

The Role of Women in Peace-Making: Global Perspective and the Indian Context

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DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2025.1210000237>

Received: 02 November 2025; Accepted: 08 November 2025; Published: 15 November 2025

ABSTRACT

This study investigates the evolving role of women in peace-making, with a particular emphasis on global experiences and the Indian context. Adopting a qualitative-descriptive research design, the study analyzes secondary data from United Nations reports, policy documents, scholarly literature, and case studies of women-led peace initiatives. The methodology involves comparative thematic analysis to identify global trends and Indian-specific patterns of women's participation in peace processes.

The key results reveal that while women's formal representation in global peace negotiations remains limited—only 13% of negotiators and 6% of mediators between 1992–2022—their informal and grassroots contributions significantly enhance reconciliation, post-conflict recovery, and social cohesion. In India, case studies from Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Nagaland, and Chhattisgarh demonstrate that women's organizations have successfully mediated local disputes and fostered communal harmony.

The study's implications stress the need for institutional reforms to integrate women systematically into peace and security frameworks. It concludes that women's inclusion is both a moral imperative and a strategic necessity for achieving durable, inclusive peace and sustainable national development.

Keywords: Women, Peace-making, Gender, India, Conflict Resolution, Global Perspective, Sustainable Peace

INTRODUCTION

Peace-making is a complex and multidimensional process requiring inclusive participation from all sections of society. Historically, peace negotiations have been dominated by men, marginalizing women's voices despite their vital roles in community healing and conflict resolution. Across the world, women have demonstrated exceptional capacity to sustain dialogue, rebuild trust, and nurture social justice in post-conflict societies.

In India and beyond, women's peace work often remains invisible in policy frameworks and academic discourse. This study therefore seeks to explore the evolving landscape of women's engagement in peacebuilding, both globally and within India, to highlight their transformative impact and the institutional challenges they face.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A growing body of literature has examined the gendered dimensions of peace and security. The adoption of United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1325 (2000) was a pivotal milestone, emphasizing women's participation in peace processes. Studies by UN Women (2023) and Council on Foreign Relations (2019) highlight that peace agreements involving women are 35% more likely to last at least 15 years than those without female participation.

Globally, women leaders such as Leymah Gbowee in Liberia and the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition have demonstrated that female inclusion enhances negotiation outcomes and community reconciliation.

In India, scholars like Basu (2016) and Butalia (2018) have documented women's peace-building initiatives in conflict-prone regions. The Meira Paibi movement in Manipur, Naga Mothers' Association in Nagaland, and

Kashmir Women's Collective are cited as powerful examples of women-led nonviolent interventions. However, gaps persist in institutional recognition and formal representation.

Research Questions

This study is guided by the following key research questions:

1. What are the global trends in women's participation in peace-making and conflict resolution processes?
2. How have women in India contributed to peace-building in conflict-affected regions?
3. What institutional, cultural, and policy barriers limit women's inclusion in formal peace processes?
4. How can global and Indian experiences inform strategies for gender-sensitive peace policy frameworks?

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative-descriptive research design, relying primarily on secondary data analysis.

Data Sources:

1. United Nations and UN Women reports (2000–2024)
2. Scholarly journals on peace and gender studies
3. Policy documents from the Government of India and NGOs
4. Case studies of women-led peace movements

Analytical Approach:

1. Thematic content analysis was used to identify key themes such as representation, empowerment, institutional barriers, and community reconciliation.
2. Comparative analysis was conducted between global examples (e.g., Liberia, Colombia, and Northern Ireland) and Indian case studies (e.g., Manipur, Kashmir, and Nagaland).
3. Triangulation of data from reports, policy papers, and media accounts was undertaken to enhance validity.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Global Findings

1. Between 1992 and 2022, women constituted only 13% of negotiators, 6% of mediators, and 7% of signatories in major peace agreements (UN Women, 2023).
2. Women's involvement in peace negotiations has led to longer-lasting and more inclusive peace agreements.
3. Case studies from Liberia, Northern Ireland, and Colombia show that women's grassroots mobilization can compel warring parties to the negotiation table.

Indian Context

1. In Jammu and Kashmir, organizations like Athwaas and Kashmir Women's Collective engage in trauma healing, dialogue, and advocacy for victims of violence.
2. In Manipur, the Meira Paibi women's network has acted as a community watchdog against human rights violations, often mediating between the military and civilians.

3. The Naga Mothers' Association (Nagaland) promotes peace through the motto "Shed No More Blood", mediating ceasefire dialogues.
4. In Chhattisgarh, women's self-help groups have become vehicles for peace through livelihood generation and conflict de-escalation in Maoist regions.

Key Insights

1. Women's informal peace-building efforts often achieve greater community impact than formal political negotiations.
2. Structural barriers, patriarchal norms, and limited access to decision-making hinder women's formal participation.
3. The integration of women's voices in policy and security institutions remains minimal, necessitating reform.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

1. Institutional Reform: Governments should institutionalize women's participation in all peace and security frameworks.
2. Capacity Building: Training programs for women mediators and community leaders can strengthen peace infrastructure.
3. Gender-Sensitive Governance: Implementation of India's National Policy for Women (2016 Draft) and the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) Agenda should be accelerated.
4. Monitoring and Evaluation: Establish gender audits and peace indices to measure women's impact on peace sustainability.

CONCLUSION

The study affirms that women's participation is central to building inclusive, sustainable peace. From global arenas to India's conflict-affected regions, women have proven to be effective mediators, peace advocates, and social reformers. Yet, their contributions remain undervalued within formal political and security structures.

Integrating women into every level of peace-making—from grassroots dialogues to national Security Council's—is not merely a question of representation; it is a strategic imperative for ensuring just and lasting peace. India's evolving democratic framework provides an opportunity to lead by example in institutionalizing gender-sensitive peace-building practices.

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