

*Chapter seven*

# South Sudanese Women in Peace Building and Conflict Resolutions: Prospects and Hurdles.

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## Introduction

It is an undeniable fact that women are the backbone of our social system and culture. Peacemakers say, without women there is no peace. Women have the wisdom and the capacity to see beyond what's obvious and the courage to do what others have never thought of doing. They possess the capacity to transform the society into a desirable direction.

There is no revolutionary moment in a woman's life than when she is privileged to bring forth into the world the miracle of a new life. Instantly, she becomes inseparably linked to the human chain of life. There, she becomes an active participant in the quest for a better world. Then why will she not contribute her resources and energies in maintaining peace first of all in her home, society and the world at large? At this moment, I am convinced that every single child in the world a girl is being born, who will grow up as beautiful woman to take her rightful place in the society to contribute to a peaceful world order.

Our dreams of world's future can only be realized if women are educated, are made economically prosperous, are empowered politically and are enabled to play a bigger role in the society.

However, inter-state and intra-state conflicts often result in wars or large scale violence, leading to massive destruction of lives and property as well as disruption of social, political and economic lives of large populations. In 20th Century maximum number of wars and other violent conflicts took place that resulted in massive destruction and disruptions. The world also witnessed several other inter-state wars apart from the First and Second World Wars in which millions died. In 1996, according to UN sources, about fifty countries were involved in major crisis (Bukky, 2005:4). It is hard to make peace, but easy to make war. War anywhere becomes one of the most futile exercises. This exercise directly brings about untold human sufferings, destruction of our environment, infrastructures and loss of lives. Conflict arises due to a complex set of variables coming together and reinforcing each other at multiple levels and at critical junctures of a country or region's development. It leaves in its aftermath significant development and humanitarian challenges. Women continue to experience systematic violations of their human rights. A new policy, therefore, is required by which it will aggressively expand its development and implementation of programs mitigating the causes and consequences of conflict, instability, fragility and extremism. It must incorporate sensitivity to the dynamics of conflict and instability in its design or execution.

In 2005 World Summit, the world leaders reaffirmed the significant role of women in conflict prevention, resolution and peace building. For the first time the interlinkages across development, peace and security and human rights were accepted. A call was made for the full and effective implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1325 on Women and Peace and Security. It became a core rationale for the creation of integrated approaches to peace building and for the creation of the Peace Building Commission (PBC). Today, women in the aftermath of crisis have perilously little protection or access to services, justice, economic security or citizenship. Very often it poses a challenge to meet basic needs and safeguard their fundamental rights.

Involving women and gender expertise in peace building activities is essential for reconstituting political, legal, cultural, economic and social structures so that

they can deliver on gender equality goals. Gender equality brings to peace-building new degrees of democratic inclusiveness, faster and more durable economic growth for human and social capital recovery. Indeed, peace building may well offer the single greatest opportunity to redress gender inequities and injustices of the past while setting up new precedents for the future. But these opportunities can be enhanced significantly – or constrained – by how the international community sets its priorities for recovery and uses its resources for peace building. The occurrence of women’s leadership and civic engagement has historically led to positive and progressive social change for all people in a community. Women’s participation in decision-making is particularly crucial in war-torn communities, both during and after conflict. When women’s voices are heard and recognized as valuable, more sustainable, economic and social stability is achieved (Erin Currier, 2005: 18).

Thus, women participation in peace building and conflict resolutions has remained a daunting debate in social sciences, particularly, in political science. Leading scholars in this field continued to discuss women participation in peace building and conflict resolutions in generalities, leaving out women in conflict and post-conflict societies. Inspired by this pedagogy deficit, the paper is going to fill this gap of knowledge. The paper therefore is organized as follows: Section one deals with the concept of peace building and conflict resolution. Section two discusses exclusion theory in analyzing poor participation of women in peace building and conflict resolutions. Section three acknowledges successful attempts of women participation in peace building and conflict resolutions, particularly, South Sudanese women. Section four pinpoints the hurdles that impedes South Sudanese women in peace building and conflict resolutions. Section five summarizes, concludes and recommends further research.

## Conceptualizing Peace Building and Conflict Resolution

The objective of peace building is to strike a balance between ‘negative’ peace and ‘positive’ peace (Galtung, 1996: 7). Because conflicts usually leave their mark on the post- settlement process in form of broken lives, shattered and divided communities, distrust, and hatred, the task of constructing a self-

sustaining peace is never an easy one. The post-settlement peace building in such circumstances becomes what Grenier and Daudelin (1995: 346) call the “peace building market-place” (the cessation of violence) is traded for other commodities, such as political opportunity (election) and economic advantage (land). They argue that, “exchanging resources of violence against other resources is arguably the pivotal type of ‘trade’ in peace building” (Ibid: 350).

The way in which gender is integral to peace, and violent conflict makes clear that a gendered analysis of peace building is essential to preventing and mitigating new violent conflict in societies while helping them recover from current conflicts.

This paper adopts the definition of peace building announced in the “Peace building Initiative Strategic Framework” by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) (2002). The CIDA describes peace building as follows:

Peace building is the effort to strengthen the prospects for internal and external peace and decrease the likelihood of violent conflict. The overarching goal of peace building is to enhance the indigenous capacity of a society to manage conflict without violence. Ultimately, peace building aims at building human security, a concept which includes democratic governance, human rights, rule of law, sustainable development, equitable access to resources, and environmental security...Peace building may involve conflict prevention, conflict resolution, as well as various kinds of post-conflict activities. It focuses on the political and socio-economic context or humanitarian aspects. It seeks to...institutionalize the peaceful resolution of conflicts (CIDA, 2002: 2).

Besides, Boutros-Ghali (1992) defines the term peace building as ranging from specific tasks that might derive from a comprehensive peace agreement – such as helping to disarm the parties, canton troops, and hold or destroy weapons; monitoring elections; fielding civilian police; and repatriating refugees – through far broader and less tangible objectives such as the restoration of order, advancing efforts to protect human rights, reforming or strengthening governmental institutions, and promoting formal and informal processes of political participation (Ghali, 1992: 5). On the other hand, Kofi Annan (1997) defines peace building as “the various concurrent and integrated actions undertaken at

the end of a conflict to consolidate and prevent a recurrence of armed confrontation” (Annan, 1997: 35).

Essentially conflict exists in all countries and in every level of society. Conflict per se is not necessarily a negative force; rather it is a natural ex-pression of social difference and of humanity’s perpetual struggle for justice and self-emancipation. Conflict resolution is directed at understanding conflict processes and alternative non-violent methods that help disputing parties reach mutually acceptable positions that resolve their differences.

On the other hand, conflict resolution is argued as “a variety of approaches aimed at terminating conflicts through the constructive solving of problems, distinct from management or transformation of conflicts (Millary, 1999: 8).” Andrew Millary et al. (1999) indicate that by conflict resolution, it is expected that the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed and resolved, and behavior is no longer violent, nor are attitudes hostile any longer, while the structure of the conflict has been changed (Ibid: 9).

Paul Mitchel and Gabriel Banks (1998) refer to conflict resolution as:

An outcome in which the issue in an existing con-flict are satisfactorily dealt with through a solution that is mutually acceptable to the parties, self-sustaining in the long run and productive of a new, positive relationship between parties that were pre-viously hostile adversaries; and any process or procedure by which such an outcome is achieved (Mitchel and Banks, 1998: 7).

Kofi Annan (1997) definition of peace building and Paul Mitchel and Gabriel Banks (1998) definition of conflict resolution are suitable for this piece.

Nonetheless, peace building and conflict resolutions are considered to occur simultaneous and reinforcing sets of activities with an intricate and organic relationship much as human rights principles relate to broad development goals. One cannot be done without the other. It is therefore important that all sectors of society, which are present in one way or another in all aspects of an ongoing conflict, are represented in negotiations and actions that seek to lay the foundation for peace and post-conflict resolution.

## Exclusion Theory

This theory was advanced by Wolfgang Pauli in 1925. Though it was quantum mechanical exclusion, it was later applied in social sciences. It argues about deliberate delimitation or non-inclusion of subjects into the issue. In terms of women participation in peace building and conflict resolution, this theory definitely applies. Very few women are included in peace negotiations or in politics of governance in general in countries affected by conflict and war. Very few peace agreements have taken a gender and human rights perspective into account. Women's voices and concerns have often been excluded in decisions that affect the economic and power structures of post-conflict reconstruction, from land and property rights to legislation issues. Women continue to be excluded from negotiations, treaty-making, interim and transition-appointed governments, in planning and implementing humanitarian aid, post-conflict reconstruction planning and policy-making. On the whole, peace processes remain a male exclusive endeavour where men negotiate power, and largely set the post-conflict agenda.

Indeed, the concerns and priorities of women in conflict resolutions are ignored in most peace talks as well as in the development of most post-conflict reconstruction programs despite the reality that women account for the majority of conflict victims as objects of rape, assault, abduction, sex slavery, and forced human movement. The most obvious and arguably effective way for women's concerns and priorities to be expressed is to take measures to ensure that a large number of women are directly involved in formal conflict resolution procedures, rather than continuing to remain as relatively powerless community members. It is unusual for women, or women-specific issues, to be perceived as integral to an international dispute.

The invisibility of women in international affairs, the widespread acceptance of religious and cultural justifications for the unequal treatment of women, and the lack of international significance attached to women's lives explain the marginalization of women in international arena. Even where women are major actors in an international incident, this reality is rarely identified in dispute settlement. For example, trans-border refugee flows frequently both provoke, and are the consequence of, international disputes. Although women constitute large numbers of refugees, they do not figure separately in negotiations about

resettlement. Other forms of discrimination, by contrast, have been at the core of significant international disputes. The multiple discriminations of race, ethnicity and sex suffered by women are not, however, seen as part of these disputes, or as relevant to their resolution. One result of the absence of women in the process of international conflict resolution is that basic concepts in this field have been developed in a very limited way (Wood and Worth, 2000: 18).

## Women and Post-Conflict Peace Building

In the past few years, there has been an increasing recognition by government, international organizations, and civil society of the importance of gender equality and empowerment of women in the continuing struggle for equality, democracy and human rights, as well as for poverty eradication and development (El-Bushra, 2000: 11).

In nearly every country and region of the world, there has been progress on achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, although this progress has been uneven and the gains remain fragile. A great challenge facing the world today is the growing violence against women and girls in armed conflict. In today's conflict, they are not only the victims of hardship, displacement and warfare; they are directly targeted with rape, forced pregnancies, and assault as deliberate instruments of war. Women are deeply affected by conflicts, which they have had no role in creating.

Armed conflict and its aftermath affect women's lives in ways that differ from the impact on men. Men in communities under attack tend to abandon public spaces to avoid being conscripted, attacked, or taken hostage. This increases the burden placed on women to hold communities together in the absence of men at war. On the other hand, women as symbols of community and/or ethnic identity may become the targets of extensive sexual violence. Conflict in some places has highlighted the use of rape as a tool of warfare. In Rwanda and South Sudan, women were raped as a means of ethnic cleansing, serving not only to terrorize individual victims but also to inflict collective terror on an ethnic group (Maxwell, 2018: 9).

An intensive literature explores the interconnections between the roles of women and men in conflict situations and the politics of identity and agency. Literature on Rwanda, South Sudan, DR Congo, Mozambique, Pales-tine, and Sri Lanka shows that women may be victims, but they also often participate actively as soldiers, informants, couriers, sympathizers, and supporters.

Conflict brings with it terrible human rights consequences for all involved – children, women and men. The impact of conflict on the civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights of women, in particular, is often devastating. In spite of the fact that conflict has a high level of impact on the lives of women, it is disheartening to note that they are not fully involved in the peace building process because of its gendered nature. Women’s interests have been neglected by the peace process, which has resulted in male-centered approaches to peace and security. The intrinsic role of women in global peace and security has remained unrecognized since the crea-tion of the United Nations.

In the past decade, many countries have embarked upon the difficult transition from armed conflict towards resolution and peace building. The international community’s role in this transition has shifted from narrow humanitarian and relief activities to more comprehensive efforts to foster sustainable peace. At the same time, the community has shifted from a stepped approach of relief to development to one that combines a broader package of concurrent steps. Development organizations have become increasingly engaged in activities during post-conflict, devoting time and resources to supporting this transition.

Building a lasting peace that sustains post-war economic, political, and social development requires the full participation of all citizens. Yet it is increasingly recognized that the role of women in post-conflict settings has received inadequate policy attention. According to Theo Ben Gurirab, Namibian Minister of Foreign Affairs (cited in Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE, 2005), attempts to address the human rights consequences of conflict, including the particular impact on women, can only be comprehensive and long-lasting if women play active part in all the relevant processes and mechanisms given the gender-differentiated impact of war on women (OSCE, 2005: 3).



It is important to know that preventing a war is entirely different than resolving one once it has begun. In order to prevent conditions that give rise to violent conflict from coalescing, capable societies must be created. These societies are characterized by three components: 1) security, 2) well-being, and 3) justice for all of its citizens, including its women. According to William Lute (2002), women's roles in promoting these three causes provide examples of their activities towards preventing the emergence, spread, or renewal of mass violence (Lute, 2002: 19).

The belief that women should be at the center of peace building and resolution processes is not based on essentialist definitions of gender (Lisa & Manjrika, 2005). The field of sociology makes a distinction between sex, and gender. Human beings are not born 'men' or 'women'. Masculinity and femininity is learned, rehearsed, and performed daily (Butler, 1999: 16).

It would be naïve to assert that all women respond in a similar manner in a given situation or that women are 'natural peace builders' (Lisa & Manjrika, 2005). Gender identity is performed differently in different cultural contexts. Gender identity must always be viewed in relationship with an individual's other identities such as his or her ethnicity, class, age, nation, region, education, and religion. It is important to note that there are different expectations for men and women in various sectors of the society and gender roles shift with social upheaval. In conflict situation, men and women face new roles and changing gender expectations. Their biological and sociological differences affect conflicts and peace building. In all, most societies value men and masculinity more than women and femininity (Lisa & Manjrika, 2005: 9).

Despite this existence of 'sexism' or 'patriarchy', there are some widely accepted reasons why women are important to all peace building processes. Women are important because they constitute half of every community, and the task of peace building, a task that is so great, must be done in partnership with both women and men. Secondly, women are the central caretakers of families in most cultures, and everyone is affected when women are oppressed and excluded from peace building. Therefore, it is essential that women be included in the peace building and conflict resolution processes.

Besides, women play in process of peace building; firstly, as activists and advocates for peace, women wage conflict nonviolently by pursuing democracy

and human rights. Secondly, as peacekeepers and relief aid workers, women contribute to reducing direct violence. Thirdly, as mediators, trauma healing counselors, and policymakers, women work to 'transform relationships' and address the root of violence. Lastly, as educators and participants in the development process, women contribute to building the capacity of their communities and nations to prevent violent conflict. This is made possible as a result of socialization processes and the historical experience of unequal relations and values that women bring to the process of peace building (Lisa & Manjrika, 2005: 10).

## Without Women There is No Peace

Women are the backbone of our social system and culture. Without women there is no peace. They possess the capacity to transform the society into a desirable direction. Women are the significant players in the process of change and development. In their quiet existence lie the will and the making of a better tomorrow. Women, who constitute half the world's population, are the true strength of a nation. As I have already stated in my introductory paragraph there is no revolutionary moment in a woman's life than when she is privileged to bring forth into the world the miracle of a new life. Instantly, she becomes inseparably linked to the human chain of life. There, she becomes an active participant in the peace process for a better world. Education, employment and empowerment are the three vital weapons in ensuring the progress of women who, in turn will play their role to free the world from violence and war. Mervat Tallaway 2016 emphasizes, women must be recognized as key actors in conflict resolution and fully included in all strategies and effort for peace making and peacekeeping (Tallaway, 2016: 14). Kofi Annan stresses that women understand the root causes of tension and are more likely to know which group within communities and countries are likely to support peace initiatives (Annan, 2012: 8).

A girl, who is being born today around the world, will grow up as a beautiful woman to contribute her mite to a peaceful world order tomorrow. But conflicts continued to threaten Great Horn of Africa. In such calamitous situations, women and girls are often exposed to acts of violence, which seriously undermine

their human rights and deny them opportunities arising from gender inequality (Agbalajobi, 2017: 3). Studies have shown that women are worst hit in situations of violent conflict and are also affected differently from men during these crises. It is becoming increasingly obvious that women have unique opportunities for conflict resolution and peace building due to the unique role they play in society.

## Women as Peace Makers

The newest approach in the process of conflict resolution and peace building process must emphasize on gender uniqueness (Mbagwu, 2001: 12). The majority of women are displaced by war so it is now understood that they could play an important role in efforts to resolve conflicts. Women are 'beautiful souls' loving peace (Sylvester, 1995: 32). The feminist theory also argues that women are inherently peaceful, capable of preaching, teaching and preserving peace. There is an innate ability in women that makes them prefer nonviolent actions (Ferris, 1992: 11). Conflict resolution with just women came out with more constructive discussions than groups with mixed gender (Babbit and Pearson-D'Estree, 1996: 17). It is agreed that women are very trustworthy, dependable, and exhibit a high level of honesty and integrity. They are dedicated, reliable and committed to family and national aspirations and goals. Women, the life givers of the world, therefore have a stake in the world pursuit of peace since they exhibit a high level of perseverance, patience and tolerance in achieving set objectives. Women have been proactive in the resolution of conflicts, but their roles have before not been given deserved prominence and recognition (Bukky, 2005: 19).

Beijing Conference of 1995 emphasized on women's capacity for leadership that must be utilised to the full and to the benefit of all in order to progress towards a culture of peace. Their historically limited participation in governance has led to distortion of concepts and a narrowing of processes in such areas as conflict prevention, the promotion of crosscultural dialogue and the redressing of socio-economic injustice, women can be the source of innovation and much needed approaches to peace building. Therefore, it is important to deeply understand the dynamics of women's peaceful engagements. Indeed, conventional wisdom has tended to undervalue wom-en's contributions,

assuming that they are non-political citizens, and that their preoccupation is primarily with domestic issues. It is noted that women agitate against externally imposed big development projects as it leads to ecological degradation, affects subsistence activities like farming and fishing, and reduces employment opportunities for local people as such projects prefer non-natives in their recruitment. They also address lack of basic social infrastructure and economic development opportunities at the grassroots, non-compensation for land use, corporate insensitivity on the part of the multinational, divide and rule tactics, sexual harassment of local women, as well as epidemics. It is worth mentioning that these women protests remain mostly non-violent but effective and point to how the intellect and energy of women can be harnessed for peace (Ukeje, 2004: 606).

## Role of the International Community in Women's Peace Building Efforts

The road to peace should be out of concerted effort and concern of all. Third parties serve as mediators with various strategies towards maintenance of peace. Statesmen have been engaged in initiating peace settlements and establishing international system for the maintenance of peace and security since the World War 1. The Treaty of Versailles, the establishment of the League of Nations and now the United Nations' Organisation are the outcome of these endeavours. The UN reaffirms its faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small. It strives to establish conditions under which justice and respect the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained, and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom, and for these ends to practice tolerance and live-together in peace with one another as good neighbours, and to unite our strength to maintain international peace and security.

The year 1975 was declared as the Year of the Women by the General Assembly of the United Nations with a three fold objectives: equality, development and peace. The Beijing conference on women in 1995 was also the demonstration of mobilization for the struggle for equality, development and

peace. The conference handed over the flame of peace, symbolizing the daily struggles of women to promote the settlement of conflicts, ap-peasement, peace building and the sustainable existence. Similarly, the United Nation declared the year 2000 as the international year of the culture of peace and 2001 – 2010 as the international decade for a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world. Governments, local organizations and individuals all over the world are using these years to probe deeply into the nature and practice of a peace culture. September 21 annually is also declared as International Day of Peace. (Bukky, 2005: 22).

It would not be out of place if I quote Kofi Annan, the then U.N. Secretary General, “the future of the world belongs to women”. At the United Nation in Geneva, women gathered for 5 days in October 2002 for the first time in history to talk about new initiatives aimed at promoting world peace, and eliminating the causes that lead to conflict (Ibid: 26). Despite the efforts made by UN to deal successfully with many serious issues confronting it, international conflicts have nevertheless persisted and many remained un-resolved and a plethora of more complex conflicts keep occurring globally. With provision of Article 52 of the United Nations Charter allowing regional organizations to make arrangements for settlements of their disputes many of such regional and sub-regional bodies have not relented in their endeavours on peace-keeping and peacemaking. Organisations like African Union (AU), the Organisation of American States (OAS), the League of Arab States, Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Corporation (SADC) and the European Union, among others have demonstrated their efforts towards peace.

Individual member states have made efforts to complement the global efforts towards peace making and peace building. It must be pointed out that while national interests and other factors militate against the success of the United Nations in its attempts to maintain international peace and security through peacekeeping, it has made tremendous success in many ways. This fact explains why during its 40th anniversary, the Norwegian Nobel Com-mittee awarded the Peace Prize to the peacekeeping forces of the United Nations. In realizing their work, the military wing is usually assisted by negotiators and other civilians who employ diplomatic options in form of peace-talks, meetings, conferences,

negotiations, third parties, NGOs, re-gional and other groupings in an attempt to break the deadlocks.

## The Role of Regional Institutions in Empowering Women

The organizations like OAU, Feminine non-governmental organizations (NGOs), Economic Commission of Africa (ECA), the United Nations, have dedicated themselves to the promotion of the African women and their participation in decision-making, among others for the establishment of peace, resolution of conflicts and national reconciliation. The need is to get to the women, both educated and uneducated cannot be over emphasized. Also, the change agents have to involve the local women in any area they are working so as to carry them along. There is need for partnering academic institutions with communities to forge peace alliance committed to community transformation, poverty alleviation and social justice. The United Nations Resolution 1325 on “Women, Peace and Security” 2000 stresses the importance of women’s role in conflict prevention and resolution and highlights the need for women’s equal participation in the maintenance and promotion of peace and security.

## Women’s Role at Grass Root Level

Women often organize at the grass roots level in order to promote peace but their access to formal peacemaking and peace building processes continues to be limited. Very few women are included in peace negotiations or in politics of governance in general in countries affected by conflict and war. Very few peace agreements have taken a gender and human rights perspective into account. Women’s voices and concerns have often been excluded in decisions that affect the economic and power structures of post-conflict reconstruction, from land and property rights to legislation issues. Women continue to be excluded from negotiations, treaty-making, interim and transition-appointed governments, in planning and implementing humanitarian aid, post-conflict reconstruction planning and policy-making. On the whole, peace processes remain a male exclusive endeavour where men negotiate power, and largely set the post-conflict

agenda. It is vital that both women and men have equal opportunities to participate in the ongoing processes for the principles of democracy and good governance to take root in countries coming out of conflict (UNMISS, 2008: 3).

## The Roots of South Sudanese Women Peace Building

### Katiba Ban'at

Katiba Ban'at in Arabic refers to the battalion of women in South Sudan. It was a military movement that was founded together with SPLM/SPLA in 1983 to allow women participate in the liberation struggle. The number of women in Katiba Ban'at was roughly between 1000 to 2000 women (Ashworth, 1999:8). The movement was the entry point for South Sudanese women participation in war and peace (Derek, 2017: 7). South Sudanese women helped in provision of food, intelligence gathering and actual field combat in the war theatres. Although many women performed satisfactory in the Katiba Ban'at, women deserted the movement out of fear and due family commitments.

## Participation of South Sudanese Women in Peace Processes

### The Wunlit Peace Accord, 1999

South Sudanese women have been steadfast in peace processes in South Sudan. The etymology of this effort is the Wunlit Peace Process between Dinka and Nuer in 1999. Hailed as a successful people to people peace, Wunlit peace accord halted the conflicts and animosities between the grass-roots Dinka and the Nuer. The Sudan Council of Churches played a great role of facilitation. However, women from Dinka and Nuer took traditional roles to mobilize their men and ensure that the peace event was successful (Ashworth, 2000: 6). The slaughtering of white ox (Mior Mabior) was done amidst ululations of the women for peace and reconciliations of the two bitterenemies turned friends (Johnson, 2001: 3).

The women ensured that the white ox was well cooked and divided amongst the two communities who ate it and enjoyed the peace ritual. Without women, the Wunlit Peace Accord would have not been possible.

## Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA)

This was a peace deal negotiated by between National Congress Party (NCP) of Sudan and Sudan Peoples' Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) of the South. The agreement was inked on 9th January 2005 at the Kenyan Capital-Nairobi. The success of this peace deal, though, viewed as the effort of Dr. John Garang and Ustaz. Mohammed Taha, the real success was the women of the Sudan and particularly, from the Southern Sudan. The organization of the women, Sudan Women Action Network (SWAN) formed in early 2000 championed the peaceful resolution of con-flicts in the Sudan.

## Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (ARCSS and R-ARCSS)

ARCSS was signed in August 2015 in Juba to end the conflict between President Salva Kiir and Dr. Riek Machar that erupted on 15th December 2013. During the negotiations of this deal, women were critically involved. Groups such as Women Bloc, Women Coalition and Gender Empowerment for South Sudan Organization, amongst others were involved in successful negotiations of the deal. Eminent personalities such as Madam Rebecca Nyandeng Garang, Madam Angelina Teny and Madam Awut Deng Acuil were all in the forward negotiating ARCSS representing their parties.

Revitalized Agreement on the Resolution of the Conflict in the Republic of South Sudan (R-ARCSS) was also supported by women. Women Civil Society Groups such as Women Bloc, Women Coalition and other women Civil Society Organizations ensure this agreement was inked. The eminent personalities mentioned above played essential roles in convincing the leaders to finally signed the deal on 12th September 2018.



## Hurdles Facing South Sudanese Women in Participation in Peace Building and Conflict Resolution

### Rigidity of T-GoNU to Implement 35% Women Quota Political Representation.

The Transitional Constitution of South Sudan 2011 amended 6 plus provided a threshold for women political participation. It provides 35% women quota in political representations. However, the application of this provision has been problematic. Currently, women political representation stands at 14% in the cabinet. This is far below the threshold. In the Transitional National Legislative Assembly, 20% of 400 MPs are women. This is too below the threshold.

### Hyper Masculinity Dominant

Hyper masculinity dominant remained a great challenge to women progress in South Sudan. This is due to cultural influences. For instance, women are not allowed to sit with men in meetings as well as making of decisions. Women are not allowed to sit in traditional bench courts as well as not allowed to take the inheritance after the death of husband.

### Retrogressive Cultural Barriers

Retrogressive cultural barriers have prevented women from participation in peace building and conflict resolutions. Heavy shouldered home chores such as preparing for family meals, uncontrolled children bearing and keeping girl-child out of school remained critical challenge for women emancipation in peace building and conflict resolutions. Early child marriage and Sexual Gender Based Violence (SGBV) have continued to undermine women participation in peace building and conflict resolutions. It is indicated that 60% of female children dropout of school every year due to early child marriages (Homes, 2019: 7).

## Perpetual Envy and Mutual Suspicion Amongst Women.

This has been a challenge to women empowerment and progress in political participation. Most women possess perpetual envy and mutual suspicion and thus don't support themselves. Studies have indicated that 55% of women envy and don't support politically their fellow women across the world (Dame, 2016: 8). In South Sudan, this perpetual envy and mutual suspicion has continued to cause women political downgrading and failure. During 2010 elections, 90% of women decided to vote for men instead of their women candidates in geographical constituencies (Chol, 2010: 16). Thus, this perpetual envy and mutual suspicion has continued to edge out women in meaningful peace building and conflict resolution programmes given women would not do things together.



**Figure 1:** Rebecca Nyandeng De' Mabior weeping at Addis Ababa after the principals failed to ink the deal, 17th August 2015.



**Figure 2:** South Sudanese Women in Training of Politics and Peace at Jubek Women Union Building on 7th May 2019.

## Conclusions

The paper has advanced a strong argument about the participation of women in peace building and conflict resolutions. It has appreciated from the empirical literature that women have endeavored to participate in peace building and conflict resolutions. This is exhibited from the natural creation of women as peace lovers and conflict solvers. Moreover, the gift of woman as a natural mediator has continued to shine throughout the world including South Sudan. Prospect of women participation in peace building and conflict resolution in South Sudan has been showcased in the critical roles of women groups such as Women Bloc, Women Coalition and other members of civil society in CPA, ARCSS and R-ARCSS. Women have urged their men including denying them their connubial rights to accept peace in South Sudan.

On the other hand, South Sudanese women face serious hurdles in participating in peace building and conflict resolution mechanisms. This has been analyzed through exclusion theory where South Sudanese women have been kept away from participation. Hurdles such as rigidity of T-GoNU in implementing the 35% affirmative action of women political representation, hyper masculinity dominant, retrogressive cultural barriers and perpetual envy and mutual suspicion continued to draw down women in meaningful participation on peace building and conflict resolutions. Although women always attempt to come together to forge the future, envy and suspicion continued to pull them back.

Though women participation in peace building and conflict resolution remains a disastrous and highly a concern issue amongst the concern concepts in the world, concern issues do not have to remain of great concern. Chronic failure is not inevitable or immutable, and compromise and coexistence remain eminently feasible objective of peace building and conflict resolutions. The challenge is immense, but the dividends are so great, and the alternatives so grim, that the struggle for peace is worth every ounce of sweat and toil.

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