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CATALYZING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN POST-INSURGENCY PEACE PROCESS IN NORTH-EAST NIGERIA: THE IMPORT OF DOMESTICATING RESOLUTION 1325

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The African woman needs to have vast reserves of energy to negotiate successfully the issues that confront her, such as inter-ethnic skirmishes, ethnic cleansing, religious fundamentalism, gerontocracy, and even in-lawism (Wadende 2010: 102)

Whether the elephants are fighting or making love, the grass suffers (Swahili Proverb). Women are double victims, not only are they kidnapped, but then, they are violated, raped and injured (Hitgate and Henry 2009: 144)

Abstract

As the northeast geo-political zone of Nigeria puts itself together after nearly a decade of insurgency wrought on it by the Boko Haram insurgency and cognizant of the disproportionate impact of the insurgency on women, it has become expedient to articulate an inclusive plan of action for all aspects of the peace process and recovery activities that will eventually take place in the region. This recognizes the utility of the resolution 1325 in providing an overarching framework to initiate an inclusive peace process that can lead to the transformation and remaking of the zone. The chapter canvasses for a deepening of all initiatives guided by Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) at every stratum of the society by both state and non-state actors in the recovery process that includes women in designing and implementing all initiatives aimed at peace and recovery in the region.

Background: Women (Gender) in Nigeria's Conflict and Terrorized Spaces since 1999

Apart from the fact that most insurgencies and conflicts are male-headed, the harsh realities of their acts of violence have affected the women more than the men. As a result of insurgencies, inter-group conflicts and excesses of the military during peace support

operations in Nigeria and Africa, women have become the proverbial grass in the Swahili proverb that perpetually suffers whether elephants are fighting or making love because of the severe stress, assaults, attacks and deaths they suffer in both conflict and terror-affected communities as reflected in the second epigram above. In this instance, the two elephants are the regular state armies and irregular militias both of which constitute threats to women in theatres of conflicts. Sadly, these conflicts continue to generate deaths that constitute acts of invisible violence (Animasawun and Aremu, 2015) because majority of them are not recorded and they are non-combatants deaths described as 'one-sided violence' (Kristine and Hultman, 2007). Therefore, beyond the comprehension of gender as social roles and distinctions between men and women, it has become pertinent to also recognize gender as part of the fundamental questions in all ramifications of violence (Jenkins and Reardon, 2007).

Women have always been the casualties as J.P Clark reasoned in his popular poem The Casualties written against the backdrop of the Nigerian civil war 1967-1970 (Onyinyechi, 2014) because they constitute the higher percentage amongst the dead, wounded and those dying by installment as a result of insurgency. Amongst these casualties are the Chibok girls abducted on the 14th of April 2014 while preparing for their final examinations and who have been in captivity of the Boko Haram since then. Women and ladies like them depict J.P Clarks' casualties because they live in fear of 'calculated violence and degradation of their bodies' (Chabal 2009:154), a testimony to the argument of Arostegui (2013: 535) that 'women's bodies have become battlefields' in both war and peace times (Marks, 2013).

Although in terms of guerrilla engagements, Nigerian women have not been actively involved like their counterparts in places like Eritrea and Kenya (Decker, 2010 and Wadende, 2010) in armed violence; same cannot be said about their involvement in suicide bombings. Based on the experiences of women in conflict and terror-affected communities in northern Nigeria, Mustapha (2013) observes that apart from being mothers, sisters, care-givers and home-makers who suffer disproportionately, women have also been part of the quest for peace through their involvements in inter-communal dialogues in places like Jos and Maiduguri. Esther Ibanga a Christian community leader in collaboration with Khadija Hawaja a prominent Muslim figure leveraging on their respective popularity amongst Christian and Muslim adherents organized an inter-faith women's coalition for peace (Mustapha, 2013: 16) after they had individually led women of their respective faith on a similar march. They also coordinated a joint-interfaith effort for a similar purpose in Jos.

Presently in Nigeria, there are many post-conflict, conflict-affected, terror-affected or terrorized-spaces/communities bearing the features listed by Hills (2009: 30) like '… lessening (lessened) incidence(s) of and intensity of military operations, killings and

destruction' spanning periods ranging from three months to ten years and beyond.' Also in many of these communities, peace processes and negotiations have been initiated formally and informally though hardly sustained. Formally, the government often sets up Administrative or Judicial Commissions of Inquiry most of which have memberships skewed to the detriment of women. Informally, many communities try to set up committees for peace and security which are also dominated by men.

Although post-conflict (insurgency) situations are volatile, they house the Chinese conception of conflict as containing 'danger and opportunities' (Galtung, 1996). The marginalization of women in the peace process qualifies as one of the dangers while the accruable gains from the optimization of their active participation constitute the opportunity for enduring peace. More than any other time, post-conflict or terror-affected communities offer one of the best opportunities to implement gender instruments like the resolution 1325 of the United Nations on one hand, as well as an opportunity to assess how well these instruments and policies have impacted on the imperative of women's involvement in peace processes and negotiations. This is because lasting peace in the post-conflict setting requires the full and equal participation of all members of the society. However, there has been limited implementation of existing gender instruments in meeting the needs of women affected by conflicts and insurgency especially at the sub-national levels of post-conflict and post-terror communities in Africa nay Nigeria.

Therefore, given the seemingly intractable and protracted nature of conflicts and insecurity at the (sub)national levels, it behooves stakeholders from the policy, academia and practice communes to reflect on the marginalization or invisibility of women in peace processes and negotiations across spaces and contexts and start considering it as one of the plausible reasons for the protraction of insecurity. Cognizant of the observation of Chabal (2009: 37) on the complexity of gender issues and the fact that 'many of those who discuss them have their own agenda', our agenda is informed by the need to draw the attention of policy makers, scholars, local and international partners, governments and all stakeholders to see the exclusion and sometimes marginalization of women in peace processes as a plausible factor for the failure of peace agreements.

We consider this as an epistemological and policy crisis because current realities seem to have defied extant approaches, policies and instruments meant to address the limited inclusion of women in peace processes. This necessitates a need to examine how to utilize existing national and international gender instruments in enhancing women's participation in peace processes, hindrances to the application of these instruments and how to surmount them towards strengthening women's engagement in peace, security and good governance in anticipation of post-insurgency northeastern Nigeria as the zone wriggles its way out of the burden of the Boko Haram insurgency. We align with the definition of peace process by Bell (2013: 1) as an 'attempt to bring political and/or

military elites involved in a conflict to some sort of mutual agreement as to how to end the conflict' and her definition of peace agreements as 'documents produced after discussion with some or all of conflicts' protagonists with a view to ending violent military conflicts.' However, it is worrisome that these processes have largely been exclusive of women which we consider as a plausible factor for their fragility.

The relationship between the Nigerian state and the Boko Haram Islamist sect is conceptualized as a conflict because it is a fundamental disagreement borne out of the Islamists' insistence on imposing their own version of Islam as the basis of governing the polity in Nigeria. So rather than demanding more of what the state has to offer, it is a frontal assault aimed at abolishing the state, democracy, state and individual security and safety. On the surface, this appears like a clash of civilizations as explained by Huntington (1993) between radical Islam and democracy, but Tibit (2008) and Mazrui (2006) draw attention to the need for a nuanced approach mindful of the history and sociology of the origin of political Islam which emerged as the main oppositional politics in the Islamic world in the Middle East and Egypt, Hizballah in Lebanon, SCCRI and Al-Mahdi Army in Iraq in buttressing his assertion that we are currently seeing a religionization of politics masquerading as a holy war or Jihad. Therefore, the relationship between the Nigerian state and the Boko Haram sect is not a clash of civilization along the lines of Huntington (1993) as well as an instrumentalization of religion (Islam) for violently gaining political power and remaking the society by the violent Islamists.

Women in Northeast Nigeria and (Post)Islamist Insurgency

The northeastern part of the country comprising Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Taraba and Yobe states close to other countries like Niger and Lake Chad is an area that has experienced the worst form of the bestial manifestations of Boko Haram's rage characterized by brutal massacres, hit and runs, abductions, forced conscriptions and displacements. Women, girls and children have been more endangered than men and of late there have been reported cases of female suicide bombers based on the radicalization of some captured women. Since then, the sect has emerged as the biggest threat to state and human security in Nigeria and the sub-region by making Nigeria's north-east the new epicenter of violence and insecurity. It is an area that cannot be seen to have improved since its description by the late Sage Chief Obafemi Awolowo as 'enslaved by ignorance, poverty and superstition' (Awolowo, 1947).

The worst affected states are Borno, Adamawa and Yobe states. It is instructive to note that insecurity in the region also afflicts in the context of herdsmen versus famers conflicts and indigene-settler conflicts in places like Bauchi and Taraba states. It is also noteworthy that the advancement of the sect has been reversed since the adoption of an integrated approach akin to joint problem solving approach for neighbourhood security

led by Nigeria and including Chad and Niger. The region is described as terror-affected and post-conflict arising from the extent of destruction of lives, infrastructure, displacements and injuries suffered as a result of attacks on the civilian population which is waning as the region gradually transits from war to peace. However, the Boko Haram sect still involved in hit and run attacks against the Nigerian state. As a society struggling to get back on its feet, the power differentials between men and women in pre-insurgency northeastern have been reinforced to the disadvantage and worsened vulnerability of women. Women in northeastern Nigeria, since the escalation of the insurgency, have been the worst hit in all ramifications.

We posit that the agency of women must be maximized and our advocacy is girded by the need for the presence of a critical mass of women as enunciated by Rosabeth Moss Kanter (Karpowitz et al, 2015) in order to influence the norms guiding the involvement and participation of women in both formal and informal peace processes in the northeastern part of Nigeria. Presently, there is an acute humanitarian crisis in the region weighing more on the women and children. It is also noteworthy to state that coordinated military efforts are generating assuring signals of vitiating Boko Haram. Hope for recovery rises with increasing support from the international community and the northeast looks imminent to enter a post-insurgency phase. The post-insurgency phase provides a rare moment of promoting unity and solidarity across fault lines against a common enemy the Boko Haram on the one hand and reconstructing gender relations, peace and security on the other.

Tracing Women's Activism and Participation in Peace

Global activism towards increased participation of women dates back to 1975. Arostegui (2013) traces it to the Decade of the Women's initiated by the United Nations World Conference on Women in Mexico 1975 and subsequent women Conferences in Copenhagen in 1980 and Nairobi in 1985. Sequel to the horrors of war inflicted on women during the Rwandan and Bosnian genocide and the upsurge of intra-state conflicts with severe effects on women, focal discussions on women and their plights in conflict situations were held at the 1995 UN Fourth World Conference in Beijing for the first time in such a gathering (Arostegui, 2013). This culminated in Chapter IV, Section on Women and Armed Conflict in the Beijing Declaration and Platform Action.

Also, in the year 2000, a global group of NGOs mounted pressure on the UN Security Council for the recognition of women's rights, promotion and participation in all peace and security processes and to protect them in times of conflict. This was supported by the then UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and the governments of Bangladesh, Jamaica, Canada and the United Kingdom; which culminated in the unanimous passage of the UN security council resolutions 1325 (UNSCR 1325) and its companion resolutions 1265

(1999), 1296 (2000), 1325 (2000),1612 (2005), 1674 (2006), 1738 (2006), 1820 (2008), 1882 (2009), 1888 (2009),1889 (2009), 1894 (2009), 1960 (2010), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012) and 2106 (2013) all of which are collectively regarded as the 1325 framework or the Women, Peace and Security framework for the promotion of gender equality in peace and security. It is also meant to ensure the participation of women in all peace-making processes and to protect women against violence in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The instruments cover all aspects of peace processes including peace negotiations, peace-keeping, political participation, response to sexual violence in armed conflicts, judicial and legal reform and security sector reform. Since then regional bodies like the African Union (AU) have come up with the Maputo Protocol, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the ECOWAS have developed instruments aimed at catalyzing UNSCR 1325. Although, there are still gaps in the implementation of these instruments, awareness about them is increasing globally.

Within countries, efforts have also been made to initiate and implement policies and instruments on gender; such as the National Gender Policy in Nigeria. However, despite the enactment of these instruments and policies, women have remained on the fringes of peace processes in post-conflict communities in Nigeria. After over a decade of the Resolution1325 and almost a decade of Nigeria's national gender policy, women's marginalization or/and absence in these peace processes has not been considered as a plausible cause of the protraction and relapse into violent conflicts by scholars and policy makers. In the next section, a closer look is taken at these instruments.

UN Resolution 1325, ECOWAS Protocol and Nigeria Gender Policy

The UN Resolution 1325 has been a subject of debates and analyses by academics, policy makers and the NGO community. The dominant consensus is that it is an evidence of triumph of sustained advocacy by civil society groups and 'femocrats' working in international organizations (Gorman, 2011: 53). As adopted on October 31, 2000, the Resolution called on member states to do the following:
Reaffirm existing commitments under humanitarian law as applied to women; Reaffirm specific undertakings such as the Beijing Platform of Action; Consider different needs of male and female combatants and ex-combatants; End impunity and seek to prosecute those responsible for war crimes, including rape and sexual violence; Mainstream a gender perspective into peace operations; Take into account gender considerations and the rights of Women in UN missions; and Increase participation of women in decision making and peacemaking at all levels

Two main approaches have been common in implementing the Resolution. The first one is its integration into existing policy frameworks by sub-regional bodies and countries.

Gorman (2011) lists its integration into existing policy frameworks such as the inclusion of a chapter on gender into the security sector reform handbook published by the OECD Development Assistance Committee. The second approach is to develop targeted policy framework and actions plans. Gorman (2011) enumerates some bodies that have commissioned background work in this direction. They are ICRC, UNIFEM, International Alert, European Commission and EU member states. As at 2012, there existed 16 national action plans; however, only three of these are based on conflict-affected countries (Liberia, Cote d'Ivoire and Uganda). Also, in 2009, the UN appointed a Special Representative on sexual violence with a clear mandate of ending the occurrence of incidences of sexual violence during conflicts.

It is noteworthy that Resolution 1325 and its successors: 1265 (1999), 1296 (2000), 1325 (2000), 1612 (2005), 1674 (2006), 1738 (2006), 1820 (2008), 1882 (2009), 1888 (2009),1889 (2009), 1894 (2009), 1960 (2010), 1998 (2011), 2068 (2012) and 2106 (2013) have prompted the new raft of programming on women, peace and security by international agencies and NGOs. Gorman (2011) identifies the support of UNIFEM to women's participation in peacemaking and formal peace processes, including in Darfur, the project of the International Refugee Council on sexual and gender-based violence in Liberia and DRC, offering of medical services, psycho-social counseling and support for the reintegration and livelihoods to women affected by conflicts including support to the Women in Peace-building Programme (WIPNET) in West Africa which played a pivotal role in the Liberian peace process and which has been pursuing the active participation of women at the local, national and regional level.

Despite the avalanche of resolutions and protocols, they have not been without criticisms. One of these arises from different instances of reported misdemeanors of peace-keepers that constitute a threat to the safety of women and children in war and conflict-affected communities. In order to halt/reduce the susceptibility of women to attacks during conflicts, there has been a heightened call for gender sensitivity during peace support operations in both local and international contexts as a result of incidences of sexual exploitation and abuses (SEA) against women.

Even with the existence of the Security Council Resolution 1325, personnel of the United Nations get indicted in cases of SEA defined as 'any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability, differential power, or trust, for sexual purposes, including but not limited to, profiting monetarily, socially or politically from the sexual exploitation of another' (Gorman, 2011). There are many instances of no or inadequate responses to allegations of sexual abuses against women even by official armies across the world (Bellamy and Williams, 2013). Also, there have been reported instances of sexual abuse and exploitation of women and children in the Central African Republic (CAR) by French troops working under the auspices of the United Nations. In preventing such abuses,

Galtung (2007: 25) suggests the use of 'soft peacekeeping' by making women to occupy at least fifty percent of forces deployed for peacekeeping. Insensitivity to this runs against the spirit and letter of participation of women as required by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 that underscores the imperative of gender perspectives in all UN operations and activities. The second one is the apparent insensitivity to the role of religion and Islamic culture especially in places like Afghanistan (Gorman, 2011). This must also be paid due attention in the northeast.

At the sub-regional levels, the ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture with emphasis on the participation of women in decision making and peace processes, peacekeeping and other field based activities also derived from the Resolution 1325 (Ceesay-Ebo, 2010). Specifically, Article 40 spells it out that "ECOWAS shall recognize, encourage and support the role of women in its initiatives for conflict prevention, management, resolution, peacekeeping and security." The ECOWAS framework also frowns at such practices like bush wives, wanton amputation of limbs and cruel acts of disemboweling pregnant women which have become common in both large scale and low intensity conflicts and in some cases carried out by members of state armies are pointers to the yet long road ahead of the Resolution. Laudable as the objectives are, there have been challenges at deepening its implementation. One of its draw-back is that the Panel of the Wise constituted by it has no specific quota for women and this is considered as women-insensitive (Cessay-Ebo, 2010).

Amidst these crises and the inability to fulfill the spirit and letter of these resolutions, formal and informal peace processes continue to be initiated which still sustain the marginalization of women. Also, the existing resolutions cannot be seen to be sensitive to the changing landscape of conflict and insecurity because they have still not deeply stepped down to the sub-national and local level where very high spate of localized forms of terrorism, warlordism and ungoverned spaces occupied by Armed Non-State Actors (ANSAs) exist. However, with the encouraging progress being made by the militaries of Nigeria, Chad and Niger in ridding the northeastern part of the menace of Boko Haram, it is important to ensure that peace and security in post-insurgency/conflict northeast is inclusive. In achieving this, the Resolution 1325, ECOWAS Peace and Security Architecture and Nigeria's Gender Policy are existing frameworks that can be adapted in planning and initiating inclusive post-insurgency peace process. Beyond rhetoric, this must be done conscious of the relative disadvantages against women and the unequal impact of the insurgency on men and women. This is because gender and, specifically, women are crucial for sustainable peace and security.

Women and Peace Processes in Post-Conflict Societies

The limited involvement of women in peace processes in most post-conflict communities

reveals the hegemonic nature of masculinity in most settings. Post-conflict peace processes usually turn out to be missed or denied opportunities for removing patriarchal structures of violence against women. This is because formal and informal peace processes in post-conflict communities hardly give women active roles despite the disproportionate burden of the conflict borne by them. Despite being half of the global population, events around the world point to an underestimation of the fact that without women's active participation; there cannot be sustainable peace (Arostegui, 2013: 535). It is also condemnable that much as gender (women's) roles are altered during conflicts, the need for change in gender relations are rarely emphasized as part of post-conflict peace-building; what is rather obtained is the reaffirmation of patriarchal norms.

While not oblivious of the involvement of women in both regular and irregular armies, Decker (2010:83) observes that women's equality in the battlefield does not always translate into permanent changes in gender relations drawing from the Eritrean experience. Deacon (2010:141) posits that 'because of the assumption that women's experiences mirror the experiences and needs of men, gendered postwar recovery processes often do not receive sufficient attention' because of the assumption that by meeting the needs of men, the women would have inadvertently been taken care of. This practice dates back to the short-changing of women who participated in the liberations struggle in Africa and Asia (Gorman, 2011). This trend has continued since the end of the Cold War when intra-state conflicts became phenomenal and will continue because most societies, including post-conflict communities keep women in perpetual struggles for freedom from gender and sexual violence by elevating the masculine and degrading the feminine (Tunney, 2014).

Therefore, in both private (official/formal) and the public (informal/public) peace processes, women's voices are muted (Albin, 2005). Therefore, the intention of initiating processes wherein opinions are exchanged towards clarifying and ascertaining the sources of conflict and generating alternative proposals for solutions (Ron, 2009) hardly benefits from the inputs of women. Bell (2013: 2) based on a study done in 2008 shows that out of 33 peace negotiations, only 4-11% were women and that the average participation of women on government negotiating delegations stood at 7% which was higher than the involvement of women in the delegation of armed groups during peace processes.

A review based on a representative sample of 31 major peace processes between 1992 and 2011 showed that only 4% of the signatories were women, 2.4% served as chief mediators, 3.7% witnesses and 9% negotiators (Bell, 2013:2). Further, Bell (2013:2) reveals that as at 2010, only 16% of peace agreements mentioned women while it has risen to 27% before the year 2000 (UNSCR, 1325). Another review carried out in 2012 showed that 17 out of the 61 accords between August 2008 and April 2012 carried gender

sensitive key words. Against the background of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Agreement for Burundi of August 29th 2008, Bell (2013: 3) opines that whenever there is a 'gender-friendly' mediator, it reflects in a better provision for women.

Beyond the stereotyping of women as natural peace-makers, the need for their involvement in peace processes has not been taken into cognizance. Their exclusion has been sustained by four main sentiments constructed to justify their exclusion and marginalization in peace processes. The first is the excuse often tendered by policy makers who still feel that listing women's issues or having women at the negotiation table should be reserved till the latter stage of the process which rarely comes (Bellamy and Williams, 2013).

Second, most international mediators have also complained that key local parties hardly include women in the list of their senior representatives. A new ray of hope is emerging in this regard going by the firm insistence by many international actors that more women should be involved in peace negotiations. Gorman (2011) observes that progress is being made in this direction even in unlikely places by citing the example of Afghanistan in 2002 where more than 12 women participated in the peace process unlike what obtained in 1964 and 1967 when 4 and 12 women participated respectively. Gorman (2011) explains that many international mediators complain that in many situations, elders or traditional rulers abhor the presence of women because it runs against cultural norms in many places.

The third sentiment posits that peace accords are gender neutral because they dwell on crosscutting issues like human rights and justice which become the excuse for gender insensitivity (Bellamy and Williams, 2013). The fourth excuse rests on the assumption that women do not play spoilers' roles because they do not scuttle peace processes. Therefore, because they are not considered as threatening to post-conflict peace, they are less considered as important during peace negotiations while attention is often given to militias and warlords because of the threat they pose. The four strands of narratives used to malign women in the post-conflict phase crumble like pack of cards in a well-reasoned and substantiated argument that despite the destructive effects of war and violence on women, there are times when men's dependence on women for survival, protection and recovery become inescapable.

Enhancing Women's Peace and Security in Post-Insurgency Northeastern Nigeria

In preparing for post-insurgency northeast, cognizance must be taken of its peculiarities as a society, the place of the individual and specifically the woman in the social stratification of the society and the peculiar challenges faced by the women affected by insurgency. Situating all of these within the context of the Resolution 1325 will help in

precisely adapting the framework and engendering sustainable peace and inclusive security. Care must also be taken to create a setting conducive for Joint-Problem Solving (JPS), mindful of the asymmetries of power along gender lines. The peace process must be guided by a well-defined peace model which the process will eventually produce.

At the societal level, the northeast bears gender indicators reflective of the twelve areas of critical concern highlighted in the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA) which constitute forms of structural and physical violence in peace and war times. These are the worsening burden of poverty on women; unequal access to education and training; inequalities, inadequacies and unequal access to healthcare; violence against women; the effects of armed or other kinds of conflict; inequality in economic structures and policies in all productive activities and access to resources; inequality between men and women in power sharing and decision-making; insufficient mechanism for the advancement of women; disdain for the protection of the human rights of women; stereotyping of women and inequality in women's access to and participation in all communication systems (media); gender inequalities in the management of natural resources and protection of the environment and persistent discrimination against and violation of the girl child (International Alert, 2004).

All aforesaid have been worsened by the destructive effects of the Boko Haram insurgency on being and living as a woman, belonging to the society, feeling secure and safe. This offers a rare opportunity to adapt the resolution 1325 to promote inclusive security and positive peace. Doing this will solve the epistemological crisis on one hand and ensure that policy recommendations become more effective by factoring the inputs of women affected by insurgency into peace processes while offering women an increased sense of inclusion. The consensus of women's views can be summed up in the need to embark on remodeling post-insurgency northeast with a peace model in mind and such a process should aim at creating a society where peace will not be defined as the mere absence of physical violence but one of inclusion of women and social justice. Therefore, northeast women want all interventions after insurgency in the area to produce a new reality wherein 'the excluded are included' (Confortini, 2006: 336).

Despite cutting across class and religion, women participants expressed shared desire for the activation of everything that the Resolution 1325 represents for the peace process in post-insurgency northeast. They specifically want a new post-insurgency northeast where the violent nature of entrenched hegemonic masculinity manifesting Johan Galtung's conception of violence in its direct, structural (indirect) and cultural contexts in peace and war time will give way to one that gives them voice and visibility from the home front to the public space. While Hoffman (2014) posed the phrase 'who speaks for the north', an aggregation of the views of participants underscores the need to recast the question of 'who speaks for the northern woman? The answer to this underscores the urgency for a

concerted intervention from the civil society, security agencies, the media, clerics and closer engagements with state actors and influential members of the society within formal and informal peace process.

As a predominantly Kanuri society where Islam and Christianity are the main faiths, women's place in the society is prescribed in accordance with the precepts of these faiths and culture. The northeast mirrors societies where Chabal (2012: 194) observes that the community overrides the individual because individuals see themselves as having an 'obligation to abide by society rules.' In such societies, women are always eager to become subservient to men especially when it is presented as done in the overall interest of the well-being of such societies. The implication(s) of this for the participation of women as required in the Resolution 1325 in a largely patriarchal society like the northeast must not be discountenanced by policy makers, partners and practitioners; because it can legitimize the drowning of the voices of women and their marginalization in the peace process. In order to avoid one of the main pitfalls of implementing Resolution 1325 as it played out in Afghanistan, interventions in the northeast must be sensitive to these peculiarities. Participants alluded to this as they cited instances of many International Non-Governmental Organizations that now work through locals in communities where they operate.

Also, the differential impact of the war on women speaks of calculated violence than accidental violence; although the women were divided on this as some felt differently. Therefore, recovery and reintegration plans must be based on a guided disaggregation of women's security needs based on the impact of insurgency on the individual woman. This is because an aggregation of experiences of women during insurgency would mask serious peculiar pains and needs of women. This must be pursued with a mindset that has positive peace and the seven genres of human security as its end goal. UNDP (2004) enumerates the seven branches of human security to include economic, food, health, environmental, personal, community and political security all of which have been skewed against women of the northeast in war and peace time. A gender perspective in the recovery plans for the northeast will prevent recreating violent gender structures that existed before the insurgency.

Svensson (2007) suggests practical ways that can be adopted in achieving this. These include an holistic approach that pays equal attention to both qualitative and quantitative dimensions, focus on the social and political peculiarities of each society and the environment in the geo-political zone. Eventually, the pursuit of security using the human security framework will produce a notion and reality of security that is owned by the people on one hand and one that binds them together on the other hand. This will enable the wealth of knowledge and experience locally generated to contribute to scholarship and policy.

The benefits of this include a conception of security that realistically addresses the military and non-military threats peculiar to the community and mobilizing virtually all sections of the community for same. Empowering women in such processes warrants a systematic approach cognizant of their vulnerabilities while empowering them for active participation which is a key component of the Resolution 1325. Svensson (2007) proposes the use of Participatory Vulnerability Analysis (PVA) conceived by Chiwaka (2005:2) in ascertaining the comparative strength of women. PVA is a systemized process that involves communities and relevant stakeholders to first critically examine the vulnerability of women and to motivate them towards taking appropriate action of getting involved. The PVA is premised on the assertion that communities know their situations better than any outsider and so any intervention or process must primarily take this into consideration in order to succeed.

The suitability of the PVA as a framework for restoring peace and security in the northeast is reinforced by the fact that collaborative activities of local and international organizations with state organizations have been generating views, feed-backs and suggestions through workshops and seminars which have been revealing of threats and their dimensions in the zone. This is in line with the orientation of the PVA that assessing vulnerability and empowering women for active participation should include data collection at three participatory stages. These are community, district and national. In this context, the interactions held from June 9-11 in Gombe state organized by the conflict prevention and peace-building department of the UNDP-Nigeria, the Institute for Peace & Conflict Resolution (IPCR) and Gender Development Association of Nigeria (GDAN) with participants from the terror-affected communities of the northeast can be taken as part of the PVA for the northeast. This is because it gave the participants a conducive atmosphere in a bottom-up approach to express their conception of peace and security for the zone. One of the major benefits of such interactions is that it provides policy makers and scholars first-hand revelations of the experiences of victims and witnesses of terror which cannot be presented in quantitative terms which is of no lesser importance.

The need for inclusion brings back the debate between the proponents and critics of the critical mass theory enunciated by Rosabeth Moss Kanter hinged on the assertion that the relative number of women matters for their status in any organization or process they are involved in. As attractive as it seems, Karpowitz et al (2015: 150) sound a note of warning that there '… is a puzzling disconnect between the rising presence of women and women's influence.'

Conclusion: Going Forward and Clapping with Both Hands

The Resolution 1325 provides a comprehensive template for re-ordering conflict and

terror-affected communities in ways that peace and security get defined in inclusive and sustainable terms. However, a sweeping application of this without attention to peculiar needs, structures and sensibilities in affected communities has proven to be a cure worse than the ailment in most cases. The northeastern part of Nigeria as the worst affected geo-political zone of Nigeria is ripe for the initiation of peace process wherein the three Ps of Prevention, Protection and Participation of women must be consciously undertaken to ensure that resultant peace and security are inclusive, impactful and enduring; marking a shift from clapping with one hand, to clapping with both hands.

Providing security in a post-insurgency society requires a locale-specific definition of security that addresses the fears, anxieties and aspirations of all based on needs; which the interactions with women drawn across the geo-political offered. The women want security to answer the question used in defining the concept by Barnet (2001). These are security for whom and security from what. For whom in the context of the northeast will address the needs of all but with emphasis on the needs of the worst affected members of the society; obviously the women and children. From what, will entail providing both materially and immaterially to ensure that women are not just free from fear and want but are actually free in objective terms.

One of the practical steps suggested is the need to translate the Resolution into Hausa and Kanuri languages and this is not unprecedented because it has been translated to over 100 languages and National Action Plans already. As a product of a larger agenda to create a shift from state-centered conflict resolution and peace-building to one that is agent/women-centered, it is important to identify and aggregate efforts so far made by women in both formal and informal contexts as partly done at the stake-holders' dialogue in Gombe. This will enable clear identification of needs so that Resolution 1325 can then be adapted to meet specific needs. As a follow up to the stakeholders' dialogue attended by key actors drawn from civil society organizations in the northeast, there should be a follow-up programme by these actors to document the needs of women affected by the Boko Haram insurgency in their respective spheres of operation, how they have coped with, specific impacts of the insurgency and peace-building activities that have been carried out.

This is important because it will enable the documentation of the practical experiences and work informally done by women in peace-building so that (inter)national supports will meet specific needs. After meeting their needs, the capacity of such women can now be built to become conscious peace-builders. This is important because we cannot expect lasting peace by perpetuating differentials in the capacity and skills of men and women. It has to be understood that as the worst sufferers of violence, women have the deepest insights that can contribute to ensuring sustainable peace which can also be said of the northeast women. This will fill the gap existing between prescribed solutions and lived

experiences of women affected by insurgency.

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