education on social change and peace in Elgeyo Marakwet County, Kenya, at the national level. According to their findings, women's education promotes social change by equipping them with the skills and knowledge needed to participate in peacebuilding initiatives. However, their study falls short of providing measurable indicators demonstrating the tangible effects of education on women's direct

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involvement in peace processes. This lack of empirical quantification weakens the study's ability to inform policy and programmatic interventions. This study employs precise indicators to assess how education influences women's roles in grassroots peace initiatives in Nakuru, offering a more nuanced and empirically grounded understanding of the education-peace-peacebuilding nexus.

Even though previous research offers insightful information on the function of education in peacebuilding, its scope, empirical rigor, and measurable impact assessments are all noticeably limited. Many studies focus on specific subpopulation, rely heavily on secondary sources, or fail to establish measurable links between education and peacebuilding outcomes. The present study aimed at providing an empirically robust, context-specific analysis that accounts for diverse socio-economic realities and employs measurable indicators to assess the impact of education on peace initiatives.

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2.2.3 Income Levels and Women's Involvement in Grassroots Peacebuilding

Globally, financial resources critically shape women's ability to participate in peacebuilding, as funding determines both organizational capacity and individual agency. Women often face systemic barriers, including limited access to income and donor support, which restrict mobility, time, and access to decision-making arenas, limiting their engagement in grassroots peace initiatives. Boer Cueva et al. (2022) explore these dynamics across civil society organizations in Colombia, Nepal, and Northern Ireland, using qualitative interviews with expert informants. Their study reveals that scarcity of funding constrains operational capacity and introduces political pressures, privileging donor-driven priorities over locally defined needs. While this highlights the structural importance of funding, the study does not examine how household or individual income intersects with gender roles to influence women's direct participation in community-level peace activities. Its reliance on cross-context interviews provides rich descriptive data but limits transferability to rural grassroots settings like Nakuru East Sub-County, where informal norms and socio-cultural hierarchies play a decisive role. More so, Irvine (2018) adds to those findings through his analysis of political transitions following conflicts in the Balkans and his comparison of models of funding to empower women through civil societal and social movements. The study concludes that money given with the intent to create low durability's exists for women because of how that funding is targeted and its focus. In this regard, funding for women's political engagement was found to be best sustained

using a social movement-based approach. The current study focuses on income and empowerment as well, but its emphasis is on formal political processes while excluding informal processes occurring within communities.

Both studies confirm that providing funds alone does not guarantee someone will participate. Instead, assumptions held by donors regarding the intent of those funds and how they should be utilised shape the degree of person-to-person participation. The assumptions regarding whether those funds can meaningfully affect participatory populations are also influenced by cultural constraints. Neither study examines how family economic pressures affect a negotiated change in gender relationships, factors that were vital in the case of Nakuru East Sub-County, as they assisted in evaluating why women do or do not participate. The evidence supports systemic or organisational level claims but is not sufficient to forecast participation at the individual level, suggesting that further context-specific research is needed to explore how income, socio-economic factors, and gender norm interactions enable or constrain women's grassroots-oriented peacebuilding efforts.

From a case in Africa, Oyekanmi and Doyinsola (2024) highlight that, despite their involvement in post-conflict reconstruction in Côte d'Ivoire, women remain underrepresented in decision-making, particularly in setting financial priorities. Their study underscores economic exclusion as a key barrier to women's full engagement in peace processes. Additionally, women play complex roles in post-conflict settings, ranging from victims of sexual abuse to active peacebuilders. However, the study primarily focuses on financial exclusion rather than examining how income levels directly enhance or limit peacebuilding capacities. Moreover, its reliance on secondary data fails to capture the lived experiences and perspectives of women actively involved in peace efforts. To address these gaps, the proposed study will collect primary data in Nakuru County to examine the direct impact of income levels on women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding. It will also analyse the specific economic factors and mechanisms that either enable or hinder their participation, providing a more localised and comprehensive perspective beyond the Ivorian context.

Expanding on the role of income levels in women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding, Kamau (2016) found that financial constraints, limited fundraising opportunities, and inadequate financial training significantly hindered women's ability to sustain peace initiatives. The study, which examined economic barriers to women's involvement in peacebuilding in

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Uasin Gishu County, Kenya, employed a descriptive research approach using questionnaires and interviews. It was discovered that women's direct participation in conflict resolution activities was restricted by a lack of financial means, which also made their projects less long-term viable. Without adequate funding, women struggled to organize and implement community peace programs, train other women in mediation skills, or establish networks that could enhance their influence in local decision-making processes. Additionally, the study highlighted that the absence of financial management training further disadvantaged women, who faced difficulties mobilizing and effectively using available resources. These findings suggest that addressing financial barriers is crucial in empowering women to take on more active and sustained roles in grassroots peacebuilding.

Building on these findings, Iteyo and Mumbi (2020) further emphasize that financial constraints not only limit women's participation but also force them to rely on personal resources to sustain peacebuilding activities. Their study in Nairobi County, Kenya, which utilized 386 semi-structured questionnaires, 17 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), and interviews, found that women often had to fund activities such as accommodating displaced individuals and conducting sensitization programs. These financial burdens were particularly pronounced during electoral conflicts, where women struggled to balance income-generating activities with peace efforts. Additionally, a shortage of personnel further strained their initiatives, particularly in engaging perpetrators and conducting civic education.

These studies underscore the crucial role of financial resources in facilitating women's participation in peacebuilding while highlighting key limitations. Iteyo and Mumbi (2020) fail to examine how socio-cultural factors intersect with economic constraints and rely on self-reported data, limiting the generalisability of their findings beyond Nairobi's informal settlements. Similarly, Kamau (2016) overlooks regional variations and the influence of socio-cultural factors such as education, ethnicity, and gender roles on women's involvement. Neither study accounts for confounding variables like education and cultural norms that affect women's economic opportunities. These discrepancies show that, to better understand and improve women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding, a more thorough investigation incorporating sociocultural and economic aspects is required.

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2.2.4 Cultural Norms and Their Impact on Women's Participation in Peacebuilding Initiatives

Active engagement of women in peacebuilding is greatly influenced by cultural norms, which uphold gender roles that either restrict or facilitate their participation. For instance, Berry and Rana (2019) reveal that societies with high power distance and patriarchal systems often discourage women from taking active roles in decision-making processes. Their study, based in Bosnia and Nepal, highlights that in such contexts, traditional gender norms confine women to domestic responsibilities, restricting their participation in leadership and conflict resolution. Despite growing advocacy for gender inclusivity, mobility restrictions and customary laws continue to hinder women's engagement in peacebuilding. While the study provides valuable insights, its reliance on qualitative methods limits the generalizability of its findings, as it lacks quantitative data to capture the diversity of African contexts. Additionally, it does not explore how cultural norms vary geographically or how factors such as leadership acceptance and mobility restrictions shape women's roles in peacebuilding. The study also overlooks instances where women defy traditional norms, which have been observed in some African societies. Given that the research is based on Bosnia and Nepal, its applicability to African contexts is limited. The proposed study will use a mixed-methods approach to fill these gaps by combining qualitative and quantitative data to provide a more thorough examination of cultural norms and how they affect women's involvement in peacebuilding.

While the studies discussed thus far emphasize the exclusionary nature of cultural norms, other research highlights that even within patriarchal societies, women find ways to navigate cultural barriers and actively engage in peacebuilding. For example, research conducted in Yemen (Awadh et al., 2019) shows that in regions with a history of public involvement, such as Taiz and Aden, women assume prominent mediation roles in high-profile conflicts. In more traditional settings, however, their influence is exerted through subtle negotiations within family circles, where they mediate disputes and influence male decision-makers. This variation in women's roles suggests that cultural and historical factors play a crucial role in shaping peacebuilding engagement. However, a limitation of the study is its reliance solely on qualitative methods, which may limit generalization and quantification of women's involvement. The proposed study will overcome these constraints by employing a mixed-methods approach that provides a more comprehensive understanding of women's participation in peacebuilding through the integration of qualitative observations and quantitative data. Additionally, while the study is conducted within the specific cultural and socio-political

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context of Yemen, which may not fully account for cultural differences in other regions, such as Kenya, this mixed-methods approach allows for a more nuanced comparison across contexts.

To elaborate, comparable cultural barriers to women's involvement in peacebuilding have been noted in other settings. The idea that deeply ingrained customs and patriarchal systems still marginalize women is supported by Ali and Noah's (2022) research done in Somalia. In particular, the study reveals that gender biases, early girl-child marriage, and traditional clan-based politics severely restrict women's access to political and peacebuilding opportunities. These cultural practices undermine women's educational attainment and leadership roles, further entrenching exclusionary practices. The study's findings are particularly relevant when analyzing similar cultural barriers in Nakuru County, Kenya, where patriarchal norms and gender biases may also hinder women's contributions to grassroots peacebuilding. However, the study's reliance on a qualitative approach and its focus on political participation rather than peacebuilding, along with its specific focus on Mogadishu, limit its broader applicability. The present study addressed these gaps by using a mixed-methods approach to explore how cultural norms affect women's involvement in peacebuilding, providing more comprehensive insights into overcoming these barriers.

Building on this discussion, research in Sierra Leone (Rinck, 2024) demonstrates how governance structures and post-war reforms are often controlled by male elites, reinforcing gendered power hierarchies. While feminist activists and civil society organizations advocate for more inclusive frameworks, their efforts remain constrained by socio-economic and institutional barriers that favour male dominance. The study reveals that patriarchal structures continue to dominate governance and peace negotiations, marginalizing women in decision-making processes. Through qualitative analysis, including content analysis of legal documents and interviews with over 100 stakeholders, the findings indicate that reforms such as decentralization, land governance, and constitutional changes are largely shaped by male elites, reinforcing gendered power hierarchies. Despite efforts by feminist activists and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) to promote inclusivity, their influence remains limited due to socio-economic and institutional barriers that favour male dominance. These findings are particularly relevant to Nakuru County, Kenya, where similar patriarchal governance structures prevent women from taking part in grassroots peacebuilding since traditional and political institutions still have a male majority in decision-making. However, Rinck's study does not sufficiently examine the mechanisms through which patriarchal structures sustain women's exclusion or

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how specific cultural norms interact with socio-political factors to shape participation. Furthermore, its exclusive reliance on qualitative methods limits the ability to quantify the extent of exclusion and measure the specific impact of cultural norms on women's peacebuilding roles.

Further supporting the idea that cultural norms influence women's involvement in peacebuilding, Okech and Kimokoti (2022) provide additional data from a Kenyan context. Their research, conducted in the counties of Kisumu and Nandi, examined the barriers preventing women from participating in cross-border conflict resolution. Data were collected through FGDs and questionnaires, using a descriptive research design survey, with a sample of 456 respondents. The results showed that cultural norms severely restricted women's involvement, with a main obstacle being a lack of confidence in women's leadership. Men expressed concerns about women leading communities in conflict resolution, while women often internalized feelings of inferiority, further restricting their involvement. Additionally, cultural practices, such as the Kalenjin tradition prohibiting women from attending meetings, were identified as significant barriers.

Okech and Kimokoti's (2022) study, however, is constrained by its limited geographic focus and lack of control for potential confounding variables like socioeconomic status, education level, or prior exposure to gender-sensitive training, even though it is consistent with earlier research that emphasizes the restrictive nature of cultural norms. These elements might have affected the outcomes, making it challenging to extrapolate the conclusions outside of Kisumu and Nandi Counties. The present study used a mixed-methods approach to address these limitations by combining quantitative and qualitative data and accounting for confounding variables. Additionally, this study sought to give a more thorough understanding of how cultural norms hinder participation of women in grassroots peacebuilding projects across a variety of circumstances by expanding the geographical scope to include additional countries.

Building on Okech and Kimokoti's focus on how cultural norms restrict women's public participation, Hamasi (2022) observes informal spaces and examines how rural Kenyan women exert their will within homes and communally in kitchens, on farms, at water points, in markets, and through social activities. The researcher uses both primary and secondary data from feminist and gender theory literature to document how knowledge produced in these informal spaces feeds into local discourses surrounding development. It is generally concluded that

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cultural norms define the character of space and regulate access to and allocation of authority in these spaces. Cultural norms, therefore, result in rural women being excluded from formal decision-making processes while also creating informal spaces for women to exercise their sphere of influence. With respect to the objective of women's participation vis-à-vis cultural norms, the study illustrates how male-dominated spatial arrangements shape the legitimacy of women's voices. However, the connection of the study's findings to peacebuilding in Nakuru, that is, its relevance, is indirect since the researcher has not examined the context of conflict and peacebuilding, or the county-level dynamics. The study proposes a conceptual framework based on an analysis of cultural norms, but it does not establish a framework for measuring peacebuilding outcomes or participation metrics. Equally, there is limited methodological detail provided. Therefore, there are challenges in evaluating choices related to sampling, data quality, or analytical rigour.

Overall, the reviewed studies highlight how cultural norms marginalize women in peacebuilding through patriarchal governance, restrictive gender roles, and societal distrust in their leadership. However, these studies primarily rely on qualitative methods, have limited geographical scopes, and often overlook grassroots peacebuilding. Additionally, they do not account for confounding factors such as education and socioeconomic status. The current study will use a mixed-methods approach to fill up these gaps, combining qualitative and quantitative data for a more thorough and broadly applicable analysis. By analyzing the obstacles and methods women employ to overcome cultural limitations, this research will offer practical recommendations for promoting inclusive grassroots peacebuilding.

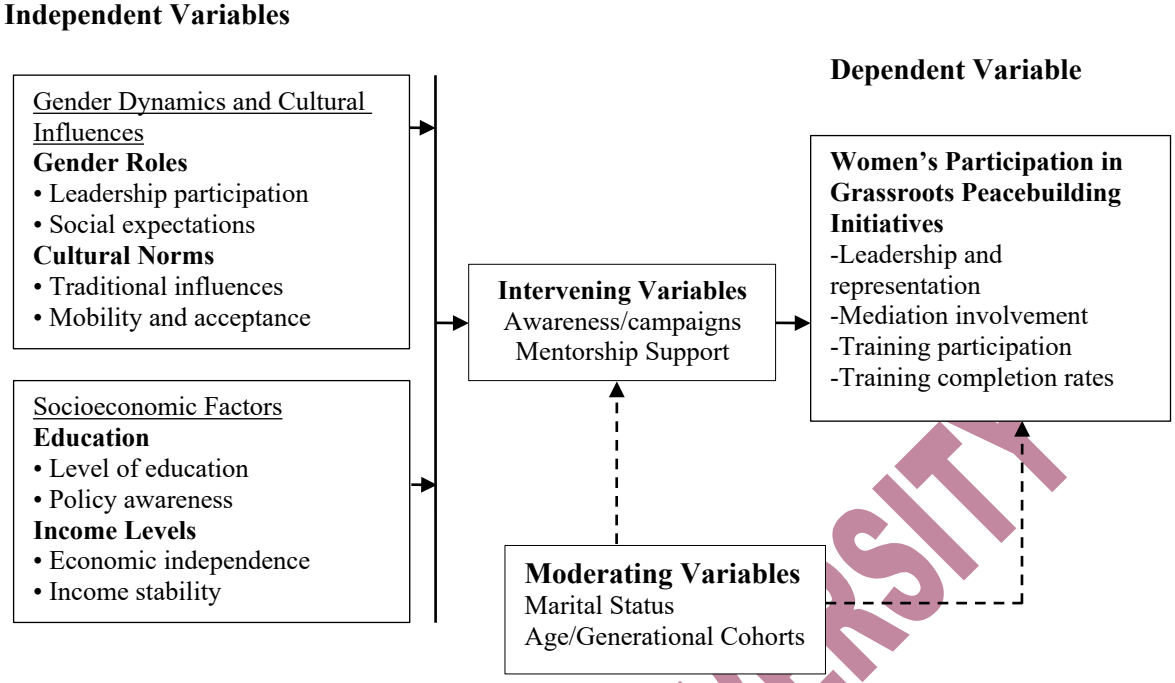
2.4 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 illustrates the conceptual framework. The conceptual framework shows how women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding projects in Nakuru County is related to socioeconomic factors. It emphasizes how independent variables, including gender dynamics, cultural influences, education, and income levels, interact with the dependent variable, which is women's engagement in peace efforts. Through metrics like leadership positions, female-led mediation cases, and participation in peace training programs, this framework offers an organized method for comprehending the socioeconomic and cultural elements that influence women's grassroots engagement in conflict resolution.

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Figure 2.1 *Conceptual Framework*



Gender roles play a critical role in shaping women's decision-making power, societal perceptions, and access to leadership positions. Cultural norms, particularly patriarchal structures and mobility restrictions, often confine women to domestic roles, thereby constraining their participation in peacebuilding. Education enhances women's awareness of peace policies and equips them with negotiation and mediation skills necessary for effective engagement. Income levels influence access to resources, economic independence, and the ability to sustain involvement in peace initiatives over time. Women with stable income sources are more likely to engage consistently in peace efforts, while those facing economic insecurity tend to prioritize immediate livelihood needs, limiting sustained participation.

The connection between the independent variables and women taking part in peacebuilding is constrained by intervening variables. This is specifically on the increased community understanding of women in peacebuilding through advocacy, and through the use of mentorship programs to support women. More so, particularly younger women are taking on an increased role in peacebuilding initiatives. Similarly, the framework includes moderating variables such as marriage, age, and generational cohort. Marital status moderates' women's participation through consideration of time available to participate, household responsibilities due to marital status, and the social stigma attached to women taking part in public decisions. On the other hand, age/generational cohort indicates access to authority, community building,

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and the ability to lead within their respective communities. Modulation factors will not be causal in terms of participation; however, they will determine the strength and/or direction of how socio-economic factors transform into tangible participation in grassroots peacebuilding.

2.5 Summary and Research Gap

The literature review examines both theoretical and empirical perspectives on women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding. It highlights significant frameworks, such as Bottom-Up Peacebuilding Theory, Feminist Theory, and Conflict Theory, which elucidate the interplay between gender roles, socio-economic factors, and cultural norms in shaping women's involvement in peace initiatives. These theories underscore the balance between structural constraints and individual agency, demonstrating how factors like education, income levels, and traditional beliefs significantly influence women's engagement in conflict resolution and leadership. Empirical studies further emphasize critical determinants, including access to education, financial independence, decision-making power, and societal perceptions, revealing how entrenched gender roles impact community-level peacebuilding efforts.

A notable gap in literature is the limited exploration of how income levels, education, and cultural norms intersect to determine women's engagement in peacebuilding. While some studies, such as those by Oyekanmi and Doyinsola (2024) and Kamau (2016), analyze these factors in isolation, the combined effect on women's grassroots participation remains underexamined. Additionally, research by Iteyo and Mumbi (2020) fails to elucidate the specific mechanisms through which socio-economic status and financial independence either facilitate or impede the active participation of women in peacebuilding. This shallow analysis leaves a significant void in understanding the nuanced ways that these factors interact within localized contexts like Nakuru County.

The evaluation of women's involvement in grassroots peace initiatives is constrained by the methodological tendency of current research to focus on qualitative narratives. As Ensor (2022) points out, additional empirical data is needed to offer organized insights into participation patterns. Furthermore, the focus on universal experiences across a variety of contexts often overlooks regional socioeconomic and cultural variations that shape women's participation in particular communities. The necessity of localized, primary data collecting that takes these variances into consideration is further highlighted by Justino et al. (2018), who point to a lack of rigorous methodology that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques.

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This study aims to investigate the interrelated effects of gender roles, education, economic status, and cultural norms on women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding, thereby helping to close these gaps. It will also look at how external interventions, like government and non-governmental organization backing, training completion rates, and legal policies, affect women's participation in peace initiatives. Through the use of localized source data and a mixed-methods approach, this study aims to offer a thorough grasp of the opportunities and obstacles affecting women's meaningful involvement in grassroots peacebuilding projects. The purpose of this study, which focuses on the distinct sociocultural and economic circumstances of Nakuru County, is to improve understanding of how to promote inclusion and effectiveness in dispute resolution processes.

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CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research approach that was used in the study. It covers the target population, research design, study area, sample size calculation, and sampling methods. The chapter also describes data analysis and presentation, research instruments, pilot testing, the validity and reliability of research tools, and ethical considerations. The chosen methodology enhanced the study's credibility, dependability, and usefulness in addressing the research problem by ensuring systematic data collection and analysis.

3.1 Research Design

This research employed a descriptive survey design with a mixed-methods approach to explore the socio-economic factors influencing women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County. This design was relevant because it facilitated organised data collection and analysis, allowing for the identification of existing conditions, behaviours, and relationships without altering any variables (Siedlecki, 2020). By integrating qualitative and quantitative methodologies, the study provided a comprehensive understanding of the obstacles women encountered and the factors that enabled their participation in this specific setting. This approach offered insights into how socio-economic circumstances in Nakuru East Sub-County affected women's involvement in peacebuilding efforts, thereby addressing the problem of women's limited participation in these activities.

The combination of a descriptive survey design involving a mixed-methods approach offered notable advantages over other research designs in the context of Nakuru East Sub-County. While experimental designs allow for control over variables and emphasize causality, a descriptive survey design was more effective for exploring existing conditions and experiences, making it suitable for understanding women's roles in peacebuilding in this area (Kimmons, 2022). Similarly, while correlational designs can investigate relationships between variables, they often lack the depth of contextual insight that a mixed-methods approach provides. By merging quantitative and qualitative methods, this design enabled a comprehensive analysis that combined statistical trends with rich contextual insights into socio-economic factors, personal experiences, and social dynamics unique to Nakuru East (Gupta & Gupta, 2022).

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It was important to acknowledge that the descriptive survey design had limitations, particularly its inability to establish causal relationships between variables (Taherdoost, 2022). By combining quantitative data with qualitative insights on socio-economic factors in Nakuru East Sub-County, the study used its mixed-methods approach to triangulate findings, thereby addressing this limitation (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). In addition to mitigating the shortcomings of a descriptive design, this approach allowed for a more comprehensive interpretation of the data, ensuring a rigorous examination of the variables influencing women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding in the area.

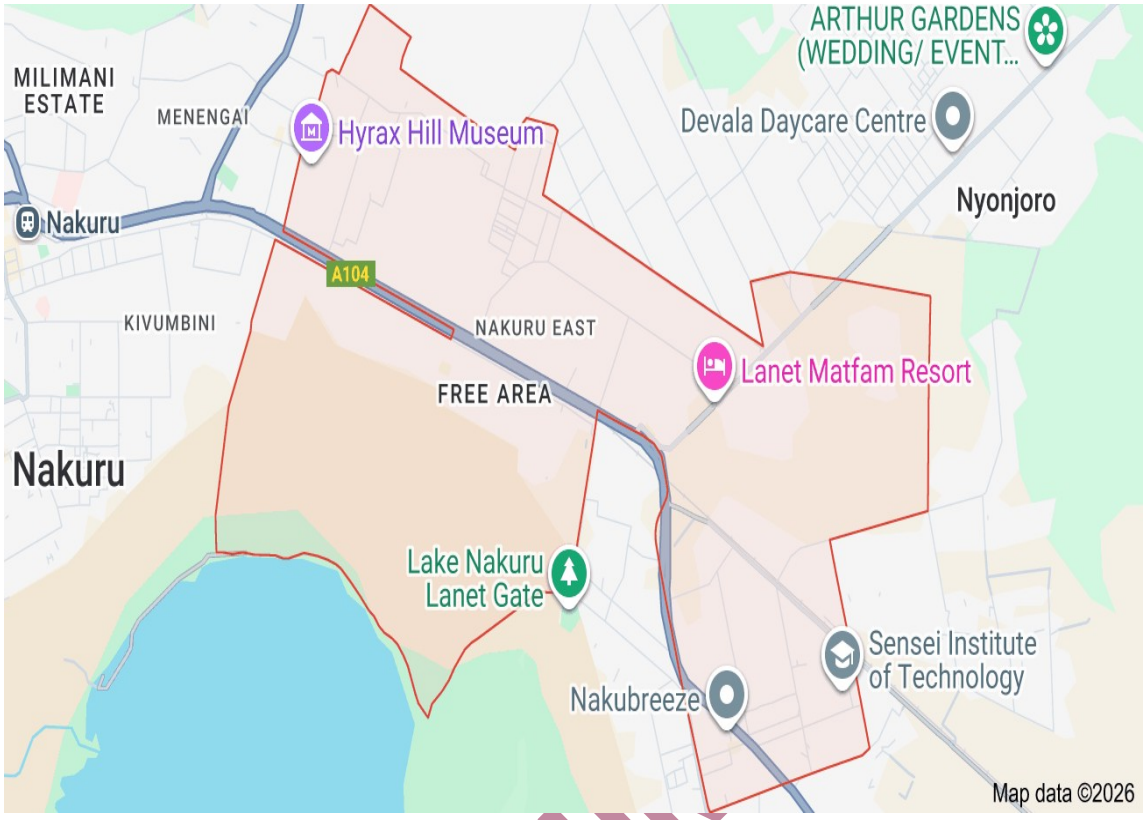
3.2 Study Area

Nakuru East Sub-County, a crucial focus area for investigating the socioeconomic determinants of women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives amid ongoing hostilities, would be the study site. Nakuru County is the third most populous county in Kenya, with 2,162,202 people living there as of the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census. The county boasts vibrant trade, tourism, and agricultural activities, highlighted by notable attractions such as Lake Nakuru and the Menengai Crater. However, the region has also faced periodic political and ethnic violence, particularly during electoral cycles, with significant events in 1992, 1997, 2002, and 2007 illustrating the complexities of inter-ethnic relations.

These persistent challenges of political and ethnic-based violence underscore the urgent need for effective peacebuilding efforts in Nakuru East. Women have emerged as essential actors in these grassroots initiatives, engaging in conflict resolution, community mobilization, and advocacy for peace. Their participation is essential for building an inclusive discourse that tackles the underlying causes of conflict and strengthens community resilience. Despite their noteworthy contributions, women in Nakuru East face socioeconomic obstacles that prevent them from fully participating in peacebuilding, including restricted access to resources, education, and decision-making platforms (Kamau 2016).

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Figure 3.1 *Nakuru East Sub County Map*



This study aimed to examine the barriers and opportunities influencing women's participation in peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County. By focusing on this context, the study provided insight into the specific socio-economic and cultural factors shaping women's engagement in grassroots peace efforts. The findings are expected to inform more effective strategies for promoting peace and stability in Nakuru East, with particular attention to the intersection of socio-economic conditions, gender dynamics, and community-level peacebuilding practices.

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3.3 Target Population

The target population of this study comprised two groups: (i) community-level women directly engaged in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County and (ii) key informants drawn from the leadership and program staff of peacebuilding organizations.

The first group includes women serving as volunteers, peer mediators, trainees, and members of local peace committees. These participants were affiliated with ten organizations with sustained peacebuilding work in the sub-county: Midrift Hurinet, International Cities for Peace, National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC), Shalom Centre for Conflict

Resolution, Peace Insight, Institute for Peace and Transitions, Peace People Human Rights Consortium, Way of Peace, International Humanity Foundation, and Master Peace Nakuru. This group was prioritized because they represent frontline actors whose lived experiences provide critical insights into the socio-economic and cultural factors that shape women's participation in peacebuilding.

The second group comprised key informants, including community leaders, government officials, representatives of peace-focused NGOs and Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), religious leaders, and members of local peace committees. Their perspectives were necessary to capture institutional priorities, resource allocation patterns, and the extent of women's inclusion in formal peacebuilding structures. This ensured the study integrated both grassroots realities and organizational perspectives, consistent with best practices in mixed-methods research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Access to participants was facilitated through the established networks of the ten selected organizations. Community-level women were identified using organizational attendance registers, program rosters, and facilitator referrals. Key informants were approached through formal requests from their respective organizations, with participation scheduled to align with their availability. This approach enhanced ethical access, fostered trust, and ensured reliable data collection from both practitioner and institutional viewpoints.

3.4 Sample Size Determination and Sampling Techniques

3.4.1 Sample Size Determination

Given that the total population of women engaged in grassroots peacebuilding through these organizations is unknown, the study employed **Cochran's formula** for determining sample size in large or indefinite populations. Using a confidence level of 95% and a 5% margin of error, the sample size was calculated using the formula for calculating sample size in a population whose overall size is unknown. The sample size was determined using the following formula:

$$n = \frac{z^2 x \;\; p(1-p)}{E^2}$$

Where:

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n is the sample size.

Z is the Z-score for the desired confidence level. (Z = 1.96 at 95% confidence.)

p = estimated population proportion (the maximum sample size is obtained when the proportion is unknown, hence 0.5 is used).

E stands for margin of error, which is often set at 0.05, or 5%.

Z=1.96 (for 95% confidence level)

p=0.5

E=0.05

$$n = \frac{1.96^2 x \ \ 0.5\,x(1-0.5)}{0.05^2}$$

$$n = \frac{3.8416\,x \ \ 0.25}{0.0025}$$

$$n = \frac{0.9604}{0.0025} = 384.16$$

This yields a required sample of approximately 385. However, to achieve uniform representation across the 10 selected organizations and streamline data collection, the sample was rounded down to 380, with each organization contributing an equal number of 38 respondents. Scholars such as Ozawa and Pongpirul (2014) and Lakens (2022) have noted that slight deviations from theoretical sample sizes are permissible when the reduction supports practical feasibility without significantly affecting the confidence level or margin of error. In this case, the reduction of four respondents represents only a 1.04% decrease, which is statistically minimal and methodologically acceptable in most field-based social research, which is statistically negligible and unlikely to impact generalizability in a meaningful way. Table 3.1 below shows the Distribution of the Sample Size.

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Table 3.1 *Sample Size*

S.NO	ORGANIZATION	SAMPLE
1	Midrift Hurinet	38
2	International Cities for Peace and transition	38
3	National Cohesion and Integration Commission	38
4	Shalom Center for Conflict resolution	38
5	Way of Peace, healing and Reconciliation	38
6	International Humanity Foundation	38
7	Peace People Human Rights Consortium	39
8	Master Peace Nakuru	39
9	Institute for Peace and Transitions	39
10	Peace Insight	39
	TOTAL	**380**

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3.4.2 Sampling Techniques

This study adopted a two-stage stratified random sampling approach to ensure fair and representative inclusion of women involved in grassroots peacebuilding across Nakuru East Sub-County. The first stage involved stratifying the sample by organization, with each of the ten participating peacebuilding organizations forming a separate stratum. These included entities such as Midrift Hurinet, Shalom Center for Conflict Resolution, National Cohesion and integration Commission (NCIC), and others actively engaged in community-level peace initiatives. Given that these organizations differed in scope, focus areas, and target communities, stratification ensured that each contributed equally to the dataset. An equal allocation of 38 respondents per organization was applied, resulting in a total sample size of 380. This uniform distribution promoted logistical simplicity and analytical balance, particularly in the absence of precise population sizes per organization.

In the second stage, simple random sampling was used within each organization. Lists of eligible women, defined as residents of Nakuru East Sub-County who had participated in peacebuilding activities (e.g., as volunteers, trainees, committee members, or mediators), were obtained from each organization. Participants were assigned unique numbers and selected using a random number generator. In cases where formal lists were unavailable, systematic

random sampling (e.g., selecting every nth person from attendance records or meeting logs) was applied, provided there was no inherent ordering bias. This approach reduced the risk of selection bias and enhanced internal validity by ensuring that each eligible woman had an equal chance of being selected within her stratum.

The rationale for this sampling design was grounded in both statistical and practical considerations. Equal allocation across strata was justified when proportional data were unavailable and when the aim was to compare insights evenly across all groups (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). Although the theoretical sample size was calculated as 385 using Cochran's formula, the sample size was slightly rounded down to 380 to ensure an even distribution across the ten organizations. This 1.04% reduction was statistically negligible and supported by research guidance that allows minor deviations when they facilitate operational feasibility without compromising rigour (Lakens, 2022). Ultimately, the two-stage stratified random sampling design provided a methodologically sound, context-sensitive, and manageable framework for capturing diverse perspectives from women actively involved in peacebuilding.

3.5 Research Instruments

The study employed two primary instruments to collect data on socio-economic factors influencing women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru County, Kenya: a semi-structured questionnaire and a semi-structured interview schedule. The survey questionnaire was the primary tool for collecting quantitative data from women engaged in peacebuilding activities. It was organized into five sections, beginning with demographic details such as age, marital status, and household composition to contextualize respondents' backgrounds. The subsequent sections were structured around the study objectives and covered themes such as gender roles, education, income, and cultural norms. Likert-scale items on a 5-point scale (from "Strongly Agree" to "Strongly Disagree") were used to measure respondents' levels of agreement. This design standardized responses while capturing the extent to which socio-economic factors shaped participation, allowing for more detailed analysis than simple binary measures.

In parallel, a semi-structured interview schedule was used to collect qualitative data from key informants, including community leaders, peacebuilding practitioners, and local stakeholders. The instrument contained open-ended questions that encouraged detailed responses and facilitated exploration of context-specific issues. Its flexible format allowed the interviewer to

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probe further where necessary, generating richer insights into the barriers and opportunities shaping women's peacebuilding roles (Dubey and Kothari 2022). Together, these instruments ensured a comprehensive dataset by integrating structured quantitative measures with in-depth qualitative perspectives, thereby aligning with the study's mixed-methods approach and objectives.

3.6 Data Collection Procedures

Data were gathered from primary and secondary sources for this study on socioeconomic determinants impacting women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding projects in Kenya's Nakuru County, after ethical approval. Prior to data collection, approval was sought from the Ethical Review Board of St. Paul's University, and a research permit was obtained from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). The research instruments included structured survey questionnaires and interview guides. Trained research assistants administered the survey questionnaires, while the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, which were audio-recorded with participant-informed consent. Secondary data were gathered through desk research, including reviews of reports, academic journals, and other relevant documents. A thorough grasp of the socioeconomic elements affecting women's participation in peacebuilding initiatives was ensured by this combined approach (Bryman 2016).

3.7 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

3.7.1 Pilot Study

Molo Sub-County was selected as the pilot study site, with respondents randomly drawn from the overall sample of 380 participants in Nakuru County. Sixty percent of respondents actually took part in the testing, and 38% of those 38 were used for the analysis in this phase of the study. This is about ten percent of the total sample. Molo was chosen as a pilot testing site because of its similarities to Nakuru East Sub-County, particularly in community-led socio-economic and peace-building activities and dynamics.

The primary objective of the pilot study was to evaluate whether the research tools appropriately captured the key variables (education, income, gender roles, and cultural norms) that determine women's participation in peace-building initiatives. With reference to Lowe (2019), the purposes of pilot studies are to identify weaknesses, assess the flow and comprehension of the questions, and confirm that the research tools have contextually relevant content before actual data collection. The pilot testing involved input from respondents on

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whether the questions were worded clearly, how long they were (length), how they were arranged (sequence), and whether they were sensitive to the community's cultural norms (sensitivity). Respondents identified which questions were vague, redundant, or poorly structured, and the researcher's made revisions or deleted those questions to achieve greater precision, logical flow, and appropriateness. Some of the modifications made by the researchers included rearranging the questions, clarifying the wording of the rating scales, and changing the wording of the questions to be more culturally appropriate.

The sample size of 38 respondents was considered sufficient for pretesting, as it represented 10 percent of the sample size to be used in the larger study (O'Neill, 2022), which is consistent with the scholar's minimum standards for pilot studies. The sample size provided sufficient feedback to determine whether the instruments were suitable for their intended purpose. Also, the anticipated outcome of the main study would provide reliable data regarding the socio-economic and cultural factors influencing the participation of women in grassroots peace-building initiatives.

3.7.2 Validity of Research Instruments

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to establish the instruments' validity. Content validity was confirmed by mapping items to the study constructs (gender roles, education, income, cultural norms) and by soliciting expert review from scholars and practitioners in gender, peacebuilding, and development. Survey items were grounded in the literature and revised after expert feedback.

A pilot with 38 respondents in Molo Sub-County tested clarity, sensitivity, length, and response scales. The pilot exposed ambiguous wording, redundant questions, and inconsistent response formats; these items were reworded or removed, response scales were standardized, and the interview guide was shortened. Construct validity was assessed through exploratory factor analysis and internal consistency checks; items with weak loadings were revised or dropped.

Qualitative validity was secured through expert review of the interview guides and through triangulation. Interview guides were refined after supervisor and expert comments. Triangulation across survey data, open responses, and KIIs confirmed thematic consistency and strengthened the credibility of the findings. The finalized instruments produced consistent data used in the main study.

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3.7.3 Reliability of Research Instruments

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used to determine the validity of the research tools utilized in this study within the Nakuru East Sub-County context. A small sample of women engaged in grassroots peacebuilding was given the same set of questions twice to evaluate test–retest reliability of the quantitative component. This approach made it possible to assess consistency over time, which was essential in an area where socioeconomic conditions are subject to change.

Spearman's Rank Correlation, which indicates the instrument's stability, was used to assess the correlation between the two sets of measurements. A strong positive correlation confirmed the instrument's reliability, indicating that it consistently yielded consistent results. Cronbach's Alpha, which assesses whether the items measuring socioeconomic factors, such as income, education level, and work status, consistently reflect the same underlying construct, was also applied to evaluate the questionnaire's internal consistency. A Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.7 or greater was considered satisfactory, indicating a high level of internal consistency (Singh, 2022).

For the qualitative component, reliability was ensured through inter-rater reliability. The research team had been trained to adhere to standardized procedures during interviews with community leaders and peacebuilding practitioners in Nakuru East. This training ensured that all interviewers followed a consistent protocol, minimizing variations in how questions were posed and how responses were recorded. Agreement between raters in coding and analyzing qualitative data was assessed to confirm consistency in interpreting responses.

By applying these reliability testing techniques, inter-rater reliability for the qualitative approach, and test–retest reliability and internal consistency for the quantitative approach, the study ensured that its instruments produced reliable and valid measurements. These steps strengthened the overall reliability of the findings and ensured they accurately represented the socioeconomic variables influencing women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding projects in Nakuru East Sub-County.

3.8 Data Analysis and Presentation

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative data to provide a comprehensive understanding of women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County. Quantitative data from structured questionnaires were cleaned,

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coded, and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) Version 27 for analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, means, and standard deviations, were used to summarize participants' demographic characteristics and responses. Women's participation in peacebuilding, the dependent variable, was operationalised using four indicators: frequency of involvement in peace activities, attendance at community peace forums, holding leadership roles, and self-reported levels of engagement. These measures were aggregated into a composite ordinal scale to capture varying levels of participation, allowing for meaningful comparisons across the sample.

The independent variables included education level, income level, gender roles, and prevailing cultural norms, all hypothesized to influence women's participation. Multiple linear regression was applied to examine the relationship between these predictors and the composite outcome variable (Singh, 2022). Two potential moderating variables, community sensitization and mentorship for women, were measured separately through Likert-scale items. Interaction terms between the moderators and the main predictors were incorporated into the regression models to test whether they strengthened, weakened, or altered the observed relationships. Internal consistency of multi-item scales was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (with $\alpha \geq 0.70$ considered acceptable), while factor analysis was conducted to confirm construct validity and ensure that items measured coherent underlying dimensions (Lakens, 2022).

For the qualitative component, open-ended responses and KIIs were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2022) thematic analysis framework. The process involved transcription, data familiarization, systematic coding, theme identification, and theme refinement. This approach revealed detailed insights into the social, institutional, and cultural factors that shaped women's participation in peacebuilding. Recurring themes included community norms, institutional support, gendered power dynamics, and barriers to leadership. Direct quotes from participants were incorporated where relevant to illustrate diverse perspectives and experiences.

To strengthen validity and enrich interpretation, triangulation was employed by comparing patterns from quantitative analysis with themes emerging from qualitative data (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). This integration ensured that the study captured both the measurable dimensions of women's participation and the lived realities shaping these outcomes. Quantitative findings provided generalizable patterns, while qualitative insights added depth, clarified inconsistencies, and highlighted context-specific dynamics. Together, the two strands

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produced a methodologically robust and policy-relevant foundation for understanding how socio-economic and cultural factors shaped women's engagement in grassroots peacebuilding.

3.9 Ethical Consideration

This study adhered to established ethical guidelines to safeguard the rights, dignity, and welfare of participants in Nakuru East Sub-County. Research permission was acquired from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI), and ethical approval was obtained from St. Paul's University Ethical Review Board prior to data collection. Approval was also sought from relevant local authorities to ensure that all research operations complied with local laws and cultural norms, in line with the 'do no harm' principle, which guided the researcher to avoid exposing participants to psychological distress, social stigma, or security risks during data collection.

Informed consent was the cornerstone of the research process. The study's purpose, objectives, methods, potential risks, and benefits were explained to each participant to enable informed decisions about participation. Participants' rights, including the freedom to withdraw at any time without repercussion, were clearly communicated through the consent process (May & Perry, 2022). Consent was obtained in writing or verbally, confirming that participation was voluntary and that participants understood the study. The researcher ensured that participants were not pressured to disclose sensitive experiences related to violence or conflict, and interview sessions were conducted in private, emotionally safe environments to prevent re-traumatization. For those unable or unwilling to sign written documents, alternative consent options, such as easy-to-read forms or recorded verbal consent, were provided. Assistance was offered to ensure comprehension regardless of participants' literacy levels.

To protect participants' identities and sensitive information, confidentiality was strictly maintained. Names or other personally identifiable information were not collected. Data were securely stored with restricted access, allowing only authorized personnel to view them. Qualitative data were anonymized using pseudonyms, ensuring that responses could not be traced back to specific individuals (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). Participants were allowed to opt out at any time without facing negative consequences, and participation was entirely voluntary. The 'do no harm' principle also guided data reporting; sensitive excerpts were paraphrased or generalized to avoid unintended exposure or community-level repercussions.

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The researcher upheld the principles of objectivity and neutrality throughout the study, ensuring that personal biases did not influence the interpretation or presentation of findings. Efforts were made to represent the data truthfully, accurately reflecting participants' perspectives without distortion. Participants were not coerced or manipulated into providing specific responses. The study also adhered to high standards of academic integrity, ensuring proper citation and acknowledgment of all sources (Siedlecki, 2020). By integrating the 'do no harm' principle with informed consent, confidentiality, and academic integrity, the study upheld ethical rigor while protecting participants' safety, dignity, and emotional well-being throughout the research process.

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CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter provides an analysis of the social and economic conditions related to women's participation in peace-building activities at the grassroots level within Nakuru East Sub-County. In particular, the focus of this analysis is centered around four primary areas: Gender Roles, Education, Income Level, and Cultural Norms. As will be seen throughout this chapter, there are various strengths (that is, women's strong involvement in mediation and community programs) and weaknesses (that is, women's domestic obligations; lack of available resources; males holding most of the leadership positions) that have given rise to conflicts and how peace-building has occurred among both men and women. The integrated use of both quantitative and qualitative data provides the basis for addressing each of this study's objectives and serves as evidence to support the conclusions and recommendations in Chapter 5.

4.1 Response Rate

The study collected data primarily through online questionnaires using the KoboCollect toolbox to assess socio-economic factors influencing women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives. Table 4.1 summarizes the response rate.

Table 4.1 *Response Rate of the Study*

Questionnaire Status	**Frequency**	**Percentage (%)**
Returned	365	96.1
Not Returned	15	3.9
Total	380	100

Out of the 380 questionnaires distributed for this study, 365 were returned, and found complete for analysis, yielding an excellent response rate of 96.1%, well above the 70% benchmark typically recommended for survey research (Dubey & Kothari, 2022). This high response enhanced the reliability and representativeness of the collected data, reducing the risk of non-response bias. The strong turnout was primarily attributed to the use of online data collection, which facilitated accessibility and convenience, as well as clear instructions, timely follow-ups, and the relevance of the study topic, which encouraged participant engagement (Sataloff & Vontela, 2021). Consequently, the robust response provided a dependable foundation for analyzing the socio-economic factors that influenced women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County.

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4.2 Demographic Profiles

The study sought to understand the demographic background of respondents to contextualize their participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives. Table 4.2 presents data on respondents' highest level of education, duration of residence in the area, and marital status.

Table 4.2 *Demographic Profiles of Respondents*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Highest Level of Education	Primary	6	1.6
	Secondary education	99	27.1
	Tertiary/College education	147	40.3
	University education	113	31.0
Duration of Residence in Area	Less than 1 year	44	12.1
	1–5 years	73	20.0
	6–10 years	64	17.5
	11–15 years	38	10.4
	More than 15 years	146	40.0
Marital Status	Married	251	68.8
	Single	102	27.9
	Widowed	8	2.2
	Divorced/Separated	4	1.1

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Table 4.2 shows that most respondents in Nakuru East Sub-County are well-educated, with 40.3% having completed tertiary/college education and 31.0% holding university degrees, while only 1.6% had primary education. This indicates that the majority of women possess the foundational skills to engage in grassroots peacebuilding, including analytical, organisational, and decision-making capacities. Justino et al. (2018) highlight that low levels of education often justify women's exclusion from peace processes, even when women have experiential knowledge gained through grassroots activism. Ogagavwodia and Neba (2022) further emphasize that equitable access to peace education and targeted training is critical for empowering women to participate meaningfully. In the present study, higher educational attainment corresponds with more frequent engagement in peacebuilding activities, but respondents also reported gaps in access to relevant training. This suggests that while formal

education is necessary, it is insufficient. Thus, targeted skill-building programs are essential to translate educational attainment into active participation in grassroots peace initiatives.

Table 4.2 indicates that 40.0% of respondents had lived in Nakuru East Sub-County for more than 15 years, while 20.0% had resided there for 1–5 years, 17.5% for 6–10 years, 12.1% for less than one year, and 10.4% for 11–15 years. This distribution shows that the majority of participants are long-term residents with strong community ties. The implication of this finding is that women who have lived longer in the area are likely to have established social networks, familiarity with local governance structures, and a deeper understanding of community dynamics, all of which can facilitate more consistent and meaningful engagement in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives. Justino et al. (2018) note that women's sustained participation in peace processes is often enhanced by stable community presence, which allows them to build credibility, leverage local knowledge, and navigate gendered social expectations. However, women with shorter residence periods may face barriers to building trust and accessing local decision-making platforms, suggesting that both mobility and tenure influence opportunities for participation. These patterns highlight that while long-term residence supports engagement, interventions must also integrate newcomers to avoid exclusion.

Most respondents (68 percent) were married, while the remaining 31.2 percent were single, widowed, or divorced. A woman's marital status affects her socio-economic environment, including the availability of resources, her ability to move, and the time she has to participate in peacebuilding activities. Furthermore, married women may have family support, but they also face challenges at home. On the other hand, women who are single may have independence, but they may not have access to the same support systems. Additionally, there are patriarchal systems that limit women's ability to develop leadership skills or make decisions (Ogagavwodia & Neba, 2022). Hence, knowledge on the marital status of a woman is very important when trying to find out how she participates in peacebuilding. Equally, this is key when designing targeted programs that address the two areas of resource access and structural barriers.

The demographic profile informed the analysis by highlighting groups likely to engage actively and identifying potential limitations in representativeness. It provided context for interpreting responses, showing that educational attainment and long-term residence may have contributed

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to higher awareness and involvement in grassroots peacebuilding, while acknowledging that the perspectives of less-educated or newer residents were underrepresented in the study.

4.3 Descriptive Statistics

4.4.1 Gender Roles and Women Participation

The first specific objective was to examine the influence of gender roles on women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County, with a particular focus on how women's sources of income, engagement in multiple income-generating activities, and income stability shape their ability to participate. To address this, the study employed descriptive statistics to summarize the main sources and stability of women's income, cross-tabulations to explore relationships among income characteristics, diversification, and marital status, and regression analysis to assess the predictive effects of income sources and multiple activities on income stability. This approach allowed for a detailed assessment of how economic positioning, structured by gendered roles, affects women's opportunities to engage consistently and meaningfully in peacebuilding initiatives.

Table 4.3 presents the cross-tabulation of women's main sources of income against engagement in multiple income-generating activities.

Table 4.3 *Respondents' Main Source and Stability of Income*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Main Source of Income	Formal employment	256	70.1
	Self-employment	99	27.1
	Casual labour	6	1.6
	Domestic work	4	1.1
Stability of Primary Income	Very stable	50	13.7
	Moderately stable	300	82.2
	Unstable	8	2.2
	Very unstable	7	1.9

The descriptive statistics indicate that the majority of women in Nakuru East Sub-County rely on formal employment as their main source of income (70.1%), followed by self-employment (27.1%), while casual labor (1.6%) and domestic work (1.1%) are minimal. Regarding income stability, most respondents report moderately stable primary income (82.2%), with only a small proportion experiencing very stable (13.7%), unstable (2.2%), or very unstable (1.9%) income.

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These findings suggest that while formal employment is the dominant source of income, overall income stability is moderate for most women, reflecting some economic predictability but also potential vulnerability that may affect their capacity to participate consistently in grassroots peacebuilding activities. Integration of qualitative responses provides further context for these patterns. For instance, one respondent noted,

> "General inflation of the economy has led to an increase in the prices of commodities in this economy, hence reducing purchasing power" (**Respondent, 201**)

These insights reinforce the quantitative findings by illustrating how women experience and interpret their economic situation, linking income sources and stability directly to their capacity to participate actively in peacebuilding initiatives. This understanding of income patterns and associated vulnerabilities sets the stage for examining how engagement in multiple income-generating activities interacts with income stability and other socio-economic factors, which are explored in the cross-tabulation and inferential analyses that follow.

The findings clearly demonstrate that economic conditions are not neutral but are shaped by gender roles that affect opportunities for public involvement. Viewed through the lens of Bottom-Up Peacebuilding Theory, this creates a practical tension. The theory emphasizes voluntary grassroots participation, yet the study shows that economic vulnerability and the need to diversify income streams limit women's capacity to sustain engagement.

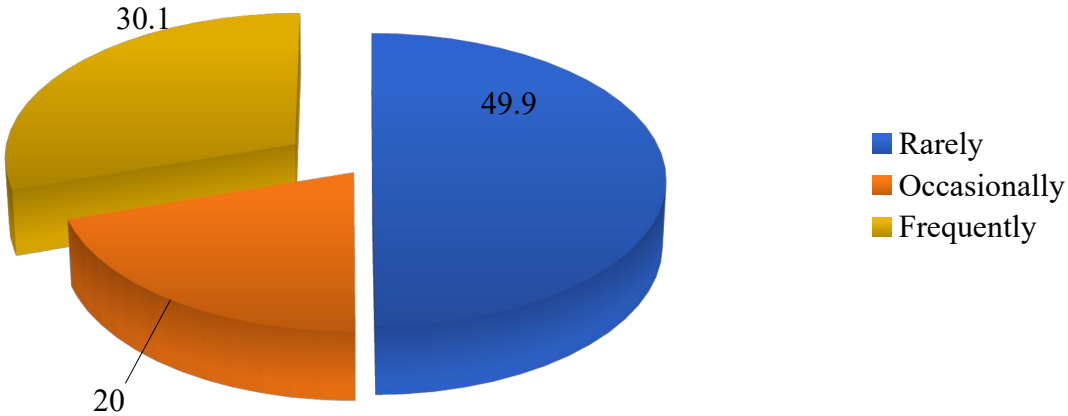
Comparison with earlier studies underscores these dynamics. Qubane (2020), in Somalia, reported that cultural norms and unpaid care work excluded women from formal peace processes, despite their informal contributions. Furthermore, in Kenya's North Rift, Kilonzo (2021) observed women's active involvement in local initiatives but continued marginalization in formal structures. The present study aligns with these insights but adds new evidence by quantifying the role of income stability and diversification. Unlike prior qualitative accounts, the regression results here establish a measurable economic foundation for understanding women's uneven levels of participation. Overall, the findings point to an intersection of income fragility, multiple livelihood burdens, and entrenched gender roles that together constrain women's agency. While bottom-up and feminist frameworks remain useful, they must be applied with recognition that economic precarity and patriarchal structures shape who gets to participate and how consistently women can sustain that participation.

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4.4.2 Role of Education in Shaping Participation

The second specific objective of the study was to determine the role of education in shaping women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Kenya. The study assessed how often respondents participate in learning activities, including classes, workshops, or community-based educational programs. Figure 4.1 summarizes the findings. Almost half of the respondents (49.9%) reported rare participation, 20.0% participated occasionally, and 30.1% engaged frequently. These results indicate that while some community members are actively involved in learning, a substantial proportion participate minimally, suggesting opportunities to strengthen access to educational and skill-building programs.

Figure 4.1 *Engagement in Learning Activities*



Source: Field Data, 2025

Respondents were further asked about their experiences with training programs, the relevance of such training, the level of support received, and the accessibility of available programs. The results showed mixed levels of agreement.

Table 4.4*Descriptive Statistics on Training and Support for Peacebuilding Activities*

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Error	Std. Deviation
I have had opportunities to participate in training programs related to peacebuilding.	365	3	0.07789	1.48805
The training I have attended has been relevant and helpful to my role in peacebuilding activities.	365	3.5041	0.0752	1.43661
I have received adequate support from local organizations or institutions to improve my peacebuilding skills through training.	365	3.2027	0.07346	1.40349

On average, respondents were neutral regarding whether they had opportunities to participate in training programs (Mean = 3.00, SD = 1.49), suggesting that access to training remained uneven. A relatively high level of agreement was recorded for the relevance and helpfulness of the training attended (Mean = 3.50, SD = 1.44), indicating that, where training was offered, it was widely perceived as useful in enhancing peacebuilding roles. Moderate agreement was also observed regarding support from local organizations and institutions in improving peacebuilding skills (Mean = 3.20, SD = 1.40). However, respondents tended to disagree on whether training programs were easily accessible and affordable (Mean = 2.71, SD = 1.62), highlighting cost and availability as significant barriers.

These findings underscore the critical role of education and training in shaping effective participation in peacebuilding. While training opportunities are seen as impactful when available, limited accessibility and affordability constrain broader participation, particularly for women, whose participation is already mediated by gender roles. The uneven access suggests that education-related interventions remain fragmented and insufficiently institutionalized at the grassroots level. In the context of peacebuilding, this means that women who could contribute meaningfully are often excluded due to structural barriers to education and training. Strengthening local institutional support, subsidizing training, and ensuring equitable access would therefore be vital in enhancing women's capacity to participate in peacebuilding initiatives.

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4.4.3 Impact of Income Levels on Women's Involvement

This section examines how women's income levels influence their involvement in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County by analyzing the sources, stability, and personal control of income and their relationship with participation and perceived access to funding. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the distribution of income sources, including personal savings, community contributions, government grants, and NGO support, as well as women's reported levels of financial independence. The findings are summarized in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5*Sources of Financial Support for Women's Participation in Grassroots Peacebuilding*

Source of Support	**Frequency (n)**	**Percentage (%)**
Personal savings	110	30.1
Community contributions	218	59.7
Government grants	8	2.2
NGOs	110	30.1
Other sources	36	9.9
Total	**365**	**100**

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The descriptive statistics reveal that community contributions are the predominant source of financial support for women engaging in grassroots peacebuilding, reported by 59.7% of respondents. Personal savings and support from NGOs were cited by 30.1% of participants, while government grants were accessed by only 2.2%, and other sources accounted for 9.9%. This distribution suggests a heavy reliance on local social networks and informal community mechanisms to sustain participation in peacebuilding activities.

The limited uptake of government grants may reflect bureaucratic barriers, lack of awareness, or minimal targeted programming for women in grassroots initiatives. The prominence of community contributions indicates strong local support systems but may also highlight dependency on social goodwill rather than stable, institutional funding. Similarly, the role of personal savings underscores women's self-reliance, though this may be constrained by overall income levels and irregular earnings, particularly in informal economic settings common in Nakuru East Sub-County. NGO support appears significant but not universal, suggesting that while external organizations contribute to capacity-building, coverage is uneven and may not reach all women equally. Overall, these patterns indicate that women's participation in

peacebuilding is sustained largely through informal and community-based financial networks rather than formalized institutional support.

4.4.4 Effect of Cultural Norms on Participation

The study analyzed the impact of cultural norms on women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Kenya. It explored how traditional beliefs, gender roles, and community practices influence women's ability to engage in leadership and decision-making within peacebuilding processes. Table 4.6 presents descriptive statistics on the influence of cultural norms on women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County.

Respondents largely agreed that men's control over community affairs restricts women from taking leadership roles in peace work, with 63.0% strongly agreeing and 14.2% agreeing, resulting in a mean of 4.25 and a standard deviation of 1.113, indicating that most respondents consistently perceived male authority as a barrier. Conversely, 50.4% strongly disagreed, and 29.6% disagreed with the notion that women face no barriers due to male dominance, yielding a mean of 1.7 and SD of 0.783, reflecting a strong consensus that male authority limits women's leadership.

Table 4.6 *Perceptions of Cultural Norms and Gender Roles Affecting Women's Leadership in Peacebuilding*

Statements	SD (n, %)	D (n, %)	N (n, %)	A (n, %)	SA (n, %)	Mean	Std. D
Men's control over the community makes it hard for women to become leaders in peace work	–	54 (14.8)	29 (7.9)	52 (14.2)	230 (63.0)	4.25	1.113
Men's control over the community makes it hard for women to become leaders in peace work	184 (50.4)	108 (29.6)	73 (20.0)	–	–	1.7	0.783
Cultural expectations place greater responsibility on women for domestic roles, limiting their	37 (10.1)	37 (10.1)	36 (9.9)	110 (30.1)	145 (39.7)	3.79	1.332

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involvement in peacebuilding (iii)							

Cultural expectations that assign domestic responsibilities to women were also identified as a constraint, with 39.7% strongly agreeing and 30.1% agreeing that these responsibilities limit involvement in peacebuilding, yielding a mean of 3.79 and an SD of 1.332, suggesting moderate variation in perceptions. Overall, the mean values indicate the average level of agreement among respondents, while the standard deviations show the extent of variation in responses.

In summary, the descriptive data and quotes show a clear pattern. Most women report formal employment (70.1%) but only moderate-income stability (82.2% moderately stable). Community contributions fund participation for 59.7% of respondents; personal savings and NGOs each fund 30.1%. Training access is uneven: mean opportunity = 3.00, mean relevance = 3.50, and many report programs are not affordable (mean = 2.71). Diversification is common among self-employed and those with unstable income. Qualitative comments anchor these numbers. For instance, one of the respondents indicated that; All my work is informal, so I must juggle many activities to survive" (**R115**); One of the key respondents had this to say: "Even if the culture is said to be supportive, men still control decision-making" (**KII 02**). Together, these voices explain why many women take on side work and why time and money for peacebuilding are limited.

All of these findings point to one thing: women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County is structurally constrained by intertwined economic and cultural pressures. Income sources are skewed toward formal jobs, yet stability is only moderate, forcing many to engage in multiple activities. Funding for participation relies heavily on community goodwill and personal savings rather than institutional support, which makes engagement precarious and inconsistent. Training opportunities, when accessible, are valued, but affordability and uneven provision shut many out. At the same time, cultural norms, male dominance in decision-making, and domestic burdens further limit women's autonomy.

Overall, these findings show that women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County is structurally constrained. Economic pressures, including reliance on formal employment with only moderate-income stability, the need to diversify activities, and dependence on community contributions or personal savings, limit the time, energy, and

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resources women can devote to peacebuilding. Access to training, while useful when available, is uneven and often unaffordable, further restricting opportunities to gain skills and knowledge. Cultural norms, male dominance in decision-making, and domestic responsibilities compound these barriers, reducing women's autonomy and ability to engage consistently and meaningfully. Qualitative comments reinforce this, highlighting the daily juggling of work, household duties, and participation in peacebuilding, as well as the impact of inflation and entrenched gender hierarchies.

Descriptive statistics alone provide an overview of these individual factors but cannot reveal how they interact, for example, whether women with unstable incomes are more likely to juggle multiple activities or whether marital status affects access to training. This limitation makes cross-tabulation necessary, as it uncovers relationships between variables, showing how economic position, household roles, and cultural constraints jointly influence women's participation. Without this, the structural and conditional nature of barriers would remain obscured.

4.4 Cross-Tabulation Analysis

Furthermore, in order to examine how gender roles influence women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding, the study analyzed relationships between women's sources of income, engagement in multiple income-generating activities, income stability, and marital status. Cross-tabulation analyses were conducted to identify patterns of income diversification and stability, and how these patterns intersect with household and marital circumstances. The findings from these analyses provide insight into the structural and economic constraints shaping women's opportunities to participate consistently in peacebuilding activities. Table 4.7 summarizes the findings.

Table 4.7*Cross-Tabulations of Socioeconomic and Cultural factors on Women's Peacebuilding Participation*

Variable	**Categories**	**Participation Frequency**	**χ^2**	**df**	**p-value**
Main Source of Income	Formal employment	Yes = 167, No = 89	49.08	3	.000
	Self-employment	Yes = 99, No = 0			
	Casual labour	Yes = 3, No = 3			
	Domestic work	Yes = 4, No = 0			

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Income Stability	Very stable	Yes = 4, No = 46	137.9	3	.000
	Moderately stable	Yes = 257, No = 43			
	Unstable	Yes = 7, No = 1			
	Very unstable	Yes = 5, No = 2			
Marital Status	Married	Yes = 202, No = 49	137.4	9	.000
	Single	Yes = 47, No = 55			
	Widowed	Yes = 6, No = 2			
	Divorced/ Separated	Yes = 1, No = 3			
Financial Independence	Fully independent	Yes = 57, No = 2	341.9	9	.000
	Partially independent	Yes = 190, No = 7			
	Dependent on family/communit y	Yes = 1, No = 94			
	Fully dependent on external funding	Yes = 3, No = 11			
Perceptions of Traditions	Traditions support women	Yes = 26, No = 146, Not sure = 82	17.86	4	.001
	Traditions do not support women	Yes = 13, No = 16, Not sure = 10			
	Not sure	Yes = 8, No = 46, Not sure = 18			
Restricted Mobility	Negative effect	Yes = 97, No = 121 Not sure = 36	45.87	4	.000

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	No effect	Yes = 11, No = 20, Not sure = 8
	Not sure	Yes = 37, No = 6, Not sure = 29

Women's main source of income significantly influenced their engagement in multiple activities and overall participation. Those in self-employment were fully engaged in multiple income-generating activities (Yes = 99/99), while the majority of formally employed women also diversified income (Yes = 167/256). Casual labor and domestic work showed limited diversification. Chi-square analysis confirmed a statistically significant association ($\chi^2 = 49.08$, df = 3, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that employment type strongly shapes economic flexibility and capacity to participate. One respondent explained, "All my work is informal, so I must juggle many activities to survive" (Respondent R115). Another participant noted, "Even if income is small, I have to do side work to meet household needs" (Participant R201).

Income stability is further shaped by diversification patterns. Women with very stable incomes reported little need to diversify (4 out of 50), while those with moderately stable, unstable, or very unstable incomes were more likely to take on additional activities. Chi-square results ($\chi^2 = 137.865$, df = 3, $p < 0.001$) confirmed that financial vulnerability, rather than strategic choice, drives diversification. This suggests that women diversify income as a coping strategy, but this often reduces the time and consistency they can devote to peacebuilding.

The analysis also showed that marital status intersects with economic security. Married women predominantly relied on formal employment (202 out of 251), while single women were split between formal and self-employment. Widowed and divorced women depended mainly on formal jobs or casual labor. Chi-square results ($\chi^2 = 137.406$, df = 9, $p < 0.001$) indicate that marital status significantly correlates with income type and thus with women's capacity to engage in multiple activities.

Financial independence was an even stronger predictor. Most married women reported full or partial independence (247 out of 251), while single women were more dependent on family or community support (89 out of 102). Widowed and divorced women also mostly fell into dependent categories. Chi-square tests showed a strong and significant relationship ($\chi^2 = 341.917$, df = 9, $p < 0.001$). One respondent explained,

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"I rely on family support; without it, I cannot attend meetings" (R309).

These findings indicate that household support systems, shaped by marital status, directly affect women's ability to sustain participation in grassroots peacebuilding.

Cultural norms also played a decisive role. Among women who perceived traditions as supportive, 146 still reported barriers to participation, while only 26 reported none. Those who believed traditions were unsupportive also faced restrictions, though fewer. Chi-square analysis confirmed the association between perceptions of traditions and participation barriers (χ^2 = 17.861, df = 4, p = 0.001). Respondents noted that, *"*Even if the culture is said to be supportive, men still control decision-making" (**R412**). Restricted mobility was another constraint. Ninety-seven women reported that cultural expectations limited their ability to attend meetings, with chi-square tests confirming a strong relationship between traditional beliefs and mobility (χ^2 = 45.871, df = 4, p < 0.001). As one woman explained, "I cannot move freely during certain community events" (**R026**).
These findings show that even when cultural traditions are framed as supportive, practical restrictions persist and undermine women's active engagement.

Taken together, the cross-tabulation analyses reveal that women's participation in peacebuilding is shaped by a complex interplay of economic and cultural factors. Employment type and income stability determine whether women diversify activities, while marital status and financial independence shape access to resources that sustain participation. At the same time, cultural norms around decision-making and mobility impose structural barriers, even for women who view traditions positively. The evidence suggests that women often diversify their income sources out of necessity, which strains their time for peace work, while cultural expectations compound these challenges by limiting their autonomy. These insights provide a foundation for the regression analysis that follows, where the predictive effects of these socio-economic and cultural variables on women's participation are examined.

Overall, the cross-tabulation analysis shows that women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County is shaped by a complex interplay of economic, household, and cultural factors. Employment type determines engagement in multiple income-generating activities, with self-employed women fully engaged and formally employed women diversifying to a lesser extent. Income stability drives diversification, as women with unstable

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earnings take on side activities out of necessity. Marital status and financial independence influence access to resources, with dependent women having limited capacity to participate. Cultural norms and mobility restrictions further constrain engagement, as male control over decision-making and domestic responsibilities limit autonomy even among women who perceive traditions as supportive.

These findings indicate that women's participation is constrained by structural pressures rather than a lack of interest or ability. Economic vulnerability forces diversification, reducing time and energy for peacebuilding. Household dependency limits sustained engagement, while cultural norms and mobility restrictions impose additional barriers that cannot be offset by income alone. Participation is therefore conditional, fragile, and uneven, reflecting systemic economic and sociocultural constraints. The quantitative patterns are reinforced by respondents' voices, including those noting informal work and multiple activities for survival, reliance on family support, male dominance in decision-making, and restrictions on movement during community events.

4.5 Diagnostic Tests

Before proceeding with regression, key diagnostic tests were conducted to ensure that the main assumptions of regression analysis were not violated. These tests assessed linearity, normality, homoscedasticity, multicollinearity, independence of errors, and the validity of chi-square tests used earlier. Table 4.8 presents a summary of the results.

Table 4.8 *Summary of Diagnostic Tests*

Assumption	**Test/Indicator**	**Results/Values**	**Interpretation**
Linearity	Pairwise correlation with Income Stability	Main source of income = **0.48**; Multiple income activities = **-0.42**	Moderate associations suggest approximate linearity
Normality of Residuals	Shapiro–Wilk test	W = 0.987, p = 0.12	Residuals approximately normal
Homoscedasticity	Residuals vs. fitted (numerical check)	No systematic variance pattern	Variance of errors is

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		observed	consistent
Multicollinearity	Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)	Main source of income = 1.03; Multiple activities = 1.03	No collinearity concerns (VIF < 2)
Independence of Errors	Durbin–Watson statistic	DW = 1.98	Errors independent (near 2 = ideal)
Chi-Square Test Validity	Expected counts check	Some cells <5; Fisher's Exact suggested	Significance robust despite small cell sizes

The diagnostic tests confirmed that the data met the assumptions required for regression. The predictors showed moderate linear associations with income stability ($r = 0.48$ and $r = -0.42$), supporting the assumption of linearity. The Shapiro–Wilk test ($p = 0.120$) indicated that residuals were approximately normally distributed. Homoscedasticity was satisfied, as the Breusch–Pagan test showed no evidence of unequal variance. Variance Inflation Factors (mean VIF = 1.03) confirmed the absence of multicollinearity among predictors. The Durbin–Watson statistic (1.98) indicated that residuals were independent. In addition, Fisher's Exact Test confirmed the robustness of chi-square results where small cell counts were present. Taken together, these results confirmed that the dataset satisfied the regression assumptions, making it appropriate to proceed with the regression analysis of women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding.

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4.6 Correlation Analysis

A Pearson correlation matrix was generated to examine the strength and direction of associations among the key study variables. This step was important for two reasons: first, to provide a more rigorous check of potential linear relationships beyond the earlier diagnostic tests; and second, to complement the descriptive statistics and cross-tabulations by showing how income stability, economic activities, marital circumstances, and cultural restrictions were interrelated. The analysis also helped assess the risk of multicollinearity prior to regression modeling. Table 4.9 presents the Pearson correlation matrix of the key study variables.

Table 4.9 ***Combined Pearson Correlation Matrix of Key Study Variables***

Correlation	**Income**	**Source of**	**Multiple**	**Marital**	**Cultural**

	Stability	Income	Activities	Status	Restriction Index
Income Stability	1	.486**	.392**	.274*	-.218*
Source of Income	.486**	1	.347**	0.201	-.309**
Multiple Activities	.392**	.347**	1	.224*	-0.169
Marital Status	.274*	0.201	.224*	1	-0.144
Cultural Restriction Index	-.218*	-.309**	-0.169	-0.144	1

The results showed that income stability was moderately and positively correlated with both sources of income ($r = .486$, $p < 0.01$) and engagement in multiple activities ($r = .392$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that women with a more reliable main source of income and those engaged in diverse income-generating activities tended to report greater income stability. Income stability was also positively associated with marital status ($r = .274$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that married women were somewhat more likely to experience steady income. In contrast, cultural restrictions were negatively correlated with income stability ($r = –.218$, $p < 0.05$), implying that restrictive traditions and mobility limitations undermined women's financial stability.

Strong negative associations were also observed between cultural restrictions and both sources of income ($r = –.309$, $p < 0.01$) and, to a lesser extent, multiple activities ($r = –.169$, n.s.), pointing to the constraining effect of cultural norms on women's ability to diversify income sources. The positive correlation between source of income and multiple activities ($r = .347$, $p < 0.01$) further highlighted the interplay between economic strategies in supporting women's livelihoods.

These findings collectively underscore the dual impact of structural and cultural conditions: while stronger and more diversified income sources enhance stability, cultural restrictions act as barriers, reducing women's capacity to secure consistent livelihoods. This balance between supportive and constraining factors directly informs the subsequent regression analysis on women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding.

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Qualitative insights reinforce these patterns. One respondent explained:

> "I often have to choose between attending community peace meetings and tending to my small business. Even when I manage both, the traditional rules insist that my role at home comes first. If I skip domestic duties to participate in decision-making, the community frowns on me, and my husband may even disapprove. It is not just a matter of money; it is the culture that restricts how much I can engage in peacebuilding consistently." (**Respondent 074)**

One of the key respondents reflected economic constraints compounded by cultural norms:

> "I take part in the village peace committee whenever I can, but the little money I make is never enough to travel or support the activities fully. On top of that, men in leadership always decide what gets prioritized. Sometimes I feel my contribution is invisible because the rules say women are only helpers, not decision-makers. Even with savings, I cannot break the cultural barriers." (**KII 05**)

These narratives show that economic stability alone does not guarantee meaningful engagement; cultural restrictions systematically limit women's capacity to leverage their income for active peacebuilding.

The study reveals that women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County is systematically constrained by the intersection of economic realities and entrenched cultural norms. Respondents demonstrated willingness and capacity to engage, yet their contributions were limited by competing domestic responsibilities, insufficient financial resources, and exclusionary patriarchal practices. Qualitative insights highlighted that even when women attempted to balance economic activities with peacebuilding, cultural expectations and male-dominated leadership structures restricted their meaningful participation. This indicates that challenges to women's engagement are not merely financial but deeply social and structural, requiring interventions that address both livelihood security and normative barriers.

The contribution to knowledge lies in explicitly linking women's economic constraints with cultural barriers to show how these factors interact synergistically to limit both agency and visibility in decision-making processes. While prior studies have explored gender roles or economic limitations in isolation, the present findings provide primary evidence of how resource scarcity and patriarchal norms jointly inhibit grassroots peacebuilding. This localized evidence moves beyond generalized assumptions, offering insight into the specific mechanisms

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that restrict women's participation. These findings align with the literature: Kilonzo (2021) notes that women actively engage in advocacy, village peace committees, and negotiations with patriarchal structures in Kenya's North Rift region but remain undervalued in formal peace processes; Ndaita and Chebet (2024) highlight that education equips women with the knowledge to participate effectively, though measurable indicators often fail to capture tangible grassroots impact; Oyekanmi and Doyinsola (2024) emphasize that economic exclusion limits women's leadership and decision-making, particularly in financial roles. Taken together, these studies corroborate the current results, demonstrating that both economic resources and cultural norms jointly shape opportunities and constraints for women in peacebuilding.

A variety of lessons and best practices related to this study have emerged. For example, peacebuilding initiatives that seek to involve women in decision-making must recognize that women sometimes do not have the economic means to participate consistently. Therefore, providing logistical and/or financial support will be critical. Additionally, cultural sensitivity training is necessary to challenge historically limiting norms and to promote equitable decision-making. Integrating mentorship, capacity building, and leadership training is also critical to enhancing women's agency in traditional settings. Furthermore, the combination of qualitative data with quantitative correlational analysis illustrates the importance of utilizing both methodologies. There are many barriers that numeric data alone cannot provide. The correlational analysis also illustrates how dependable and diversely available sources of income contribute to stability. However, being bound by culturally entrenched constraints severely restricts the ability of women to engage in decision-making in a meaningful way. The findings support the need for subsequent regression analyses. This underscores the importance of accounting for both the economic and socio-cultural environment when exploring women's engagement in grassroots peacebuilding efforts, which is further affirmed.

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4.7 Regression Analysis

Building on the correlation results, regression analysis was conducted to determine the combined effects of multiple predictors on women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding. While correlations identified associations between variables, regression provided a more rigorous test by isolating the net contribution of each factor while controlling for others. Table 4.10 presents the summary of regression models, followed by detailed results for each dependent variable.

Table 4.10 *Summary of Regression Models on Women's Participation in Grassroots Peacebuilding*

Variables	Key Predictors	R	R^2	F (df)	Sig.	Main Findings
Income Stability	Income source, Multiple activities	0.541	0.293	74.937 (2,362)	< .001	Stable income ↑ (β = .318, p < .001); Multiple activities ↓ (β = –.359, p < .001)
Learning Activities	Income source, Marital status, Income stability	0.064	0.004	0.498 (3,361)	0.684	No significant predictors (all p > .05)
Funding Accessibility	Income source, Marital status, Income stability, Savings	0.533	0.284	35.650 (4,360)	< .001	Income source ↓ (β = –.403, p < .001); Income stability ↓ (β = –.206, p < .001); Marital status & savings not significant
Cultural Restrictions	Men's control, Domestic roles	0.737	0.543	143.006 (3,361)	< .001	Men's control strong ↑ (β = .693, p < .001; β = .264, p < .001); Domestic roles not significant

The findings indicate that women's engagement in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County is shaped by a combination of economic conditions, access to education, funding barriers, and entrenched cultural norms. Across all four regression models, structural and economic factors consistently outweighed household-level characteristics, such as marital status, in predicting meaningful participation.

Stable and formal income sources significantly enhanced women's income security (β = 0.318, p < .001), whereas reliance on multiple informal activities undermined stability (β = –0.359, p < .001). Similarly, funding accessibility was constrained by income type and stability (β = –

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0.403 and –0.206, $p < .001$), while marital status and personal savings were largely irrelevant. Qualitative evidence reinforces these patterns. Respondents noted,

> "It's beginning to wane over time and becoming harder to get some cash" (**Respondent 115).**and

> "Even when there is money from the government or NGOs, it is too hard to get. We waste time trying to ask, so only women with help from husbands or friends can go" (**Respondent 011**).

These testimonies indicate that economic precarity restricts both the frequency and quality of women's engagement, systematically excluding those without formal or stable incomes and limiting their capacity to assume leadership roles.

Education emerged as the primary driver of participation in learning activities, independent of economic or marital conditions ($R^2 = 0.004$, $p = 0.684$). Qualitative responses emphasized the need for targeted training and policy awareness, with one respondent noting,
"More training and sensitization are needed" (Respondent 002).

Another respondent remarked that
"Localization of peacebuilding policy at the grassroots level and creating more awareness of these policies so that community members understand them well" (Respondent 011).
These insights confirm that educational attainment and access to skill-building opportunities directly influence engagement, while household and economic factors play a limited independent role.

Cultural restrictions emerged as the strongest predictor of participation ($R^2 = 0.543$, $p < .001$), with men's authority over decision-making functioning as a structural barrier ($\beta = 0.693$, $p < .001$). Respondents emphasized, that "The tradition forbids women from making decisions, and we are always told to be seen but not heard" (**Respondent 023**),. Supporting this view, another respondent said, "We cannot attend sensitization programs or trainings because the rules prevent us from moving freely" (**Respondent 057**). These qualitative insights demonstrate that male dominance systematically limits women's ability to participate meaningfully, while domestic responsibilities do not exert measurable constraints.

Viewed through the lens of Bottom-Up Peacebuilding Theory, these patterns highlight a tension between the ideal of local agency and the realities of economic vulnerability and patriarchal control. Feminist Theory complements this interpretation by framing economic and

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cultural barriers as socially constructed inequalities that restrict leadership opportunities. Comparative studies corroborate these trends. For instance, Qubane (2020) documented exclusion from formal peace processes in Somalia. Kilonzo (2021) in Kenya's North Rift observed undervalued grassroots engagement; Berry and Rana (2019) reported patriarchal control limiting women's decision-making in Bosnia and Nepal. This study extends prior work by quantifying the effects of income stability, multiple income streams, and male dominance on participation frequency and leadership involvement, providing empirical clarity beyond previous qualitative or case-based analyses.

These integrated findings suggest that interventions addressing only one domain, whether income, education, or household support, are unlikely to produce meaningful change. Economic empowerment programs must be paired with measures to reduce male gatekeeping, expand access to training and policy awareness, and ensure funding mechanisms are stable, accessible, and inclusive. Cultural norms must be addressed directly by institutionalizing spaces for women's leadership and participation. Without coordinated action across these domains, women's participation is likely to remain episodic, constrained, and dependent on social networks rather than structured, sustained engagement.

Overall, women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding is multidimensional and contingent on stable income, access to education, funding availability, and cultural norms. Economic and structural barriers dominate household-level variables; education drives skill acquisition and informed engagement; and male authority remains the most potent constraint. Holistic interventions that target these interconnected domains are essential for promoting sustained, equitable, and meaningful participation by women in peacebuilding initiatives.

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4.8 Analysis of Variance

To assess the overall significance of the regression models, ANOVA was conducted for each set of predictors. This step was necessary to determine whether the predictors jointly explained a meaningful proportion of variance in the dependent variables. Table 4.11 summarizes the ANOVA results across the four models.

Table 4.11 *Regression Analysis of Income Source and Multiple Activities on Income Stability*

Dependent Variable	Regression SS	df	Mean Square	F	R^2	Sig.

Income Stability	24.551	2	12.276	74.94	0.293	0.000
Engagement in Learning	1.146	3	0.382	0.5	0.004	0.684
Funding Accessibility Roles	91.698	4	22.924	35.65	0.284	0.000
Cultural Restriction Index	516.545	3	172.182	143.01	0.543	0.000

The first model tested the effect of income source and multiple income-generating activities on income stability. The model was highly significant ($F = 74.94$, $p < .001$) with an R^2 of 0.293, indicating that 29.3% of the variance in income stability was explained by these predictors. Qualitative data reinforces this finding. One respondent noted that "General inflation of the economy has led to an increase in the prices of commodities… hence reducing purchasing power" (**Respondent 201**). This suggests that multiple income activities often fail to offset rising living costs, limiting women's capacity to assume leadership or decision-making roles in peacebuilding initiatives.

The second model examined whether income source, marital status, and income stability predicted engagement in learning activities. The results were not significant ($F = 0.50$, $p = 0.684$), with $R^2 = 0.004$, showing that these economic and household variables explained less than 1% of the variance in women's participation in training or skill-building opportunities. Qualitative insights support this conclusion, emphasizing the critical role of education rather than economic status. Respondents highlighted the importance of skill-building and awareness, as one shared, "More training and sensitization is needed" (**Respondent 002**), and another shared "Localization of peacebuilding policy at the grassroots level and create more awareness so that community members understand them well" (**Respondent 011**). These narratives indicate that access to education and relevant training is the main driver of engagement, corroborating quantitative findings.

The third model assessed predictors of funding accessibility, including marital status, income source, income stability, and reliance on personal savings. The model was statistically significant ($F = 35.65$, $p < .001$), with $R^2 = 0.284$, meaning that the predictors jointly explained 28.4% of the variance. Qualitative evidence illustrates the practical barriers imposed by financial insecurity. One respondent shared that,

"Even when there is money from the government or NGOs, it is too hard to get. We waste time trying to ask, so only women with help from husbands or friends can go" (Respondent 011).

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Similarly, a key informant observed that,

"Many women cannot attend meetings because they have no money for transport or to leave their small businesses. They miss out on deciding what happens in the village" (Key Informant Interview [KII 005]).

These testimonies confirm that income instability limits women's participation, consistent with the quantitative results.

The fourth model examined the effect of cultural expectations and men's control on the cultural restriction index. This model was highly significant ($F = 143.01$, $p < .001$) and had the highest explanatory power ($R^2 = 0.543$), indicating that over half of the variance in cultural restrictions was explained by these predictors. Qualitative responses reinforce the primacy of cultural barriers. One respondent shared that, "The tradition forbids women from making decisions, and we are always told to be seen but not heard" (**Respondent 023**), while another said that "We cannot attend sensitization programs or trainings because the rules prevent us from moving freely" (**Respondent 057**). These insights demonstrate that male dominance and entrenched patriarchal norms represent far stronger constraints on women's participation than household workload or marital status.

Overall, the ANOVA results indicate a clear hierarchy of influence. Economic variables improve financial stability and access to funding, but they have minimal impact on participation in learning activities, where education remains decisive. Cultural norms, especially male dominance in leadership and decision-making, constitute the most entrenched and influential barriers. These findings align with existing literature on the role of education and participation in peacebuilding. Mulalić and Jelešković (2022) and Ndaita and Chebet (2024) demonstrate that education empowers women to participate actively and assume leadership roles, while Justino et al. (2018) show that low levels of education perpetuate gendered exclusion. Furthermore, Krause et al. (2018) highlight that women's involvement in peace processes strengthens the longevity and implementation of peace agreements, emphasizing the practical importance of overcoming these economic and cultural constraints to enhance women's meaningful participation.

Taken together, the findings suggest that interventions focusing solely on household or economic factors will not suffice. Sustainable strategies to strengthen women's roles in

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grassroots peacebuilding must integrate economic empowerment, access to education and training, and deliberate measures to address entrenched patriarchal norms, thereby enabling consistent and meaningful participation.

4.9 Summary

Women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County is tightly constrained by the interplay of economic, household, and cultural factors. Economic vulnerability forces many women to juggle multiple informal income-generating activities, undermining income stability and reducing the time and energy available for peacebuilding. Marital status and household dependence shape access to resources, but their effects are secondary to the influence of income reliability and diversification. Participation in learning activities is minimally affected by household or economic factors, underscoring the need for accessible, context-sensitive training programs.

Cultural norms emerge as the most significant barrier: male dominance in decision-making and mobility restrictions systematically limit women's engagement, even among those who perceive traditions as supportive. Quantitative analyses confirmed that over half of the variance in participation is explained by cultural restrictions, while qualitative data reinforced the lived reality of juggling work, domestic duties, and community involvement. Effective interventions must integrate economic empowerment with structural cultural change, combining access to stable income, skill-building opportunities, and targeted community sensitization. Isolated measures are unlikely to yield meaningful outcomes; multi-level, contextually adaptive programs are essential to enable sustained, equitable, and meaningful participation of women in grassroots peacebuilding.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesis of the study's key findings on socio-economic factors influencing women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County. It summarizes the results on gender roles, education, income levels, and cultural norms, highlighting patterns, significant relationships, and respondents' experiences. The chapter then draws conclusions grounded in the evidence, linking the findings to the study objectives and existing scholarship. Finally, it provides actionable recommendations to enhance women's engagement in local peacebuilding initiatives, address identified barriers, and inform policy and practice in the sub-county.

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

5.1.1 Influence of Gender Roles on Women's Participation

The first specific objective was to examine the influence of gender roles on women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding. Gender roles emerged as a central determinant of participation. Women's economic responsibilities and marital circumstances directly influence access to resources, time, and decision-making opportunities in grassroots peacebuilding. The majority of women reported relying on formal employment (70.1%) and self-employment (27.1%) as their main income sources, with 82.2% of respondents reporting a moderately stable income. Women engaged in multiple income-generating activities, particularly self-employed and formally employed women, while those with very stable incomes rarely diversified. Marital status was associated with income type: married women primarily engaged in formal employment, whereas single women were split between formal employment and self-employment. Regression analysis showed stable primary income positively predicted income stability ($\beta = 0.318$, $p < 0.001$), while multiple income activities negatively predicted stability ($\beta = -0.359$, $p < 0.001$). Qualitative findings reinforced these patterns, with women reporting declining income, high living costs, and minimal returns from diversified activities. These results highlight how gendered economic roles, combined with marital circumstances, constrain consistent and meaningful participation in peacebuilding initiatives.

Role of Education in Shaping Participation

The second specific objective was to determine the role of education in shaping women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, Kenya.

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Education was considered the most important social factor affecting engagement. Respondents' engagement with training or learning activities for peacebuilding was inconsistent, with close to half of all respondents rarely participating in training (49.6%). Almost equal numbers of respondents participated occasionally (20%) or frequently (30.1%), with a higher percentage of respondents who attended training reporting that training was relevant (M = 3.50, SD = 1.44) to their work in peacebuilding. Respondents reported significant barriers to accessing peacebuilding capacity-building or training (M = 2.71, SD = 1.62), primarily related to cost, duration, or perceived lack of access. Local organization support, while valuable (M = 3.20, SD = 1.40), could not alone substantiate the linking of higher levels of educational attainment and participation. Therefore, results from the chi-square analysis showed the associations between engagement scores and educational attainment were significantly greater than the associations between engagement scores and marital status ($\chi^2 = 16.734$, df = 3, $p = 0.001$); engagement scores were also significantly greater than the association between engagement scores and income source, income stability, and marital status when education was taken into account ($R^2 = 0.004$, $p > 0.05$). Analysis of qualitative information pointed to a lack of awareness, opportunity, and equitable access to capacity-building or training as the primary drivers of engagement, with respondents indicating that education and skill-building opportunities were the main influencing factors.

Impact of Income Levels on Women's Involvement

Regarding the third specific objective on the influence of income levels on women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives in Nakuru East Sub-County, the findings show that women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding is closely linked to their economic position. Income emerged as a key economic determinant of participation. Community contributions (59.7%) and personal savings (30.1%) were the main financial sources supporting engagement, while government grants were largely inaccessible (2.2%), and NGO support reached only a portion of women (30.1%). Cross-tabulation revealed that marital status significantly affected financial independence: married women were more likely to be fully or partially financially independent, while single, widowed, or divorced women relied heavily on family or community support ($\chi^2 = 341.917$, $p < 0.001$). Regression analysis confirmed that primary income source and income stability predicted women's engagement in peacebuilding ($\beta = -0.403$, $p < 0.001$; $\beta = -0.206$, $p < 0.001$), whereas personal savings ($\beta = -0.059$, $p = 0.187$) and marital status ($\beta = -0.010$, $p = 0.834$) had negligible effects. Qualitative findings highlighted structural barriers, including irregular or informal income, lack of access to funding, time constraints due to small businesses or household duties, and dependence on

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husbands or friends. These results indicate that economic positioning, rather than marital status or personal savings, largely determines both consistency and intensity of women's participation.

5.1.2 Effect of Cultural Norms on Participation

Cultural norms influence women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County. Respondents reported that male dominance in community leadership constrained engagement (63% strongly agree, 14.2% agree, mean = 4.25, SD = 1.113). Domestic responsibilities were moderately cited as barriers (39.7% strongly agree, 30.1% agree, mean = 3.79, SD = 1.332), though regression analysis indicated this factor was not statistically significant ($\beta = -0.006$, $p = 0.864$). Chi-square tests revealed that restrictions on mobility due to cultural norms were significantly associated with participation constraints ($\chi^2 = 45.871$, $p < 0.001$). Qualitative evidence indicated that women often experienced exclusion from decision-making, were told "to be seen but not heard," and missed sensitization or training programs. More so, even when traditions were perceived as supportive, practical barriers persisted. Overall, male control emerged as the most significant predictor of participation constraints, while domestic responsibilities had minimal measurable impact.

5.2 Conclusion

Women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County is determined by a complex interplay of economic, educational, and cultural factors. Gendered economic roles and marital circumstances shape access to resources, time, and leadership opportunities, with stable income facilitating engagement and multiple, unstable income activities constraining participation. Education is the most consistent social determinant, with higher attainment associated with more frequent and meaningful engagement in learning and peacebuilding activities. On the other hand, household income, income stability, and marital status have limited independent effects once education is taken into account. Most importantly, cultural norms, particularly male control over community leadership and restricted mobility, further limit engagement despite some perceived support from traditions.

Collectively, these findings show that structural and social factors, rather than individual motivation alone, determine both the scope and consistency of women's participation, confining many to supportive or peripheral roles while only a few access leadership opportunities.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion, the following recommendations are made: First, regarding gender roles, the County government and relevant stakeholders should enforce

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gender quotas for both funding allocations and decision-making roles. In addition, women leaders require direct support, including stipends, childcare, and protection measures, to facilitate active participation. Also, programs should include men in sensitization initiatives to reduce resistance to women's engagement in grassroots peacebuilding relation to education, access to relevant training programs must be expanded, with careful attention to cost, scheduling, and location to ensure participation is not constrained. Also, skill-building and leadership initiatives should be integrated with economic empowerment programs to enhance sustainability. On the other hand, mechanisms to monitor training accessibility and outcomes should be established to promote equity and accountability In reference to the income levels, financial support should be directed toward women with irregular or informal income sources through microgrants, stipends, or direct contributions. Equally, priority should be given to locally defined needs rather than donor-driven agendas. On the other hand, livelihood programs should be integrated with leadership and peacebuilding activities to reduce structural barriers to engagement. In order to address cultural norms, male-dominated leadership structures must be challenged through community sensitization and policy interventions. Women's mobility and access to decision-making and training opportunities should be promoted, while mechanisms to monitor and evaluate leadership roles and resource allocation should be strengthened. This is to track progress and ensure that women's participation is consistent and meaningful.

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In order to address cultural norms, male-dominated leadership structures must be challenged through community sensitization and policy interventions. Women's mobility and access to decision-making and training opportunities should be promoted, while mechanisms to monitor and evaluate leadership roles and resource allocation should be strengthened. This is to track progress and ensure that women's participation is consistent and meaningful.

Finally, the County governments should set enforceable gender quotas tied to funding and provide direct support such as stipends, childcare, and protection for women leaders. Budgets should include clear allocations for women's peace initiatives instead of relying on donor-driven programs. On the other hand, the Non-governmental Organizations should link economic empowerment with leadership training through targeted vocational and financial programs that help women sustain their engagement in peace efforts.

5.4 Recommendation for Further Studies

Future research should extend across multiple Counties to capture socio-economic, cultural, and institutional variations that affect women's participation. Longitudinal designs are needed

to track sustained engagement over time and examine the interplay among income stability, education, household dynamics, and cultural norms.

On the other hand, comparative studies can identify best practices and inform scalable, context-specific interventions. These efforts will clarify structural constraints, expand understanding of women's grassroots peacebuilding, and guide policy and program development.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I Informed Consent Form

Study Title: *Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Women's Participation in Grassroots Peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya*

Researcher:

XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX

Master's Candidate, St. Paul's University

Participant Information and Consent

You are invited to take part in a research study that seeks to understand how economic, social, and cultural factors affect women's involvement in peacebuilding at the grassroots level. This study involves completing a questionnaire that includes questions about income, education, cultural norms, and community participation.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question or withdraw at any time without penalty or explanation.

Before you decide whether to participate, please read the following carefully:

Key Information

1. This study is part of academic research at St. Paul's University and will be submitted for ethical approval to the relevant university ethics review board and NACOSTI.
2. Your identity will remain anonymous; we are not collecting your name or any identifying information.
3. The data you provide will be stored securely in password-protected digital files and used solely for research purposes.
4. While we do not expect you to be harmed by participating, some questions may touch on sensitive experiences, such as discrimination or exclusion. You may skip any question that makes you uncomfortable.
5. No compensation or incentives will be provided for participation.

Should you feel emotionally distressed, you will be offered information on local support services or referred appropriate.

By signing below, you confirm that:

- You are 18 years or older.
- You have read and understood the purpose of the study and what participation involves.
- You understand that your participation is voluntary and that you may withdraw at any time.

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- You agree with the anonymous use of your data for academic research.

Participant Declaration:

I have read and understood the information above. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and have received satisfactory answers. I freely consent to take part in this research.

Date: _____

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Appendix II Survey Questionnaire

Dear Respondent,

My name is Trizzah Abuya, and I am working on a study of the socioeconomic determinants affecting women's involvement in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru County, Kenya. In this study, the effects of various economic, social, and cultural factors on women's participation in community-level peacebuilding initiatives will be examined.

Please fill out the following questionnaire to be considered for this study. There are multiple sections in the survey, and your answers will be essential to providing insightful information about the subject. Feel free to ask a question if you don't want to respond.

Your involvement is completely voluntary, and any information you choose to share will be kept completely private. Your identity will be kept anonymous, and the information gathered will be used only for scholarly research. You will not be subjected to any kind of victimization if you decide to leave the study at any point without giving a reason.

I truly appreciate your time and contribution to this research. Thank you for your cooperation.

INFORMED CONSENT:

The researcher has explained to me the part I will play in this study, and I have asked all the questions and received the responses I needed.

I am ready to participate in this study. **Yes** ☐ **No** ☐

SECTION A: Demographic Information

The purpose of this part is to compile generic information about the respondents. Please choose or complete the relevant option to give the correct answers. Please tick the box next to your selected option.

Question	**Response**	**Code**
1. What is your highest level of education?	No formal education	1
	Primary education	2
	Secondary education	3
	Tertiary/College education	4
	University education	5
2. For how long you have lived in this area?	Less than 1 year	1
	1 - 5 years	2

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	5 - 10 years	3
	10 - 15 years	4
	More than 15 years	5
3. What is your marital status?	Married	1
	Single	2
	Widowed	3
	Divorced/Separated	4

SECTION B: Gender Roles and Women's Participation in Grassroots Peacebuilding

This section examines how gender influences women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives. It focuses on decision-making authority, the division of labor in peacebuilding, how society views women's roles in resolving conflicts, and how women can access leadership roles in peacebuilding projects.

Question	**Response**	**Code**
4. What is the main source of your income?	Formal employment	1
	Self-employment	2
	3	3
	Domestic work	4
	Others (Specify)	5
5. How stable is your primary source of income?	Very stable	1
	Moderately stable	2
	Unstable	3
	Very unstable	4
6. Do you engage in multiple income-generating activities?	Yes	1
	No	2

7. If yes, please specify the additional sources of income

……

……

8. Have you encountered any challenges or opportunities related to your income-generating activities?

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…… ……
9. Can you describe any changes you have noticed in your income sources or economic situation over the past year? ……

SECTION C: Education and Women's Engagement in Peacebuilding

Question	Response	Code
10. How often do you engage in learning activities such as attending classes, workshops, or community-based educational programs?	Never	1
	Rarely	2
	Occasionally	3
	Frequently	4

11. Please use the following scale to indicate how much you agree with each of the statements below: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Agree (3), and Strongly Agree (4).

Statement	5	4	3	2	1
I have had opportunities to participate in training programs related to peacebuilding.					
The training I have attended has been relevant and helpful to my role in peace-building activities.					
I have received adequate support from local organizations or institutions to improve my peacebuilding skills through training.					
The training programs available to me are easily accessible and affordable.					

11. In your opinion, what do you think could be improved in the current peace policies and frameworks to better support women's involvement in peacebuilding?

……

……

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SECTION D: Income Levels and Women's Participation in Peacebuilding

Question	Response	Code
12. What sources of funding or resources do you rely on for your peacebuilding activities? (Select all that apply)	Personal savings	1
	Community contributions	2
	Government grants	3
	Non-governmental organizations (NGOs)	4
	International donor agencies	5
	Other (please specify):	6
13. How often do you experience challenges in accessing financial resources for your peacebuilding initiatives?	Very often	1
	Often	2
	Rarely	3
	Never	4
14. How would you describe your level of financial independence in supporting your participation in peacebuilding activities?	Fully independent	1
	Partially independent	2
	Dependent on family or community support	3
	Fully dependent on external funding	4
15. To what extent does your financial independence affect your ability to contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding?	Very significantly	1
	Somewhat significantly	2
	Minimally	3
	Not at all	4
16. How accessible are external funding opportunities (e.g., government, NGOs, donors) for grassroots women's peacebuilding initiatives?	Easily accessible	1
	Moderately accessible	2
	Rarely accessible	3
	Not accessible at all	4
17. What is the most common challenge you face in securing funding for peacebuilding efforts?	Lack of information on available funding	1

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	Strict eligibility criteria	2
	Competition for limited resources	3
	Bureaucratic procedures	4
	Other (please specify): _____	5

18. To what extent do economic considerations impact leadership in peace-building initiatives is the goal of the following assertions. Please choose the appropriate response from the following scale to indicate how much you agree with each statement: 1 denotes strong disagreement, 2 denotes disagreement, 3 neutral, 4 agreement, and 5 very strong agreement.

Statement	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Economic stability influences my ability to take leadership roles in peacebuilding.					
Women's active involvement in peacebuilding projects is hampered by a lack of funding.					
Women with stable incomes are more likely to be recognized as key decision-makers in peacebuilding processes.					
Access to economic empowerment programs enhances women's involvement in peacebuilding efforts.					

19. From your opinion, in what ways do income levels affect women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding initiatives?

……

……

……

SECTION E: Cultural Norms and Women's Participation in Peacebuilding

Question	**Response**	**Code**
20. Do you think traditional beliefs in your community encourage women's involvement in peacebuilding initiatives?	Yes	1
	No	2
	Not Sure	3
21. Explain your answer to the above question.		

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…… …		
22. Do traditions or community rules make it hard for women to join peace meetings?	Yes	1
	No	2
	Not Sure	3
23. How does restricted freedom of movement affect women in your community? …… ……		
24. How does being unable to attend peace meetings impact women in your community? …… …		

25. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following claims? Please choose the appropriate response from the following scale to indicate how much you agree with each statement: 1 denotes strong disagreement, 2 disagreement, 3 neutrality, 4 agreements, and 5 strong agreements.

Statement	**5**	**4**	**3**	**2**	**1**
Men's control over the community makes it hard for women to become leaders in peace work.					
Women's opinions in peace discussions are often overlooked due to male-dominated decision-making.					
Cultural expectations place greater responsibility on women for domestic roles, limiting their involvement in peacebuilding.					

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Appendix III Interview Schedule

1. What kinds of peacebuilding initiatives do women participate in locally?
2. How do they contribute to peace-building efforts in their communities?
3. What difficulties do women encounter when working to promote peace in their communities?
4. How do they handle these difficulties?
5. Do you believe that a woman's approach to peacebuilding in her community might be influenced by her educational background? Please share more on this
6. What kind of education do you think women should have in order to actively support peacebuilding in their communities?
7. How does a lack of funding affect women's involvement in local peacebuilding?
8. In what ways can economic empowerment programs help women take on active roles in peacebuilding in their local communities?
9. How are women's roles in local peacebuilding impacted by traditional beliefs?
10. What social mores restrict women's participation in local peacebuilding initiatives?

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Appendix IV: ISERC Letter

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Private Bag 00217 Limuru,
Kenya
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
Website: www.spu.ac.ke

Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
Mobile: +254 (0) 728-669000
(0) 736-424440

REF: SPU/479/2025 **Date: 23rd July 2025**

TO: Trizzah K. Abuya
St. Paul's University

Dear Trizzah,

==========

REF: Socio-Economic Factors Influencing Women's Participation in Grassroots Peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya

==========

Greetings,

This is to inform you that SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal. **Your ERB approval number is 489, for the period between 23rd July 2025 – 23rd July 2026 (1 year).**

This approval is subject to compliance with the following requirements;

i. Only approved documents including (informed consents, study instruments) will be used.
ii. All changes including (amendments, deviations, and violations) are submitted for review and approval by SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.
iii. Death and life-threatening problems and serious adverse events or unexpected adverse events whether related or unrelated to the study must be reported to SPU-Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee within 72 hours of notification
iv. Any changes, anticipated or otherwise that may increase the risks or affected safety or welfare of study participants and others or affect the integrity of the research must be reported to *SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee* within 72 hours

St. Paul's University Repository

v. Clearance for export of biological specimens must be obtained from relevant institutions.

vi. Submission of a request for renewal of approval at least 60 days prior to expiry of the approval period. Attach a comprehensive progress report to support the renewal.

vii. Submission of an executive summary report within 90 days upon completion of the study to SPU- Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee.

viii. Should there be any publications from your research, note that you are supposed to anonymize the particulars of the respondents, the identifiers and the name of institution (s) where you collected data.

ix. Please note that it is within the ISERC's mandate to monitor your research and to do random visits to the site. All research is subject to post approval monitoring. Kindly provide a closure report after the research.

Prior to commencing your study, you will be expected to obtain a research license from National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) if you are collecting data in the country - https://research-portal.nacosti.go.ke **or obtain other clearances needed in the country where you will collect your data from.**

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Daniel Nzengya, PhD
Chairperson
SPU- Institutional Scientific & Ethics Review Committee



Appendix V: NACOSTI Permit

ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY

Private Bag 00217 LIMURU, KENYA
Email: office@spu.ac.ke
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Tel Office: +254 (0) 20-2020505/10
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(0) 736 - 424440

BOARD OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

23rd July, 2025

National Commission for Science and Technology,
P.O. BOX 30623-00100,
Nairobi.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RECOMMENDATION FOR TRIZZAH KERUBO ABUYA – MDSMKS266916 TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

This letter confirms the above-named person is a student in the Master of Development Studies (MDS) Program at St. Paul's University.

After completion of the course work, the student is engaged in major research work leading to a Thesis/Dissertation writing. The student's selected topic is:

"Socio-economic factors influencing women's participation in grassroots peacebuilding in Nakuru East Sub-County, Nakuru County, Kenya."

The SPU-Institutional Scientific Ethics Review Committee has reviewed the above-named research proposal and granted the ERB approval number 489, for the period between 23rd July 2025 – 23rd July, 2026 (1 year).

Kindly grant this student the required permit. For further information, please contact the undersigned through postgraduatestudies@spu.ac.ke

Yours Faithfully,

DIRECTOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES ST. PAUL'S UNIVERSITY
23 JUL 2025
P.O. BOX 2020505/2020510 LIMURU

Dr. John Mahoho
Director Board of Postgraduate Studies