

Gender Concerns Aid in the Understanding of Peace and Conflict

Lifu Liu *

Department of Gender Studies, London School of Economics and Political Science, London, WC2A 2AE, United Kingdom

* Corresponding Author Email: l.liu69@lse.ac.uk

Abstract. Centred on United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325, this study provides insights into the role of gender in peace and conflict, including but not limited to advocating for gender equality, preventing sexual violence, protecting women who are victims of conflict, and promoting women's participation in international peace-related activities. This study highlights the different roles that women play in conflict and challenges the traditional view of women as mere victims of conflict through three cases. While Turkey's national culture contributes to the challenges faced by women in the military, such as sexual harassment. At the same time, there has been a lack of progress in empowering women and integrating them into peace and security institutions. In the case of the African Union, for example, despite a series of documents advocating for women's advancement and gender equality, little progress has been made in two decades when it comes to implementation at the country level. Nepal is an example of women's empowerment in conflict. The transformation of widowhood practices is one of the most noteworthy aspects of the conflict, in which women were able to get what they wanted. The research indicates that though resolution 1325 may not fully increase the social positions of women, women could defend their rights and enhance their powers on their own through conflicts.

Keywords: Gender, Resolution 1325, WPS, conflicts.

1. Introduction

Gender is something that can't be avoided when people want to understand peace and conflict fully. Resolution 1325 calls for gender equality and greatly safeguarding women's safety issues under this case [1]. The three pillars (3Ps) of 1325 are the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence, the protection of women from violence during and after conflict, and the participation of women in the administration of peace and security [2]. Despite a twofold increase in the number of women negotiating peace agreements at the negotiating table, only 9% of the 31 main peace processes that occurred between 1992 and 2011 involved women as negotiators, and 3% of the military in the United Nations [3]. In general, research on the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) agenda concludes that current policy approaches to implementing it are commendable in concept but fail to significantly alter the prevailing state of affairs [4]. This study aims to explore the impact of gender in conflict and peace at a deeper level, as well as the extent to which resolution 1325 affects women.

2. Background Information

The objective of WPS is to enhance the agency of women in positions of authority and traditionally male-dominated domains, such as the military, where decisions about peace and security are rendered [2]. In Liberia and Burundi where quotas for women in administration or security forces are in place, National Action Plans (NAPs) appear to be primarily an instrument to combat gender-based violence, sexual exploitation, and abuse [5]. To combat Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and establish, a transitional legal system that takes gender into account is considered to be established. Consequently, the inclusion of a greater number of women in law enforcement is frequently proposed as a remedy for the issue of sexual assault [6].

In the documentary, *My Daughter: The Terrorist*, mother Antonia and guerrilla fighter daughter Dharshika are chronicled. Antonia asserts that her daughter's allegiance to the insurgents surpasses

the depths of their relationship. By forging unanticipated alliances between explosives and guerrillas and redefining the identities of the deceased as martyrs, terrorists, heroes, or mere collateral damage, war transforms its participants [7].

Another view was provided for women who had served in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka, an organization known for its patriarchal ideology. A peculiar instance of gender subversion that occurred during the conflict was the enlistment of several of these young women by their families. The LTTE granted these women extraordinary privileges, such as the ability to operate heavy machinery and wield weapons, in a country with a strong patriarchal culture [7]. Notwithstanding their devoted service as bodyguards and foot soldiers to LTTE commanders, they were informed upon their departure from the organization that they lacked political stature. They are now reliant on government and non-governmental organization assistance to escape destitution and disgrace, having been abandoned [8]. Participating in India's ongoing civil conflicts as a Maoist provides low-income families with a consistent financial stream; therefore, it is not uncommon for both men and women to do so. The Maoist insurgency in India functions as a job providing militants with financial means to support their families [7].

Feminists lobbying for Resolution 1325 often emphasize that women don't merely play the passive victim who needs protection; rather, they play a range of roles that contribute to the dispute [9]. Women harmed by and living through war are countless, nameless, and faceless; consequently, it is difficult to assess or fulfill their needs. However, feminist scholars have posited that during times of conflict, women may have the opportunity to enhance their political engagement and autonomy due to the absence of males from the household [10].

3. Negative Influence: Case in Turkey

It is commonly observed that governments that allocate an excessive proportion of their gross domestic product (GDP) towards military expenditures subsequently reduce funding for social services such as housing, healthcare, and education. This impacts women disproportionately, as they have historically been the primary caregivers in the household and the impoverished segments of society.

By a disproportionate margin, the Turkish military is allocated 5.3% of the nation's gross domestic product [11]. The Turkish army portrays itself as a guardian of the military heritage. Male Turks are commonly believed to be born with an inherent military duty [12].

The military may appear to be an attractive option for women hailing from low-income households and other disadvantaged ethnic backgrounds, owing to its competitive remuneration and prospects for professional growth. However, researchers have demonstrated that the approach is inherently faulty. It is imperative that all female military personnel maintain performance standards equivalent to their male counterparts and should never demonstrate signs of superiority that could humiliate men. Notwithstanding their physical prowess in rivalry with males, they are encouraged a "feminine" comportment.

Establishing friendships devoid of sexual connotations within male troops is challenging due to their unwavering conviction that female soldiers are merely objects of sexual desire. It is well documented that male military personnel harass and assault female service members [11].

4. Criticize of the Resolution

Even though the WPS resolutions have demonstrated that gender inequality and women's rights are issues of peace and security, the United Nations Security Council has still encountered criticism. Feminist academics and activists are critical of the United Nations Security Council's approach to gender and discrimination. The ratification of Resolution 1325 was primarily motivated by the proponents' desire to eliminate the exclusion of women from decision-making processes and enhance their participation in the general operations of the United Nations Security Council [13]. Women

comprised a mere 1% of peacekeepers in 1993; by 2014, which number had scarcely increased to 3% [14].

Concerning women's participation, the United Nations Security Council has only addressed it to the extent that it aids in the achievement of Security Council and state security objectives. There are significant concerns regarding this [15].

There is widespread concern among women's activists worldwide that the integration of the work of women's groups into national security strategies could potentially jeopardize the security of women. Concerns regarding potential perceptions of women's duties as predominantly information-gathering-oriented are rooted in the belief that they significantly contribute to national security.

Feminists argue that instead of permitting women to be "utilized" by the state, they ought to be granted the agency to surmount challenges and actively engage in society [13]. Moreover, communities may develop a skepticism of women's rights organizations if they are supported by authorities to counter radicalism rather than promote gender equality, given the associations of these organizations with state security protocols.

Additionally, the United Nations Security Council has not fully implemented the accountability mechanisms for the WPS agenda. To ensure the effective execution of its thematic determinations, the United Nations Security Council may institute accountability mechanisms through the establishment of internal procedures, including the creation of working groups and committees. The UN Security Council has not yet demonstrated interest in establishing a working group or other specialized body to encourage member states to assume responsibility for the WPS agenda, even though the notion has been discussed. The presence of this lacuna indicates that accountability is lacking in this agenda item. In 2005, the UN Security Council formed the Children and Armed Conflict Working Group to handle the children's theme agenda item, which is distinct from the WPS agenda. The members of the working group oversee domestic conditions and offer suggestions for measures that should be implemented by states, non-state actors, the United Nations system, and other entities [13].

Furthermore, while the UN Security Council has yet to establish the requisite mechanisms to ensure member states are held accountable for their conduct, the advancement of accountability measures has been led by civil society organizations. Thus far, the primary objective of these non-governmental organizations (NGOs) has been to convince member states of the United Nations to develop National Action Plans (NAPs) that prioritize WPS, so that the resolutions may be incorporated into domestic policy.

The African Union (AU) is the preeminent organization on the continent in terms of formulating policies and initiatives that advance gender equality. By UNSCR 1325, every effort is being made to incorporate gender mainstreaming into peace and security processes [16]. Twenty-five years have passed since the adoption of UNSCR 1325; however, the issue of women's empowerment and complete participation in peace and security institutions and processes remains unresolved. Notwithstanding numerous endeavors in agenda formulation, training, petitioning, and framework development, this has transpired.

A mere 50 nations out of 196 countries that have formulated such strategies are effectively implementing them; thirty percent of those nations are situated in Africa [17]. Even fewer women participate as negotiators in the negotiation process, and an even smaller percentage of women sign peace accords [18].

The proportion of women in peacekeeping forces is a mere 3%, while the proportion of women in deployed police stands at 10%. Consequently, the United Nations falls short of its intended objective of having 20% female police officers and 10% female personnel [16].

Efforts to increase the proportion of women employed in security have not significantly increased their safety. Serious allegations of peacekeepers abusing children and women have brought sexual and gender-based violence in conflict zones to the forefront. The demarcation between aggressors and guardians becomes increasingly permeable.

Moreover, acts of violence against women are not confined to nations officially involved in conflict; rather, they are considerably more widespread and permeate the "everyday" lives of women in every country. One significant theoretical challenge arises when attempting to disentangle the discourse and execution of UNSCR 1325 from the wider feminist movement concerning gender, peace, and security, which served as its inspiration: the suppression of women's perspectives [16]. Feminist scholars contend that security institutions and the militarization of society are the result of entrenched gender disparities and fundamental presumptions regarding the nature of man and woman.

Feminism is defined as the "political movement for women's rights and gender emancipation," [19]. As the WPS agenda was being formalized, however, there was a notable transition in focus towards the involvement of women in peace and security institutions and processes. This was achieved in large part through the implementation of gender mainstreaming in the security sector.

A lack of emphasis has also been placed on how the experiences of women differ during and after conflicts. Rapidly overshadowing feminist efforts to emphasize the multifaceted roles women play in these circumstances was a unifying view of women as victims in need of protection. The imperative to confront SGBV served to validate the involvement of women in peace processes, the security sector, and peacekeeping operations. To summarise, the security industry did not benefit nearly as much from a gender perspective as it could have.

Present justifications for women's participation are predicated on the suppositions that they are inherently more rational and capable of persuading men to see reason; these justifications also rely on preconceived notions of women as mothers and caretakers. An additional frequently cited rationale is the inclusion of women as victims of conflict. While several dissident organizations and political parties have deployed female delegates, comparatively few have highlighted the fact that women are active participants in the struggle and not merely observers.

Regarding the participation of women in peace processes, South Africa served as an example for other countries to emulate. A coalition comprising South African women, who were all main political parties, was unified in their quest for a 30% bargaining share [16]. In addition to the subsequent gender-sensitive peace accord and constitution, they authored the Women's Charter, which served as a foundational document for their recommendations during the negotiations, outlining the fundamental principles of gender equality. But they never requested this condition while mediating conflicts in southern Africa or elsewhere in the African continent.

New research on women's autonomy in post-conflict settings indicates that war obliterates established gender norms. Nevertheless, research investigating the profound impacts of conflict is scarce [20]. Little evaluation or recognition has been given to the transformative potential of minor, localized changes, which are typically the precursors to broader societal shifts. Experiences of women in Africa, suggest a positive correlation between women's increased political participation and the occurrence of conflicts. The countries that have recently recovered from conflict have witnessed the greatest surge in women's political participation [21]. In addition to its destructive effects, war catalyzes swift social transformations that reshape power dynamics based on gender through the interconnection of demographic, economic, and cultural changes [20].

5. Good Example: Nepal

5.1. Situation of Nepal

Nepal could be used as a perfect example in this case. Despite recent efforts to mitigate its effects, patriarchy continues to exert a substantial influence on the social structure of Nepal. 1853 saw the drafting of the first National Code by upper-class citizens. The 1963 National Code drew some of its fundamental inspiration from the Manusmriti and other Hindu scriptures [22].

The Manusmriti is an extremely discriminatory text that restricts its perspective on women to the domestic sphere. Due to its religious significance, matrimony is generally considered to be the norm. "Men must make their women dependent day and night and keep under their control those who are attached to sensory objects. Her father guards her in childhood, her husband guards her in youth, and

her sons guard her in old age. A woman is not fit for independence” [23]. Women were not given any rights but had to rely on men for their whole life long time.

Even though Nepal granted women the right to vote in 1951, preceding its South Asian neighbor countries, their social standing remains inferior to men. The 1963 National Code regarded matrimony as a universal institution, stipulating numerous gender-based discriminatory restrictions. Consequently, the ability of female offspring to acquire property or citizenship was severed. The dowry system, a predilection for males, and a gender education gap are all consequences of parents regarding their daughters as possessions [22]. Regardless of compatibility, spouses are still expected to uphold traditional values in contemporary Nepal, where marriage is regarded as a permanent commitment. Despite several amendments, gender-biased policies continue to be present in the National Code of 1963 [22].

5.2. Case

One case in which conflict can elevate the status of women is through cultural transformations, such as the one that has transpired in Nepal regarding widowhood. Before the Civil War, widows were subject to stringent regulations. As an expression of reverence, high-caste Hindu families frequently mandated that widows of all ages don white saris, which symbolize purity. It was a universally accepted standard. Additionally, she should never wed again. Thousands of young males were killed during the People's War. This caused a significant proportion of women, exceeding half of whom were below the age of 40, to lose their husbands [22].

Several NGOs initiated assistance for combat widows. The Red Colour movement was an initiative launched by the non-governmental organization Women for Human Rights in opposition to the discriminatory practices that were enforced upon widows. Due to the lack of religious significance and association with prejudice associated with the traditional white sari, the campaign furnished widows with red saris to encourage their active participation. Despite encountering opposition from the community, this endeavor was unable to reach its complete potential; nevertheless, it did establish a foundation for subsequent social changes [10].

The widows who received assistance from WHR realized that the prejudice they had faced was not attributable to any aspect of themselves, but rather to their cultural background. Widows' conduct transformed becoming aware that the white sari doesn't obtain any religious meaning, but cultural discrimination [24]. Individuals gradually ceased donning saris in their entirety in favor of a more diverse spectrum of hues. As a result of their opposition to the all-white sari as an emblem of sorrow, widows who were among the first to do so were maligned. Initially stigmatized, this perception changed as widows who wore unconventional attire became more conspicuous in public. In recent years, the widow population has increased dramatically, and they are no longer stigmatized by being required to wear a white sari in public [22].

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, a close focus on peace is essential to understanding peace and conflict. Resolution 1325 emphasizes the importance of including women in peace negotiations and calls for the advancement of women and gender equality, but the impact of this effort on reality needs to be increased again, and fundamental change is not a simple matter, for example, women's participation in peace negotiations is still low. For example, women's participation in peace negotiations remains low. Nepal is an example of women using conflict to advance their status. Transformations in social structures and cultural practices have reshaped gender relations and enriched women's rights.

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