

More Than Victims: The Role of Women in Conflict Zones

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Abstract. Although women and children are not directly involved in the armed conflict, many victims have been found in this group. In conflict, the role of women is underutilized and even underestimated in conflict prevention, maintenance, and peacebuilding. When the conflict occurs, women play an essential role in conflict management, both as mediators, mediators, and peacemakers, to become the last bastion of conflict victims seeking safety and protection. This paper aims to describe the role of women in conflict areas in carrying out the conflict resolution process. The study was conducted using a literature review technique utilizing most existing written materials, including selected academic sources and documents prepared by various related institutions related to internal and international conflicts. In conflict that occur in various parts of the world, women participate in the four stages of conflict resolution, namely preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. Preventive diplomacy is an effort to prevent disputes from turning into conflicts, increasing the level of conflict intensity between conflicting groups, and expanding conflict zones if they have occurred. The role of women in Iraq, Burundi, and Kenya illustrates women's involvement in preventive diplomacy. The peacekeeping stage mark by the process of stopping or reducing acts of violence. The role of women's groups in Liberia to end the civil war and overthrow the Liberian dictator from the presidency marks women participation in the peacekeeping. Meanwhile, peacemaking aims to bring together or reconcile the political attitudes and strategies of the conflicting parties through mediation, negotiation, or arbitration from the elite or leader level. This role was exemplified by women's groups in Aceh and Ambon through intentional and unintentional conflict reconciliation. The last stage, namely peacebuilding, is marked by various efforts to create lasting peace. This stage marked by the contribution of Rwandan women in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process after the 1994 genocide.

Keywords: The role of women, conflict zones, conflict resolution, agents of peace

1 Background

Although wars between countries have decreased, domestic violence continues and is increasing. Over the past two decades, civil conflicts had doubled from 30 in 2001 to 70 in 2016 (Oxfam International, 2019). Conflict will always have an impact on the parties involved in the conflict directly or indirectly. When conflicts occur, especially in armed conflicts, children and women often become victims or are negatively impacted. Women are vulnerable to gender-based violence when conflicts occur, such as rape, torture, discrimination, and other violence. Plumper and Neumayer estimate that conflict or war affects women's life expectancy

lower than men. Apart from experiencing violence, women's access to necessary resources such as food, clean water, and health services is also limited. This condition provides an indirect effect that is stronger than the direct combat effect during the war (Shea & Christian, 2016). On the other hand, women are also directly affected by the death of their families due to the conflict (Noor & Binte-Saleem, 2017).

Even before the conflict occurred, women tended to be seen as a class of society whose involvement was limited in social, political, and economic spheres. For example, the ratio of Pakistani women involved in starting their own business and becoming self-employed is meager, with women entrepreneurs representing only one percent of this gender population as a whole (Noor & Binte-Saleem, 2017). Women, in this case, are often seen as weak and unable to reason, so they are not given the responsibility to be involved in the public sphere. This assumption has been embedded in people's thinking.

Based on a survey conducted by Oxfam in 2013, it was explained that, in general, men perceive women as lacking the capacity to participate in political or public life. On the other hand, women believe that they cannot overcome the stigma or social pressure that will arise if they try to voice issues related to women (Oxfam International, 2019). With this assumption, women are also often forgotten to be agents of peace and conflict resolution. The opportunity for women to be involved in conflict resolution seems to be deliberately limited.

For example, the government's initiation of the Maluku conflict resolution at the elevated level was carried out at the Malino II meeting. The meeting invited 34 people as representatives of the Christian community and 35 people from the Muslim community in Ambon city. However, there were only three women from the 69 delegates of the Malino II meeting (Asyathri & Yuliati, 2014). From these data, it can be seen that women are rarely involved in formal meetings.

Various works of literature encourage the understanding that the role of women is significant in conflict resolution. International organizations and NGOs have also consistently called for increased participation of women in the peace process. Although it is rarely highlighted, it is not uncommon for women to remain active in conflict resolution efforts, either directly or indirectly.

This involvement is carried out through trade, following grassroots movements, or being directly involved in formal meetings and filling positions in government. This article intends to explain women's roles in the stages of building conflict resolution through a search of some related literature. This paper will also first explain the impact of conflict on women and the different ways women and men deal with and resolve conflicts.

2 Concept of Conflict Style and Conflict Resolution

In dealing with conflicts, of course, management is needed to resolve them. There are five types of conflict management style tendencies. First, competing is a conflict style with a concern for fulfilling one's own goals at the expense of others. Second, accommodation is done by sacrificing one's own goals for the benefit of others. Third, avoiding is an act of ignoring the goals of both parties by delaying conflict issues. Fourth, the collaborative style is done by finding a satisfactory solution for both parties.

Finally, compromising tries to find a middle ground by only partially fulfilling the interests of both parties (Shepherd, 2015). The first style gives excellent concern to oneself, whereas the second style focuses on others. Contrary to the first two conflicting styles, the

third style does not pay attention to the parties' goals for a while. Meanwhile, the last two conflicting styles are the fourth style which focuses on the interests of oneself and others, and the last one is concerned with both parties equally.

The experiences of women and men in conflict situations differ significantly and the way they manage the conflict (Stella, 2015). Various studies have shown that men tend to use competitive and avoidant styles, while women prefer collaboration and compromise. Therefore, peace agreements and reconstruction will be more effective if they involve a peacebuilding process (Shepherd, 2015). Unfortunately, many parties forget the role of women in conflict, both in negotiations at the negotiating table and in the peace process and peacekeeping. The issue of peace and all efforts to make it happen is considered part of men's work so that the role of women in this regard is considered less significant.

Reviewing conflict resolution, Johan Galtung emphasized three processes that must be passed before peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding are created. Peacekeeping is a stage of conflict resolution that stops or reduces acts of violence (absence of direct violence). The next stage is peacemaking, a process whose goal is to reconcile or reconcile the political attitudes and strategies of the conflicting parties through mediation, negotiation, or arbitration from the elite or leader level. The final stage of peacebuilding is where the implementation of social, economic, and political changes or reconstruction is carried out to achieve lasting peace (Asyathri & Yuliati, 2014).

Meanwhile, the UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali in July 1992 described four models of peace operations that were not much different from Johan Galtung's thinking (Mumtazinur, 2017). This concept is considered to help define peace operations. The four models include preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding. Preventive diplomacy is an action to prevent disputes from escalating between conflicting groups, prevent disputes from becoming conflicts, and prevent conflicts from spreading if they occur. In contrast, the other three stages are almost the same as those proposed by Johan Galtung.

Discussions on the role of women in conflict resolution and peacebuilding are increasing, especially in the form of multilateral policies. Efforts to evoke the role of women in conflict resolution and decision-making were outlined in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action. Subsequently, on October 31, 2000, the United Nations Security Council by mutual agreement adopted Resolution 1325, which focused on increasing the role of women in the maintenance of international peace and security which marked the beginning of the agenda for women, peace and security.

With this resolution, the term Gender Mainstreaming was further promoted. This global agreement is needed to foster and enhance good cooperation between men and women in responding to conflict. The mandate of Gender Mainstreaming is to ensure that the agenda of women's issues can be included and discussed in various aspects of international policy, especially in international security. Women have historically not been given a decision-making role in severe security issues, such as violent conflict.

Resolution 1325 urges women's participation in peace initiatives, protection from human rights violations, and conflict prevention. Eight resolutions have been made and approved to broaden the scope of women's issues on the UN agenda (Oxfam International, 2019). Furthermore, this resolution is an alternative explanation explaining the relationship between women peacemakers and conflict resolution. In some kinds of literature, a more concrete explanation of the significance of women's participation is expressed. One of the indicators consistently used by academics and policymakers is the number of seats women hold in government (Stone, 2014).

Women's participation can also be seen during the negotiation phase. In negotiations, a gender-critical approach will be effective in power-sharing to anticipate "stalled" negotiating mechanisms and try to build a broader agenda for peace treaty changes early on (Bell, 2018)). Although UN Security Council resolutions have been issued, unfortunately, most of the resolutions adopted by many countries focus more on the core issues of participation and protection (mainly related to gender and sexual violence).

Although this is an essential element, other vital issues such as conflict prevention and the role of women in this regard are not given the same priority (Oxfam International, 2019). In this case, the government is considered to doubt still the role of women in solving public problems.

3 Women as Conflict Victims

In the last few decades, gender is one of the issues often discussed and has received much attention from social and political experts. Discussions on gender issues often begin with a debate about the primary differences between men and women, especially in world politics (Mumtazinur, 2017). What needs to be emphasized, especially according to feminists, is that gender is categorized as a social category, not a 'given' biological category (Shepherd, 2015). Gender is constructed in society.

Feminine and masculine are two terms that indicate one gender and can be learned through social interaction. Feminine traits are often identified with women, while the masculine is synonymous with men. Gender is an identity, structure, symbol that can affect social life, including conflict situations (Asyathri & Yuliati, 2014). The manifestation of each gender category can take different forms depending on the culture in which the meaning of gender grows and has historically changed.

Thus, the definition and meaning of gender can change due to differences in class, culture, age group, and in certain situations, such as in war or peace situations. However, some literature also argues that traditional culture in many countries tends to discriminate against women in many ways (Bell, 2018).

In Kenya, for example, only 3% of land can be owned by women, while land ownership is considered the main asset of Kenyans because 70% of the community's livelihood is agriculture. The restrictions on women's property rights to land are in line with the patrilineal inheritance tradition, which shows that men own all but a small part of the land (Stella, 2015).

It is not only a matter of access to resources; discrimination against women is also often shown by the number of women who are treated with gender-based violence. Gender-based violence is a form of discrimination that seriously hinders women's opportunities to enjoy rights and freedoms based on equal rights of women and men (Ocktaviana & Purwoko, 2014).

In addition to physical violence, women also tend to be limited in their activities in the public sphere because most people think that women only need to manage their interests within the household. If it is related to the impact caused by the conflict, it can be seen that children and women are often the victims when the conflict has started. Although children and women are not the triggers of conflict, women often become victims of violence such as abuse and rape (Mumtazinur, 2017).

Gender inequality is the most severe and detrimental form of discrimination. This discrimination makes women and girls live in poverty, deprived of their rights, and limited in their capacity to make changes. In every corner of the world, women tend to exercise less

power and control than men, especially in the public sphere (Oxfam International, 2019). This discrimination also takes place in situations of peace and conflict. For example, before the war against ISIS in Iraq, women and girls had experienced various patterns of violence in their daily lives. According to Oxfam interviews, 83% of women stated that they had been subjected to behavioral control by their husbands, 33% had suffered psychological abuse, and one in every five women had experienced physical violence (Oxfam International, 2019). Discrimination and violence can worsen when conflict occurs.

When the conflict begins, the community is vulnerable to adverse impacts, including the emergence of many fatalities. As an example of the conflict in Burundi between 1993-2003, more than 300 thousand people became victims in the civil conflict in the conflict area. More than 1.5 million people have become refugees, and another one million people have been displaced in various areas.

In other cases, such as in Liberia, women are often victims of abuse and rape. This event is similar to what happened in Rwanda, where between 250,000-500,000 women were affected by gender-based violence, especially rape. Not only causing casualties, but conflict can also disrupt community activities, especially in the economic field. These forms of violence occurred in various conflict areas, such as on the border of Ambon, Indonesia, which became the scene of conflict between Muslim and Christian communities. When the conflict occurred in Ambon, economic activity, especially the market, was completely paralyzed in the first weeks. Two main markets in Ambon city, namely Mardika market and Gambus market, caught fire. Due to the paralysis of economic activity, household needs also feel the impact. Women who are considered to have the responsibility to be housekeepers also face difficulties in this regard.

Conflict or war also tends to affect women's life expectancy lower than men. In conflict or war, women are often victims of violence from the conflicting parties. In addition, women's access to necessary resources such as food, clean water, and health services reduces. Therefore, women are prone to receive the effects of conflict indirectly rather than the effects of direct combat obtained during the conflict (Shea & Christian, 2016). Although women are often required to distribute logistical supplies (such as food and other necessities), ironically, women are always the users and managers of natural resources who are generally excluded from the formal decision-making process about these resources.

In addition, the instability of the post-conflict environmental situation and other problems of a personal nature create stress, and anxiety in women's lives and, of course, make women feel very uncomfortable (Noor & Binte-Saleem, 2017). As happened in Iraq, even the war against ISIS ended in 2017, women's nightmare caused by this conflict is far from over. Women are isolated, attacked, and stigmatized by their communities; even worse, women cannot return to their home communities for fear of being subjected to the same humiliating treatment (Oxfam International, 2019).

As a result, women are trapped in hazardous conditions. In contrast to Iraq, in Pakistan, the conflict is characterized by strikes by residents in villages and unilateral control of core infrastructure elements such as roads, bridges, communications, or other persistent effects concerning ongoing terrorism cases (Noor & Binte-Saleem, 2017). As a result, many people's daily activities are disrupted, such as economic activities and transportation. Women and children also have difficulty getting access to security, food, and education due to conditions that are shrouded in fear.

Such a conflict environment gives women at least the worst uncertainty, fear, and hopelessness. Paradoxically, after experiencing many difficulties resulting from the conflict, some women were forced to enter the business world or a more profound role in the public

sphere. This situation is primarily due to the loss of male family members due to conflict, so women need to take over to keep the family alive (Noor & Binte-Saleem, 2017).

Again, gender inequality is a problem that will have an impact on economic development. Just as before, women face barriers to entrepreneurship caused by their gender. There is always a stigma that women should stay at home and take care of all household matters. The presence of women outside the home is also considered to be able to invite greater crime. Economic inequality and lack of access to resources make women dependent on men and more vulnerable to economic manipulation and exploitation.

In carrying out activities outside the home, the refugee camps, which should have been a place of refuge in times of conflict, were not used properly. The camps otherwise do not protect women from sexual violence. Ironically, not infrequently, the harassment and violence received by refugee residents, especially women, actually came from personnel assigned to look after and protect the refugees.

For example, in Sri Lanka in the late 1990s, rape and other sexual harassment incidents were reported by police and paramilitary personnel tasked with providing security to populations displaced by civil conflict (Shea & Christian, 2016). This form of violence provides a very heavy trauma for refugees or victims of conflict.

4 Women's Role as Agent of Peace

The view that women are only victims of conflict seems to have marginalized the role of women as initiators of peace. This action resulted in a minimal number of women's representation in peace negotiations (Ocktaviana & Purwoko, 2014). For example, in the conflict in South Sulawesi, Indonesia did not pay much attention to the involvement of women as in the Malino Meeting, which was a Maluku conflict negotiation that invited 34 people as representatives of the Christian community 35 people from the Muslim community in Ambon city. Of the 69 delegates of the Malino II meeting, only three of them were women.

Most women do not have a formal political platform; they often draw credibility and power from a broader social base and promote their agenda at the grassroots level. This limitation condition is also stated in a United Nations report which shows that from 1990 to 2017, women made up only 2 percent of conflict mediators and 8 percent of peace negotiators globally (Iloh & Oghomitse, 2019). Women are considered relatively more sensitive to humanitarian problems and "lost" in human life than men (Shea & Christian, 2016).

The role of women in conflict needs to be studied by considering the context in which the conflict occurs. However, when conflict takes place, women do not only appear as victims. Not infrequently, in the event of a conflict, the figures of women appear either directly or indirectly as mediators in the conflict or peacemakers. In fact, on several occasions, women became the last bastion of perpetrators or victims of conflict seeking safety and protection (Ocktaviana & Purwoko, 2014).

The issue of women's participation in conflict management and peace processes has been discussed in various international commitments since the mid-1990s (Stella, 2015). For more than six decades, international peace operations have also been recognized and carried out in dozens of countries in various parts of the world. A UN Security Council Resolution regulates women, peace, and security in terms of official international recognition. Resolution 1325 recognizes the under-utilized and underutilized contribution of women in conflict prevention, maintenance, and peacebuilding.

Furthermore, this resolution emphasizes the importance of women's active participation (Iloh & Oghomitse, 2019). The resolution generally promotes Gender Mainstreaming. This global action is needed to respond to conflicts that occur with good cooperation between men and women in maintaining peace. Gender Mainstreaming is directly related to the principles related to the elimination of discrimination against women (Mumtazinur, 2017).

When conflict has occurred, the role of women can be seen in the peacekeeping stage, where women try to stop or reduce acts of violence (absence of direct violence). UN-derived peace operations may prevent and restore conflict situations, but not the trauma experienced by women victims.

In this condition, a woman's role becomes meaningful; women can help alleviate the suffering of other women in 'female' ways that may not be done, especially by male peacekeepers. The experiences of women and men in conflict situations are significantly different, as are how they manage the conflict. Some scholars argue that women's resistance to violence may be the result of women being conditioned by society to become caregivers and peacemakers. Women also prefer the style of collaboration and compromise in resolving conflicts.

Stone (2014) conveys the theoretical assumption that women hold the key to peace, starting to impact national-level governance through the application of gender quotas to ensure women's representation in the political sphere. This involvement can be seen from the leadership of women in Liberia, from the grassroots level to the presidency, who played an essential role in rights-based national reforms and the election of President Johnson Sirleaf. Women's groups began to unite in hopes of helping the peace process in Liberia, ending the Second Civil War and launching the overthrow of Liberian dictator Charles Taylor. Women's increased participation is needed in various formal institutions regarding when and how armed conflict is avoided, abbreviated, or resolved (Shepherd, 2015).

Gender issues also play an essential role in the formation of women-dominated NGOs, as happened in Iraq (Henrizi, 2015). Through interviews conducted with women's agencies in Iraq, the relationship between the agency and international donors was built to craft changes and long-term projects. With the intersection with various international actors, Iraqi women's agencies want to show that women are no longer just victims of conflict but become actors with the ability to interact and negotiate.

In addition, the agency is also working with religious leaders in Iraq to counterbalance criticism of "too pro-western." This condition shows that this agency carries out preventive diplomacy, which aims first to carry out diplomacy or negotiations to resolve problems before the conflict begins. Furthermore, this agency also plans to be more independent in carrying out its activities in the future.

Meanwhile, after the civil war in Burundi in 1962, women also have a significant role. The United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB) requested the assistance of Nelson Mandela, who is a supporter of the role of women in the conflict resolution process. Mandela also encouraged the Burundian Women's Peace Conference to create peace. The existence of Burundian women becomes vital with the existence of a quota of 30% of women in government institutions that have the right to formulate regulations that prioritize the interests of women and children, especially after the civil war (Mumtazinur, 2017).

In conflict, the presence of women encourages the success of the collective agreement as outlined in the Arusha Peace Accord, which consists of several essential points, including:

- a. Their rejection and disappointment with the slow involvement of women in the peace process.

- b. Recommend the integration of Burundian women's rights in the peace process in Burundi, including the implementation of legal mechanisms to eliminate gender discrimination and gender immunity based on war crimes.
- c. Determination of 30% quota for women's roles in government.
- d. Ensure increased protection for women and children, especially refugees.
- e. Providing guarantees for women's rights to property, land, and inheritance.

In their writings, Bell (2018) shows that there is a relatively large division of political power between men and women, especially with the use of power-sharing as a conflict resolution tool. Effective management of water resources in Marsabit, Kenya, reflects the critical role of women in preventing conflicts that occur when users with different priorities cannot access sufficient water to meet their needs. Women ration water at home to more effectively meet the needs of drinking, cooking, bathing, and washing the whole family. Women in Marsabit also did not show ethnic differences to strongly influence the conflict (Yerian et al., 2014).

In the peacemaking stage, it is not uncommon for women to reconcile or reconcile the political attitudes and strategies of the conflicting parties through mediation, negotiation, or arbitration from the elite or leader level. For example, in early 2000, when Aceh, Indonesia was still in a conflict situation, 450 Acehnese women gathered to discuss the Duek Pakat Inong Aceh (DPIA). DPIA I was held in Anjong Mon Mata, Banda Aceh, on 19-22 February 2000, which resulted in 22 recommendations. The focus of the recommendations is to ensure a peaceful settlement of the Aceh conflict through negotiation (Ocktaviana & Purwoko, 2014).

The role of women in conflict resolution and peace does occur not only directly but also indirectly. The conflict in Maluku is a conflict with the accumulation of various problems and the involvement of many actors. The role of women as agents in the reconciliation of the Maluku conflict can be seen in two forms of activity, namely intentional and unintended. The role of women included in the intended category is the Women Care Movement (GPP). Meanwhile, the role in the unintended category is through the activities of women traders in Papalele (Asyathri & Yuliati, 2014).

This group of small traders builds good relations between the conflicting parties and needs each other, especially to meet their daily needs. The stages of peacemaking can be seen from Papalele's activities by selling in the market, affecting the reconciliation of the two warring communities. One of Papalele's meaningful activities and help social reconciliation of the Muslim and Christian communities can be seen from their presence at the Baku-Bae market located in the Mardika area, Ambon (Talakua, 2017).

Various studies have shown that women are less likely to support military action, whether in the general public or government (Shea & Christian, 2016). This view can be seen from what women have done in creating conflict resolutions in Maluku. The market process runs well and is very harmonious, where most of the Muslim community act as sellers/ traders and the Ambonese Christian community as buyers. In addition, the role of women here can help carry out economic activities because previously, the market had been burned and framed as a result of the conflict.

Meanwhile, after the 1994 genocide, the main challenges faced by the new government in Rwanda were restoring and maintaining security, law, and order and initiating a process of national reconciliation and restoration. The implementation of social, economic, and political change or reconstruction is carried out to achieve lasting peace or peacebuilding; in this stage, women also show their role. Rwandan women made a significant contribution to the rehabilitation and reconstruction process initiated and promoted by the government by participating in the construction of houses in newly established settlements based on local

values known as imidugudu. These women provide food for their families and the community working under the Food for Work Programmed. At a minimum, these women can produce food from their farms to ensure food security for the people of Rwanda. This group helps in the national recovery as hunger will be a great danger to reconciliation and national cohesion in Rwanda (Iloh & Oghomitse, 2019).

5 Conclusion

Apart from being victims, women can also play an essential role in the conflict resolution process. This role can be seen from the involvement of women in their efforts to treat trauma victims of conflict, natural resource management, and involvement in peace diplomacy. Referring back to the four stages of UN conflict resolution, namely preventive diplomacy, peacekeeping, peacemaking, and peacebuilding, the role of women in conflict is seen in various stages towards peace. Preventive diplomacy efforts can be seen when women first carry out diplomacy or negotiations to resolve problems before the conflict begins.

When a conflict has occurred, the role of women can be seen in the stages of peacekeeping when women try to stop or reduce acts of violence (absence of direct violence). Women can help alleviate the suffering of other women in 'female' ways that many peacekeepers (in this case, men) may not be able to do.

In the peacemaking stage, it is not uncommon for women to reconcile or reconcile the political attitudes and strategies of the conflicting parties through mediation, negotiation, or arbitration from the elite or leader level. The stages of peacemaking that affect the reconciliation of two warring communities can also be seen from informal activities by selling in the market known as papalele. Meanwhile, the implementation of social, economic, and political changes or reconstruction is carried out to achieve lasting peace or peacebuilding stages, and women also play a role in helping reconstruct post-conflict conditions.

This role can be seen through the active participation of women in the rehabilitation and reconstruction process, such as building houses in newly established settlements locally. The various roles of women in conflict resolution are difficult to continue without promoting the Gender Mainstreaming program. The program encourages good roles and cooperation between men and women in responding to conflict. Gender Mainstreaming is also directly related to the principles related to the elimination of discrimination against women. For this reason, knowledge about gender equality needs to be instilled in the community so that awareness and changes in discriminatory mindsets arise, especially for women.

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