



## **Not Mere Spectators, Not On The Margins Of Conflict: Gender, Conflict And Peacebuilding In The Nawuri-Gonja Conflict, Northern Ghana**

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### **Abstract**

Narratives on conflicts in Northern Ghana generally made the architecture of conflicts and peacebuilding programmes the monopoly of the male gender. This lope-sided narrative paints a picture of women as mere spectators and unfortunate victims of destructive conflicts. The narratives fail to appreciate the significant roles women serve as players and active stakeholders in conflicts and peacebuilding. This study examines the functions Nawuri women played in the theatre of war of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict and in the social space in the peacebuilding processes in Kpandai and its environs after the conflict. Using a historical approach in blending information from documents and oral narratives, this paper argues that Nawuri women were not mere spectators of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict; neither did they sit on the margins of the theatre of war and peacebuilding. They played crucial roles in the conflict, both as active participants in the conduct of war, and as stakeholders in peacebuilding after the end of hostilities.

### **Introduction**

In 1991 and 1992, an inter-ethnic conflict erupted between the Nawuri and the Gonja over allodial rights in land in Kpandai and its environs in the present-day Kpandai District of the Northern Region of Ghana. The Nawuri claim to allodial rights in land in Kpandai and its environs was rooted in autochthony and indigeneity. On the other hand, Gonja claim to allodial rights was rooted in overlordship and conquest, though there is no evidence of Gonja conquest of the Nawuri in the pre-colonial period (Ampiah, 1991; Mbowura, 2013). Gonja overlordship established over the Nawuri was a colonial invention, not borne out of the encounters between the two ethnic groups in the pre-colonial times (Ampiah, 1991; Mbowura, 2012). The Germans, and later the British, empowered the Gonja as rulers over the Nawuri for the sake of colonial expediency (Mbowura, 2012; Ampiah, 2019). As rulers over the Nawuri, the Gonja exercised the powers of determining the usufructuary rights of settlers in land in Kpandai and its environs in contravention of history and tradition (Ampiah, 1991, Mbowura, 2012). Meanwhile, the Nawuri also continued to exercise such rights in land. This parallel arrangement was bound to lead to collision overtime. As both ethnic groups used history to support their allodial rights in lands led to inconclusive amicable resolution of the quagmire of allodial rights, war became the ultimate choice as a definite solution of the impasse. Eventually, war broke out between the two ethnic groups, and they fought each other three times – April in 1991, June in 1991, and May in 1992.

### **Scholarship on Conflicts in Northern Ghana**

Studies on conflicts in Northern Ghana are diverse, and have approached the topic from different perspectives and disciplines. For the sake of convenience, the plethora of studies on conflicts in Northern Ghana can be categorized into two. First, there is the traditional approach, which examines the historical dynamics and structures of conflicts in Northern Ghana. This approach focuses largely on the historical causes, trends and conduct of conflicts in Northern Ghana (Brukum, 1999, 2000 & 2001; Bogner, 2009; Jonsön, 2007; Tolton, 2010; Awedoba, 2009;

Lentz, 2007; Anamzoya, 2010; Anamzoya and Tonah, 2012; Skalnik, 1983, 1987 & 1989). The second approach, the non-traditional approach, studies conflicts in Northern with specific focus on conflict resolutions, interventions, conflict management, security arrangements, post-conflict restitution, social dynamics and parameters of conflicts in Northern Ghana (Tonah, 2007; Mohammed, 2007; Mbowura, 2012, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2020 & 2021; Bombandi, 2007; Longi, 2013; Braimah and Mbowura, 2018; Lentz, 2007 & 2007a). It should be pointed out that these categorizations are not rigid; there are some overlaps. For instance, Mbowura (2012) and Longi (2013) combined the two traditions in their studies on the Nawuri-Gonja conflict and the Kusasi-Mamprusi conflict, respectively.

This paper is situated within the non-traditional approach to the study of conflicts in Northern Ghana. It contributes to this corpus of literature by examining the gender dimension of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict by pointing out the various functions Nawuri women performed directly and indirectly in the theatre of war and peacebuilding. It argues that Nawuri women were neither mere spectators nor unfortunate victims of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict. They were active stakeholders in the processes that led to the drift to the conflict, and performed key functions on the theatre of war and in post-conflict peacebuilding initiatives.

### **Nawuri Women and the Conduct of the Nawuri-Gonja Conflict**

Women participation in conflicts and armed violence is a historical phenomenon. The role of Joan d'Arc in the Hundred Years' War is well documented in history. Women played a significant role in the making of France in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when they organized a protest against the Monarchy that resulted in the change of the seat of government from Versailles to Paris (Peacock, 1971). Women's participation in wars was also noticeable in the wars of conquest and empire building and/or consolidation in the Gold Coast (Aboagye, 2010). Historical accounts show that women have played various roles as logistics facilitators, eavesdroppers, cheer-givers, among others, in wars in Ghana in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Aboagye, 2010). For instance, records abound that show the exploits and heroic roles of Yaa Asantewaa, "the leader as well as the Commander-in-Chief of the Asante army" (Boahen, 2003: 120), in the Asante-British War of 1900-1901.

Unlike Asante women spectators in the Battle of Dodowa in 1826, who were "screaming around the battlefield searching for their husbands after their resounding defeat" (Aboagye, 2010: 411), Nawuri women were not mere spectators in the Nawuri-Gonja conflict. Both at the level of the conduct of war and at the level of peacemaking, Nawuri women were active stakeholders (Mbowura, 2021). Prior to the outbreak of the inter-ethnic conflict in 1991, both Nawuri and Gonja women provided the furnace that fueled the differences between the two ethnic groups to irreconcilable levels (Mbowura, 2021). Petty squabbles and fights between the women of the two ethnic groups were constant rituals, especially at the main source of drinking water in Kpandai (*Kiwura tribo*). Mbowura (2021) argues that the *Kiwura tribo* was the epicenter for the verbal and physical assaults between Nawuri and Gonja women in Kpandai. In his own words, "the *Kiwura tribo* became a "bout arena" between Nawuri and Gonja women. These bouts were significant to the relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja because they kept alive the antagonism between the two ethnic groups and created a general nostalgia among the Nawuri for their liberation and autonomy" (Mbowura, 2021: 36). Besides, physical and verbal assaults between Nawuri and Gonja women were not uncommon on Kpandai market days. Though there were levels of peaceful social and commercial engagements between the women of the two ethnic groups, there were occasions that misunderstandings between any two individuals of both ethnic took ethnic dimensions. Records of Nawuri-Gonja encounters made particular reference to a physical assault in 1991 between two Nawuri and Gonja women at the Kpandai market square that assumed alarming proportion (Mbowura, 2012; Mbowura, 2021). Beginning at the market square as a physical encounter between two individuals, Nawuri and Gonja women soon joined the fray and assaulted each other (Mbowura, 2012; Mbowura, 2021). Soon, the men of both ethnic groups joined the fight, turning it into a free-fight for all (Mbowura, 2012; Mbowura, 2021). This particular open-space fight was recorded because, first, it occurred at the full glare of the District Commissioner for Salaga who had visited Kpandai, and second, it assumed an alarming proportion that warranted the need to improve security in Kpandai (Mbowura, 2012). There were similar other fights between the two ethnic groups that transcended beyond female gender lines. A similar phenomenon that received the attention of the colonial authorities occurred in Balai in 1951. In this particular phenomenon, the women did not provide the trigger;

it was triggered by the interference of the Gonja in the customary practices of the Nawuri of Balai (Mbowura, 2012; Mbowura, 2021). As the Balai Nawuri men were determined to resist Gonja interferences in their customary practices, their women cheered them up (Mbowura, 2021). In the words of Mbowura (2021: 38), "singing war songs interlaced with recital of appellations, the Balai women inspired and charged their male counterparts to resist Gonja interference in their customary practices." It was unsurprising that, in the midst of the cheers, Balai men put up a fierce resistance against Gonja interference, resulting in a chaotic scene that forced the colonial authorities to deploy additional police men from Yendi to Kpandai to ensure law and order (Mbowura, 2012).

It is the general view of the Nawuri that the role of their women in the outbreak of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict cannot be discounted. As one informant puts it, "no weapons of any magnitude could have performed the role of Nawuri women in the conflict." The women kept the flames of the animosity between the Nawuri and the Gonja burning, and steadily increased the tempo till the time was appropriate for their male counterparts to rise up in armed conflict against the Gonja" (Vincent Nyefene, personal communication, 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2021). Assessing the role of Nawuri in the events that led to the outbreak of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict, an informant argued: Nawuri women were not mere spectators in the conflict; there were active stakeholders. They kept the flames of the animosity between the Nawuri and the Gonja burning. Due to their commercial activities and discharge of their domestic functions that required them to fetch drinking water from the *Kiwura tribo* and buy ingredients at the Kpandai market square, they had encounters with their Gonja counterparts on a daily basis. In almost three or four out of ten of such encounters, the encounters were not peaceful. Verbal assaults and physical confrontations often ensued between the women of the two ethnic groups. Sometimes, the confrontations between the women provided an alibi for the men of the two ethnic groups to sort out their differences over the politics of ethnic identity and allodial rights in land in Kpandai and its environs. So significant were the women in the drift to war between the Nawuri and the Gonja that they provided the spark that led to the outbreak of conflict between the two ethnic groups in 1991 (Samson Donkor, personal communication, 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2021).

From the above quotation, it is obvious that both Nawuri and Gonja women were instrumental in fomenting troubles that pushed the animosities between the two ethnic groups beyond irreconcilable and irreversible levels. This is not to say that it was the confrontations between the women of the two ethnic groups that were solely to blame for the destruction of a peaceful social space between the Nawuri and the Gonja; the men cannot equally be exonerated. Both the women and the men contributed in destroying the little vestiges of peaceful relations between the Nawuri and the Gonja in the social space, and brought the drift to war to an irreversible point. As the animosities of the two ethnic groups made the outbreak of war a possibility, it only needed a spark, which Nawuri and Gonja women provided. A street fight between the women of the two ethnic groups on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1991, provided a spark and a dress-rehearsal for armed confrontations between their male counterparts (Ampiah, 1991; Mbowura, 2012; Mbowura, 2021). As the fight between Nawuri and Gonja women died out, an unarmed fight ensued between their male counterparts, which later degenerated into armed confrontations latter on the same day (Ampiah, 1991; Mbowura, 2012).

### **Nawuri Women and the Conduct of the Nawuri-Gonja Conflict**

No accounts of women wielding arms as fighters in the battles of the conflict exist. However, oral narratives point to heroic endeavours of two Nawuri and Gonja women. In the first battle of the conflict in April 1991, a Nawuri woman resident in Kpandai was said to be one of the armed Nawuri fighters. Her heroics fizzled out as the Nawuri fighters were overawed and chased out from Kpandai (Nana Ebotowson, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2021). In the Gonja camp, a woman was said to be part of the fighting forces of the Gonja in all the three battles – the April 1991 battle, June 1991 battle and May 1992 battle. The Gonja warrior woman was said to have fought bravely at the theatre of war, and was said to have been instrumental in all the war efforts of the Gonja warriors at the battlefields (Attah Anawusa, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2021). As Attah Anawusa (personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2021), the Gonja warrior woman was: fearless and astute in war strategy. She used a single-barren hunter gun in the battles, but her dexterity in the use of the weapon was second to one. With one hand,

she could fire the gun and reload it with cartridges with ease. She wore *gbognu* (a smock studded with charms), and she operated with supernatural powers that made it practically difficult, if not impossible, to kill her. Indeed, her show of bravery and powers came to a climax when Asimani, the Gonja war leader, was shot down on the third day of the second battle in June, 1991. The Gonja warrior woman single-handedly engaged the Nawuri warriors in an exchange of fire to force them to retreat. It took the bravery and a masterful display of supernatural powers by the Nawuri war leader, Yawdu, to maneuver to where Asimani was shot down to drag him alive to the side of the Nawuri warriors.

Apart from the above isolated cases of women serving as fighters, all other roles of women at the theatre of war in the conflict were indirect. The indirect roles of Nawuri women at the theatre of war took different forms. First, Nawuri women served as eavesdroppers, whose responsibility was to use all kinds of mechanisms, including spying on the opponents, to get valuable information about the Gonja for the use of the Nawuri army. Some of the eavesdroppers risked their lives to the extent of disguising themselves to hid in the midst of Gonja women. One such notable example was the case of Madam Anesega, a Nawuri eavesdropper, whose luck run out when Gonja women identified her in their company (Mbowura, 2021). As Mbowura (2021: 40) puts it: one Madam Anesega Dari of Kpandai, one of the eavesdroppers, claimed luck ran out of her when she sneaked into the Gonja quarter of Kpandai to spy on the Gonja in the course of the war. According to Madam Anesega, she was seized by Gonja women, severely beaten up and made to sweep a large compound before she was released.

Apart from eavesdropping, Nawuri women contributed indirectly to the war machinery of the Nawuri by providing catering services for the fighters at the battlefield. Some Nawuri women, usually menopausal women, congregated at a secured quarter in Kpandai to cook food and provide drinking water to refuel the energies of the Nawuri army. This function was not peculiar to Nawuri women; there are records of women performing this role at the theatre of war in the Gold Coast (Aboagye, 2010).

Logistically, Nawuri women greased the Nawuri war machinery in two ways. First, Nawuri women used their financial resources to buy war materials, particularly cartridges to ensure that the Nawuri army did not run out of supply. They performed this function by selling their wares in Ekumidi market in the present-day Kpandai District and Lugni market in the Nanumba South District. The proceeds were used to buy cartridges to support the war efforts of the Nawuri army (Mbowura, 2021). Second, Nawuri women served as logistics keepers at the theatre of war. At a secured quarter in Kpandai where they rendered catering services to the Nawuri warriors, Nawuri women opened an armoury where war materials were kept. The close proximity of the armoury to the actual theatre of war made it possible for the Nawuri warriors to maintain their onslaughts steadily. This was particularly the case in the second battle of the conflict. Nawuri women's initiative by keeping the armoury in close proximity to the theatre of war made it possible for Nawuri fighters to retreat to the armoury from time to time to rearm themselves to continue the onslaught without losing momentum (Attah Aniwas, personal communication, 26<sup>th</sup> December, 2021).

One other indirect function Nawuri women performed in relation to the war machinery of the Nawuri was healing. Nawuri women stationed at the armoury and catering centre provided first aid to wounded Nawuri fighters. Plants and herbs of all sorts were assembled by the women for healing purposes. The women "nursed the wounds of their warriors, and provided medication for them directly and indirectly. Directly, they massaged, treated wounds and applied herbs on them. Indirectly, they contributed money to pay the medical bills of wounded warriors. All these provided psychological boost to the Nawuri warriors" (Mbowura, 2021: 42).

### **Women and the Peace Process**

Nawuri women's participation in peacebuilding after the conflict took various forms. One of the forms it took was that Nawuri women served as assessors of peace negotiations to determine their practicality (Nana Mbowura Boila, personal communication, 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2021). One such practical case was their assessment of the fragile peace agreement reached between the leadership of the Nawuri and the Gonja at the palace of the Bimbilla Na in June, 1991. After the embers of the first battle had died down and the Nawuri chased out from their settlements by the Gonja warriors, the Northern Regional Security Committee (REGSEC) invited Nawuri and



Gonja leaders to Tamale for mediation on May 7, 1991. Having held separate meetings with the leaders of the two ethnic groups, it was agreed by all parties that the conflict between the two ethnic groups be referred to the Bimbilla Na, Na Attah Abarika, then President of the Northern Regional House of Chiefs (Mbowura, 2012). Hence, "REGSEC referred the conflict to the Bimbilla Na, Na Attah Abarika, for resolution. A number of reasons influenced REGSEC's decision" (Mbowura, 2012: 210). After the logistic and administrative arrangements were fully put in place, the Bimbilla Na met the leaders of the Nawuri and Gonja in his palace in Bimbilla on June 7, 1991, aimed at finding pathways to resolve the conflict (Mbowura, 2012). Though there were no clear signs of a peaceful resolution, there appeared to be a somewhat fragile understanding of the short-term pathways needed to be taken for peace to return to Kpandai and its environs as a precursor for a resolution of the conflict. From Gonja accounts, two short-term pathways were suggested (Nana Mbowura Boila, personal communication, 27<sup>th</sup> December, 2021). First, that the Gonja would allow the Nawuri, who had fled from their settlements following their defeat in the first battle, to return to their settlements. Second, that the Gonja warriors from other parts of Gonja territories sent to garrison Kpandai would be evacuated (Mbowura, 2012). It was to test the workability of this somewhat tenuous peace agreement that Nawuri women played a significant role. First, a Nawuri woman from Kabonwule decided to test the operationalization of the peace agreement by taking her wares to Kpandai to sell (Mbowura, 2012). Though an individual initiative, the Kabonwule Nawuri woman made a selfless decision to use herself to test the peace agreement – albeit her personal economic reasons could not be ruled out. To her, a warm reception by the Gonja in Kpandai would signify their intent for peace; the opposite meant Gonja unwillingness to enter into a peaceful resolution of the conflict with the Nawuri (Vincent Nyefene, personal communication, 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2021). When it unfolded that the Nawuri woman was physically assaulted by some Gonja women, it dawned on the Nawuri that the Gonja were not committed to the Bimbilla Na peace agreement. Second, Nawuri women use their business activities to gauge the commitment of the Gonja to the peace agreement. Though displaced, some Nawuri women still engaged in petty trading, and carried their trade to the popular markets of Lugni and Kumidi. There, they met their Gonja counterparts, whereupon the Gonja women subjected them to verbal assaults (Madam Wumbei, personal communication, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2021). Through such rancorous interactions with the Gonja at the markets in Lugni and Kumidi, Nawuri women assessed the peace agreement, and warned their male counterparts of the dangers of committing to the peace agreement (Madam Wumbei, personal communication, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2021). In fact, "if the women had not served as assessors to test the practicality of the peace agreement, the Gonja would have used the tenuous peace agreement as a ploy to get the Nawuri to return to their settlements to kill them. Having come to the conclusion that the peace agreement was nothing but a ploy by the Gonja, Nawuri women – with 'a no-absolute-peace, a no-return' agenda – played a critical role in peace assessment, which eventual led to the renewal of hostilities that promoted the Government of Ghana to set up the Ampiah Committee of Enquiry to investigate the conflict and proffer recommendations for lasting peace" (Madam Wumbei, personal communication, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2021).

In the events that were intended to formulate peace in Kpandai and its environs, Nawuri women did not sit on the margins; they were active stakeholders. The memories of the horrific destructions of lives and properties which the wars of the conflict engendered pushed Nawuri women to seek possible ways for peacebuilding after the end of the third battle in May, 1992. The negative impact of the war, including the evacuation of the Gonja from Kpandai, affected social relations and economic activities of almost all ethnic groups in Kpandai and its environs (Mbowura, 2014a). Indeed, "the brutal killings of the Gonja warriors in Kpandai in the third battle was horrific and striking that the unwillingness to resort to war to sort of ethnic differences engulfed the social space of the Nawuri" (Nana Gesuorkong Seinka, Olamie of Bladjai, personal communication, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2021). To play a role in peacebuilding, "Nawuri women engaged in the *pito* industry (local beer) turned their drinking parlours into a miniature peacebuilding workshop" (Acting Kabonwule Queen Mother, Nana Agomada Yawa Nsiemendi, personal communication, 25<sup>th</sup> December, 2021). Through this initiative by the Nawuri women, "men of various ethnic groups that thronged the drinking parlours were given a dose of peacebuilding narratives from different perspectives together with their usual appetizing *pito* drink" (Acting Kabonwule Queen Mother, Nana Agomada Yawa Nsiemendi, personal communication, 25<sup>th</sup>, December, 2021).

Apart from the miniature peacebuilding workshops in the *pito* parlours, Nawuri women provided another flavour of the peace architecture narrative in their weekly *susu* (thrift) meetings. It is a common phenomenon in Kpandai and its environs for women of the same or mixed ethnic groups to band themselves together into *susu* groups to generate working capital to support their economic ventures. In the usual weekly meetings of the *susu* groups of Nawuri women, the members went beyond the economic matters of the group to discuss peace and peacebuilding issues (Donkor Anijadong, personal communication, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2021). Empirical evidence of the impact of this initiative does not exist, but the appropriation of the meetings of *susu* groups for discussions on peace and peacebuilding showed the unflinching disposition of the Nawuri women for peace. It is also a proof of the preparedness of Nawuri women to use any available forum and platform to contribute their quota to peacebuilding initiatives (Lowugyayin Kwadjo Dare, personal communication, 24<sup>th</sup> December, 2021).

Apart from the *pito* parlours and *susu* group meetings being turned into theatres for peacebuilding workshops, Nawuri women undertook other measures to establish peace in Kpandai and its environs. One of such measures was to band themselves together to protest attempts that might trigger the renewal of hostilities. This was particularly the case when a group of Nawuri women formed a protest group in 2010, known as "League of Nawuri Women Against Violent Conflict" (Mbowura, 2014a: 114). Its objective was to preserve peace in the post-conflict social space in Kpandai and its environs, and its modus operandi was to organize protests against the activities of persons that could renew hostilities of the conflict. One known instance of the protest of this league was when its members protested against the attempt by the Gonja to recover their immovable properties in Kpandai which they lost to the Nawuri as war booties (Mbowura, 2014a). Apart from this protest, little is known about the activities of the league except that the protest of the league made the Kpandai District Security Committee (DISEC) to prevent the Gonja from recovering the war booties from the Nawuri, a measure which ultimately succeeded in preserving the peace in Kpandai and its environs.

Cultural performances were also utilized by Nawuri women to raise the awareness for peace and peacebuilding. Two notable cases were the utilization of the *ejii* (female cultic dance) and *baya* (a non-cultic female dance). In the drift to the conflict and during the conflict, the genre of the songs of the *ejii* and *baya* dance were used to accentuate a message of valour, bravery and inspiration of Nawuri men to fight against the Gonja for their liberation (Nana Gesuorkong Seinka, Olamie of Bladjai, personal communication, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2021). The orientation changed after the conflict, as the genre of the songs now reflected messages for peace and peacebuilding (Nana Gesuorkong Seinka, Olamie, of Bladjai, personal communication, 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2021). Mbowura (2022: 765) argues, "the magico-cultural performances of Nawuri women for peace-building in Nawuriland in the post-Nawuri-Gonja conflict era is not so much in the peace-oriented *ejii* songs; but in the occasional ritual performances in connection with the *Chankpana*" (the deity of the *ejii* cultic group). Among other things, the *Chankpana* rituals were believed to be spiritual-cleansing tools to ward off all kinds of cataclysmic attacks – whether physical or spiritual – and to preserve the peace in the various Nawuri communities. The performances of the *Chankpana* rituals were also an occasion for divination by which the *Chankpana* oracle was believed to have foretold pathways to be navigated for the prosecution of peacebuilding and development agenda of the individual Nawuri communities and the Nawuri in general (Mbowura, 2022). There is no scientific basis for this belief, but it provided the Nawuri in general a psychological basis to prosecute any peacebuilding agenda that was linked to the *Chankpana* oracle. Furthermore, due to the aura attached to the *Chankpana* oracle, as well as the mystic obligation of its members (*alijii*) to be the mouthpiece of the oracle, the members were bound to be the agents for peace as designed by the oracle (Mbowura, 2022). In the case of the *baya* dance, similar shifts in the genre of its songs exist in the post-conflict area. According to Mbowura (2022), the genre of the *baya* songs focused more on peacebuilding than any orientation of Nawuri women over the past few years. His research has shown that the songs that accompanied the traditional the *baya* dance on all occasions from 2019 to 2020, for example, have been peacebuilding-oriented. His studies have shown that, of the 375 *Baya* songs analyzed between 2019 and 2020, a total of:

195 of them (representing 52%) focused on peace-building as a basis of development or unity and development as precursors for peace formation in Nawuriland and between the Nawuri and

their neighbours. In addition, 101 of the *Baya* songs (representing 26.93%) provided messages encapsulating joy, love and relationship in a social setting of peace and tranquility. Only 46 of the songs (representing 12.27%) focused on bereavement, sorrow and the pain of losing a beloved one while just a handful (33 songs, representing 8.8%) focused on the valour of the Nawuri in war, Nawuri identity and miscellaneous issues (Mbowura, 2022: 767).

In short, it is obvious from the above that Nawuri women appropriated their culture to advance all initiatives for peace and peacebuilding. Though the statistics of the impact of the peace initiatives of Nawuri women on peacebuilding do not exist, one cannot exclude Nawuri women's initiatives from the general discourse on peacebuilding in Kpandai and its environs after the Nawuri-Gonja conflict in 1992.

### Conclusion

This paper examined the dynamics of the participation of Nawuri women in the Nawuri-Gonja conflict of 1991/1992 and the post-conflict peace initiatives. The paper established that, with the exception of two instances, there is practically no evidence of both Nawuri and Gonja women's participation in the theatre of war in the conflict as warriors. This notwithstanding, Nawuri women have participated in the theatre of war in the conflict in a number of ways. Nawuri women functioned as logistics suppliers in the theatre of war. They also executed functions as caterers that provided food and drinks to Nawuri warriors to refuel their energies; and offered therapeutic services to wounded Nawuri warriors; performed the function of eavesdroppers that obtained valuable information about the Gonja war machinery for the use of the Nawuri army.

In peacebuilding and peace initiatives, Nawuri women were not spectators either. They performed a number of functions that contributed to the overall architecture of the peacebuilding paradigm. Nawuri women assumed the role of assessors of the workability of a negotiated truce. In addition, Nawuri women turned their *pito* parlours into miniature peacebuilding workshops where peacebuilding ideas and issues were processed and offered for free to their customers who were mainly males. Furthermore, Nawuri women added a peacebuilding dimension to their *susu* agenda, pushing it beyond its solely economic parameters to include peace and peacebuilding discussions. In addition, Nawuri took their peace and peacebuilding initiatives from a discursive domain to the domain of practical participation in two main ways. First, Nawuri women organized protests, as exemplified by the protests of the League of Nawuri Women against Violence, to send a clear message for peace in the post-conflict era. Second, Nawuri women utilized their cultural practices, particularly the *ejii* and the *baya* dances to advance their peace and peacebuilding initiative. This was manifested in two ways – the use of the genre of traditional songs associated with female traditional dances to send out peace and building messages, and the use of magico-ritual practices to advance peace and peacebuilding initiatives. This study is significant for a number of reasons. First, it provides a gender perspective on the architecture of the Nawuri-Gonja conflict and its associated peacebuilding initiatives. Second, it contributes to the non-traditional approach to the study of conflicts in Northern Ghana. Finally, it provides a basis that can be used as a benchmark for the study of the architecture of other conflicts and peacebuilding programmes in Ghana and other jurisdictions to determine the gender elements they contain.

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### List of Interviewees

Name	Social Status/Profession	Date of Interview
Vincent Nyefene	Professional teacher and youth activist	25 <sup>th</sup> December, 2021
Samson Donkor	Farmer and linguist	25 <sup>th</sup> December, 2021
Nana Ebotowson	Farmer	26 <sup>th</sup> December, 2021
Attah Anawusa	Professional teacher and youth activist	26 <sup>th</sup> December, 2021
Nana Mbowura Boila	Odekro, Kpandai	27 <sup>th</sup> December, 2021
Madam Wumbei	Nawuri <i>pito</i> brewer, Kpandai	23 <sup>rd</sup> December, 2021
Nana Gesuoorkong Seinka	Olamie of Bladjai	23 <sup>rd</sup> December, 2021
Nana Agomada Yawa Nsiemendi	Acting Kabonwule Queen Mother	December 25 <sup>th</sup> , 2021
Donkor Anijadong	Nawuri <i>pito</i> brewer, Kpandai	24 <sup>th</sup> December, 2021
Lowugyayin Kwadjo Dare,	Nawuri <i>pito</i> brewer, Kpandai	24 <sup>th</sup> December, 2021