

## Participation of women in post conflict reconstruction of their family and community in Malakal and Kodok in upper Nile state in South Sudan

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**Abstract:** *The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the role of women in post-conflict reconstruction in Malakal and Kodok in South Sudan's Upper Nile state. The study's goal is to comprehend women's participation in post-conflict reconstruction of their families and communities at the socioeconomic, economic, and political levels. Women's participation in moral and social responsibility to reconstruct plays an important role in the family and in society. A woman's role is not only to bear children and care for her family. Beyond that, women have equal rights with men to make decisions, participate in socio-political and economic levels, and to usher in a new era with the help of the peace and reconciliation committee and its activities. Women's active participation in various levels and the growth of their family and community through active participation in all levels. Through interviews, articles, and the internet, we were able to learn about the situation, and face-to-face contact was made in order to obtain clear and accurate information from the people in order to look beyond for ways to strengthen women on a socio-political and economic level. The results show that women are less involved in politics as a result of customary law. After the husband's passing, the women take over the role of being the family's primary provider. Wherever their rights are denied, women play a crucial role in taking charge for the family and community. The lack of education makes it difficult for women to participate in politics, while traditional laws and cultures prevent them from taking part in other aspects of society like decision-making. Women are actively involved in and involved in this research. This study is primarily focused with women's engagement in post-conflict reconstruction initiatives. It began with the notion that women's engagement in post-conflict reconstruction (PCR) is critical to the success of rebuilding efforts, and then set out to discover what factors influence this participation. The initial study goal was to get an understanding of post-conflict reconstruction as a process, its shifting dynamics, and the issue of post-conflict involvement. To develop linkages between these three issues and determine the primary questions for the analysis, a literature review was done.*

**Key Words:** *Participation, Reconstruction, conflict, Women.*

### 1. INTRODUCTION :

South Sudan was settled by many of its current ethnic groups during the 15th–19th centuries. Sudan was under British government and independent in the year of 1972 and was ruling the countries. After the peace agreement with the neighboring countries in 2005 by making the comprehensive peace agreement (CPA). This ended warfare and generated an outline of new measures to share power, distribute wealth, and provide security in South Sudan. Significantly, it also granted South Sudan semiautonomous status and stipulated that a referendum on independence for the region would be held in six years. Despite some obstacles, the eagerly awaited referendum did take place: a weeklong vote on independence for South Sudan was held January 9–15, 2011, with the results indicating the South's overwhelming preference to secede. The country of South Sudan declared independence on July 9, 2011. After the death of Hon. Dr. John Garang the former president took charge and led the country. This was the time the war began again with among the tribes. There are 64 tribes in South Sudan. The major tribes often fight among themselves for the power, position and land which were the root causes for the ethnic war in the country, many have died in the war, some lost their family and land and majority of the men were killed and women became widow and children left orphan.

The nature of the conflict in South Sudan is complex and characterized by the diverse patterns of decades old grievances mentioned above as well as newer challenges that further aid the fragility of South Sudan. These include lack of inclusivity (especially with regards to women), widespread lawlessness and corruption, weak institutions and

governance systems and extreme lack of basic services. these factors are interwoven and represent a challenge to stability and sustainable peace.

The discussion on women and war is not new. gender studies have long questioned the situation of women in conflict. more recently, the leading international organizations advocated for a more prominent role of women in development, especially through introducing gender equality and women empowerment as one of the millennium development goals. this all have contributed to the increasing interest in researching women's involvement in different aspects of the development practice including post-conflict situations.

## **2. REVIEW IF LITERATURES :**

The definition of post-conflict reconstruction, aims not just to rebuild, but also to enhance the previously existing infrastructure, and to set a climate for upholding the delicate peace. the following section tries to generate an understanding of this multi-layered process by digging out the essential concepts from the literature dealing with post conflict reconstruction. un wailing the academic discussion regarding post-conflict reconstruction, the role of women and their activities, and identify gaps in the available literature and to establish points and issues to question and evaluate the participation of women in post-conflict reconstruction are the key findings of this chapter.

The discussion on post-conflict reconstruction begins from the very basic definition. "continuum" has been the term frequently used in literature to describe the relationship between conflicts, relief, reconstruction and development. but this concept has been changed since its adoption in the late 1980s. more recently, it is generally understood that reconstruction can be seen as a part of the larger development process of a society emerging from conflict. (calame 2005; barakat & zyck 2009). with the exception that countries in post conflict conversions have to reconcile the development challenge with additional burdens of reconstruction and national reconciliation (del castillo 2001). The terms: reconstruction; recovery; stabilization; and development are being used interchangeably to describe the activities of transition from conflict to peace in conflict countries. however, barakat & zyck (2009) argue that the term "reconstruction" has been criticized for suggesting a return to the "status quo ante" "which undermines the ability of a community to overcome the cause of the conflict. also, reconstruction has infrastructure-oriented connotations and can't reflect the broader meaning for a comprehensive reconstruction process as the term „development“ used more recently by international organizations or „recovery“ used by barakat & zyck (2009).

## **3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM :**

The conflicts of 2013 and 2016 in upper Nile resulted in the displacement of most of the citizens of malakal town and nearby villages. some fled to neighbouring countries and some were displaced within the territory of the state, in particular the protection of civilians (poc) site located approximately 6 kilometres north-east of malakal town. serious rifts were created between ethnic communities that had lived together and inter-married for centuries, in particular the Shilluk, Dinka and Nuer. (the tribes) the main contention stands between the Shilluk and the Padang Dinka who both claim ownership of a strip of land located on the right hand side of the Nile river going downstream, as well as a stretch found on both sides of the Sobat river. the fighting for the land and the political involvement made the civilians to fight among people and slowly they started killing by the soldiers of the tribes and became a war. due to the war the people have lost their families and ran away from the community to safe guard the children and men were killed in this ethnic war. after the war the women headed family has increased and there was important given by the women for peace and harmony. out of my findings the political level involvement was the first root cause for the ethnic war in the state of upper Nile the place called Fashoda and malakal. so, the women involvement in peace made to me research for the topic.

## **4. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY :**

The significance of the study will be useful for the readers and for the people to take action in the community and in the families. the research will be for the women participation in the entire significant event and for the involvement of the women in bringing peace in the family and in the community. the women will be benefited through their active participation in giving voice to the voiceless, gender-based violence, decision making in the family, community and to change the way of living through forming groups for the women to involve in all the programs and to know their strength and to get in to the opportunity to make them to lead the family and the community by their own decisions and activities. through the participation of the women, they will be a model to the society to join hands to stand against the violence against women starting from the childhood, early marriage, harassment etc. the women must be given the chance to lead the nation through their participation in decision making and involving in the family matters and to destroy the fake and benefitable culture in the community.

## 5. SCOPE OF THE STUDY :

The research will be focused and covered on the women participation in socio, economic and local political level. the plan and the policies that women make to reconstruct the community and the methodology used for their family. the area of the study will be done in upper Nile state in South Sudan where the people are affected and reconstruction their families after the war. the women play a vital role in their family and the community to rebuild them and to bring peace and harmony through their active participation in community dialogue, meetings, seminars, workshops, awareness programs and literacy.

## 6. OBJECTIVES :

- To identify the contribution of women in post conflict reconstruction of their families and societies
- To encourage women in the fast-track planning and implementation of PCR activities in the location concerned
- To identify the impediment to women participation in reconstructing of their families and community.
- To find out the extent to which PCR policies incorporate women's participation in rebuilding processes,
- To examine the extent post-conflict reconstruction dynamics, influence the participation of women in rebuilding families and community processes
- To examine how the changing political, economic, social dynamics of PCR influence the participation of women in rebuilding their families and community

## 7. METHODOLOGY :

A methodology is a set of rules, procedures, assumptions and methods used by a researcher in his/her research paper in order to arrive at a meaningful conclusion of a research problem or question. In addition, a research methodology is a step-by-step procedure used to detect or identify, choose or select and a process used in analyzing information about a research topic. The assessment of literature has recognized that there are changing dynamics for every post conflict reconstruction process in the different areas of study. At the same time, it acknowledged that the specific events of a conflict, along with the pre-conflict situation of this place, are significant factors for women's participation in PCR. Therefore, I believe there are significant insights to be gained from looking at an individual case study. The choice of a single case study approach is supported by the following factors:

- Giving the limited time frame, a single case study is more appropriate to get a detailed account on the reconstruction process in the aftermath of conflict. As proven by literature, PCR is a long-term, complex, and multi-stakeholder process.
- The aim is to investigate relationships and focus on the process of participation in PCR, not merely the outcome of reconstruction projects. A case study approach offers more chance of going into sufficient detail to unravel the complexities of a given situation.

The scholar went on explaining that the universe for a particular study is set by the research question, which specifies who or what is of interest, and the universe may be individuals, groups of people, organizations, or even objects. Therefore, the universe of this research study is to examine the link between the dynamics of PCR and the participation of women through an example, here we have a case study methodology and the case is that of Malakal and Fashoda. The goal of this step is to view the question of women's participation in the Malakal case along a comprehensive temporal perspective of the reconstruction process. The starting point for this step is extracting the most important issues to consider from the literature then the data is collected and arranged.

**7.1 sampling size and area :** The total population of study includes 375 women, who have been displaced in different places during conflict in Malakal and returned back last year to their homeland (Malakal) after the conflict, a base line survey was conducted with 175 women who are in PCR (Peace and Reconciliation Committee and self-help groups) and women leaders from different clans like Shilluk, Padang Dinka and Nuer from Malakal town, Kodak Payam which including Biform, Hi Salaam, Dibour and Wuchuch and Lemo villages, these women constitute the universe or population of the study. The sampling areas are the focused areas for the study. The total area under investigation is divided into small sub-areas which are sampled at random or according to a restricted process based on the nature of the study. Each of the chosen sub-areas is then fully inspected and enumerated, and may form the basis for further sampling if desired. In this case Malakal state specially, Malakal town, Bilpham in Kodok Payam, Hi Salaam in Kodok Payam, Dibour in Kodok Payam, Wuchuch in Kodok Payam, Lemo in Kodok Payam were chosen as the study area because it is where the most of the women involved in PCR reside.

**7.2 source and method of data collection:** A data source is the initial location where data is born or where physical information is first found. for the purpose of this research study, primary and secondary data will be the sources of data. a method of data collection signifies ways and means in which a researcher chooses to collect data. data collection is a systematic method of collecting and measuring data gathered from different sources of information in order to provide answers to relevant questions. the importance of data collection during research study is that, it enables the researcher to answer relevant questions and evaluate the outcomes in relation with the hypothesis of the research topic formed when framing the topic. in this case, the purpose of this research is to collect information aimed at analysing the effectiveness of prc and the role of women leaders before and after conflict in malakal district. therefore, the method that used to collect data for the purpose of this research is interview: and the tool to use is questionnaire. it is a tool which allows the interviewer/researcher to ask questions to the interviewee/respondents face to-face to obtain the insights into the problem under study.

### **7.3 RESEARCH QUESTION**

The research revolves around the following question:

1. What is the contribution of women in post conflict reconstruction of their families and societies?
2. What are the impediments to women participation in reconstructing of their families and community?
3. To what extent do PCR policies incorporate women's participation in rebuilding processes, and in what aspects of rebuilding this participation is perceived?
4. To what extent do post-conflict reconstruction dynamics influence the participation of women in rebuilding families and community processes?
5. -How do the changing political, economic, social dynamics of PCR influence the participation of women in rebuilding their families and community?

### **8. LIMITATIONS :**

The shortcomings that the researcher encountered during the study was as follow: firstly, fluency in cholo, arabic and bari language, the researcher is a foreigner and doesn't understand or speak the cholo, arabic and bari languages very well. therefore, the researcher was limited in being able to read and interpret english language on the research question to the prc and women leaders in their primary languages (cholo, arabic and bari), therefore there was need for an interpreter. secondly, cultural and other types of bias such as, the fact that no research has been done on the effectiveness of the prc by women after war in malakal district and the researcher is a non-south sudanese, there were individuals who viewed the topic as inaccurate or improper for a foreigner because of cultural difference. thirdly, the measure used to collect the data, the researcher realized after completing interpretation of the findings, there are better ways which could have been used to gather data which may have inhibited the ability to conduct a thorough analysis of the results to a specific question in the survey that, in retrospect, could have helped address a particular issue that emerged later in the study.

### **9. DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS :**

Women are considered as vulnerable in the society as well they are treated as in the family. through women the self-help groups have identified and entire responders were in the self-help group to save money and to develop their knowledge. through the self-help groups they are able to face their economic shortages in time of their need. they are able to sustain their life through small businesses by borrowing loan from the shg. though they are not able beyond their limit, by receiving small amount they get the profit to sustain their life in order to change their family and the life. to support them in higher level women, have to attend the training on entrepreneurship according to their ability, they could start the work and sustain themselves to grow. the women have to spend time to learn and to create the atmosphere that they are able to achieve and strengthened through trainings through government and ngo.

As we have collected the samples and the visit of the research area, women formed peace groups (prc) and solving the issues among women and the conflict in their areas. the group has system to be followed. they also have federation for the groups to solve the unsolved issues among the families. each peace committee has 15 members in the group, including local authority persons such as chiefs, elders of the community, church representative, women group members, business people, traders, youth, cattle keepers. they meet twice in a month to share their activities in the groups and strengthen them to continue in next level. they have village level peace groups, payam level and county level peace groups. from village peace group 5 people represent from each group and gather for payam federation, from those payam 2 people are selected for county level federation and 1 person from each group are selected for national level to participate or to representative in the programs organized by the government.

The peace groups as actors are active enough to solve their issues in their areas, they solve their problems in their bomas and their payam alone. they are not aware of other bomas's activities. each has different opinion and the knowledge. to unite them together, they supposed to be called together once in a month to share their activities and share their ideas to get good relationships as well they come with the better ideas in order to link them correctly to share their opinions. Though women are active enough in the groups to solve, they also face the obstacles such as domination, unrecognized, non-consideration by the local authorities. when the group of women seek the support from the men, they are not willing to support them immediately where else delay them and sometimes they are not recognized by their rights and by the male groups. to solve this kind of issues, peace and reconciliation group must be given the authorities to solve by themselves.

## 10. SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS :

**comprehensive commission:** south sudan's 2011 transitional constitution mandated 25% representation of women in decision-making positions in government, institutions and commissions. this was upheld in the peace agreement, government must provide for the inclusion of different stakeholder groups, including women's groups in the peace process implementation institutions and commissions. this will help women secure some representation, but the conflict parties did not adhere to the quota, and in practice women were largely under-represented in commissions. though extensive lobbying, the peace agreement provides women an increased representation of women to 35%, the quota is still not met.

**Increased gender-sensitive concord:** women have secured gender-sensitive provisions in concord. this must include provisions on safeguarding women's rights and strong justice and accountability measures, such the establishment of a special court, which will investigate and prosecute serious war crimes against women.

**Women's coalitions and joint arrangements:** building coalitions and associations was a critical factor that contributed to women's influence. women often built coalitions across political and ethnic divides. they must be provided coordinating bodies to harmonize demands and develop joint positions, which shall be presented by women delegates during negotiations, and use to influence national, regional and international stakeholders. when women united around specific demands, such as the 35% quota and the need for justice and accountability mechanisms, they will for sure be able to leverage greater influence. periodical studies should be conducted among the migrants to understand them in a better way and formulate policies in favour of them. maximum days of work should be guaranteed from the government side which may restrict distress migration from the rural areas of the country. government should ensure the individuals education to the higher level.

**Need to amend harmful gender norms and practices:** there are widely held and deeply embedded beliefs about gender roles in south sudan, which situate women largely in private, rather than public and political spheres, have limited women's political participation, decision making and leadership. this has meant that women do not have equal opportunities to be involved in leadership roles, and those who take them on feel they are not taken seriously or face backlash. such societal expectations surrounding gender roles begin at a young age as girls are often given less priority than boys. nearly three-quarters of girls do not receive an education, making the country, the lowest-ranking country for girls' education, nearly half of girls are married before the age of 18, and these harmful practices need to be amended by the government.

**Getting bigger funding:** malakal women identified the lack of funding as a key barrier to participation. this limited consultations between women delegates and their constituencies, particularly given the fast-paced and at times unpredictable nature of the processes. competition over limited funding from donors and support from international partners also exacerbated tensions between women and women's groups, increased funding by national and international ngo's can serve better to the solutions of this problem.

**Inclusion of women in peace process:** encouraging women to participate in all levels of building peace because, women's participation increases the longevity of a peace agreement. an analysis of 182 signed peace agreements between 1989 and 2011 showed that agreements from peace negotiations including women were 35 percent more likely to last at least 15 years.<sup>1</sup> women's groups build coalitions and bridge divides to advocate for peace, and are less likely than other societal groups to disrupt negotiations. an in-depth study of 40 peace processes found that no women's groups attempted to derail any process, unlike other societal groups.

## 11. CONCLUSION :

The country is the fragile country due to the conflict. yet the country has fertile land and the people are doing agriculture and the fishing. the area of the gender and internal conflict has highlighted and divided in to several sections in international and national document providing numerous guidelines and the principles to improve the position of local women in conflict related situation. though the policies and the principles made, they are need to be activated for the women's sake. in order to support to the women, it is important to approach women in realistic way. women's positions, roles, activities in conflict affected area are totally different from the men. there are different roles and the activities women are in the post conflict areas such as others, bread winners etc. the participation of the women is discussed in social, family economic and political level to bring changes and to actively participate in the roles in this study, but apart from it, discussed about the ethnicity, tribal conflict, power to rule and to possess the land etc. the seven major roles of women given in post conflict phase are women as a victim of sexual abuse, women as combatant, women for peace in non-governmental sector, women in formal peace politics, women as coping and surviving actors, women as household heads, women in formal and informal employment opportunities.

Though the local rules and norms are there to be followed there is still need some changes according to the technology world. to respond the seven roles of women in conflict, this review has three major challenges for intervening agencies in policy and practice.

- employ more women as professionals in conflict related interventions such as preventing diplomacy, peace-making and peace building and post conflict rehabilitation.
- adapt conflict elated interventions increasingly to the need and the interest of the local women in post conflict situation, the agencies should apply the conflict and the gender analysis and have discussion that the conflict affect women and men differently and to bring the gender equality by analysing it and to respect the women.
- anticipating seven major roles of women concretely in their policies and interventions, mitigating the negative impacts of the conflict on women and supporting them newly acquired political positions and their organizations.
- through supporting women and making them to participate in entire level as men in the position and the local governing authority, the nation will see the extreme growth

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