



# International Peace Support Training Centre Nairobi, Kenya

## Participation of Women in Peace Building in Somalia: A Case Study of Mogadishu



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JOYCE GICHURU



# Participation of Women in Peace Building in Somalia: A Case Study of Mogadishu

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**SERIES 5, N°6**

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## Foreword

The International Peace Support Training Centre (IPSTC) has made considerable contribution in research and training on peace support operations in the Great Lakes region and the Horn of Africa. The centre is a training and research institution focussing on capacity building at the strategic, operational and tactical levels within the African Peace and Security Architecture and has developed to be the regional centre for the African Standby Force (ASF) in Eastern Africa. It addresses the complexities of contemporary United Nations (UN)/African Union (AU) integrated peace support operations through exposing actors to the multidimensional nature of these operations. The research conducted covers a broad spectrum ranging from conflict prevention, management, and post-conflict reconstruction.

The Peace and Security Research Department (PSRD) of the IPSTC presents Occasional Paper Series 5 of 2014 on various themes on peace and conflict situations in Eastern Africa. In 2014, IPSTC produced seven Occasional Papers. Three of them focussed on the Great Lakes Region, while the rest covered Kenya, Somalia and South Sudan. This particular publication explores the participation of women in Somalia in their protection, prevention of discrimination and representation in decision making, while identifying the hindering factors to the same.

These papers provide insight into pertinent peace and security issues in the region that are useful to policy makers. They also provide significant contribution to the security debate and praxis in the region. The research products from IPSTC have been developed by researchers from Kenya, Burundi, Ethiopia and Uganda and will inform the design of training modules at IPSTC.

This Occasional Paper is an important contribution to the vision and mission of IPSTC. The research and publication of this Occasional Paper has been made possible by the support of the Government of Japan through UNDP and the European Union.

**Brigadier R.G. Kabage**  
**Director, IPSTC**

## Acronyms

<b>AMISOM</b>	African Union Mission in Somalia
<b>CBOs</b>	Community Based Organizations
<b>CEDAW</b>	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
<b>CSOs</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>FGS</b>	Federal Government of Somalia
<b>GII</b>	Gender Inequality Index
<b>IDPs</b>	Internally Displaced Persons
<b>NGOs</b>	Non-Governmental Organizations
<b>SCS</b>	South Central Somalia
<b>SGBV</b>	Sexual and Gender Based Violence
<b>SMEs</b>	Small and Micro Enterprises
<b>SWSC</b>	Somali Women’s Studies Centre
<b>TFG</b>	Transitional Federal Government
<b>TNG</b>	Transitional National Government
<b>UN</b>	United Nations
<b>UNSCR</b>	United Nations Security Council

## Abstract

Somalia has been in conflict since the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. This has had general and gender specific effects. Generally, there has been loss of lives and livelihood, displacements, physical injuries, loss of trust and social protection afforded by the clan systems among others. However, women, on account of their gender, have been more affected and are represented as victims alongside children in the conflict. The effect of sexual and gender based violence has impacted the lives of women leaving long lasting scars. Women have therefore sought to remedy these inequalities by active participation in peace building, although their effort remains unrecognized, largely at the informal levels.

The study assessed the level of women participation which was found to be very low, with notable exceptions in advocacy (health, education, peace and security) and small and micro enterprise economy. This has been attributed to the war effects predisposing women to take action as well as increasing their resilience and adaptability. International legal instruments, and the active role and support of civil society organizations (including women groups) have facilitated their participation in peace building. However, government interventions have not been sufficient to drive affirmative action even within its ranks. Low participation was as a result of existing patriarchal institutions and structures; cultural and religious norms; armed conflict and insecurity; and intra-household bargaining power. Education, skills and experience, time constraints, and perceptions and responses to women leaders were not found to be significant to their participation. This explains the differences that arise as regards to women in conflict and post conflict situations.

Thus, for the increased formal participation of women, the Somali government should come up with a gender mainstreaming strategy that will include both short and long-term activities. Public awareness programmes are critical to bring forth women issues as part of the dialogue process. Periodic gender audits need to be carried out to ensure that progress is tracked, problems identified and remedies provided. The continued stabilization efforts by government and African Union troops also provide a framework for ensuring security and order, and they should thus be enhanced.

# Table of Contents

<b>Foreword</b>	.....	iii
<b>Acronyms</b>	.....	iv
<b>Abstract</b>	.....	v
<b>1.0 Introduction</b>	.....	1
1.1 Background	.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	.....	3
1.3 Objectives of the Study	.....	5
1.4 Research Questions	.....	5
1.5 Hypothesis	.....	5
1.6 Justification	.....	6
<b>2.0 Literature Review</b>	.....	7
2.1 Peace building in general	.....	7
2.2 Women’s Participation in Peace Building	.....	8
2.3 Empirical Literature	.....	10
2.4 Theory	.....	13
2.5 Conceptual Model: Factors Enhancing or Hindering the Level of Women Participation in Peace building	.....	14
2.5.1 Patriarchal institutions	.....	14
2.5.2 Cultural and religious norms	.....	15
2.5.3 Intra-household bargaining power	.....	16
2.5.4 Armed conflict and insecurity	.....	16
2.5.5 Education, skills and experience	.....	17
2.5.6 Time constraints	.....	17
2.5.7 Perception of and responses to women leaders	.....	17
<b>3.0 Methodology</b>	.....	19
3.1 Design of the Study	.....	19
3.2 Sampling Design	.....	19
3.3 Data Collection Methods	.....	20
3.3.1 Characteristics of the respondents	.....	21
3.4 Data Processing and Analysis	.....	22
3.5 Ethical Considerations	.....	22
<b>4.0 Findings</b>	.....	23

4.1	Perceptions of Men and Women of Peace, Security and Peace building .....	23
4.1.1	Understanding of peace, security and peace building .....	23
4.1.2	Feeling secure in Mogadishu .....	24
4.1.3	The impact of the conflict on women and men .....	25
4.1.4	Coping mechanisms.....	27
4.1.5	Role of women in peace building .....	28
4.2	Level of Women Participation in Peace Building in Somalia .....	29
4.2.1	Participation in political and economic empowerment.....	29
4.2.2	Participation in protection of their social status .....	32
4.2.3	Participation in conflict resolution and prevention .....	33
4.2.4	Participation in post conflict peacebuilding .....	35
4.3	Factors determining the level of women participation in peace building .....	36
4.3.1	Enabling factors .....	36
4.3.2	Factors that hinder the participation of women in peace building .....	43
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Discussions .....</b>	<b>44</b>
5.1	Perceptions of Women in Peace building .....	44
5.2	The Level of Women Participation in Peace Building in Somalia .....	46
5.2.1	Participation in political and economic empowerment .....	46
5.2.2	Participation in protection of their social status .....	47
5.2.3	Participation in conflict resolution and prevention .....	47
5.2.4	Participation in post conflict peacebuilding .....	48
5.3	Factors that Determine the Level of Women’s Participation in Peace Building .....	49
5.3.1	Enabling factors .....	49
5.3.2	Hindering factors .....	50
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Conclusion and Recommendations .....</b>	<b>55</b>
6.1	Conclusion .....	55
6.2	Recommendations .....	56
6.2.1	Short term recommendations .....	56
6.2.2	Long term recommendations .....	58
<b>7.0</b>	<b>References .....</b>	<b>59</b>

## List of Figures and Tables

Figure 1 1: Map showing regions of Somalia .....	2
Figure 2 1: The relationship between level of participation and enhancing or ..... hindering factors.....	15
Table 3 1: Sampling Frame .....	20
Table 3 2: Distribution of respondents by organization and gender.....	22
Table 4 1: Participation in political and economic empowerment .....	30
Table 4 2: Political representation in south central Somalia.....	31
Table 4 3: Participation in protection of their social status .....	33
Table 4 4: Participation in conflict resolution and prevention.....	34
Table 4 5: Participation in post-conflict peace building.....	35
Table 4 6: Factors that hinder the participation of women in peace building .....	43

# 1.0 Introduction

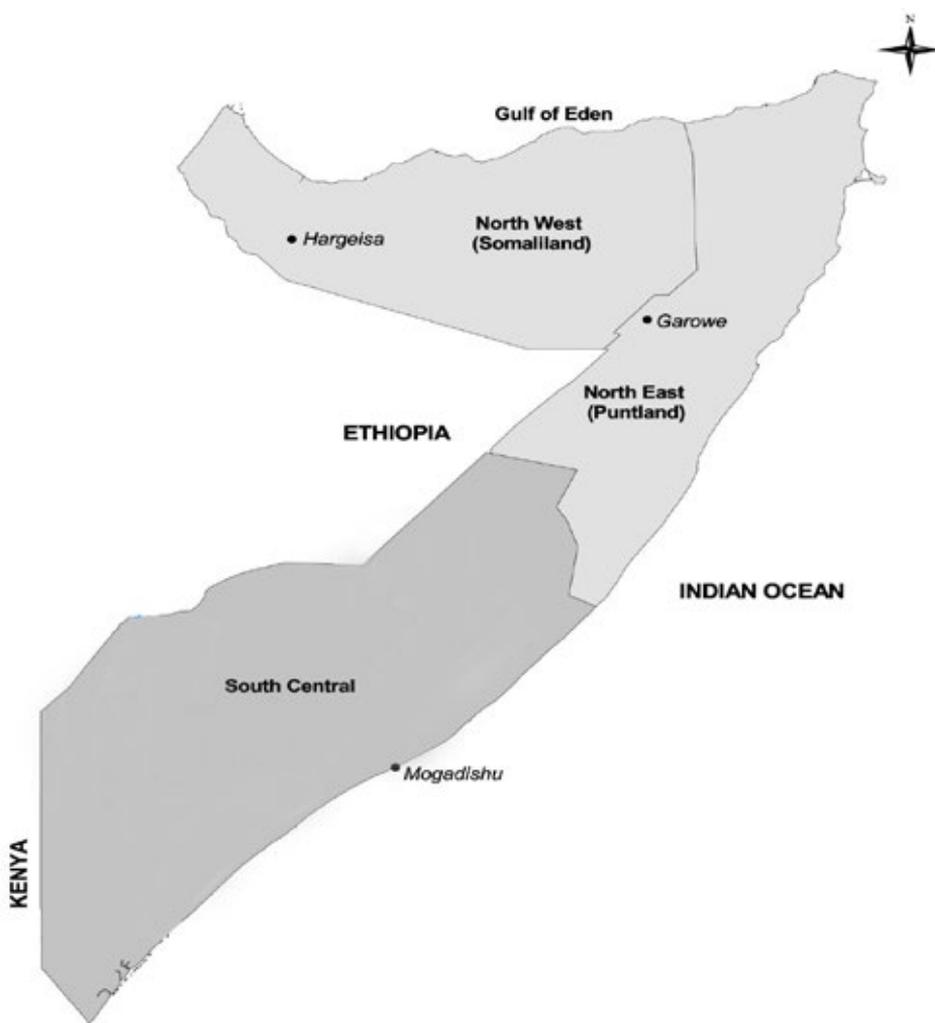
## 1.1 Background

African societies in post independence era have experienced devastating conflicts, becoming the norm rather than exception. At least 24 of the 54 nations have experienced conflict in one form or another (ACLED, 2014). A majority of these have occurred in the Horn of Africa, which has, over the years, experienced both intra and inter-state conflicts. The region includes Somalia that has experienced one of the world's most complex and protracted conflicts since the fall of Siad Barre's regime in 1991.

The Somali conflict has resulted in two relatively peaceful northern regions, Somaliland and Puntland, and a volatile south-central region (Map 1). The latter has been the epicentre of the crisis leading to approximately 500,000 deaths, displacement of 1.4 million people as well as a host of other human rights abuses (UNDP, 2012). In 2013, it is estimated that at least 3,150 people lost their lives (UNHCR, 2013).

There have been at least 14 attempts of creating peace undertaken with the assistance of the international community. However, none has managed to provide complete stability. Currently, the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) deployed in south central Somalia (SCS) has been attempting to supplement the New Federal Government of Somalia's (FGS) efforts aimed at state and peacebuilding. However, much of SCS is still under armed groups including Al Shabab, considered a terrorist group. The region's volatility continues to exert immense suffering on Somali people as their security, freedom of movement, and livelihood cannot be guaranteed.

The effects of protracted conflict on men and women has been different with the latter being more adversely affected in terms of deaths, physical injuries, displacement and loss of livelihood. Women form at least 80 percent of refugees in most camps in and out of the country (UN, 2013a). Mogadishu alone hosts at least 369,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) of which women, children and vulnerable groups form the majority (UNHCR, 2013). In addition, they have been more affected by the demeaning and dehumanising sexual and gender based violence (SGBV). The UN (2013b) reported that at least 800 women were raped in Mogadishu alone between 2008 and 2013.



*Figure 1-1: Map showing regions of Somalia<sup>1</sup>*

As such, women are more often than not depicted as victims and casualties alongside children in times of conflict (Oyugi, 2005). Whereas this is a fact, women act as combatants or peacemakers, or a combination of both. Besides, they have had to take up the role of household head following absence due to war of men. Consequently, as women experience the immediate effects of conflict, they are the first to work at peace and are likely to continue doing so after the gun shot sounds die.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Available at Somali peacebuilding and community security website

The Somali women have been engaged in peacebuilding albeit through informal and unrecognized processes. In the context of African traditional societies, Somalia included, a mother is the first and most valuable school in life and peace as educators to children (Jama, 2010). As peacemakers, they have responded in a variety of ways depending on the situation at hand. One notable example is the use of poetry to transmit powerful peace messages to their male leaders. They have also wielded immense latent decision making power as they influence their husbands, sons and fathers, while being effective family managers. This form of participation, however, is unrecognized and considered informal.

In the quest for the formation of a stable and democratic society, there has been recognition and push for inclusion of women in formal peacebuilding processes. This was seen for example in the Arta (Djibouti) and Nairobi (Kenya) peace talks in which women lobbied for inclusion of what they referred to as the sixth clan. Their efforts have been supplemented by local and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Koppell (2009) acknowledges the inclusion of women has increased the attention to women's priorities such as human rights concerns, and promoted reconciliation and security on the ground, thereby strengthening the peacebuilding process.

In an ideal peace building situation, men and women are supposed to enjoy the same rights and opportunities across all sectors of society, including economic participation and decision making. The differences in behaviour, aspirations and needs of women and men are also equally valued and favoured. Contrary to this, women are rarely involved, and when this happens, they tend to occupy peripheral and informal roles that are rarely given recognition (Dharmapuri, 2013). As the Somali society evolves towards being democratic and inclusive, the participation of women is very critical as they have always had a strong stake in democratisation and peacebuilding processes (UN, 2013).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

There has been concerted effort to enhance participation of women, mainly through the use of international legal systems to lobby for the inclusion of women, proactive activities of women groups and activists, as well as international support

and solidarity for the plight of women in Somalia. This has especially been the case after the passing of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) alongside others that emphasise the protection, prevention of discrimination, and participation in decision making of women, commonly referred to as the 3Ps (Nduwimana, n.d).

The equality of men and women is enshrined in Article 11 of the Somali constitution (2012). However, gender inequality is estimated at 0.766 out of 1<sup>2</sup>, with the country ranking fourth lowest globally in the Gender Inequality Index (GII)<sup>3</sup> on internationally comparable indices (UNDP, 2012). UN Women (2012) however, argues that generally the involvement of women in decision making alongside the peace building process has been marginal. As of March 2013, there were less than 4 percent female UN peacekeepers in the world. In AMISOM, only 1.49 percent of the total military personnel are women. During the Mbagathi<sup>4</sup> process, there was intense lobbying for inclusion of women and women groups, yet only about 55 women out of 1,000 delegates were on the negotiation table. Of these, 21 were registered as observers and 34 as official delegates. Of the latter, 26 took part as members of faction groups or Transitional National Government (TNG). The national parliament in 2012 comprised only 13.8 percent of women, despite the Transitional Federal Government (TFG) target of 30 percent (UN, 2013).

Thus, dividends of peace building are still skewed in the favour of men. Women in Somalia continue to face difficulties as they confront many barriers in the social, political and economic fronts. The question is why women in Somalia continue to be marginalised in formal peace building processes, despite all the emphasis and activities aimed at increasing their participation. The study thus sought to understand the level of women participation in formal peace building processes in Somalia, and identify factors that hinder their effective participation.

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2 1 denotes complete inequality

3 GII is a UN index based on the premise that, all too often, women and girls are discriminated against in health, education and labour market with negative repercussions for their freedom.

4 The Mbagathi process was held in Kenya in 2002-2004 with a total of 1,500 delegates, implying that women were only a small fraction. The process however began in Eldoret before shifting to Mbagathi in Nairobi.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

The main aim of the study was to analyse the factors that facilitate or hinder the level of women's participation in peace building practices in south central Somalia.

Specifically, the study targeted:

1. To understand the perceptions to peace, security and peace building in south central Somalia.
2. To examine the level of women participation in peace building in south central Somalia.
3. To analyse those factors that facilitate or hinder the level of women participation in peace building in south central Somalia.
4. To suggest policy options for enhancing the participation of women in south central Somalia.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

The study sought answers to the following research questions:-

1. What are the perceptions to peace, security and peace building in south central Somalia?
2. What has been the level of women participation in peace building in south central Somalia?
3. What are the factors that facilitate or hinder the level of women participation in peace building in south central Somalia?
4. How can the level of participation of women in peace building be enhanced in south central Somalia?

### **1.5 Hypothesis**

1. The participation of women in the peacebuilding process is low.
2. Several factors may hinder this participation namely: -
  - Armed conflict and insecurity

- Patriarchal institutions
- Cultural and religious norms
- Intra-household bargaining power
- Education, skills and experience

## 1.6 Justification

The protracted conflict in Somalia has redefined the roles of men and women. Many women groups, NGO's and community based organisations (CBO's) have been formed to champion peace building activities in Somalia. Due to the power of traditional structures, women were largely excluded in such activities, but there has been a shift since the adoption of UNSCR 1325 on the role women play both in conflict and peace building.

The reality is that men continue to take the leading role in virtually all formal peace processes and women are ignored hence diminishing their potential capabilities for peace building (Hudson, 2010). Ensuring women participate in peace building is not only a matter of women and girls' rights. Women are crucial partners in shoring up the three pillars of lasting peace: economic recovery; social cohesion; and political legitimacy (Luchsinger, 2010). According to Luchsinger, several of the world's fastest growing economies began their ascent from ashes of conflict. Their success, it is argued, stemmed, in part, from women's increased role in production, trade and entrepreneurship.

Therefore, it is necessary to understand the role women in Somalia play in the new socio-cultural and political environment. It is also important to understand what has informed their role in peace building, the challenges they face and what their participation in governance systems means. This study will greatly benefit policy makers in determining the specific interventions that relate to the overall needs of women in the Somalia, as it stands to gain from their increased participation in peacebuilding.

## 2.0 Literature Review

### 2.1 Peace Building in General

Peace building underpins peacemaking that aims at a voluntary settlement between parties in armed conflict and peace keeping that refers to interposition of international armed forces to separate fighting parties by addressing structural issues and long term relationships (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse and Miall, 2011). The three concepts having developed over time within the UN system, point to Galtung's theory that recognises three types of violence in a conflict: direct, structural and cultural (Galtung, 1990). In order to reach 'positive' peace, Galtung argues for a strategy that integrates the whole society as opposed to just ending direct violence, which is usually the primary focus once conflict breaks out. The cessation of hostilities leads to 'negative' peace since society cannot be peaceful unless the unjust structures and relationships are addressed and removed (Galtung, 1964; Ramsbotham, *et al.*, 2011).

Using Galtung's model which views contradiction, attitude and behaviour as three parts of a conflict that are constantly changing and influencing each other, the three forms of violence can then be integrated into a framework of understanding how to resolve and manage conflicts (Galtung, 1996). Thus, direct violence can be reduced by changing conflict behaviour, structural violence by removing structural contradictions and injustices, and cultural violence by changing attitudes (Ramsbotham *et al.*, 2011). These, in turn, can feed into the strategies of peacekeeping (controlling actors to prevent them from destroying each other), peacemaking (transforming attitudes and assumptions) and peace building (overcoming contradictions at the root of the conflict) (Galtung, 1996; Ramsbotham *et al.*, 2011).

Adding a gender-conscious approach, structures of domination and hidden power relations can be better understood, hence complementing Galtung's theory (Confortini, 2006). The argument is that peacemaking occurs at the very national level, but for its success, there is need to cascade its implementation up to the lowest level so as to enhance the inclusion of all those affected by the conflict. Therefore, peace building requires the effective intervention by internal and external actors to create conditions conducive to peace; the relief and reconstruction of war-torn society; and the creation of inclusive political and socio-economic institutions to build trust and to create a sense of security (Bumsumtwi-Sam, 2004).

## 2.2 Women's Participation in Peace Building

Gender (as opposed to biological sex) refers to the historical and social construction of the role differences between men and women (Ramsbotham *et al.*, 2011). This relates to power relationships and has a tendency of affecting all areas of behaviour in social institutions and practices. Conflict is a constructed social practice and, as such, scholars argue that resolution mechanisms cannot afford to be gender blind (Porter, 2003 and 2007) because in such situations, the definition of roles and responsibilities becomes altered.

In the case of Somalia for example, women found themselves thrust into being providers as the male head either joins the war, is killed or incapacitated. As such, women have had to adapt to these newfound identities that affect them either positively or negatively. Within this context, Potter (2008) states that Somali women have attained a platform to agitate for greater equality. Thus, women in post conflict situations find themselves in a dilemma in the sense that while they are undertaking hitherto new roles, there is the urge, either internally or externally, to revert to roles played before the conflict.

Women's participation or inclusion of gender issues in conflict resolution is consistently considered less urgent, and therefore less important than other priorities (UN-OSAGI, 2004). However, the real work of peace building requires that local people seek solutions to their conflicts through communities, regions and nations, rather than outsiders imposing their approaches to problem solving. UN-INSTRAW (2008) argues that this is important in two ways: first, there is a correlation between more inclusive and open models of negotiations and a higher likelihood that the outcome agreements will hold and conflict will not return; and second, there is a correlation between the organised participation of women groups and greater gender-sensitivity of texts of the agreements, which enhances comprehensiveness and legitimacy.

There have been efforts taken to engender the peace building process, especially after UNSCR 1325. Thus, within the UN system, the goal of gender mainstreaming is defined as:

*“...the process of assessing the implications for women and men of any planned action, including legislation, policies or programs, in all areas and at all levels. It is a strategy for making women’s as well as men’s concerns and experiences an integral dimension of the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies and programs in all political, economic and societal spheres so that women and men benefit equally and inequality is not perpetuated” (UN-OSAGI , 2002 p. 1).*

Nduwimana (n.d.) notes that the UNSCR 1325 provides the framework for the participation of women. This includes recommendations on three themes (3Ps), namely; protection, prevention of discrimination, and participation to decision making. However, the author avers that while the UNSCR 1325 does not specify the content of the reforms, the nature of services to provide or the procedures needed to protect women and their right to participation, other instruments (UNSCRs 1880, 1888, 1889 and 2160 and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women-CEDAW) suggest areas and action plans aimed at bringing equality to women and girls.

Due to this, the situation varies from country to country, and there are discrepancies at different levels and in various sectors on the implementation of UNSCR 1325. Following a country’s own women’s needs assessment, an implementation or action plan is developed. For example, Somalia conducted a needs assessment in 2004 with the help of international agencies, but this has not translated to a national action plan or ratification of the international legal instruments.

Nduwimana (n.d.) provides some activities that could form part of an action plan using the 3Ps. Protection relates to legal protection as well as social and economic security. Issues such as land and property rights, health, education and economic empowerment fall under this category. Owing to the conflict, women end up being household heads, and thus need to be in a position to provide for their families. Economic empowerment is critical in enhancing their capacity. In many societies however, they are not expected to own property or make decisions regarding family wealth.

Prevention of gender-based discrimination has both a legal and political dimension. The latter involves the whole population developing a culture of peace and equality, and taking ownership of this culture. This is supposed to consider the contributions of both men and women and their effective representation, especially in the media. At times, women are represented as victims of a conflict and their participation, especially at the household level, is ignored. Legal issues relate to transitional justice as women experience long-lasting psychological effects of a conflict due to SGBV. Other areas include institutional, legal, judiciary, and security sector reforms.

Finally, there is need for participation and representation of women in decision making bodies, which relates to their right to participate and make decisions at the national and community levels. UN Women (2012) identify the participation of women in decision making institutions as marginal. For example, only 1.4 percent of AMISOM troops are women. In the case of conflict and post conflict situation, participation is lower as the environment does not favour or recognize the role women can play in peace building (Maina, 2012).

Klot (2007) further notes that there are three principle strategies for gender mainstreaming: addressing the particular impact of conflict on women's recovery, especially SGBV; supporting women's full participation and ownership of peace building and decision making processes; and ensuring that, national priorities for political, social and economic recovery, addresses past inequalities, and influences gender relations positively, while contributing to gender equality. As such, the author argues priorities of women in peace building in post conflict situations are very elaborate: provision of basic security, repatriation of displaced people, recovery of property and livelihoods, and support to women's economic activities. This framework of activities is relevant to this study as it was used to determine the participation of women in peace building and the hindering factors thereof.

## **2.3 Empirical Literature**

There is a lot of literature on the role of women in peace building in general, especially after the adoption of UNSCR 1325. Empirical studies point to the need to ensure protection and enhance participation of women in peace building processes as a way of maintaining sustainable peace. However, the studies have differed in terms

of scope, methodology and focus. The differences in experiences and environment notwithstanding, women still face similar hindrances when it comes to exclusion and gender discrimination. The only notable difference is that women in conflict and post-conflict situations will regard some issues as more relevant to them, compared to those in relatively stable economies (Maina, 2014).

UNIFEM (2010) identified the various ways women engage in peace processes. They participate as mediators or members of mediation teams; as delegates of the negotiating parties; as all-female negotiating parties representing a women's civil society with an observer role; as witness; in a parallel form or movement; as gender advisers to mediators, facilitators or delegates and as members of technical committees or a separate table or working group devoted to gender.

The study found that despite the passing of UNSCR 1325, participation of women in peace negotiations averaged less than 8 percent in 14 cases sampled (UNIFEM, 2010). Thus, at the peace table where crucial decisions on post conflict recovery and governance are made, women are conspicuously underrepresented. However, they argue that in many cases, women have sought various ways of ensuring that their issues are presented and discussed with at least 50 percent of their recommendations adopted. This study was further enhanced in 2012, increasing the sample frame to 31. The results, however, yielded a similar result of women being marginalised in peace processes.

While the study provides an insight on women's participation in peace process, it is based on negotiations of ending hostilities at the time of intense conflict, thereby ignoring the role women play beyond the negotiation table. The study also was generalised, yet conflict situations vary and the response of women is likely to be impacted by different factors. Due to this macro level approach, specific issues relating to women at the grassroots are ignored and the top-bottom process is assumed in peace building.

At the regional level, Maina (2012) examines the challenges of women participation in peace building in Africa. The author identifies challenges arising from lack of education and skills; lack of resources, conflict and insecurity (including SGBV); traditional practices; and weak government intervention systems. The study, while

providing an insight to barriers women face in peace building in conflict and post conflict situations, relies heavily on the case study of South Sudan. Thus, the dynamics of the Somali conflict may present a different analysis of the problems women face.

ActionAid, Institute of Development Studies, and Womankind (2012) concluded that peace means different things to women and men because of their unique experiences as a result of war and society structure (Cardona, *et al.*, 2012). They further found that women face a number of barriers in peace building, including culture, violence, poverty, access to education and sustainability of support. However, women are very active in informal peace process, but remain unrecognised and a link between the local and national processes lacks. They argue that in each of the case studies, there is need to support what works to enhance the participation of women, and this may vary among women groups.

The study faced the challenge of collecting views from both men and women in either focus groups or key informant interviews, something this current study attempts to avoid to ensure balanced views. The case studies were also diverse, with some experiencing continued war while others were in some form of stability. This leads to generalisation problem since the study areas were not fully homogenous. However, it provides a framework for this current study, with the exclusion of Somalia in their units of analysis.

Other country specific studies include Agbalajobi (2009), Alaga (2010), Minoletti (2014) which looked at the situation of women in Burundi, West Africa, Myanmar respectively, and MacCarthy (2011) with case studies of Sierra Leone, and Rwanda. The authors argue that participation of women is low, and several factors explain this phenomenon including patriarchal institutions, culture and religious norms, poverty, time, intra-household bargaining power among others. The studies appreciate the latent roles women play, and the fact that they are not recognized. This study intends to enrich this body of knowledge from a geographical context by looking at the factors that hinder women participation in Somalia.

There have been studies done on the role of Somali women notably by Nakaya (2004) and Francis (2013). The two studies noted that women in Somalia have made

immense contribution in galvanising peace building and recovery, but they remain marginalised from formal peace processes where important decisions are made. The study by Nakaya (2004), however, was conducted at the early stages of the existence of UNSCR 1325, after which several changes occurred in the advancement of women and women rights. The focus of this current study therefore was to find out whether these advancements have had an impact on the level of women participation. Francis (2013), on the other hand, concentrates on the relatively peaceful regions of Somalia, namely Somaliland and Puntland.

## 2.4 Theory

The study is premised on the theory of social exclusion, a multidimensional process of progressive social rupture, detaching groups and individuals from social relations and institutions, and preventing them from full participation in the normal, normatively prescribed activities of the society, where they live (Silver, 2007). Individuals or groups may be discriminated against owing to their age, gender, colour/race and class among others. The result is that affected individuals or groups are unable to fully participate in the economic, social and political spheres of society.

Women, on account of their gender, face social exclusion in many forms. The feminist movement of the 1970s was indeed a direct result of marginalisation of white women from the labour force and undervalued house work (Moosa-Mitha, 2005). As such, feminists argue that men and women should equally participate in the labour, public sector and home with due regard to their capabilities.

Luchsinger (2010) argues that in a conflict and post-conflict situation, there is systemic exclusion of women from the public sphere (and war), which becomes difficult to move out of. This, according to Luchsinger, is referred to as “The Vicious Cycle of Exclusion.” Women are excluded from the process of designing peace agreements and recovery frameworks which results to insufficient attention to redressing gender inequalities and women insecurity. As such, the needs of women are not met, and their capacity and potential to participate in peace building and recovery remains unutilised. MacCarthy (2011) argues that the chances of achieving sustainable peace are diminished by under participation of women, yet they form a sizeable part of the population.

The converse is social inclusion which relates to affirmative action to change the habits that lead or have led to social exclusion. World Bank (2013) defines social inclusion as the process of improving the ability, opportunity and dignity of people, and disadvantaged on the basis of their identity to take part in society. This provides the basis of for example, women quotas in politics, and lower selection criteria among others. It denotes deliberate interventions, and more so from the government institutions. This is exemplified by Rwanda, for example, whose participation of women is considered among the highest in the world (Mzvondiwa, 2007). The success of such a country emerging from conflict can be attributed to deliberate interventions aimed at increasing the number of women, especially at the decision making level (Maina, 2012).

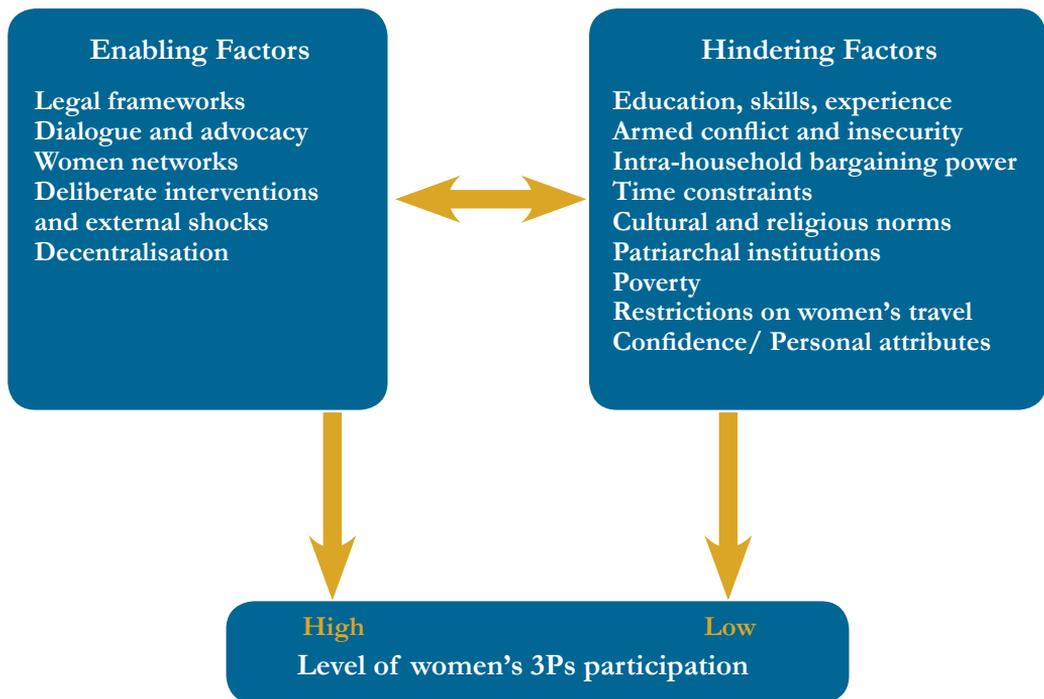
## **2.5 Conceptual Model: Factors Enhancing or Hindering the Level of Women Participation in Peace Building**

Several scholars have identified many factors that hinder the participation of women, but in the context of this study, only those that were considered relevant were examined. Conceptually, there are factors that contribute to the level of women participation. This contribution is either negative or positive, thereby denoting that there are factors that facilitate or hinder the level of women participation (see Figure 1). However, hindering factors seem to exert a force so strong that women are unable to unlock their full potential for effective participation in the society. There is also a possibility of an interchange of factors, where the enabling factor can become a hindrance to participation.

### **2.5.1 Patriarchal institutions**

The existing institutions are predominantly occupied by men owing to restrictive patriarchal social norms and attitudes that reinforce traditional gender roles. Most actors in conflict and post-conflict settings, from the warring parties and peacekeeping forces to international organisations and peace negotiating delegations, usually have a strong male bias against the inclusion of women (UN-INSTRAW, 2008). The outcome is a peace building process that excludes an important percentage of

individuals in the society. Even in situations where the male head was away, they tend to regain their status when they return after war and the woman is expected to quietly slip back into her traditional role, giving way to the male head. Such institutions tend to relegate women into the private sphere with total disregard of their capabilities and potential.



*Source: Author's own compilation from literature review*

**Figure 2-1: The relationship between level of participation and enhancing or hindering factors**

### 2.5.2 Cultural and religious norms

These norms consider women as subordinates and men as their superiors. For instance, some religions do not allow women to go out in public and they can only communicate through men. On the other hand, some cultural practices place women at a lower position to men and, many a time, should be represented by the man. Other negative influences such as Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) are justified from a cultural perspective.

Such cultural and religious norms then feed into patriarchal norms and attitudes, thereby creating patriarchal institutions. The two concepts have been intertwined to the extent that it is sometimes unclear where norms originate from and their applicability. For example, the Quran upholds that both men and women are equal but in Islamic faith practice, man is believed to be the head of the household and should act as guardian of the woman.

### **2.5.3 Intra-household bargaining power**

The bargaining power women have in their households can determine their ability to participate in peace building activities. The bargaining power of any individual arises from status and economic empowerment. A woman from a prominent family or clan is likely to have a higher bargaining power and will determine the activities she can participate in without requiring the authority of her husband or male figure. The same is true of a woman who is able to make a decent income, thus command higher decisions making space and capacity. The laws governing owning of property also determine the bargaining power of a woman. This, in general, can be directly linked to poverty status of women as they do not own resources and are usually co-owners, therefore such property lies in men's hands.

### **2.5.4 Armed conflict and insecurity**

The long term impact of conflict and militarisation can create a culture of violence that makes women vulnerable to post war violence and insecurities. Due to the changing gender roles, there is also a likelihood of increased domestic violence in such settings. SGBV continues to be applied to dominate and subdue women as well as a weapon of conflict (Cardona *et al.*, 2012). This lack of general security could impact on the freedom of women to participate in peace building activities. Women who work on women rights or empowerment, and female politicians are particularly vulnerable to intimidation and threats. This also comes with the use of derogatory remarks on women who attempt to venture and become vocal in the public sphere. Moreover, women are forced into early marriages especially to militant group members. Such a situation has become common in conflict situations as happened with the abduction of young school girls by the violent extremist group Boko Haram in Nigeria (Maclean, 2014).

### **2.5.5 Education, skills and experience**

The education, skills and experience matter for both men's and women's ability to meaningfully participate, especially in governance structures. Owing to the fact that literacy rates are skewed in favour of men in many African countries, they tend to dominate most of the institutions. Moreover, the few literate women are usually marginalised and isolated in society. The participation of women is also likely to be low in areas that are highly technical in nature such as peace negotiations and mediations.

### **2.5.6 Time constraints**

Typically, women undertake multiple roles such as reproduction, production and community work. As such, they are expected to ensure that household tasks are given due prominence, thereby they end up engaging in such chores. In many communities, a woman who undertakes business and political work and neglects her household duties is frowned upon compared to men. In addition, cultural norms in most communities forbid men from undertaking such tasks and thus the woman operates under intense pressure. The long term effect is that women end up reducing their participation in public activities and concentrate more on the private sphere. There are also differentials between the urban and rural women, with the former having more time due to their economic capabilities and availability of technology and infrastructure.

### **2.5.7 Perception of and responses to women leaders**

Gendered norms not only affect women's opportunity to take on decision making roles and have the confidence to participate actively, but also affect how women in decision making roles are perceived and responded to. This affects the willingness of women to participate in decision making roles, and those who do are stereotypically portrayed as going against the norm of allowing men to lead and are mainly branded as failures in the homes. Ironically, women who take up powerful positions are considered abrasive and are labelled divorcees. Some women believe that certain positions belong to men and do not consider they are ideal for the same.

Moreover, in some communities, the rural –urban disparities make women not to believe in their own potential. Those active in the public sphere are likely to be from

urban centres, well educated and with a higher bargaining power. As such, rural and low income earning women are likely to be in discord as they will be focussing entirely on different sets of problems. For the rural woman, accessibility to basic needs will be of primary importance, while the urban one will be fighting for higher pay. These disparities result in weak women's movement not able to effectively articulate gender issues and participate in the public sphere.

## 3.0 Methodology

### 3.1 Design of the Study

The research was conducted in Mogadishu (south central Somalia), the capital city of Somalia, with 1.554 million people, roughly accounting for 16 percent of the total population of 9.557 million (UN, 2013a). The sex ratio is further estimated at 98.4 (males per 100 females), thereby women constitute about 60 percent of the total population. The choice of Mogadishu as a case study was based on two aspects: in conflict situations, peace building activities are likely to begin at the capital before trickling to the periphery; and the security situation which reduces the possibility of reaching more respondents in the hinterland.

Qualitative research techniques were applied. Data collection was done by two independent researchers, Somali Women's Studies Center (SWSC) and the primary researcher using key informant interviews (KIIs).

### 3.2 Sampling Design

Purposive sampling was adopted as case study requires that one works with a small sample of people, nested in their context and studied in-depth (Miles and Huberman, 1994). It was also based on extensive literature review, which provided a likely guide of the key respondents. The sampling frame consisted of representatives of different groups within Mogadishu, who are believed to have direct impact on the participation of women. These included individual women/men, women groups, UN/AU agencies, politicians, civil society and non-governmental organizations and the Somali government. Due to the difficult security situation in Somalia, there exist a substantial number of NGO actors in Kenya, who were also sampled.

However, despite there being a form of pre-specification of sample groups based on literature review; the sample evolved as the field work progressed. The initial choice of informants pointed to similar or different samples that revealed important facets to the study that were otherwise not discernible at the beginning. Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to this as conceptually-driven sequential sampling.

The sample frame thus evolved as shown in the table below: -

**Table 3-1: Sampling Frame**

Sample groups	Target		Total
	SWSC	Primary researcher	
Women NGO groups	8	2	10
NGOs local	6	4	10
NGOs international	0	5	5
Members of Parliament	4	1	5
Elders	1	2	3
Youth	2	3	5
Government officials	3	7	10
Private sector	1	1	2
Total	25	25	50

*Source: Author's own compilation*

### 3.3 Data Collection Methods

Primary data was collected using KIIs by the two independent researchers. This had two advantages: first, it allowed for data reliability as it was possible to undertake cross checking of findings between the two sets; and second, the use of local networks in an otherwise volatile environment due to language and security issues. Twenty one and 23 KIIs were conducted by SWCS and the primary researcher respectively, during the month of August 2014. The latter mainly interviewed respondents from NGOs with headquarters in Nairobi (Kenya) and participants to an International Peace Support Training Centre Mobile Workshop on dialogue, negotiation and mediation held in Mogadishu (Somalia) on 26<sup>th</sup>–28<sup>th</sup> August, 2014.

The total number of KIIs was 44, giving a response rate of 88 percent, which was sufficient and representative for analysis and reporting (Table 3-2). According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), a response rate of 50 percent is adequate, 60 percent is good and over 70 percent is excellent.

The KII tool included both structured and semi-structured questions which were arranged thematically into three broad areas: namely understanding perceptions to peace, security and peace building; level of women participation; and factors

enabling/hindering the level of women participation. Within each broad area, specific questions that addressed subject of interest were posed and outcomes were discussed in the findings section.

Field data as presented was further supplemented with extensive secondary data to allow for corroboration and comparison of responses.

### **3.3.1 Characteristics of the respondents**

The study sought to ascertain the gender and occupation of the KII respondents. This enabled the determination of ability and capacity of respondents in providing key relevant and in-depth information on the participation of women in peace building in Somalia.

The KIIs were drawn from different sectors of the government, civil society and private sector as shown in Table 3-2. KIIs from the women NGO groups and NGOs were those mainly concerned and focusing on gender and women issues. The desire was to interview five female members of parliament, but at the time of the study, only two were available since they were participating in training workshops that were being conducted in Kampala. However, male parliamentarians were interviewed and the opinion of former female members of parliament sought. These latter KIIs were also heading women groups' organisations as well as local and international NGOs, and thus their perspectives were measured at the current organisation.

Government officials were mainly those who were directly handling various issues affecting women such as the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, Labour and Social Sciences, Religion, Somali Police Service and Office of the Prime Minister. The youth were mainly from CSOs that had gender components in their activities, as well members of government institutions.

The number of females interviewed totaled 25 and that of males 19. The desire was to have more women, but the number was low due to the unavailability of female parliamentarians as noted earlier.

*Table 3-2: Distribution of respondents by organization and gender*

Category of organisation	Target No.	Achieved No.	Percentage response rate %	Gender	
				Female	Male
Women NGO groups	10	8	80	7	1
NGO- local	5	7	140	4	3
NGO – international	5	5	100	3	2
Members of Parliament	10	5	50	2	3
Elders	5	3	60	0	3
Youth	5	5	100	3	2
Government officials	10	9	90	6	3
Private sector	0	2	-	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>19</b>

*Source: Author's own compilation*

### 3.4 Data Processing and Analysis

There were two processes used based on the objectives defined in this study. For objective one, content analysis was used and it involved a series of steps in which the recorded data was clustered according to specific thematic areas. The clustered data was then used to develop meanings and patterns of responses in which conclusions were drawn.

Objective two and three were analysed descriptively using statistical software, SPSS and content analysis. Frequencies were used to determine the level of women participation in the four pillars of peace building and 3Ps, as well as the factors that facilitate or hinder the participation of women.

### 3.5 Ethical Considerations

The respondents were informed appropriately of the purpose, duration and potential use of research results. The informants were also assured of their anonymity during publication of the findings. The safety of female respondents was critical as they felt they would be targeted if they openly advocated for women's rights. It was therefore pertinent to be confidential for their credentials and security.

Other ethical considerations such as research permits and authorisation were also obtained from the relevant institutions.

## 4.0 Findings

This section presents the findings of the study in three thematic areas: perceptions to peace, security and peace building; level of women participation in peace building; and factors that enable/hinder the participation of women in peace building. Descriptive and content analysis is used to identify patterns of behaviour among respondents and quantify the variables.

### 4.1 Perceptions of Men and Women of Peace, Security and Peace building

The first objective of the study was to determine the perceptions to peace, security and peace building. The respondents were asked several questions in key thematic areas in order to establish their understanding of these terms and the role of women in peace building.

#### 4.1.1 Understanding of peace, security and peace building

The respondents were asked to explain what they understood by the terms peace, security and peace building. All the respondents defined peace as absence of violence, the presence of tranquility and calmness, and a safe environment to live in. They also understood security as situations in which there is no fear. However, 45 percent (20) of the respondents further stated that security relates to when rule of law, order, stability and protection are available to all. To this end, a majority of the respondents felt that the government should be responsible for ensuring their citizens are peaceful and secure.

*“To me peace and security means the same thing and are interconnected. Without peace, there can be no security and without security, there can be no peace” KII female respondent*

Female respondents who were 56 percent of the total alluded to the fact that peace provides an opportunity to demand and exercise their rights and achieve full potential as equal human beings.

*“...peace and security is very important to women. It provides us an opportunity to demand our rights, there is increased access to opportunities including education, employment and we can participate in politics” KII female respondent*

When asked to define the term peace building, two major responses were provided. Sixty eight percent (30) of the respondents defined peace building as a ‘process’ or ‘project’ that builds lasting peace and in which all groups in society should be involved. The rest (32 percent or 14) noted that peace building relates to forgiveness, dialogue and recovery in order to build trust, reconciliation and build new relationships. This last group of respondents pointed out that the activities of peacebuilding involved providing access to opportunities to all groups in societies and in sectors such as economic, political and judicial sectors.

#### **4.1.2 Feeling secure in Mogadishu**

The respondents were asked whether they felt secure living in Mogadishu. Slightly over half (23) reported that they felt insecure, while the rest answered in the affirmative. There were also variations among the categories of organisations as some government, local and international NGO officials stated they felt insecure.

*“...compared to several years back I now feel a bit safe” KII male respondent*

*“The stabilization efforts by government and AU troops has enabled us to live more peacefully, but more needs to be done” KII female respondent*

Male respondents particularly highlighted that those considered to be prominent members of the society, belong to government or are active in politics, made them vulnerable to attacks and kidnappings.

*“I do not feel safe in Mogadishu because the security situation is constantly changing. Thus, one becomes afraid of his and her security and the security of their families” KII – male respondent*

Female respondents also noted that women who are strong proponents of gender equality feel insecure, especially from extremist groups. Moreover, they felt that they cannot openly advocate for some issues in areas considered to be controlled by extremists for fear of reprisals.

### **4.1.3 The impact of the conflict on women and men**

The respondents were asked to explain how the conflict in Somalia affected them, and in particular, if there were any differences observed among men and women. All the respondents noted that there were general and gender specific impacts of the conflict. They noted that the conflict resulted to deaths of many of their family and community members, while others have been maimed and were living with the scars and burden. Many have been displaced from their homes, and there was loss of state and clan protection, jobs and livelihoods.

They also noted that the volatile security situation continues to provide a potent ground for armed groups and militias, further exacerbating the impact of the conflict. They were of the opinion that war reduced the potential of Somalis as a community and individuals to provide or acquire basic services such as health, education, food and water. As such, they felt that a large number of the population had to rely on humanitarian aid for basic services and needs.

Majority of the respondents also felt that relationships among communities and individuals have been eroded by the long running conflict, which had an impact on trust building as they prefer to rely on their own kin. They argued that this has led to the increased clan and sub-clan divides. Female respondents pointed out that they are more affected as their loyalty and trust is in doubt.

The respondents noted that men felt they had lost the ability to protect and provide for their families, and there has been a higher incidence of unreported domestic violence as well as breakdown of families through abandonment and divorce.

*“... How are we expected to provide for our families? There are no enough jobs here for us. At times we want to go and join the armed militia groups as they pay without any question, but the cost to our peace and security is so high” KII – male respondent*

They also noted that men and boys are targeted and, at times, pressurised to take up arms and join armed groups or serve under the myriad of warlords in SCS. The female respondents were concerned that their men and young boys lacked alternative ways of earning a living, which led them into clan-based militias and armed groups, thereby exacerbating the security situation.

Majority of the respondents also noted that the conflict had led to a redefinition of gender roles. Women primarily have become providers in the households, and carry out otherwise male prescribed economic activities, especially in the small and micro enterprises. While a majority of the respondents felt that this was positive, they observed that it could be related to the heightened tension, divorce and abandonment in some families as men felt threatened by the increased women empowerment.

*“I have been forced to go out and look for business, job or whatever it is I find to provide for my family both nuclear and extended” KII female respondent*

*“After being involved in the war for many years, he comes home a maimed and disabled man and has to rely on my wife even for food. How low can this get for a man?” KII male respondent*

All respondents were of the view that the conflict had affected women on account of their gender. The male respondents acknowledged that the loss of family/clan and state protection had heightened insecurity among women. Female respondents were especially concerned with the rising cases of divorce, domestic violence, SGBV, and physical attacks directed towards them on account of their gender and vulnerability. Of great concern was the proliferation of small arms and light weapons (SALW) which were continually used to perpetuate unfathomable injustices on women by extremists groups as well other armed groups.

However, a few of the respondents stated that there is a worrying trend of women joining terrorists groups beyond the traditional roles of raising funds, recruiting new members and providing support as wives, carers among others. They noted that the Somali Jihadi women have increased and are considered more dangerous as they attract less attention from security agents.

#### 4.1.4 Coping mechanisms

The respondents were asked to describe some of their coping mechanisms. The responses varied depending on whether the concern was general or gender specific. In general, majority noted that their survival and resilience during the conflict arose from the cohesion among groups and communities. They stated that this invoked in them willingness to assist each other materially and financially.

A majority of respondents listed the following as necessary to their survival: belief in God and imminence of death; keeping hope alive despite all odds; remittances by family members in Diaspora to their kin or contributions to community humanitarian and development projects; becoming refugees in neighbouring countries or seeking asylum in third countries; using their extended kinships and linkages to get amnesty and be allowed to engage in trade/commerce; establishing grassroots organisations, NGOs and networks to provide services to vulnerable groups; and resolving and averting conflicts to minimise their effects and sustain peace in their respective communities.

A majority of the respondents argued that there were disparities on how men and women were coping with the effects of the conflict. The men indicated that some chose to take up arms to find opportunities to provide food and protection for their families and clan, while at the same, keeping the honour and further fuelling the conflict. Majority of the respondents also argued that some have chosen to do nothing and instead engage in idling and chewing of *khat*.<sup>5</sup>

On the other hand, respondents acknowledged that women were more adaptive and creative to the extent that they managed to carry out activities that enabled them to take care of their families.

*“...the conflict has transformed us. We have had to do whatever it is in our capacity to take care of our families when our men went into war” KII female respondent*

<sup>5</sup> Khat or commonly known as ‘qaad’ or ‘jaad’ in Somalia is a plant whose leaves and stem are chewed for their stimulating effect.

*“...women have taken all manner of odd jobs and businesses in order to take care of the family, while we the men have found some of these jobs demeaning” KII male respondent*

#### **4.1.5 Role of women in peace building**

In order to appreciate the role of Somali women in peace building, female respondents were asked several questions: have they played any role as peace builders; what motivated them to undertake these activities; were they involved in any organisation while undertaking peace building; did they have training in peace building; and whether they transmit a culture of building peace in their families and communities?

Majority of the female respondents acknowledged that they had many roles as peace builders, especially at community level. They especially singled out activities they carried out in dismantling illegal checkpoints belonging to different armed militia groups in Mogadishu. Female respondents also noted that they formed district peace committees consisting of women and youth, with the aim of ensuring security in the communities. They also noted that on many occasions they succeeded in bringing the warring parties together, even at the national peace processes.

All the female respondents stated the following factors as driving them to build peace: they were adversely affected by the conflict; the warring parties were relatives or family members (sons, husbands, fathers, uncles); that they are regarded to belong to their father’s clan, hence possess a dual clan nature; and they felt they owe themselves and families, especially the young children, to ensure peace and security.

*“...I had to because my involvement in peace building determined my own security and that of my family” KII female respondent*

*“...I participated in a number of peace building activities including the Arta process, because I wanted my country to be peaceful and safe for us and have a functional government” KII female respondent*

All the female respondents noted that their participation in peace building was twofold: as individuals, or as part of women groups or organisations. They acknowledged that women groups form the bulk of civil society groups in Somalia, and work in partnership with local and international NGOs. Female respondents also noted that they participated in peace building activities voluntarily, and were not compensated for their time.

All female respondents acknowledged that they had received training in the different areas of peacebuilding, either through their women groups or NGOs. Some noted that they have received training abroad in countries like Kenya and Uganda. They stated that they found such forums useful in enhancing their peace building capacity.

All female respondents stated that they transmit a culture of peace to their children, family and community. They noted that they deliver peace messages through radios and billboards, and educate the public on peace issues. They also highlighted the use of poetry and song to transmit peace messages. The female respondents also noted the importance of acting as peace envoys among the warring clans and communities.

## **4.2 Level of Women Participation in Peace Building in Somalia**

The second objective of the study was to examine the level of women participation in peace building in Somalia. The respondents were asked to score from five pre-specified categories of very low, low, neutral, high, and very high in four areas: participation in political and economic empowerment; participation in protection of social status; participation in conflict resolution and prevention; and participation in post conflict peace building. They were also asked to give reasons that could be contributing to the level of participation. The responses were noted and the data analysed descriptively using SPSS for frequencies of respondents' scores. The findings are presented in the following sections.

### **4.2.1 Participation in political and economic empowerment**

The general participation of women in political and economic empowerment attained a low score as illustrated in Table 4-1. However, women participation was given a higher score in advocacy in health, education, peace and security at 63.6 percent, and economic empowerment activities at 54.6 percent.

*“...in our Ministry, out of three hundred staff, only ten are women. This number includes only three that can be considered to hold managerial level capacities with the rest serving as secretaries and office cleaners” KII female respondent*

**Table 4-1: Participation in political and economic empowerment**

Level of participation	Variables for participation in political and economic empowerment						
	National politics %	Lower level politics %	Advocacy %	Policy reforms %	Policy implementation %	Economic empowerment activities %	Empower other women %
Very low	75.0 (33)	79.5 (35)	9.1 (4)	65.9 (29)	68.2 (30)	2.3 (1)	18.2 (8)
Low	15.9 (7)	9.1 (4)	6.8 (3)	13.6 (6)	20.5 (9)	9.1 (4)	43.2 (19)
Neutral	4.5 (2)	9.1 (4)	20.5 (9)	9.1 (4)	4.5 (2)	34.1 (15)	20.5 (9)
High	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	<b>47.7 (21)</b>	9.1 (4)	6.8 (3)	<b>43.2 (19)</b>	15.9 (7)
Very high	2.3 (1)	0.0	<b>15.9 (7)</b>	2.3 (1)	0.0	<b>11.4 (5)</b>	2.3 (1)
<b>N</b>	<b>44</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>						

*“...men could not do some jobs but women have no inhibitions and will sell anything from clothes to meat” KII male respondents*

**Reasons given for the level of participation:**

- High score
  - Direct impact of the war
  - CBOs active roles
  - Changing gender roles and adaptability of women
  - Role as caregivers
  - Divorce and abandonment
- Low score
  - 4.5 clan formula/ male domination/clan system
  - Lack of skills/education/confidence, especially for political participation
  - Lack of political will (government)
  - Lack of technical/financial capacity

Secondary findings corroborate the view of respondents. For example, in the political landscape, while there is a gradual change with the recent appointments of the new government, the participation of women is still very low (Table 4 -2)

*Table 4-2: Political representation in south central Somalia*

Institution	Total positions	Women	Percentage
New federal cabinet	10	2	20%
New federal parliament	275	37	14%
TFG cabinet	28	1	3.7%
TF parliament	575	76	12%
Independent federal constitution Commission	30	8	36%
Districts	None	None	None

*Source: UNDP Somalia, 2012*

The findings also indicate that one of the women cabinet appointments was a first for Somalia, with a portfolio as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. The second appointment heads the Ministry of Social Development, which is critical in gender equality.

In the economic front, women are facing increased economic opportunities but many of them still work in menial positions, involving sacrifice, risk and humiliation (UNDP Somalia, 2012). Musse and Gardener (2013) also argued that women in Somalia make money that is enough to only sustain their families. As such, women’s participation in wage employment in the non-agricultural sector stands at 33 percent. Therefore, many of them will be found operating in the small and micro enterprise economy (SMEs), and only a few will be active in sectors that yield high profits such as imports and exports; livestock export and fishing, industries considered the mainstay of Somali’s economy (UNDP Somalia, 2012). This is attributed to Somali being a pastoralist community in which livestock represents the family’s wealth; yet, the ownership is conferred to men traditionally. They still take the risks despite the hindrances, and as such, the fuel retail trade sector in Mogadishu is dominated by women at 99 percent (Musse and Gardener, 2013).

Women also experience higher unemployment rate of 74 percent compared to men at 61 percent (UNDP, 2012). Similarly, when they attain employment, they

occupy lower ranks, mainly in cleaning and sanitation jobs, and often times they are exploited. SCS lacks employment policy regulations aimed at protecting employees from exploitation (Musse and Gardener, 2013).

In the education system, only 15 percent of the teaching force are women and a majority are unqualified (UNICEF, 2012). This trend can further be understood from a primary transition perspective where only 37 percent of the girls who joined secondary school sat for the 2011/2012 form four exams. However, there is a notable increase in the demand for girls' education, despite the enrolment rate standing at 28 percent (UNICEF, 2012). According to the 2006 Somalia Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, the adult literacy rate for women is estimated at 26 compared to 36 percent for men, and an overall of 31 percent. This was an increase from 19 percent for women in 2001, exemplifying the important role of advocacy in education and health.

#### **4.2.2 Participation in protection of their social status**

The participation in protection of women's social status was generally low (Table 4-3). However, participants scored highly in women's implementation of projects that prevent SGBV at 63.7 percent and local gender based issues/trainings at 54.5 percent.

##### **Reasons for the level of participation:**

- High
  - Effects of SGBV on women
  - Support from CSOs/NGO work
  - Need to work for peace
- Low
  - Shame/fear/family name and honour
  - Weak structures
  - Traditional norms
  - Lack of technical/financial/training capacity

*Table 4-3: Participation in protection of their social status*

Level of participation	Variables for participation in protection of their social status				
	SGBV projects %	SGBV reporting systems %	Humanitarian aid projects %	Gender based issues/ training %	Local health projects %
Very low	9.1 (4)	36.4 (16)	0.0	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)
Low	9.1(4)	45.5 (20)	40.9 (18)	27.3 (12)	47.7 (21)
Neutral	18.2 (8)	15.9 (7)	27.3 (12)	15.9 (7)	36.4 (16)
High	<b>45.5 (20)</b>	2.3 (1)	20.5 (9)	<b>47.7 (21)</b>	11.4 (5)
Very high	<b>18.2 (8)</b>	0.0	11.4 (5)	<b>6.8 (3)</b>	2.3 (1)
<b>N</b>	<b>44</b>				
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>				

Secondary findings corroborate these results. Access to health care services is limited, with maternal mortality rate at 1,600 per 100,000 live births (UNICEF, 2012). The number of women who receive antenatal care coverage is 26 percent for one visit and only 6 percent up to four visits. Likewise, 33 percent are attended by a skilled birth attendant, and only 9 percent have institutional deliveries (WHO, 2006). Moreover, the health care profession is dominated by men, hence the low access to reproductive health.

Due to the use of customary law as regards SGBV, many of the cases go unpunished and/or are not discussed openly (UNDP Somalia, 2012). In SCS, law enforcement agencies deny the reported increase in rape, and alleged victims risk intimidation and imprisonment (Musse and Gardener, 2013). As such, most cases remain unreported due to fear and shame. Moreover, most of the domestic rape cases may go unreported. This is also heightened by increased forced marriages, especially in the Islamic extremist controlled areas (UNDP Somalia, 2012; Musse and Gardener, 2013).

### 4.2.3 Participation in conflict resolution and prevention

The participation of women in conflict resolution and prevention also scored very low with the exception of involvement of women in peace and security civic education at 60 percent (Table 4-4).

### Reasons for the participation:

- High
  - Effects of the conflict on women and society
  - Dual clan nature of women
  - Family interests
- Low
  - Loyalty issues
  - Traditional roles
  - Male dominance/4.5 clan formula
  - Top down approaches
  - Weak information sharing mechanisms

*Table 4-4: Participation in conflict resolution and prevention*

Level of participation	Variables for participation in conflict resolution and prevention					
	Peace and security civic education %	Early warning systems %	Com-munity/ national dialogue %	Com-munity/ national negotia-tion %	Com-munity/ national media-tion %	Monitoring peace and security %
Very low	13.6 (6)	75.0 (33)	45.5 (20)	88.6 (39)	88.6 (39)	75 (33)
Low	9.1 (4)	18.2 (8)	47.7 (21)	6.8 (3)	6.8 (3)	18.2 (8)
Neutral	18.2 (8)	4.5 (2)	6.8 (3)	2.3 (1)	0.0	6.8 (3)
High	<b>54.5 (24)</b>	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	4.5 (2)	0.0
Very high	<b>4.5 (2)</b>	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>N</b>	<b>44</b>					
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>					

Somali culture is organised according to a clan system, with membership in a *diya* group based on kinship. The group members form alliances which are then used in conflict resolution, through the blood compensation system. In such a case, the groups pay or receive *diya* mainly in the form of livestock. However, women are not members in the same way as men since they do not count as paying members, and payments go directly to men. Moreover, the group of elders referred to as Male

Traditional Elders (*Somali- Aqalka Odayasha*) is responsible for decision making and women are not allowed in such a forum (JPLG/UNDP, 2012). This system has further been used at the national level, thereby denying women representation.

#### 4.2.4 Participation in post conflict peacebuilding

The participation of women in post-conflict peace building scored the lowest, especially in the crucial Disarmament, Demobilization and Re-integration (DDR), judicial reforms, post conflict elections and governance, SSR and small arms control (Table 4-5).

##### Reason for the participation:

- Low
  - Forcible DDR that does not consider women/disregards women as combatants and members of armed groups
  - Ignores community level activities by women
  - Some of the processes such as transitional justice are yet to begin, while others are at the preliminary stages of implementation
  - Armed conflict and insecurity
  - Subjective use of different laws
  - Lack of technical/financial capacity

*Table 4-5: Participation in post-conflict peace building*

Level of participation	Variables for participation in post conflict peacebuilding						
	DDR %	Judicial reforms %	Elections and gov- ernance %	SSR %	Small arms control %	Land and property rights %	Settling dis- placed persons %
Very low	72.7 (32)	90.0 (40)	93.2 (41)	79.5 (35)	77.3 (34)	56.8 (25)	52.3 (23)
Low	6.8 (3)	4.5 (2)	4.5 (2)	13.6 (6)	9.1 (4)	29.5 (13)	4.5 (2)
Neutral	20.5 (9)	4.5 (2)	2.3 (1)	4.5 (2)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)	2.3 (1)
High	0.0	0.0	0.0	2.3 (1)	11.4 (5)	11.4 (5)	25 (11)
Very high	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	15.9 (7)
<b>N</b>	<b>44</b>						
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>						

The legal status of women constitutionally is equal to that of men. However, due to the influence of customary law, their discrimination is very common. Customary law sets the value of a woman at half that of a man, and subordinates her interests to those of the man (Musse and Gardener, 2013). This implies that judgements are likely to favour a collective security outcome more than individual rights.

The rights of women with regard to property is also not given due consideration (UNDP Somalia, 2012). Male relatives tend to abuse this right and grab land from widows in the name of holding it in trust for the children (Musse and Gardener, 2013). Besides, *Sharia* law which affords women more rights as regards to marriage settlements, child custody, and inheritance is not appropriately applied due to the training capacity of judges, who are men. Moreover, *Sharia* institutions do not allow women judges.

### **4.3 Factors Determining the Level of Women**

#### **Participation in Peace Building**

The third objective was to examine the factors that enable and/or hinder the participation of women in peace building. The factors were split into enabling and hindering factors, and the findings are as discussed in the following sections.

##### **4.3.1 Enabling factors**

The respondents were asked to discuss the various factors they consider to provide an enabling environment for women's participation in peace building. This also relates to the different deliberate interventions by the government and other stakeholders. The data was then clustered and analysed thematically.

###### **4.3.1.1 Institutions**

The participants were asked to discuss about the different interventions taken by the government, women organisations, and civil society among others in encouraging and promoting women's participation in peace building.

When asked about the role of civil society organisations (CSO) including women groups, majority of the respondents noted they have played an active part to promote and advocate for gender concerns. The groups have lobbied and advocated for the inclusion of women by way of affirmative action and provided support, financial, technical or otherwise, to Somali women.

Women groups were particularly singled out for advocating the end of harmful cultural practices such as female genital mutilation (FGM), early marriages, affirmative action (introduction of 30% rule), and use of effective conflict resolution mechanisms. Majority of the respondents acknowledged that through extensive networks and collaborations among women/women groups, peace building processes in Somalia have been salvaged when at their lowest point. In this case, the Arta, Djibouti conference, was given as an example.

Some of the male and female respondents however alluded to the fact that due to the active lobbying by CSOs, especially those that are foreign, the impression that gender issues are a western concept being imposed on the Islamic community has been created. Some of the female respondents pointed out that in some of the Islamic extremist areas, interaction with the CSOs has been denied, and if permitted, only under the terms agreed upon between extremists groups and the CSOs. They also pointed out that the term gender equality is still considered contentious.

Majority of the respondents also noted the important role played by the Somali Diaspora communities. Through their extensive support, these communities were able to marshal for international support for the rights of women in Somali. They also acknowledged the support, material or otherwise, to women's movement in Somalia. Female respondents also noted that the differences in experiences between the women in Diaspora and those who have never left Somalia provide a framework for comparative analysis, exchange of ideas and knowledge. However, some of the male respondents alluded that there was friction between the Diaspora women and the local ones, as their concerns were different. However, female respondents were of the opinion that this argument is put forth when the men feel they are not ready to give up their positions for women.

The respondents were also asked about the role of government, and a majority of them do not believe much is being done to encourage the participation of women, despite the existence of a Ministry of Women and Human Rights.

*“...we have engaged the top leadership and requested for their support to enable women in decision making but our demands have fallen on deaf ears” KII female respondent*

*“...the government sees us – members of non-state actors who are involved in peace building as a threat and thus, it does not support them. Often, government wishes to take the activities including peace building over from CSOs” KII female CSO respondent*

Only a few of the respondents stated the government, including the Federal Parliament of Somalia, acknowledges the contributions of women in peace building and further encouraged them to participate in the process .

*“...the current government is doing its best to encourage women to play active roles in peace building. It is worth noting that this government is a government in war.” KII male government official respondent*

*“...the government recognizes the important contributions by women in peace building. They see them as allies. However, it (government) does not provide enough resources to support women’s peace building initiatives.” KII female Member of Parliament respondent*

When asked whether the framework of cooperation between the federal government, UN and AU agencies will translate to increased participation of women, the responses were varied. Some felt that the current sense of stability in Somalia, especially with the presence of AMISOM, enhances the opportunity for women participation. Others, however, felt that the participation of women continues to suffer as the institutions in this framework grapple with gender mainstreaming. Some of the respondents also noted that there exists a gender coordination mechanism consisting of government and donor agencies, but its activities are yet to be felt.

As to whether they consider the current debate on decentralisation and federalism an enabling factor to women's participation, the responses were varied. Three main responses were noted; majority of the male respondents were of the opinion that it would create more space for women; some female respondents felt that they would still be marginalised despite the increased diffusion of powers and inclusivity, while some of the female and male respondents felt that it was too early to assess the impact of decentralisation.

*"...for as long as the selection process is based on the 4.5 clan formula, federalism still remains a top-down approach and male dominated. Women will still be marginalized"* KII female respondent

#### **4.3.2.2 Legal and policy instruments**

The respondents were asked whether there exist any legal or policy instruments (national or international) that facilitate the participation of women in Somalia. Majority of them were aware of the different international and national legal and policy instruments available. Some of the respondents however, were not conversant with the contents of these instruments, and how they relate to the participation of women. They were also not sure of the relevant departments that deal with gender issues as every agency seemed to have an opinion.

Some of the government officials indeed acknowledged that Somalia had ratified at least three international bills on human rights namely: International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; and the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. They noted, however, due to other state and peace building concerns, the country is yet to accede to the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

Also, Somalia had signed and ratified the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights in 1985. However, Somalia had signed but not ratified the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol) in 2006. The officers also noted that Somalia is yet to ratify other international legal instruments relating to women and gender, such as UN resolutions and CEDAW.

Majority of the respondents acknowledged that while Somalia is yet to ratify these instruments, it has provided a framework and benchmark for enhancing participation of women, especially on their protection. However, the female respondents noted that the lack of ratification means that Somalia is yet to develop and adopt a National Action Plan and strategies aimed at nationalising these international instruments. This, they argued, has not happened despite the country having done a Joint Needs Assessment in 2004.

Majority of the respondents also noted that it was these international legal instruments and practice in other countries that led to the inclusion of the 30 percent quota on women representation in the Garowe II principles.<sup>6</sup> However, female respondents were of the opinion that this inclusion occurred due to donor pressure and conditionality. This, they argued, was due to the clause on women's quota not being included in the Provisional Federal Constitution adopted in August 2012.

*“...the government is under pressure from the international community and donor conditions, and the woman has been the beneficiary” KII female respondent*

Majority of the respondents also acknowledged that most of the international NGOs (AMISOM/UN agencies/Oxfam among others) have developed and implemented gender policies for Somalia. The female respondents were particular that this has enabled more women to participate in all stages of programmes and projects implemented by these institutions. They highlighted the importance of affirmative action in sectors such as education, where many Somali girls have benefited from scholarships and bursaries.

*“... I am a proud beneficiary of the UNDP scholarship program which enabled me pursue higher education after completing my secondary education in Dadaab, Kenya and attaining a score of B+” KII female respondent*

Some of the respondents also noted that several articles in the Constitution (2012) provide some latitude for women such as Article 3 on the founding principles which

<sup>6</sup> Garowe II principles refer to the outcome of the Somali National Consultative Constitutional Conference held on 21<sup>st</sup> -23<sup>rd</sup> December 2011, Garowe, Puntland, Somalia.

states that “women must be included, in an effective way, in all national institutions, in particular all elected and appointed positions across the three branches of government, and in national independent commissions.” Article 11 on equality states that “everyone is equal before the law; even unintended acts by their effect can be defined as discriminatory, if they impair or restrict a person’s rights; the state may not discriminate against any person on the grounds, including but not limited to, clan, ethnic or social origin, sex etc; state measures designed to achieve full equality for individuals or groups who have suffered discrimination or disadvantage shall not be deemed discriminatory (e.g. quota system).”

Article 22 on right of political participation which states that “every citizen has the right to take part in public affairs; including the right to form and/or take part in the activities of political parties (including the right to vote and stand for positions in elections for adults). However, some female respondents were of the opinion that this was not enough to guarantee the participation of women as there is need for specific clauses to be included on the same, since this was already done in the Garowe II principles. They argued that Garowe II principles 1(d) provided for 30 percent women seats of the National Constituent Assembly, and it was meant to provide a guide as well as direct finalisation of the draft constitution in 2012. They noted that Article 133 of the same constitution spells out the process of amendment of the constitution, thereby providing women with a window of opportunity in the constitutional process ending 2015.

Female respondents also pointed out that Article 15 (4) of the constitution bans female genital mutilation, but infibulations remain common and are, sometimes, supported by women themselves.

They also noted that there exists a Draft National Gender Policy Guide (2014-2024) which is in the process of revision, yet it has not been implemented. Some government officials did note that women considerations have been given prominence in the Somali Compact for State and Peace building (2014-2016), in which key priority areas include inclusive politics, security, justice, economic foundations and revenue services. They noted, however, as is common with much of the government activities, the compact was done in collaboration with UN and other lead agencies. Also, while it allows for effective coordination of state and peace building activities,

it would be too early to evaluate its effectiveness on the participation of women. While women are mentioned, there are no specific strategies that aim at including them in all the pillars.

Majority of the respondents also noted that concerns of women were widely known and there are many documents and policies on the same such as the Somali Compact, Draft Gender Policy and Joint Needs Assessments done in 2004. Therefore, what lacks is the strategy that can be used to achieve the defined objectives.

Respondents also noted that the most progressive reforms occurred during the pre-1991 period, with the enactment of the Family Law in 1975. Female respondents argued that this law assured women of equal rights and made discrimination against women illegal. They noted that during this period, women were able to access education, health and occupy positions even in the military. Respondents noted that post 1991, there was re-emergence of customary law (*Xeer*), and extended use of Islamic law (*Sharia*). As such, the family law which was developed in the pre 1991 period has been relegated to the drawers, and instead, customary and Islamic laws are used where applicable.

Female respondents were of the opinion that *Sharia* provided for more rights and entitlements to women than the '*Xeer*.' Therefore, it was noted that the problem with *Sharia* law is that it is administered by men and tends to be misinterpreted in their favour. They also argued that there tends to be the application of different laws when they suit the men. The men, on the other hand, were of the opinion that they interpret and follow strictly what *Sharia* or '*Xeer*' law recommends on all issues regarding women as well as men.

#### **4.3.3.3 Other factors**

The respondents were asked to provide other factors that enabled women participation. Majority of the respondents gave two key responses: the tenacity of women and ICT infrastructure. They noted that these two elements have enabled women to mobilise for a cause. On observation, all the respondents interviewed had at least one mobile phone and of the latest brand.

### 4.3.2 Factors that hinder the participation of women in peace building

The respondents were asked to score Yes, No or both on whether patriarchal institutions, cultural and religious norms, intra-household bargaining power, armed conflict and insecurity, education/skills/experience, time constraints and perceptions of, and response to women leaders affect the level of women’s participation. The results varied for the different variables as shown in Table 4-6. Patriarchal institutions, cultural/religious norms, and armed conflict and insecurity were yes with 84.1, 81.8 and 73 percent, respectively. The respondents scored almost equally on the variable intra-household bargaining power at yes (50%), no (45%) and both (4.5%). Education/skills/experience, perceptions of/responses to women leaders and time constraints scored for no at 50, 63.6 and 79.5 percent respectively.

*Table 4-6: Factors that hinder the participation of women in peace building*

Variables	Yes %	No %	Both %	Total %
Patriarchal institutions	<b>84 (37)</b>	16 (7)	0	<b>100</b>
Cultural and religious norms	<b>82 (36)</b>	18 (8)	0	
Armed conflict and insecurity	<b>73 (34)</b>	4 (2)	18 (8)	
Intra-household bargaining power	50 (22)	45 (20)	5 (2)	
Education, skills, experience	34 (15)	<b>50 (22)</b>	16 (7)	
Perceptions of and responses to	27 (12)	<b>64 (28)</b>	9 (4)	
Time constraints	18 (8)	<b>80 (35)</b>	2 (1)	
	<b>N= 44</b>			

## 5.0 Discussions

### 5.1 Perceptions of Women in Peace building

The community in Mogadishu has a basic understanding of the terms peace, security and peace building. This can be attributed to the fact that the respondents were mainly engaged in peace building activities and a majority held at least higher levels of education. Moreover, Somalia is a country that has been in conflict since the 1990s, and there have been numerous attempts (at least 14) to restore order and stability. As such, a majority of the leaders in various institutions have had an interaction with external actors through peace negotiations, workshops and conferences, where many of the issues are discussed.

Mogadishu residents still feel insecure but appreciate the gains made through the FGS and AMISOM. The sense of security can also be attributed to the location and financial ability of the residents. Security in Mogadishu can be conceptualised as concentric as it begins from the airport area and ebbs outwards establishing safe, semi safe and insecure zones. In addition, the heavy presence of government forces, AMISOM troops, international aid agencies, foreign embassies and private security companies result to high rental charges by chance rather than a deliberate move. Therefore, the closer one is to the airport and the ability to afford rent determines the security of a majority of Mogadishu residents.

Moreover, prominent individuals in Somalia including government officials, UN/AU troops, aid agency workers and gender activists are highly targeted, especially by armed extremist groups, thus, if they can afford, they will acquire security. For those who cannot afford and need to survive, they will have to maintain a low profile and remain incognito, which many women use to be considered harmless.

The conflict has greatly impacted on Mogadishu residents. This is seen from two perspectives; general and gender specific impacts. General effects include deaths, displacement and loss of livelihood. The loss of trust and social relationships has also had a devastating effect resulting in collapse of clan protection systems, especially for women and children. The gender roles have also been redefined, resulting in the old age clash between the two genders. This can be attributed to the increased demands by women and the continued rejection by men over the same.

However, there is recognition that women have been more adversely affected by the conflict, and change in gender dynamics is bound to occur. The problem therefore arises on how different gender groups will accommodate these changes and ensure equality is maintained without relegating the role of men. This is not unique to Somalia as other countries are grappling with such issues. For example in Central Kenya, the targeted advocacy for access to education for girls in primary level of education has resulted to high enrolment rates among them, while that of boys has been declining despite free primary education (Amunga, Amadalo and Maiyo, 2010).

Women in Somalia have also been more adaptive to the changes arising from the conflict compared to men, as seen in their increased prominence in the small and micro enterprises and at community mobilisation levels for peace, security, education and health. In Mogadishu for example, many men have taken to idling after losing hope, miraa (Khat) chewing etc... to the detriment of the family and community. In the same breadth, the women are struggling to make ends meet and provide for the family, thereby building their resilience. International aid agencies and CBOs have also found a willing partner in the woman as she has concerns for the family and society compared to the man. They have therefore become more involved in activities to improve their lives and that of their families.

The Somali woman has played a very important role in peace building in Somali, although they remain largely unnoticed. Tozoacha (2013) refers to the Somali woman as the unsung hero the society has been dependent upon for many years. Their formal recognition remains low, yet they have undertaken numerous activities towards peace building. They advocated for a sixth clan<sup>7</sup> in the Arta, Djibouti peace process, but while this was not achieved, they were given space at the peace negotiation table. Women have been seen selling their jewellery and other valuables to raise funds for peace building, while also singing songs and reciting poems to warring parties. They have also used their dual clan nature to act as peace mediators among clans.

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7 The sixth clan relates to the term women advocating for their representation used as Somali politics are discussed around the clan based system in which the 4.5 clan formula is used. This gives consideration to the four main and large clans, four in number and a combination of smaller clans/tribes at 0.5. Women in this case were advocating to be considered a separate clan devoid of the clan system as they felt their issues transcended the clan.

## **5.2 The Level of Women Participation in Peace Building in Somalia**

### **5.2.1 Participation in political and economic empowerment**

The level of women participation in political and economic empowerment in Somalia is generally low, with the exception of two sectors namely: advocacy in health, education, peace and security; and engaging in economic empowerment activities. This can be attributed to the changing dynamics arising from the conflict where women have been forced to undertake duties outside their traditional realm. The women are also more adaptive to difficult situations, and are ready and willing to do certain duties such as merchandising and selling meat, which have been found degrading. As such, a group of wealthy women is growing in Mogadishu giving them a higher intra-household bargaining power.

On the other hand, this new found independence is pushing more and more women to demand for their rights. While this is positive, it is creating a rift in society, especially among the older generation. The implication is that there seems to be a battle of the sexes, and men take this threat seriously. The high divorce rates in the Somali community could also be a pointer to this changing trend, as men find themselves relegated to hitherto unknown spaces.

The ability to organise themselves into groups also gives credence to their high participation in advocacy for health. There exist a good number of women groups in Somalia that deal with issues ranging from health to education among others. The fact that the women have been more affected than men, especially psychologically, only pushes them further to act.

The low level of participation could be a pointer that the current interventions are not as effective as would be desired. Participation of women in national politics is frustrated by the fact that male politicians agree to it in principle but in practice, it is not upheld. This is a common feature in many African countries, where the number of women in national politics is very low with the exception of a country like Rwanda where it can be argued that the deliberate government interventions and political will have resulted in the high participation of women in politics.

### **5.2.2 Participation in protection of their social status**

The level of women participation in protection of their social status is generally low, except for implementation of projects that prevent SGBV and local gender based issues/trainings. The higher level of participation in these two areas is attributed to the increased participation of women, through women groups/CSOs and assistance of donors and international NGOs. To this extent, it can be assumed that for Somalia, the extensive advocacy and limelight given to such issues mean that women are very active in this area. However, the levels of SGBV cases in Somalia are still very high, despite the effort of women. This can be explained by the fact that local reporting systems are still very low, due to the stigma and shame attached to SGBV.

Moreover, the necessary gender sensitive infrastructure to deal with prosecution and reporting of SGBV is lacking in Somalia. As such, women who attempt to address the issue have to deal with a male dominated police service that intimidates and harasses them. This fear of intimidation further drives others to silence. Security Sector Reform (SSR) programmes initially did not emphasise gender concerns, but is currently being applied. However, the effect of any intervention takes time to be felt at the ground level, and therefore, the women's unit still has a lot to do in order to effectively handle all the relevant issues relating to them .

### **5.2.3 Participation in conflict resolution and prevention**

The level of women participation in conflict resolution and prevention is low in Somalia for all areas except their involvement in peace and security civic education, where majority of women are involved. This can be attributed to the fact that women are very active at the household and community levels advocating for peace, but are systemically marginalised in the national processes. On many occasions, top-down approaches are applied in the conflict context giving prominence to warring parties at the expense of grassroots activities. In the case of Somalia, involving the clan elders and war lords has been given more prominence, thereby creating a less inclusive peace building process. It can be argued that the concern is usually to ensure cessation of hostilities, hence the need to proceed in such a manner. Ignoring such a large segment of society results in skewed peace dividends as the warring factions, mainly men, are seen to benefit from the process, unlike the women.

## 5.2.4 Participation in post conflict peacebuilding

The level of women participation in post conflict building is very low, especially in the crucial sectors of DDR, judicial reforms, post-conflict elections and governance, SSR, and small arms control. In DDR and SSR for example, women have played a critical role in disarming youth at the community level. They even contributed money towards training the youth and managed to secure them jobs in the private sector that are highly competitive. However, these efforts have been very minimal and limited, especially due to funding.

Women themselves have also not been given due consideration as candidates for DDR, SSR or small arms control. It has always been presumed that women are not active combatants and only play peripheral roles such as cooks and cleaners. However, irrespective of their position in the ranks, these women have still participated as war perpetrators and their exclusion is hindsight. It is also worth noting that the DDR process in Somalia is still at the formative stages, and it mainly applies forcible disarmament tactics and gives consideration only to men. As such, this has provided armed combatants with an innovative mode of transporting SALW using women. Therefore, government forces are not appropriately trained to handle this category of combatants.

In the Somali Police Force (SPF), women are allocated duties such as custodians, secretaries, communication, health and sanitation (a kind word for cleaner) and cooks. They are not given duties as patrol officers, although recently there is an effort to include them in the traffic department. Moreover, due to cultural and religious norms, the women officers' uniform looks cumbersome and may prove to be a hindrance if they are to conduct patrols and apprehend criminals.

Within the SPF, there exists a dedicated women's section that is headed by a woman, but one that operates sub-optimally, owing to weak reporting structures coupled with cultural factors. However, there have been efforts to improve services through training of female officers in bilateral and multilateral capacity building projects. In tandem with this, the judicial system is still very weak, and only recently appointed its first woman judge.

This means that cases involving SGBV and other violations on women are not given due consideration at the moment. Due to poor and weak structures, there is a very high possibility of cases either going unreported or unprosecuted. The cost of prosecution may also be very prohibitive, especially for women.

The transitional justice process is yet to be well established in Somalia. This process is very crucial, especially for women, as it allows them to begin a healing process as they are more often than not suffering deep psychological effects of the war. The continued delay of this process therefore continues to provide ground for anxiety among women, as the effects are long lasting.

## **5.3 Factors that Determine the Level of Women's Participation in Peace Building**

### **5.3.1 Enabling factors**

Numerous interventions by institutions such as CSOs, UN/AU agencies among others continue to advocate and insist on the participation of women. For example, the security gains from the current FGS/AMISOM framework enable their participation and demands for their rights. The resilience of many CSOs and NGOs, both local and international, coupled with the strategy of remaining low profile, has enabled them to continue providing crucial services to the communities. As noted earlier, if one is considered high profile, then they are likely to be targeted. As such, many of these peace builders maintain a low profile by, for example, not hiring private security and travelling incognito.

International legal instruments and policies are also very relevant in the context of Somalia despite the country not ratifying them. This is because, currently, they serve as the basis for legal and policy guidelines and provide a benchmark for the development of national ones. There also exists a draft gender policy, although it is not implemented. The provisional constitution, while it advocates for gender equality, lacks specific provisions regarding the participation of women. The issue of federalism seems to cloud the debate of constitutionalism, thereby masking other important issues such as gender equality. Currently, there exists sufficient legislation and documents regarding the participation of women, but there is no

harmonised strategy towards achieving the goal of gender mainstreaming. The gender coordination mechanism within the government lacks the capacity to ensure that gender in the Somali Compact (2014-16) is appreciated at all levels of governments departments and programmes.

There is also recognition and, especially among women, of the differences in laws as applied in Somalia regarding women. They consider the *Sharia* law to be more accommodating of women rights, compared to traditional and secular laws. On many occasions, issues relating to the family are handled under the customary (*Xeer*) laws, which are more often than not, administered by men on behalf of the community. A male representative is expected to speak on behalf of the aggrieved woman, and one can only envision matters as grave as SGBV. Thus, the concerns of the woman are not likely to be addressed.

## **5.3.2 Hindering factors**

### ***5.3.1.1 Patriarchal institutions***

Patriarchal institutions hinder the level of women participation in peace building. As such, the existing institutions lack appropriate representation, falling short of affirmative action under UNSCR 1325. These male dominated institutions continue to be perpetuated through the 4.5 clan formula, which is based on the clan system, that is a male domain and women and children are supposed to be led.

Beyond this is the institutionalised sexism where the male gender views itself as superior to the female one. For example, issues of security are considered to be male domains, thus women have no role to play as they are considered ‘soft.’ As such, many institutions considering the security situation prefer to employ men than women. For example, in many of the private security companies in Somalia, 98 percent of the employees are male irrespective of nationality. Indeed, in AMISOM, only 1.4 percent of peacekeepers are women. This shows how institutions consider men at the expense of women.

### ***5.3.2.2 Cultural and religious norms***

Cultural and religious norms are not supportive of women’s involvement in formal peace building activities and decision-making. The clan system as part of the cultural institutions is considered undemocratic as the decision-making process tends

to be male dominated and non-inclusive, thus, women are denied any leadership roles in formal peace building activities. In addition, extremist groups oppose the participation of women in peace building. In the traditional setting, the Somali woman is supposed to be represented by a male relative, especially in decision making bodies such as the elders, where the Xeer law is practiced.

The main challenge of including women in such a clan system lies more in the dual clan nature of women. In Somalia, when one is born, one belongs to their father's clan and this does not change even with marriage. As such, a woman has ties in her father's home as well as her husband's. When it comes to participation, the problem arises more from the issue of loyalty. It is difficult to determine where the woman's loyalty in such a context is, as it is argued by men. The nature of the conflict in Somalia is at a level where one only trusts those who are closest to them, more so those who belong to their clan/sub-clan. This web of trust and loyalty effectively considers the woman outside the framework and she is not expected to exercise any formal decision making.

Religious norms are somewhat a misnomer for women in Somalia. This is due to the fact that Islamic law is very accommodative of women rights, especially on land, property rights and protection of their status. On the other hand, the law prohibits women from active public role, and instead, they should be represented by men. However, the problem does not stem from the law itself, but its interpretation and use in Somalia. Different groups have varied interpretations, and at times, the law is misinterpreted to favour men and marginalise women. Therefore, there seems to be religious groups that favour the participation of women, while others are extremely opposed.

### ***5.3.3.3 Armed conflict and insecurity***

Armed conflict and insecurity hinders the level of women participation in Somalia. Women are not armed, thus they are targeted by armed groups, especially extremists. The proliferation of SALWs further fuels insecurity in women. Due to conflict and insecurity, women are intimidated and threatened by individuals and groups who want insecurity and conflict to continue in their respective communities, since they benefit economically. The limitation of movement has especially affected women as they try to earn an income to take care of their families as most are the sole breadwinners.

Ironically, while conflict is largely considered to hinder the participation of women, a considerable number consider it a deterrent and a motivator to women's participation to peace building. Due to conflict and insecurity, women have been motivated to get out of their homes and work for peace. The Somali woman has been known to persuade the warring groups among their clans to lay down their arms. Since she suffers the greatest burden of the war, she is obliged to work for peace. However, the continued conflict and insecurity may deny her the space and opportunity to build peace.

#### ***5.3.4.4 Intra-household bargaining power***

There is no consensus among Somalis on whether intra-household bargaining power hinders the level of women's participation or not. The lack of consensus can be attributed to the different views held by the sex groups as well as the age. Men at an advanced age believe women should give more emphasis to their household duties and leave the difficult tasks of peace building to them. The increased economic ability of women continues to make men feel threatened. This can be related to the fact that the man as the household head holds the political, economic and social power in the home. Thus, any tilting of this power alters the households' relationships.

There is also a link with cultural and religious norms where the man is considered the household head. As such, the power and control over the household should determine the direction and activities of the home. However, the conflict has altered traditional and religious norms, resulting to women who are not only empowered economically, but demand a higher say in decision making at the household level. This in turn has made the women more aware of their rights, hence increased demand of their rights at the national level. However, despite this change, there is still an imbalance in terms of accessibility to resources and opportunities for women in Somalia.

The youth, both male and female, are more accommodating of this new change. This can be attributed to the fact that they are direct beneficiaries of the economically empowered woman. During war, the younger generation is likely to know only one parent, the female, as the men are either at war, killed, maimed, or due to lack of hope, have abandoned their homes altogether.

The youth have thus seen their mothers struggle and see them through life. Those that have succeeded to higher levels in society have a higher regard of the role women can play compared to the older generation.

Therefore, there is discernible change with regard to male/female power relationships at the household level, and the response to this change varies among different groups in Somalia. The normative beliefs held among the different groups on gender roles are also being challenged, requiring a new way of thinking and the ability to accommodate each other. This can be discerned from the different views where there seems to be an acceptance of the important role women play in providing for their families, but the extent to which this new found ability can be used to challenge the existing power relationships, remains a thorny issue in Somalia.

#### ***5.3.5.5 Education, skills and experience***

Education, skills and experience are not considered hindering factors to the participation of women in peace building in Somalia. This can be attributed to two reasons: the devastating effects of long and tenuous conflict; and the collapse of traditional protective mechanisms. The women thus, being vulnerable, have no choice but to engage in peace building. It has become widely accepted even among men that for one to participate, all that they require is the willingness to create peace as the skills can be developed.

Somali women are believed to possess certain attributes including confidence, courage and strength, which enhance their active participation in peacebuilding. These attributes were seen in the role they played in the *Arta* conference among others. They were brave enough to demand for the closure of illegal check points in Mogadishu. This proves that resilience, confidence and courage were their driving factors more than their education, skills and experience.

However, as they continue to increasingly participate in peace building activities, especially at the national level, education, skills and experience pose a challenge. This was the reason given by many of them who felt that this could be the cause of the low levels of political participation.

### ***5.3.6.6 Perception of and response to women leaders***

Perceptions and responses to women leaders do not hinder the level of women participation. This can be attributed to the fact that since women are mainly working for a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Somalia, then they are viewed positively. Despite lack of a strong women movement in Somalia, the existing networks (the looses NAGAAD network of women) are still strong enough to enable effective mobilisation, especially at the community levels. However, there was a discernible lack of unity among women at the national level. This can be attributed to the lack of a strong women movement as well as the clan system, whereby women at the national level represent their clan rather than women interests. Therefore, from a general perspective, women have become more of activists rather than engaging in dialogue for effective participation. In the long term, the perception and responses to women leaders will be eroded, thereby decreasing their acceptance in society.

In this study, the only noted negative perceptions and responses to women leaders' stemmed from extremists groups who consider women as second class citizens. Such groups also oppose any idea they consider westernised such as women activism/ feminism among others.

### ***5.3.7.7 Time constraints***

Time constraints do not hinder the participation of women in peace building in Somalia. Since women have suffered immensely; there is a high possibility that they will find time to participate in peace building. The gains of participation definitely outweigh the lack of it, and this has made them go out of their way to ensure they work towards building peace, especially at the community level where their activities have been greatly felt.

## 6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

### 6.1 Conclusion

This study examined the level of women participation in Somalia and the factors that hinder it. The level of women participation in Somalia in all public sectors is low despite numerous efforts by women, women groups and the international community. However, in economic enterprise, health advocacy and informal peace building, women play a very critical role.

The study has identified several factors that have led to the current level of women participation as mainly international legal frameworks, affirmative action, women lobby groups and activism as the changing dynamics of the conflict. However, this effort is yet to bear fruit when compared with international standards. Women continue to face difficulties in their quest for equality and participation as is common in other countries. For Somalia, specific factors hinder their participation owing to the fragility of the nation. The main factors include: patriarchal institutions as perpetuated by the 4.5 clan formula; the interchangeability of the secular and religious laws to the detriment of women participation; the lack of capacity in terms of resources and space due to their diminished intra-household bargaining power; and continued armed conflict and violence that targets women, more so from extremist groups. Time constraints and the perception and responses to women leaders were not found to have significant effect on the participation of women.

Lastly, the study concludes that the participation of women is an activity that has to be worked upon for it to be attained since it is not automatic. As such, women in Somalia will have to continue putting in place measures that will ensure they enjoy their rights. For Somalia, gender equality is more of a concept that is externally driven and it has not found acceptance within the patriarchal Somali community. Until such a time that deliberate government interventions are realised, women participation remains just a promise which can be broken.

## 6.2 Recommendations

The recommendations provided are classified into two namely, short term and long term. Short term recommendations draw on what is already being done to enhance the level of women participation and will result in addressing the factors that have the greatest impact such as patriarchal institutions, cultural and religious norms, and armed conflict and insecurity. Long term recommendations are mainly aimed at ensuring that gender concerns are given due consideration as Somali continues to strive for statehood and stability. This is because, as noted, some of the gender issues that are not of concern today are likely to become bottlenecks in the level of women participation.

### 6.2.1 Short term recommendations

- Prosecute and follow up on all SGBV cases to prevent the continued perpetration of human rights injustices on women. This can be done by strengthening the women department in the Somali Police Service, through the current SSR programmes that focus on women police officers.
- Undertake periodic gender audit to enable the continuation, correction and sustenance of gender mainstreaming programmes.
- Roll out multi-sectoral public awareness programmes to enable national dialogue on the role of women in peace building. This should include government officials through the Ministry of Women and Human Rights, religious and traditional leaders, women groups, donor agencies and the citizens. It is worth noting the important role played by traditional and religious leaders in Somali, and the extent to which they can be used in such programmes.
- Gender mainstreaming is a globally accepted approach to achieving gender equality, where women's and men's concerns and experiences are made integral to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all policies and programmes (ECOSOC, 1972). The Somali government can achieve this through the inclusion and implementation of specific articles regarding the participation of women in the ongoing constitutional process;

revising and implementing the Draft National Policy and other related policies; and enhancing the capacity of Ministry of Women and Human Rights. As noted, the success of any gender mainstreaming activity arises from deliberate government efforts. The donor agencies, while having existing gender policies, should ensure the full implementation beyond the confines of the gender advisor.

- Deliberate government and donor agencies intervention programmes to the small and micro-enterprises sector to enable economic empowerment of women.
- Deliberate interventions by government and donor agencies to enhance the effectiveness of women groups' community building initiatives such as in health, education, peace and civic education and DDR.
- Begin to implement crucial peace building programmes such as judiciary reforms, DDR, SSR and transitional justice to ensure that underlying women issues are addressed.
- Undertake future studies in the following:
  - The role of women in armed conflict with a view of engendering the DDR programmes.
  - The peace building potential of women in economic enterprise in Somalia.
  - The effectiveness of women in peace building processes in Somalia.

## 6.2.2 Long term recommendations

- Establish a strong women movement in Somalia to replace the existing NAGAAD loose coalition network.
- Invest in women's education at all levels.
- Improve infrastructure especially in health, education and transport to ensure ease of access and opportunities for all.
- Ratify international legal frameworks regarding women such as UNSCR 1352 and 1882, among others, and develop national plans for long-term implementation of gender issues.
- Continue and sustain the Federal Government of Somali efforts at ensuring national security through the AMISOM peacekeeping framework.

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## Participation of Women in Peace Building in Somalia: A Case Study of Mogadishu

Somalia has been in conflict since the collapse of Siad Barre's regime in 1991. This has had general and gender specific effects. Generally, there has been loss of lives and livelihood, displacements, physical injuries, loss of trust and social protection afforded by the clan systems among others. However, women, on account of their gender, have been more affected and are represented as victims alongside children in the conflict. The effect of sexual and gender based violence has impacted the lives of women leaving long lasting scars. Women have therefore sought to remedy these inequalities by active participation in peace building, although their effort remains unrecognized, largely at the informal levels.

The study assessed the level of women participation which was found to be very low, with notable exceptions in advocacy (health, education, peace and security) and small and micro enterprise economy. This has been attributed to the war effects predisposing women to take action as well as increasing their resilience and adaptability. International legal instruments, and the active role and support of civil society organizations (including women groups) have facilitated their participation in peace building. However, government interventions have not been sufficient to drive affirmative action even within its ranks. Low participation was as a result of existing patriarchal institutions and structures; cultural and religious norms; armed conflict and insecurity; and intra-household bargaining power. Education, skills and experience, time constraints, and perceptions and responses to women leaders were not found to be significant to their participation. This explains the differences that arise as regards to women in conflict and post conflict situations.

Thus, for the increased formal participation of women, the Somali government should come up with a gender mainstreaming strategy that will include both short and long-term activities. Public awareness programmes are critical to bring forth women issues as part of the dialogue process. Periodic gender audits need to be carried out to ensure that progress is tracked, problems identified and remedies provided. The continued stabilization efforts by government and African Union troops also provide a framework for ensuring security and order, and they should thus be enhanced.

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