Readings
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Chapter Eight:
Gender and Conflict

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Sexual violence is a widespread though not universal
phenomenon during conflict. It is employed selectively, for
strategic reasons, and targets men as well as women--Kimberly
Theidon and Kelly Phenicie (2009)

Antecedents

The defining features from the beginning of 20th century to the early 21st
century include numerous armed conflicts, authoritarian regimes, and
genocidal episodes, and the last quarter of the 20th century ushers in a
significant increase in attention to women's rights and protagonism in the
context of political violence and terrorism. These negative developments
necessitated research and policy initiatives on conflict prevention,
resolution, and reconstruction activities that recently focus on gender
dimensions to conflict, with a view to incorporating their concerns to
policy and academic settings, in order to better understand and respond to
the impact conflict has on men and women.

Although conflict is part of human experience and occurs on everyday
basis in all the societies but women in Africa increasingly bear the greater
burden of conflicts in which they rarely contribute to the outbreak.
(Fayomi, 2009: 173). This presupposes that men and women are actors in
conflict but women are the most vulnerable which is also reiterated by the

Geneva Protocol of 1949 and the Additional Protocol of 1977. The Protocol explicitly contains measures to protect women during armed conflicts. The overall aim from the research perspective is to address these knowledge gaps and intensify awareness in the academic and practitioner networks.

One of the most important dimensions of discrimination, oppression and inequality in modern societies is gender in the context of conflict. . Gender refers to a set of culturally conditioned traits associated with maleness or femaleness. There are two sexes which are male and female; these are biologically determined ascribed statuses. Also, there are two genders, masculine and feminine; these are socially constructed ways of being a man or a woman (Kornblum, 2003:430). Associated with gender is its stratification as male and female which are channeled into specific statuses and roles in the societies. Therefore, Kornblum (2003) opines that gender roles are the sets of behaviours considered appropriate for individuals of a particular gender. Examples of the issues arising out of the definition of gender roles include controversies over whether women in the armed forces can serve in combat or whether men with children ought to be eligible for family leave from work. Hence, the roles which are assigned to both men and women in the societies are heavily influenced by culture and accorded differing amounts of income, power, or prestige, and these patterns of inequality contribute to the system of stratification in the societies.

Gender in Conflict Circumstances

Men and women are dependent on relationships and bonds, which renders them vulnerable and gives them the power to violate others. But this essential human vulnerability only leads to victimisation and

violence under certain circumstances. All human societies take precautions: they institutionalise, regulate, civilise or unleash collective or personal violence within institutionalised power relations. They define "legitimate" and "illegitimate" violence and create institutions in order to enforce the formal or informal rules that apply to the use or prevention of violence. These processes are culturally and historically diverse. The gendered orders of violence are built through institutions such as the state, the military, the bureaucracy, the educational system and the family (Enloe, 1990). They are enshrined in religious beliefs, language and symbolic orders. They are dynamic and they are organised along the lines of gender, class, "race" and other "identities"

In essence, both women and men experience violent conflicts in very different ways. The challenge is not only to respond to the special but often neglected needs of women as a result of conflict, but also to better understand gender roles and processes relating to gender and conflict throughout the phases of conflict, including the male roles. Gender issues cut across all sectors of society, regardless of political, economic, or social context, and this is no different for situations of political violence and armed conflict (Moser and Clark, 2001).

Discussions of gender issues in situations of war often present women as victims, particularly as regards sexual abuse and forced abduction, while men are presented as perpetrators or defenders of their nations and communities. Women and children are frequently classified together as one category - that of civilians - while men are often classified only as combatants.

Conceptual Clarifications

Gender Gender is derived from the Latin noun, genus (meaning 'kind' or 'group'). It refers to the socially determined ideas and practices of what it is to be female or male. It refers to how a person's biology is culturally valued and interpreted into locally accepted ideas of what it is to be a woman or man. Gender resonates on differences between men and women and the unequal power relationships that result. The term indicates that the differences between men and women are not inevitable products of biological sex differences.

Gender Violence

Gender violence is a product of inequalities violence that is targeted at both men and women because of their sex and/or their socially constructed gender roles. Gender violence disproportionately affects the members of one sex more than another. Examples of places with gender violence are Afghanistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Pakistan, India, South Africa et cetera. Gender Violence are manifested in : the forcible recruitment of young boys into the army who are put through violent indoctrination, and then made to perform suicidal missions in order to prove their masculinity; and the slashing of the wombs and removal of their foetuses of pregnant women, thereby leading to the death of many women.

Sexual violence

Sexual violence is violence which includes rape, enforced prostitution, sexual slavery, or sexual mutilation. Gender violence is usually manifested in a form of sexual violence, but can also include non-sexual

physical or psychological attacks on women, men and children. It should be noted that both men and women could be raped. Men may also be raped to humiliate them by forcing them into the position of women and thereby rendering them weak or inferior according to the prevailing stereotypes.

In addition sexual violence can be expressed through sexism that is associated with violence and harassment of women, which is often intended to "keep women in their place" and maintain male power. . in some extremely patriarchal societies, women who have been raped may be beaten or killed by their own husbands, fathers, or brothers, who feel dishonoured by the violation of their women. These "honour killings" are merely extreme examples of the violence that are both physical and emotion that is routinely directed at women globally (one of the most horrific crimes committed during conflict. (Kornblum, 2003:436)

It is pertinent to emphasise that sexual violence is a perennial problem during conflicts or unrest globally.. It happens all over the world in Afghanistan through Colombia to Somalia with lasting consequences long after the fighting has stopped. Girls and boys make up a large number of the survivors of sexual violence in conflict as well as a large number of those who do not survive yet their experiences and specific needs are often overlooked and the perpetrators of these awful crimes are rarely brought to justice.

Gender Balance

Gender balance is not quotas but refers to a balanced composition of women and men in order to bring equality to the current male-dominated

international institutions. According to Beijing Platform for Action (1995), participatory member States governments committed themselves to:

• *establishing the goal of gender balance in governmental bodies and committees, as well as in public administrative entities, and in the judiciary (para. 190(a))*

> • *aim at gender balance in the lists of national candidates nominated for election or appointment to United Nations bodies , specialized agencies and other autonomous organizations of the United Nations system, particularly for posts at the senior level. (para. 190(j))*
>
> • *integrate a gender perspective in the resolution of armed or other conflicts and foreign occupation and aim for gender balance when nominating or promoting candidates for judicial and other positions in all relevant international bodies, such as the United Nations International Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and for Rwanda and the International Court of Justice, as well as in other bodies related to the peaceful settlement of disputes (para.142(b))*--Beijing Platform for Action(1995).

The UN General Assembly called upon Member-States to

commit themselves to gender balance, inter ala, through the creation of special mechanisms in all government-appointed committees, boards and other relevant official bodies as appropriate, as well as in all international bodies, institutions and organizations, notably by presenting and promoting more women candidates. (UN General Assembly Resolution 51/96, 12 December 1996).

Evolving Gender and Conflict: Theoretical Viewpoints

There have been major and significant changes, especially since the 1970s, in the wider socio-political context. The women's movement, medical and legal developments, international human rights discourse, shifts in mainstream religious and cultural understandings of gender relations and roles in conflict situations. The burgeoning body of evidence from research and practice supports the explanatory value of gendered theoretical perspectives within and across relevant disciplines. But the gendered perspective to violence in relations to women has been disputed by an approach (family conflict/violence) which claims to find evidence for gender symmetry and equivalence in the use of violence within intimate partner relationships. In acrimonious academic and popular debates, the cry goes up, and the question is: 'but what about violence against men'?

The terminologies of sex and gender are often used interchangeably, but the two terms do not have the same meaning. Doyle and Paludi (1998) are of the view that the word sex has become a catchall term which means different things to different people. In common usage most people define sex as one of the two mutually exclusive and unchangeable biological categories which differentiate female from male, and in which most living species fit. Since gender can be defined as the state of being male or female mainly in cultural or social contexts, it refers to the members of one or other sex from the perspectives of masculinity and femininity, thereby denoting having qualities that are traditionally associated with men and women. Conflicts in this context refer to serious disagreement or incompatible or at variance and prolonged armed struggles.

Conflict has affected prodigious numbers of people from the angles of

power relations across vast spaces in recent decades. It has also been exacerbated by the concentration of conflict in areas that are fairly developing or underdeveloped. For this reason, theories and models of development take into account, and sometimes even go so far to assume, that established practice will occur under conditions of on-going conflicts or in situations termed "post-conflict." (Cerretti , 2009:1). In essence, the dominant strains of development discourses have failed to address the realities of many societies that they target in relation to conflict.

Burn (2005) discusses gender in relation to development as a model that "focuses explicitly on improving women's status," with "an emphasis on looking at the overall power relationships of women and men and their importance to development" . The approach is inherently critical of existing means and ends of development, which predominantly ignored the participation of women in economy and development until worldwide women's movements forced male-dominated governments and institutions to give them some, if only token, representation. The gradual steps taken by the UN to "mainstream" gender analysis into all of their work have not achieved full relevance even within that organization, not to speak of the countless other institutions driving development that have appeared more threatened by gender-based analysis.

Because gender remains a marginalised category of analysis in development discourses, Burn's elucidation of the gender and development model is significantly unique..

Several scholars have documented the increased burden women are forced to assume by the expectations of femininity in response to

structural adjustment. Femininity has historically been constructed around the role of caretaker-for-the-family and when governments reduce food subsidies, health-spending and educational opportunities; women are most often forced to act as quartermasters, caretakers, and teachers for their family with a decreasing amount of resources. Burn also identifies neoliberal development models as adding to "women's workload through environmental degradation, taking water and land for cash crop production, and taking men away for wage earning."

It is pertinent to note that gender and development model (GAD models) addresses two assumed needs, economic inequality across the North/South divide and gender inequality within a society, by attempting to "transform society to create gender equality" while expanding economic opportunities for all people. The means for this transformation require women to be cast as "architects of their own development," according to Burn, "through women's organization and activism participation in politics, and decision making" (Burn, 140:150). The GAD approach is best exemplified by organisations like the Self-Employed Women's Association of India (SEWA) that functions as both a financial institution and labour organisation for women entrepreneurs and those who wish to become entrepreneurs. The organisation attempts to not only raise the income gained by women, but also to raise consciousness about means to understanding and altering the marginalised role of women in society. SEWA is driven by the desires and needs of its constituents, not by the will of wealthy, foreign donors, and it attempts to transform gender relations far beyond just providing financial stability. However, organisations of this nature cannot succeed in creating gender equity by themselves, as they target only the feminine side of gender identity for transformation.

however, societies emerging from or engaged in conflict are also embedded in conflict about gender roles. Many of the most heinous forms of violence inflicted upon women and men by the mostly-male combatants "are linked to traditional images of what it is to be a [masculine] warrior, [or] because of women being seen as man's property" (Connell 2000, 14). Conflicts in recent decades have featured a disturbing array of forms of gender-based violence that includes mass rape, forced abortion, forced pregnancy, sexual slavery, gender-targeted executions, and other sexually exploitative or demeaning activities performed under coercion. These events trouble both masculine and feminine roles and further the construction of a binary representation of men-as-violent and women-as-victims, or its equally problematic, euphemized substitute: a binary of the masculine-as-protector and the feminine-as-protected. Not only are particularly violent forms of masculinity often encouraged by conflict, other less-aggressive forms of masculinity are often marginalized in societies experiencing the negative economic repercussions of hosting conflict.

While assessing the legacy of the wars that fractured the former Yugoslavia in the 1990's, Zivcovic (2006), claims that:

> [...] economic emasculation, at least for certain segments of the population, "depresses" the male pole of the gender balance [...] Ethnonationalist re-traditionalising rhetoric of recovering some ideal, proper, traditional, et cetera masculinity feeds off and exploits this "depression," and, under situations of crumbling legal order, the resultant boost to certain kinds of masculinities could account for at least some of the appeal of war. Zivcovic (2006:260),

Therefore, taking into consideration the societies emerging from

conflict, this means masculinities, both victorious and defeated, must be addressed and altered in ways that encourage gender equity and peace if a society hopes to prevent a reoccurrence of open hostilities. In marginalising masculine gender in its analysis, the GAD model undoubtedly strong in many regards, fails to live up to its name or the needs of people who have survived violent conflicts in the Global South.

The linkage between Gender and Conflict: Empirical Viewpoints

During the horrific thirty-six year long civil war, which occurred between 1960 and 1996 an estimated 200,000 Guatemala citizens people both males and females were murdered, which along with the extreme brutality of the violence committed make it one of the bloodiest in Latin America to date (Human Rights Watch, 2008).

While describing some of the methods utilised in carrying out their horrendous acts, Carey and Torres (2010) document some of the methods of torture used against civilians, describing the public evisceration of pregnant women, people being burned alive, and systematic decapitation of victims (Carey and Torres, 2010:156-157).

In addition to the official report of the Guatemala's Commission for Historical Clarification (CEH), 'Guatemala: Memory of Silence' (1999) attributed responsibility for 93% of the human rights violations to the army or armed forces acting under their direction such as the Civil Patrols, clearly demonstrating the widespread use of state-sanctioned violence. However, although men also suffered a great deal of violence and torture during the civil war; the forms of violence used against them were much less often related to their sexuality (Hollander, 1996:46). on the other hand, the methods of violence and torture used against women on the other hand, including forced nudity and rape, the targeting of

sexual organs, and specific forms of torture related to pregnancy and childbirth, were truly gender specific (Hollander, 1996: 69).

According to Amnesty International (2002), mass rape and sexual mutilation formed a key part of the army and civil patrols strategy [Amnesty International. Moreover, the torture can be interpreted both as direct violence against women, and as well a form of symbolic violence. The public rape of women, in front of their loved ones and the community, and the removal of the foetus from the body of a pregnant woman, were often precursors to mass assassinations signifying the symbolic appropriation of the community's future' (Carey and Torres, 2010:157). Furthermore, during the civil war, the violence also had a particular racialised characteristic. In Guatemala, indigenous people form 43% of the population, and Mayan women were specifically targeted for sexual violence (Beltran and Freeman, 2007). The report by Guatemala's Commission for Historical Clarification estimates that 88.8% of those who suffered sexual violence were Mayan, and that the majority of abuse and torture took place in the early 1980's in the indigenous rural highland regions of Guatemala, demonstrating the radicalized nature of the violence (Guatemalan Commission for Historical Clarification, 1999).

Also, in Guatemala, the torture and murder of women cannot be attributed solely to the legacy of the civil war, but rather 'examining the social support networks of gender-based violence compels us to confront the potential horrors of patriarchy' (Carey and Torres, 2010:162). While systematic sexual violence has been a part of conflict, worldwide, throughout history, it is only in recent years that it has gained attention and been internationally recognised as a potential 'war crime' by the

International Criminal Court, and that international treaties have attempted to legislate against violence against women.

Moser and Clark (2001) affirm that gender-based violence often struggles to be seen as a human rights abuse because international human rights legislation enforcement is effective. Although, international attention to violence against women during conflict, is a welcome development, but it is yet to start addressing the complex interlinkages between violence against women during conflict, and the violence that takes place against them during peace period or pre-conflict era. Therefore, Kelly (2000) is of the view that gender-based violence during conflict cannot be analysed as fundamentally different from violence in peace period or pre-conflict: violence against women in the context of armed conflict simply intensifies already existing attitudes and behaviours. In addition, Rehn and Sirleaf (2002) reiterate that violence against women in wartime is a reflection of violence against women in peacetime.

African Women Resistances to Oppression

UNDP (2006) states that in many societies, especially in sub-Saharan Africa, the transition from childhood to adulthood marks a turning point in societal expectations from the male and female as the world expands for boys and contracts for girls.

Women and men experience violent conflicts in very different ways. The challenge is not only to respond to the special but often neglected needs of women as a result of conflict, but also to better understand gender roles and processes relating gender and conflict throughout the phases of conflict, including male gender roles. Examples of Women who played active roles resisting denial of their rights and oppression in Africa include:

1. Aba Women Riots of 1929.

Aba women rioted against the direct taxation introduced by the British government in the provinces in the eastern part of Nigeria.

2. Malawian women revolted in order to defend their rights to wear trousers, short dresses, knickers and revealing dresses. in January, 2012. In 1994, they were legally permitted to wear trousers but this was revoked in December. 2011, and the outcome was the revolt which was referred to as the Sisterhood of the Travelling Kabudula.

3. Mekatilili wa Menza of Giriama Revolt in Kenya. She was charismatic woman who led Kenyan women to protest against the British recruitment of labourers for the World War 1 (WW1).She advocated for the freedom and basic human rights for all, male and female, young and old, including children. She was a heroine of her own time and died in 1925 at the age of 70.

4. Madam Efunroye Tinubu. She was an active adversary of the British colonial government in Nigeria. She became an active opponent of slave trading.

Women and Conflict: An empirical Viewpoints

There is clear evidence that women suffer severe forms of abuse during, and often after, armed conflict (Moser and Clark 2001). In Mozambique and Rwanda mass rape was used as an instrument of war; women were abused both by their rapists, and communities who afterwards rejected them (Turshen 2001).

In India, the gang of men who attacked an Indian woman who later died from her horrific injuries tried to run her over with the bus she was brutally raped in, it emerged today. The 23-year-old was tossed out of the

moving vehicle only for her fiancé to battle to pull her from under its wheels, police in New Delhi, India have said.

'They tried to drive the bus over the rape victim and her male friend. Her friend pulled her to safety, just in time', an officer close to the investigation claims. According to the family members, the girl and her fiancé were planning to marry in February, 2013 but the woman, who remains anonymous because in India rape victims cannot be named in any circumstances under section 228-A of its Penal Code. She eventually died on the 16th of December, 2012 despite treatment at a Singapore hospital - two weeks after she was attacked.

Message: Protests continued in Delhi on New Year's Day as it was revealed that the victim was thrown under a bus by her attackers, police sources said

Message: An Indian man arranges posters on a road during a protest to mourn the death of a gang rape victim in New Delhi.

Other instances of sexual violence against women include the rape of Somali women in refugee camps in Kenya while they were busy gathering firewood. Refugee women were forced to exchange sex in return for being allowed to cross a border into South Africa. The girls in Northern Uganda were abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army. They were forced to work as domestic and sex slaves (Waliggo 1999).

In addition, Sexual violence occurs frequently in all phases of armed conflict and may be carried out by armed forces, military groups, or civilians. The resultant experience of ssexual violence against girls and women could be pregnancy, stigmatisation and segregation. Children born of forced maternity are more likely to suffer infanticide, stigma, neglect, and discrimination, and their mothers may be rejected and ostracized by their communities. It is pertinent to emphasise that domestic violence affects women during peace and war, but may be increased in situations of social exclusion, poverty, disempowerment, and frustration, which frequently occur following displacement.

Conclusion

Ceretti (2009) opines that if development models hope to positively impact the largest possible number of people their policies need to reflect the historical and current realities of conflict. Conflict has differential effects across geography, gender, class, and other forms of identity that must also be attuned to in order to affect positive change. Further research is necessary in this field and, unfortunately, the contemporary world provides many sites in which conflict-aware development must be implemented. Until the guarantee of sustainable personal security is extended to all people of the world, the potential for conflict stalks every corner of the world.

In addition, men and women should display positive attitude to life so as to have a relatively stable environment. It is over a decade since the watershed Resolution 1325 introduced Women, Peace and Security onto the Security Council's agenda. The resolution deals with the special impact that war has on women and children and stresses the necessity to involve women in conflict prevention, peace building and post-conflict reconstruction. The intervening decade has seen progress in expanding the notions of peace and security. Accordingly, peacekeepers must be armed with examples and information to help them operate effectively on the ground. So much effort should be directed in the areas of practicable policies so as to promote actions that have real impact, as we move from best intentions to best practices. This will require us to recognise and publicise success stories, not just horror stories

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