

The role of women in armed conflict resolution and peace-building in Uganda: A case of the LRA conflict in Kitgum district, Acholi sub-region

by

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Introduction

The realm of women and armed conflict resolution is quite the less navigated area of study in developing countries particularly Uganda. This study, in general, analyzes the role of women in armed conflict resolution and peace-building in Uganda and their experiential perspective using Kitgum District. This study is derived from the disproportionate representation of women in conflict resolution strategies and peace-building processes despite also being victims of the same armed conflicts.

Objectives of the study

1. To examine the factors that influence women's role in conflict resolution and peacebuilding,
2. to assess the relationship between women involvement and restoration of peace in armed conflict-ravaged areas of Kitgum,

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3. to assess the effect of excluding women from armed conflict resolution processes on the attainment of peace in Kitgum, Uganda.

Methodology

The study adopted the case study design and employed the qualitative approach. The design was also preferred because it is appropriate for addressing the ‘why’ questions and to understand issues or answering the ‘how’ questions as well as understanding behaviour, beliefs, opinions, emotions from the participants' perspective (Hennink et al. (2011)).

The study used non-probability sampling techniques because according to (Patton & Cochran, 2002), sampling in qualitative studies is normally purposive. The study used the Maximum Variation sampling technique under purposive sampling to study subjects of different characteristics such as age, gender, and knowledge about the subject.

The study was conducted during the period of Covid-19. Thus, the methods used included telephone interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). Phone Interviews were conducted in May, shortly after easing the national lockdown while FGDs were conducted in July 2020.

Key findings

Under the first objective, the study found that the factors that influenced the role of women in armed conflict resolution in Kitgum include; social-cultural, economic, and political factors.



The study also found that the relationship between women's involvement in armed conflict resolution and restoration of peace in armed conflict-ravaged areas of Kitgum was linked to the lessened possibility of conflict, attainment of sustainable development, and gender-sensitive recovery.

The research equally studied the effect of excluding women from conflict resolution processes on the attainment of peace and found that it increased the chances of conflict, created an unjust society, and didn't, therefore, appreciate women's contribution to peace. The field findings revealed that exclusion reinforced victimization, lowered the opportunities for conflict resolution and peacebuilding while suppressing women's effectiveness in conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

Key recommendations

Building women's leadership skills: More women need to be encouraged to take up leadership positions and their skills to be built for effective representation. This would enable them to participate beyond the household level and ensure their effective participation in conflict resolution and peacebuilding. This can be done through workshops organised by the Ugandan Government, UN Women, FIDA among others

Developing skills to empower women programs: According to the respondents, women were not involved in the peace process as mentioned earlier. They proposed the need for skills development in peacebuilding perhaps through adult literacy and training programs.



Supporting women's initiatives and numerical increase in participating in the public sphere: There was a concern that women's efforts needed to be better supported, in particular small women's groups operating at the grassroots.

Promoting peace at the grassroots level: There is a need to strengthen the existing peace efforts at the grassroots level by sharing lessons learned from different communities. Women peace activists at the grassroots level should be supported to improve the effectiveness of their interventions and to share their experiences with others.

Creating a forum for women to voice their views: The study found that although women had diverse issues and proposals to voice, they did not have suitable fora to present their ideas since they were left out of various conflict resolution activities.

Promoting the UNSC resolution 1325: The UN Security Council should take specific, progressive measures to ensure implementation of Resolution 1325 in northern Uganda, including increased monitoring with consequences for failure to comply with its provisions for the security of women in armed conflict and their utmost inclusion in conflict resolution processes.

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