

WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY – ADVOCACY AND IMPLEMENTATION OF UN RESOLUTION 1325

Dr. Girija K.S.*

**Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University College of Arts, Tumkur University, Tumakuru
572103*

***Corresponding Author:**
girijaksrao@gmail.com

Abstract:

“Where women are full participants of politics or economy, societies are more likely to succeed – former US President Obama”

The recent war by Russia on Ukraine has thrown up many issues to the forefront and peace and security occupying an important place. The devastations and the human loss that has incurred are unimaginable and horrific for women. Though threats of war was seen in many circumstances, it was not possible due to the former Soviet Union’s position and stand post world war II. However, it is unfortunate that in the present case, it’s the Russian Imperialistic tendency that has led to the war. In this context, it becomes vital to consider the UNSCR 1325 which advocates both war’s adverse effects in general and women in particular and women’s important contributions to peace and security. Yet, despite this resolution being passed women are underrepresented in the peace building process and negotiations worldwide. This article examines the role of women in peace and security process both in conflict situations and post conflict reconciliation as described in UNSCR 1325.

Keywords: *gender, imperialist, negotiations, peace, security, UNSCR*

INTRODUCTION:

The concept of Gender, Peace and security in International relations is a new phenomenon and has gained importance in the recent past. Wars in the past have been atrocious and people could not escape from being victims. However the awareness regarding the conflicts has to a great extent provided a solace. Despite this, women and children have not escaped from the clutches of exploitation and women have been targeted as armed forces attempt to demoralize their opponents. (Gender, War & Peace, US Institute of Peace, www.usip.org/npec). Since women are neither in the peace negotiations to end conflicts nor are a part of UN sponsored negotiations, women's issues is often left out or is missing from peace settlements, which hamper the reconstruction process. Hence the importance of bringing gender into peace building process becomes vital and it is not just concerned about the violation of rights but an overall inclusive process. The UNSCR (United Nations Security Council Resolution) 1325 provides support for women in peace building and involves them in both conflict and post conflict advocacy and reconciliation process. However, only 33 countries and 5 commonwealth nations have approved National Action Plans (NAPs) to implement the resolution. (M'Cormack-Hale, 2012)

The roles played by women alter and expand during conflict as they participate in the struggles and take on economic responsibilities and duties of household at the same time. These opportunities bring them closer on a common platform, exchange their views and advocate for peace struggles.

Researchers have shown that violent conflicts have affected different groups such as women, children, sexual minorities, men differently and also the approaches to peace building too. Hence building inclusive sustainable peace initiatives becomes pertinent in addressing gender power dynamics and gender roles and expectations. Women and men have differential experiences both during and post-conflict, and that women have a unique set of challenges related to peace building and security (Beever, p.21). Moreover, the informal contributions of women have been highlighted and declared invaluable to resolving conflict and building sustainable peace (Pratt and Richter-Devroe, 2011, p.490)

Further, those which *do* take into account issues of gender, overwhelmingly fail to address structural inequalities and power dynamics which are the foundation of gender discrimination (Strickland and Duvvury, 2003)

Gender identities are social, cultural and political constructs that are dependent on a range of other factors, such as class, age, profession, urban/rural setting, kinship and marital status, disability, sexual orientation and, depending on the situation, ethnic, religious, cultural or caste background. Gender is also a relational concept, meaning that gender identities are created in relationship with each other, in the context of the whole society"

Objectives:

The paper explores the following objectives:

1. To identify the concept of gender peace and security in International context
2. To explore the role played by women in conflict and post conflict situations
3. To understand UNSCR 1325

Women, Peace and Security –**“When women lead and participate in peace process peace last longer – UN Women”**

Gender is a very complex subject that identifies the relations with society and further emphasizes the discriminatory social practices that are prevalent from a very long period of time. What then is gender and why does it becomes relevant in present condition? Gender is a social construct and refers to the roles, norms, behavior and expectation from the society on the basis of one's sex. In other words, it is “the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for men and women” (World Health Organization, 2017) It also means “Unequal treatment of people based on their gender which arises from differences in socially constructed gender roles” (Wood, 2005)

Differences between men and women are often thought in terms of biological and physiological. However the differences are much more and normally it is a woman who is expected to abide by such social norms and hence the social constructs define a women's and men's role in society. The roles that are played by men and women vary according to the socio-economic, political-cultural structures and contexts and are thus influenced by religion, caste, creed and ethnicity. Furthermore gender roles are reinforced through education, political, economic systems, social obligations, cultural norms and the role that a women is expected to play. These roles are reinforced and believed in politics, peace building and security at International level. (Wood, 2005).

As Simon de Beauvoir states “ One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman..” is a reflection of the social structure. Men and women are born equal but they are taught certain appropriate behavior, attitudes, that change their roles in society. This behavior determines the gender gaps and roles in society. However, the roles played by women are totally different from that of men.

“Women, Peace and Security (WPS) is a **policy framework that recognizes that women must be critical actors in all efforts to achieve sustainable international peace and security**. WPS promotes a gendered perspective and women's equal and meaningful participation in peace processes, peace-building and security”. (UN women)

“The landmark resolution on Women, peace and security was adopted by Security Council on 31st October 2000. This resolution reaffirms the role played by women in prevention of conflicts, peace negotiations, peace building, and peace keeping and stresses the role played by women in maintenance and promotion of peace and security”. (UN women)

“Peace building is fundamentally about dealing with the reasons why people fight in the first place, while also supporting societies to manage their differences and conflicts without resorting to violence”. In other words “Peace building is the **development of constructive personal, group, and political relationships across ethnic, religious, class, national, and racial boundaries**. It aims to resolve injustice in nonviolent ways and to transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflict”.

Originally coined in 1975 by Johan Galtung, the term ‘peace building’ intended to encompass a wider range of activities than the earlier notions of peacemaking and peacekeeping, by acknowledging the importance of identifying and building structures which might militate against war, therefore addressing the root causes of conflict (Barnett et al., 2007, p.37). The term was made popular in the international arena by UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in his 1992 Report *An Agenda for Peace*, and its importance was reaffirmed in his 1995 *Supplement to an Agenda for Peace*, though at the time peace building was referred to as ‘*post-conflict* peace building’, thereby limiting the application of the term to activities taking place when conflict had ended, or was coming to an end.

Hence, Women’s contribution to peace and security cannot be negated. It is noted that women play an important role in peace and justice who, unfortunately are being systematically dehumanized in conflict situations in the world and without accountability, peace building process becomes incomplete.

UNSCR 1325 Resolution:

In the year 2000, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) which formally acknowledged, for the first time the changing nature of warfare, in which civilians and women are the worst targets where women continue to be excluded from participation in the peace process and the role of women in peace building and mandated a meaningful inclusion of women in decision-making on Peace and Security. The resolution acknowledged the impact of armed conflict on women and children. “The resolution specifically addresses how women and girls are impacted by the violent conflicts and how they are victims of masculinity and hence recognizes the critical role that women can play in peace building processes. UNSCR 1325 affirms that peace and security efforts are more sustainable when women are equal partners in the prevention of violent conflict”. (United States Institute of Peace, What is UNSCR 1325?)

The UNSCR 1325 did not come up in vacuum but was a result of 50,000 women who convened in Beijing Conference to form “Beijing Platform of Action” (fourth world conference) in 1995 and a number of other initiatives that tackled the issues of gender based violence and discrimination in armed conflicts and post-conflict situations at the end of 20th century². (UN women (1995), The UN fourth world conference on women).

“The Beijing Declaration & Platform for Action” set certain objectives to ensure the involvement of women in Peace and Security as women were excluded from meaningful participation in peace processes. At the 23rd Special session of the UN General Assembly in 2000, a political declaration document was adopted that discussed women and armed conflict. During its presidency in UNSC, Namibia initiated the open debate on Women, Peace and Security, Canada on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, the Netherlands on Children and armed conflict, and Bangladesh on Women’s contribution to peace and security.³ (Pragathi, The Hindu, November 28, 2021).

Thus, “The resolution reaffirms the important role to be played by women in the prevention and resolution of conflicts and in peace-building, and stressing the importance of their equal participation and full involvement in all efforts for the maintenance and promotion of peace and security”. Further it also emphasizes on the need to implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law that protects the rights of women during and after the conflicts. (UNSCR resolution)

Some highlights of the Resolution 1325:

Keeping in mind the commitments of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for action, as well as gender equality and other issues, the Resolution 1325 (2000) adopted by the Security Council at its 4213th meeting on 31 October 2000, has the following objectives:

- ❖ Expresses the concern that civilians, particularly women and children account for the vast majority of those adversely affected by armed conflict, including as refugees and internally displaced persons, are targeted by combatants and armed element
- ❖ Reaffirms the role of women in prevention of conflicts
- ❖ Stresses the importance of equal participation and full involvement at all levels of decision making

- ❖ Reaffirms the need to implement international humanitarian and human rights to protect the rights of women and children
- ❖ Emphasizes the need for all parties to conduct awareness programs to protect the special needs of women and children
- ❖ Recognizes the urgent need to mainstream a gender perspective into peacekeeping operations
- ❖ Urges the member states to implement the provisions of the resolution

Resolutions of United Nations Security Council (UNSC) on Women, Peace and Security:

The pressure from the NGOs, the civil society groups and others led to the passage of the UNSCR 1325 and since then 10 supporting UNSC Resolutions have been passed addressing different concerns of Women, Peace and Security (WPS)

1. UNSC 1325 : Adopted on 31 October 2000 – A landmark resolution on Women, Peace and Security
2. Resolution 1820 – Adopted on June 19, 2008 – Recognizes that conflict related sexual violence is a tactic of warfare and calls for preventing sexual violence, deployment of more women to peace building operations and enforcement of zero-tolerance policies for peace keepers with regard to acts of sexual exploitation or abuse.
3. Resolution 1888 – Adopted on 30 September, 2009 – It was introduced by United States Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton who presided over the session. Resolution established UN special representatives on sexual violence in conflicts.
4. Resolution 1889 – Adopted on 5 October 2009 – addresses obstacles in women’s participation in peace processes and calls for development of global indicators.
5. Resolution 1960 – Adopted on 16 December 2010 – requested information on suspected patters of sexual violence during armed conflict and calls to end sexual violence.
6. Resolution 2106 – Adopted on 24th June 2013 – The fourth resolution focuses on operationalising the obligations relating to sexual violence rather than creating new structures. It includes women’s participation in combating sexual violence and calls for further deployment of Women Protection Advisors (WPA)
7. Resolution 2122 – Adopted in October 2013, this resolution creates stronger measures to include women in peace process and calls for regular briefings and reports on women, peace and security. It also includes provisions for increasing gender equality and female empowerment.
8. Resolution 2242 – Adopted on 13 October 2015 – Urged to initiate revised strategy with the aim of doubling number of women in peace keeping operations in next five years
9. Resolution 2467 – Adopted on 29th April 2019 – calls for a survivor centered approach in the prevention and response to conflict related sexual violence.
10. Resolution 2493 - Adopted on 29th October 2019 urges states to recommit themselves to women, peace and security agenda by creating safe environment for women leaders, peace builders, human rights defenders across the globe.

These different resolutions were passed to reintegrate women in peace & security. Any meaningful commitment to 1325 can begin only when the country addresses the culture of impunity that is so deeply embedded in the foundation of its post-colonial practices.

Does UNSC really want women, peace and security?

United Nations in general and UNSC in particular as a body are responsible for implementing the 1325 resolution. However, the question is, how far are they free from the bias and how far are they really wanting to include women in peace building process? The positive note is, having implemented the above resolutions; the UNSC annually reviews the extent to which nations have adopted this. However, it has to go a long way.

In her address last year, on the 20th anniversary of the UNSCR 1325, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngeuka, the then UN Under-Secretary-General & Executive Director of UN women, said there were more evidence that peace agreements were likely to last 15 years or longer when women were at negotiating table. “Evidence shows that peace processes that involve women are crucial to long term and lasting peace”. Yet, women are systematically excluded from the process”.

At the recently concluded UNSC meeting on 21 October 2021 led by Kenyan Presidency on the issue, “Investing in Women in Peacekeeping and Peacebuilding”. The Council was briefed by UN Secretary-General António Guterres, Sima Sami Bahous, Executive Director of UN Women, and Bineta Diop, African Union Commission Special Envoy for WPS. Among the key themes that came up frequently in the discussion included women’s participation in peace processes, women in peacekeeping, and protection; less frequently discussed themes that are nonetheless critical to implementation of the WPS agenda included conflict prevention, militarization and small arms and their effects on women and girls, support for women human rights defenders. (<https://www.peacewomen.org/security-council/security-council-open-debate-women-peace-and-security-october-2021>) It also emphasized that

- *Militarization as a barrier for women’s rights*
- *Securing the participation of women in peace process*
- *Engaging women leaders in different countries and at war situations*
- *Initiatives by the UNSC in involving women*

1325 National Plan Action at a glance:

“The National Action Plans provide a valuable tool for nations to implement their commitments to WPS agenda and civil society to hold them responsible. NAPs are a practical document that contains details of actions a government is required to take to meet its obligations under UN Security Council women, peace and security resolutions and other internationally agreed resolutions to ensure that these commitments are translated into concrete policies and programs. It also provides an opportunity for the stakeholders to identify priorities, determine responsibilities, allocate resources and initiate strategic actions within a defined time frame to deliver the policies and programs that respond to the needs of the conflict-affected women” (UN women).

According to WILPF Monitoring and Analysis of National Action Plan on Women Peace and Security,

- ❖ 98 UN member states (51%) have adopted the 1325 resolution.
- ❖ The NAPs of 35 member states (36%) include an allocated budget for implementation
- ❖ 31 current NAPs (32%) include references to and specific actions towards disarmament
- ❖ 70 NAPs (72%) allocate a specific role to civil society organizations for implementation.

Provisions under NAPs:

The UN points out the priorities and actions that are identified within the WPS-NAPs framework that integrate the four pillars of WPS agenda. They are:

- ❖ Women’s **participation** at all levels of decision-making in peace and security sphere: Participation of women and children in peace processes is one of the important criteria in making them hold more positions and equally participate in decision making process. This not only gives confidence to women but also makes them responsible and resilient. “Meaningful involvement of women and girls in all policy areas and at all levels leads to more inclusive decision-making and to share responsibility and ownership, and thus to more sustainable peace and reconstruction”. Supporting and participation of women either at political and administrative hierarchies or at leadership positions should not be a formal procedure but true initiatives and policy changes are to be incorporated. “Particular focus should be on marginalized women, who due to their age, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, place of residence, education, religion, political views, work and physical or other disability are not only minimally informed or consulted or have more difficulty in obtaining access to decision-making processes.”(NAP, Dutch action plan)

To eliminate the barriers for women’s equal participation in peace building process and make them equal partners, it is essential to give them their due position at all levels and recruit them to disseminate the peace process. Discriminatory legislations need action and

- ❖ **Protection** of the rights of women and children
- ❖ Incorporation of gender perspective in conflict **prevention** initiatives
- ❖ Ensuring that gender considerations are included in **relief and recovery** efforts.

Within the broader phenomena certain specific provisions are also incorporated which addresses the key areas:

- Of conflict prevention
- Peace negotiations and peace agreements
- Constitutional and electoral reforms
- Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of combatants
- Prevention of gender based violence
- Conflict rehabilitation
- Gender balance: women in decision making
- Peacekeeping operations and security concerns

Some Member states that have adopted National Action Plan:

The National Action Plan is a document that intends to incorporate the objectives of 1325 resolution by outlining the government’s approach towards inclusion of women in peace, security by preventing conflicts, violence against women and children and taking necessary measures. As mentioned earlier, 98 UN member states have adopted this in their National policies and have implemented it; Denmark being the first nation.

Sl.No.	Countries	Year of Implementation of NAP
01	Denmark	2005
02	Sweden	2006
03	Norway	2006
04	UK	2006

However, India is yet to adopt it in its national policy framework. Since women are systematically excluded from the peace building process and decision making at all levels, gender inequality is increasing across nations and hence it becomes pertinent for nations to understand the gravity and implement it.

Conclusion:

As Prof. Vibuti Patel has put it, peace as the absence of every type of structural violence leads to discriminatory process and is a long time goal that takes time to achieve in conflict and post conflict settings. Structural violence refers to a form of violence where social structures or institutions may harm people by preventing them from meeting their basic needs. It also includes institutionalized forms of violence such as casteism, racism and sexism.

Thus, the Women, Peace and Security Agenda have a transformative potential. It is considered as a powerful tool for moving from exclusive to democratic decision-making, from gender inequality to gender justice and from conflict and violence to sustainable and feminist peace. To realize a transformative potential of the Women, Peace and Security Agenda, it is time to move from verbal commitments to action: Governments, the United Nations, civil society, the private sector and other actors must implement relevant commitments across all thematic areas! Ensuring a gender perspective and women's participation, protection and rights is critical, including in prevention and disarmament, protection in displacement settings, peacekeeping, policy-making and reconstruction. **Action is crucial and critical to build a sustainable and peaceful world for all of us to live. Let's make it possible for the future generation too.** (UN report)

Reference:

- [1]. Asha Hans and Swarna Rajagopalan, (Springer 2019) "*The Letters: An Exchange on Patriarchy, Militarization and Feminist Peace Activism,*" in *Exploring Betty A. Reardon's Perspective on Peace Education: Looking Back, Looking Forward*, edited by Dale T. Snauwaert
- [2]. Roshmi Goswami, Kumudini Samuel, Nighat Said Khan, (2017) "*Herstory: women and peace movements in South Asia*", in *R. Manchanda Women and politics of peace* (pp. 59-79). SAGE Publications,
- [3]. Swarna Rajagopalan, (Oct 2011) "*Peace Refractions, "Peacebuilding issue, Agenda,*
- [4]. Swarna Rajagopalan, (March 2011) "*Building a Feminist Peace,*" Seminar 619,.
- [5]. Soumita Basu, (2016) "*The global south writes 1325 (too)*" *International Political Science Review*,
- [6]. UN www.peacewomen.org *Why investing in women peace and security*
- [7]. www.nato.in 20th April 2022 *Women peace and security*,
- [8]. <https://www.peacewomen.org/security-council/security-council-open-debate-women-peace-and-security-october-2021>