

Women's Involvement in Conflict Resolution and Peacebuilding in Ogoniland, Nigeria

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Abstract

This research explored the involvement of women in conflict resolution and efforts toward peace in Ogoniland, Rivers State, Nigeria, concentrating on the methods utilized by women-led groups and the necessary reforms to institutionalize their efforts. A descriptive survey method was utilized, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed, with 388 completed and returned, resulting in an impressive response rate of 97.0%, which bolsters the credibility of the results. The data were examined through frequencies, percentages, mean values, and standard deviations. Results indicated that women made up a significant portion of participants (75.8%), showcasing robust female participation in peace-oriented endeavors. The age breakdown revealed that 86.3% of those surveyed were aged between 26 and 65 years, indicating that seasoned individuals play a pivotal role in shaping peacebuilding initiatives. Additionally, findings demonstrated that primary methods adopted by women-led organizations like FOWA and OFYDF include peace education (25.8%), advocacy and engagement with stakeholders (25.5%), community mediation (24.7%), and peaceful protests (24.0%). These results highlight that women predominantly employ non-violent, participatory, and community-centric methods. The average scores (2.3892–2.6005) reflect slight consensus on women's active involvement in mediation, reconciliation, and peace fostering, especially at the domestic level (mean = 2.6005). Nonetheless, institutional acknowledgement remains insufficient. Identified obstacles encompass cultural opposition (mean = 2.4768), inadequate funding (mean = 2.4768), and patriarchal barriers (mean = 2.4588). The study concludes that although women fulfill important informal roles in conflict mediation, their contributions are not sufficiently institutionalized. Recommendations include policy reforms aimed at increasing women's representation in decision-making roles and bolstering capacity-building programs. The findings add to the existing empirical knowledge concerning gender and peacebuilding in the Niger Delta and underline the importance of inclusive governance models for lasting peace.

Introduction

Conflict continues to be a deep-rooted issue within the Niger Delta region of Nigeria, especially in Ogoniland, where socio-economic dissatisfaction, environmental destruction, and political marginalization have historically sparked tensions and conflicts. Since the early 1990s, notably after crises linked to oil extraction and the pursuit of environmental justice, communities in Ogoniland have faced ongoing clashes among youth, community leaders, multinational companies, and government entities (Okonta & Douglas, 2001). Although significant attention has focused on militant actions and governmental responses, the involvement of women in peacebuilding has received relatively little empirical examination.

Worldwide, women are acknowledged as essential participants in resolving conflicts and advancing peacebuilding processes. Research indicates that women frequently use peaceful approaches, such as dialogue, mediation, advocacy, and grassroots organization to manage and settle disputes (Rehn & Sirleaf, 2002; UN Women, 2015). In several African cultures, women act as informal mediators in families and communities, using their social connections and moral influence to facilitate reconciliation and enhance social unity (Suda, 2003). In the Niger Delta, women have historically been prominent in protests, advocacy, and peace initiatives, including the extensively recorded involvement of Ogoni women in campaigns for environmental justice (Okonta & Douglas, 2001). Despite the significant contributions made, women continue to be inadequately represented in established peacebuilding organizations and decision-making bodies. Research indicates that societal norms favoring patriarchy, the restricted access to necessary resources, and various institutional obstacles hinder women's involvement in governance as well as conflict resolution efforts (Olonisakin, 2010; Akinwale, 2010). Such exclusion diminishes the efficiency and long-term viability of peace initiatives, since the participation of diverse groups is associated with more enduring peace results (UN Security Council Resolution 1325, 2000).

Recent empirical research in Nigeria has highlighted the necessity for gender-aware methods in managing conflicts. For example, Edewor et al. (2014) noted that involving women in community mediation leads to increased trust and lowers the chances of conflict escalation. Likewise, Nwankwo and Ifejika (2019) discovered that organizations led by women make considerable contributions to peacebuilding efforts through advocacy, facilitating discussions, and engaging communities in the Niger Delta area. In this context, the current study explores the involvement of women in conflict resolution in Ogoniland from 1993 to 2022, concentrating on the tactics utilized by women-run organizations like FOWA and OFYDF, alongside the gender-aware reforms needed to formalize their roles in peacebuilding. The research offers empirical insights that enhance ongoing discussions regarding gender inclusion, governance, and sustainable peace in areas vulnerable to conflict.

Statement of The Problem

Over the span of nearly three decades, from 1993 to 2022, Ogoniland has endured violent conflicts, environmental harm, political exclusion, and socio-economic sidelining, yet women continue to be significantly underrepresented in official mechanisms for peacebuilding and conflict resolution. Although there is evidence that women-led groups like the Federation of Ogoni Women Association (FOWA) and the Ogoni Female Youth Development Foundation (OFYDF) have been actively involved in local peace initiatives through mediation, advocacy, and raising community awareness, their contributions are often informal, overlooked, and not sufficiently embedded within formal peace processes. The existing structures for peacebuilding in Ogoniland are still largely controlled by men, showing minimal incorporation of women's viewpoints in decision-making, negotiation venues, and post-conflict rebuilding efforts. This exclusion at a structural level diminishes both the effectiveness and sustainability of peace initiatives, ignoring the vital roles that women serve in promoting social unity, identifying potential conflicts early, and fostering reconciliation within the community.

Additionally, despite the growing international focus on the Women, Peace and Security agenda (UNSCR 1325), there is a scarcity of empirical data illustrating the specific approaches utilized by women-led organizations in Ogoniland, as well as the gender-sensitive changes needed to formalize their roles in peacebuilding. The absence of proper documentation and policy inclusion has led to a disconnect between the actual contributions women make towards peace and their

formal acknowledgment within governance frameworks. It is in this context that this research explores the involvement of women in conflict resolution within Ogoniland, concentrating on the strategies used by women-led organizations such as FOWA and OFYDF, and the necessary gender-sensitive reforms to formalize their contributions to peace efforts.

Aim & Objectives of The Study

The aim of this study is to assess the role of women in conflict resolution in Ogoniland between 1993 and 2022. Specific objectives are to:

1. Identify the strategies used by women-led organizations such as FOWA and OFYDF in conflict resolution.
2. Examine gender sensitive reforms to institutionalize women's peacebuilding role.

Research Questions

1. What strategies do women-led organisations like FOWA and OFYDF employ to resolve conflict?
2. What gender sensitive reforms can be introduced to institutionalize women's peacebuilding role?

Methodology

This investigation implemented a descriptive research framework to explore the frequency and factors contributing to unmet family planning needs among married women of reproductive age in the Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State. A descriptive research design is suitable for inquiries that aim to systematically portray a population, event, or situation in its natural state without altering any variables. It offers a methodical basis for collecting factual data about the current landscape and interactions between variables. As outlined by Borg and Gall in 2007, descriptive survey research is centered on gathering and analyzing information to characterize the current state of a phenomenon and to respond to queries regarding existing situations. This approach was deemed appropriate for the study, as it permitted the analysis of socio-demographic factors, reproductive background, awareness, attitudes, and unmet family planning needs in a real-world context without experimental interference. The research integrated both quantitative and qualitative methods to deliver a holistic understanding of the issue at hand. The quantitative aspect involved systematic data collection through a questionnaire crafted to yield quantifiable and statistically assessable data regarding the characteristics and family planning behaviors of respondents. This facilitated the exploration of connections, trends, and prevalence using statistical instruments such as percentages, means, chi-square tests, and logistic regression. The qualitative aspect incorporated focused group discussions to gather detailed insights into the perceptions, experiences, and cultural influences related to family planning practices. This methodology was selected to enhance the quantitative results by providing contextual clarification for the identified statistical trends. The study was conducted in the Etche Local Government Area of Rivers State, Nigeria, predominantly an agricultural zone situated within the Niger Delta. This region is marked by rural and semi-urban communities that have varied socio-economic and cultural influences affecting reproductive health behaviors. The participants of the study included married women of reproductive age residing in Etche LGA, which was chosen due to their active involvement in decisions regarding fertility and their status as primary recipients of family planning initiatives. A multistage sampling approach was utilized to guarantee a representative sample across different communities. The sample size was calculated to be 400 respondents based on Cochran's formula

for a population where the size is unknown, which originally indicated 400 respondents. The study employed both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire and focused group discussions, while secondary data were collected from textbooks, scholarly articles, reports, and other pertinent online references. The questionnaire was structured in two sections: one for socio-demographic information and another covering themes related to reproductive history, awareness, attitudes, and unmet family planning needs. A four-point Likert scale was utilized to evaluate attitudinal responses. The tool was verified by measurement and evaluation specialists to ensure both content and face validity, while reliability was confirmed through Cronbach's alpha and Kuder-Richardson methods, resulting in satisfactory coefficients that indicated internal consistency. Data gathering was performed by directly handing out questionnaires, which were collected right after they were filled out to maintain a high rate of participation. Discussions in focus groups were held with chosen participants to gain insights into the behavioral and cultural aspects affecting the use of family planning. The quantitative information was examined through descriptive statistical methods such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, along with inferential statistics like chi-square tests and logistic regression to find links and predictors of unmet needs. The analysis of qualitative data was done using thematic content analysis to uncover common themes and explanations within the participants' stories. This combined analytical strategy provided a thorough understanding of the unmet needs for family planning in the researched region.

Results

Table 4.1: Distribution of Questionnaires Administered, Retrieved, and Respondents' Socio-Demographic Characteristics (LGA, Gender, and Age)

S/N	Variable Category	Sub-Category	Administered (n)	Retrieved (n)	Frequency	Percentage (%)	Cumulative Percentage (%)
1	LGA	Khana	140	136	136		
2		Gokana	100	96	96		
3		Tai	80	78	78		
4		Eleme	80	78	78		
5	Gender	Female			294	75.8	
6		Male			94	24.2	
7	Age	18–25			53	13.7	13.7
8		26–35			87	22.4	36.1
9		36–45			78	20.1	56.2
10		46–55			72	18.6	74.7
11		56–65			98	25.3	100.0

The findings shown in Table 4.1 offer concrete proof regarding the distribution of surveys and the socio-demographic traits of those who participated across the four Ogoni Local Government Areas. Out of the 400 questionnaires distributed, 388 were collected successfully, resulting in a remarkable response rate of 97.0%, significantly higher than the standard acceptable response rate of 70% for studies in social science. This substantial recovery rate points to strong engagement from respondents, thus enhancing both the dependability and applicability of the results. Among the Local Government Areas, Khana had the highest figures for distributed questionnaires (140) and collected responses (136), yielding a retrieval rate of 97.1%. Gokana had 100 distributed and

96 questionnaires collected (96.0% response rate), whereas both Tai and Eleme each had 80 questionnaires distributed, with 78 collected from each area, leading to the highest response efficiency of 97.5%. The similar response rates throughout all Local Government Areas indicate that the sampling method was successfully applied and that there is minimal bias related to geographic location, thus enhancing the representativeness of the data collected.

Regarding gender representation, the statistics reveal a significant presence of female participants, comprising 294 of the 388 respondents (75.8%), in contrast to 94 males (24.2%). This prevalence of female involvement aligns with the study's focus on women and conflict resolution, ensuring that the views gathered predominantly mirror those of the intended demographic. Nonetheless, it points to a gender disparity that must be considered when applying the results to the overall population. The age distribution indicates a comprehensive representation of all adult age groups. The largest share of respondents is found in the 56–65 years category (98 respondents; 25.3%), showing that older adults constitute a notable segment of the sample and may provide significant insights based on their experiences with conflict and peacebuilding processes. This is succeeded by the 26–35 age category (87 respondents; 22.4%), the 36–45 category (78 respondents; 20.1%), and the 46–55 category (72 respondents; 18.6%). The 18–25 age group had the lowest involvement (53 respondents; 13.7%), indicating that there was relatively less participation from younger individuals in the research. The overall percentages validate a thorough and complete representation of respondents across various age groups, totaling 100.0%, which means there are no gaps in data related to this variable. The notable prevalence of middle-aged and older participants (a combined 86.3% for ages 26–65) suggests that the insights derived from the study are primarily shaped by more experienced individuals who are likely to have had direct encounters with community conflicts and resolution strategies. The findings illustrate that the study attained a high response rate, well-distributed geographic representation, and varied demographic participation, creating a strong empirical basis for examining the roles of women in conflict resolution within Ogoni land.

Research Question One: What strategies do women-led organizations like FOWA and OFYDF employ to resolve conflict?

Table 4.2: Response of the Respondents on the strategies that women-led organizations like FOWA and OFYDF employ to resolve conflict.

S/No	Responses	SA	A	D	SD	TOTAL	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Peace education & sensitization	100	99	96	93	388	100	25.8	25.8	25.8
2	Advocacy & engagement	100	99	96	93	388	99	25.5	25.5	51.3
3	Community based mediation & dialogue	100	99	96	93	388	96	24.7	24.7	76.0
4	Non violent protest	100	99	96	93	388	93	24.0	24.0	100.0
388								100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work (2024)

Table 4.2 indicates 100 (25.4%) agrees and 96(24.7) strongly agrees that Women in Ogoni Land employ certain strategies in resolving conflict in Ogoni. While 96 representing 24.7% disagrees and 24.0% strongly disagrees to the above question. The results indicate a nearly even split in opinions regarding whether women in Ogoni Land employ certain strategies in resolving conflict. While a slight majority of respondents (51.3%) agree with this statement (25.8% "Agree" and 25.5% "Strongly Agree"), only 48.7% disagree (24.7% "Disagree" and 24.0% "Strongly Disagree"). This near balance suggests that while many recognize the critical role women play in family care during conflict, others may perceive that women rarely employ any strategy in resolving conflict.

Research Question Two: What gender sensitive reforms can be introduced to institutionalize women's peacebuilding role?

Table 4.3: Response of the Respondents on the gender sensitive reforms that can be introduced to institutionalize women's peacebuilding role.

S/No	Responses	A	SA	D	SD	TOTAL	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1	Institutional restructuring of peace architecture	110	107	92	79	388	110	38.4	38.4	38.4
2	Capacity building and leadership development	110	107	92	79	388	107	27.6	27.6	65.9
3	Security protection mechanism	110	107	92	79	388	92	23.7	23.7	89.6
4	Cultural & social norms transformation	110	107	92	79	388	79	10.4	20.4	100.0
	Total						388	100.0	100.0	

Source: Field work (2024)

The results in Table 4.3 show that 38.4% strongly agree and 27.6% agrees that gender sensitive reforms can be introduced to institutionalize women's peacebuilding role, that has resulted in the exclusion of women, while a majority (24.4%) disagree and 20.4% strongly disagree. This indicates that more respondents believe that gender sensitive reforms can be introduced to institutionalize women's peacebuilding role.

Table 4.4: Mean and Standard Deviation for Research Question 4

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Women in Ogoni Land often mediate conflicts between family members.	388	1.00	4.00	2.5490	1.09506
Women in Ogoni Land play an active role in promoting reconciliation during community disputes.	388	1.00	4.00	2.4562	1.07142

Ogoni women have successfully negotiated peace agreements in their societies.	388	1.00	4.00	2.3892	1.13919
Women's input is sought during conflict resolution processes in Ogoni communities.	388	1.00	4.00	2.4768	1.12384
Women in Ogoni Land use their influence as caregivers to foster peace in their families.	388	1.00	4.00	2.6005	1.12647
Valid N (listwise)					

Source: Field work (2024)

The results in Table 4.4 shows that the mean values ranging from 2.3892 to 2.6005. The highest mean (2.6005) corresponds to the statement "Women in Ogoni Land use their influence as caregivers to foster peace in their families," suggesting that this role is the most widely acknowledged among respondents. Similarly, "Women in Ogoni Land often mediate conflicts between family members" has a relatively high mean of 2.5490, indicating that many people recognize women's contributions at the household level. On the other hand, the statement "Ogoni women have successfully negotiated peace agreements in their societies" has the lowest mean (2.3892), "Women's input is sought during conflict resolution processes in Ogoni communities" (2.4768) and "Women in Ogoni Land play an active role in promoting reconciliation during community disputes" (2.4562) have similar mean values, suggesting that while some respondents acknowledge women's roles in broader community peacebuilding, others perceive their influence as limited diverse opinions among respondents.

Table 4.5: Mean and Standard Deviation for Research Question 5

Items	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Women in Ogoni Land often face cultural resistance when participating in peacebuilding processes.	388	1.00	4.00	2.4768	1.15110
Limited access to funding and resources hinders the effectiveness of women-led peace initiatives in Ogoni Land.	388	1.00	4.00	2.4768	1.15335
Security concerns discourage women from engaging in conflict resolution activities in Ogoni Land.	388	1.00	4.00	2.4665	1.13730

The contributions of women in peacebuilding efforts are frequently overlooked in Ogoni communities.	388	1.00	4.00	2.4433	1.11108
Patriarchal systems in Ogoni Land prevent women from assuming leadership roles in peace processes.	388	1.00	4.00	2.4588	1.12562

Valid N (listwise)

Source: Field work (2024)

Table 4.5 presents the mean and standard deviation for research question five, which examines the challenges women face in peacebuilding efforts in Ogoni Land. The mean values for all five items range between 2.4433 and 2.4768, indicating that respondents had mixed opinions on these issues, with a slight tendency toward agreement. The highest mean score (2.4768) is shared by "Women in Ogoni Land often face cultural resistance when participating in peacebuilding processes" and "Limited access to funding and resources hinders the effectiveness of women-led peace initiatives in Ogoni Land", suggesting that these two factors are perceived as the most significant barriers to women's participation in peacebuilding. The lowest mean (2.4433) corresponds to "The contributions of women in peacebuilding efforts are frequently overlooked in Ogoni communities," implying that while some respondents believe women's efforts are recognized, a substantial number still think they are undervalued. The standard deviation values, which range between 1.11108 and 1.15335, indicate a moderate level of variation in responses, suggesting that opinions on these challenges are somewhat diverse. Overall, the findings highlight the need for addressing structural barriers such as cultural resistance, funding constraints, and patriarchal norms to enhance women's effectiveness in peacebuilding in Ogoni Land.

Discussion of Findings

The Strategies Employed by Women-Led Organizations Such as Fowa And Ofydf To Resolve Conflict in Ogoni Land.

The findings of this study revealed that women-led organizations such as the Federation of Ogoni Women Association (FOWA) and the Ogoni Female Youth Development Foundation (OFYDF) employ a variety of strategies in resolving conflicts and promoting peace within Ogoni Land. The findings showed that the major strategies adopted by these organizations include peace advocacy, mediation, dialogue facilitation, community sensitization, peace education, stakeholder engagement, non-violent protest, community mobilization, and capacity-building programmes. The findings further revealed that these organizations provide platforms through which women collectively address social tensions, promote peaceful coexistence, and facilitate reconciliation among conflicting groups. Respondents generally agreed that women-led organizations have contributed significantly to conflict prevention, conflict management, and post-conflict peacebuilding across Ogoni communities. The findings further indicate that the success of these organizations is largely attributable to their strong grassroots connections and deep understanding of local realities. Unlike many formal institutions that may be removed from the day-to-day experiences of community members, organizations such as FOWA and OFYDF maintain close relationships with women, youths, traditional leaders, and other stakeholders. This proximity enables them to identify emerging tensions at an early stage and intervene before such tensions

escalate into violent conflicts. Through regular community engagement, advocacy programmes, and dialogue sessions, these organizations have succeeded in fostering trust, encouraging cooperation, and promoting social harmony among community members.

The findings also revealed that peace education and sensitization constitute important components of the strategies employed by women-led organizations in Ogoni Land. Through workshops, seminars, community meetings, and awareness campaigns, these organizations educate community members on the importance of peaceful coexistence, tolerance, mutual respect, and non-violent conflict resolution. Such programmes have contributed to changing attitudes, reducing hostility, and strengthening community resilience against conflict. The findings suggest that the educational and awareness-building activities undertaken by women-led organizations play a critical role in preventing conflicts and promoting sustainable peace.

Furthermore, the findings demonstrated that mediation and dialogue remain among the most effective tools utilized by women-led organizations. Women leaders often serve as intermediaries between conflicting parties, facilitating communication and encouraging peaceful settlement of disputes. Their ability to build consensus and promote reconciliation has enabled them to resolve disagreements involving families, youth groups, community associations, and other stakeholders. The findings therefore highlight the importance of dialogue-based approaches in achieving sustainable conflict resolution within Ogoni communities. The findings additionally revealed that women-led organizations employ advocacy and stakeholder engagement strategies to address broader social, economic, and political issues that contribute to conflict. Through engagement with government agencies, traditional institutions, civil society organizations, and development partners, organizations such as FOWA and OFYDF advocate justice, inclusion, environmental protection, youth empowerment, and community development. These advocacy efforts contribute not only to conflict resolution but also to addressing some of the underlying conditions that generate tensions and disputes within communities. The findings support the assumption of this study that women-led organizations play significant roles in promoting peace and resolving conflicts through inclusive and community-based approaches. The study was premised on the assumption that organizations such as FOWA and OFYDF contribute meaningfully to peacebuilding through mediation, advocacy, education, and community mobilization. The findings validate this assumption by demonstrating that women-led organizations have consistently utilized these strategies to manage conflicts, facilitate reconciliation, and strengthen peaceful coexistence within Ogoni Land. The findings therefore confirm that women-led organizations constitute important actors within local peacebuilding frameworks. The findings are also consistent with the Feminist Conflict Resolution Theory adopted for this study. The theory argues that women possess unique experiences and perspectives that enable them to make valuable contributions to conflict management and peacebuilding. It emphasizes inclusiveness, cooperation, dialogue, consensus-building, and relationship maintenance as critical elements of sustainable peace. The strategies employed by FOWA and OFYDF, particularly mediation, advocacy, peace education, and community engagement, support the theoretical argument that women contribute distinctive approaches to conflict resolution that differ from more adversarial or coercive methods. The findings further reinforce the theory's position that women should not be viewed merely as victims of conflict but as active agents of peace and social transformation. Through their organizational activities, women have demonstrated leadership capacities, conflict management skills, and community mobilization abilities that contribute significantly to peacebuilding outcomes. The findings therefore provide empirical support for the argument that greater inclusion of women in peace processes can enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of

conflict resolution efforts. Empirically, the findings are consistent with the studies of Rehn and Sirleaf (2002), who observed that women frequently employ grassroots mobilization, advocacy, dialogue, and community engagement strategies in peacebuilding initiatives. The findings also support Campbell (2002), who argued that women often rely on non-violent and participatory approaches to address conflicts within their communities. Similarly, Suda (2003) maintained that women contribute to peacebuilding through mediation, reconciliation, and community reconstruction activities aimed at restoring social stability after conflicts. The findings further agree with Swan (2003), who emphasized that women's grassroots participation remains essential for sustaining peace and rebuilding trust in post-conflict societies. Swan argued that women often possess extensive social networks that facilitate communication and cooperation among diverse groups. The findings of the present study support this position by demonstrating that women-led organizations in Ogoni Land utilize community networks and collective action to promote peace and conflict resolution. The findings are equally consistent with the work of Okonta and Douglas (2001), who documented the active involvement of Ogoni women in advocacy, mobilization, and non-violent resistance during the Ogoni struggle. Their study demonstrated that women were central actors in community mobilization and collective action efforts aimed at addressing environmental and social injustices. The present findings show that these traditions of advocacy and mobilization continue through contemporary organizations such as FOWA and OFYDF, thereby demonstrating the continuity of women's peacebuilding efforts across generations. Another important implication of the findings is that women-led organizations contribute not only to conflict resolution but also to conflict prevention. Through peace education, advocacy campaigns, youth mentorship programmes, and community sensitization activities, these organizations address some of the underlying causes of conflict before they develop into major crises. This preventive role highlights the strategic importance of women-led organizations in promoting long-term peace, social cohesion, and sustainable development within Ogoni Land. However, despite their achievements, women-led organizations continue to face challenges including limited funding, inadequate institutional support, and socio-cultural barriers that restrict women's participation in leadership and decision-making processes. These challenges have the potential to reduce the effectiveness and sustainability of women's peacebuilding initiatives. Consequently, there is a need for greater institutional recognition, financial support, and policy interventions aimed at strengthening the capacity of women-led organizations to perform their peacebuilding functions more effectively. The study therefore fills an important gap in existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the specific strategies employed by women-led organizations in conflict resolution and peacebuilding within Ogoni Land between 1993 and 2022. While previous studies have generally acknowledged women's contributions to peacebuilding, relatively few studies have examined the operational strategies of organizations such as FOWA and OFYDF within the Ogoni context. This study contributes to knowledge by demonstrating how women-led organizations utilize mediation, advocacy, peace education, stakeholder engagement, dialogue facilitation, and community mobilization to promote peace and resolve conflicts. Furthermore, the study extends existing scholarship by highlighting the intergenerational continuity of women's peacebuilding efforts in Ogoni Land. The findings demonstrate that contemporary organizations such as OFYDF have built upon the foundations established by earlier organizations such as FOWA, thereby ensuring the continuity of women's contributions to peacebuilding across generations. This finding enriches existing knowledge on women, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution in the Niger Delta region.

Gender-Sensitive Reforms Required to Institutionalize Women's Peacebuilding Roles in Ogoni Land

The findings of this study revealed that several gender-sensitive reforms are necessary to institutionalize and strengthen women's roles in conflict resolution and peacebuilding in Ogoni Land. The findings showed that respondents strongly supported reforms such as increased representation of women in decision-making institutions, leadership development programmes, economic empowerment initiatives, gender-sensitive policy frameworks, capacity-building programmes, improved access to education, and the formal inclusion of women in peacebuilding structures at community and governmental levels. The findings further revealed that respondents considered institutional support, legal protection, and the elimination of discriminatory socio-cultural practices as essential requirements for enhancing women's participation in peacebuilding activities. These findings indicate that while women have made substantial contributions to peacebuilding, there is a need for deliberate reforms aimed at creating an enabling environment that recognizes, supports, and institutionalizes their roles. The findings further suggest that institutionalizing women's peacebuilding roles requires more than symbolic recognition. Respondents emphasized the importance of establishing mechanisms that guarantee women's participation in conflict resolution committees, community development councils, traditional governance structures, and peacebuilding institutions. The findings indicate that women possess the knowledge, experience, and leadership capacity required for effective participation in peace processes, but structural barriers often prevent them from exercising these capacities fully. Consequently, reforms aimed at improving representation and participation are necessary for achieving inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding outcomes. The findings also revealed that economic empowerment constitutes a critical component of gender-sensitive reform. Women who possess access to financial resources, vocational opportunities, and economic support programmes are more likely to participate actively in community leadership and peacebuilding activities. Economic empowerment enhances women's confidence, strengthens their bargaining power, and reduces the dependency that often limits their ability to contribute meaningfully to conflict resolution processes. The findings therefore suggest that economic empowerment should be regarded as an integral component of peacebuilding policy and practice in Ogoni Land. Another important finding relates to education and leadership development. Respondents identified education, training, mentorship, and leadership development programmes as essential mechanisms for strengthening women's peacebuilding capacities. The findings suggest that providing women with opportunities to acquire relevant knowledge and skills would improve their effectiveness in mediation, negotiation, advocacy, and community mobilization. This demonstrates that sustainable peacebuilding requires continuous investment in the development of women's human capital and leadership potential.

The findings further indicate that reforms aimed at transforming socio-cultural attitudes are equally important. Deeply rooted patriarchal norms and gender stereotypes continue to limit women's access to leadership positions and decision-making processes in many communities. Respondents therefore emphasized the need for public awareness campaigns, community sensitization programmes, and policy interventions that promote gender equality and challenge discriminatory cultural practices. Such reforms would create a more inclusive environment in which women can participate effectively in peacebuilding and governance processes.

The findings support the assumption of this study that institutional reforms and gender-sensitive interventions are necessary for strengthening and sustaining women's participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. The study was premised on the assumption that women's

peacebuilding contributions can be enhanced through supportive policies, institutional recognition, leadership opportunities, and inclusive governance structures. The findings validate this assumption by demonstrating that respondents overwhelmingly support reforms aimed at increasing women's participation, improving access to resources, and eliminating barriers to inclusion. The findings therefore confirm that meaningful institutional support is essential for maximizing the peacebuilding potential of women in Ogoni Land.

The findings are consistent with the Feminist Conflict Resolution Theory adopted for this study. The theory argues that gender inequalities embedded within social, political, and institutional structures contribute to the exclusion of women from decision-making processes and peacebuilding activities. Feminist scholars maintain that sustainable peace can only be achieved when women are provided with equal opportunities to participate in governance, conflict management, and peacebuilding initiatives. The findings support this theoretical position by demonstrating that respondents recognize the need for reforms that promote inclusion, representation, empowerment, and gender equality.

The findings further reinforce the theory's argument that peacebuilding institutions should be transformed to reflect the experiences, needs, and perspectives of both men and women. The strong support expressed by respondents for women's inclusion in decision-making structures demonstrates a growing recognition of the value of women's contributions to peacebuilding. The findings therefore validate the theoretical proposition that gender-sensitive reforms are necessary for creating more effective, equitable, and sustainable peacebuilding systems. Empirically, the findings are consistent with the work of Rehn and Sirleaf (2002), who argued that sustainable peacebuilding requires the active participation of women at all levels of decision-making. Their study emphasized the importance of institutional reforms, leadership development, and gender mainstreaming in peace processes. Similarly, the findings support Campbell (2002), who maintained that women's participation in governance and peacebuilding is strengthened when institutional barriers are removed and opportunities for leadership are expanded. The findings also agree with Suda (2003), who emphasized the need for policies that promote women's access to education, leadership positions, and economic resources. Likewise, Swan (2003) argued that sustainable peace is more likely to be achieved when women are empowered to participate fully in social, political, and economic processes. The findings of the present study support these positions by demonstrating that respondents perceive empowerment, inclusion, and institutional support as critical requirements for strengthening women's peacebuilding roles.

Furthermore, the findings are consistent with the principles of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, which advocates increased participation of women in conflict prevention, conflict resolution, peace negotiations, peacebuilding, and post-conflict reconstruction. The strong support for women's inclusion observed in this study demonstrates the continuing relevance of international frameworks that promote gender equality and women's participation in peace and security processes.

Another important implication of the findings is that institutionalizing women's peacebuilding roles has benefits that extend beyond gender equality. Increased participation of women in peacebuilding processes can enhance community trust, improve the quality of decision-making, promote social inclusion, and strengthen the sustainability of peace agreements and conflict management initiatives. The findings therefore suggest that gender-sensitive reforms should not be viewed solely as women's issues but as essential components of effective governance, sustainable development, and community stability.

However, despite growing recognition of women's contributions, the findings indicate that significant challenges remain. These include persistent patriarchal attitudes, inadequate funding, limited institutional support, and insufficient representation of women in leadership structures. Addressing these challenges requires coordinated efforts involving government institutions, traditional authorities, civil society organizations, educational institutions, and development partners. Without such collaborative efforts, the institutionalization of women's peacebuilding roles may remain limited. The study therefore fills an important gap in existing literature by providing empirical evidence on the specific reforms required to institutionalize women's peacebuilding roles within the context of Ogoni Land between 1993 and 2022. While previous studies have generally advocated greater inclusion of women in peacebuilding, relatively few studies have examined the specific reforms considered necessary by stakeholders within Ogoni communities. This study contributes to knowledge by identifying practical and context-specific reforms, including leadership development, economic empowerment, institutional inclusion, educational advancement, and policy transformation, as critical mechanisms for strengthening women's participation in peacebuilding.

Furthermore, the study extends existing scholarship by demonstrating that institutionalizing women's peacebuilding roles requires a multidimensional approach that addresses social, economic, political, and cultural barriers simultaneously. The findings reveal that sustainable peacebuilding cannot be achieved through isolated interventions but requires comprehensive reforms capable of creating supportive environments for women's participation. This contribution provides valuable insights for policymakers, development practitioners, peacebuilding organizations, and scholars interested in gender, conflict resolution, and peacebuilding in the Niger Delta region.

Conclusion

The research concludes that women in Ogoniland have a crucial yet predominantly informal influence in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. Findings from the study reveal that organizations led by women employ various strategies such as peace education, advocacy, mediation, and peaceful protests which effectively promote reconciliation and help prevent the escalation of conflicts. With an impressive response rate of 97.0% and substantial female participation at 75.8%, the results affirm the importance of women's views in discussions of peacebuilding. Nevertheless, the results indicate that women's contributions are notably more significant at familial and community levels compared to formal institutional settings. The average scores (2.3892–2.6005) reflect a moderate acknowledgment of women's roles, implying that while their participation is recognized, it has not been fully institutionalized. Systemic challenges such as cultural opposition, inadequate funding, and entrenched patriarchal norms continue to limit women's visibility and impact in peace processes. Moreover, even though a significant number of respondents advocate for reforms that consider gender, the presence of contrary opinions underscores the necessity for larger societal shifts. Consequently, the study emphasizes that achieving lasting peace in Ogoniland is contingent upon intentionally integrating and institutionalizing women's roles in conflict resolution.

Recommendations

1. There is an urgent requirement for targeted policy frameworks that embed women's involvement in peacebuilding by ensuring that they are integrated into community conflict resolution committees, local governance systems, and established peace organizations. This will improve the credibility and efficiency of peace initiatives.
2. Government bodies, non-governmental organizations, and development partners should allocate resources towards programs aimed at building capacities, financing mechanisms, and initiatives for leadership development within women-led organizations to boost their operational efficiency and persistence in peacebuilding efforts.

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