



Woman in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Ethiopia: Rhetoric or Reality?

A Call for Reconsideration

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ABSTRACT

This paper reflects women's position in peace building process in Ethiopia, and examines whether women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building process are real or rhetoric. Then it provides mechanisms of empowering women in peace building activities. This exploratory evaluation research provides evidence using both primary and secondary data. The research result shows that women's role in conflict resolution and peace building activities are highly marginalized due to structural barriers which includes lack of capacity in conflict resolution, victimization and sexual harassment in conflict distance women's from peace building activities. Furthermore, sociocultural influences, patriarchal norms limit their visibility in conflict resolution and peace building activities in Ethiopia. Lack of genuine representation and absence of peace policy are among the challenges that limits women's from peace building activities. Therefore, women's role in conflict resolution and peace building activities are just a rhetoric and taken as a political instrument for government gains than reality in determining women's living as well as the sustainability of peace in the country especially since 2018 Ethiopia's political transition. Based up on the finding, the research call the following reconsideration measures, namely: (1) Peace policy formulation that addresses the current marginalized position of women in the country's peace building process, (2) Promoting and strengthening genuine representation of women in governmental decision making institutions, and (3) measures that raise practical engagement of women in peace process, and (4) addressing sociocultural barriers using civic empowerment works so as to get women capable actor in conflict resolution and peace building activities in the country.

Keywords: Conflict, Peace-building, Resolution, Women

INTRODUCTION

Violence and conflict are the main obstacles to durable peace and sustainable development. Nearly half of all people living in extreme poverty reside in countries affected by conflict. That figure is expected to rise to 80 per cent by 2035 (UN, 2019). Violence and conflict often lead to "development in reverse", by causing death, disease, deprivation, displacement, destruction, damage, as well as the absence of public services and limited access to resources, which in turn can provoke grievances resulting in mistrust and

conflict (UN, 2019).

Post-conflict periods present opportunities and challenges to peace building activities that can help prevent future conflict. If peace building and conflict resolution processes are inclusive, open and democratic, the resulting system will be resilient (UNDP, 2007). It is important to foster a broad sense of ownership of the decisions made during the conflict resolution and peace building process: if people feel they have a stake in the decisions, they are more likely to respect the agreements, rule and decisions and stay politically engaged in the long term (International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance; 2017).

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Ethiopia is one of Africa's most complex states due to its ancient history, diverse culture and contradictory processes of state formation (Abbink, 2005). Ethiopia has recorded impressive economic growth over the last decade and is ranked among the ten fastest growing economies in Africa and among the world fastest movers of human development (Sehen Bekele, Fisseha Mekonnen and Chrysantus Ayangafac, 2012). Ethiopia is undergoing a profound political and economic transition to liberal democracy since March 2018. After nearly thirty years of single-party rule by the EPRDF, Ethiopia has signed a historic peace agreement with Eritrea, opened the country to multiparty politics, released political prisoners, and upheld fundamental rights and liberties. This reform is shaking the precarious interethnic equilibrium (Dibu and Ahadu, 2020). After the reform the country is facing political, religious and ethnic violence's and takes thousands priceless lives Ethiopian and displaced a number of individuals. The IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix shows that from a total of 2,271,899 IDPs in 2018, conflict was reported as the primary driver (accounting for 1,773,482 IDPs). As a result, the country's GDP had fallen down, one of the most striking such drops in the world (Radelet, 2007). The violence particularly impacted women, children, youth and the elderly people and the country suffered from trauma of violence. Therefore, conflict resolution and peace building tasks in Ethiopia have a reasonable ground to consider its successfulness.

In Ethiopia; government institutions, civil societies, traditional institutions and local people are at work of conflict resolution more than ever. Even if incorporating women's in the government institutions are in progress (Awol K., 2018, their engagement in peacebuilding and conflict resolution projects is not visible enough. Similarly, researches on this issue mainly focused on women's victimization in conflict, rather than assessing their role in conflict resolution and peace building projects. At the same time mechanisms of enhancing their role and the challenges in conflict resolution and peace building are largely ignored. Therefore, this research addresses the long ignored roles of women in conflict resolution and peace building process as well as the mechanism of enhancing their role. Specifically the research has the following objectives;

- To show importance of Women's Participation in Peace building and conflict resolution in Ethiopia.

- To discuss the Participation of women in peace building and the Current Dynamics on Ethiopian Women peace Builders
- To examine the success of women's in conflict resolution and peace building activities in Ethiopia
- To identify the challenges and barrier for women in peace building process in Ethiopia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Scotet. H (2004) argued that conflict resolution models are elastic. This model is based on a post modernism world views. In this field of studies, researchers respect subjectivity and multiplicity of views since actors in conflict acts up on local information. Based on this world views, we used qualitative research approach. To understand the role of women in peace building projects the researchers used multiple data source and data types. The primary data were collected using interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). Secondary data were also collected from 10 Universities, MOP, MoWCYA, Ethiopian Election Board, and research institutions, civil societies which operate in Ethiopia, different political parties and local government. To triangulate and to substantiate the finding of the paper, the researchers used both published and unpublished materials on the subject.

The study theoretically based on socio-political approach to the empowerment of marginalized groups; conceptually on women empowerment framework; legally on United Nation Security Council Resolution No.1325/2000, FDRE Constitution and FDRE Women Policy (1993).

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Peace Policy, Peace Building and Marginalized Groups in Peace Building Process

Peace building is challenged by a number of accumulative factors such as growing vulnerability to natural hazards and restrictions or lack of access to economically important resources. These challenges are also a result of misguided policies and approaches to gender sensitive inclusion, proliferation of arms, divisive politics, ineffective governance of pastoral areas and uneasy state-citizen relations (Fetherston, 2000). One of the gaps in such kinds of national goal is having absence of peace policy. Ethiopia indeed needs a peace-building policy to improve coordination and effectiveness of its peace building and conflict resolution projects. The constitution, sectoral policy pronouncements, international conventions and policy frameworks which the country has ratified, contain bits and pieces of policy pronouncements on peace-building.

The articulation of values, principles, norms and policy actions on conflict prevention and peace building in policy instruments has paramount importance (Hayhurst, 2009).

Ongoing interventions on conflict prevention and management in Ethiopia have mostly been adhoc to handle onsets of violence and prevent humanitarian crises. However, attention is given to sustainable resolution of long standing and deep rooted conflicts after March 2018 transition.

Since causes of conflict in Ethiopia are both multidimensional and complex (competition for resources such as land, pasture, and water; clashes due to livelihoods competition between sedentary farmers and pastoralists; heightened awareness of ethnic identity; and political issues such as language rights and perceptions of disenfranchisement, and arguments on border delineation between regions and ethnicities (UNDP, 2007), the multi-dimensional of conflict resolution and peace building model must be considered. Such works are attempted by different stakeholders (at sub-national, national and international) might be required to engage in simultaneous and sometimes uncoordinated action that requires effective management (Fetherston, 2000).

Generally peace-building policy will provide a framework and mechanism for coordinating actions and will also facilitate effective synergies between local, national and regional efforts in conflict prevention and peace-building (Hayhurst, 2009). At the heart of any peace policy resilience and inclusiveness is important pillars. The ability to be resilient majorly depends on the inclusiveness of peace building process. These principles give the opportunity to deal with the problems with all segments of the societies (UN Women, 2014).

Peace building and conflict resolution projects generally in the world particularly in Ethiopia marginalized significant part of the society; youth and women. Historically conflict resolution and peace building values, policies, institutions and practices side lined significant segment of the population especially women (Agbajobi, 2010). That is why peace building efforts failed in a number of peace building cases. In the face of multifaceted conflict in Ethiopia, it is imperative to enhance the role of women peace building effort for effective control resolution and sustainable peace in Ethiopia.

Though there is growing concern for making women as important participants in conflict resolution and peace building process, there are still pervasive challenges and barriers for making significant and

substantial women in such projects (Justino, Mitchell and Muller, 2018).

Women as a victim of conflict

In conflict situations organizations, academicians, practitioners and different sections of the society consider women as victims. According to the report of UN Woman, “women often have limited economic and other resources to protect themselves” (2014). In conflict sexual violence are parts of the tactics each conflicting parties employ against their counterparts, because women are usually regarded as “symbolic bearers of caste, ethnic, or national identity” (Bouta and Frerks, 2002). They also found that women’s engagement in post war discussion became limited even from getting justice on the violation of their right at conflict period. Therefore, women are primary victims at conflict as well as post conflict period, because, most post conflict discussion doesn’t give emphasis for gender lenses.

Until now, Women and peace has been the agenda of different actors for over 20 years. However, the formative framework ignored women from peace building projects. As a result, the question of how to improve women’s role in peace building process remain the agenda of the day in Africa in general and in Ethiopia in particular.

Women as important actors in conflict resolution and peace building

Unlike the old established perception in conflict resolution, it has been said that women have a critical significance in peace building efforts. Therefore, women are important in peace process, because, women constitute almost half of the population everywhere. In addition, women are core in family that gives care and support. As a result, women have special concern for issues and facilities (healthcare and education) that maximize their family growth and success (UN Women, 2014). Therefore, the peace building process can’t be free from the efforts of women at all. Women serve peace making process as “advocator, peacekeeper, relief workers, moderators and observers”. Thus women’s fair share and involvement are a necessary (Agbajobi, 2010).

However, the prominent role and perspectives of women in peace building has been ignored for long at different places. Such ignorance limits the need to realize sustainable peace in every community.

After the ratification of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 /2000, peace building process considers women as an essential component, at least either for quantitative advantage or on paper

(Justino, Mitchell and Muller, 2018). They also argued that beyond addressing the particular problems and challenges of women, the resolution document includes the need to enhance women's capacities to contribute in the post conflict recovery works and peace building activities.

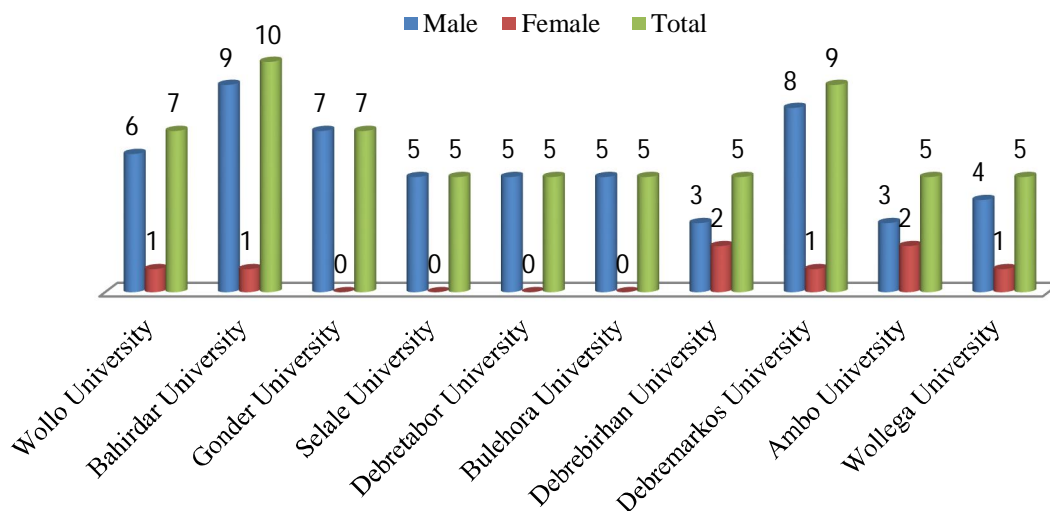
Researchers argued that women empowerment and gender equality is the heart in peace building process. Because it has a direct link with peace building efforts by lowering risk of conflict (Justino et al, 2014), promoting human rights (Melander, 2005), promoting democracy (Barro, 1997) and lowering corruption (Dollar et al, 2001; Swamy et al., 2001). Empowerment of women in decision making organs of political position provides them a double sword in furthering gender justice in the one side and transforming conflict on the other sides. To support this argument The Rwanda experience tells a lot. For example in Rwanda the destabilized post war power balance let the women change their traditional role

and assumes positions that helped them to define new power relation (women largest share as parliament members, executives and business leader) and consolidate just gender relation. To put it simply, balanced power relation between men and women in particular and all segments of the society in general is the determinate factor for lasting peace (Spierenburg, Steenkamp & Wels, 2006).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Empirical data in Ethiopia is not in line with the above maxims. Sample data collected from nine public universities in Ethiopia shows that women's power balance in decision making positions are insignificant. Power balance helps women for influencing decision making process in any kinds of institutions. According to the data presented below Ethiopian public Universities lost women's perspective in decision making in general and peacebuilding activities in universities in particular.

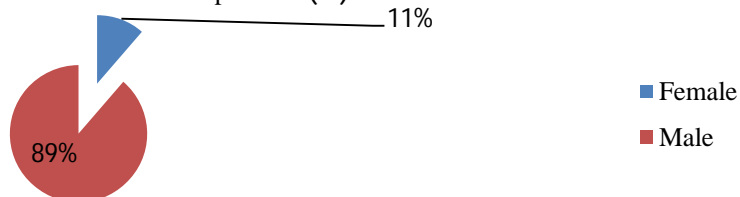
Fig.1. Selected Universities Top Management in Gender Composition (in Number)



From a total of 10 universities selected, 91% (55 in number) of the top management (includes the presidents and vice presidents) positions are owned by men, whereas insignificant positions (9%) (8 in

number) are left for women (Fig.1). As summarized from the above figure, almost half of the selected universities didn't include women's in their top management at all.

Fig.2. Selected Universities Senate Members in Gender Composition (%)



Source: Survey, 2020

Women's representation in the Senate, the main decision making body of the university, is also insignificant. Unlike the expectations and objectives of Ethiopian universities, women's decision making and leadership position are squeezed and almost excluded. From a total of 45 Ethiopian public universities, currently, none of the universities hires female president.

From this it is possible to conclude that, academic institutions expected to work on gender equality and women mainstreaming are found failing and faced with gender marginalization as like many other government organizations at different layers.

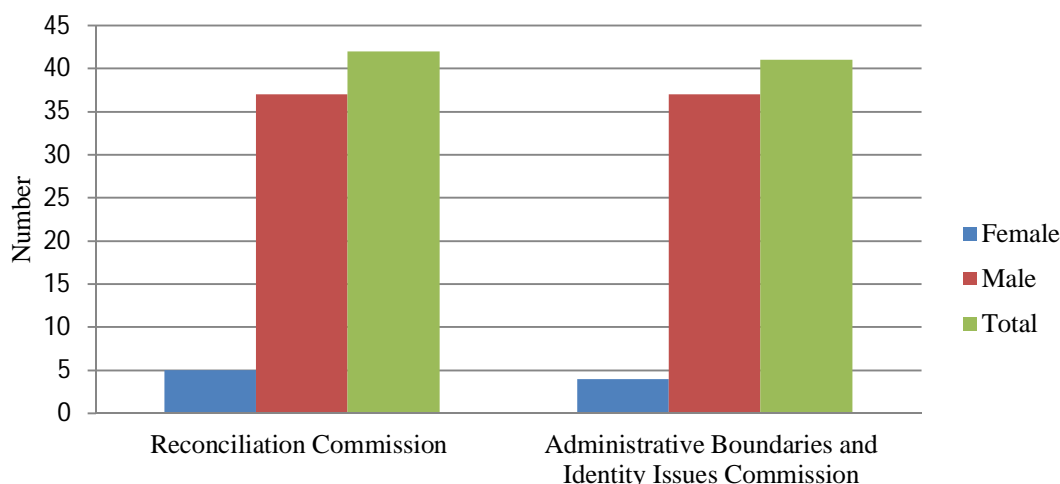
As summarized by Justino (2018), women's message in raising children has a critical impact to make a person of good behave in a society. Therefore, peace is mother's investment on their children by raising their consciousness about peace and coexistence.

However, different country's studies and the case we analyses in Ethiopia show that, women's role in peace building process are limited due to; low perception of women about their role, domestic violence and sexual abuse continue to be dominated

in conflict situation and peace building activities. Nominal peace building role of women in the government institutions and economic limitations like transport, logistics and loss of daily earnings prevented women's from participating in voluntary groups' peacemaking process.

In Ethiopia, the Reconciliation Commission was established in the beginning of 2019 to reconcile based on truth and justice. The commission has 42 members and as an institution it was assumed to be "free and independent institution that inquire and disclose the truth of the sources, causes and extent of conflicts and that takes appropriate measures and initiate recommendation that enable for the lasting peace and to prevent the future occurrence of such conflict" (Reconciliation Commission Proclamation, 2019). The parliament established commission is gender blind institution in which only 5 (12%) of women, whereas 37 (88%) of members are men. In countries where women's has been the most victims of conflict, peace building institution called, Reconciliation Commission, ignores women's genuine and fair representation.

Fig.3. Reconciliation Commission & Administrative Boundaries and Identity Issues and Commission Members (in Number)



Source: Ethiopianreporter(2019)

Administrative Boundaries and Identity Issues Commission was established by the Ethiopian government at the beginning of 2019 with the objective to solve "issues of administrative boundaries, self-government and Identity questions that repeatedly occur between and within regions... since it causes of great instability" of the country (Administrative Boundaries and Identity Issues Commission, 2019). From a total of 41 members of the commission, only 4 (10%) of them are women,

whereas, 37 (90%) of the members are Male. From this data women's presentation and representation at the commission are insignificant. Therefore, the success of the commission in Ethiopia's political transition lacks the voices and ideas of women. It is an indication of the continuation of women's marginalization and exclusion from the formal peace process in the country.

Furthermore, lack of confidence in decision making process undermine women's role in peace building initiatives. Such limitation creates its own negative effect on how others like family and community members recognize their role in peace building.

Importance of Women's Participation in Peace building and conflict resolution

Though women are victims of conflict, however, women are participating in job creation, armies and peacemakers. Thus, women serve the community by providing the socioeconomic support for their members affected by conflict Jestino et al., (2018). In conflict affected areas, Women labor works engagement are increasing in different countries (Afghanistan, Indonesia, Nepal, Tajikistan and Colombia) (Ibid), mostly the low skilled works, the informal sector. Women also provide health, education, training, psychological support in refugee camps, hospitals, charities and other local organizations.

Such role makes women important in conflict resolution and peace building initiatives and processes. Women's in providing such roles it provide them good visibility and presence in post-conflict situations to contribute their share in peace building processes (Buvinic et al., 2012). It helps women to contribute for peace building efforts as well as raise their representation in peace making and political deals supported by different international organization.

For example after the genocide of Rwanda men are either killed or in prison or flee out of the country and 70 % of the population were female that sustain the community by serving as head of households, shouldering the economic survival and reconstructing the community (Ramuts, 2006). Similar to this case the Somali Women led civil societies organizations achieved much in the past two decades. The Somali women have helped to disempower local warlords and made progress in political participation. Though clan based politics in Somali typically exclude in peace talk (since clan affiliation is unpredictable that they may choose either their mothers' or fathers, or daughters clan), it gives them structural role, multiple clan affiliation in serving as conduit of dialogue between conflicting clans and pressurize the war lords to put in to peace talk.

However, research findings revealed that, though women's role are increasing during conflict and in peace building process, still gender inequality persists and women's disadvantage continues

(Justino et al, 2018). According to Justino and eta al (2018), such disadvantage caused exclusion of women from large scale peace process beyond the local (family and community) engagement.

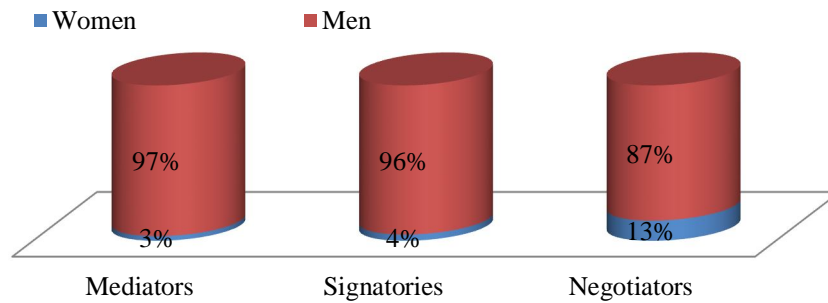
As evidenced from literature, women's formal role in conflict resolution and peace building process has been limited (Justino et al., 2013), whereas their informal role has a paramount relevance in supporting the democratic government and its culture by mobilizing informal women's group, organizing peace demonstration and rallies and local intermediaries between the conflicting groups.

This argument illustrated the Ethiopian's women's role in conflict resolution and peace building efforts. Mekuanint (2015) argued that women in shinglina are considered as plaintiff and defendant, but rarely as moderator. According to him in some districts of this part of the country plaintiff and defendant women appeared with/through their male relatives. He asserted that women's non/low participation in shinglina has adverse effect on its success. Though women rarely appear in shinglina and they are playing an important role in educating peace for the villagers and family members. In addition they initiate conflict resolution (Erfomereba/Duberties in North Wollo) and assisted the effectiveness of shingilina by forcing and sectioning the conflicting parties to resolve conflicts in a peaceful ways. Women may deter violence by passing deterrent words to their relatives.

The Global Experiences of Women's Participation in Peace Building

The global experience on the, "participation of women's organizations makes a peace agreement 64% less likely to fail" Nilsson D. (2012) cited in (O'Reilly, Súilleabháin & Paffenholz, 2015) and "When women participate in peace processes, the resulting agreement is 35% more likely to last at least 15 years" (O'Reilly, Súilleabháin & Paffenholz, 2015). According to Caprioli M. (2003) cited in (O'Reilly, Súilleabháin & Paffenholz, 2015) "Higher levels of gender equality are associated with a *lower propensity for conflict*, both between and within states". It is resulted from the equal chance than women contributed for the society from leading and participating security sector leadership. As a result, women have better opportunity to "gather intelligence about potential security risks" Louise Olsson & Johan Tejpar (eds.) (2009)". Despite women's critical contributions to security, their representation in peace processes has lagged behind.

Fig.4 Women's Roles in Major Peace Processes (1992–2018) (Global Data)



Source: Cfr (2019)

Sub Saharan Experience of Women's Participation in Peace Building

In sub Saharan countries where violence has a long history and costs many lives, women's role in peace

building process has also be ignored. Reports on major peace process of some countries mentioned below shows that the voices of women are repressed from being heard and not represented in the peace policy formulation of the countries (Open data, 2016).

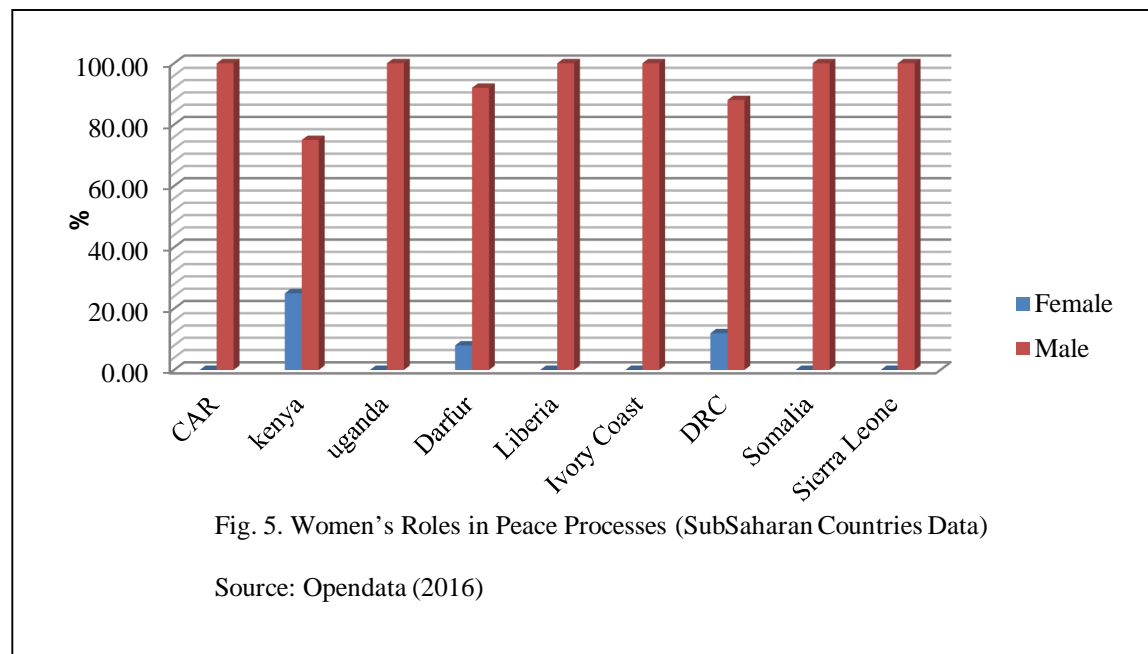


Fig. 5. Women's Roles in Peace Processes (SubSaharan Countries Data)

Source: Opendata (2016)

Despite gender mainstreaming projects and agendas of Africa, the participation of women's in decision making and peace building processes are limited, if not none. The sub-Sahara African countries report indicated¹, there was a difference in women's participation. The achievements of sustainable peace were linked with the participation of women in the process. Therefore, the difference in women participation between the two countries contributed to the differences in realizing peace in each country (UN Women, 2012).

Participation of women in Ethiopia: State Building and Peace Making Role

Historically, Ethiopia is the state marked by significant women's in the history of the country. Women's countless role in the country has been done being a queen as well as servants position.

Lucy (Dinknesh) literally "you are lovely" is the pioneer women in the history of Ethiopia and archeological achievements. She an international audiences to Ethiopian as a cradle land as well as the socioeconomic benefit at current times (Pankhrust R., nd).

A rebel leader, *Youdit Gudat*, Queen at around 10th C. A.D, reigned over a kingdom and destroys *Axumite*

civilization and rush Ethiopia with a “zeal for revenge” with her legacy of destroying ancient Ethiopian civilization and churches, it is undeniable that she was “resourceful in leveraging military” for her administration as a queen (SALA, 2020).

Empress *Taytu Betul*, late 1800C. A.D, “a military strategist and pioneering motherland mogul”, she played a significant role in defending Italy’s first invasion of Ethiopia (Ibid). She served her king *Minilik II* as military counselor and decisive strategist and decision maker in defending war from invader Italy. Besides, her contribution in diversifying business in the country and sociocultural development was paramount in the history of modern Ethiopia (Ibid).

Among different women’s in Ethiopia, a sisterly fighters named *Senedu* and *Yewubdar Gebru’s* A.D, contributed for their country peace and development and sovereignty. *Senedu* and *Yewubdar* serve their country to maintain sustainable peace as “freedom fighter and vice president of the parliament” and “freedom fighter lately virtuoso pianist” respectively. As a women, their contribution to the evacuation of Fascist Italy from their country Ethiopia, during Italy’s second invasion.

Politically, few women’s were a change maker in the history of Ethiopia. Queen *Sheba* and queen *Zewditu’s* contribution was significant in the making and building of ancient as well as modern Ethiopia (Bahiru Zewde, 2002). However, the historical accounts and documents say a lot about few women’s and their role over their country. Previously, women’s engagement in different national and international affairs was not as like as what men has been doing.

Their engagement and role improvement are still in need of detail examination. As part of this examination, this paper address the changes and dynamics of women’s role in their community and country in peace making process, its challenges and opportunities as well.

Current Status of Ethiopian Women’s in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building

Currently, women in Ethiopia are suffering from conflicts in different parts of the country. The FDRE constitution has recognized women’s equal right with men in 1995. It gave an opportunity to have a

formal claim over the participation and representation of women at political institutions and peace building processes.

In 2018 the Prime Minister Abiy Amhed’s Cabinet considers women’s position which constitutes 51% of the total population. As a result, 48% of his cabinets are female ministers and it is taken as a significant move in patriarchal country (Awol K., 2018). According to him, such recognition of women at political crisis that break the statuesque, in his word “the patriarchy can be beaten” gives an insight for girls to work hard to realize their dream too. It is also an indication that breaks an old established doctrines and practices “women can’t lead” (Ibid). According to Endalew Assefa’s work on women’s representation and depiction in Afaan Oromo and Amharic proverbs, dehumanization and subjugation of women are also rooted in the cultural values of the two dominantly speaking languages (2011). In his work, “the women can’t fit” are represented on the proverbs “ሴት ምን ታውቃለች አዋቂ ትወልዳለች እንጂ/A woman does not know anything, but she gives birth to a knowledgeable child” and in Oromo proverbs, “A woman can be tall, but not knowledgeable” / ‘*Durbi dheerina malee beekumsa hin qabdu*’. Such kind of stereotype in our culture deters women from contributing for their country’s peace building effort.

Though women’s share at the FDRE cabinet raises to 48%, it doesn’t mean their participation at local governments improved. As the data collected (Table 1) from South Wollo Zone and Dessie City administration, Women’s participation and representation in the political leadership and decision making position are insignificant. From the table below, gender gap goes higher when decision making position goes lower from the Zonal to Woreda and Kebele levels. The rural Kebele’s of the zonal administration did not hire women’s at all. This indicates that women’s role in the local tires of government, where female constitutes more than half of the population, are marginalized. Therefore, women’s representation at the Federal cabinet doesn’t show the representation of women at the lower tires of government. Therefore, gender mainstreaming plans and projects need to revise their priorities for the local contexts especially at rural kebele’s.

Table 1. Women's Decision Making Position in South Wollo & Dessie Town (No & Percent)

		Male	Female	Total	Women assumed Positions
Dessie Town Administration	Kebele Cabinet members	43 (62%)	26 (38%)	69 (100%)	5 kebele administered by Women
	Sub-city Cabinet	79 (81%)	19 (19%)	98 (100%)	No Women Sub-city administrator
	Dessie Town Cabinet	41 (77%)	12 (23%)	53 (100%)	
South Wollo Zone	Kebele Administrator	528 (100%)	0 (0%)	528 (100%)	
	Woreda Office Head	705 (84%)	133 (16%)	838 (100%)	1 Woreda administrator and 1 Vice Woreda Administrator
	Zonal Office Head	32 (76%)	10 (24%)	42 (100%)	
Federal Government Cabinet		52%	48%	100%	

Source: Dessie Town and South Wollo Zone Prosperity Party Office (2020)

Though government has women's policy towards promoting women's empowerment and equality, their role in political decision making and peace building process are neglected (FDRE Women's Policy, 1993). The empirical data presented above shows the gap in practice and women's status in the current political transition of Ethiopia.

Selected Case on Women's in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building Process

Conflict Prevention, resolution and Peace building Experience from North Shoa & Oromo Nationality Zones, Amhara, Ethiopia

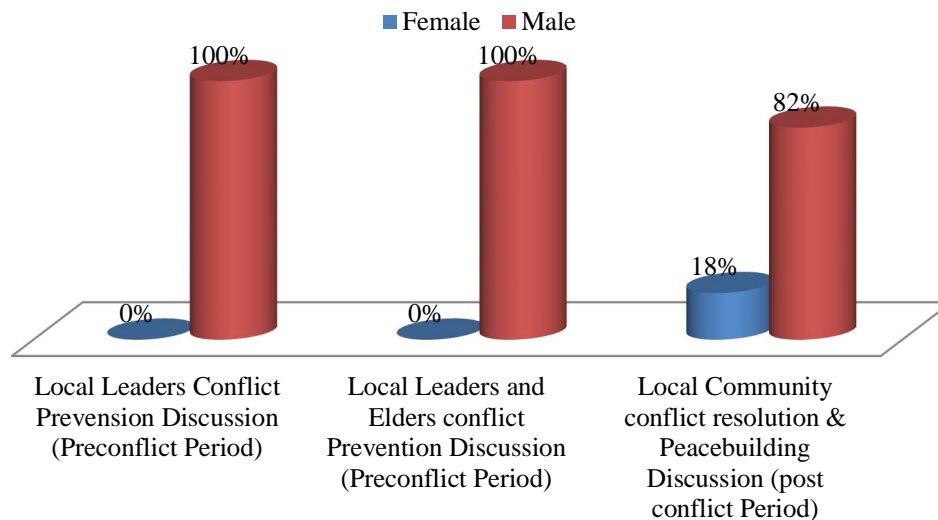


Fig.6. Women's position in conflict prevention and Peace Building Process

Source: Survey (2020)

There was conflict between Amhara and Oromo Ethnic group in the aftermath of the April 2018 reform. As the conflict indicators happened in the area there were pre-conflict discussion aimed at preventing the then potential conflict. In this conflict prevention stage, Discussions were held between political leaders, local elders and youth

representatives. According to our informant the first round pre-conflict discussion were held between local leaders of the area. Though there are female leaders in both sides of the local governments the discussion participants were all men.

In the second round pre-conflict discussion to deescalate the then political tension, the local leaders

agreed to discuss for the second round by having representative of the community from local elders and youth. From 21 participants in this peace discussion none of them were women. Not surprisingly representatives from both sides and from all segments (political leaders, local elders and youth) were all male. Unfortunately the delegates of gentlemen peace discussion fail to prevent the occurrence of conflict. Even some of delegates during pre-conflict peace talk were alleged for instigating conflict during the clash. Women's hope for peace which was determined by gentlemen perished in their hand and the conflict erupted. During the conflict women, youth, children, elderly people and disabilities were the primary victims of direct and indirect consequences of conflict in the area. Though the magnitudes of death, casualties and destruction in the area is not well recorded, peaceful and the harmony relation was disturbed; physical and psychological displacement has happened; the economic, political and social lives of the local people is negatively influenced. For example, since the area is dependent on irrigational agriculture, loss of agricultural tools and other materials (like water pump generators) affect the local farmers to perform their usual productions. Women and children exposed to psychological trauma. In nutshell the primary losers of this conflict was women while they were not part of the peace building effort in pre-conflict stage.

Similarly in the post conflict peace conferences the representation is very low as indicated above in the graph. According (Sebsib, Mulugeta and Shimelis, 2020) the low participation of women has important implication that women's contribution become marginal and justice may not be served since they are denied to reflect their compliant in the conflict transformation process. These defiantly affect the possibility of sustained peace.

Barriers and Challenges of Women in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Ethiopia

Sociocultural barriers are among the structural barriers that limits women's from their success in peace building. Cultural influence, social norms and patriarchal values discourage women that puts them at home that outside like men (Agbajobi, 2010) & (Justino, 2018). Then, women are not in a position that can handle conflict, because, traditionally "war is the work of gentlemen" and at the same time, it has been practice for long that peacemaking is also the role of men not women. In some situations, when women engage in peacemaking process, they may not have skill, knowledge or both on how to manage public dialogue, discussion, negotiation (perception

and real as challenges and barriers)etc. due to inexperience for such issues. The cultural barriers resulted in women's mostly dependent on resources, education and training. Such dependencies have critical influence for women's being active in decision making and facilitation role in the society to maintain peace. This perception of women no have skill and knowledge in managing conflict and bring peace in post conflict period need to be changed. According to WEF, changing the perception requires a mind shift by the conflicting parties, the government officials and the community at large by how they see women's role (2015).

This paper identified the policy (institutional and practice) gaps as well as the sociocultural and economic barriers that limits women's participation in peacemaking activities. In current Ethiopia's political transition, women are victim and it is a sign of the failure of the projects which has been implemented for long towards women empowerment and gender equality. In government where women consists half of the ministerial cabinet, such victimization of girls and women's shows the continuation of violence against women and peace making effort failure at large.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

From the study, it is found that Ethiopian society is at work of conflict resolution as the urgency demands it. Therefor it is imperative and timely to quest how we can enhance the elasticity of conflict resolution and peace building project and the role of women in it. Despite the suitability of the country lags behind from adopting peace policy and there should have women centered peace policy.

According to the research finding the participation of women in conflict resolution and peace building efforts, though there are competing scholarship about women as peace trouble shooter and trouble maker, they are marginalized more than half of the world's population if not largest number of the world. However scholarship did not reach an agreement about the defined role of these segments of the society in peace building effort. Women are misrepresented as prominent actor of violence crisis and revolution. Unlike the traditional views against women there is the raising views which accept women as important segment of the society in peace building. Women have sociological and structural advantage to build peace as a core of family and most often has multiple clan affiliation in many African societies. This group of scholarship (Jestino, Mitchill and Muller, 2016), said women are

represented as advocate and keeper of peace, relief worker during war, moderator and initiator of peace talk. Currently, women's peace building role gain acceptance by the international community and organization. Thus, the UN Security Council resolution No. 1325/2000 affirms the essentiality of women in peace building effort. This indicated that there is strong interest in enhancing the role of women in peace building effort to give the work ownership and trust by all segment of the society. Though there is an attempt of having elastic and inclusive approaches in peace building process, empirical data shows that little is achieved concerning gender mainstreaming and satisfactory participation in the third world in general and in Ethiopia in particular.

The finding of this paper indicated that, the participation of women in organizational leadership is very low. For example, from 10 Ethiopian public universities Senate and Top management Women constitute only ten percent. Similarly the two adhoc peace commissions established after the April 2018 Ethiopian transition only 11% of the members are women. Participation of women is low and not effective does not mean nothing has been done in Ethiopia concerning this issue. Women were empowered in government office, and now 48% of the federal Ministry constitutes women. But, women's position at Federal Cabinet constitutes of 5% and participation at rural area and grass root level stay very low if not absent.

There are barriers that affect women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building effort. Among others structural barriers (absence of coherent peace policy); victimization and haplessness; socio-cultural barrier; low gender development index and associated problems like low level of education, poverty, lack of experience and low skill in peace building. These issues further reinforce the already existing socio-cultural barrier for women peace builders. It also exposed them for dependency and bad perception in conflict resolution and peace building.

For the last 30 years the government of Ethiopia tries to empower women. The government ratified women's policy to bring positive change in women participation. But, the recent political and religious polarization creates pervasive structural barrier for Ethiopian women to appear as peace agent. In general, the above complicated and mutually reinforced socio-cultural, economic and political barrier keep women's participation in conflict resolution and peace building remain unsatisfactory in Ethiopia.

The research finding obligate us to call upon the stakeholders (government, civil societies, education organization) to encourage women participation in peace building projects. Most of all, the government should introduce coherent and inclusive peace policy which guarantees institutional and legal framework for enhancing their role in peace building projects.

In addition, right based approach and economic development approach should be integrated in peace building process to replace the existing cosmetic representation of women and men with substantial representation. Above all, women should be represented with a defined role either as negotiator or mediator or observer unlike the present day participation of women with undefined role. Moreover the government should spent large effort in maintain law and order since the break out of violence primarily affect the wellness of women.

Recommendations

1. Women's marginalization from peace building process should be improved by maintaining the significant and genuine inclusion and meaningful participation in peace process using the following models; direct participation at all negotiation table, Observer participant status, Consultation participation, Inclusion commission, Problem-solving workshop, Public decision making and Mass action.
2. Addressing women's gaps and genuine empowerment; knowledge, skills and attitudes gap in peacemaking process should be addressed using training and education. The Capacity Building projects should be implemented to focus on comprehensive on civic empowerment and development of women in in practice than political win.
3. Promoting and strengthening genuine representation of women in governmental institutions. It helps the peace process to be benefited from diverse interests and various voices.
4. Maintaining rule of law. Women's are victims of conflicts in Ethiopia, at the same time their sayings are marginalized in the conflict resolution and peace building process. Therefore, a minimum to do at government hand is maintaining rule of law so that women can participate effectively in peace building initiatives successfully.
5. Peace Policy on women's role in peace building should be formulated. One of the

gaps for low participation of women in peace building is the absence of peace policy. Therefore, it is the time that urgent policy interventions are required to reconsider women's position in peace building institutionally.

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ⁱ For example the Kenya and Somalia peace deal, named "Agreement on the Principles of Partnership of the Coalition Government" and Declaration on Cessation of Hostilities & Principles of the Somalia National Reconciliation Process, respectively.