

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

An Evaluation of the Role of Women in Conflict Resolution Processes in Zimbabwe from 2008 to 2013: A Case Study of Marlborough Suburb, Harare

Andrew Mukono

Lecturer, Zimbabwe Open University, Harare, Zimbabwe

Abstract:

The research sought to evaluate the role that women play in the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe using a case study of Marlborough Suburb in Harare. The area of study is where the researcher resides. The case study research design was chosen because it enabled the researcher to make use of the several approaches to research. The qualitative approaches enabled the researcher to study the phenomena in the natural settings, coming face to face with reality. This research used questionnaires and interviews in collecting data. Semi-structured questionnaire were used during interviews. Structured interviews were expected to improve the quality of the data. Other than using questionnaires, face-to-face interviews were conducted. Respondents were interviewed using a semi-structured questionnaire. The interviewees comprised men and women, In order to come up the respondents for this particular research, purposive sampling was adopted. In this case, respondents were selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones would be the most useful or representative. The researcher relied on his expert judgement to select respondents that were representative or typical of the population. The results showed that the respondents were aware of the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe. There was a general feeling that women should be included in the Conflict Resolution processes. Research findings indicate that there were more male participants in conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe than their female counterparts. Respondents concurred that women were not adequately represented and therefore there was a call to have them enjoy equal opportunities in the conflict resolution processes. The study also revealed that women were being excluded from the conflict resolution processes because of the perceived patriarchal systems that were in practice in some parts of the country. Some respondents highlighted that women were less educated than their male counterparts. Other respondents indicated that women were less not prepared to take up challenges in decision making positions such as politics. Despite the exclusion of from participating in conflict resolution processes, it was found out that women in Zimbabwe had a critical role to play in solving conflicts. Reasons for the need to include women in conflict resolution ranged from the fact that women constituted fifty-two (52%) of the country's population and should therefore have a role in the affairs of Zimbabwe. Women were also said to be having motherly love and this would be handy in the conflict resolution processes. The respondents highlighted that women should be included in the conflict resolution processes because they were more patient than man and that they were known to be peace loving. The research also revealed that women faced some challenges in the conflict resolution processes. The challenges were highlighted as the non implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), lack of policies that supported women participation in the conflict resolution processes, patriarchal systems and that women were afraid of taking up challenges in politics. To overcome these challenges, the respondents recommended that Zimbabwe must implement and enforce the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). The respondents also advocated for the removal of patriarchal practices that excluded women from participating in political decision making positions. There was also a call for the Zimbabwean government to enact laws that that encourage and support women participation in the political sphere.

Keywords: Conflict, conflict resolution processes, peace building, patriarchal systems, politics, role, United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), women

1. Introduction

The full participation of women in conflict resolution is no longer a matter of privilege but has become a right. This new development is slowly becoming a norm world over at all levels of human existence. However, in some circles women's activities involving the promotion of peace are still not recognized due to a number of factors such as culture, religion and patriarchy. Zimbabwe is a typical example because public officials are still being elected based on male-dominance. In view of the above, this study seeks to examine the role of women in conflict resolution at macro level.

2. Background to the Study

According to Peace Women Organisation, women are amongst the most vulnerable victims in war and conflict situations, yet they are also often the ones that trigger peace mechanisms. According to OXFAM (2005) approximately 80% of today's civilian casualties are women and 80% of all refugees and internally displaced people worldwide are women and children. However, there exist in literature some stereotypes that women are more peace loving than men, and can bring a troublemaker to the negotiation table. It has been argued that women are more effective and more efficient than men in negotiations. Social research has demonstrated that women tend to be more cooperative and less aggressive when it comes to conflict resolution processes (Hunt, 2005). According to Goldstein, 2001, different feminists argue that, women, because of their greater experience with nurturing and human relations, are generally more effective than men in conflict resolution and group decision-making". They claim that men are relatively violent and women relatively peaceful and this is largely due to women's care giving roles and potential for motherhood, leaving them inclined to oppose war and be more interested in finding alternative methods to conflict resolution. This is further supported by Skjelsbaek's discussion of how motherhood is conceptualized as the antithesis of violence (Skjelsbaek and Smith, 2001). In terms of Political Conflict Resolution, there is always an expression commonly referring women as "Mothers of politics" following the idea that women due to their innate nurturing role may wish to protect their sons from risking their lives at war. This idea is key to the essence of my study as it demonstrates the way in which violence could potentially be reduced if more women were involved in political conflict resolution.

During times of political conflicts gender differentiation is heightened; men are instilled with patriotism and their duty to protect women, children and the nation, whilst women are, reminded that by biology and by tradition they are the keepers of the heart and home (Giles and Hyndman: 2004). Other indications that women may be more prone to peaceful solutions to conflict than men is their dominance of anti-war movements in which women are often either more numerous than men, or sometimes form their own all-female organizations. This could be due to this idea that women are more peace-loving, that they have far less power than men in decision making and negotiations and thus must seek other forums in order to try to pressure governments into taking peaceful action.

Betty Bumpers (1999), the founder of Peace Links in the USA, was quoted as saying:

it is not because we think better than men, but that we think differently, it's not women against men, but women and men together, it's not that the world would have been a better place if women had run it, but the world will be a better place when we as women, who bring our perspectives, share in running it.

Women must be involved in Political Conflict resolution because they have important and necessary roles to play in all phases of post-conflict reconstruction. Women are in a better position to talk to women who took part in the fighting in terms of demobilisation and re-integration because they are quite knowledgeable about fellow women and that these women will be willing to open up to fellow women and share their fears and concerns.

Women usually suffer mental disturbances during conflicts and thus, their full involvement in conflict resolution processes is necessary so as to relieve them of some unpleasant conflict experiences. The United Nations Resolution 1325 provides the mandate for women inclusion in peace and conflict resolution. Experiences have also shown that women are both victims and participants in conflicts and thus they are directly affected by the conflict as victims of violence, as bereaved relatives and friends. The general consensus that women are pro-peace justifies their inclusion in conflict resolution processes.

According to (Hunt, 2005) "women's presence in political conflict resolution and peace building processes is transformative, they have the power to change politics." UNICEF is also on record saying that the language used by women is fundamentally different since it incorporates love, empathy, consensus, accommodation, respect, reconciliation and diversity. OXFAM (ibid) went on to say that the presence of women in political conflict resolution processes brings about restraint in men's behaviour. Women speak more correctly and more politely. Women's participation in the democratic process could result in greater tolerance in society and radically influence people's thinking. According to many research studies on women and political participation, women's different life experiences prepare them for effective participation in the political processes. The WORLD BANK is also on record as saying that, if women are not present at policy and decision-making levels, there is a democratic deficit as decisions taken without women's perspective lack credibility in a democratic context.

Women must be involved in conflict prevention, resolution and management efforts at all levels. When they are not active participants, the views, needs and interests of half of the population are not represented, and therefore interventions will not be as appropriate or enduring. Because the consequences of conflict weigh so heavily on the lives of women, they naturally show great interest in peace processes. In some cases, peace itself may come much later if women are not involved in the process (Giles and Hyndman: 2004). For example, the leadership and diligence of women as leaders of human rights organizations has been critical in keeping the international community aware of the continuing conflict in Chechnya and growing instability in Russia's other republics in the North Caucasus. These groups have pressed the Russian authorities to address the rampant violation of human rights across the region, and the women-led Memorial, a Russian NGO, has provided the world with documented information on human rights violations from the North Caucasus and especially Chechnya.

The Peace Women Organisation is also on record as saying that women play some decisive roles in negotiating the peace process. To do this role effectively, they must be empowered politically and economically, and must be adequately represented at all levels of decision-making. Despite the difficulties conflict-affected women face, their role in peacemaking has steadily grown over the past several years. In Liberia, the Women's Peace Initiative made major strides towards a peaceful resolution of the 14-year conflict by pushing for disarmament of the fighting factions before the signing of a peace accord. In some war-torn countries like Guatemala, Burundi, Cyprus, Bosnia, and South Africa, among others - women's peace organizations and coalitions have played a crucial role in helping to bring about peace.

There have been many policies, covenants and resolutions that have been put in place to support the muted idea that women should be actively involved in conflict resolution processes and peace building. These resolutions came as after a strong realization that women despite their continued suffering during protracted conflicts, they will be pushed aside when peace negotiations are initiated. These are The 1995 Platform for Action and the Beijing Declaration; The Millennium Development Goals and United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security

The Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women in 1995, described itself as an agenda for women's empowerment. Under its section on Women in Armed Conflict, it agitate an increasing the participation of women in conflict resolution at decision-making levels and urged governments, as well as international and regional international institutions to integrate gender perspectives in the resolution of armed or other conflicts and foreign occupation.

Goal three of the millennium development goals (MDGs) is the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. The targets for the achievement of this goal are the inclusion of women and girls in education, equal access to employment and recruitment, and the representation of women within decision-making positions. The Millennium Summit Declaration stated: "We stress the important role of women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace building. We also underline the importance of the integration of gender perspective and women's equal participation and full involvement in all efforts to maintain and promote peace and security, as well as the need to increase their role in decision-making at all levels."

The United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was the first UN Security Council Resolution to be passed that specifically addresses women's roles in conflicts and peace processes, as well as the impacts of war on women. The resolution advocates for the protection of women and children after conflict and encourages states to consider women's inclusion in post-conflict reforms such as disarmament, security, and judicial, constitutional and electoral processes. The resolution recognizes for the first time the role of women in conflict--not as victims, but as actors in the prevention and resolution of such conflicts and in equal participation in peace building and decision-making." Since then, other international bodies have adopted resolutions and declarations emphasizing the importance of women participation in peace building processes.

Women, like their male counterparts have the right to have their views and concerns heard regarding the resolution of political conflicts and peace building. Excluding women from peace talks is therefore a serious omission because it denies them the right to be heard and equally represented. Women have played a greater role in transforming conflicts worldwide, despite the challenges that they face in these peace processes. Given chance to be heard and represented, women can prove to be critical sex in resolving political conflicts. The former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan once said, "in war tone societies, women often keep societies going, they maintain the social fabric, they replace destroyed social services and tend to the sick and wounded, as a result, women remain the prime advocates of peace."

Women's efforts to participate in formal peace processes have faced various challenges. The polarized and tense environment of conflict negotiations usually reinforces prevailing patriarchal and other social attitudes that exclude women from power circles.

According to OXFAM (2000) the Congolese government, as well as the other warring parties, strongly opposed the inclusion of women in formal peace negotiations. For them, war and peace are exclusively the business of men. In addition, the men who attended the negotiations felt that women did not have any right to participate because they were not fighters and they did not enjoy meaningful representation in local or national decision-making bodies before the war.

Traditionally, women have been left out of peacemaking and peace building, or regarded simply as war-victims. Furthermore, too often, they suffer "a backlash against any new-found freedoms, and they are forced 'back' into kitchens and fields," whereas they may have seen their role expanded significantly during the war period. Their work in rebuilding communities, building peace and overcoming trauma has often been ignored and remained invisible. However, "they have consistently demanded recognition as the active agents in the prevention of war, rehabilitation of victims and reconstruction of physical structures."

Despite notable progress for women over the past decade, even when they manage to play a role in peace negotiations, women tend to fade into the background when it comes to rebuilding destroyed economies and reconstructing war-torn societies. Their efforts in rebuilding social networks are viewed as peripheral to formal mechanisms, and women do not receive their deserved recognition. In most cases, women's efforts towards peace go unrecognized and are under-reported, as data collected on peace processes is often not disaggregated by gender. Women are usually put off by the power relations that often characterise political conflict resolution work. Women's efforts to participate in formal peace processes have faced various challenges. The polarized and tense environment of conflict negotiations usually reinforces prevailing patriarchal and other social attitudes that exclude women from power circles. Many post-conflict contexts are characterized by unequal power-sharing between men and women. Women often have the burden of ensuring the subsistence of their households. They are also the primary caregivers for elderly relatives and children as for example in Rwanda, where women took care of the displaced people including orphans. Because of this heavy burden women do have limited opportunities to get involved in national or even local decision making. For example, in Rwanda, women were not given the opportunity to attend political gatherings or speak in public.

According to Mutamba (2005) women's participation in formal peace negotiations has faced strong opposition. There were no women present at the Dayton Accords, which ended the conflict in Bosnia, and just one woman was at the negotiating table in Rambouillet, prior to the NATO bombing campaign. The "gender task force" initially set up within the Stability Pact for South-Eastern Europe has disappeared from the list of new future priorities despite achieving positive results, notably in Macedonia.

OXFAM is also on record as saying that, despite elaborate international and national policy frameworks, women in Zimbabwe and most countries face enormous challenges to their participation in peace-building processes. The Women in Development Toolkit (2004) also outlines that the efforts that women make in terms of political conflict resolution processes are not without many obstacles and risks. At the community level, women face significant obstacles to engagement in peace building processes, including exclusion

from male-dominated decision-making forums, lack of funding, exclusion from formal peace-building processes, resistance to initiatives that challenge cultural traditions, and security risks. Women's participation in political conflict resolution is hindered because they might have fled the conflict. These women take additional work as resources become increasingly scarce. This in turn affects the health of women and girls. All these make participation by women in Political conflict resolution and peace building more difficult for women.

Women are more likely to be subjected to cultural pressures against putting themselves forward, to refrain from travel and not to engage in important public arenas. Where women want to participate they may not have the required education or training, since their education may have been disrupted by the conflict. Political groups and Political conflict resolution processes may therefore tend to be male dominated. According to McKay (1995)

"Women are put off by the nature of political power relationships, and do not knowhow - or wish - to adapt even if they know how to use the system. Men shape and lead politics, so that the practice of a true democracy and equality are a problem."

Access to social networks affects women's participation in Political Conflict resolution agendas. Many social networks involving women may have broken down during conflict. Others may have been neglected by many of the women as a result of the sexual violence they might have experienced during conflict. This may affect women's ability to participate in conflict resolution processes. Many women's organisation cite lack of resources as a limiting dimension that needs to be overcome in participation of women in political conflict resolution. These include includes lack of employment opportunities and to productive asserts such as land, capital, health services, training and education.

Another challenge faced by women in Political Conflict resolution is the fact that women do not have well established mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the implementation of the gender agenda in post-conflict settings. For example, in Somalia, male dominated structures have not facilitated the implementation of the agreed affirmative action. The Congolese government, as well as the other warring parties, strongly opposed the inclusion of women in formal peace negotiations. For them, war and peace are exclusively the business of men. In addition, the men who attended the negotiations felt that women did not have any right to participate because they were not fighters and they did not enjoy meaningful representation in local or national decision-making bodies before the war. Unlike in relation to electoral processes, Congolese men involved in formal peace negotiations did not feel the need to 'woo' the female constituency. This left Congolese women with international commitments - the implementation of which are tributary to governments and others actors' good will. McKay (1995) says:

In the pacific Islands that have undergone a period of armed conflict that included Fiji, Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, women were very much involved in peace building in these countries by engaging in talks with the armed and warring groups especially in their own communities, but were eventually ignored once the peace negotiations reached state level. However, sustainable peace building in these countries would require further involvement of women, and the building of peace networks at the regional level.

Other challenges include lack of funding for women to participate in all diplomatic negotiations and in the implementation processes that follow. The majority of the formal processes take place in foreign countries. Women usually cannot afford to cover their travel expenses, as they generally come from among the poor. It is more difficult for them to participate in formal peace processes when their main concern is survival and fulfilment of the basic needs of their families in the chaos created by the war.

UNIFEM is directly tackling the challenge of implementing SCR 1325 at the community level in order to build women's' engagement in peace-building and public decision-making, and to protect women and children in communities around the world. In order to enhance the performance of women in peace building and conflict resolution Governments and the UN should: Ensure that women play a key role in the design and implementation of post-conflict resolution and peace building activities. Support and strengthen women's organizations in their peace building efforts by providing adequate and sustained financial and technical support. Strengthen the protection and representation of refugee and displaced women by paying special attention to their health, rehabilitation and training needs. End impunity and ensure redress of crimes committed against women in violent conflict and enforce and bring to justice culprits involved in rape as a war crime. Establish mechanisms for enforcing and monitoring international instruments for the protection of women's rights in post-conflict situations.

Conflicts have been experienced world over and Zimbabwe is no exception to this phenomenon. Some of the conflicts such as the struggle for independence of Zimbabwe have been long and brutal. It should be remembered that Zimbabwe's Liberation Struggle affected both men and women with many of them losing their lives, being displaced and tortured including forced migration. Zimbabwean women are on record as having participated in this political liberation struggle. However, when official peace negotiations begin and the decisions on the consolidation of peace and rebuilding of the country are made, women are relegated to the traditional role of service providers while male leaders assume the mantle of strategic decision-making. The political rhetoric during the Zimbabwean war affirmed gender equality and urged women to support the war but were soon forgotten in the ensuing scramble for power. A case study of Zimbabwean women after the armed struggle demonstrates this point well. After Zimbabwean women's active participation in the liberation war, and after they campaigned vigorously for ZANU PF and ensured the party's victory in the polls, the then Prime Minister R.G. Mugabe, the country's new leader, noted that:-

"The principle of equality between men and women is basic to the political philosophy of our government. We learned throughout the liberation struggle that success and power are possible when men and women are united as equals. It was when women were free to fully contribute towards their own freedom that Zimbabwe was possible" (Lapchick and Urdang 1982: 108).

UNICEF, 2005, noted how Zimbabwean women played an active role in the liberation struggle, only to be forgotten upon the attainment of independence. UNICEF observed;

But having recognized women as important players in the newly independent nation, soon after the elections, the male leadership "turned its back upon them and pushed them aside. The political base of the new society remained fundamentally the same as it had been under the pre-war regime and offered women fewer openings than had been promised.

At a press conference in August 1998, the late Joseph Msika, the then Minister without Portfolio in charge of resettlement, reportedly stated, "I would have my head cut off if I gave women land." This was when the Government of Zimbabwe denied a petition by women's groups that one-third of land redistributed under the land reform program be distributed to households headed by women, which reportedly made up one-third of all rural households.

Most approaches to conflict resolution and peace building have either ignored or marginalized issues of gender and women. Women consistently remain a minority of participants in conflict resolution and peace building initiatives receiving less attention, usually just as mere beneficiaries or victims of conflict (OXFAM). Reflecting on the above developments, in 2002, Secretary General Kofi Annan stated in his report on women, peace and security that:

"We can no longer afford to minimize or ignore the contributions of women and girls to all stages of conflict resolution, peacemaking, peace-building, peacekeeping and reconstruction processes. Sustainable peace will not be achieved without the full and equal participation of women and men".

As a result of women's exclusion from peace building, negotiations and decisions, they lack direct influence in the identification of reconstruction priorities that are usually part of peace agreements. Nevertheless, women continue to play critical roles through their work in grassroots organizations working for peace and reconciliation.

During the Global Political Agreement in Zimbabwe that sought to find a lasting solution to Zimbabwe's political crisis following the disputed 2008 Harmonised elections, it was sad to note that few women took part in conflict resolution processes. Of the six negotiators, only Priscilla Misihairambwi was a woman. On the other hand, Lindiwe Zulu was the only woman among the SADC appointed facilitators. To ensure that the GPA was successfully implemented, the Organ for National Healing and Integration was created through Article VII of the GPA. Just like the two scenarios above, Ms Sekai Holland was the only woman in the Organ.

As if women had no role to play, only three females, namely Priscilla Misihairambwi, Oppah Muchinguri and Tabitha Khumalo were part of the Joint Monitoring and Implementation Committee (JOMIC) that was tasked to monitor the progress of conflict resolution process in Zimbabwe. The rest members in this committee were male. The Constitutional Select Committee (COPAC), which was established on the basis of article VI of the Global Political Agreement, was made up of a total of 25 members. The committee came up with a home grown Constitution that was passed through a referendum in March 2013. It was also sad to note that the three principal leaders of the COPAC were male. Out of the 25 other subcommittee COPAC members, only five were females while the rest were male. The Secretariat of the COPAC steering committee was headed by a male member.

Following the 2008 Harmonised elections in Zimbabwe women remained underrepresented in government and politics. Twenty of the 150 M.P.s were women, including the deputy speaker of the Parliament. Three cabinet ministers with portfolios, three ministers of state, and three deputy ministers were women. Women participate in politics without legal restriction; however, according to local women's groups, husbands particularly in rural areas commonly direct their wives to vote for the husband's preferred candidates. According to Ntombikayise Mswela a women's rights activist "women in Zimbabwe are largely seen as a huge demographic to be exploited by politicians who seek their support in their struggles but yet to exclude them when negotiations for peace are initiated". Women in Politics Support Unit (WiPSU) in Zimbabwe is trying to increase women's political participation and strengthen the leadership capacities of women in political office in Zimbabwe including conflict resolution structures, but it seems nothing tangible is coming out as witnessed by their continued segregation in political structures.

3. Theoretical Framework

This study was underpinned by John Burton's view that women play a significant the role of in conflict resolution. Women as well as other people who have had the experience of being members of disenfranchised, underprivileged and minority groups, have according to Burton, a special role to play in the area of conflict resolution and peace building (Burton, 1990). He insists, however, that "it is not that females are more peace-oriented or less forceful than males," but rather that "because of their social experiences" women are better positioned to trust conflict resolution initiatives and engage in activities that will further the prospects for peace (Burton, 1990, 35).

4. Methodology

The case study research design was chosen because it enabled the researcher to make use of the several approaches to research. The qualitative approaches enabled the researcher to study the phenomena in the natural settings, coming face to face with reality. This research used questionnaires and interviews in collecting data. Semi-structured questionnaire were used during interviews. Structured interviews were expected to improve the quality of the data. Other than using questionnaires, face-to-face interviews were conducted. Respondents were interviewed using a semi- structured questionnaire. The interviewees comprised men and women, In order to come up the respondents for this particular research, purposive sampling was adopted. In this case, respondents were selected on the basis of the researcher's judgement about which ones would be the most useful or representative. The researcher relied on his expert judgement to select respondents that were representative or typical of the population.

5. Findings

In this section data obtained from respondents who included both men and women from Marlborough Suburb in Harare. The first section describes the demographic data of the respondents. Research findings based on the research questions asked in the study follow. Tables and figures were used to highlight the findings.

5.1. Response Rate

The table shows that twenty (20) respondents were successfully interviewed. This shows that all those interviewed had their responses captured and that gives a hundred percent (100%) of the interviews conducted. This could have been attributed to the fact that all the prospective interviewees who were sampled responded to the questions that formed the basis of the research study. The table also shows that twenty-five questionnaires were administered and that twenty (20), which translates to eighty percent (80%), were returned while five (5), which translates to ten percent (20%), were returned. The non-return of questionnaires could have been due to the sensitivity of the subject matter or the fact the respondents had no time to respond or were not even aware of the research subject.

Number of Respondents interviewed		Questionnaires		
		Sent	Received	Non Response
	20	25	20	5
Percentage	100%	100%	80%	20%

Table 1: Interviews conducted and questionnaire response rate

5.2. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

In relation to the study, personal attributes of the respondents/participants was sought to establish the background information. An appreciation of the background information was vital in that it had a bearing on the conclusions that will be drawn. Availability of such information would help the researcher in coming up with appropriate recommendations. The respondents were drawn from individuals of different backgrounds. This enabled the researcher to have a cross-sectional view of how the respondents judged the role of women in conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe.

5.2.1. Respondents' Gender

A total of thirty (40) respondents took part in the research. Of these, twenty (20) were male and the other twenty (20) were female as shown in table 2.

Gender	No of Respondents	Percentage
Female	20	50
Male	20	50
Total	40	100

Table 2: Respondents' gender

5.2.2. Respondents' Age

A total of 40 participants took place. There were 20 female participants and 20 male participants. More participants were from the 31-40 which constituted thirty-eight percent (38%), followed by those from the 41-50 age group which constituted twenty-two percent (23%). The 51-60 age group had four (5) participants which constituted thirteen percent (13%). The above 60 age group had six participants, constituting fifteen percent (15%). The 21-30 age group and the below twenty age group had three (3) and two (2) participants each which constituted eight percent (8%) and five percent (5%) respectively. The respondents' ages are shown in table 3 below.

Age	No of Respondents	Percentage
Below 20 but above 18	2	5
Aged between 21 - 30	3	8
Aged between 31 - 40	15	38
Aged between 41 - 50	9	23
Aged between 51 - 60	5	13
Aged above 60	6	15
Total	40	102

Table 3: Respondents' age

NB: The above percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

5.2.3. Respondents' Level of Education

All respondents had completed Ordinary level ("O" level). Five (5) participants had completed 'O' level, eight (8) had completed 'A' Level, eight (8) had obtained Diplomas, nine (9) were first degree holders, five (5) had masters' degrees, three (3) were doctors and two were professors. The high level of education among the respondents enabled the smooth flow of data collection. The respondents

understood and spoke English fluently during the in-depth interviews. The high literacy level was also shown in the way the questionnaires were answered.

Level of Education	No of Respondents	Percentage
'O' LEVEL	5	13
'A' LEVEL	8	20
DIPLOMA	8	20
DEGREE	9	23
MASTERS	5	13
DOCTORATE	3	8
PROFESSOR	2	5
TOTAL	40	102

Table 4: Respondents' level of education

NB: The above percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

5.2.4. Respondents' Marital Status

Of the forty (40) respondents who participated in this research, ten (10) were single, eighteen (18) were married, four (4) were divorced while another four (4) were widowed. Four other respondents had separated.

Marital Status	No of Respondents	Percentage
Single	10	25
Married	18	45
Divorced	4	10
Widowed	4	10
Separated	4	10
Total	40	100

Table 5: Respondents' marital status

5.3. Respondents' Awareness of Conflict Resolution Processes in Zimbabwe

Eighty five percent (85%) of the respondents indicated that they were aware of the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe. Ten percent (10%) said they were not aware while five percent indicated that they were not sure of what the researcher was taking about. The results are shown in figure 1 below.

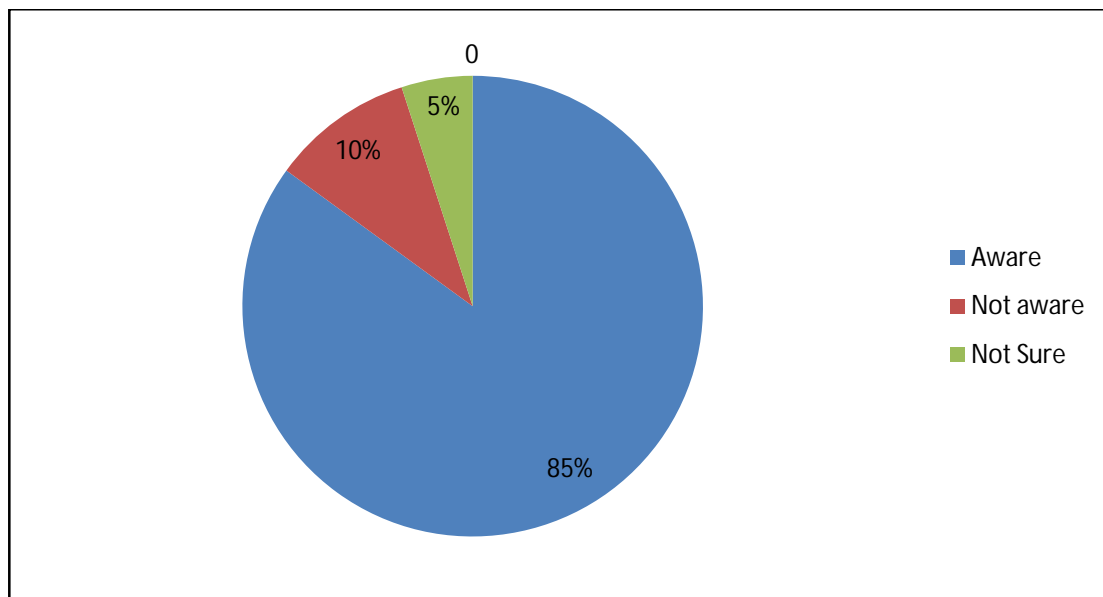


Figure 1: Respondents' awareness of the Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe

5.4. Respondents' Views on the Inclusion of Women in Conflict Resolution Processes in Zimbabwe

There was an overwhelming response on the inclusion of women in Political Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe. Ninety – five percent (95%) of the respondents indicated that women should be included while five percent (5%) said that women should never be included in the processes of resolving political conflicts are done in Zimbabwe. (See figure 2 below.

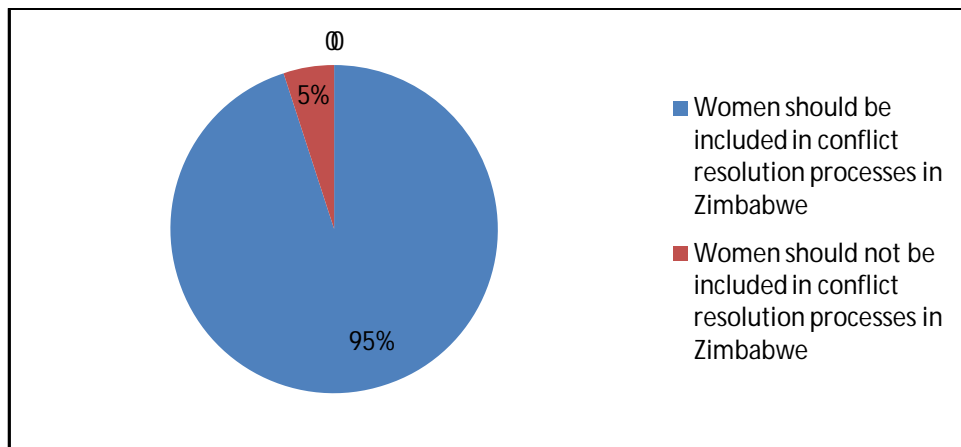


Figure 2: Respondents' views on the inclusion of women in Political Conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe.

5.5. Respondents' Views on Participation of Women in Political Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe

Ninety five (95%) of the respondents indicated that there were more male participants in the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe while five percent (5%) of the respondents indicated that there was a fair number of female participants in the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe.

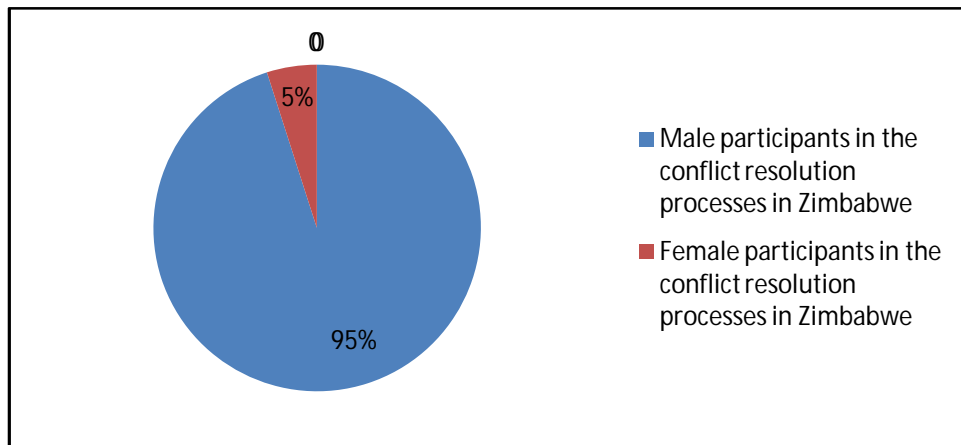


Figure 3: Respondents' views on participation of women in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe

5.6. Respondents' Views on Women Representation in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe

All the respondents (100%) concurred that women were not adequately represented in Zimbabwe's Political Conflict resolution processes indicated in figure 4 below.

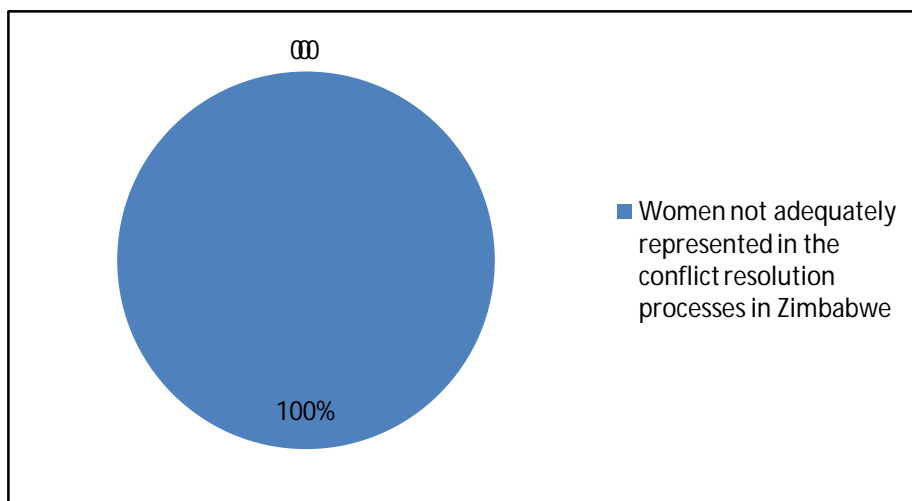


Figure 4: Respondents' views on women representation in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe

5.7. Respondents' Views on Participation Opportunities between Men and Women in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe

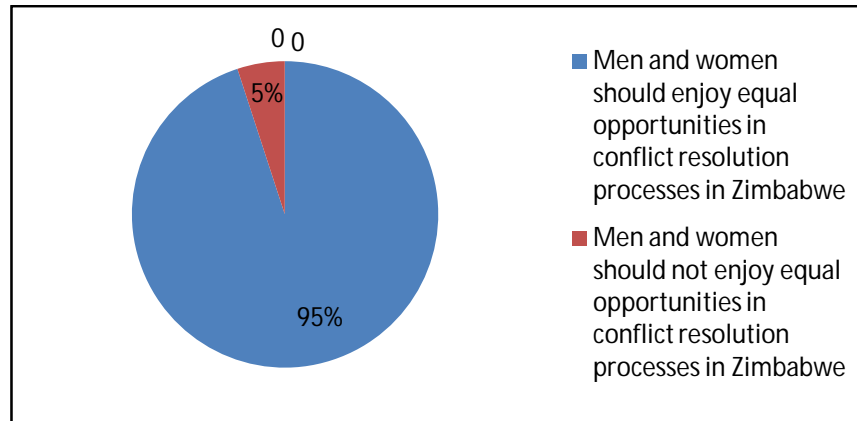


Figure 5: Respondents' views on participation opportunities between men and women in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe

5.8. Respondents' Views on Participation Why Women Are Excluded from Conflict Resolution Processes in Zimbabwe

75% of the respondents indicated that women were mainly excluded from Conflict Resolution processes because of patriarchal systems that views women a secondary sex. 20% of the respondents indicated that the exclusion of women may be that generally women are less educated than their male counterparts and will naturally become few in positions which require decision making like in Politics. The other 5% of the respondents indicated that women are excluded because they are generally considered as a weaker sex.

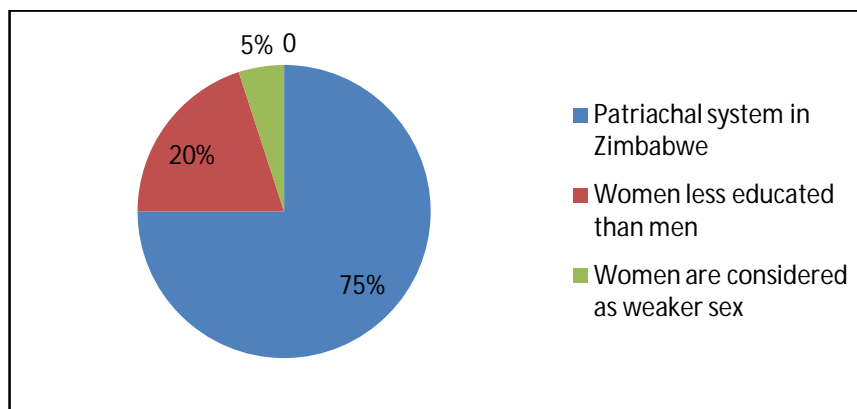


Figure 6: Respondents' views on participation why women are excluded from Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe

5.9. Respondents' Views on the Role of Women in Conflict Resolution Processes in Zimbabwe

The results on Figure 7 below show that the majority of the respondents (90%) indicated that women play a very important role in Conflict Resolution Processes. The other 10 % of the respondents indicated that women have no role to play in the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe.

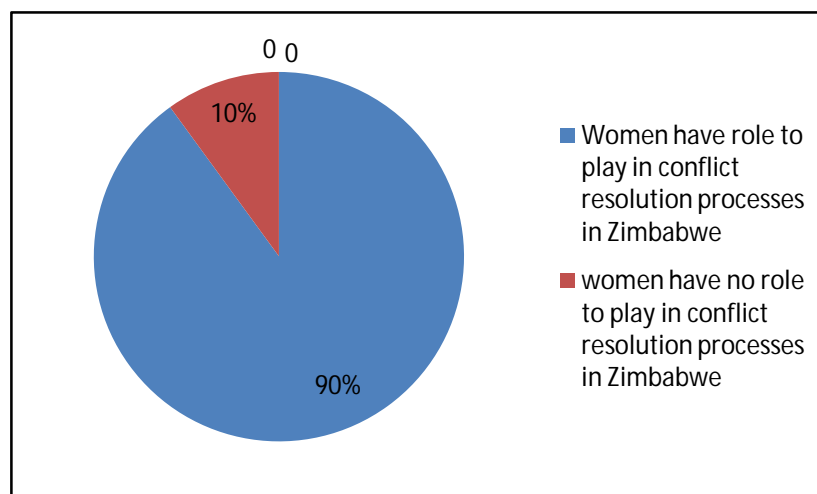


Figure 7: Respondents' views on the role of women in Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe

5.10. Respondents' Views on Why Women Should Be Include in Conflict Resolution Processes in Zimbabwe

40% of the respondents indicated that women should be included in conflict resolution processes because they constituted 52% of the population. 30% of the respondents indicated that women had motherly love, 20% indicated that women were more patient than men and 10% indicated that women were known to be peace loving, These qualities would make good negotiators,

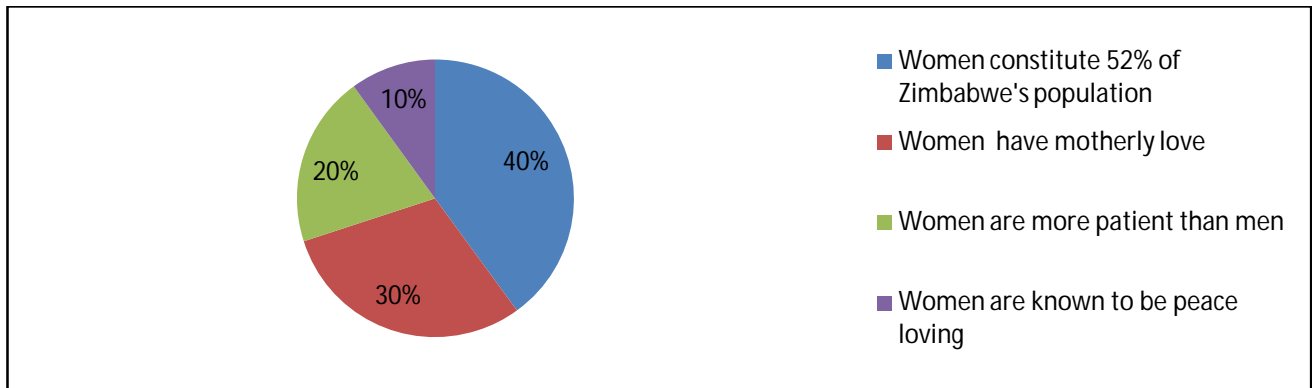


Figure 8: Respondents' views on why women should be include in Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe

5.11. Respondents' Views on Whether Women Faced Challenges in Conflict Resolution Processes in Zimbabwe

Eighty (80%) of the respondents indicated that women faced some challenges in Political Conflict Resolution Processes, while 15% indicated that women did not face any challenges. 5% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure.

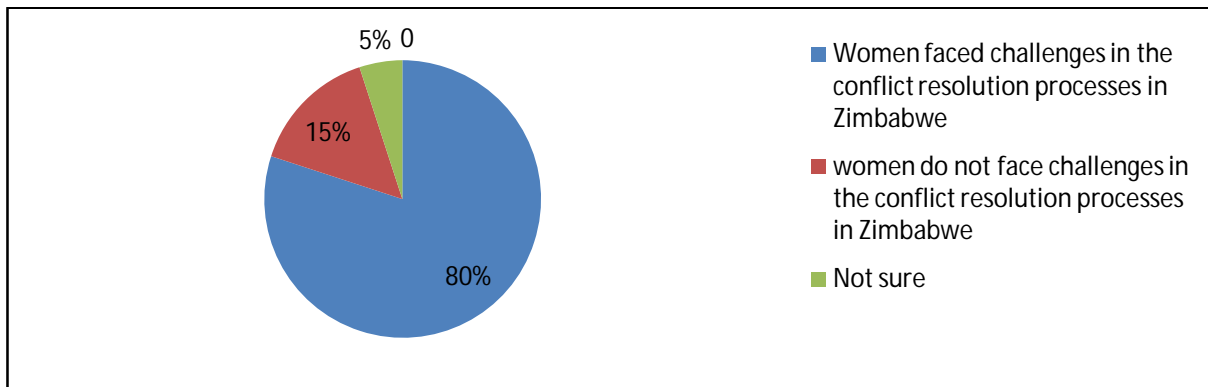


Figure 9: Respondents' views on whether women faced challenges in Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe

5.12. Respondents' Views on the Major Challenges That Women Face in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe

Results in figure 10 below indicate that women in Zimbabwe face a number of challenges in Political Conflict Resolution Processes. Among them are the non-enforcement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) which was indicated by 50% Of the respondents, lack of policies that support women's participation in politics 25%, the patriarchal system (20%) and women being afraid of taking challenges (10%)

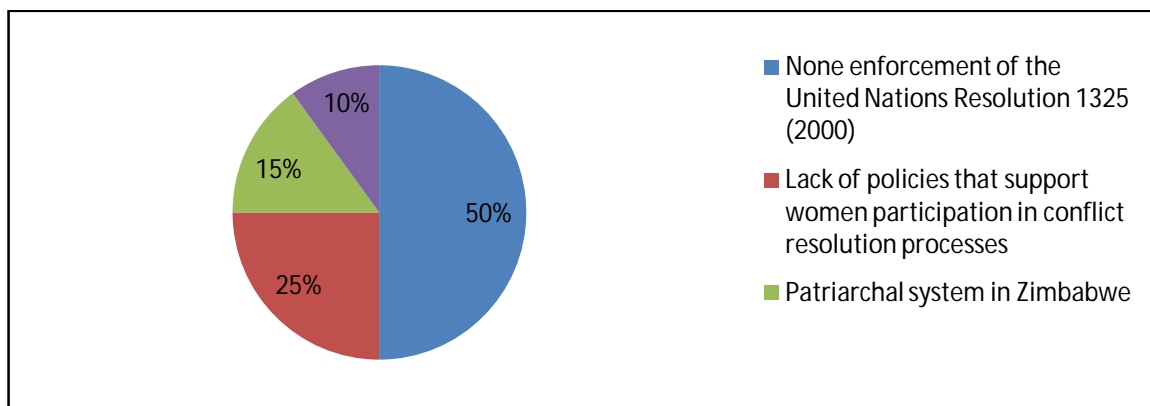


Figure 10: Respondents' views on the major challenges that women face in Political Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe.

5.13. Respondents' Recommendations on Improving Women's Participation in Conflict Resolution Structures in Zimbabwe

The respondents came up with a number of possible suggestions that could improve the participation of women in conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe. 60% of the respondents suggested that there was need for the full implementation and enforcement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), 20% of the respondents felt that there was need to get rid of the patriarchal practices that excluded women from participating in political decision making positions. 15% of the respondents indicated that there was need for the Zimbabwean government to enact and implement laws that encourage and support women to have a say in the political sphere. There was also a call by the participants for the Zimbabwean government to encourage gender equity and equality in designing and implementing conflict resolution programmes and peace building initiatives (5%),

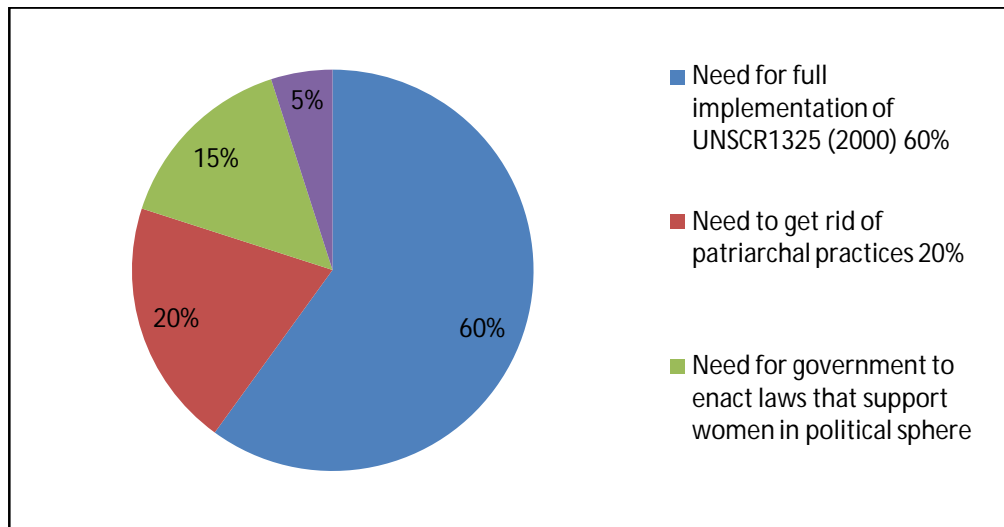


Figure 11: Respondents' recommendations on improving women's participation in Conflict Resolution Structures in Zimbabwe

6. Discussion and Analysis

This discussion follows the main research questions that were asked during the study. The research questions included the respondents' awareness of Conflict Resolution Processes in Zimbabwe, the inclusion of women in Political Conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe, participation of women in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe, women representation in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe, participation opportunities between men and women in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe, why women are excluded from Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe, role of women in Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe, why women should be included in Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe, whether women faced challenges in Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe, the major challenges that women face in Conflict Resolution in Zimbabwe and recommendations on improving women's participation in Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe. Eighty five percent (85%) of the respondents indicated that they were aware of the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe. Ten percent (10%) said they were not aware while five percent indicated that they were not sure of what the researcher was taking about.

Ninety five (95%) of the respondents indicated that there were more male participants in the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe while five percent (5%) of the respondents indicated that there was a fair number of female participants in the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe. All the respondents (100%) concurred that women were not adequately represented in Zimbabwe's Conflict resolution processes. 75% of the respondents indicated that women were mainly excluded from Conflict Resolution because of patriarchal systems that views women a secondary sex. 20% of the respondents indicated that the exclusion of women may be that generally women are less educated than their male counterparts and will naturally become few in positions which require decision making like in Politics. The other 5% of the respondents indicated that women are excluded because they are generally considered as a weaker sex.

Forty percent (40%) of the respondents indicated that women should be included in conflict resolution processes because they constituted 52% of the population. 30% of the respondents indicated that women had motherly love, 20% indicated that women were more patient than men and 10% indicated that women were known to be peace loving, These qualities would make them good negotiators. The majority of the respondents indicated that women were generally natural conflict negotiators than men. The major reasons proffered which generally make women to be good to negotiate for peace were as follows:-Women form the majority of the population in many situations. Women possess inborn nurturing skills which stem up from motherhood skills. Women are more patient than men. Women's negotiating tactics are usually non-violent. The above reasons are also supported by IDEA (2004), who indicated that women are more peacekeepers because of their natural skills on negotiating in family conflicts as mothers and caregivers. Research findings indicated that women have a greater, important and critical role in the conflict resolution processes. The respondents indicated that women had a critical role in conflict resolution and that it is necessary to include them in political structures in Zimbabwe.

There was an overwhelming response on the inclusion of women in Political Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe. Ninety – five percent (95%) of the respondents indicated that women should be included while five percent (5%) said that women should never

be included in the processes of resolving political conflicts are done in Zimbabwe. The majority of the respondents indicated that men dominate political conflict resolution structures in Zimbabwe. This observation is supported by one Zimbabwean diplomatic writer Wenceslaus Mudyadzozo, who said "the problem with political resolution structures in Zimbabwe is that there are still far away from being gender sensitive, since males are more dominant than females". These findings can also mean that women are not equally represented in political conflict resolution structures in Zimbabwe.

Eighty (80%) of the respondents indicated that women faced some challenges in Political Conflict Resolution Processes, while 15 indicated that women did not face any challenges. 5% of the respondents indicated that they were not sure. Results from figure 10 indicate that women in Zimbabwe face a number of challenges in Conflict Resolution Processes. Among them are the non-enforcement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) which was indicated by 50% of the respondents, lack of policies that support women's participation in politics 25%, the patriarchal system (20%) and women being afraid of taking challenges (10%)

The respondents came up with a number of possible suggestions that could improve the participation of women in conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe. 60% of the respondents suggested that there was need for the full implementation and enforcement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), 20% of the respondents felt that there was need to get rid of the patriarchal practices that excluded women from participating in political decision making positions. 15% of the respondents indicated that there was need for the Zimbabwean government to enact and implement laws that encourage and support women to have a say in the political sphere. There was also a call by the participants for the Zimbabwean government to encourage gender equity and equality in designing and implementing conflict resolution programmes and peace building initiatives (5%).

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

Research findings indicate that the majority of the respondents were aware of the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe, with only a few indicating that they were not aware of the processes. On the inclusion of women in Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe, the majority of the respondents indicated that women should be included while a few five percent said that women should never be included in the processes of resolving political conflicts are done in Zimbabwe. The respondents also noted that there were more male participants in the conflict resolution processes. All the respondents concurred that women were not adequately represented in Zimbabwe's conflict resolution processes. The respondents indicated that women were mainly excluded from Conflict Resolution processes because of patriarchal systems that view women as secondary sex, women were less educated than their male counterparts and will naturally become few in positions which require decision making like in politics. The respondents indicated that women were excluded because they were generally considered as a weaker sex. The majority of the respondents indicated that women play a very important role in conflict resolution processes. On why women should be included in conflict resolution processes, the respondents indicated that women should be included because they constituted 52% of the population, women had motherly love, women were more patient than men and that women were known to be peace loving. These qualities would make good negotiators. The majority of the respondents indicated that women faced some challenges in conflict resolution processes. Others indicated that women did not face any challenges. Some of the respondents indicated that they were not sure. Results from the research indicated that women in Zimbabwe faced a number of challenges in Conflict Resolution Processes. Among them were the non-enforcement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), lack of policies that support women's participation in politics, the patriarchal system that women being afraid of taking challenges.

The respondents came up with a number of possible suggestions that could improve the participation of women in conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe. 60% of the respondents suggested that there was need for the full implementation and enforcement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000), 20% of the respondents felt that there was need to get rid of the patriarchal practices that excluded women from participating in political decision making positions. 15% of the respondents indicated that there was need for the Zimbabwean government to enact and implement laws that encourage and support women to have a say in the political sphere. There was also a call by the participants for the Zimbabwean government to encourage gender equity and equality in designing and implementing conflict resolution programmes and peace building initiatives.

In light of the findings from this research, a number of proposals are being made with the aim of improving women's participation in the conflict resolution processes in Zimbabwe. Every citizen of this country should be made aware of any activity taking place in the country in order to have full citizenry participation. Women should be included in Conflict Resolution processes in Zimbabwe. There should be an equal number of both male and female participants in the conflict resolution processes. Women should be adequately represented in Zimbabwe's Conflict resolution processes. Patriarchal systems that view women as secondary sex and exclude them from Conflict Resolution processes must be done away with. Women should not consider as a weaker sex. Women should play a very important role in Conflict Resolution Processes. Women should be included in conflict resolution processes because they constituted 52% of the population of Zimbabwe. Women have motherly love and are more patient than men. Since women are known to be peace loving, it is assumed that they can be good negotiators in the conflict resolution processes.

On the challenges faced by women in Conflict Resolution Processes, there should be full enforcement of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000). The resolution mandates women to take a leading role in the conflict resolution processes. There should be policies that support women's participation in politics and women should not be afraid of taking challenges. There is need to get rid of the patriarchal practices that exclude women from participating in political decision making positions. The Zimbabwean government should enact and implement laws that encourage and support women to have a say in the political sphere. There is also need for the Zimbabwean government to encourage gender equity and equality in designing and implementing conflict resolution programmes and peace building initiatives.

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