



The Role of Women in Peace Negotiations: Assessing the Importance of Women's Participation in Peace Processes and Understanding Their Unique Contributions to Conflict Resolution

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ABSTRACT

The role of women in peace negotiations has garnered increasing attention as a crucial aspect of conflict resolution and sustainable peace-building efforts. This research study seeks to assess the significance of women's participation in peace processes and understanding their unique contributions to conflict resolution, by analyzing a diverse range of case studies and empirical data. This research aims to shed light on the often-underestimated impact of women's involvement in formal and informal peace negotiations; to explore how women's inclusion in peace negotiations enhances the overall quality of dialogue; to foster broader representation of affected communities and brings novel perspectives to the negotiating table. This research is qualitative research using the documentary research method. Documentary data were collected from related academic books, case studies, papers, and research reports, as well as official documents from relevant international organizations concerned that were studied by content analysis and logical analysis. The research analysis investigated the impediments and challenges faced by women in participating effectively in peace processes and identified potential avenues for overcoming gender-based barriers and promoting greater gender equality in diplomatic engagements, as well as examined the distinct approaches and strategies employed by women in resolving conflicts, involving their emphasis on human security, gender-sensitive policy formulation, and social cohesion initiatives. The research findings will contribute to the development of more gender-responsive policies and strategies in conflict resolution and peace-building initiatives, paving the way for more equitable and effective peace processes worldwide.

Keywords: Role of Women, Peace Negotiations, Peace Processes, Conflict Resolution, Security, Women and Peace

INTRODUCTION

There is plenty of evidence from international relations scholarship to back up the claim that men and women approach conflict and conflict resolution in different ways. Women's position, their representation in national legislatures, and the duration of women's suffrage are all known to reduce the likelihood and/or severity of wars between nations (Melander 2005; Caprioli and Boyer 2001; Caprioli 2000). Research highlighting gender differences in simulated negotiations supports the normative idea that women bring a unique perspective to peace processes, a belief that underpins international initiatives like UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions, as well as national action plans on women, peace, and security (Boyer et al 2009).



Women in state administrations or civil society organizations have received a lot of attention in the study on the widespread effects of women on conflict outcomes. While this is going on, researchers looking at non-state armed groups (NSAGs) have shown that women have participated in insurgencies in 60 different nations since 1990, making up most of these organizations that have been active during this time (Mazurana 2014; Henshaw 2016, 2017; Wood and Thomas 2017). Particularly, these women continue to be underrepresented in peace negotiations, according to the United Nations. Even where women were present, they "continue to be disproportionately highly represented in groups that agitate for peace and mobilize communities and society to demand that parties to the conflict lay down their arms" (UN Women 2012: 6). According to a 2012 report from UN Women, only about 9% of all negotiators in major peace processes 1992–2011 were women. This highlights a troubling discrepancy between the actual frequency with which women participate in NSAGs and the lack of such women in negotiations that are supported globally.

The Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) was adopted by the United Nations in 2000, and it was then that academics and practitioners started to pay greater attention to women's participation in peace processes. The first of its type, Resolution UNSCR 1325, called for the participation of women in the peace process while highlighting their unique contributions to it (UNSC 2000). There are now around seven more UN Security Council resolutions that recognise the different contributions women contribute to peace processes, including UNSCR 1820 (UNSC 2008), UNSCR 1888 (UNSC 2009a), UNSCR 1889 (UNSC 2009b), and UNSCR 1960 (UNSC 2010) collectively known as the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda. The systematic and representative participation of women in peace processes as negotiators, mediators, arbitrators, etc. has generally been argued to significantly increase the likelihood of achieving lasting peace outcomes (Myrntinen 2016; Gizelis 2009; Nakaya 2004; Byrne, Marcus, and Stevens 1995; Boals 1973; Sen 1999; Byrne 1995, 1996; UNSC 2016). While ignoring other social identity markers' significant role in excluding women, researchers have frequently used a narrow definition of gender - men versus women - to explain unequal social relations that exclude sections of society from the peace process (Pratt and Richter-Devroe 2011). Aiming "to elevate women's voices and leadership, increase their participation in peace processes and leadership in security institutions, and bring grassroots strategies for peacebuilding to the international level" (Donnelly et al. 2020), the Women Peace and Security Agenda aims to "improve women's status and leadership."

LITERATURE REVIEW

It's crucial to note that this review of literature on women's involvement in peacemaking mostly focuses on formal negotiating procedures. Even when they are not formally involved, women have created networks and groups to influence formal peace negotiations and have participated in less formal and informal conversations to resolve disputes (Porter, 2003). One well-known instance of women's external impact on official peace negotiations is the example of local women's organizations encircling buildings in Liberia to force peace negotiators to remain in the room until conversations are over (Diaz & Tordjman, 2012). As far as research is concerned, United Nations Women (UN Women) has been the most reliable source. Following an analysis of 31 significant peace processes, they emphasized the appalling levels of women's involvement in peace settlement and talks in their 2012 paper. They discovered that just 4% of peace agreement signatories and less than 10% of peace negotiators between 1992 and 2011 were women (UN Women, 2012). Similar findings were made by the German Corporation for International Cooperation (GmbH), which concluded that "women frequently have no direct

access to mediators or the official mediation and negotiation teams and there is no official, standardized mechanism for accessing information about the peace process and for developing women's interests" (2013, p. 15).

Both Karam (2000) and El Jack (2003) contend that the exclusion of women from the peace table is motivated by essentialist views of women who see them as passive participants in conflict as opposed to active participants who provide different viewpoints. According to Mpoumou (2004), who wrote on the Congo peace process, "the Congolese government, as well as other warring parties, strongly opposed the inclusion of women in formal peace negotiations because, for them, war and peace are exclusively the business of men" (p. 122). , Jama (2010) notes that in Somalia, "women have used their positions within the clan system [as "neutral" peacemakers] to bridge clan divisions and to act as a first channel for dialogue between parties in conflict," even though "women are typically excluded from decision-making forums." Another group of researchers investigating peacebuilding are more interested in whether the results or reports of peace settlement procedures explicitly recognize the role of women in post-conflict communities rather than the proportion of women who participate in the peace agreement process. For instance, in a 2015 study, a group of scholars under the direction of Radhika Coomaraswamy evaluated the state of resolution 1325's implementation at the international, regional, and national levels as well as how it affected the language used in peace accords. According to the survey, 27% of peace agreements signed after 2000 have mentioned women, which is more than twice as many as those reached between 1990 and 2000. Similarly, the UN Secretary-General noted the growing trend of women's inclusion in peacemaking processes in a report to the Security Council. According to him, gender or women's rights elements were included in 50% of the 16 peace accords reached in 2014 as opposed to 30% in 2012 and 22% in both 2011 and 2010 (UNSC 2015).

The UN has asked nations to increase the number of women deployed as part of their efforts to peacekeeping after the adoption of Security Council resolution 1325. In addition to addressing concerns about sexual violence against local women, whether committed by local men or male peacekeepers, the deployment of women to peacekeeping operations was anticipated to motivate local women and girls to fight for their rights and to take part in peace processes (Simi 2010; Gizelis 2009; Kent 2007; Koyama and Myrntinen 2007; Olsson and Tryggestad 2001; Stiehm 2001). Only 874 of the 10,785 UN police officers and 24,74 of the 90,181 military troops were women as of April 2009, according to a UN Department of Peacekeeping (UNDPKO) report (as referenced in Simi 2010, p. 192). Owing to this gap, scholars such as Simi (2010) argue that males continue to dominate the "hypermasculine" realm of peacekeeping.

Beardsley and Karim (2013) also point out that, despite an increase in female peacekeepers, the majority of female military personnel are often stationed in low-risk locations. They frequently aren't sent to places where they could be most needed, including where sexual assault and gender equity are serious issues (p. 463–6). For instance, in countries where sexual assault and gender inequality are well-documented, such as Afghanistan, Burundi, Liberia, Cambodia, or Tajikistan, there were absolutely no women participating in military peacekeeping missions (International Women's Tribune Centre, 2002). For two reasons, this is concerning. First, it may make female military personnel's contributions to peacekeeping missions less valuable. According to UN Security Council resolution 1325, improving gender sensitivity of peacekeeping missions at the local level and improving the perception of women in local contexts are two essential goals for involving women in peacekeeping operations. The

likelihood of achieving this aim decreases if women are not sent to areas with severe gender disparity. Second, sending women to only low-risk battles may feed stereotypes that they are less capable and vulnerable than males and require their protection.

This topic has mostly been the subject of essentialist or social constructionist discussion. On the one hand, essentialist ideas such as women being innately calm and emotionally responsive serve to justify the urge for women to be involved in peacekeeping operations. According to the UN, for example (UN DPKO 2000), the pacifying presence of women in peacekeeping operations lessens aggression and hypermasculinity. According to UNDPKO, "women's presence in [peacekeeping operations] improves access and support for local women... [and] makes male peacekeepers more reflective and responsible." (Source: Simi 2010, p. 189-0). As noted by Kent (2007), the presence of female officers tends to make peace missions more accessible. Victims, particularly women and children, are more receptive to speaking with female peacekeepers. A world run by women, according to Fukuyama (1998), would be "less aggressive, competitive, violent... [and] less prone to conflict." (p. 27-33) seems to support these essentialist ideas about women in peacekeeping.

Women peacekeepers often have the "skills that can lead a war-torn society through a process of nation-building, economic development, and reconstruction" (Rehn and Johnson 2002, 65) because of their diverse identities and experiences. Making peacekeeping operations "more reflective of the societies with which they deal, thereby giving them a better chance to achieve a sustainable peace" should be the ultimate goal of including both men and women in these operations (Hudson 2005, 793). As previously stated, peacekeeping operations are typically short-term measures used to allow post-conflict societies to maintain physical security while efforts are made towards the reconstruction of society and the resolution of underlying causes of the conflict — peacebuilding. Peacekeeping operations do not aim to address the root causes of a conflict.

In post-conflict circumstances, women instinctively step up to weave the "fabric of life together," according to Mindry (2001) (1197). In peacebuilding, women frequently don't have much of a choice since "they are left with children, the elderly, the wounded and ill, amid devastation and have to find ways to survive" (Porter, 2007). Because they are "intertwined [with] everyday issues] of gender equality, demilitarisation, promoting non-violence, reconciliation... and sustaining the environment," women's roles in peacebuilding, according to Mazurana and McKay (2002), are typically less visible. Without being acknowledged by themselves or the greater community, women perform significant roles in promoting peace. Because it enables "different activities [to be] recognised as part of peacebuilding practise, power dynamics in society to be laid bare and possibly confronted," the active engagement of women in peacebuilding "changes the meaning of peacebuilding itself" (Shepherd 2016). Skjelsbaek (2001) demonstrates the intimate relationship between gender and peacebuilding in his writings based on case studies in Vietnam, El Salvador, and the former Yugoslavia. According to Skjelsbaek's research, there is a significant link between women's involvement in peacebuilding and war narratives. The research demonstrates that, although women were actively involved in peacebuilding processes in all three countries, women's contributions were more noticeable in El Salvador, Vietnam, and Yugoslavia than in Yugoslavia due to the nations' diverse war histories. The efforts of all parties—including women—are valued when wars are rationalised as being required for liberation goals, as they were in Vietnam and El Salvador. Women's involvement in peacebuilding, however, is less stressed when wars are perceived as needless and particularly oppressive towards women; instead, the focus is on what males can do to safeguard women in the future.

Women are perceived as life-creators (mothers), nurturers, trustworthy, less violent, and more loving due to their biological features and social orientation, making them more equipped for peacebuilding efforts (Anderlini 2007; Porter 2001; Moola 2006; Boulding 1990; Caprioli 2000, 2003). Women are often seen as trustworthy by all sides of a disagreement because they are less likely to be involved in it. In post-conflict communities, this sense of neutrality and their desire to interact with all sides go a long way to lessen worries and uncertainties and foster peacebuilding (Anderlini 2007).

According to scholars such as Agbajobi (2010), the involvement of women in peacebuilding should not be supported by any stereotyped attributes; rather, women need to have a role in the consolidation of peace in their communities because they make up half of the post-conflict communities. Additionally, the comprehensiveness of the process is inevitably constrained by the absence of women from peace-building initiatives, who are those most directly impacted by war. Most of the researchers make use of the idea of intersectionality to highlight the social, economic, and historical disparities that may interact with gender disparities to affect women's engagement in peacebuilding. For instance, Myrntinen, Naujoks, and Schilling (2015) evaluate the moderating impact that the availability of natural resources has on women's engagement in peacebuilding based on case studies in Kenya and Nepal. They conclude that in regions where conflicts have been heavily influenced by struggles over natural resources, women's participation in peacebuilding processes alone will not be sufficient to change unequal power structures and access to resources. Instead, a comprehensive gender relational approach to peace-building and natural resource management, as well as the active inclusion of women in significant decision-making processes, are necessary for peace-building efforts to be successful. Similar studies conducted in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Palestine have been cited by Moghadam (2005) to support his claim that women are trapped in all three nations by "weak states, occupying powers, armed opposition movements, and patriarchal gender arrangements" (63). Understanding how each of these factors affects and defines women's daily lives is necessary before one can comprehend the contributions women may make to peacebuilding. True security necessitates not just the absence of conflict but also the abolition of unfair social connections, as noted by Tickner (1992) in his observation that "the achievement of peace, economic justice, and ecological sustainability is inseparable from overcoming social relations of domination and subordination" (128).

According to Lakshmi Puri, women's roles and contributions to peace education are crucial not only because they make up the majority of the world's population, but also because they are the main forces behind the dramatic shift in attitudes, institutions, and cultures that we want (UN Women 2014, para. 5). In general, experts have argued that women should be seen as key agents of peace education since they are touched by conflict and violence, if not most affected. This is in addition to their 'natural' affinities with children and their intrinsic love for parenting and teaching. Women should be included in peace education because, in the opinion of Adirika (2014), "they are first and foremost, humans, flesh and blood, affected by every issue that affects humanity. They should be involved because they are involved, [because] they exist!!!" (3). By their distinctive "perspectives and experiences," as well as their capacity to advance a "gender-just peace," which is essential for long-term processes of peacebuilding and reconstruction, women, according to Kirk (2004), serve an important function in peace education (53).

For years, Brock-Utne (2009) argues, that even though women typically form the core of peace organizations, they are rarely acknowledged for their contributions. They are mostly ignored in history texts, which are typically "his-story" books that describe the emergence of violent conflicts or wars that were begun by males. (215). Only a few peace education programmes

have considered gender disparities, despite the UNSCR 1325's passage bringing women's participation in the peace process to the attention of the world (Taylor 2014; Becker 2012; Pruitt 2013). According to the UN Women (2014), gender concerns are still marginal in peace education circles and women's objectives are still seen as secondary to the "hard" problems of peace and security.

By instructing male ex-combatants in financially viable professions (such as carpentry, metalwork, auto mechanics, and plumbing) while instructing female ex-combatants in less lucrative pursuits (such as catering, soap-making, hairdressing, and weaving), peace education programmes in places like Sierra Leone, for instance, have bought into gender stereotypes.

In conclusion, it is evident from the literature on women's participation in the peace process that women are in a position to significantly contribute at each stage of the peace process. Even though it's frequently ignored, including women can improve the possibility of achieving sustainable peace. For example, in peacebuilding, women can draw attention to structural causes of violence that take the form of social inequality. In peacekeeping, women can make missions more approachable and sensitive to issues like sexual violence.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study applied qualitative research by using a documentary research method. All documentary data was collected from related research reports, academic books, case studies and papers, as well as official documents and information of the United Nations and other international organizations concerned. All collected documentary data were studied by content analysis, critical analysis and logical analysis throughout the data triangulation process to achieve comprehensive research results and discussion, conclusion and recommendations.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive changes in the post-conflict governance, security, and justice sectors can be facilitated by the engagement of women. As they frequently support peaceful methods and conflict prevention, women's participation in peace processes can help to reduce violence both during and after conflicts. Increased gender equality can result from women's engagement in peace negotiations by enabling them to assume leadership positions in politics, civil society, and government. Women may prioritise and address humanitarian issues during peace talks, including the protection of civilians, the well-being of internally displaced people, and access to essential amenities. Women leaders frequently place an emphasis on social healing and reconciliation, concentrating on re-establishing connections and trust within communities and between parties involved in conflict. Future generations of women and girls can draw inspiration from women's participation in peace processes, which will motivate them to take leadership positions and actively participate in conflict resolution.

Significant Case Studies Establishing Women's Involvement in Peace Negotiations and Conflict Resolution

1. The Liberian Women's Peace Movement

The horrific civil war in Liberia, which lasted from 1989 to 2003, was characterized by extensive brutality, violations of human rights, and evictions. Deep-seated racial and political differences characterized the battle, which featured several armed organizations.

The Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace movement, led by women like Leymah Gbowee and Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, was one of the key elements in the country's peace process. This

grassroots movement started as a reaction to the Civil War's terrible effects on families, especially for women.

Key Contributions and Strategies

Non-violent Protests: Women protested peacefully, holding sit-ins and holding marches, calling for an end to the fighting and their involvement in the peace talks.

Cross-Ethnic Solidarity: Women from many ethnic and religious backgrounds joined together to promote peace in the movement, which was remarkable for its inclusion. This interethnic cooperation served to heal the gaps that had stoked the violence.

Advocacy for Women's Participation: The campaign effectively fought for the participation of women in the peace negotiations and significantly contributed to ensuring that the final peace deal took account of women's concerns.

Pressure on Warring Factions: Women applied pressure on the opposing sides by their moral power as mothers and civic leaders. They organised demonstrations at the peace negotiations and demanded that the mediators pay attention to their concerns.

Impact and Results

The 2003 Accra Comprehensive Peace Agreement established a National Transitional Government and contained provisions for the inclusion of women in post-conflict governing systems. The Women of Liberia Mass Action for Peace leader Ellen Johnson Sirleaf later assumed the office of president of Liberia, making history as the continent's first female head of state. The peace accord improved stability and paved the stage for Liberia's healing and rebuilding.

Critical Lessons

The Power of Grassroot Movements: Women-led grassroots groups may have a significant influence on peace processes by uniting communities, promoting change, and putting pressure on negotiators to take the demands of the people into account.

Inclusivity: The inclusivity of women from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities in the peace movement fostered unity and reconciliation.

Women as Change-Catalysts: Women's roles as mothers, carers, and community leaders gave them a unique viewpoint on the peace process and helped them successfully win over the opposing sides' humanity.

2. Colombia's Peace Negotiations

The peace process in Colombia, especially the negotiations with the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), provides substantial insights into the challenges involved in putting an end to protracted armed conflicts. More than five decades of armed conflict in Colombia, primarily involving the government, Leftist guerrilla organizations like the FARC, and paramilitary forces led to widespread Human rights violations, extensive violence, and displacement.

The Government of Colombia led by President Juan Manuel Santos was a key factor in the Peace negotiations. The FARC has strong roots in Colombia's rural communities and was one of the biggest and most enduring guerrilla organisations in Latin America.

Peace Process Important Stages

The peace process officially began with exploratory talks(2010-2012) facilitated by Norway and Cuba. These early discussions laid the groundwork for the formal negotiations.

The formal negotiations were held in Cuba's capital city of Havana(2012-2016). They were broken down into six primary agendas including land reform, political engagement, drug trafficking, victims' rights, disarmament, and peace accord implementation.

The Colombian government and the FARC came to a historic peace accord in 2016, after four years of negotiations, which was put to a referendum for approval. However, the referendum narrowly rejected the agreement.

To take into account objections made by opponents, the government and FARC revised the peace agreement in 2016. This revised agreement was then ratified by the Colombian Congress.

Key Contributions and Strategies

Inclusion of Gender Perspective: The Colombian peace process was remarkable for emphasizing the value of including a female perspective. The "gender sub-commission" made sure gender concerns were taken into account when creating the peace agreement.

DDR (Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration): The disarming and reintegration of FARC combatants into civil life was outlined in the peace agreement.

Victims' Rights: The agreement included clauses protecting the rights of victims, including assurances against recurrence and the pursuit of justice, truth, and reparations.

Challenges

Deep social differences in Colombia were made clear by the peace process. Some groups opposed giving up to the FARC, while others thought that peace was necessary. It was extremely challenging to ensure the protection and safety of former FARC fighters, especially during their transition back into society. Throughout the procedure, political polarisation remained, hindering the execution of the peace accord.

Impact and Results

Thousands of FARC fighters were disarmed and demobilised as an outcome of the peace agreement. As a result of their political transformation, the FARC took part in democracy. In many parts of Colombia, the peace process helped to significantly reduce violence and boost security. The agreement's implementation was still fraught with difficulties, particularly in tackling rural development and security issues.

Critical Lessons

Inclusivity & Adaptability: It is essential to involve a variety of stakeholders, including women's organisations, civil society, and disadvantaged communities in achieving sustainable peace. In complex peace negotiations, flexibility and adaptation in the face of obstacles and setbacks are vital.

International Mediation & Long-term Commitment: International mediators like Norway and Cuba may play a crucial role in maintaining momentum and fostering confidence. Colombia's ongoing peace process emphasises the necessity of a consistent dedication to peacebuilding.

3. Northern Ireland's Women's Coalition

The main issue of the violent three-decade-long Northern Ireland Troubles was the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, which pitted nationalist Catholics and unionist Protestants against one another. Numerous thousands of people died, and the area experienced extreme polarisation.

During the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement in 1998, a number of women from diverse backgrounds came together to form the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition in order to make sure that women's opinions were heard.

McWilliams and Pearl Sagar, founding members of the NIWC, were instrumental in promoting the participation of women in the peace talks. Women from diverse backgrounds, representing a wide spectrum of political, religious, and communal connections, were members of the coalition.

Key Contributions and Strategies

Cross-Community Collaboration: The NIWC was exceptional in that it overcame sectarian barriers to bring together women from both nationalist and unionist areas. This intercommunity strategy was crucial in a society that was highly polarised.

Mediation and Compromise: Members of the NIWC were prepared to make concessions to achieve a peaceful resolution and played a mediating role in bridging differences with other political groups.

Advocacy for Gender Equality: In the peace discussions, the coalition underlined the necessity for inclusive government systems while promoting gender equality and addressing the unique needs of women.

Challenges

The NIWC was initially opposed by certain major political parties because they saw it as a new player threatening the status quo. In a nation where political leadership was typically controlled by men, the coalition encountered skepticism from both men and women. Extremist groups threatened and intimidated members of the NIWC, as they did with many other people active in Northern Ireland politics.

Impact and Results

The NIWC was a key proponent in getting the Good Friday Agreement to include a commitment to women's rights and gender equality. The majority of people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland approved the Good Friday Agreement, which played a key role in ending the Troubles. With its members holding seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly and participating in the region's government, the NIWC continued to be active in politics during the post-agreement period.

The 1998 Good Friday Agreement was directly influenced by women who had access to the negotiations. They increased the emphasis on social concerns on the agenda and finally succeeded in getting language about victims' rights and peacemaking, along with a promise to help young victims of violence, included in the agreement. The full and equal participation of women in politics was also mandated by another provision. The NIWC also suggested a civic forum to connect the peace process to a post-negotiations public dialogue.

Critical Lessons

Inclusivity is crucial: In cultures with severe societal divisions, inclusiveness and inter-communal cooperation can play a crucial role in resolving disputes and fostering peace.

The Power of Grassroots Movements: Women-led grassroots groups have the power to significantly influence political and peace discussions.

Advocacy for Gender Equality: Women's rights and gender equality should be at the forefront of all accords for peace and governance.

Courage and Resilience: In the midst of dangers and difficulties, members of the NIWC showed extraordinary bravery and resiliency, highlighting the need for persistence in peace efforts.

4. Parallel Consultative Forum in Guatemala

In order to bring interested parties together on one stage and provide non-binding suggestions to the parties engaged in negotiations—the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Union and the government—the Assembly of Civil Society in Guatemala was established in 1994. Representatives from eleven different interest groups, including the women's movement, indigenous groups, religious communities, and human rights organisations, attended the meeting. This was made possible in part because the nation's active civil society was well-organized and had consistently put pressure on governments for peace over time.

Key Contributions and Strategies

Women had a massive impact on the composition of this meeting and the agenda it would follow. The women's sector represented 32 women's groups, and the women who represented those groups formed alliances with the women who represented other groups in the assembly to bridge gaps and bring the varied groups together. Additionally, they argued for the participation of other marginalised groups including displaced communities in order to promote greater variety in the composition of the assembly.

Challenges

However, the implementation phase of the Guatemalan peace process also exposed its shortcomings. The most extensive revisions to the constitution were to have been included in a vote two years after the Civil Society Assembly approved the peace accords, but it was unsuccessful. This has been linked to several factors, including the lack of an institutional basis for civil society engagement following the signing of the agreements and organized civil society's ineffective communication with the general public.

Impact and Results

The peace mediators and the deal they came up with were significantly influenced by this forum. On all the pertinent topics being discussed at the negotiating table, the assembly prepared recommendation papers. The parties to the negotiations incorporated the majority of its suggestions either directly or indirectly. This includes wording on women's rights, political participation, and gender equality, as well as women's roles in carrying out the peace deal.

Critical Lessons

Inclusivity and Representation: The Parallel Consultative Forum's inclusivity and representation were a major strength. Indigenous people, in particular, and other historically marginalised groups, were able to express their concerns and participate in the peace process. Because of the diversity of the Forum's composition, more comprehensive peace accords were made possible by taking a wide variety of perspectives into account.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Give financial assistance to women's groups, alliances, and networks so they may expand sustainably and take advantage of chances to originate, initiate, and participate in peace processes.³¹ Long-term finance, beyond a 12- to 24-month project cycle, would be needed for this.
- Create basic knowledge materials on gender and political power-sharing that are simple to use (such as a checklist, a list of typical problems and solutions, or an introduction training session for men and women).
- Conduct more analysis and study in areas of political power-sharing that are pertinent to women in general, such as elections and appointments for temporary power-sharing agreements.
- Create visible campaigns for gender equality before meetings (such as online campaigns) collaborate with strong allies (men, institutions that mediate disputes, etc.) and maintain close observation on attacks and harassment of women.
- Design a global training program on gender perspectives for those living in conflict-affected areas. The course should be supported by evidence, presented by practitioners who have demonstrated their expertise and made accessible at both the national and regional levels.
- Support structures and capacity-building programs for women should be incorporated to grow their influence and effectiveness before, during, and after a peace process.



- It will also be necessary to place more focus on engaging women in both the prevention of conflict before it occurs and the implementation of peace accords once they have been established.

CONCLUSION

This study shows that women's participation in peace negotiations is not just crucial for gender equality but also for establishing a sustainable, inclusive peace. This also emphasizes the significance of tackling the difficulties and obstacles that continue to prevent women from fully participating in peace processes by looking at case studies and the distinctive contributions that women have made to conflict resolution. It asks for a deliberate effort to empower and engage women in decision-making processes linked to peace and security at the global, regional, and local levels. In the end, a more peaceful and equitable world depends on recognizing and utilizing the potential of women in peace discussions. Beyond the technical effort required to enable women's engagement in practice and the conceptual changes in the way people perceive peace, there is still a deeper ideological barrier to women's full participation that necessitates forming alliances across countries. Women are at the forefront of developing original strategies to promote participatory processes that move all citizens closer to the objective of peace.

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