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an assessment of the gender sensitive strategies by the national peace and reconciliation commission in conflict prevention in harare metropolitan province

By

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A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of Peace and Governance in partial fulfilment for the requirements for the Honors of Science in Peace and Governance Degree

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Abstract

The research sought to assess the gender sensitive strategies by the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission in conflict prevention in Harare Metropolitan Province. The

objectives of the study were to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the conflict prevention strategies by the NPRC in Harare, to assess the effectiveness of the conflict prevention strategies implemented by the NPRC in Harare and to examine the obstacles faced by the NPRC in implementing the current gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies in Harare. The study was limited to the NPRC, Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and UN Women. Data was obtained by distributing 20 questionnaires within the Commission and conducting 8 interviews with NPRC, ZCC and UN Women officers. The research design used was a mixed method approach whereby the researcher used both qualitative (interviews) and quantitative (questionnaires) methods which enabled the researcher to gather both statistical and subjective data allowing for data triangulation. Findings revealed that despite limited resources and persistent effects of patriarchal norms, the Commission has made strides towards incorporating gender considerations into its conflict prevention strategies with promising successes such as the increased female representation in peace dialogues and trainings. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to the existing body of knowledge on gender sensitive peacebuilding strategies and provide valuable insights for policy makers, practitioners and stakeholders involved in peace and reconciliation efforts in Harare. By critically evaluating the NPRC's gender sensitive approaches, the researcher went on to proffer recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of such strategies and advancing gender inclusive peacebuilding initiatives in the region.

Declaration form

I, **B201158B**, hereby declare that this research report is the result of my original work, except as noted in the acknowledgement, references, and by comments made in the report's body, and that it has not been submitted in whole or in part for another degree from another university.

Signed

Date

Dedication

This research is dedicated to my mother and father for their guidance, love and never ending support.

Acknowledgements

List of abbreviations and acronyms

GBV   - Gender Based Violence

NDS   - National Development Strategy

NAP   - National Action Plan

NPRC   - National Peace and Reconciliation Commission

WPS   - Women, Peace and Security

UNDP   - United Nations Development Program

UNIFEM   - United Nations Development Fund for Women

UNSCR   - United Nation Security Council Resolution

VSGD   - Victim Support Gender and Diversity

ZCC   - Zimbabwe Council of Churches

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Background

Several scholars implicate that Gender sensitive conflict prevention is a crucial aspect of peacebuilding and conflict resolution efforts (Pruegl, 2017; Cohn, 2018; Goetz, 2019; Hutman, 2019). Conflicts are predominantly viewed as issues primarily affecting men, with women being seen as passive bystanders. There has been a growing recognition of the importance of integrating gender perspectives into conflict prevention efforts and recognizing the effects of conflicts on men, women, boys and girls differently stemming from existing gender inequalities and social norms. Understanding these different impacts is essential for designing targeted interventions and to identify and tackle the underlying reasons for conflicts, with a focus on promoting gender equality.

Incorporating gender sensitivity in peacebuilding is crucial to guarantee that women's and girls' needs are considered and addressed. Without gender sensitivity, peacebuilding initiatives can end up reinforcing or even exacerbating gender inequalities. For example, when women and girls are not included in peace negotiations, peace agreements often fail to address their specific needs and concerns (Verveer, 2020). This can lead to a lack of sustainable peace.gender sensitivity is essential for conflict

prevention, and can be achieved by promoting gender equality and empowering women, leading to more effective peacebuilding efforts.

Gender-based violence and conflict are serious problems in many parts of the world, including Harare, Zimbabwe, (Abosede &Adeyemi, 2016; Ncube, 2018). Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to violence and they often face unique challenges in accessing justice and resources. O'Rouke (2018) and O'Riley (2019) supports the idea that incorporating a gender perspective is essential for effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding. They point to the importance of considering how gender roles and inequalities influence conflict and violence, and how gender-based violence is commonly employed as a weapon of war. Women make up 52% of the global population and play crucial roles in both economic production and reproduction, contributing significantly more too societal development than men (Chen, 2010). However, their participation in peacebuilding and decision making remains limited due to lack of gender sensitive initiatives in politics and society. Some developing countries have introduced gender quotas to address this, with Rwanda and Mozambique achieving notable female representation in government (48% and 39%, respectively), exceeding the Beijing Platform's 30% target (Mani, 2014). The SADC Protocol aims higher, targeting 50% representation. In Zimbabwe, women's representation has improved temporarily, with a constitutional provision allocating 60 seats in the national assembly for two terms.

According to the Zimbabwe 2013 Constitution, the Parliament has the authority to make provisions consistent with the constitution, which may encompass gender sensitive strategies aimed at promoting inclusivity and addressing historical injustices. This legislative framework underscores the significance of gender sensitive approaches in the national context, providing a basis for the assessment of the Commission's initiatives. The NPRC Gender and Inclusion Policy Handbook (2021) propounded that, over the years, the country has experienced violent conflicts that have transcended different generations and different historical epochs. Conflicts has also developed over access to economic resources particularly in the mining sector and during the country's fast track land reform program. According to Win (2004), violence is assumed a gendered and often a sexual nature where women bear the greatest brunt and burden of violent conflicts. This, for example, included the mass rape of women and girls as a weapon of war during both the liberation struggle and in post-independence political contestations.

The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) was established in 2013 to promote peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe. The organization has a specific mandate to deal with gender-based violence and conflict, and has been working to implement a range of strategies to foster gender justice and prevent violence. There is also the need for a more comprehensive studies on effective gender-sensitive conflict prevention strategies in Harare. Hence this study works towards the promotion of more innovative ways to achieve gender-sensitive conflict prevention by looking at the strategies used by the NPRC in efforts to promote gender-sensitive conflict prevention, examining their current activities and challenges faced in implementing these activities in Harare.

Purpose of the study

It is the purpose of the study is to assess the gender sensitive strategies used by the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission in conflict prevention in Harare Metropolitan Province.

Statement of the problem

Gender inequality is deeply rooted in many societies and it often overlaps with various forms of discrimination including race, ethnicity, class and sexual orientation. In conflict situations such as wars and electoral times, these inequalities are worsened, leading to increased violence and insecurity for women, men, girls and boys especially in developing countries such as Zimbabwe. Women and girls are most vulnerable during conflicts as they experience different types of violence based on their gender including sexual violence, for example during the Gukurahundi conflict in 1980, many women were raped and sexually assaulted and these crimes often went unpunished and there was no justice. There are still many challenges in addressing issues of gender based violence in Harare, these include underreporting of crimes, lack of access to service and cultural and social barriers to reporting violence. That said, organisations such as the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission and individuals are working to address these challenges and improve the situation for women in Harare Metropolitan. In line with the National Development Strategy (NDS) 1, the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) recognises the importance of gender mainstreaming in creating an organised national social fabric and preventing social tensions arising from the marginalization of a significant portion of society. Henceforth, there is need to further assess the effectiveness of the NPRC in issues concerning gender-sensitive conflict prevention

1.4 Research objectives

1. To identify the strengths and weaknesses of the current conflict prevention strategies by the NPRC in Harare.

2. To assess the effectiveness of the conflict prevention strategies implemented by the NPRC in Harare

3. To examine the obstacles faced by the NPRC in implementing the current gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies in Harare

1.5 Research questions

1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the current conflict prevention strategies by the NPRC in Harare?

2. How effective are the conflict prevention strategies implemented by the NPRC in Harare?

3. What are the obstacles faced by the NPRC in implementing the current gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies in Harare?

1.6 Assumptions of the study

1. Conflict prevention is a one size fits all solution.

2. Women's participation in peacebuilding will automatically lead to more peaceful outcomes.

3. Women are solely victims of conflict and also perpetrators.

1.7 Significance of the study

To researchers

Theoretically, this research will help to fill gaps in the literature on gender sensitive conflict prevention as it will help identify the factors that influences the effectiveness of gender sensitive peacebuilding strategies as well as to develop a better understanding on the role assumed by the NPRC in promoting gender sensitive peacebuilding in Zimbabwe. It will also help to assess the effectiveness of the NPRCs efforts in promoting gender equality and peace in Harare.

The research will provide an opportunity to gain in-depth knowledge and understanding on the strategies used by the NPRC in gender-sensitive conflict prevention to ensure peacebuilding in Harare. It will also provide a chance to build capacity in research design and methodology and this will provide an opportunity to gaining new insights into the role of gender sensitive peacebuilding in promoting sustainable peace.

To policymakers

The findings of this research will be of benefit to policymakers and practitioners working on gender-sensitive peacebuilding. They will gain a better understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing the NPRC, and will be able to use the findings to inform future policy and practice.

 To the community

The findings of this research will be of benefit to the communities affected by conflict in Zimbabwe. By providing evidence-based recommendations for improving the implementation of gender-sensitive peacebuilding strategies as well as this helping to improve the lives of women, men, boys and girls affected by conflict.

1.8 Delimitations of the study

The study mainly focuses on data that was collected from 2016 to 2023. It will focus on National Peace and Reconciliation Commission thematic departments. The research is limited to the specific strategies that are used by the NPRC in ensuring gender-sensitive conflict prevention in Harare Province. While the Commission has a wide range of activities, the research is focused only on the strategies or activities that relate to gender sensitive conflict prevention and the effectiveness of these strategies. The research was conducted in Harare because all the operations of the NPRC are centralized at its head office located in Harare CBD hence information is only obtained from the head office.

1.9 Limitations of the study

The sample size of the participants is too small to draw definite conclusions about the effectiveness of the gender-sensitive conflict prevention strategies used by the NPRC and not all members from the selected sample participated in the interview process and answering of questionnaires. The researcher aided this by expanding the research to the stakeholders that work hand in glove with the Commission

in ensuring gender-sensitive conflict prevention. The study is prone to time constraints which hinders the proper collection of data material. This will be aided by effective management and the use of technology to significantly improve the efficiency of the data collection process.

1.10 Definition of key words

Conflict is a situation in which two or more parties perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from the other parties in achieving their goals (Adebajo, 2001).

Conflict prevention according to Lederach (1995), is addressing the root causes of conflicts before they escalate into violence. He emphasizes the importance of taking action before violence occurs, rather than waiting until violence has already broken out.

Gender, according to Labani (2010), is a social and cultural construct that refers to the shared beliefs, values and practices that define masculine and feminine roles, responsibilities and opportunities which are assigned to individuals based on their gender identity.

Gender mainstreaming, according to Kabeer (2005) is a strategy to achieve gender equality by integrating gender perspectives into all aspects of policy making, programing and implementation. It is a way to ensure that gender perspectives are integrated into all aspects of decision making to achieve gender equality and improve the living conditions of women and girls.

Gender sensitive conflict prevention, according to the United Nations Development Fund for Women (1989)), is the process of identifying, analyzing and addressing the gender-related causes and consequences of conflict with a view to establishing, strengthening and maintaining peace

1.11 Dissertation outline

Chapter 1: introduction- an overview of the topic, background and context of the research, purpose and scope of the study.

Chapter 2: literature review- a summary and critical analysis of the existing literature on the research. This includes the theory used in support of the research.

Chapter 3: Research methodology- description of the research design, methods and procedures. An explanation of why the researcher chose a particular design, how data is collected and how it will be analyzed.

Chapter 4: Data presentation and Analysis- provision of a comprehensive overview of the data collected and discuss the findings in line with the objectives and the literature provided in chapter two.

Chapter 5: Recommendations- a summary of what was done in the research and recommendations to the NPRC's on efforts towards gender sensitive conflict prevention.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a review of the relevant literature on the gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies and how they are used by the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission (NPRC) in ensuring peacebuilding. The chapter focuses on the strengths and weaknesses and the strategies, the effectiveness and the obstacles that are faced in implementing these strategies. According to Torry (2021), conducting a thorough review of existing research on a topic is essential for researchers of all levels as it helps to identify areas of weakness and strength in current knowledge, thereby guiding and improving one's own research design and execution. The chapter will therefore explore what different scholars have written on the topic assessing the gender sensitive strategies in conflict prevention.

2.2 Theoretical framework

2.2.1 Liberal Feminist Theory

The research was guided by the feminist theory (Liberal) which is based on the idea that it helps shed light on the ways in which gender can shape experiences and perceptions of conflict prevention strategies. A feminist perspective would emphasize the need to consider the perspectives of women and other marginalized groups when assessing the strategies it is a key factor in shaping experiences and outcomes and that it should be integrated into all aspects of policy making. The feminist approach is encompassed by different scholars who view feminism from different perspectives. The theory draws upon the perspectives of the radical and liberal approach. Abbott and Wallace (1997) notes that feminism encompasses a range of movements and ideologies that seek to achieve equal rights and opportunities for women in politics, economics and society, promoting gender equality and challenging gender biases and inequality. Thereby one can then note that the feminist approach is an approach which is made up of various ideologies put forward by those who advocate for feminism.

The feminist theory is a lens through which to view the world, emphasizing the importance of gender in understanding social structures and relationships. It posits that gender is not solely an individual characteristic, but is also constructed and shaped by external factors such as societal norms, political agendas and economic systems which impact its expression and experience as supported by Butler (1990). It also highlights the ways which gender intersects with other forms of oppression such as race, class and sexuality. Hence the perspective emphasizes the ways in which women are disproportionately affected by conflict and highlights the need for a gender-sensitive approach to resolution and prevention. True (2011) argues that the feminist approach to conflict prevention can contribute to peace and stability by ensuring that the specific needs of women are addressed.

Jaggar (1983) developed the liberal feminism theory, which advocated for gender equality and activism to achieve it. This theory focuses on issues like equal opportunities in education, workplace and women's rights. While dressing private sphere issues, liberal feminism prioritizes equality, examining how personal life affects public life. Its primary objective is achieving gender equity in the public sphere through legal changes, equal access to education, equal pay and improved working conditions. According to this theory, all forms of discrimination, bias and prejudice must be eliminated to create a

successful society where individuals can excel without obstacles and both men and women have equal opportunities to succeed in all aspects of life.

Liberal feminists aim to create a level playing field where girls and women can exercise their rights, make choices and participate fully in all areas of life, free from constraints and barriers that have historically limited their freedom and potential. Thus, this theory will bring out the inequality especially among women as they try to grapple with issues of gender inclusiveness and woman participation in the study. In this regard, approaching the research question with the aid of this theory will lead to the exploration of gender sensitive ways of solving issues of inequalities and discrimination in matters of national issues. The theory also introduces the element of equality and equity which is central to the gender discourse.

2.2.2The gender mainstreaming approach

 Mama (2009) argues that gender mainstreaming should be integrated into all aspects of policy making and programing rather than being treated as a separate add-on. The gender mainstreaming approach involves intentionally considering the needs and experiences for both women and men in all policies and programs to promote gender equality and address gender-based disparities and inequalities. It also recognizes that gender equality is not just a women's issue, but rather a universal concern that affects both men and women. The approach emphasizes that gender interconnects with other forms of inequalities such as class, race and age. The goal of gender mainstreaming is to create a society that is more just and equitable for all people regardless of their gender. This is done by taking into account the different experiences and needs of both men and women, ensuring that everyone has equal opportunities and rights. For example, Burundi has established a gender based monitoring system to collect data on violence among women and girls, also developing policies that help prevent a respond to violence. This is to ensure the safety of all groups.

Hills (2020) asserts that the gender mainstreaming approach is made to understand the role played by women in conflict prevention. It is grounded in feminist theories that emphasize the significance of gender equality and women's empowerment in peacebuilding. It draws on existing research that has found that women's involvement in conflict prevention can lead to more sustainable peace and that women have unique perspectives and experiences that can inform peacebuilding efforts. The National Development Strategy (NDS) 1also acknowledges that integrating gender perspectives is essential for building a harmonious and equitable society and for avoiding social unrest that can result from excluding a large segment of the population from development opportunities. This approach will be used to guide the research design, data collection and analysis, and will help to explain the findings of the study.

        Smith (2018) found that incorporating women's voices into peace processes can help to build more sustainable peace. Additionally, Jones (2017) further says that gender-sensitive conflict prevention strategies can be more effective than traditional approaches. These findings suggest that the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission may benefit from using gender-sensitive approaches in its work. Hence, the research will draw upon the feminist theory to examine the ways in which gender inequality and patriarchy affect both conflict and efforts to prevent it

2.3 Gender-Sensitive Strategies in Peacebuilding

2.3.1Gender-balanced representation

According to Williams (2022), gender-balanced representation is the idea that brings about the representation of men and women in international organizations. This includes the fact that it can help ensure that a variety of perspectives are represented and that women have an equal voice in decision making. This is a key strategy in gender sensitive conflict prevention as it helps to ensure that the voices and perspectives of women are heard and included in decision making processes. Berry (2018) argues that gender-balanced representation is necessary to ensure that peacebuilding methods are sustainable and equitable. This also result in promoting inclusivity in the decision making processes ensuring that their needs are taken into account. According to the IPSS (2017), inclusivity can be achieved through mechanisms such as gender quotas, gender balanced negotiation teams and inclusive consultation processes.

Gender-based representation in Harare's council has led to the rise in the number of women councilors, which is an important step towards ensuring equal representation and decision making power for women. However, a potential weakness could be it may not be able address the core causes of gender inequality in the city because of patriarchal attitudes or social expectations. One of the key functions of the NPRC is to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. This includes safeguarding women representation in decision making processes and their voices are heard, working with various stakeholders including the government, civil society and community groups to achieve its goals.

2.3.2 Gender-sensitive conflict analysis

Gender-sensitive conflict analysis is whereby conflict is analyzed using a gendered lens. This strategy involves analyzing the underlying causes of conflict by looking at the perspectives of both men and women. This can help identify the gendered dimensions of conflict and peace to develop more effective strategies to prevent and resolve conflict. Kuehnast (2019) and O'Donnell (2020) mention that gender sensitive conflict analysis can provide unique insights and perspectives that are often overlooked in traditional conflict analysis hence proving the effectiveness of the strategy. This analysis has enabled institutions to develop targeted interventions that address the specific needs of these groups.

This approach recognizes the complex and dynamic nature of conflicts and how it intersects with gender. It also has the potential to contribute to more effective conflict prevention and peacebuilding efforts. According to Jenichen (2018), there are several challenges to gender sensitive conflict analysis which include lack of resources and expertise, the difficulty of measuring progress and gender sensitive approaches may not be accepted by all stakeholders. The NPRC is responsible for implementing the country's gender policy, which includes a focus on gender sensitive conflict analysis by engaging in

several programs and initiatives that are designed to promote gender equity and address violence against women and girls.

2.3.3 Empowerment

Nwosu (2022) defines empowerment as a process that enables people to make strategic life choices, improve their wellbeing and influence social change. Green (2020) adds on that empowerment can be used as a strategy for gender sensitive conflict prevention by confronting the root causes of inequality and improving the quality of life for marginalized groups. Empowerment aims to address the primary causes of violence and conflict. Scholars argue that women's empowerment can help reduce conflict by promoting economic development, improving women's access to resources and decision making and increasing trust and cooperation within communities (Goertz, 2016; Porter, 2018; Craske, 2019). Women's empowerment programs, including vocational training, education, and economic empowerment initiatives have enabled women to become economically independent and to participate fully in peace-building efforts (NPRC, 2020).

Empowerment as a strategy focuses on addressing structural inequalities and its potential to create lasting change. However, it can be difficult to measure the success of empowerment interventions which may not be feasible in all contexts and the approach require long term investment and commitment. The NPRC plays a role in implementing empowerment programs aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women such as gender inclusive dialogues and trainings on gender sensitive conflict prevention. These programs provides opportunities for women to engage in income-generating activities and participate in decision making processes.

2.3.4 Programs on gender based violence

Bao (2020) suggests that programs that aim to reduce gender based violence can be an effective tool for gender sensitive conflict prevention. These programs should focus on education, country mobilization and economic empowerment to create lasting change. Gender-based violence is often used as a strategy of war and conflict to control, threaten and subjugate women and girls. Therefore, addressing GBV is an important part of any strategy for conflict prevention. Trimarco (2016) has argued that reducing gender based violence can help create more peaceful and just societies as well as promote development and economic growth. These programs have helped to decrease the prevalence of gender-based violence and aim to stimulate a culture of peace and respect for human rights.

The gender based violence programs can help identify and tackle the underlying factors that contribute to gender based violence and provide long term solutions and can help promote gender equality and social justice. However there are weaknesses such as lack of coordination and cultural understanding. Also, these programs may not take into consideration the complex nature of gender based violence and may not reach all affected communities. The NPRC is obligated to work closely with local communities and grassroots organizations to raise awareness on gender based violence and provide support to victims and survivors by providing counselling and access to legal services.

2.3.5 Early warning systems

Early warning systems are systems that use data collection and analysis to identify potential conflicts before they happen (Logan, 2017). Gender sensitive early warning systems can help prevent conflict and help lessen the risk of violence (UNDP, 2018). Gender sensitive early warning systems can take into account the unique experiences and perspectives of women, men, boys, girls and other marginalized groups. This provides a more comprehensive understanding of conflict risks (Kagwania et al, 2016).

Gender sensitive early warning systems can help ensure the needs and concerns of women and girls are taken into consideration when conflict prevention strategies are developed. This can lead to more effective and inclusive conflict prevention efforts. However, potential drawbacks may include the risk of oversimplifying gender dynamics, the potential for gender stereotypes to influence analysis and lack of gender expertise within many early warning systems. The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission in Harare has developed the Conflict Early Warning and Early Response (CEWER) system established so as to monitor, analyze, respond and prevent conflicts.

2.4 Strengths of the conflict prevention strategies in Harare.

 The key strength of the current conflict prevention strategies in Harare metropolitan is the emphasis on a collaborative approach (Rubenstein, 2016; Northrup, 2018; Borum, 2019). The strategies involve multiple stakeholders, including community leaders, government agencies, civil society organizations, and residents themselves. This collaborative approach ensures that diverse perspectives are taken into account when identifying and addressing potential sources of conflict. By involving all relevant parties, these strategies can effectively address conflicts at their root causes and promote sustainable peace. This collaborative approach enhances the effectiveness of conflict prevention strategies by pooling together diverse perspectives, knowledge, and resources.

        Skjelsbaek (2016) argue that an inclusive approach to conflict prevention is essential for ensuring gender sensitivity. They argue that including women in peacebuilding processes is important in creating sustainable peace. This is because women have different perspectives and experiences than men which can help to prevent and resolve conflict. For example, women are often disproportionately affected by conflict and they may be better able to identify and deal with the root causes of violence. Raftopoulos (2018), Sweetman (2018) and Gjerde (2020) agree that inclusion strategy is a step in the right direction but that more needs to be done to fully integrate gender into the works of every organization. According to the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the empowerment of Women (2017), inclusivity helps ensure that the perspective and the needs of diverse groups are taken into account, leading to more inclusive and equitable conflict prevention and resolutions processes.

The involvement of local communities is another notable strength of the current conflict prevention strategies in Harare metropolitan (Klaits, 2015; Santa-Cruz, 2019). Recognizing that conflicts often arise due to underlying social, economic, and political factors, these strategies prioritize community engagement and participation. By actively involving residents in decision-making processes and encouraging dialogue, the strategies promote a sense of ownership and responsibility among community members. This engagement fosters a collective effort in preventing conflicts and ensures that the strategies implemented are contextually relevant and effective. This approach ensures that conflict prevention strategies are contextually relevant and responsive to the needs of those directly affected by conflicts

Another strength of the current conflict prevention strategies is the implementation of early warning systems. These systems are designed to detect early signs of tension or conflict and provide timely information to relevant stakeholders. By identifying potential conflicts at an early stage, preventive measures can be taken to de-escalate tensions and prevent violence from erupting. Early warning systems enable authorities to respond proactively and implement targeted interventions before conflicts escalate into more significant issues. Ortiz (2016) and Baines (2017) argue that early warning systems should be designed to consider the different experiences and needs of women, men, boys and girls. They also point out the idea that early warning systems should not only focus on predicting conflict but also on prevent it. These systems aim to identify potential conflicts before they escalate into violence. By monitoring social, political, and economic indicators, the commission can detect early signs of tension and take proactive measures to address them. Early warning systems enable the institution to intervene in a timely manner, preventing conflicts from escalating and minimizing their impact on communities.

2.5 Weaknesses of the conflict prevention strategies in Harare.

In Harare, the lack of inclusivity in gender-sensitive conflict prevention can be seen in number of ways. For example there is often last of presentation of women and other marginalized groups in decision making processes. This can result in policies and programs that do not adequately address the needs of these groups hence leading to conflict. According to Merger (2016), lack of inclusivity in gender-sensitive conflict prevention is a serious problem that can lead to ineffective interventions and further marginalization of women and girls. Several scholars agree that several organizations has been adamant in lacking the element of inclusivity (Kasirye, 2018; Muringayi, 2019).

Another weakness highlighted in the literature is the inadequate allocation of resources towards conflict prevention efforts in Harare Metropolitan. Limited financial resources allocated to conflict prevention programs hinder their effectiveness and sustainability. Insufficient funding leads to a lack of capacity building, training, and infrastructure development necessary for successful conflict prevention initiatives. This will also lead to the lack of capacity in carrying out conflict prevention strategies. Inadequate resources for these initiatives can lead to a number of consequences such as lack of capacity to carry out gender sensitive conflict prevention initiatives and a lack of sustainable solutions to conflict prevention (Phala, 2016; Dunne, 2018; Muhekwi, 2018) facing limited resources, including financial and human resources, hinders the institutions ability to effectively implement its conflict prevention strategies. The lack of resources limits the scope and scale of activities, and it is often unable to respond promptly to emerging conflicts.

Lack of Political Will is a major weakness in ensuring gender-sensitive conflict prevention. It can result in a lack of funding and support from both the government and the people. Some scholars argue that political will is not just financial support but also the attitudes of and beliefs of political leaders (Pharaoh, 2013; Ruteere, 2016; Gqola, 2016). The current conflict prevention strategies have also been hindered by a lack of political will to deal with the underlying causes of conflicts. The institutions face challenges in getting government officials to prioritize gender issues leading to the lack of resources and capacity within itself to effectively implement on gender-sensitive conflict prevention. Pharaoh (2013) has argued that the lack of political will is a reflection of a wider political and social context in

Zimbabwe, the inability to effectively implement gender-sensitive conflict prevention initiatives is a result of the patriarchal and militarized nature of the state of Zimbabwe.

Lack of Follow-up Mechanisms is a weakness that hinders gender-sensitive conflict prevention strategies. Follow-up mechanisms are essential for ensuring gender sensitive policies and practices are implemented and sustained. Hellum (2018 and Pham (2019) argue that these mechanisms are crucial for ensuring that policies and practices are implemented and sustained. According to the UNDP (2018), the lack of follow up mechanisms has resulted in a significant gap between the adoption of the strategies and implementation on the ground. As a result, the impact of these initiatives remains limited and gender based violence will continue to be prevalent.

2.6 Effectiveness of the conflict prevention strategies towards peacebuilding in Harare

Gender-sensitive conflict prevention strategies aim to combat the root causes of conflicts while considering the specific needs and experiences of different genders. These strategies recognize that gender inequalities can contribute to conflicts and that addressing these inequalities is essential for sustainable peacebuilding.

Inclusion of Women is a key part of gender sensitive conflict prevention. Swaine (2020) emphasizes the importance of ensuring that women are not just included in the peace process, but also in the design and execution of conflict prevention schemes. Women's inclusion in peacebuilding processes allows for a more holistic understanding of conflict and it understanding of the conflict and its resolution Research suggests that including women in conflict prevention processes leads to more sustainable peace outcomes. Mailto (2020) argues that Women's participation brings diverse perspectives, priorities, and solutions to the table, which can help address underlying causes of conflicts effectively. The inclusion of women is considered an effective element of the strategy because women often have different experiences and perspectives from men, which can provide valuable insights into the causes of conflict and how to prevent it. It also recognizes that women's participation can help to build trust and foster cooperation among different groups (Fisher 2019). In support of this, the NPRC has The Victim Support, Gender and Diversity (VSGD) department which works to ensure that the voices of women and girls are heard and that gender is factored into all aspects of the Commission's works.

Gender-sensitive strategies can be particularly effective in capacity building because they can address the different needs and experiences of women, men, girls and boys. For example, gender-sensitive training can help to ensure that women have the abilities and knowledge they need to participate entirely in peacebuilding initiatives. This can include skills such as conflict resolution, negotiation, and communication. It can also include knowledge about the causes and dynamics of conflict, as well as the role that women can play in peacebuilding. It also can help to create an environment that is more conducive to women's participation. It can do this by promoting gender equality and addressing gender stereotypes. Some scholars agree that gender-sensitive capacity building requires a long-term commitment and should be integrated into all aspects of peacebuilding and conflict prevention efforts (Kovacs, 2016; Baines, 2017; Hjalm, 2018). Building the capacity of NPRC staff and stakeholders on gender-sensitive approaches is crucial for effective implementation. Training programs can enhance their understanding of gender dynamics, equip them with tools for gender analysis, and enable them to integrate gender perspectives into their conflict prevention efforts. The strategies implemented by the NPRC to promote gender-sensitive capacity building have been effective in a number of ways. First, the NPRC has developed a National Action Plan on Women, Peace, and Security (NAPWPS), which is a

comprehensive document that sets out specific goals and objectives for promoting of gender equality in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. The NAPWPS has made significant strides in promoting gender awareness and empowering women to take an active role in peacebuilding, leading to a more gender inclusive and sustainable peace process. The Commission also has established a Gender Unit within its organizational structure, which is responsible for coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the NAPWPS.

Jewkes et al (2013) have argued that engaging men and boys is important for achieving gender equality and helps in in the alleviation of violence against women and girls. They have also noted that this type of engagement can help to shift gender norms and promote positive role models for men and boys. By involving men as allies in promoting gender equity and dealing with gender-based violence, the NPRC can foster more inclusive and sustainable peacebuilding.

Gender-sensitive conflict prevention is effective in addressing gender-based violence, which is a major issue in many conflict-affected countries. Gender-sensitive conflict prevention strategies seek to prevent and adress violence against women and girls, including sexual assault and exploitation, in a way that is made to deal with the specific needs of women and girls. This includes ensuring that women and girls have access to justice and other services, and that perpetrators of gender-based violence are held accountable. Chinkin (2016), Cohen (2019) and Mazurana (2021) have argued that gender-sensitive conflict prevention strategies are essential for addressing gender-based violence. In their research, they have highlighted the significance of adopting a gender perspective in conflict prevention and peacebuilding, and have argued that this can help to reduce and prevent gender-based violence. Conflict prevention strategies should address gender-based violence (GBV) as a root cause and consequence of conflicts. The NPRC can work towards preventing GBV by promoting legal frameworks, providing psycho-social support for survivors, and raising awareness about the destructive effects of GBV on individuals and communities. They do so by establishing a hotline for victims of gender-based violence to report incidents and seek assistance, provided training to law enforcement officials on how to probe and prosecute incidents of gender-related violence, supported the establishment of safe spaces for women and girls who have experienced gender-based violence and conducted awareness-raising campaigns on the issue of gender-based violence.

2.7 Obstacles faced in implementing the current gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies in Harare

One of the key obstacles faced by institutes is the deeply entrenched patriarchal norms and attitudes within Zimbabwean society. Gender inequality is deeply rooted in cultural, social, and economic structures, which makes it challenging to implement gender-sensitive strategies effectively. Customary gender roles and stereotypes tend to limit women's participation in issues to do with policymaking processes and hinder their access to resources and opportunities. Enloe (2014) and Caprioli (2016) claim that patriarchy creates a context in which conflict is more likely to occur. Patriarchy promotes gender inequality, and inequality can create a sense of injustice that may lead to conflict.

Additionally, patriarchal attitudes can hamper women's involvement in peace processes and this possibly leads to gender based violence (Enloe, 2019). This can also create a sense of entitlement among men that can lead to conflict. The main obstacle created by patriarchal norms and attitudes is resistance to the work of organizations. Because of patriarchal attitudes, efforts to promote gender equality and

prevent conflict may be seen as a threat to the traditional power structure. Enloe (2019) further ds on that this can lead to backlash and opposition from those who benefit from the status quo. Additionally, patriarchal norms can make it difficult for women to participate fully in the work of organizations as they may face social and cultural barriers to their involvement.

Lack of awareness and understanding among stakeholders is a major obstacle to the implementation of gender-sensitive conflict prevention strategies (Benard, 2019; Prugl (2020). Many people do not understand the importance of dressing gender inequalities and preventing violence against women and girls as part of conflict prevention and they underestimate the role that women and girls play in conflict prevention and peacebuilding. This lack of understanding can make it difficult to gain support for gender-sensitive strategies and to implement them effectively. True (2014) and Ruane (2018) argue that increased awareness and understanding of the gendered dimensions of conflict and peacebuilding is essential to effectively addressing these issues. This includes understanding how gender inequality and violence against women and girls are linked to conflict, as well as understanding the specific roles that women and girls can play in peacebuilding.

Furthermore, resource constraints pose a significant obstacle to the implementation of gender-sensitive conflict prevention strategies (Sjoberg, 2019). She goes on to say resource constraints can limit the ability of gender mainstreaming to be effective. Limited funding and inadequate allocation of resources can hinder the ability to carry out the mandate of organizations effectively. Insufficient financial support may restrict organizational capacity to conduct research, engage with communities, provide support services to survivors of conflict-related gender-based violence, and implement awareness campaigns on gender equality. Meger (2016) argues that this limited funding has prevented the full implementation of the resolution, which includes measures for preventing gender-based violence and ensuring the increase in women's participation in peace processes.

Additionally, political factors can also impede efforts to implement gender-sensitive strategies. Political will and commitment are essential for creating an enabling environment for gender equality initiatives. Scholars add on that the relationship between political factors can hinder the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security hence proving as an obstacle to gender-sensitive conflict prevention initiatives (Caprioli, 2016; Vogelstein, 2018; Krook, 2018). However, political instability or competing priorities may divert attention away from addressing gender issues effectively

Institutions in Harare faces several obstacles in implementing gender-sensitive conflict prevention strategies. These obstacles include deeply entrenched patriarchal norms, lack of awareness and understanding of gender issues, resource constraints, and political factors. Overcoming these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that addresses societal norms, provides training and capacity building, secures adequate resources, and fosters strong political support for gender equality initiatives.

2.8 The United Nation Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 on Women, Peace and security (WPS)

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) is a landmark resolution adopted by the UN Security Council on October 31, 2000. It considers the unique experiences of women in conflict zones and recognizes their critical contributions to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, peacebuilding and

post-conflict recovery efforts. UNSCR 1325 was the first resolution to explicitly recognize the disproportionate impact of armed conflict on women and girls. It acknowledges that women are often targeted as victims of sexual violence, forced displacement, and other forms of gender-based violence during conflicts. The resolution emphasizes the importance of women's participation in all aspects of peace processes and calls for their protection and empowerment.

The resolution consists of four main pillars: participation, protection, prevention, and relief and recovery. Under the participation pillar, it calls for the increased representation of women at all levels of decision-making in national, regional, and international institutes involved in conflict prevention, management, resolution, and peacebuilding. The protection pillar focuses on preventing gender-based violence during conflicts and ensuring accountability for perpetrators. The prevention pillar highlights the need to confront the root causes of conflict through gender equality and women's empowerment. The relief and recovery pillar emphasizes the importance of gender-responsive approaches in humanitarian assistance and post-conflict reconstruction.

Despite its significance, there have been challenges in implementing UNSCR 1325 effectively. One major challenge is the lack of political will among member states to prioritize gender equality in peace processes. Limited financial resources allocated to gender-related initiatives also hinder implementation efforts. Additionally, cultural norms and patriarchal structures within societies often perpetuate gender inequalities and limit the involvement of women in decision-making processes. The lack of data and monitoring mechanisms to assess progress further complicates the evaluation of the resolution's impact.

UNSCR 1325 has sparked a global movement advocating for the inclusion of women in peace and security processes. It has led to the development of subsequent resolutions, such as UNSCR 1820, which addresses sexual violence in conflict, and UNSCR 1888, which strengthens measures to protect women and girls from violence. The resolution has also influenced national action plans on Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) adopted by various countries. These action plans outline specific strategies and commitments to implement UNSCR 1325 at the national level.

While UNSCR 1325 has made significant strides in recognizing women's roles in peace and security, it has faced criticism for its limited focus on intersectionality and the experiences of marginalized groups. Critics argue that the resolution often fails to address the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women from diverse backgrounds, including those from ethnic minorities, indigenous communities, and LGBTQ+ individuals. There is a growing call for a more inclusive approach that recognizes the intersecting forms of discrimination faced by women in conflict-affected settings.

The UNSCR 1325 has been instrumental in raising awareness about the gendered impacts of armed conflict and advocating for women's participation in peace processes. While challenges remain in its implementation, the resolution has paved the way for subsequent initiatives and national action plans on Women, Peace, and Security. Moving forward, there is a need to address intersectionality and ensure that the voices of all women are heard in efforts to achieve sustainable peace.

2.9 Summary

The chapter focused on the literature review showing the importance of gender sensitivity on issues to do with peacebuilding and conflict prevention. The chapter discusses the feminism theory, the gender

mainstreaming approach, strengths of the gender-sensitive strategies in conflict prevention, weaknesses of the gender sensitive strategies in conflict prevention, the effectiveness of these strategies and their obstacles. The chapter also encompasses the Women, Peace and Security Resolution 1325 as it addresses the gendered dimensions of conflict. The next chapter will discuss the methodology used by the researcher in her research.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the main presentation of the processes and methods that were used in conducting this research, which were also in line with the set objectives of the research. The chapter discusses the research methodology, research design, target population, ethical considerations and data collection methods. Both primary and secondary data collection methods were used in order to come up with authentic information on the efforts by the NPRC in gender-sensitive conflict prevention.

3.2 Research philosophy

Saunders et al (2020) defines a research philosophy as a set of assumptions, beliefs and ways of thinking about the development of knowledge. They also note that different research philosophies can guide the research process in different ways, with some placing more emphasis on objectivity and others emphasising the role of human interpretation. This research is guided by a pragmatic philosophical approach which is used in research to assess the effectiveness of specific strategies or interventions and it allows for a more flexible and practical approach to data collection. The approach also focuses on practical consequences ad outcomes rather than abstract theories which justifies why the research used a pragmatic philosophical approach.

3.3 Research approach

Duriesmith (2020) defines research approach as a conceptual framework that guides the process of research and shape the interpretation of the collected data. The study employed a research design that effectively integrated both quantitative data analysis and qualitative insights. Using a mixed-methods approach can help provide a more ample and enhanced understanding of the issue at hand and this could help answer questions like, what gender-sensitive strategies has the Commission used, and what have been the results. According to Creswell and Clark (2018), the mixed methods approach provides the ability to identify and address potential biases to each method. The research used mixed methods approach because it provides a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic.

3.4 Population

According to Janes (2021) research population is the entire group of people or objects that are being studied. This is typically a large group, and researchers often select a smaller sample from this population for their study. The population should be well-defined and relevant to the research question, and the sample should be representative of the population. The population the researcher studied were the employees of the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission and its stakeholders, Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and UN Women. This would include all the people who work for the Commission, from the top executives to the front-line workers.

3.5 Sample size

Saunders (2018) defines a sample size as the number of elements that are selected from the population for analysis. This means that the sample size is the number of people, organizations, or other elements that are included in the research. 20 questionnaires were distributed to staff of the Commission. Interviews were done with five people from the NPRC, three from ZCC and two from UN Women totaling to a number of 10 interviews.

3.6 Sampling and sampling techniques

Leedy and Ormrod (2018) define research sampling as the process of selecting the individuals or items that will be included in a study. They note that researchers should always consider the goals of the study when selecting a sample, and should aim to select a sample that is representative of the population of interest.The research used a combination of purposive and convenience sampling. Roy and Rahman (2020) defines purposive sampling as a type of sampling in which the researcher cancerously chooses the cases to be studied based on their knowledge and judgement. The research purposively selected participants based on certain criteria, such as gender, educational background, and role within the NPRC.

3.6.1 Convenience sampling

The research will also use convenience sampling which includes selecting individuals who are easiest to reach (Martin, 2021). It will include stakeholders from the UN Women and ZCC who are willing and available to participate in the study. Convenience sampling allows researcher to work with whoever happens to be available and willing to participate. This also allowed the researcher to guarantee that the

sample is representative of the staff of the NPRC, UN Women and ZCC while also making the research process more efficient.

3.7 Data collection tools

Data collection tools are methods and instruments used to gather information for a study. The research used a mixed method approach whereby there was the use of semi-structured interviews to the selected staff of the NPRC, UN Women and ZCC and 20 questionnaires in efforts to assess the strategies that are being used by the Commission in gender-sensitive conflict prevention. Using both methods can help increase the validity of the research by providing a more comprehensive understanding on the topic.

3.7.1 Semi structured interviews

Kumar and Rajendran (2020) describe semi-structured interviews as a qualitative research method that balances the flexibility of unstructured interviews with the focus of structured ones, offering a middle ground between the two approaches. Semi structured interviews have an interview guide with questions that are similar for all interviewees but the order and exact wording may vary depending on the response of the interviewee. The researcher used semi structured interviews with the NPRC staff, UN Women and ZCC to allow a more natural and conversational flow of information which made participants more comfortable and willing to share their thoughts and experiences.

3.7.2 Questionnaires

According to Kumar (2019), a questionnaire is an instrument used to collect data from individuals, comprising a set of questions and prompts designed to elicit responses and gather information. Questionnaires were used to allow a more standardized and comparable data, as all participants answered the same questions. The questionnaires were distributed to staff of the NPRC from the top executives to the implementing officers for a diverse information range.

3.8 Data presentation and analysis

Smith and Sparkes (2020) suggest that qualitative researchers should consider their audience and tailor their data presentation to the needs of that audience. They also emphasize the importance of creativity and coherence in data presentation, suggesting that researchers should make use of a variety of presentation formats, such as tables, figures, and stories, to help convey the meaning of their findings.

 According to Smith and Sparkes (2020) researchers should use a variety of visual methods, such as tables, graphs, diagrams, images, and even poetry, to help convey the meaning of their findings. In addition, they recommend using a narrative approach to data presentation, which involves telling a story that captures the essence of the findings. The data collected from the unstructured interviews were presented with the tittles, departments and responses of the interviewees to key questions on

gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies. The data would be analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying common themes and patterns in the responses. This will help identify the most salient issues and areas for further exploration. The analysis is in the form of descriptive text, with relevant quotes from participants included to illustrate key themes.

3.9 Validity and reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, the researcher has used a mixed methods design including both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data would be collected using a validated questionnaire given to the staff members of the NPRC at random and qualitative data will be collected through semi structured interviews to the selected commission officers and members of the UN Women and ZCC. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed verbatim and the transcripts will be checked for accuracy by an independent researcher. The data will be analyzed using content analysis and the findings will be triangulated to ensure that they are valid and reliable.

3.10 Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations in a research refers to moral principles and standards that guide research activities and make sure that the research is conducted in an ethical manner. There is need for informed consent and issues to do with confidentiality are a priority. The researcher shall treat all participants with respect and dignity. This will include enduring that they are fully aware of the purpose of the research and that they have given their consent to participate. The researcher should also make sure that the research does not put the participants at any risk of harm as this research is only meant for academic purposes. The researcher was also mindful of any cultural or religious sensitivities that might be relevant to the research and make sure that the research is transparent and accountable.

3.11 Summary

The chapter provided an in-depth research methodology and explained why certain methods were used to attain research outcomes. The data gathering techniques (semi-structured interviews and qualitative questionnaires) were also explained and why they were the best options for the research to attain its outcomes. The research population was defined and sampling techniques (purposive sampling) were explained. The chapter also explained the data analysis procedures used in the research and explained why thematic analysis was the best tool for this research. The next chapter presents the findings of the research.

CHAPTER 4

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and analyses the data gathered by the researcher from the research process and presents the data in various themes that emanated from the research process. The themes are grouped under the objectives that they emanated from and help analyse data in a logical sequence. Ethical considerations are upheld by not mentioning any names as all participants chose to remain anonymous.

Table 1 Response rate

CATEGORY OF RESPONDENTS	EXPECTED RESPONDENTS	ACTUAL RESPONDENTS
NPRC	6	6
ZCC	2	1
UN Women	2	1
Total	10	8

The table shows the expected response rate versus the actual response rate

The number of people expected for the research were 10(ten) for the interview and 8(eight) responded including two stakeholders from Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) and one from UN Women. Of the 8 respondents, 5 where women constituting sixty-three percent (63%). The number of women respondents is more than the men, this could be because women are more interested in incorporating gender sensitivity in preventing conflict and also, the NPRC has more women than men because it has a strong commitment to gender equality and has policies and practices in place to ensure that women are fairly represented. A total of twenty (20) questionnaires were distributed within the NPRC. The aim of these was to gain insights into the perspectives and experiences of individuals in implementing these strategies and how they think they could be improved.

The chart above shows the response by the NPRC staff concerning their implementations and feedback on their gender sensitive conflict prevention endeavors. The chart also shows that most people understand what the concept is all about and how they incorporate the idea in their day to day experiences and practices. 18 out of 20 people showed to have an understanding on gender sensitive conflict prevention and 19 out of 20 has confirmed that the gender sensitive strategies by the NPRC has been successful. This is so because the aspect of gender is mainstreamed in all aspects of the Commissions works and the presence of gender focal persons in each department. Of the 20, 17 people have indicated that the strategies have had a positive impact on the lives of people in Harare Province. This proves the success of the NPRC in gender sensitive conflict prevention.

4.2 Strategies by the NPRC in gender sensitive conflict prevention

4.2.1 Training workshops on gender based violence and conflict prevention

Training workshops on gender based violence and conflict prevention has been deemed the most effective strategy that the NPRC with the help of stakeholders such as UN Women and ZCC has implemented in Harare. By providing training to a wide range of people including government officials, police officers, health workers and community members, it creates a common understanding of the issues and how to address them. They also allow for the sharing of best practices and the development of new approaches to addressing gender based violence and conflict prevention. To support the effectiveness of this strategy, an interview with a member of the ZCC was conducted in which the

respondent provided insights on an important aspect on how the church plays a role in these workshops in which the respondent says-;

Through training workshops, the church has been able to help empower the community members to dress the issues to do with gender based violence and conflict prevention and build a culture of respect and non-violence.

Other respondents has brought up that, by attending these training workshops, participants show a significant increase in knowledge about the issue and are able to incorporate their knowledge in their lines of work hence proving that training workshops are an effective strategy by the NPRC in ensuring gender sensitive conflict prevention. This concurs with the views by Trimarco(2016) who argue that reducing gender based violence can help create a more peaceful and just societies as well as promote development and economic growth. By engaging in training workshops, peace practitioners are able to come up with effective ways to tackle issues to do with gender based oppression and ensure cooperation.

4.2.2 Gender Inclusive Dialogues

Gender inclusive dialogues are conversations and discussions that are designed to be welcoming and inclusive of all genders. According to the United Nations (2020), gender inclusive dialogues are important because they can lead to more effective and equitable decision making. This is so because a wide range of perspectives and experiences can be taken into account leading to more informed and comprehensive initiatives. To support the effectiveness of this strategy, a respondent from the UN Women said-;

"By involving all genders in conflict prevention and resolution, we can ensure that the needs of all people are met and conflicts are resolved in a more just way."

This is in line with the gender mainstreaming approach which is an effort to ensure that gender equality is considered in all areas of policy and programing. With this, IPSS (2017) notes that inclusivity can be achieved through mechanisms such as gender quotas, gender balanced negotiation teams and inclusive consultation processes.

4.3 Effectiveness of the gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies by the NPRC

Gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies are those that take into account the specific needs and experiences of women and girls in conflict-affected areas. They often focus on women economic empowerment, gender based violence and women's leadership and political participation. The effectiveness of these strategies can vary depending on the context and the specific strategies used.

From the findings, it has been noted that the gender sensitive strategies by the NPRC has been effective in preventing conflicts in Harare as shall be supported by different respondents. During the interviews, the respondents has pointed out that, as members of the Commission, they have incorporated strategies that has been effective in promoting peace and prevent the occurrence of conflicts within the Harare Metropolitan province. Some of the strategies incorporated are gender inclusive dialogues, workshop trainings on gender based violence and conflict prevention and awareness campaigns. To show the effectiveness of these strategies, the following words were quoted by the Victim Support, Gender and Diversity officer-;

"Our strategies have been effective in a number of ways, we have seen a decrease in the number of reported cases of gender-based violence and an increase in the number of people who have sought support from our programmers. In addition to that, we have also seen an increase in the number of women and girls who are participating in leadership and empowerment programs throughout Harare"

The effectiveness of the strategies by the NPRC were further emphasized by the response by the Complaints Handling and Investigation of Legal services officer in which the respondent added that-;

"I would say that our strategies as the NPRC has been effective judging by the decrease in the number of reported cases and an increase in resolved cases, due to the programs such as awareness campaigns and gender inclusive dialogues, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of people who are aware of their rights and how to respond and report these violations."

The above statement provided reflects with the liberal feminist theory which advocates for individual rights, equal opportunities and social structures that support gender equality.

4.4 Strengths and Weaknesses of Gender Sensitive Conflict Prevention Strategies

Gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies aim to deal with the underlying causes of conflict such as discrimination and gender inequality, rather than just the symptoms. These strategies recognize that men and women experience conflict differently, and that the causes of conflict are often rooted in gender based inequalities. By addressing these underlying issues, gender sensitive strategies can help to create more sustainable and long term solutions to conflict. However, when implementing these strategies, there are strengths and weaknesses on each strategy.

From the findings through interviewing respondents by the NPRC, it has been noticed that they have admittedly pointed out the weaknesses and strengths of their strategies as pointed out by the Conflict Prevention, management, Resolution and Transformation officer that-;

"The strengths and weaknesses of the NPRC's implementation of gender sensitive strategies are linked to the overall effectiveness of these strategies. Its success in combating the root causes of conflict and engaging women in peacebuilding efforts can be seen as strengths. However the challenges faced by the Commission such as limited resources and political will can hinder the effectiveness of these strategies proving them to be weaknesses"

4.4 Strengths of the Gender Sensitive Conflict Prevention Strategies

The strengths of the strategies contributes to the overall effectiveness of the NPRCs approach to conflict prevention. By incorporating gender sensitive measures, the Commission can ensure that is work is inclusive and benefits all members of society.

4.4.1 Collaborative approach

According to Winkle (2022) a collaborative approach is an approach that brings together diverse stakeholders to jointly create, analyze and implement solutions to joint problems. From the interview, the general manager of the Victim Support, Gender and Diversity department pointed out that-;

"The Commission has worked to build partnerships and networks with a wide range of stakeholders including civil society organizations, youth groups, women's groups, churches and traditional leaders. It allows the Commission to draw on the expertise and experience of different groups, leading to the effectiveness and sustainability of our conflict prevention strategies."

This is further supported by Bennett (2020), who asserts that the Commission has established a network of local peace committees (LPCs) in all ten provinces of Zimbabwe which provide a forum for dialogue, consultation and collective action of conflict prevention and resolution. This shows that the commission recognizes the importance of different stakeholders in the process of conflict prevention and resolution. This will also help to build trust and promote a sense of ownership among all stakeholders. This is I line with the views of Borum (2019) who states that all relevant parties can effectively address conflicts at their root causes and promote sustainable peace. The collaborative approach helps ensure that everyone has joined the cause and shows commitment towards reaching sustainable peacebuilding, leaving no one behind.

4.4.2 Inclusive approach

The inclusive approach emphasizes the need to ensure that all groups including women, men, youth and marginalized communities are involved in the process of conflict prevention. This helps safeguard that the needs and perspectives of all groups are taken into account, leading to a more effective conflict prevention and resolution strategies. A respondent from the Healing, Rehabilitation and Reconciliation (HRR) department responded-;

"The Commission has held a number of gender inclusive dialogues at the local, provincial and national levels. These dialogues bring together women and men from different backgrounds to discuss issues related to conflict and peacebuilding. The goal being to create a safe space for open and honest discussions and develop strategies for addressing gender-based violence and other issues that affect women, men, girls and boys."

From the response, this shows that the NPRC is committed to addressing the underlying causes of conflict and building peace in a sustainable way. In Harare, these dialogues has been an important step towards creating a more inclusive society. As noted by Klaits (2015), engagement fosters a collective effort in preventing conflicts and strategies that are implemented are contextually relevant and effective.

4.5. Weaknesses of the Gender Sensitive Conflict Prevention Strategies

This response was found from other respondents on the issue and they can admit that although these strategies have their strengths, they also have weaknesses. These weaknesses can be overcome by interchanging these strategies so as to complement each other. Another respondent from the VSGD department pointed out that-;

"It is important to keep in mind that each strategy has its own strengths and weaknesses, and not all strategies are equally effective in all situations. But it is important to take into account the specific context and the needs of the community when implementing each strategy."

4.5.1Lack of political will

The NPRC is making progress in implementing these strategies but there is need for more work to ensure its success. It is also important to understand that each strategy has its own unique strengths and weaknesses and that it is crucial to tailor the strategy to the specific context and needs of the community.

4.6 obstacles faced by the NPRC in implementing gender sensitive conflict prevention

There are several obstacles that hinder the effectiveness of the gender sensitive strategies by the NPRC in conflict prevention as stated by the respondents during the interviews conducted and these are lack of political will, resistance from traditional patriarchal structures and limited resources. All these are major obstacles by respondents as stumbling blocks for the effectiveness of the gender sensitive strategies by the NPRC in conflict prevention.

4.6.1 Lack of political will

Lack of political will is an obstacle for implementing gender sensitive strategies by the NPRC. Without political will, it is difficult to implement any strategy that may be perceived as challenging the status quo. The government may be reluctant to provide the necessary resources and funding or prioritize the strategies over others. They may also face pressure from groups that oppose gender equality or do not see the value of these approaches. What is important is to find how the Commission can tackle this by other alternatives as outlined by the respondent-;

"The lack of political will is a major obstacle that needs to be addressed through evidence-based advocacy, engaging with decision-makers and building support from the bottom up"

This shows that lack of political will proves as an obstacle to reaching the desired goals of the Commission but it has been able to engage with civil society organizations and community leaders to build support and advocacy for the strategies.

4.6.2 Resistance from patriarchal norms

Resistance from patriarchal norms can be a major barrier to the successful implementation of gender sensitive conflict prevention tactics as outlined by the respondents. The resistance can come from a variety of sources including religious and cultural beliefs, lack of understanding of gender mainstreaming or concerns about losing power and privilege. A respondent from the Zimbabwe Council of Churches (ZCC) points out that-;

"Resistance to gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies based on patriarchal norms can have a number of negative effects. For example it can perpetuate cycles of gender based violence and prevent the full participation of women in peacebuilding processes."

It was also pointed out by a great number of respondents that working together and engaging in dialogue can break down this barrier and help create a more just and equitable world for everyone. The ZCC respondent ended the topic by saying-;

"Faith leaders, government officials and civil society organizations have a role to play in the process and it is only through mutual understanding and respect that we achieve meaningful change."

4.7 Summary

The chapter addressed how the data was gathered and the findings were given as was conducted by using interviews and questionnaires of which they were a mixed method approach of both qualitative and quantitative approach. Different views were given pertaining the effectiveness of the gender sensitive strategies by the NPRC such as workshop trainings and gender inclusive dialogues. Their effectiveness and ineffectiveness were given by the respondents. Obstacles to these strategies were also given by the 8 interviewees.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study its findings. It also provides recommendations and conclusions drawn from the study. This chapter of the study seeks to give a summary of the previous chapter and possible conclusions that the researcher has drawn from the research findings.

5.1 Summary

In Chapter 1 of the study, the research introduced the background of the study with the purpose of assessing the gender sensitive strategies by the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission in Gender Sensitive Conflict Prevention. The chapter showed that gender based violence has been a cause of concern in Harare and the need to address these issues. It also brings into play the importance of the NPRC in efforts to prevent conflicts in Zimbabwe. The objectives of the study being to identify that

strengths and weaknesses of the conflict prevention strategies by the NPRC in Harare, to assess the effectiveness of the conflict prevention strategies implemented by the NPRC in Harare and to examine the obstacles faced by the NPRC in implementing the gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies in Harare.. Also, the research included some research questions which are what are the strengths and weaknesses of the strategies by the NPRC in conflict prevention, how effective are the current conflict prevention strategies implemented by the NPRC in Harare and what are the obstacles faced by the NPRC in implementing these gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies in Harare. The chapter introduces all the contents of the entire research and what it is all about. Definitions of key words in the study were defined and also some assumptions of the study were outlined.

In chapter 2 the research focused on literature review and theoretical framework whereby it looked at secondary data contributed by other scholars on the subject which is under study. The chapter focuses on the strengths and weaknesses and the strategies, the effectiveness and the obstacles that are faced in implementing these strategies. It also looked at the approach that guides the research which is the gender mainstreaming approach. The chapter also outlines the theory which was used during the study which is the Liberal Feminism theory. The theory was used to support the case which is under study and what their views were on the study undertaken.

Adding on, chapter 3 focused on research methodology and design whereby it highlighted the methodologies which were going to be used for data collection. The chapter focused on the use of questionnaires and interviews to gather data for the research. The research sample was also included in chapter 3 whereby the researcher decided on the population sample which was going to be involved during the study. The chapter also looked at the data collection procedures and also ethical considerations which were guiding the research being undertaken.

Chapter 4 focused on data presentation and analysis and this was done through the use of graphs and tables of the data collected. The chapter used bar graphs and tables to present data which was collected by the researcher. Also, it interpreted the data collected from the interviews and questionnaires and it showed the response rate of the respondents. Also, the chapter provided the obstacles faced in implementing these gender sensitive strategies. All the information which was collected was analyzed and presented in Chapter 4. The findings of the study showed that the Commission and its stakeholders have been working tirelessly towards incorporating gender in their works hence creating a more inclusive culture.

5.2 Conclusions

The conclusions made in this research are based on the objectives that guided this research. The objectives of this research were to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the conflict prevention strategies by the NPRC in Harare, to assess the effectiveness of the conflict prevention strategies implemented by the NPRC in Harare and to examine the obstacles faced by the NPRC in implementing the current gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies in Harare.

Based on the findings from the research, the following conclusions were drawn-;

The assessment of the Commission's conflict prevention in Harare has revealed both strengths and weaknesses. The strengths lie in the inclusive approach which signify a positive shift in the dynamics of local peace initiatives. By taking into consideration the views by both men and women in a conflict

situation, there is bound to be effective conflict prevention strategic planning thus ensuring the safety of everyone and efforts towards sustainable peace and peacebuilding. The NPRC in Harare also has some weaknesses such as the lack of adequate resources which have proven to hinder the proper implementation of strategies in efforts to eradicate gender based violence. Lack of political will results in no or little funding of the initiatives. Lack of follow up mechanisms has also been the weakness of the NPRC as this results in the creation of gaps between the adoption of the strategies and implementation on the ground hence proving as a weakness. While the NPRC's efforts in gender sensitive conflict prevention demonstrate notable strengths and weaknesses, there is need to require further attention and development to enhance the effectiveness of these strategies in preventing conflicts in Harare.

From the results, the effectiveness of the gender sensitive strategies in Harare is limited. While the NPRC's approaches are theoretically sound and rooted in participatory principles, the lack of sustained funding and effective coordination with other stakeholders has hindered their implementation. While the Commissions' conflict prevention strategies in Harare face significant challenges, the organization's dedication to addressing the drivers of conflict and its commitment to participatory, inclusive methods offer a glimmer of hope for peacebuilding efforts in the city. The NPRC's innovative approaches, such as community –led dialogue and training initiatives have the potential to be effective when provided with adequate resources and support.

The NPRC's attempts to implement gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies in Harare have been hindered by numerous obstacles, including financial constraints, deeply-entrenched patriarchal norms and the legacy of violence and division from past conflicts. Additionally, it faces obstacles in enhancing women's economic empowerment and ensuring they fully benefit from economic growth, as specified in the revised Gender Policy's objectives for promoting gender equality in economic opportunities and outcomes. These obstacles highlight the multifaceted nature of gender sensitive conflict prevention strategies and the importance of learning from global experiences particularly in Africa. The study highlighted the urgent need for sustained support from the government, civil society and international donors to provide the necessary resources and expertise for the NPRC to effectively address the gendered dynamics of conflict in the city.

The National Peace and Reconciliation Commission's gender sensitive strategies have made a significant impact in promoting peace and reconciliation in Zimbabwe specifically in Harare. These strategies have contributed to a reduction in violence, the inclusion of women and the marginalized groups in peacebuilding processes and an increase in the participation of women in decision making. However, although successful, the Commission still faces challenges in implementing these strategies and these include lack of resources, capacity and political will. Despite these challenges the Commissions efforts have shown the potential for gender inclusive approaches to be an effective tool for promoting sustainable peace and preventing conflict.

5.3 Recommendations

After all the findings and conclusions, the research also came up with some recommendations to help the National Peace and Reconciliation Commission in its mission towards conflict prevention.

Increase the capacity of local organizations on the works of the Commission so as to implement gender inclusive strategies in every sector in Harare.

Encourage the development and implementation of a clear monitoring and evaluation framework.

Engage more in strategic partnerships with other organizations, local and international that work towards conflict prevention

The NPRC should strengthen communication and outreach efforts to promote the importance of gender inclusive approaches.

The Commission should collaborate strongly with the media to raise awareness about gender inclusive conflict prevention. This will also help increase its visibility nationwide and globally.

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Annexures

Appendix 1: Research questionnaire

Research tittle: An assessment og the gender-sensitive strategies by the NPRC in conflict prevention in Harare Metropolitan Province.

Instructions :Tick on the appropriate box

Do not put your personal details in the questionnaire.

Indicate your age

18-25

26-45

46-65

65+

Indicate your sex

Male

Female

Indicate your level of education

O level

A level

Diploma

Degree

Masters

PHD

Do you understand the concept of gender sensitive conflict prevention?

yes

no

What are the gender sensitive strategies that the NPRC has implemented in Harare

…….

……..

………..

From the strategies above, which one do you consider to be the most successful strategy and why?

……

……

Have these strategies impacted the lives of women and girls in Harare?

Yes

No

Give reason

………

……

What challenges does the NPRC face in implementing these strategies

………

……

……
……………………………………………………………………
What recommendations do you prescribe to NPRC to enhance its influence on issues to do with conflict prevention?

……
……
…………………………………………….

Appendix 2: interview guide

Research tittle: an assessment of the gender-sensitive strategies by the NPRC in conflict prevention in Harare Metropolitan Province.

Section 1: for NPRC staff

Can you tell us briefly about what the NPRC does and the department you are in?

What are the organizations gender sensitive strategies in conflict prevention in Harare?

Can you tell me some of the key objectives of your organization's conflict prevention strategy

Who are the key stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of these strategies

How does the strategies address the root causes of conflict?

How effective have these strategies been?

How do you measure the success of a strategy?

What resources and capacities does the organization have to implement the strategies?

What challenges or barriers does the organization face in implementing the strategies in Harare

 Can you tell us more about the gender-specific needs of communities affected by conflict, specifically in Harare?

 How are the needs of women and girls taken into account in the design and implementation of the conflict prevention strategies?

 How are these conflict prevention strategies addressing gender-based violence?

Are the conflict prevention strategies taking into account the different needs of women and men?

 What mechanisms are in place to monitor and evaluate the gender-sensitive impact of the conflict prevention strategies in Harare

Section 2: for stakeholders

How does your organization work towards gender sensitive conflict prevention?

How do you coordinate your efforts with the NPRC?

How has your collaboration with the NPRC pushed the agenda of your organization?

Do you have any recommendations for improving collaboration with the NPRC?

If you were to comment on the works of the NPRC in Harare Province, what would you say?

What are your recommendations on how the NPRC can improve on their strategies in gender sensitive conflict prevention?