To Explore on How Women's Education Level Influences Peaceful Coexistence in Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

This research explored how women's education level influences peaceful coexistence in Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya. The specific objective of this study was to explore on how women's education level influences peaceful coexistence in Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya. The study utilized Social Network Theory. A descriptive research design was adopted for the purposes of this study. The target population for this study was 117,777, including men, women and youth, over the age of 18 years. The sample size of this study was 399 respondents were drawn from the five wards of Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County. Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Qualitative data and quantitative data analysis methods were used in this study. Data were coded and numbered from structured questions; classified into variables for the sake of clarity and stored in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 22). Descriptive statistical analysis was done on the output through frequencies and percentages using SPSS program. To fit with the study's objectives, thematic analysis was undertaken inline with the information extracted from the interviews with key informants, using a set of research questions for each theme, the study has revealed that education of women is crucial to peaceful coexistence in Kibra Constituency. Women who are educated are viewed to be more skilled in mediation, dialogue promotion, and community harmony. The study recommended that peace education and conflict resolution training should be embedded within women's income-generation and empowerment projects to strengthen their role in community peace efforts.

Key words: education level, peaceful coexistence, and Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County,

. INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Sustainable peace and stability in nations all around depend critically on women's economic empowerment. Equipped economically, women have the means, skills, and autonomy to participate in the political, social, and financial domains. This empowerment has wide-ranging effects on harmony, lessens conflict, and lead to a more cohesive society. Below is a background on research showing how women's economic empowerment has enabled peaceful cohabitation across many countries (Christopherson, 2022)

Since women account for more than half of the population, their contribution to economic growth is essential (Mould, 2022). Addressing the challenges that keep women from succeeding in microbusiness can significantly increase their contribution to economic development.

The World Bank Report (Gleb, A. 2023) observed that the equality of men's and women's rights to work, to be at work, and to access economic resources has advanced noticeably worldwide. This is attributed in part to rapid advancements in increasing their access to education and reproductive control, women today have more choices for paid work. Still, there is a notable gender disparity in labour force participation; men's and women's rates are roughly 80% and 50%, respectively, and since 1990, there has been a residual of approximately 30% difference.

Women have historically been excluded from efforts and activities aimed at promoting peace simply because they are perceived as the victims of war. Their contributions to community reconstruction and peacekeeping have mostly gone unnoticed (Manchanda, 2020). The idea that women have no part in a battle other than as victims, however, has recently been disproved. In Sierra Leone, the number of women directly participating in wars and post-conflict activities is increasing (Coulter, 2021). Women who become financially independent are more suited to help their local communities and societies grow. Reducing conflict, advancing communication, and fostering social cohesiveness all depend critically on empowered women. Through microfinance programs, women's cooperatives, and agricultural projects which not only raise their economic situation but also help to heal divisions between many social and ethnic groups; women have been crucial in post-conflict settings, including Rwanda and Liberia (Suda, 2019).

Women are very important in the peace building process following the election related violence in Kenya. In particular, women groups played a major role in easing communication and reconciliation between ethnic groups after the 2007-2008 post- election violence. According to Schmidle (2021), it was women who played a crucial role in mending divisions and as such, they used their economic networks, i.e., savings and loan groups, to re-establish solidarity. These networks played a great role in achieving long term peace, since the participation of women in cooperative economic activities was the basis of long-term stability within such communities.

The Kenyan government and international organizations have supported programs which promote more women involvement in politics and business. Significantly, Women Enterprise Fund has provided financial support to women entrepreneurs, and this has led to women equality in peace building process because more women are being involved in the process and going against the patriarchal system. By boosting women's involvement in decision-making, these programs have promoted responsibility and independence, two qualities necessary for lasting peace.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Within an optimal policy and social framework, women in Kenya across both rural and urban settings would experience equitable access to economic resources, including secure land tenure, credit facilities, fair labor compensation, and leadership positions, while residing in communities characterized by social cohesion and mutual trust.

Women's economic empowerment fuels not only the progress of gender equality and peaceful international coexistence but also sustainable development. Women who experience economic empowerment can access resources, become financially independent, and participate in activities necessary to their welfare and social contributions in decision-making.

Even though these benefits are becoming more known, significant barriers to women's economic empowerment still exist, especially in underdeveloped areas. Cultural standards, unequal access to education, limited job opportunities, and gender-based violence limit women's full economic involvement.

The limited economic empowerment of women in Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya, and its consequences on fostering peaceful coexistence within the society are investigated in this paper. Women in Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya, suffer significant challenges, including limited financial resources, access to education, land ownership, and chances for economic decision-making, notwithstanding efforts meant to reduce gender inequality and increase women's economic participation. These obstacles prevent women from reaching their economic independence as well as being sensitive to poverty, violence, and social exclusion. The absence of financial empowerment for women in this underdeveloped, highly populated, underprivileged area aggravates social fragmentation, gender-based violence, and ethnic conflicts.

Although there are various studies on the effects of women's economic empowerment and peaceful coexistence especially in different socioeconomic environments, still there is inadequate knowledge on the junction and mutual influence of these two social dimensions. Current studies mostly focus on economic empowerment and

peace building separately, with little integration of these elements to investigate their causal or correlative relationships.

Emphasizing spotting chances and difficulties in economically empowering women as a means of conflict prevention and peace building, this paper looks at the link between women's economic empowerment and the facilitation of peaceful coexistence. Understanding this link helped develop policies and projects using women's economic potential to progress inclusive and peaceful societies.

General Objective of the Study

The primary objective of this study is to explore on how women's education level influences peaceful coexistence in Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

To explore on how women's education level influences peaceful coexistence in Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County, Kenya.

Research Questions

How does women's level of education influence peaceful coexistence in Kibra Constituency?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Empirical Literature Review

According to Harari (2018), higher education gives an edge to women's abilities and equips them to learn how to defend better their property inheritance rights. By teaching women, the legal rules underpinning property rights they can be involved in inheritance with an enhanced clarity and directness of spirit. Similarly, Yasu (2018), using a unique dataset collected by internationally recognized NGO Kamer, found a similar positive relationship between a higher level of education and the probability of women in Diyarbakir, Turkey, seeking the recognition of equal inheritance rights.

Also, Kiruthu (2019) discussed education-related inequalities in Kenya, specifically identifying recent low literacy levels of female Kenyans as serious obstacles to their participation in decision-making. In other places, scholars have made the argument that women are seen as inadequately knowledgeable, and thus not adequately able to contribute to peace building efforts. This is furthered by the few education opportunities available to women and the perceptions within the prevailing cultural environment that a related piece of formal education is necessary for the role of participation within processes related to peace building. As a result, many women may feel that they are not qualified to make a contribution despite the fact that they have vital information about the impact of conflict on their communities. While formal education isn't always a requirement, women lived experiences and awareness of the impact of war give them important insights that need to be recognized as part of the peace building effort.

Research by Hirsh (2021) indicates the greater the access to a higher education and specialized training the more likely a woman will start a business or pursue formal jobs and then become more financially autonomous. That is economic inclusion, which makes families stronger, local economies stronger and socio-economic tensions - the origins of many conflicts - reduced. It has additionally been revealed that obstacles associated with gender can be eliminated with the help of vocational and entrepreneurship education which will grant women resources to actively participate in community reconstruction efforts in rural or post-conflict areas (World Bank, 2020)

Other programmes like the Kenya Youth Employment and Opportunity Program (KYEOP) or the Ajira Digital Programme initiative are helping older women to acquire technical and entrepreneurial skills that are enhancing their work opportunities and positively impacting their families and communities (World Bank, 2022). At the grassroots level, organizations such as FAWE Kenya and Shining Hope for Communities

(SHOFCO) provide non-formal education and vocational training to marginalized women. These programs foster economic independence and help reduce risks linked to gender-based violence and social instability.

In conflict-prone areas like Nakuru and Kisumu, women's peace groups use educational workshops to foster dialogue and resolve tensions (Depledge, 2016). By developing leadership and negotiation skills, these initiatives empower women to take active roles in peace building.

Women can boost their political participation through investments, training, and developmental opportunities, which is called women's economic empowerment. Actions to help more women join local government and decision-making bodies are needed to develop unity and harmony in Nairobi County.

Theoritical Review

Social Network Theory

Social Network Theory (SNT) takes special attention to the social structure that is responsible for establishing individual/group relationships that can then be exploited to overcome the challenges encountered in our day-to-day lives. First proposed by J. A. Barnes in 1954, the theory deals with interaction amongst individuals/organizations, more specifically the specific kinds of interaction that are characteristic of a network, which facilitates the discovery of solutions to common problems. From this standpoint, social network analysis is useful because it can be used to obtain information about aggregates of people, which can justify the observed regularities and behaviors that occur in aggregates of people [Stanley and Catherine 1994]. Social network analysis as a methodology seeks to throw more light on these entities by understanding the underlying behaviors, patterns, identification of key centers, deduction of types of interaction, and the actors involved in the network (Scott & Davis, 2015).

Social network development provides the conceptual basis for understanding the interconnections which exist between individuals, groups, and organizations. The relation of the social units can be called the relation (relations shared between relations). Social network theory (Scott 2012) argues that social relationships are more important than social content (the objects in your network) and that social processes occur through social relationships.

Synthetic natural toxin, SNT, has been used widely for many applications in many fields. For example, in the domain of public health, it has been used to understand the spread of diseases, such as HIV/AIDS, which are obviously network-based viruses but for which the network that should be measured might be sexual networks or drug networks, for example (Latkin & Knowlton, 2005). In organizational studies, it has helped to reveal how informal networks within companies influence decision-making, innovation, and job mobility (Krackhardt & Hanson, 1993). In education, researchers have employed Social Network Theory (SNT) to assess peer influence on academic performance and social integration. In peacebuilding and gender studies, social networks have been analyzed to explore how women's groups mobilize resources and support peace efforts, especially in conflict-prone societies.

The assumptions of Social Network Theory (SNT) include the belief that individuals (actors or nodes) are embedded in a web of relationships, and that these ties significantly affect outcomes such as behavior, power, and access to capital. Another assumption is that social structure emerges from the patterns of relationships rather than solely from individual attributes.
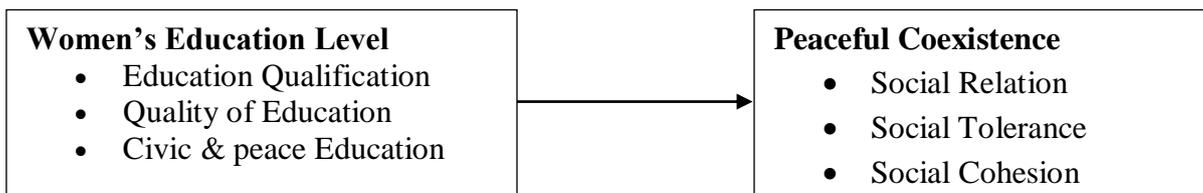
In this regard, the researcher found this theory quite helpful since it clarified the significance of the interactions developed in a social network. Social Network Theory emphasizes how the link helps to promote peaceful coexistence in societies. Social networks can eliminate mistrust and encourage cooperation among many groups of women and between men and women by helping relationships develop across many groups. In civilizations where women have access to inclusive and encouraging networks, the spread of collective values, including equality, cooperation, and mutual respect, becomes more realistic, promoting peace building

Rather than it being a new thing, social network theory is highly relevant to a movement aimed at helping women financially and creating peaceful communities. Just as a social cognitive perspective is crucial for understanding significant change, so is a social rib pathology perspective that recognizes the importance of mobilization of existing social relations and building new ones. It promotes a frame shift, changing the way stakeholders understand women from being viewed as separate individuals to being connected to multiple social networks. When implemented in conjunction with other strategies that seek to address systemic inequalities, Social Network Theory can be a powerful tool for implementing effective and sustainable interventions that are rooted in social dynamics.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Independent Variables

Dependent Variable

Women's Education Level
- Education Qualification
- Quality of Education
- Civic & peace Education

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Peaceful Coexistence
- Social Relation
- Social Tolerance
- Social Cohesion

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A descriptive research design was adopted for the purposes of this study. The proposed methodology is aimed at finding and analyzing characteristics of a population or phenomenon. The descriptive research is a combination of qualitative and quantitative research to gather data in order to obtain supporting evidence for predictions on the problem or hypothesis concerned.

Target Population

The target population for this study was 117,777, including men, women and youth, over the age of 18 years. However, according to the last census of Kenya conducted by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS, 2019), the estimated population of Kibra Constituency in Nairobi County, Kenya was estimated to be 185,777, which was dispersed over five wards in the constituency

Sampling Design

For this research, the sample size was computed by Yamane (1967) formula. One such formula was applied on a population of 117,777 comprising both male and female subjects from Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County, above the age of 18. According to Yamane (1967), for a 95% confidence level and p=q 0.05, the size of the sample should be:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e)^2}$$

Where, **n** is the sample size

N is the population size

e is the level of precision (0.05)

In this research the sample size is calculated as: N=117,777

n = 117,777/ (1+117,777*0.05^2) giving a sample size of 398.64

Sample Size, n = 399

The 399 respondents were drawn from the five wards of Kibra Constituency, Nairobi County.

Data Collection Tools

Both primary and secondary data were used in this study. Primary Data is information directly obtained for the purpose of the research study through the use of research methodology which is demonstrated to fit the research context. Secondary data, on the other hand, refers directly to available information which can be gained prior to the research project by the person conducting the research (Neuman, 2006).

For this study, secondary data were taken from libraries such as literature, the internet, books, and also from conference papers. Apart from these, the major tools that were used are primary data collection by distributing questionnaires and using an interview guide.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Qualitative data and quantitative data analysis methods were used in this study. Data were coded and numbered from structured questions; classified into variables for the sake of clarity and stored in Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS version 22). Descriptive statistical analysis was done on the output through frequencies and percentages using SPSS program. To fit with the study's objectives, thematic analysis was undertaken inline with the information extracted from the interviews with key informants, using a set of research questions for each theme. The results were then analyzed and summarized into a report.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

Response Rate

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Response	292	73
Non- response	107	27
Total	**399**	**100**

The targeted sample size was 399 subjects. Those who filled and returned the questionnaires were 292 respondents making a response rate of 73%. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting, a rate of 60% is good and a response rate of 70% and over is excellent. This means that the response rate for this study, that is, 73%, was excellent and therefore good enough for data analysis and interpretation

B. Women's Education Level Influences Peaceful coexistence.

Responses	Strongly agree		Agree		Neutral		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
Women's education improves their ability to mediate and resolve disputes in the community.	66	23%	151	52%	35	12%	23	8%	17	5%
Educated women are more likely to promote peaceful dialogue in community conflicts.	52	18%	132	45%	64	22%	35	12%	9	3%

Higher levels of education among women foster mutual respect and tolerance in Kibra.	24	8%	88	30%	92	32%	65	22%	23	8%
Formal education equips women with knowledge and values that support peaceful coexistence.	135	46%	102	35%	32	11%	16	6%	7	2%
Educated women are more active in community peace initiatives and awareness programs.	85	29%	148	51%	42	14%	13	5%	4	1%

Respondents were asked several questions on how women's education level influences peaceful coexistence and the response were as follows: on if women's education improves their ability to mediate and resolve disputes in the community 23% strongly agreed, 52% agreed, 12 were neutral and 8% disagreed while 5% strongly disagreed; second question was if educated women are more likely to promote peaceful dialogue in community conflicts 18% strongly agreed, 45% agreed, 22% were neutral and 12% disagreed while 3% strongly disagreed; third question asked was if higher levels of education among women foster mutual respect and tolerance in Kibra, 8% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, 32% were neutral, 22% disagreed and 8% strongly disagreed; the fourth question was if formal education equips women with knowledge and values that support peaceful coexistence 46% strongly agreed, 35% agreed, 11% were neutral and 6% disagreed while 2% strongly disagreed; lastly the respondents were asked whether educated women are more active in community peace initiatives and awareness programs 29% strongly agreed, 51% agreed, 14% were neutral, 5% disagreed and 1% strongly disagreed shown in table 4.6 above. The findings are in line with findings by Harari (2018) who indicate that there is a positive association between education and promotion of peaceful coexistence. This section of analysis indicates that education is widely recognized as a fundamental tool in enhancing women's ability to build peace and mediate during conflict in Kibra. The results were supported by interviewees who stated that: *Educated women were described as being more confident, better communicators, and more likely to participate in community initiatives. The majority of interviewees believed that women with higher education levels are more involved in peacebuilding, particularly through community meetings, NGOs, or local government roles. However, a few respondents noted that even uneducated women can be peacebuilders, especially through informal platforms like religious groups or women's savings circles. Most participants agreed that education fosters better relationships among women from different ethnic or social backgrounds. Educated women were perceived as more open-minded, tolerant, and skilled in conflict resolution.*

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

CONCLUSION

The study has revealed that education of women is crucial to peaceful coexistence in Kibra Constituency. Women who are educated are viewed to be more skilled in mediation, dialogue promotion, and community harmony. This finding aligns with the findings of other researchers worldwide, including UNESCO (2016), which point out that women education improves civic activity, critical analysis, and conflict management skills, all of which leads to sustainable peace.

Further, as Proposed by Galtung (1996) and Sen (1999), education enables humans to have the avenue to play an active role within society with the aim of rendering society less violent as a direct result of greater amount of knowledge, awareness and socially. In Kibra, where both the ethnic and economic mix of populations is heterogeneous, knowledgeable women can play a significant role in the formation of awareness and collaboration.

The opinions may have been varied with regards to certain aspects like mutual respect and tolerance, but it was to a larger extent accepted that women education is among the most critical strategies which could be

employed to facilitate peaceful co-existence. In highlighting the results of the study, the policies and programs that stimulate the population (girls and adult women) to be educated in informal urban areas are important.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Peace education and conflict resolution training should be embedded within women's income-generation and empowerment projects to strengthen their role in community peace efforts. Women entrepreneurs should be given targeted financial support through microcredit schemes, grants, and mentorship to increase their economic independence and capacity to influence peace initiatives. Create and support forums where financially independent women can share experiences, mediate local disputes, and influence policymaking around social cohesion.

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