ABSTRACT
This study focused on the role of the Pokot women of Sigor region in peace building. The study began by examining the history of the Pokot people in relationship with the conflict that was experienced in the Sigor region from 1984 to 2000. This study sought to, among other things, provide the background understanding of the conflict and, more importantly, the roles that women played in conflict management and peace building. The study took place in Sigor region of Pokot Central District in West Pokot County. This is a region that experiences frequent conflicts between the Pokot community and her neighbours, particularly the Turkana community.

The study analyzed the conflict and peacemaking processes from 1984 to 2000. The study started by discussing the causes of armed conflicts among the Pokot people during this period of investigation. It then focused on the roles that women played in addressing or ameliorating the effects of the conflicts. In investigating the role played by the Pokot women of Sigor region in peace building, the research sought to achieve three objectives i.e. investigate women’s participation in conflict in Sigor, examine the impact of conflict on Pokot women in Sigor and to examine women participation in peace making and peace building processes. To achieve these objectives the research was guided by three hypotheses which included a notion that Women’s active participation in conflict affected their involvement in peace building, that Women were the most affected by conflict in Sigor region, and finally that Women’s participation in peace building among the Pokot community will lead to sustained peace between Pokot and her neighbours.

To satisfactorily achieve the above, the research was guided by the feminist political theory whose arguments describe a polyphonic chorus of female voices. The study concluded by examining the impact of conflict on the social, economic and political factors of the Sigor region, in general, and women, in particular.

Amongst the key findings, the study revealed that the nature of warfare has dramatically changed due to the development of increasingly sophisticated weapons technology. The study found out that women in conflict prone-areas in West Pokot County, such as Sigor, xii
were often mobilized during armed conflict because their support, labour and services were needed in the whole cycle of warfare enterprise. The research revealed that, apart from taking part in conflict, women and girls also faced insecurity due to persistent conflict, hence influencing them to take active roles in peace building. The research proved that increased meaningful women participation in peace talks, mediations and other negotiation processes, including during the peace negotiations and planning processes, often led to lasting peace in the pastoral Pokot community. The research highlighted the importance of women’s meaningful participation in peace negotiations because the groundwork for peace and security structures was put in place. The research also proved that women were very important in influencing men in society and can help sustain the peace process.

This study was based on Jean Elshtains’ feminist political theory whose arguments provide or describes a polyphonic chorus of female voices. The research has shown that armed conflict negatively affects women and men and results in gender-specific disadvantages. The study revealed that the impacts of armed conflict on gender relations are significant. Forced displacement and gender-based violence are two examples of impacts that are not inevitable outcomes of armed conflict, but rather are deliberate strategies of war.