"WOMEN RELIGIOUS LEADERS AS ACTORS IN ETHNIC CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND RESOLUTION IN NAKURU AND UASIN GISHU DISTRICTS, KENYA"

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DECLARATION

This project is my original work and has not been presented in any other institution

[Signature]

NEWTON KAHUMBI MAINA
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Abstract
This study investigated women religious leaders as actors in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts, Kenya. These two districts in the Rift Valley Province, suffered the worst effects of the ethnic clashes that took place between 1992-1998.

The study was based on the general premise that in all conflict related situations women bear the greatest brunt of the violence. Yet, they are hardly represented in peace negotiations and in the various structures of peace making. Where they are included, the number of women is miserably minimal or negligible. By and large, the study shows that during the ethnic clashes, women were the main victims of the mayhem perpetrated by the attackers. Nevertheless, women are sidelined in various structures and processes of peace building. They are also under represented in the various peace meetings.

The study has demonstrated that religion can be integrated with gender dimension in peace building, conflict prevention and management. This is underscored by the significant roles of women in peace building. These roles are evident from the work of Rural Women Peace Link, a network of women groups that is geared to peace building in the areas that have suffered the effects of ethnic clashes and other violent related conflicts such as cattle rustling.

Various organizations that are involved in peace building, and conflict prevention and management are identified and discussed. These include the National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK); the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJ&PC) and Catholic Women Association (CWA) under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru (CDN); Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR); and Mothers Union and Nakuru Region Inter-diocesan Christian Community Services, under the aegis of the Anglican Church of Kenya (ACK), Diocese of Nakuru. The role of women religious leaders in peace building, conflict prevention, management and resolution is discerned from the various programs that are run by these organizations.
The study employs a theoretical framework that is reconstructed from the functionalist theory of religion and the roles of religious women. This is in view of the fact that women religious leaders operate within the purview of religion. Hence it is within the context of religion that the roles of women religious leaders has been explained and understood.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The last decade of the twentieth century witnessed many incidents of violent conflicts in many parts of the world. These conflicts were largely inter-ethnic or intra-ethnic, religious or racial. For example, there were religious conflicts between the Catholics and Protestants in Northern Ireland, ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia and the Rwandan genocide that pitted Tutsi against Hutu.

In Kenya, the advent of political pluralism in 1991 heralded a wave of violent ethnic conflicts and clashes in parts of the Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western provinces. Another wave of ethnic clashes prior to and after the 1997 general elections took place in parts of the Rift Valley like Nakuru and Laikipia districts and Likoni in Coast Province. Since then, there have been sporadic conflicts between the agriculturalist Pokomo and Wardei, and the pastoral Oromo communities in Tana River District of Coast Province. These communities had sporadic warring encounters over pasture and watering points at the beginning of this century. In addition, there was an outbreak of spates of pre-election and post-election violence in parts of the Rift Valley Province following the December 2002 general elections.

Thus we could argue that, the emergence of violent ethnic conflicts in Kenya whether resulting from general elections, ethnic tensions or other causes is a possibility. This is because conflicts are generally an integral part of society, human relations, nature, and existence. Therefore, conflicts cannot be entirely eliminated (Solomon, 1999:34; Mwagiru, 2000:6). This means that any type of conflict regardless of its cause(s) is inevitable so long as human societies exist. As Aseka argues: "no society is predicated on eternal consensus and harmony" (cited, Murunga, 2000). This implies that as long as causes of ethnic conflict - such as land disputes, cattle rustling and animosity - obtains, the potential for fresh hostilities or escalation of the same exist (NCCK, 2001:51). It could be argued that although ethnic conflicts cannot be eliminated – just like any other
type of conflict - they can be managed. Devising ways of managing ethnic conflicts is an important aspect of limiting their debilitating effect on society.

It may not be an exaggeration to state that throughout history, there are very few cases, if any, when women have started a war. Though women may have perpetrated violence, it is the men who have waged war and institutionalised violence. Invariably men make decisions on whether to wage war or not to wage war, when to stop it and how to implement peace (Spadacini, 2001:4; Owour, 2002:78). In spite of all that, women bear the greatest brunt of the effects of war. In other words, wars and civil strife caused by ethnic and religious conflicts almost invariably target women and children (Bellamy, 2002:11). Statistics show that in all types of violence related conflicts against civilians, 95 per cent of the victims are women and children (Scheper, 2002:44). Women are more affected by internal displacements arising from ethnic conflicts with its attendant security problems. This explains why 90 per cent of refugees are women and children (ibid, p. 44). Displacements and insecurity engendered by ethnic conflicts bring about increased physical, psychological and social suffering to women. This leads to trauma, disability and death. In the event of death or displacement of men, women bore a heavy financial burden in their efforts to provide for their families. This is owing to the roles of women as mothers and caretakers of children and the family. Consequently, women are exposed to various hazards. For example, they are widowed, sexually abused, forced to leave their homes and even become commercial sex workers in their efforts to provide for their families (NCCK, 2001:36-37; Gichaga, 2002a: 169; Gichaga, 2002b:66).

In spite of the vulnerability of women to the effects of war and other related conflicts, there is a noticeable absence of women from negotiations in various peace talks either at the national, regional or international levels. In actual fact, globally, only a small number of women participate in formal peace negotiations (www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/women). Yet, little has been done to promote women's participation in these peace negotiations (Onadipe [Online Working Group...] 1999). According to Pankhurst (2000), women are a minority of participants in peace building projects, receive less attention than men in the post conflict reconstruction, peace building and rehabilitation policies. This situation
is evident right from the grass root levels where the role of women has been assumed and largely remains invisible. This is in spite of the role women have traditionally played as conflict mediators at the domestic and community levels (Spadacini, 2001:7). Within the Kenyan situation, the current study reveals that in the areas that experienced ethnic clashes and other forms of conflict, the participation of women in peace processes have been limited. This is the case in peace meetings convened by the Provincial administration where women are hardly represented (NCCK, Community Peace Building & Development [CPBD], 2002:50).

Generally, there is also lack of attention to the gender dimensions in conflict and post-conflict situations. The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) notes that women are persistently excluded from decision-making processes in peace negotiations and reconstruction of society in the aftermath of war. It is on this note that the Platform recognised that:

The equal access and full participation of women in power structures and their full involvement in all efforts for the prevention and resolution of conflict are essential for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security (1995:10).

The United Nation's Resolution (S/RES/1325) on Women, Peace and Security, which was adopted by the Security Council on 31st October 2000, reaffirms further the important role of women in peace building, and conflict prevention and resolution.

Granted, women should not just be passive victims of conflict related situations. They should equally be active actors for peace as well. There is therefore a need to explore new ways where women could be active players in managing and resolving conflicts. In other words, there is a need for proportionate representation of women as serious partners in managing and resolving conflict and peace building efforts at all levels of human endeavour. This is imperative in view of the cardinal responsibility of women in the household and their role in ensuring the well-being and protection of children.

The role of women in conflict management and resolution could effectively be integrated with that of religion. This brings about the interaction of religion with women in conflict management and resolution. The World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP)
which was set up in Tokyo in 1971 envisaged a situation where religions could be mobilized to bring about peace and reconciliation in areas rocked by all types of conflicts (Karam, 2002:30). This brings about the interaction of religion with women, hence, the role of women religious leaders as actors in conflict management and resolution.

Religious women symbolize more than motherhood due to their identification with God’s work. They symbolize safety and security in case of conflicts (ibid, p.31). As community service providers, religious women have access to the vulnerable victims of violent conflict, that is, women and children, and they are aware of their specific needs and requirements. At the time of chaos, confusion, hopelessness and helplessness exacerbated by conflicts, religious women provide spiritual strength and bring hope and trust (Buwalda, 2002:69). On the other hand, religion helps communities affected by conflicts to overcome their traumatic experiences by seeking solace in prayer and spiritual refuge (ibid, p.68). A combination of religion with the role of women gives an important and interesting facet in managing and resolving ethnic conflicts. The interaction between religion and women in ethnic conflict management and resolution sets the main problematic of the present study. How could women religious leaders in their various faith traditions contribute to ethnic conflict management and resolution?

1.2 Statement of the Problem
Religion could be a factor in the emergence of ethnic conflicts and violence. It has played a crucial role in fanning ethnic and religious conflicts in Africa. This is evident in countries such as Algeria, Sudan and Nigeria where atrocities have been committed in the name of religion. Conversely, religion could be used as an instrument of reconciliation, conflict management and resolution. In areas rocked by ethnic conflicts, religion has helped ease tensions and heals wounds brought therein. Yet, partly due to inadequate perception of the impact of ethnic conflict on women, the religious oriented approach tends to neglect the gender dimension in conflict management and resolution.

The vulnerability of women to the effects of war and ethnic related conflicts has been underlined. Nevertheless, women are conspicuously absent or under represented from
various peace talks and negotiations that ignore the role of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. This creates a paradox. How should women be mainstreamed in the various efforts toward conflict prevention, management and resolution? Owing to the importance of religion in society, how could it be integrated with gender dimension in managing and resolving ethnic conflict? The role of women in ethnic conflict management and resolution should be integrated with that of religion. In this respect, the role of women religious leaders comes into focus. However, there is dearth of documented evidence on the role of women religious leaders in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Kenya.

Women religious leaders have important roles in communities. They exercise moral authority and respect is accorded to them. By working closely with the victims of ethnic conflicts, women religious leaders aid in the process of reintegration of these people in society. This role is however either downplayed or underestimated. This aspect needs to be documented and brought to the fore. This necessitates an empirical research enquiry. The proposed study therefore attempts to investigate the role of women religious leaders as actors in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts, Kenya.

1.3 Research Questions
The study aims at answering the following questions:

1. What was the context of the ethnic clashes in Kenya?

2. How could religion be integrated with gender dimension in managing and resolving ethnic conflict?

3. How could women be mainstreamed in the various efforts toward conflict prevention, management and resolution?

4. How could women religious leaders in their various faith traditions contribute to ethnic conflict management and resolution in Kenya?

5. In what ways could women religious leaders combine their vocation with the traditional/social expectations in providing the needs and services to victims of ethnic conflict?
6. How could women religious leaders apply their status in society as the voice of women to influence policy decisions that relate to various efforts of promoting peace in areas affected by ethnic clashes?

7. How could women religious leaders set the agenda for the government, politicians, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other stakeholders involved in developing programs on ethnic conflict management and resolution?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

(a) To identify and examine the roles of various women religious groups that are involved in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts, Kenya.

(b) To evaluate the specific roles of women religious leaders in managing and resolving ethnic conflict in the two districts.

(c) To discuss various strategies that could enhance the role of women religious leaders in managing and resolving ethnic conflicts in the two districts.

1.5 Research Premises

(a) The Rural Women’s Peace Link, Catholic Women’s Association, and Mother’s Union are some of the groups of women religious leaders involved in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts.

(b) Within their denominational or religious affiliation, women religious leaders are involved in various activities geared towards managing and resolving conflicts. These include resettlement and rehabilitation of clash victims, relief assistance and housing.

(c) Various strategies of empowering women religious leaders could enhance their role in ethnic conflict management and resolution.
1.6 Significance of the Study

First, the present study hopes to document the role that a significant segment of the society, that is, women religious leaders could contribute in ethnic conflict management and resolution. Despite their role in conflict prevention and resolution, women’s initiatives and efforts are rarely documented. The present study hopefully underlines that contribution.

Second, ethnic conflict management and resolution should always start at the grassroots. Peace efforts that ignore the involvement of women who are more vulnerable to violent conflicts are likely to come to naught. This is because peace and reconciliation efforts that are driven by religious women leaders are more of an integral engagement of their work in communities. For such efforts to be fruitful, the initiatives of women religious leaders need to be put into their proper perspective. The present study will hopefully fulfil that task.

Third, the study sought to unveil the ways through which women religious leaders could be empowered to enhance reconciliation among communities that have been affected by ethnic clashes. The potential of women religious leaders in this task should be recognized through research inquiry.

Fourth, women religious leaders constitute a community of hope and a community of prevention. Amidst ethnic strife, they provide hope based on the sanctity of life. They also prevent occurrences that are symptomatic of ethnic conflicts such as discrimination, distrust, manipulation and so on. The current study provides strategies that could generally enhance the role of women in ethnic conflict management and resolution.

Fifth, to various stakeholders in peace process, there is a need to recognize that women religious leaders could undertake a more visible and vocal role in peace making. This is because, generally, women are nurtures, healers and educators of society. They have a special role in bringing about the universal values and principles of religion to the policy
level. Religious women have worked for the transformation of society at the grassroots for many years. But as mentioned elsewhere, their efforts have received little or no recognition. Women have either been denied or eschewed from leadership roles. Their skills and attributes are needed in order to create a just, equitable, caring and peaceful society. The current study underlines this contribution.

1.7 Theoretical Orientation

The theoretical orientation that informs the current study is reconstructed from a combination of functionalist theory of religion and the roles of religious women. According to functional theorists such as Smith, Durkheim, O’dea & O’dea, and Yinger, religion has various functions in society (Hamilton, 1995; O’dea & O’dea, 1983). Women religious leaders operate within the purview of religion, hence, it is within that context that the role of religious women leaders should be explained and understood. According to Otunu (2002:13) there are various roles of religious women. These are: as a community of faith and solidarity; prophetic action; reconciliation and rehabilitation; healing; as advocates; prevention and hope. These roles are juxtaposed with the functional roles of religion to provide a framework that could explain the role of women religious leaders in ethnic conflict management and resolution. This is explained in the conceptual model (see Figure 1).

Religion is a social institution that contributes to the survival of society or its social integration and solidarity (Hamilton, 1995:106). Religion provides equilibrium for a society and support for the social values and social stability. It justifies, rationalizes and supports the sentiments that give cohesion to society. Further, religion legitimises and stabilizes social order (ibid. pp.112, 116). Within that context women religious leaders serve as a community of faith and solidarity to bring about stability and a sense of togetherness among members. To the communities that have experienced ethnic clashes in Kenya, religious women leaders offer integrity to all people whom they see as children of God, regardless of tribe, race and socio-economic background.
The second functional role of religion is to fulfil a social function through meeting individual as well as group needs for psychological satisfaction. Within that context, religious women are a community of witnesses. They impress upon people about the belief in God who rewards and punishes evil. This helps to promote values that could be undermined if individuals were to believe that evil prospers and the good is not rewarded (ibid, p.117). Similarly, religious women play the prophetic function by emphasizing on enjoining the good and forbidding evil. They remind the various combatants of the causes of ethnic conflicts and their costs (cf., Otunu, 2002:13). Within the area of study, women religious leaders uphold moral order in society by helping to minimize the incidents that give rise to or fuel ethnic conflicts. By stressing on values that are acceptable to all, women religious leaders act as a community of advocates. They assert the values that protect the vulnerable groups of society, especially women and children, and the aged who are more affected by ethnic conflicts.

The third functional role of religion is that it aids the individuals at the time of the crises of life and transition from one status to another (Hamilton, 1995:121). Religion provides emotional support in the face of uncertainty, consolation when faced with disappointment and reconciliation with society when alienated from its goals and norms at the time of conflicts (cf.. O’dea & O’d ea, 1983:14). It is within that context that religious women are a community of reconciliation and rehabilitation. In this regard, women religious leaders offer hope to individuals who have suffered from the effects of ethnic clashes. This assists in putting these people back on the road to recovery. Women religious leaders also play an important role in post conflict situations as a community of rehabilitation and healing. For example they assist the victims of ethnic clashes to understand and appreciate life beyond and after the clashes.

The fourth functional role of religion is the provision of answers to basic problems and psychological compensation for various injustices (Pickering, 1984:304; Hamilton, 1995:117-120). It attempts to explain what cannot otherwise be explained such as death and suffering. It gives meaning to distressing situations. It establishes poise and serenity in the face of evil and suffering that other efforts have failed to eliminate. In that respect,
women religious leaders act as agents of hope by providing solace and comfort. Accordingly, they help people who have suffered from the effects of the ethnic clashes to survive and overcome the trauma through spiritual healing. In addition, they offer solutions and support to people from diverse backgrounds, by finding strength and hope in their different religious affiliations.

Finally, religion has an integrative role in society. Integration involves resolution of conflicts through the process of persuasion, mutual adjustment and compromise (Hamilton, 1995:120). Within their role as a community of prevention, religious women leaders are crucial in mediating in conflict situations and checking the symptoms that bring about ethnic conflicts (cf., Otunu, 2002:13; Gonzalez-Bueno, 2002:9). Women religious leaders in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts use religion to integrate various communities that have suffered the effects and crises wrought by ethnic conflicts. By using religion, women religious leaders help those communities to co-exist once again and adjust to their former lives.

To conclude, the functionalist theory of religion and the role of religious women provide a theoretical orientation and a conceptual model for investigating the role of women religious leaders in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study relied heavily on questionnaires. Most of the respondents were not available for interviews due to their busy working schedules and the nature of their work. Hence, they insisted on filling the questionnaires at their convenient time with arrangements to collect them later. Consequently, some of the questionnaires were misplaced and never received.

Within the area of study, the CJ&PC is one of the main organizations that deal with issues of peace building, conflict management and resolution. Yet, we did not interview or administer questionnaires to any respondents working in this organization. Initial
information - received from the CJ&PC in Nakuru – that was never authenticated indicated that there were no women peace workers or facilitators in the organization. Instead, we were referred to other organizations.

Apparently, the NCCK is the most conspicuous and active organization involved in peace building and conflict management programs in the area of the study. This is for an obvious reason. As we have noted later (vide Chapter Four), the NCCK is an umbrella organization of member churches. Its activities are therefore widespread not only in the area of the study but also throughout the country. In that connection, the findings of the current study could be perceived to be more inclined towards the NCCK than other organizations.

1.9 Operational Definition
Women Religious Leaders:
Broadly constitute women members of the various church committees such as the chairperson, secretary and treasurer in church organizations such as CWA and Mothers Union, etc; those employed in organizations such as the NCCK, CCR and RWPL as peace facilitators or coordinators; those ordained as priests, lay leaders and deaconesses as in the ACK’s Mothers Union; and the Catholic women religious (sisters).

1.10 Abbreviations
AACC ............ All Africa Conference of Churches
ACK ............. Anglican Church of Kenya
AIDS ............. Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
APDC ............. Area Peace & Development Committee
APRC ............. Area Peace and Reconciliation Committee
CAPA ............. Council of Anglican Provinces of Africa
CCR............... Centre for Conflict Resolution
CDN ............. Catholic Diocese of Nakuru
cf ................ confer compare
CJ&PC ........... Catholic Justice and Peace Commission
COGWO ........... Coalition of Grassroots Women’s Organization
CPBD ............. Community Peace Building & Development
CWA ............... Catholic Women Association
ECOWAS ........... Economic Community of West African States
GNS ............... Good Neighbourliness Seminars
HIV ............... Human Immunodeficiency Virus
IGAD .............. Intergovernmental Authority on Development
LPI ............... Life and Peace Institute
LWI ............... Liberian Women Initiative
NAP ............... National Agenda for Peace
NCCK ............. National Council of Churches of Kenya
n.d ............... no date
NGO ............... Non-Government Organization
NSCC ............. New Sudan Council of Churches
PCEA ............. Presbyterian Church of East Africa
PSW ............... Problem Solving Workshops
RUF ............... United Front of Sierra Leone
RWPL ............. Rural Women Peace Link
SPLM ............. Sudan’s Peoples’ Liberation Movement
SWAN ............. Sudanese Women’s Association
SWAVP ............ Sudanese Women’s Voice for Peace
STD ............... Sexually Transmitted Diseases
UNICEF ........... United Nation’s Children’s Fund
UNIFEM ........... United Nations Development Fund for Women
VPC ............... Village Peace Committee
WCC ............... World Council of Churches
WCRP ............. World Conference on Religion and Peace
WILPF ............ Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom
WMP ............... Women’s Movement for Peace
WPP ............... Women’s Peace Program
FIGURE 1

Religion fulfills social function for group needs for psychological satisfaction

Religious women as a community of witnesses; the prophetic function

Religion contributes to survival of society, equilibrium, social integration and solidarity

Religious women as a community of faith

The role of women religious leaders in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts, Kenya

Religion provides answers to basic problems and psychological compensation for various injustices

Religious women offer solutions through spiritual healing, to survive and overcome the trauma

Religion assists in managing crises and transition from one status to another

Religious women as a community of reconciliation and rehabilitation

Religion has an integrative role through persuasion, mutual adjustment and compromise

Religious women as a community of prevention through mediation in conflict situations
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

In this study, literature has been reviewed thematically focusing on the various aspects of the objectives of the study. These are the following: conflicts in general; ethnic conflicts in Kenya; strategies for peace building and ethnic conflict management; role of religion in peace building and conflict management; role of the Church and its leadership in conflict management and resolution; role of Church organizations in peace building and conflict management; women as victims of war and conflict related situations; women as agents of war and violence; marginalization of women in peace processes; need to incorporate women in peace building and conflict management processes; role of women in peace building and conflict management processes; women's initiatives in peace building and conflict management processes; and role of women religious leaders in peace building and conflict management processes.

2.2 Conflicts in General

It is well recognized that conflicts are part and parcel of human societies and existence. This makes post-conflict peace building an essential component of conflict prevention. According to the Aspen Institute (1997, preventing conflict from re-igniting is as important as preventive action before conflict arises or becomes full-fledged war. The goal of post-conflict peace building is to consolidate peace that requires change, re-ordering of priorities and breaking the cycle of conflict. The present study has investigated the various efforts of women religious leaders in consolidating post-conflict peace building in the areas that have been affected by ethnic clashes in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts.

On a general note, Scheppe (2002) contends that conflict and development or lack of it, are related. She observes that most violent conflicts stem from deeply rooted social and economic injustices often related to identity, politics and extended periods of relative deprivation. On the other hand, Otunnu (1997) attributes competition for power,
resources and prestige as the cause of conflicts. Maina (2000) dwells further and gives examples of Kenya and Nigeria, as countries where competition for limited resources and state power have been the root causes of ethnic strife. Further, she mentions other causes of ethnic conflicts as: inability of the state to execute its role towards its citizenry such as exercise of justice and fair distribution of resources as is the case with many conflicts in most parts of Africa. People pursuing their own personal interests at the expense of others as evidenced by the Likoni clashes in coastal Kenya. The observations of Otunnu, Scheper and Maina capture the scenario behind the outbreak of ethnic clashes in Kenya as discussed below.

2.3 Ethnic Conflicts in Kenya

The phenomenon of violent ethnic conflicts in Kenya has attracted enormous attention from scholars since the outbreak of ethnic clashes that accompanied the introduction of plural politics. Scholars have documented the genesis of the clashes and the underlying causes of their outbreak. These works include, but not limited to, Ogot (1997), Gecaga (2000, 2002a), Maina (2000), Rutto (2000) and Okoth & Ogot (2000).

Gecaga (2000, 2002a) traces the various causes of ethnic clashes in Kenya. These causes are colonialism which balkanised communities into tribal cocoons through ethnic barriers and isolation; some ethnic groups were dispossessed off their land and that created economic disparities between different regions and ethnic groups, and uneven distribution of social amenities such as schools and hospitals. In addition, she argues that colonialism promoted ethnic consciousness and nationalism at the expense of supra-ethnic nationalism. According to her, the other causes of ethnic clashes are opportunism and unfair distribution of economic resources and political power on ethnic lines.

Rutto (2000) perceives the outbreak of ethnic clashes in parts of the Rift Valley in 1992 as a demonstration of the ugly face of ethnic relations. He argues that the absence of a strong constructive inter-ethnic social structure was a source of ethnic conflicts with ethnic biases, myths, stereotypes and misinformation exacerbating ethnic differences.
Apart from Gecaga (2002a, 2002b) as will be demonstrated later, religion did not feature in the works under review, hence the need for the present study.

2.4 Strategies for Peace Building and Ethnic Conflict Management

Otunnu (1997) broadly mentions the need for conflict prevention and peace building. He adds that, conflict prevention is about how to mediate the competition for power, resources and prestige in a peaceful way to avoid a spiral of violence. Conflict prevention is also about deploying means and measures to prevent escalation of conflict into violence or de-escalating violence and restoring peace.

Scheper (2002) discusses the prevention of violent conflicts by noting that new ways to prevent them should be explored. Further, she notes that peaceful solutions to violent conflicts need to be sought especially those that deal with communities at different levels. On the same issue, Maina (2000) discusses various strategies of managing ethnic conflict. These include channelling of power to methods that attract unity such as one party state; reallocation of resources to the less disadvantaged; enforcement of laws that call for co-existence between various communities and use of a national language policy and common ideology.

According to Maina (2000, citing Glickman, 1995), managing ethnic conflicts is elusive because interest groups sometimes want to benefit from the same conflicts they want to manage. She cites the example of Kenya’s political establishment, which during the ethnic clashes of 1992 and 1997 exhibited partisanship in quelling the clashes. This is tantamount to selective management. It is the contention of this study that religious groups have acted as neutral bodies that take non-partisan stance in conflict management.

Mwagiru (2000) cites the charters of the UN (article 33[1]) and Africa Union (article 3[4]), which specify the methods of peaceful settlement of disputes. These methods are: negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or any other peaceful means of their choice. Mwagiru et al (1998) classifies these methods as either coercive or non-coercive. Among the
Coercive methods are judicial settlement and arbitration. The non-coercive methods are negotiation, meditation and Problem Solving Workshops (PSW). The non-coercive methods are peaceful methods of conflict management because they do not involve the use of force. Delving further, he observes that negotiation and mediation are the best methods of reaching a solution. On the other hand, PSW have been used in resolving protracted conflicts such as ethnic clashes in Kenya. This method, he continues to argue, brings out the deep-seated feelings between the parties in ethnic conflict. PSW entails: the parties involved talking about the history of their conflict; acceptance of the responsibility for harm caused each other; mourn about the losses incurred from the conflict and agree on the nature of their future relationship. He concludes that all these issues are necessary for the healing process and resolution to commence.

Generally, the works under review offer insights to the present study by identifying and discussing some of the methods that are used in managing and resolving ethnic conflicts. Some methods identified above are applied by many organizations in the area of study to manage and resolve conflicts. In Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts, women religious leaders apply the same methods in ethnic conflict management and resolution.

2.5 The Role of Religion in Peace Building and Conflict Management

It has been pointed out before that religion could be a source of conflict. Tschuy (1997) contends that religion is a cause of injustice, fear, intolerance and violence. Within the Kenyan context, Kamaara (1997) observes that ethnic hatred, tension and conflicts have been identified with religious differences. Specifically, Chepkwony (2002) argues that during the ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley, ethnic affiliations tended to surpass religious considerations as ethnic loyalties took precedence over Christian fellowships and other relations. However, this study shows that religion could also be used to promote peace and justice and managing and resolving conflict. This is possible if religious teachings are applied impartially.

While discussing the role of religion in world peace, Karam (2002) traces the origin of World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP). Founded in 1971 in Tokyo, WCRP is
a forum where all religions could come together to discuss the latest challenges, opportunities and strengths. She observes that, the founders of WCRP envisaged it as an arena of mobilizing religions to bring about peace and reconciliation in all regions ravaged by conflicts. WCRP has over thirty chapters distributed around the world.

On the other hand, Buwalda (2002) holds that religion is important in assisting communities to survive from traumatic events. She points out that people often interrogate themselves wondering why God allowed something to happen while others find solace in prayer or other religious rituals. She continues to state that religious institutions and clergy can offer support to all sorts of people, for example those who have lost their faith and everything else and those who find strength and solace in prayer.

The two cases discussed above demonstrate how religion can be used to promote and build peace. They have offered insights to the present study, which has investigated the role of religious women leaders in ethnic conflict management and resolution.

2.6 The Role of the Church and Its Leadership in Conflict Management and Resolution

The Church can be used to fuel conflict(s). Discussing the 1994 Rwandan genocide, Tschuy (1997) argues that the churches abetted in the killing as church leaders were silent about the events that led to the genocide. Delving further into the church's complacency in the genocide, Human Rights Watch (1999) notes that the church leaders did not issue a prompt and firm condemnation of the killing, implying that the genocide found favour with God. Indeed, some clergy and religious persons were accused of inciting the killings, delivered victims to the killers or even participated in killing. The evidence in that respect is the two priests found guilty of genocide and sentenced to death by a Rwandan court. The Rwandan case is a pointer that the Church and its leadership could be used as instruments of conflict, violence and death.

In spite of the past errors of commission and omission, Havermans (1999) state that the Church in Rwanda is fighting to wipe out the stigma of its complicity in the 1994
genocide. The Anglican Church of Rwanda is part of the Nairobi based Council of the Anglican Provinces of Africa (CAPA). It set up departments of reconciliation in all dioceses in 1997 in which seminars were held and guest speakers from Europe, America and other parts of Africa invited to talk about forgiveness and peaceful co-existence.

According to Assefa (1996), peace making and reconciliation are mandates for the Church. Its primary duty is to foster reconciliation between God and human beings or effecting reconciliation with oneself as a product of reconciling the individual with God. Quoting the scriptures (Matthew 5:23-25, 18:23-35; 1 John 4:20), he contends that in social conflict situations, it is not possible to be reconciled with God before people are reconciled with one another. He further observes that the Church can perform its reconciliatory obligation in conflict situations by cultivating a ground for social reconciliation and peace building. In such a situation, he adds, the Church should bridge the gap between God and people by acting as an agent of social reconciliation. Accordingly, the Church should lay the foundation for peace and build the bridges between people separated by conflict, reconcile adversaries, and create a community between former enemies. Mwagiru (2000) concurs with Assefa (1996) by observing that the Church is a suitable conflict manager because of its vocation of peace and reconciliation. It could act as neutral body that could take a non-partisan stance in conflict management and resolution. He further adds that, since its mission is one of peace and reconciliation, the Church should be engaged in conflict management.

On the basis of the above arguments, the following examples demonstrate the role of the Church as an instrument of peace making and reconciliation. De Veen (1999) notes the role of the Church in peace efforts in the Sudan. The Sudan Working Group under the All African Conference of Churches (AACC) in Nairobi coordinates the peace efforts of the churches. Discussing further, Shisanya (2002) observes that in the Sudan, the Church has acted as a mediator between the Government and the Sudan’s People’s Liberation Movement (SPLM) at Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) talks aimed at building peace. Rutto (2000) barely mentions the partisan role of the churches such as Catholic, Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) and the Anglican Church of Kenya.
(ACK) during the ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley. Ruto's contentions are however contradicted by Human Right's Watch (1993) which shows that the churches were directly involved in ameliorating the severe situation engendered by the ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley. For example, the Catholic Church was involved in the provision of relief services such as food, shelter, water and putting up latrines for victims of ethnic clashes in the camps at Elbourgon and Kamwaura, among other areas. In the same vein, Abuom (1996) underlines the role of the Church in mediation and intervention during ethnic clashes that engulfed parts of Kenya in 1992 and 1997. This was through sermons, prayers for peace, personal visits to the victims and the delivery of relief services.

Discussing the impact of ethnic clashes on women, Gecaga (2002a) makes note of the roles the Church could play in conflict resolution. This include: Christians taking responsibility towards genuine community by facilitating peace and evolving strategies for conflict resolution while paying attention to the vulnerable groups - women, children and the physically challenged. This article however does not capture the role of women religious leaders as torchbearers in conflict resolution, hence, the need to fill this gap.

By borrowing a leaf from the works under review, the present study has examined the roles performed by women religious leaders - who are members of various church affiliations - toward conflict management and reconciliation in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts.

Magesa (1996) recognizes the role of Christian religious leaders in reducing or eliminating the root causes of simmering or open violence and effecting true peace. Quoting Assefa (1987:3-4), he argues that one way of effecting true peace is by becoming agents of conflict resolution through mechanisms of “good offices”, inquiry, mediation and arbitration. He further observes that, the fact that religious leaders are approached and accepted as mediators shows that because of their spiritual disposition, they are believed to possess the characteristics and skills in question. Citing Biblical references on peace making (e.g. Matthew 5:9; 1 Peter 3:15-17), he notes that peace making is a permanent ministry of the Church. Hence Christian religious leaders have a
responsibility to sharpen and deepen their skills in peace making. Magesa’s work however, is general and does not refer to specific cases where the Church leaders have used their skills in peace making. This study has, among other things, explored how religious women leaders use their skills of peace making to manage conflicts in areas that have experienced ethnic clashes.

While discussing the role of the Church in nation building, Kamaara (1997) argues that church leaders find themselves in a dilemma when they are caught between their gospels’ teachings on reconciliation and their ethnic inclinations. According to her, church leaders should pursue the gospel teachings on peace building that surpasses any ethnic considerations. While Kamaara may not have been thinking about the role of the church leadership in ethnic conflict management and resolution, some of the issues that she raises are poignant and find further deliberation by other scholars.

2.7 The Role of Church Organizations in Peace Building and Conflict Management

On a general note, Bush & Chase (2002) contend that faith based organizations or NGOs are major players in countries affected by war. Among the various activities they are involved in are: humanitarian relief and development programs and child sponsorship; projects to alleviate poverty, hunger, illiteracy and injustice; evangelical mission work and human and faith-based rights’ work. In this connection, Assefa (1996) notes that church organizations such as the AACC, World Council of Churches (WCC) and the NCCK are involved in conflict management.

Tschuy (1997) elaborates on WCC. He notes that since it’s founding in 1948, WCC has had ethnic conflict and religion as one of its agenda. He adds that it has consistently called on its member churches to participate in the struggle against human rights abuses, racism and genocide as a part of the search for Christian unity of humanity. In this connection for example, following the ethnic cleansing in Rwanda and Bosnia, WCC joined the Lutheran World Federation and the World Alliance of Reformed Churches to organize a consultation in Colombo Sri Lanka, in November 1994 on Ethnicity and Nationalism: A Challenge to the Churches. The WCC Working Group on Racism,
Indigenous Peoples and Ethnicity in Berlin in January 1996, analysed the questionable contribution of some churches to the historical formation of distinct ethnicities.

Shisanya (2002) demonstrates the role of Church organizations in peace building. The New Sudan Council of Churches (NSCC) offers the evidence. NSCC that has been meeting with the SPLM since 1997 to dialogue and seek effective ways for the Church and SPLM to collaborate in search for a just and lasting peace and freedom for the people of the Sudan. Nation (1999) and the NCCK CPBD (2002) detail the role of NCCK in its Peace and Reconciliation Project that has been undertaken to help overcome the consequences of ethnic clashes that had rocked the western region of Kenya, prior to and after the 1992 general elections. This has been done through setting of Village Peace Committees (VPC), Area Peace and Development Committees (APDC), Good Neighbourliness Seminars (GNS), public gatherings (barazas), Church Leaders Meetings (Workshops) and Chief's Workshops. In addition, the National Agenda for Peace (NAP) Survey is another project of the NCCK that addresses the issue of conflict, insecurity and the factors that motivate such conflicts in the country. NAP evolved from the experiences gathered through the CPBD and is another clear demonstration of the role of NCCK in conflict management. The other initiative of NCCK is RWPL. According to the NCCK Peace Programme (2002), RWPL is a network of women self-help groups. It was founded in 1999 by women peace facilitators whose aim was to bring about a just and sustainable peace through creative and cooperative approaches to peace keeping at the community level. The role of CPBD and RWPL link in conflict management and resolution has been investigated in the present study.

2.8 Women as Victims of War and Conflict Related Situations

Various scholars have argued that women and children are the greatest victims of conflict related situations and civil strife (Aloysia, 1996; Brownell, 1996; Heyzer, 1996; Ayanga, 2002; Bellamy, 2002; Gecaga, 2002a, 2002b; Scheper, 2002).

Aloysia (1996) recounts some of the atrocities committed to women during the Rwandan genocide. They include: brutal murder, rape in all possible circumstances resulting to
pregnancies, widowhood and displacements that resulted to exiles. Scheper (2002) analyses the impact of war situations on women. She notes that family structures crumble through death accompanied by an increase in domestic violence and trauma that manifests itself in depression, chronic fatigue, stress, anguish and listlessness.

Brownell (1996), Aloysia (1996), Gichaga (2000a, 2002b) and Ayanga (2002) concur that war and other conflict related situations create double roles for women. These include: heading households, breadwinning and homemaking roles. Delving further, Gichaga (2002b) observes that the death of male combatants and their displacements imposes a heavy burden on women. This creates female-headed households, with the attendant destruction of homes rendering women and children refugees. Yet even in their circumstances as refugees, women have to take care of the children, the old and the sick. Besides, they have to perform other life-sustaining responsibilities such as household chores and fetching water and firewood. Heyzer (1996) notes that women are relied upon to reconstruct social relationships and the social fabric of the society through care and nurturing when social disintegration occurs in families, communities and countries.

The **Beijing Platform for Action** (1995) emphasises the crucial role of women in the period of armed conflict and disintegration of communities. It shows that women work to preserve social order and act as peace educators at the domestic and community levels. They also play a critical and sometimes the most powerful role in creating peace and advocating cooperation rather than competition. In the same trend of thought, Ayanga (2002) argues that women’s situation as the greatest victims of conflict situations and war should not be attributed to their vulnerability *per se*, but to their special maternal responsibility towards the well being of their family. Hence she concludes that most women would rather become refugees together with their children than sitting and watching them die in armed conflicts.

Granted, there is a need to recognize and document various efforts of women in conflict management and resolution. The present study documents this aspect of women religious leaders.
2.9 Women as Agents of War and Violence

Women are agents and instruments of war just as they are agents of peace and reconciliation. Spadacini (2001) posits that women are often depicted as the “victims” of violent conflict while men are depicted as “aggressors”. According to her, this view negates the role of women as perpetrators and supporters of violence.

According to African Rights (1998), during the Rwandan genocide, women played a significant role in gathering information, feeding and sheltering the infiltrators. Further, women participated in military operations. Female spirit mediums were morale boosters while some groups of women encouraged the escalation of violence through singing, ululating and beating drums. In addition, women were used to mark out the “enemy”, concealed weapons and carried bullets in their hair and guns inside the bundles of firewood. Spadacini (2001) concurs with the African Rights (1998) by showing how women abetted and participated in the Rwandan genocide through providing economic support to the “war effort”; inciting men to commit violence; refusing to protect or feed the “enemy”, and inculcating a militaristic ideology to the children. The foregoing review shows that women are agents of war and violence. The present study shows women’s complicity in the escalation of ethnic clashes. Nevertheless, the thesis advanced in the study is that the isolated cases of women’s connivance cannot water down their roles in peace building.

2.10 The Marginalization of Women in Peace Processes

In spite of the vulnerability of women to the effects of war and conflict situations, as Weiss (1996), Pankhurst (2000) and Wanyeki (2002) have noted, few women participate in the negotiation process and peace talks aimed at preventing and resolving conflicts. Pankhurst (2000) asserts that despite their contributions in provision and nurturing, women’s efforts are ignored, rarely recognised and altogether not rewarded. This is in spite of the fact that women constitute a highly motivated and able group of stakeholders for peace building.
The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) observes that failure to include women as stakeholders in peace process means: their experiences as peacemakers are not incorporated and utilized in peace negotiations and peace building processes in spite of their central role in initiating dialogue and reconciliation at the grassroots’ level. Their exclusion results in peace which fails to address sufficiently key issues that include: demobilization and rehabilitation of women and girl soldiers, the continued violence against women refugees, lack of redress for the human rights violations and abuses women suffer.

Spadacini (2001) decries the fact that in spite of the involvement of women in conflict prevention and resolution at the grassroots, there has been a prevailing tendency to sideline women during official peace negotiations processes. She attributes this situation to political and economic marginalisation of women. Women’s role as political players is ignored, prohibited or looked down upon. She gives the example of the Burundi Peace talks when male delegates told the facilitators: “women are not parties to this conflict. This is not their concern. we cannot see why they have come. why they bother us. We are here and represent them.” This kind of argument is one of the reasons that could largely explain why women are sidelined from many peace processes.

Our survey established that despite the role of women in peace building in the two districts that formed the core of the present study, their participation in formal structures of peacemaking and conflict management is miserably minimal. It is therefore not a wonder that the role of women as peacemakers has not attracted due attention. The need to document women’s role in conflict management and resolution warrants the present study.

2.11 The Need to Incorporate Women in Peace Building and Conflict Management Processes

The United Nations Resolution (S/RES/1325) reaffirms inter alia: the significant role of women in conflict prevention and resolution and in peace building. It stresses the importance of women’s equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the
maintenance and promotion of peace and security; the need to increase women's representation and their role in decision making with regard to conflict prevention and resolution at national, regional and international levels. The resolution calls on all actors involved when negotiating and implementing peace agreements to adopt a gender perspective, such as putting measures that support local women's peace initiatives and indigenous processes of conflict resolution.

According to Heyzer (1996), since women are the worst victims of war and conflict situations and the ones who understand the full potential of implications of destruction, then it follows that they should ideally be the highest stakeholders of peace. In this regard, she underlines the need to recognize and tap women's unique skills and talents in peace building process. On the same note, Weiss (1996) underscores women's participation in international peace and security processes as a prerequisite to achieving peace. Ershova (1996) reiterates the sentiments of Heyzer (1996) and Weiss (1996) by noting that women's expertise needs to be drawn to ensure their participation in mainstream conflict resolution and peace building activities. She further argues that women are the effective agents of conflict resolution since they have this experience at home, family and community. Even during the time of conflict, women's traditional roles are shifted to the battlefront. In the same vein, Meghji (1996) underlines the historical role of women as care takers of the family. This, according to her, places women in a unique position as transformers of a culture of violence to a culture of peace, hence, the need to appreciate and develop the leadership potential of women.

Spadacini (2001) avers that women can ably make peace just as much as men do or even better. She further notes that women are more experienced than men in making peace than in waging war because of the way they have been educated and the values that are passed to them. Women's abilities in peacemaking are derived from their gender roles that societies have traditionally ascribed to them.

Similarly, Scheper (2002) asserts that women are not natural peace doves just as men are not natural warriors. She affirms that the role of women in society and during conflict
presupposes that they are better placed to take care of both the domestic and community interests and the well-being of children which is a cardinal responsibility.

Pankhurst (2000) contends that, often women have stronger commitment to the ending of violence and the maintenance of long-term peace than men. In this connection she contends that the specific health and economic needs of women need to be incorporated in peace building policies. She argues that measures that help women to work together and their experiences could help strengthen efforts in peace building enormously. It is assumed that women have special qualities that equip them better than men for peace and better for peace than war. These qualities include emotional strength to transcend pain and sufferings and their predisposition to peace that provide them with greater potentials for peacemaking. These qualities should be identified and harnessed in peace building (Punkhurst, 2000:9).

According to Onadipe (1999 [Online Working Group...]), women tend to show empathy, are committed to consensus building and focus on human security issues rather than political solutions. She continues to say that women make a difference when they are involved in the peace process because they endure much pain and suffering throughout their lives due to the gender roles imposed on them. In the same trend of thought Sharoni (1999 [Online Working Group...]), observes that women are socialized differently to be more compassionate and care taking. This implies that women have a distinctive approach to peace. Krahma (1999 [Online Working Group...]) avers that as oppressed members of most societies, women are unique in that they can often relate to oppression experienced by the minority party to conflict, even if they come from the majority. This gives them the ability to perceive the conflict from more than one perspective; from the perspective of their enemy, a necessity in any type of peace building.

Ochwada (2000) argues that given the horrid experiences of women in war and conflict situations, their participation in peace processes should be given due attention. He further notes that owing to their roles as producers and reproducers of household, women’s approach to conflict resolution could be less confrontational.
By borrowing insights from the works under review, the present study has examined the role of women as agents of peace and reconciliation and how their participation in conflict management in the area of study could be enhanced.

2.12 The Role of Women in Peace Building and Conflict Management Processes

It should be noted that women’s contribution to conflict resolution and peace building is a positive development. This is because women bring diverse conflict experiences and represent different interest groups and other priorities than men. Due to their interests, women are capable of forming coalitions that bridge deep political, ethnic and religious divides (www.clingendael.nl/cru/pdf/women).

The Beijing Platform for Action (1995) notes that women and women’s groups have a vital and indispensable role in building positive peace and transforming conflicts. Underlining the role of women as peacemakers, Spadacini (2001) shows the specific roles of women in peace making at the grassroots level. This includes organizing to resist militarization, creating space for dialogue and weaving together the ripped fabric of society. Further, she observes that during conflict, many women are involved in relief work, assist wounded soldiers and take care of the orphans, disabled and the elderly.

Pankhurst (2000) argues that in many wars women have used their different roles to minimise the effects of violence or to end the war by acting as peacemakers. She singles out the various roles of women during and after conflicts, noting that they carry a greater burden than men in caring for the survivors, both adults and children and the sick.

The International Alert’s draft code of conduct explicitly recognizes the particular and distinctive peacemaking roles played by women in conflict-afflicted communities. By poignantly giving examples of the wars in Ethiopia, Somalia and the Sudan, it contends that women and women’s organizations are reservoirs of important local capacities that can be used in peace building.
The works under review demonstrate clearly the role of women as peacemakers, and provided insights for the present study.

2.13 Women’s Initiatives in Peace Building, and Conflict Management Processes

International initiatives of women’s role in peace building and conflict resolution are evident from the already mentioned examples of UN Resolution 1325 and the Beijing Platform for Action. Others include **Women Building Peace: From the Village Council to the Negotiating Table**, a campaign launched by the International Alert, UK, in May 1999 in collaboration with Amnesty International; the Women’s International League for Peace and Freedom (WILPF); the Women’s Commission for Refugee Women and Children & the Hague Appeal for Peace; and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

The campaign by the International Alert is rooted in more than 100 civil society organizations in the world. It aims at raising women’s experiences and perspectives of peace and conflict to help them develop their potentials as peace builders. It strives for a greater commitment to gender analysis in peace building and conflict transformation and inclusion of women at all levels of peace processes and security planning. Hence, the International Alert supports individuals, structures and organizations that have a role in developing sustainable peace (Spadacini, 2001:26). UNIFEM on the other hand promotes women’s leadership and training for women to participate in peace negotiations and conflict resolution processes (*ibid.* p.27).

All over the world, women individuals and groups have contributed enormously to peace building and conflict management and resolution. Outside Africa, Spadacini (2001) mentions the Jerusalem Link, founded in 1994. It brings together two independent women centres of Palestinian and Israeli women located in East and West Jerusalem. The Jerusalem Link aims at promoting women’s political, social and cultural activities and leadership in order to promote peace on the basis of justice and equality through
providing a model for co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians. This is a clear example of women’s leading role in developing linkages across conflict where men have failed.

According to Spadacini (2001), within the Great Lakes region, the International Alert launched a project through the Women Peace Program (WPP) in 1996. This was in response to the needs by women and women’s organizations working for peace in Burundi, Rwanda and other parts of the Great Lakes region. The WPP facilitates dialogue between women from different ethnic groups in this region.

Ochwada (2000) mentions a few women who have been at the forefront as participants in workshops and peace meetings on conflict resolution at the regional level. They include Aloysia Inyumba, a Rwandese Minister for Family and Women Affairs, Nasri Hussein Adam of Somalia and Mary Brownell of Liberia.

Brownell (1996) on her part demonstrates the participation and involvement of women as agents of peace building and conflict resolution in Liberia. She notes that, women’s organizations have since 1990s been active agents in regional and international efforts to end civil war. These organizations have participated in all conferences and signed documents calling for an end to war and the formation of a new government.

Dwelling further on Liberia, Onadipe (1999 [Online Working Group...]) and Posthumus (1999) affirm the role of Liberian Women Initiative (LWI). Founded in 1994, LWI speeded up the peace process in Liberia. Through a sustained campaign, LWI added the voice of women in the peace process. This was by impressing upon the stakeholders in the peace process such as Economic Community of West African States (ECOWS) heads, the USA and the United Nations to accept its proposals. Through constant lobbying, LWI managed to gain access to some of the peace negotiations. According to Onadipe (1999 [Online Working Group...]), the involvement of LWI and the high level presence of women in the Liberian peace process marked a breakthrough into the peace process. This is because the policy makers were impressed with the women’s tenacity and
determination to present and represent the views of women in the peace process. Posthumus (1999) maintains that LWI's efforts led to large-scale disarmament exercise of 1996-1997 that preceded the elections. Meanwhile, LWI has continued to foster non-violent ways of conflict management through its community work among the poor of Monrovia.

In Sierra Leone, Posthumus (1999a) and Spadacini (2001) observe that women groups have had peace demonstrations and prayer sessions. In 1995, the women groups coalesced into Women's Movement for Peace (WMP). It was founded with the aim of resolving, through peaceful negotiations, the civil war related conflicts in Sierra Leone and thus was at the forefront in advocating for peace and a representative government. WMP put pressure on the government and United Front of Sierra Leone (RUF) to negotiate for ceasefire. WMP had a number of meetings with the government and rebel sides in an effort to reach a negotiated settlement that was achieved with a ceasefire on 29th November 1996. WMP played a critical role in the relative success of the 1996 presidential elections and the massive civil disobedience against the Koroma junta that took over in a military coup in May 1997.

Nearer home in Somalia, Nation (1999) observes that women have played a leading role in the Life and Peace Institute (LPI), an international and ecumenical peace research institute that has supported locally based peace processes in Somalia since 1992. LPI supports peace building through empowering local actors. It is partly through the women on the ground that LPI has realised a holistic approach to peace work. This approach starts at the community level that lays the foundations for regional and national reconciliation.

Van Beurden (1999a) dwells further on women's peace initiatives in Somalia. He affirms that women owned NGOs are more prevalent and active in peace building, setting coalition between different factions and supporting health and nutrition programs. These mitigate the negative effects of conflicts by working with the displaced and those without sources of income and basic supplies. The various women NGOs operate under the
umbrella Coalition of Grassroots Women’s Organizations (COGWO), the main link of grassroots women groups.

De Veen (1999) discusses some of the women NGOs that are involved in peace efforts in the Sudan. These include Sudanese Women Voice for Peace (SWVP) based in Nairobi. SWVP is involved in peace activities from women’s perspectives. This involves establishing mutual relations between women in communities and various traditional institutions in the war-ravaged south, through peace building training and creating peace demonstrations. The other organization is the Sudanese Women Association (SWAN) in Nairobi. This is an organization of women refugees from different ethnic and political groupings that aims for reconciliation and respect for human rights within the Sudanese refugees camps.

Nation (1999) highlights the efforts of women led peace initiative in Kenya. This is the Wajir Peace Group founded in the 1990s by a group of women who had been fatigued by violence and gun related crime in Wajir District. The group mobilised the community bringing together the youth, government departments, students, Christians and Muslims. A process of healing led to the formation of Wajir Peace and Development Committee in 1994. According to Van Beurden (1999), this was a multi-ethnic network of 27 governmental organizations and NGOs representing businesswomen, elders, Christian and Muslim religious leaders, and security workers. It was mandated with conflict prevention and resolution where women played an important role because they were better equipped than men to get meetings organized with people from all clans. The peace group combines both traditional and modern mechanisms and conducts community training for leaders aimed at capacity building and creation of structures. Nation (1999) and Van Beurden (1999) concur that a Rapid Response Team comprising elders, religious leaders, women and security officials was mandated to diffuse tension and mediate in conflict or violence in any part of the district.

At the local level the present study has established that NCCK has been mobilizing women to take active role in conflict resolution. Meetings are organized and held
exclusively for women to give them a chance to participate in ways that would not have been possible in mixed seminars. In view of the aforementioned case examples, the present study explored the various ways of managing and resolving conflict by women religious leaders.

2.14 The Role of Women Religious Leaders in Peace Building and Conflict Management Processes

In his Opening Statement at the WCRP, Gonzalez-Bueno (2002), the Chairman of United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) Spanish Committee insisted that religious women have a fundamental role in conflict prevention and resolution. He affirms that religious women leaders are a source of solace and comfort for other women and children traumatized by conflicts. Equally, religious women leaders offer practical solutions to deal with new, urgent solutions of family and community disorder.

In her Keynote Address in WCRP, Munley (2002) contends that religious women of all faiths have important contributions in a world ravaged by war and conflicts. She draws examples from different parts of the world to demonstrate the invaluable contribution of Catholic women religious in healing the wounds of war and other conflict related situations. This is possible, she argues, because women religious possess certain attributes. These include: God’s unconditional love, experience of community life, capacity for being with the needy, bringing a ministry of compassion, creating an atmosphere of trust and having a gift of long term commitment.

The civil war in Sierra Leone as discussed by Karam (2002) illustrates how women religious leaders play a key role in the relationship between religion and armed conflict. She observes that after various unsuccessful attempts by various negotiators, both religious and non-religious and the Sierra Leone Inter-religious Council, it took the religious women to bring the government and rebels to a round-table. This broke the impasse between the two protagonists. The religious women were able to infiltrate top rebel leadership and to convince some of them to participate in the peace talks. She further notes that the religious women went to the jungles and demanded to talk to the
rebels as "their mothers". They were able to gain access because they were religious women "doing and being identified with God's work", thus symbolizing sanctity, safety, security and peace. To the rebels, the religious women reminded them of their mothers and their families whom they had not seen for sometimes because of war. The success of religious women in the peace initiative earned them praise and admiration from their male colleagues in the Sierra Leone Inter-religious Council.

Buwalda (2002) maintains that religious women bring resources that are specific to their roles and affiliations. Many religious organizations have experiences in establishing schools and provision of medical services. In this connection, religious women can work collectively to make a change. She notes that religious women have networks that could tap into the material and financial resources – food, clothing, building materials, school materials etc. - needed at the time of war. These networks serve the religious women working in different circumstances of war by providing emotional support and practical advice while playing key roles in providing leadership to affected communities. In addition, religious women have resources, a way of interacting with the female culture and understanding of social issues. All these they share with women and their children without having to overcome gender gaps. Further, religious women bring to the conflict situation their faith. At a time when there are chaos, confusion and hopelessness, the understanding of their link with religion provides spiritual strength, lending hope and a trust that things will work out in the long run.

The studies under review demonstrate the potentials - albeit un-exploited - that are inherent in religious women in solving armed conflict. In this regard, a few questions were posed for the present study: could the potentials of religion and motherhood be exploited when dealing with issues of ethnic conflict management and resolution in the two districts in Kenya? Which are the women religious groups involved with the issues of ethnic conflict management and resolution and what are the specific roles of women religious leaders in conflict management and resolution in the two districts? How could Karam and Buwalda's observations apply to women religious leaders involved in ethnic
conflict management and resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts? These are some of the concerns addressed by the present study.

2.15 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed various works that relate in one way or another to the present study. On the whole, we could conclude that much has been written on conflicts, ethnic conflicts and their causes, and strategies for peace building and conflict management. It is evident from the review that religion can be used as an instrument of war and peace building and that the Church, its leadership and various Church organizations are involved in all manner of conflict management. It is also certain that although women are worst victims of war, they are sidelined, deliberately or otherwise in various peace processes and efforts. Otherwise, it is shown that women are the highest stakeholders of peace hence their role in peace building, conflict management and resolution should be recognized. Various examples of women led peace initiatives either by individuals or groups, lay or religious have been discussed. The relevance of this literature to the present study and the various gaps of knowledge in the extant works have been highlighted. The review indicates a need to focus more attention on the role of women religious leaders in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Kenya since this data is scanty if at all available. The dearth of information on this area warranted an empirical research inquiry that brought about the current study. Hopefully, the present study has made an informed contribution on the role of religious women leaders in ethnic conflict management and resolution.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Scope of the Study and Research Locale

The study sought to examine the role of women religious leaders in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Kenya. The research locale was Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts of the Rift Valley Province (see maps 1 & 2). The Rift Valley is the largest province of Kenya’s eight provinces that also comprise Central, Coast, Eastern, Nairobi, Northeastern, Nyanza and Western provinces (see Map 1). It is an extensive province that straddles the Kenya-Ethiopian border in the north and the Kenya-Tanzania border to the south.

(a) Nakuru District forms the core of the study area (see Map 2). Its administrative headquarters is Nakuru town, which also couples as the provincial headquarters of the Rift Valley Province. Baringo and Koibatek districts borders Nakuru to the north, while Narok District is in the south, Nyandarua District to the east and Kericho and Bommet districts to the west.

3.2 Rationale for Research Locale

The rationale for the choice of Nakuru was based on the following:

First, it is one of the districts in the Rift Valley that was severely affected by ethnic clashes of 1991-1998. During that time, the upsurges of ethnic conflict took place in Olenguruone, Molo, Njoro, and Kamwaura among other places. A second wave of ethnic clashes hit the district prior to and after the 1997 general elections. The areas affected then were: Njoro, Mau Narok, Kianjonya, Rare and Baruti farms (see Catholic Diocese of Nakuru, Peace & Justice Commission [CDN, P&JC], 1998).

Second, besides being one of the most densely populated districts in the Rift Valley (CDN, P&JC, 1998), Nakuru is an extensive multi-ethnic district and home to a mixed
population of Kenyan communities, mainly the Kikuyu and the Kalenjin. This makes the district a very volatile area regarding ethnic conflicts and relations.

Third, a lot of programs for the victims of ethnic clashes have taken place in Nakuru District in the recent past. For example, the CDN, P&JC program started in 1991. This program entailed a number of activities aimed at healing the effects of ethnic clashes. They included the resettlement of about 30,000 people at Moi Ndabi who were displaced from Enospukia in Narok District in mid October 1993. These people had initially camped at Maela Trading Centre in Nakuru District. Other activities included relief assistance, reconciliation awareness workshops, civic education and so on.

(b) Outside Nakuru District, the study focussed on Uasin Gishu District (see Map 2). Uasin Gishu borders Nandi, Kericho, Koibatek, Trans Nzoia and Kakamega districts. The rational for the choice was based on the following:

First, the District experienced ethnic clashes in such areas as Burnt Forest, in the period following the first multi-party general elections in 1992.

Second, it is within the district that the Rural Women’s Peace Link project of the NCCK is coordinated at Eldoret. This project is one of the latest efforts of religious women’s contribution to peace initiatives in a volatile area. The project draws from various women groups operating in the North Rift region. These are women who have suffered from the effects of inter-ethnic conflicts and cattle rustling.

The North Rift region is one of the nine regions under the NCCK that comprises Uasin Gishu, Nandi, Trans-Nzoia, Turkana, Keiyo, Marakwet and West Pokot. Several districts in the North Rift have been engulfed in violence pitting pastoral communities against one another. Cattle rustling have been prevalent in Marakwet, Samburu, Trans- Nzoia, Baringo and Turkana districts. More than 500 lives have been lost and about 10,000 displaced by these clashes (The Update, 31/5/00, p.7)
LOCATION OF THE DISTRICTS

**KEY**
- International boundary
- District boundary

Scale: 1:5 000 000

0 100 200 km

- Uasin Gishu District
- Nakuru District
3.3 Pilot Study.
A pilot study was conducted in December 2002 to pre-test the questionnaire (research questions). This exercise was significant and fundamental to the field study since it introduced the researcher and the assistant to the area of study. Through the Pilot Study, we identified the various organizations that deal with issues of peace building and conflict management in the area of study. In addition, we also identified the organizations that have religious women leaders in their staff establishments and those that do not have.

The Pilot Study revealed a paucity of women leaders in the various organizations that had been targeted for the study. Consequently, this determined the research instruments and sampling procedures that we eventually applied.

Consequent to the Pilot Study, it was apparent that the interview guide/questionnaire was too large and required trimming. Some items in the questions required clarifications while others were repetitious as they elicited the same data. Eventually, we were able to come up with a shorter, manageable and concise questionnaire/interview guide.

3.4 Sampling Procedures for Organizations
The various organizations that basically deal with issues of peace and conflict management in Nakuru were identified. An attempt was made to exclude, rather grudgingly, some organizations that deal with matters of peace and conflict management, because they do not have women leaders in their staff establishment. This included the CJ&PC. In the same vein, the CCR was purposively selected. Although it is not a religious organization, *per se*, it has women religious leaders in its establishment who formed a part of our study population.

The following organizations were selected for the Nakuru District sample:
(a) Centre for Conflict Resolution
(b) Catholic Women Association
(c) Mothers’ Union
For Uasin Gishu District, the Rural Women Peace Link, which is a project for the NCCK North Rift region was selected for the sample. This was due to the reasons that were mentioned earlier.

3.5 Sample Population.

The sample population was women religious leaders. These are women working in various religious organizations that are involved in the resettlement and rehabilitation of ethnic clash victims, supply of relief assistance, civic education and reconciliation workshops. The sample population therefore constituted women working under the Catholic Women Association, NCCK South Rift Region, CCR, Nakuru Inter-Diocesan Christian Community Services of ACK and Mothers’ Union. It also included women working under the aegis of the NCCK coordinated RWPL in Eldoret.

3.6 Selection of Respondents

Due to the paucity of numbers of women leaders working in the various organizations, the women population was purposively selected the study sample. Snowball approach was also used where respondents identified and introduced the researcher to potential respondents. In total, 20 women religious leaders were purposively selected for the sample in the two districts. These were unevenly distributed in the five categories mentioned below.

3.7 Categories of Respondents

There were 5 categories of respondents, derived from the following:

(a) Catholic Women Association.
(b) Centre for Conflict Resolution.
(c) Mothers’ Union.
(d) Nakuru District Inter-Diocesan Community Services.
(e) The NCCK South Rift Region.
3.8 Research Instruments

These were interview schedules and questionnaire

(a) Interviews were held with women religious leaders. An interview guide was prepared to guide the procedure. Interviews elicited data on the organizations of affiliations; the specific roles that religious women perform; how those roles assist in managing and resolving ethnic conflicts and the strategies to enhance the role of religious women leaders in conflict management and resolution.

(b) A questionnaire was used to complement the interview method. It was administered by the researcher and the research assistant and was used where potential respondent(s) were not available for interviews. In some instances, administration of the questionnaire was followed by in-depth interviews where clarifications were required.

3.9 Library Research

Library data was gathered from the libraries at Hekima College, Maryknoll Institute of African Studies, among others. This data was specifically on conflicts, ethnic conflicts and their management, the role of religion (religious women) in ethnic conflict management and resolution. The data was derived from books, research projects/reports, occasional papers/bulletins/pamphlets, Internet sources and so on.

3.10 Research Procedures

After the workshop in Addis Ababa Ethiopia, we embarked on revising the proposal and developing and pre-testing research instruments. Before undertaking the research, we had to seek a research clearance permit from the Office of the President.

Library research was conducted between January and April 2003 alongside some fieldwork. Preliminary fieldwork was conducted between February and March and later from May to July 2003. During the Pilot Study, initial contacts were conducted through the NCCK headquarters in Nairobi and the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission in Nairobi. Within the area of study, contacts were established with potential respondents.
who also introduced us to other key respondents. Depending on the convenience of the respondents, appointments were arranged for interviews or for administering questionnaires. In some cases, questionnaires were left with a view to collect them later.

3.11 Procedure for Data Analysis
Data obtained from the field and library were collated and coded to create categories. It was then classified, synthesized and interpreted. The findings were used to test the premises. The data was then arranged to form the various chapters of the study. A detailed analysis and presentation follows in Chapter Four.
CHAPTER FOUR
DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 Introduction
The present study investigated the role of women religious leaders as actors in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts. The study aimed at answering several research questions that were based on three broad objectives outlined in Chapter One. This chapter forms an analysis and interpretation of data based on those research questions and objectives.

4.2 Contextualizing Ethnic Clashes in the Rift Valley
The genesis of ethnic clashes in Kenya coincided with the introduction of plural politics in 1992. The ethnic clashes erupted in the Rift Valley Province on 29th October 1991, just prior to the first multiparty general elections held in December that year. The first scene of the skirmishes was Miteitei Farm in Tinderet, Nandi District on the border of the Rift Valley, Nyanza and Western provinces. These initial clashes pitted the Nandi, a sub group of the Kalenjin against the Kikuyu, Kamba, Luhya, Kisii and the Luo (Human Rights Watch, 1993:19; RoK [Republic of Kenya, hereinafter referred to as] Akiwumi Report, 1999:59). The clashes spread later to other farms in the area such as Owiro Farm predominantly inhabited by the Luo, and in Kipkelion Division in Kericho District inhabited by the Kalenjin, Kikuyu and the Kisii (Akiwumi Report, 1999:59).

After the general elections of December 1991, the clashes escalated so that, by February 1992, they had spread to Molo, Olonguruone, Narok, Londiani, Muhoroni, Turbo, Koru, Sabaot and other parts of Kericho, Trans Nzoia, Uasin Gishu districts and many other parts of Rift Valley Province. In 1993, the clashes erupted in Enosupukia in Narok, Naivasha and Transmara. In these areas, the Maasai and Kipsigis – a sub group of the Kalenjin – were pitted mainly against the Kikuyu and other groups such as the Kamba, Kisii and Luhya (ibid, p.59).

Another wave of ethnic clashes broke out prior to and after the 1997 general elections. These clashes took place in among other places in Laikipia and Njoro in 1998, pitting the
Samburu and the Pokot against the Kikuyu in Laikipia, and the Kalenjin against the Kikuyu in Njoro (*ibid*, p.59). Clashes also erupted at the Coast, in Likoni Division of Mombasa pitting the mainly upcountry peoples – Kikuyu, Luo, Kamba and Luhya – against the coastal inhabitants, mainly the Digo and the Duruma.

The genesis and causes of the ethnic clashes that engulfed parts of the Rift Valley, Western, Nyanza and Coast provinces between 1991 and 1998 have been discussed and are well documented by scholars (*vide*, Chapter two). However, according to the *Akiwumi Report* (1999) these clashes were politically motivated and were caused by among other things: conflict over land, cattle rustling, political differences and ecological reasons.

**Nakuru District**

Nakuru District experienced two phases of ethnic clashes. The first phase started on 14th March 1992 in Molo South in various locations such as Kapsumbeiwo, Chemaner, Kipsonoi, Nyota and Temoyetta. On 24th April 1992, clashes broke out in Mau Summit area, Molo Division, pitting the Kikuyu against the Kalenjin warriors. The clashes spread the following day to Olenguruone Division, again pitting the Kikuyu against the Kalenjin (*Akiwumi Report*, 1999:121-123). In Nakuru District, the clashes in Olenguruone were well planned and executed, hence the severest and most tragic as all the Kikuyu and other non-Kalenjin were kicked out of their farms (*Human Rights Watch*, 1993:25).

Clashes in Njoro, a multi-ethnic division with a Kikuyu majority started on the night of 25th January 1998 immediately after the December 1997 general elections, when a supposed gang of Kalenjin warriors attacked some Kikuyu in their homes, torched their houses and killed some of them. The Kikuyu in Lare Division staged retaliatory attacks against the Kalenjin, torched many of their houses, killed and injured several of them (*Akiwumi Report*, 1999:148-151).
Uasin Gishu District

The clashes pitting the Kikuyu against the Kalenjin broke out in Burnt Forest near Eldoret on 13th December 1992 after the first multi-party elections. These clashes displaced about 15,000 people. There were more ethnic flare-ups again in January 1993 (Human Rights Watch, 1993:26,34; Akiwumi Report, 1999:112). Largely, the clashes in Uasin Gishu were confined to Ainabkoi Division, mainly occupied by the Kikuyu among other communities (Akiwumi Report, 1999:112). By 1993, Uasin Gishu District had the largest number of displaced people predominantly Kikuyu who had not returned to their farms. Most of the displaced people were scattered and depended on goodwill of neighbours and friends for sustenance.

4.2.1 The Effects of the Ethnic Clashes

In the Rift Valley, it was mainly the non-Kalenjins or non-Maasai who were targeted in the clashes. The Akiwumi Report recounts how the clashes were perpetrated:

The attacks were barbaric, callous and calculated to drive out the targeted groups from their farms, to cripple them economically and to psychologically traumatize them. Many of the victims were forced to camp in schools, church compounds and shopping centres where they lived in makeshift structures of polythene sheets, cardboard and similar materials. They had little food and belongings with them and lived in poor sanitary conditions with their children who could no longer go to school(1999:60).

The first effect of the clashes was the displacement of many people from their homes and farms. Within the first six months after their flare up, the clashes had displaced about 100,000 people (Human Rights Watch, 1993:37). According to the Kiliku Report (RoK, “Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee to Investigate Ethnic Clashes in Western and Other Parts of Kenya”) cited in Human Rights Watch (ibid, p.31) by September 1992, the ethnic clashes had caused 779 deaths, 600 injured, 56,000 homeless families and property damage estimated at Kenya Shillings 210 million. In Nakuru District, the second wave of ethnic clashes that broke out in Njoro, Mau Narok, Kianjoya, Kiptangwany, Rare and Baruti farms led to the death of 150 people, 5000 injured and 11,000 displaced (CDN, 1998). On the whole, about 300,000 people were displaced by the ethnic clashes in Kenya (Nation, 1999:28). The injuries inflicted during the clashes a physically disabled many people (Omondi, et al, p.18).
Hence, the clashes brought about the deaths of many people, destruction of property and dwindling food production as farms were left bare when the displaced people took refuge in the urban centres where they lived in abject poverty (Akiwumi Report, 1999:136-37). Consequently, there was an increased crime rate as many people roamed in the market centres, child prostitution and girl child pregnancies increased within the camps and urban centres. There was also increased rate of infections of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD) and HIV/AIDS in the crash areas (Omondi, et al, n.d. p.34).

The clashes caused animosity, hostility and suspicion between communities that had hitherto lived together peacefully for many years. Mixed marriages that were founded on inter-ethnic relationships were jeopardized with some breaking up (Akiwumi Report, 1999:137; Omondi, et al, p.18).

The clashes led to a break down of community's social support systems such as kinship ties, women groups and inter-ethnic relationships. The social fabric of family was disrupted, as marriages were broken and family members separated. This brought untold sufferings to women and children, being the most vulnerable victims of war and conflict related violence. Some men in mixed marriages used the clashes as scapegoat to evict their wives and families. Women in such marriages suffered in the hands of their husbands, some were abandoned for being considered as members of the aggressor or enemy community Omondi, et al, n.d. p.37).

Many men were killed the clashes. Some fled while others abdicated their responsibilities of providing for the family. In the absence of men as breadwinners or where their roles became subservient women - whether single or widowed - had to shoulder an extra burden of providing both economic sustenance and emotional support for their families. In addition, women had to have an extra load of caring and nursing the injured and the children conceived through rape incidents during the clashes (ibid, p.18).
During war and conflict situations, rape is used as a means of violence against women. It is an act of aggression and a way of getting to the male relatives, husbands and sons. Other forms of sexual violence against women are deliberate strategies to humiliate the targeted communities (Spadacini, 2001:10). During the clashes in the Rift Valley, rape was used as a tool to humiliate and break down the pride of the victims. Women were raped in the presence of their sons and husbands. Other forms of sexual violence are evident in the way teenage girls could be exchanged for food, shelter and protection. For example, six girls were married off to the Kipsigis men in Muhoroni (Omondi, et al., p.34). Due to their vulnerability, women and girls could use sex to secure safety or economic favours from the male aggressors (ibid, p.18).

4.3 The Role of Religion, Religious Groups and Church Leadership in Ethnic Conflict Management and Resolution

Religion is a factor in fanning and instigating ethnic violence. Similarly religion could be used as a tool for peace building, conflict prevention and management. Religion breaks ethnic and regional barriers and differences thus enhance cohesiveness among communities. Religion acts as a frame of reference by teaching moral issues and encouraging forgiveness and reconciliation.

During the clashes in Njoro, NCCK peace facilitators used religion to preach a message of forgiveness, peace and reconciliation between the warring communities. Biblical messages (e.g. Luke 10:25-37; Mathew 5:9; 2 Corinthians 5:18-19) of loving one’s neighbour, peace and reconciliation were used to impress on victims of the clashes to make peace with the enemy. In clash areas such as Molo and Baragoi, the Church leadership came out strongly to condemn the inhuman acts perpetrated by the attackers. Drawing from the Epistles of St. Paul (e.g. Ephesians 2:12-16; Colossians 1:22-23) that deal with reconciliation between Jews and Gentiles, Church leaders preached the message of peace and reconciliation and also acted as mediators by organizing reconciliation workshops that brought together the communities.
4.4 Organizations Involved in Peace Building, Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution

4.4.1 Introduction

There are many organizations that are involved in various projects on conflict management and resolution in the two districts. Owing to the severity of the clashes in Nakuru District, many of these organizations operated from there. Many organizations sprung up at the peak of the clashes in 1992 and 1997 to provide relief services to the victims of the clashes. Some of these organizations were the NCCK, Kenya Red Cross, Catholic Relief Services, Human Rights organizations, UNICEF, World Vision, Kituo Cha Sheria, Anglican Church, Action Aid and other NGOs. Some of these organizations later folded up or closed down their operations in the area. Presently, due to the prevailing atmosphere of relative calm in the former clash areas, few organizations still operate. Among these, are the NCCK, Centre for Conflict Resolution, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJ & PC) under the aegis of the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru, the Catholic Women Association (CWA), and the Mothers’ Union and Nakuru Region Inter-Diocesan Christian Community Services both of the Anglican Church. The specific activities of these organizations in peace building, conflict management and resolution are discussed below.

4.4.2 The National Council of Churches of Kenya (NCCK)

The NCCK was founded in 1913 as an umbrella organization of Christian churches in Kenya. It brings together 26 Protestant member churches and 15 member organizations (NCCK, 2002:14). The NCCK’s operations fall under 9 regional zones. These are Nairobi, Central, Lower Eastern, Upper Eastern, Coast, North Rift, South Rift, Nyanza and Western regions. Nakuru District falls within the South Rift. Other districts within this region are Baringo, Koibatek, Narok, Samburu, Bomet and Kericho. Uasin Gishu District falls under North Rift. Other districts within this region are Nandi, Trans Nzoia, Turkana, Keiyo, Marakwet and West Pokot (NCCK, 2001:4).
It is noteworthy that the NCCK is presently the most conspicuous organization that deals with issues of peace and reconciliation, not only in the area of study, but also in the entire country. This prevalence is beholden to the churches that constitute NCCK’s membership. It is through the churches that the NCCK’s peace and reconciliation programs are conducted and implemented.

The general aim of the NCCK is tailored to speeding up of economic, political and social (spiritual) development of communities. The spiritual dimension is implied in the organization’s close working relationship with churches. Among its objectives are the following: to promote and share the Good News of the Kingdom of God to the people of Kenya; to promote peace and security through community mobilization and peace building initiatives and to create awareness - through training of church leaders - of the underlying causes of conflict.

Since its inception, the NCCK has been deeply involved in issues of peace. In the wake of the ethnic clashes, it was among the first organizations that provided relief and rehabilitation to the victims (NCCK, 2001). Since then, it has been involved in addressing issues pertaining to ethnic clashes and other conflict related situations in the country. At the national level, the NCCK launched the National Agenda for Peace (NAP) project that looks into the issues of conflict in 2001. NAP provides a national advocacy platform for peace and development issues. It developed from the experiences gained through the work of NCCK Community Peace Building and Development (CPBD) project in the western part of the country. This is a community intervention project that is presently in its 4th phase (NCCK, CPBD, 2002:15). The CPBD project was the NCCK’s response to the ethnic clashes that rocked western Kenya prior to and after the 1992 general elections (NCCK, 2001:1).

Our survey established that, in the wake of the ethnic clashes in 1992, the NCCK started a Peace and Rehabilitation Project for the victims of the clashes. This was an intervention program that had three components. These were: (a) emergency relief for the clash victims (b) rehabilitation and resettlement of the victims and (c) peace and
reconciliation for the belligerent communities. The project was involved with the provision of relief food, blankets, sanitary towels, mattresses etc, and shelter during emergencies; search for peace and working towards termination of hostilities and rehabilitation and restoration of peace (Omondi, *et al*, p.12)

With time, the NCCK' Peace and Rehabilitation Project that addressed the effects of the ethnic clashes switched its attention from relief and rehabilitation to peace and reconciliation (Nation, 1999:28). Within those parameters, the NCCK has developed a conflict transformation framework that promotes communities' emergency intervention, rehabilitation, resettlement of the displaced, and peace and reconciliation at community level. All these constitute the NCCK's role in conflict management and resolution, which is the focus of the present study.

The NCCK facilitated various joint meetings between the belligerent communities as a method of managing and resolving conflict. In this regard, meetings were convened such as the Good Neighbourliness Seminars (GNS), Village Peace Committee (VPC) and Area Peace and Reconciliation Committees (APRC) and public *barazas* [meetings] (Omondi, *et al*, pp.12-13). The provincial administration organizes and convenes *barazas* as instruments of peace. They are used as forums to communicate important peace messages, policy decisions and to dispel harmful rumours and tension between communities (NCCK, CPBD, 2002:61). From the bottom to the top, the provincial administration constitutes the Sub-Chief who is in charge of a sub-location, Chief in charge of location, the District Officer (DO) in charge of a division, District Commissioner (DC), in charge of a district and a Provincial Commissioner, in charge of province.

The membership of APRC cuts across local people displaced by the clashes, those who remained in their villages after the clashes, representatives of local leadership, churches, NGOs, youth and women (Nation, 1999:28). The community peace committees hold APRC meetings monthly. On the other hand, GNS are community meetings aimed at analysing community and development approaches to resolve conflicts (NCCK, CPBD,
2002:61). They are held with various groups such as church and community leaders, politicians, educators, women, youth, and community workers and government workers (Nation, 1999:28; NCCK, CPBD, 2002:17). The GNS create awareness and understanding of the need to maintain peace in their areas. This enable groups to analyse conflict situations and develop strategies to deal with conflicts.

The NCCK’s role in peace building recognizes the communities’ potentials and initiatives. This is done through the establishment of GNS, VPCs and APRC, and training of village peace animators all of which have contributed to peaceful co-existence through easing of inter-ethnic tensions (Omondi, et al, p.25). In addition, the **NCCK’s Peace and Reconciliation Project** has been involved in rehabilitation of destroyed infrastructure, opening up of and re-establishment of markets to restore trade and increase interactions between the combatants; promotion of cultural contacts and exchanges through sports such as netball and football and other joint group activities. Sports are a peace building strategy that promotes interaction between communities and reduces idleness that gives people especially the youth the opportunity to engage in criminal acts and other conflict related activities (NCCK, CPBD, 2002:61). Finally, there is promotion of inter-community exchanges such as weddings, burials and other community activities. These have potential of minimizing fear and suspicion as the combatants interact (Omondi, et al, p.13). All these are approaches to peace building that are utilized by the NCCK, CPBD project.

The **NCCK Peace and Reconciliation Project** has been involved in rehabilitation work through formation of Area Peace and Rehabilitation Committees. The Project leased and bought land to resettle those who lost their farms. It provided building materials such as posts, nails, window and doorframes, iron sheets, ridges and polythene papers to those who had lost their houses during the clashes. It also restored food production by providing the victims with farm implements such as hoes and farm inputs such as fertilizers and seeds. Rehabilitation also involved mending broken social relationships and networks through promotion of activities and good will gestures such as exchange of presents and participation in social functions such as weddings, *harambees* (pooling of
resources). These are important peace initiatives for maintaining peace for they create cohesion among the youth. The NCCK also assisted in the rehabilitation and restoration of social facilities such as schools, churches, dispensaries and cattle dips all of which had been destroyed during the clashes. Since the communities shared these facilities each community felt it had a stake in their proper functioning. This was a way of normalising relations and promoting peace among these communities (Omondi, et al, pp.15, 23; NCCK, CPBD, 2002:22).

The NCCK was also involved in guidance and counselling as a part of rehabilitation work. This was aimed at forgiveness and healing for the displaced people, mainly emphasising the need for the people to forge ahead with life and let bygones be bygones. Guidance and counselling also entailed trauma-healing workshops for the victims of the clashes. This was important to enable them to regain their self worth (NCCK, CPBD, 2002:24; The Update, 31/8/00, p.5).

4.4.3 The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission (CJ & PC)
Apart from the NCCK, the Catholic Justice & Peace Commission (CJ&PC) is possibly the other organization that is quite active in conflict prevention, management and resolution in the area of study. CJ&PC operates under the auspices of the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru (CDN) that covers Nakuru, Kericho, Bomet and Baringo. The Justice and Peace Program was established in 1991 to promote justice and peace among the faithful of the Diocese.

The Justice and Peace Commission promote democratic ideals through advocacy, training and awareness campaigns. Some of its objectives are:

- to develop programs that could educate people about having a sense of justice.
- to guide and coordinate pastoral action on achieving justice and peace.
- to work towards eradication of injustices.
- to advice, encourage and support all who are involved in promotion of justice
- to promote a spirit of charity and reconciliation (CDN, J&PC, file).
The CJ&PC was involved in a number of peace and reconciliation activities towards healing the effects of the ethnic clashes. This included relief assistance. It supplied maize, beans, sugar, milk etc. In 1995, CJ&JP conceived a resettlement program to settle the victims of ethnic clashes. The CJ&PC aimed at resettling clash victims who were living in market centres at Elbourgon, Maela and Kamwaura. Land was bought and subdivided, and money provided to finance the construction of houses. The victims were also provided with food in order to concentrate on the construction of their houses. The resettlement program settled 72% of the targeted 400 families comprising 3,200 people, in Elementaita and Lare settlements (CDN, J&PC, 1999).

The CJ&PC in collaboration with other stakeholders such as NCCK have been involved in reconciliation and awareness workshops, civic education and Lenten campaigns (NCCK, CPBD, 2002; CDN, J&PC).

4.4.4 Centre for Conflict Resolution

Field research revealed that the Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) in Nakuru promotes positive productive and participatory methods of conflict prevention, management and resolution among communities of the Rift Valley. It also undertakes civic education and conscientization campaigns in resolving disputes and reconciliation in the rural areas of the Rift Valley. CCR empowers communities to acquire the requisite knowledge of peace building and the need to resort to the traditional methods of conflict resolution. Basically, then CCR conducts situational analysis of the state and nature of social conflicts by acting as an advocacy liaison centre for the promotion of dialogue, negotiation and mediation services (Van Beurden, 1999:151). This is meant to promote peaceful co-existence among the diverse multi-ethnic communities of the Rift Valley.

To achieve its objectives in peace building conflict management and resolution, CCR organizes informal meetings, seminars, discussions and workshops to strengthen existing structures of peace building and reconciliation. It also engages in capacity building among community members through formation of peace committees in areas affected by
conflicts. Similarly, it uses theatre clubs, songs and dances to portray reconciliatory messages to the conflicting communities.

4.4.5 The Catholic Women Association
The Catholic Women Association (CWA) is affiliated to the Kenya National Council of Catholic Women. In Nakuru, CWA was started in 1975 as a part of the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru. To promote the welfare of women, CWA has the following objectives:

- to facilitate the spiritual growth of the members and to assist in evangelisation through charity work from Small Christian Community to the parish level and beyond.
- to strengthen spirituality through praying together, sharing the word of God and assisting one another.
- to empower women in matters affecting them through dissemination of information, knowledge and skills and enhancing their participation in national and international affairs
- to enhance women’s self-reliance through income generating activities.

It could be argued that the role of CWA in peace building and reconciliation at the community level is basically an extension of its work at the family level. CWA offered relief assistance of food and clothing to the victims of the clashes. It organized and coordinated seminars on peace issues and was also involved in the rehabilitation work following the ethnic clashes. Rehabilitation work entailed counselling children who had been traumatized by the clashes, and teaching them some trade. This was meant to pre-empt them from becoming street children. Since CWA operates under the umbrella of the CDN, currently much of its work of peace building falls under the CJ&PC.

4.4.6 Mothers Union
The Mothers Union is a worldwide organization and communion of Anglican women started in England by Lady Mary Sumner in 1876. In the Anglican Diocese of Nakuru - which covers Nakuru, Koibatek, Baringo, Kericho, Narok and Trans Mara - women
activities could be traced from the inception of the Diocese in 1961. However, it was not until 1965 when the first five members were enrolled into the Mothers Union.

The following are the objectives of the Mothers Union:

- to uphold Christ’s teachings on the nature of marriage and promote it’s wider understanding.
- to encourage parents to bring up their children in the faith and life of the Church.
- to maintain a worldwide fellowship of Christians united in prayer worship and service.
- to promote conditions in society favourable to stable family life and protection of children.
- to help those whose family life has met with adversity.

From the objectives, it is obvious that the Mothers Union work in conflict management and resolution is concentrated at the family or domestic level. This is possibly based on the firm belief that a strong family unit is the foundation of a stable society.

During the ethnic clashes, the Mothers Union, under the umbrella of the ACK, Nakuru was one of the many organizations that were involved in the provision of relief services to the victims of the clashes. In addition, it offered counselling services to the victims and coordinated reconciliation meetings among the warring communities. Our research findings show that during periods of relative calm, the Mothers Union is not involved in peace building and conflict management activities. That explains why currently there are not such activities in its programs.

4.4.7 Nakuru Region Inter-Diocesan Christian Community Services

This is an organization of the ACK, Diocese of Nakuru. Its objectives are:

- to raise the living standards of the marginalized communities by reaching out to them through integrated programs on water, agriculture, social issues, gender, environment, health and HIV/AIDS.
• to uplift the standards of rural communities through training them on health, agriculture and water, etc.

Regarding its role in peace building, conflict prevention, management and resolution, the organization is involved in the provision of relief services. It also engages in community programs on poverty reduction that could be a source of conflict. Local leaders are trained and equipped with the knowledge and skills of peace building. Besides, disaster preparedness is an item of agenda in various conflict reconciliation workshops that are often arranged by the organization.

4.4.8 Summary of the Methods Applied in Peace Building and Conflict Management by the Various Organizations

In sum, the various methods applied in peace building and conflict management by the organizations discussed above are, but not limited, to the following:

• Mediation: involves a third party as a mediator in solving differences between two groups that cannot face each other.

• Negotiation: entails creating space by two conflicting groups that come together and the setting up of peace committees that meet and discuss to get a solution to a problem.

• Dialogue: entails discussion, problem-solving techniques that involve all the stakeholders.

• Reconciliation: is a long process of repeated contacts through workshops. A mediator who is essentially a third (neutral) party to the conflicting groups enhances easier communication in the workshops.

• Advocacy: involves influencing policies that bring conflicts e.g. land, border policies etc.

• Facilitation: involves a third party that enhances easier communication and understanding of the nature of the problems between two conflicting parties, and how to resolve the problems and differences.

• The other methods are public barazas, commonly used by the members of the provincial administration and drama and songs that portray peace messages.
• There is also a new concept called “do no harm”. This entails understanding what
the context of a conflict was, what were the “dividers”, “connectors”. After that,
the two parties are led into discussing and coming up with workable solutions on
how to strengthen the “connectors” and weaken the “dividers”.

The foregoing methods are important and applied in different situations of peace building
and conflict management. Some methods are used alongside the others. For example,
dialogue is applicable in virtually all situations. Women religious leaders apply these
methods in their peace processes, but the degree of application differ from on form of
peace building and conflict management, to another.

4.5 The Complicity of Women in the Ethnic Clashes

In the collective memory, women are generally perceived as peace lovers, non-violent
beings, givers and protectors of life. In that regard, to conceive a woman otherwise is
simply anomalous. With this conception in mind, it is difficult where to place women
who abet in violence, killing and genocide as in the case of Rwanda or those who, in one
way or another, instigated the ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley.

Data adduced from the field survey shows women’s complicity in the ethnic clashes.
Along the Gucha-Transmara border, women escalated the clashes by wailing. This had a
ripple effect of attracting men to war (NCCK, CPBD, 2002, p.45). Similarly, among the
pastoral communities where cattle rustling raids are traditional pastime, women use songs
to encourage their sons and husbands to raid. Those who seem to cower are derided
(NCCK Peace Programme, 2002). In the Pokot-Marakwet conflict women were mainly
involved in supporting the raiders. They assisted in driving away stolen livestock and
pillaging of household objects (Omondi et al, n.d, p.11). In Marakwet District, women
instigated war by inciting men to raid for cattle in the neighbouring communities. This
derailed the peace process in the area through consistent violations and reneging on the
peace pacts signed by the communities (The Update, 31/8/00, pp. 6-7). Field survey
reveals that during the ethnic clashes in Nakuru District, women were accomplishes in
the clashes through torching of the houses of neighbours from the conflicting community.
Notwithstanding this complicity, we cannot gainsay the role of women in peace building, as the following sections shows.

4.6 The Marginalization of Women in Peace Building Processes

Due to their vulnerability, women should be at the forefront in peace building and conflict management and resolution. However this is not always the case. Available data (vide Chapter Two) indicates that women’s participation in many forums of peace processes is minimal. Field survey attests that there is paucity of women in various formal structures of peace building, security issues and conflict management, where they are under represented in various positions. This disproportionate representation or under representation of women is evident in the NCCK Peace and Rehabilitation Project, where the posts of chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary and treasurer are preserves of men in the various committees such as APRC and VPC. The participation of women in GNS, VPC, APRC is miserably minimal. Women are also under represented in the distribution of relief activities. This means that women’s needs, perceptions and expectations are hardly met (Omondi. et al, pp. 13,20; NCCK, CPBD, 2002:50).

A number of reasons could explain why women are under represented in various structures of peace building processes. These include social cultural norms, practices and customs that assign certain roles to women. Due to patriarchal attitudes, culture and society assign reproductive and parenting roles to women. This means that women are confined to their domestic roles. They hardly have time to attend meetings or to seek leadership positions in society. This means women’s abilities and knowledge are not valued or recognised. A woman who seeks a leadership position faces criticism and rejection from her community. She is an anathema and rebel who compromises her subscribed roles. Among many communities, an ideal woman is the one who is reserved, humble and does not mix with men in public places and meetings. Accordingly, the participation of women in peace negotiations is perceived to be a threat to the status quo. Traditions and culture justify women’s exclusion from leadership positions, peace negotiations and so on, ostensibly, to protect her from the vulnerability of the shenanigans of public domain. This is the domain of male power and leadership.

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The attitude of women has also contributed to their sidelining from participation in peace building processes and structures of conflict management. Some women fear being looked down upon while others lack confidence that is required in seeking leadership positions or contributing to public discourses during meetings. Due to lack of education women tend to associate leadership and public offices with men. It is therefore common to find that majority of the women who are involved in peace building and conflict management processes at the grassroots are less educated and less experienced in organizational and leadership skills than their male counterparts.

Owing to lower levels of educational attainment many women lack understanding of strategies required in peace processes. Overall, there is unequal access of women in decision-making processes because fewer women have been involved in politics. Hence, it is extremely difficult for the few women leaders to develop effective strategies in peace making. Gender blind legislation derived from cultural underpinnings discriminate against women. A combination of these reasons explains why women are under represented in various structures of peace building processes and or their contributions hardly recognised.

4.7 The Role of Women in Peace Building and Conflict Management

Although there is ample evidence to suggest that women abet in conflict related violence, it is only in very rare cases that they cause war. On the contrary, women suffer more from the consequences of war and other violence related conflicts. Oral response supports this argument:

Women rarely create conflicts. When there is no peace, women and children are the first ones to suffer. They are more vulnerable and the ones who are adversely affected by war and conflict situations (Mumbi, O.I. 14/7/03).

In almost all societies, it is a recognised fact that women play a crucial role in creating peace. Although unrecognised, this role is largely informal. The roles of women as mothers help to promote their role in peace building. Right from the household level to the society, women are peace educators. Being the first teachers, mothers inculcate the virtues of peace, love and tolerance to their children. Mothers are compassionate and they
would not want their children to be hurt in conflict related situations. Hence they
discourage their sons and husbands from engaging in war. Mothers are known to use their
maternal instincts by talking to their husbands (men) to avoid war. In the mid nineties
“Mothers of Political Prisoners”, cajoled the government to release their sons who had
been imprisoned by the KANU regime. This testifies how women could utilize their
natural talents to end conflict.

Largely, women are stakeholders in peace. Their role in peace building is indispensable.
The need for women’s contribution in peace building is underlined by oral response:

Women can be of more use in resolving conflicts. Being the worst victims of conflicts,
they have inner feelings about loss and destruction. They are more sensitive to peace,
have a realistic, reasonable and consensual approach to peace building and conflict
resolution and they can easily interact with other women from the conflicting community
(Field Survey, 15/7/2003).

The contribution of women in peace building is attested to by the findings from the
NCCK Peace and Rehabilitation Project. It shows that women make the first contacts
after the end of the active conflict either through trade or interaction at water points. Its
women who experiment on the existence or recommencement of peace owing to the
traditional respect for women as instruments of peace. Oral response underscores the
cultural role of women in peace making. For example, among the Pokot, when a woman
throws her abdominal belt in front of raiders embarking on a raiding mission, the mission
is called off (Mumbi, O.I. 14/7/03). In most communities, traditionally it was unusual to
attack women and children. Therefore, women could be used to broker peace deals
between warring communities. The Geneva Convention recognizes the principle of non-
violence towards women. Unfortunately this principle was not observed during the
clashes. Women and children were not spared and they equally became victims of the
atrocities committed by the attackers (Omondi, et al, p.13). Other traditional forms of
conflict resolution are compensation.

4.8 The Role of Women Religious Leaders in Peace Building and Conflict
Prevention and Management

Having generally looked at the role of women in peace building, we need now to focus
our attention on the contributions of religious women. Basically, women religious leaders
do not cause war despite the fact that women can instigate war and violence, as alluded to in our earlier discussion. Indeed, within the area of study, religious women were concerned about the destruction of property and loss of life engendered by the ethnic clashes and the suffering that women and children endured. This could be expressed by the feelings of a woman leader in West Pokot as recorded by Omondi, et al (n.d. p.16):

Women were not happy with the conflict. Had many women been in leadership they would have refused to support the participation of the youth in the conflict because they were eyewitnesses to many who died, a fact that pained them a great deal. The death of a young person reminds any mother of the pain of childbirth and therefore no woman will encourage her child to take up arms, fight and may be get killed in the process. Women do not walk with weapons.

These sentiments refer to the conflict between the Pokot and the Marakwet in the North Rift. Undoubtedly, the sentiments capture the real situation and feelings of majority of women who were eyewitnesses to the horrid experiences of ethnic clashes. This shows that religious women can combine their experiences of motherhood to bring about or to promote peace among conflicting communities.

The present study shows that religious women could combine their vocation with their traditional social expectations as mothers to provide the needs and services of victims of ethnic conflicts. As mothers, religious women are readily available and oblige to offer relief services to the sick and injured. Religious women offer psychological counselling for the victims and by encouraging them through prayer. They have natural instinct of nurturing and caring that they easily exploit to care for the victims of conflicts. During the ethnic clashes in Olongeuone religious women provided for the children victims of the clashes by sheltering them in their own homes, offering them food and clothes. It is this knowledge of caring and nurturing, that religious women can bring to the negotiating table to reconcile conflicting parties.

In peace building, religious women have been involved in: identifying the victims of conflicts and assessing their various needs; they provide required assistance which include distribution and supply of relief materials. They offer logistical support by liaising with the provincial administration, NGOs such as the Red Cross for provision of relief supplies, and others such as CCR for reconciliation workshops. They also offer their services in counselling and training in reconciliation workshops. Besides, they also
act as mediators and facilitators in reconciliation workshops. In rehabilitation, religious women participate in decision-making committees. They are involved in the purchase of plots for the resettlement of clash victims.

It is important that more religious women are involved not only in peace building and conflict prevention and management processes, but also in leadership positions where they can influence policy decisions. One of the ways in which religious women have been integrated into the processes of peace building and conflict management is through the Rural Women Peace Link.

4.9 The Rural Women Peace Link (RWPL)
The Rural Women Peace Link (RWPL) is a network of women self help groups committed and engaged in a just and sustainable peace through creative and cooperative approaches to peace keeping at the community level (NCCK, Peace Program, 2002:5). As a program of the NCCK, National Peace Program Western Zone, administered in Eldoret town in Uasin Gishu District, RWPL was founded and registered in June 1999 by a group of women whose mode of lives and principles were radically changed by the violence in their respective areas. Some of the founder members of RWPL were peace facilitators with the NCCK Peace Program Western Zone, Peace Process. One of its objectives is to enable women from the warring communities to meet, analyse and design solutions to the problems that affect them (NCCK, Peace Program, 2002:16-19).

The RWPL was conceived with a view to incorporate women into community decision-making processes. This was due to the vulnerability of women in ethnic conflict situations, their marginalization in the economic systems and decision-making processes, socio-cultural exploitation and political manipulation. It is in this regard that the founder members of RWPL envisaged a united front to address violence motivating causes and something that could mitigate the effects of war and poverty among women and children (ibid, p.6).
The RWPL is a significant instrument in the promotion of community peace building processes, through joint and communal activities. As a result of its initiatives more women have been mainstreamed into peace building activities and have fully been incorporated into Area Peace and Development Committee (APDC) and VPC levels (NCCK, CPBD, 2002:45). Through RWPL, networks and linkages among grassroots women, groups have been established within particular regions that have acted as forums for women to share their specific concerns and experiences that could bring about change and transformation in society (NCCK, Peace Program, 2002:6-7).

The initiatives of the RWPL in peace building and conflict management and resolution are evident in the way that its affiliated groups have intervened in areas of conflict either individually or jointly. For example, it has managed to organize workshops that bring about reconciliation among various warring communities. In Gucha Transmara border, RWPL organized a workshop that brought together the Kisii, Kalenjin, Kuria and the Maasai. The agenda of the meeting was to discuss alternatives to wailing that had been a factor in the escalation of the violence as it attracted men to war. It was impressed upon the women to use other means to express fear instead of wailing (NCCK, CPBD, 2002:45).

The RWPL also uses exchange visits as a method and strategy of conflict management. The women conducted exchange visits to share experiences on conflict issues affecting them (NCCK, CPBD, 2002: 21). The visits were a women’s only affair, owing to the traditional conception of women as peacemakers. Besides, women are considered to be more empathetic towards the “enemy”. Men were not included since they may be considered as spies (Omondi, et al, p.14). Exchange visits enable the APDC members to be emissaries of peace and bring messages of hope and goodwill from their perceived enemies. This promotes peace and harmony and contributes to peaceful co-existence between communities (NCCK, CPBD, 2002:21).

The RWPL is also mandated to address the issues affecting the position of the rural women where conflict and violence are matters of concern. These issues are poverty
alleviation, leadership and community governance, HIV/AIDS scourge, obsolete cultural practices such as female genital mutilation and wife inheritance among others. Since its inception in 1999, RWPL has organized several workshops and seminars for community’s grassroots women to make them aware about violence, HIV/AIDS and their solutions.

According to the **NCCK Peace Program** (2002:7), the following are some of the achievements of the RWPL networking activities: women have been organizing regular peace meetings; more local women have opted to take leadership positions; the women and the community leaders have established effective links; the rural women networks have gained support and appreciation by men and from the government; women have become aware and can now discuss peace and women’s problems in their groups and network meetings; women in some network areas can express the rural woman’s stand on issues of security by sending delegations to DCs’ offices and finally, there was the participation of the RWPL in the constitutional review sessions at the local level.

### 4.10 Conclusion

This chapter has examined the context of the ethnic clashes in the Rift Valley and their effects. It is shown that religion, religious groups and church leadership mitigate the effects of the clashes and other conflicts. Within that context, various organizations are involved in peace building programs. Generally, the role of women in peace building and particularly that of religious women leaders is discerned from the various programs that are run by these organizations.
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction
The present study investigated women religious leaders as actors in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts, Kenya. The study was guided by three objectives as follows:

- to identify and examine the roles of various women religious groups that are involved in ethnic conflict management and resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts.

- to evaluate the specific roles of women religious leaders in managing and resolving ethnic conflict in the two districts.

- to discuss various strategies that could enhance the role of women religious leaders in managing and resolving ethnic conflicts in the two districts.

Various premises were used to test the objectives. The following is a summary of the findings and conclusions.

5.2 Summary of Findings and Conclusions
The ethnic clashes that took place between 1992-1998 were politically motivated and unprecedented in Kenyan history. Evidently, Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts were adversely affected by the clashes. The clashes led to massive loss of human life, destruction of property, displacement of people and infliction of injuries to many people. Equally, the clashes led to a breakdown of marriages and families, kinship systems, social and economic relationships and engendered hostilities between communities that had hitherto lived together peacefully for many years. Like in all conflict and violence situations, women and children bore the brunt of the effects of the ethnic clashes. Rape and other forms of sexual violence were perpetrated on women and girls.

Following the outbreak of the clashes, religion was optimally utilized in peace building, conflict prevention, management and resolution. Indeed, most of the organizations that are involved in peace building programs in the two districts have religious affiliations.
These include the NCCK, CJ&PC, CWA, Mothers Union and the Nakuru Region Inter-diocesan Christian Community Services. The NCCK is among the most notable, active and conspicuous organizations that have become synonymous with peace building and conflict management. Apart from the NCCK and possibly the CJ&PC, many of the other organizations such as the Mothers Union, CWA and the Nakuru Region Inter-Diocesan Christian Community Services do not seem to have on-going programs on peace building and conflict management. Regarding peace programs these organizations were only active at the peak of the clashes when they provided relief services to the victims of the clashes. We could explain this situation by noting that being affiliates of NCCK through member churches, the peace building programs of such organizations could run parallel to the NCCK’s programs. That would be tantamount to duplication since NCCK operates through member churches such as ACK, PCEA, the Methodist Church and Quakers, etc. Similarly, CWA would be duplicating the work of CJ&PC commission, since the two operate under the umbrella of the Catholic Diocese of Nakuru.

During the clashes, women abetted in the violence through various war efforts such as torching of houses. Nevertheless women also contributed in creating peace, managing and resolving the conflict between the various communities. A classic example of religious women’s contribution to peace building and conflict management is the RWPL. This is a network of women groups under the auspices of the NCCK that operates within the premise that women are the ones most affected by conflicts and ethnic violence. That being the case, RWPL has adopted a holistic approach to peace building and conflict prevention and management. It empowers women politically, socially and economically. This has been done with the realisation that the empowerment of women is a prerequisite to their integration into and involvement in community decision-making processes.

By virtue of their involvement at the grassroots level, religious women leaders offer their services across the various faith communities. They can set the agenda for the various stakeholders in peace building and conflict management. Largely, during the ethnic clashes, religious women combined their religious roles with their traditional and ascribed roles as mothers to look after the victims of ethnic conflicts. Indeed, the various
roles that religious women play in peace making proves that religion could effectively be integrated with gender dimension in peace building, conflict prevention and management.

The various peace initiatives in the area of study reveal that there is a lot of potential in women, albeit unexploited, which could be tapped in peace building. This demonstrates that if women are effectively empowered politically, economically and socially, they can fully be involved in peace building and conflict management. In this way, they can transform the society especially in the areas that have experienced ethnic clashes.

Generally, the contribution of women in peace building and conflict management is limited in the area of study. This is due to gender imbalances in the distribution of leadership positions in various organizations involved in peace building and conflict management and resolution. This imbalance is reflected right in the grassroots level where women are poorly represented in leadership positions of various structures that deal with conflict management, rehabilitation and reconciliation. This situation is replicated in various meetings that deal with peace issues where women are also miserably represented. Since men predominate in relief and emergency services, women's needs and opinions are not taken into consideration. Therefore, gender imbalances create unequal and unfair distribution of relief services such as food, blankets and other basic necessities. Women would be better managers of such services since men use their positions to sell relief food and other inputs or to use such to solicit for sexual favours from women. Thus the involvement of women in conflict prevention, management and resolution is crucial in creating a more just and equitable society.

Women's role is pivotal in stabilizing families and communities during and in the aftermath of ethnic related conflicts. During and after the ethnic clashes, women shouldered a lot of burden than men in caring for the survivors, the wounded and the children and providing the material and psychological needs of the family. Women's contribution to ethnic conflict prevention, management and resolution processes are critical to the development of substantial peace among the communities living in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu districts.
Religious women make significant positive contributions in ethnic conflict management and resolution and promoting peace at the grassroots. They bring diverse experiences. The role of religious women in society especially during conflicts makes them to have a better eye for the community and household interests and the well being of all especially children. On the basis of their interests women are able to bridge ethnic divides. Hence excluding women from participating in peace processes would jeopardize the sustainability of peace itself. The RWPL has indeed used its various networks of women groups to play the role of peacemaking by mitigating the effects of violence visited on their respective communities.

Women religious leaders have a platform from where they could create awareness of the dangers of ethnic conflicts. Through this platform, religious women leaders inculcate moral exhortations that assist to alleviate situations that could lead to ethnic conflicts. As moral advocates and providers of relief services, religious women leaders have a relative advantage in providing the needs of the victims of ethnic conflicts.

5.3 Recommendations: Strategies to Promote the Role of Women Religious Leaders in Peace Building, Conflict Management and Resolution

There is need to reinvigorate the creative aspects religion as a source of healing and inspiration in conflict prevention, management and resolution.

There is need to increase the participation of local religious women in the preparation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all field activities focusing on women’s roles in conflict prevention and resolution and post conflict reconstruction. Proportional representation of religious women in peace building efforts will make conflict prevention work more effective.

There is need for the government to formulate forward looking strategies for Kenyan women by building a culture of peace to strengthen women’s role in conflict prevention,
management and resolution. In this connection, religious women leaders should network with other women leaders such as the parliamentarians, to share their experiences.

As recommended by the Beijing Platform for Action (1995), there is need for the government and other stakeholders like the Church and religious organizations to promote equal participation and opportunities for women to participate in all forums and peace activities at all levels. Evidence adduced from the present study proves that women’s participation in various forums of peace making is negligible. Underlining the need to incorporate a gender perspective in conflict management and resolution the Platform noted:

> The war experiences of women are different from those of men. Women have different perspectives to offer, suffer from different risks and costs and respond to conflicts differently. The only way to have a gender perspective integrated into conflict resolution is to have women participating at every level of every resolution and transformation process without which peace processes lose their legitimacy (1995:12).

It could be deduced from the above remarks that lack of gender perspective in peace building, conflict management and resolution implies that women’s perspectives, expectations and needs are not met. The presence of women in various committees dealing with conflict management, rehabilitation and reconciliation should be a representative of women’s real needs and concerns and not just a sham.

Within the various organizations involved in peace building such as the NCCK, CCR and CJ&PC, there is a need for policies that offer training and educational opportunities to empower women through capacity building. This will equip them with the relevant skills in peace building and conflict management. Notably, some organizations like the NCCK are already doing that. Such women could be incorporated into the various structures of the organizations. In addition the trained women could be incorporated into committees such as GNS, VPC and APDC and in rehabilitation and execution of emergency relief services. Generally, this could contribute to making women more productive in peace building.

There is a need for more women and gender sensitive men to be employed in leading positions in various organizations involved in peace building and conflict management.
programs. In this case the NCCK is well ahead of other organizations. For example the NCCK regional coordinator for the South Rift and the coordinator of the RWPL are women. Indeed, the highly visible and acclaimed women working for the NCCK peace projects are highly acknowledged at the grassroots level. Their abilities and acceptance act as an advocacy at community level and is a confirmation of women’s leadership, capacity and result driven skills.

More religious women in leadership positions of the organizations that are involved in peace building programs could definitely act as role models for the grassroots women. This will earn them respect from men who tend to recognize women of substance who have proved their mettle and capabilities by overcoming apparent insurmountable feats. The case of Sierra Leone where religious women broke the impasse between the rebels and government earning them high regards is a testimony to what women can achieve in peacemaking given an opportunity (vide, Chapter Two).

There is need to develop mechanisms and processes that mainstream religious women’s involvement in the social, political and economic reconstruction of communities that have experienced ethnic clashes and other conflict related violence. The role of women religious leaders in post conflict reconstruction is fundamental in sustaining and maintaining women’s voice. Where their influence and capacities have been excluded, religious and laywomen leaders must be empowered educationally, politically and socially to assert themselves.

In promoting gender equality in peace building and conflict management and resolution, it is important for stakeholders to develop instruments and methodologies that combine gender conflict analysis and incorporate community participatory approaches into their organizations’ activities. In addition such organizations should focus more on the needs and interests of women in their rehabilitation and reconciliation programs.

There is need for gender mainstreaming policy - by the government and organizations involved in peace building - alongside special policies geared towards women
Mainstreaming gender perspectives in all policy processes is important to make sure that peace-building activities do not disadvantage women. This could generally strengthen the voice of women in peace building.

The work of religious women leaders as agents of peace and reconciliation in ethnic conflicts could complement the government and other stakeholders’ efforts on the same, in the following ways:

- Since religious women are members of the existing networks, the government and stakeholders could utilize their potentials and give religious women more space to deal with women’s peace building issues.
- Government and stakeholders could work hand in hand with women religious leaders through collaborative efforts and networking to strengthen and make an impact in peace building and conflict management.
- Women religious leaders could give input to government and stakeholders’ efforts in peace building activities. For example they could mobilize, train and disseminate policies that are related to peace and security on behalf of government and stakeholders.

5.4 Suggestions for Further Research

- This study was limited to the role of women religious leaders. It did not delve into theological analysis. Therefore, a research could be undertaken on theological contributions to peace building, and conflict prevention, management and resolution.
- A study to investigate the role of women in indigenous peace building and conflict management approaches could be undertaken. This aspect is barely mentioned in the current study.
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Phyllis Nyambura: Assistance Program Officer, CCR.
Selina Khabega: Chairlady, CWA, Nakuru.
Susan Njuguna: Secretary, CCR.

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APPENDIX

Questionnaire/Interview Guide

Preamble
The Researcher is conducting a research on Women Religious Leaders as Actors in Ethnic Conflict Management and Resolution in Nakuru and Uasin Gishu Districts. Kindly assist him/her to fill the questionnaire/to answer the following questions. Your assistance will enable the researcher to complete the study. This information will be used purposely for this study only and will be treated with due confidence as required. Thank you so much in advance for your cooperation.

1. Personal Details
(a) Name ____________(optional) Age ___(optional)
(b) Religion: Christianity [] Islam [] African Religion [] Any other [] (tick one)
(d) Denomination (Religious Affiliation):
   Catholic [] Anglican [] Methodist [] PCEA [] Other [] Specify ___(tick one)
   Specify your grade or Job category (optional) ___

2. Organization of Affiliation
(a) What does your work entail?
(b) Name of the organization ___
(c) Area of operation of the organization ___
(d) Explain the objectives of the organization ___

3. (a) (i) In your opinion is religion/religious groups a factor in resolving ethnic conflict and bringing about peace and reconciliation? Yes [] No [] (tick one)
   (ii) (If the answer to “a” is yes) In your opinion, what is the role of religion/religious groups in conflict management and resolution? ___
   (b) Is there an example you could remember when religion was used in resolving ethnic conflict(s)? Yes [] No [] (tick one). (If “yes”) Explain where and when ___

4. (a) Could you state the various roles that your organization is involved in, in peace building and reconciliation? ___
   (b) In your opinion, what should be the role of the Church leadership and other religious leaders in managing and resolving ethnic conflict? ___
   (c) Within your religious organization/affiliation/denomination which women could you categorize as religious leaders? ___

5. (a) (i) State the various roles of women in society ___
   (ii) State the roles that are performed by women in your organization/religious affiliation ___
   (b) (i) Should women be involved in efforts toward peace building and resolving conflicts? Yes [] No [] (tick one) (If “yes”) State the reasons ___
(ii) (If the answer in "i" is "yes") State the roles of women in peace building and management of conflict

(c) (i) How could the roles of women as mothers help to promote their work as agents of peace building and reconciliation?

(ii) Could religious women combine their vocation with the traditional/social expectations as mothers? Yes [ ] No [ ] (tick one)

(iii) (If the answer to the above is "yes") In what ways could religious women combine their social expectations as mothers to provide the needs and services of victims of ethnic conflicts?

(iv) Provide examples where the above has taken place

(d) (i) In your opinion could religion be integrated with the role of women in managing ethnic conflicts and bring about peace and reconciliation in society? Yes [ ] No [ ] (tick one)

(ii) (If the answer to the above is "yes") Suggest ways in which religion could be integrated with the role of women to better results in peace building, conflict management and resolution

6. Explain how your organization is involved in each of the following activities towards victims of ethnic conflict:
   (i) Resettlement
   (ii) Rehabilitation
   (iii) Supply of relief assistance
   (iv) Reconciliation workshops

7. State the specific roles of religious women leaders in each of the following towards victims of ethnic conflicts:
   (i) Resettlement
   (ii) Rehabilitation
   (iii) Supply of relief assistance
   (iv) Reconciliation workshops

8. (i) What methods of resolving conflict are applied by your organization?
(ii) Kindly state what each of these methods entail?
(iii) Which of the above methods of resolving conflict involve women religious leaders?

9. (a) In your opinion how could you rate the work of religious women in ethnic conflict management and Resolution?
   Below Average [ ] Satisfactory [ ] Good [ ] Excellent [ ] I don't know [ ] (tick one)
   (b) Are you satisfied so far with the role that religious women leaders have played in ethnic conflict management and resolution? Yes [ ] No [ ] (tick one). Please explain_
   (c) (i) Are there ways in which the role of religious women leaders in ethnic conflict management and resolution could be enhanced? Yes [ ] No [ ] (tick one).
(ii) Suggest as many ways as possible through which this role could be enhanced.

10. (a) In your opinion do you think the work of women religious leaders as agents of peace and reconciliation in ethnic conflicts could be complement Government's and other stakeholders’ efforts on the same? Yes [] No [] (tick one).

    (b) Suggest the various ways the above could be achieved

11. (a) Do you think women religious leaders could act as the voice of women to influence policy? ____

    (b) Suggest some of the policy decisions that women religious leaders could influence the Government____

    (c) Suggest some policy decisions regarding peace and conflict management and resolution that Could be influenced by religious women leaders____