



THE IMPACT OF MALE DOMINANCE ON WOMEN'S ROLE IN THE DIVISION OF LABOUR DURING AND POST-CONFLICT IN TAMIL SOCIETY

Keerthika S. ¹

¹Visiting Lecturer, The Open University of Sri Lanka, Department of Social Studies
& University of Jaffna, Department of Sociology

ABSTRACT

This study examines the far-reaching impact of male dominance on the formulation of women's roles in the division of labour during and post-conflict periods within Tamil society. Despite the significance of gender equality in achieving a harmonious social environment, traditional gender roles and kinship systems often perpetuate gender disparities. The Tamil society, affected by conflict, offers a unique context to investigate how male dominance influences women's roles in the division of labour. This research aims to explore how the intersection of gender, conflict, and societal structures affects women's agency and participation in the labour market. By analyzing the experiences of Tamil women during and after conflict, this study seeks to identify the ways in which male dominance shapes their roles in the division of labour, perpetuating gender inequalities. The findings of this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the complex relationships between gender, conflict, and labour, informing strategies to promote gender equality and empowerment in post-conflict societies.

KEY WORDS: Male dominance, Women's roles, Division of labour, Tamil society, Conflict, Gender equality, Empowerment

Introduction and Background of this study

“The connection between war and sex is a very consistent gender issue across cultures”.

-(Joshua Goldstein, 2001).

The organization of society plays a crucial role in the establishment of a gender-neutral environment. Across different societies, the structures of kinship, marriage patterns, family dynamics, reproduction, and production exhibit temporal variations. Typically, biological differences in sex are utilized to structure gender roles, kinship systems, social functions, and the division of labor. The physiological distinctions between sexes are often cited as the basis for pronounced gender disparities. Furthermore, there exists a prevailing assumption among sociologists that women's roles have remained static over time, rendering their study as trivial and devoid of significance. This article aims to elucidate how the patriarchal framework within Tamil society has systematically marginalized women in the division of labor, particularly during and after periods of conflict.

Historically in Tamil society, women play primary roles in maintaining the home and thus they retain the Tamil culture. In this society, the parents keep the girls under their control and have careful supervision from childhood till marriage. At marriage authority over them is handed over to their husbands. These women absorbed the cultural issues of traditional morals, rules, and values and played their role only within the institution called family. These political processes were interpreted from the social sphere. Symbols of purity and sanctity are measured through the bodies of these women as the family and society see them as sacred (in Tamil call ‘Sumangalis’) (Manoranjan, 2010). These women, traditionally the breadwinners of their families, watched helplessly as the army forced their loved ones into refugee camps during the 2009 war (ibid). On the other hand, Women who joined the armed struggle against the government in LTT took on unconventional social roles constructed by society. These women label as

challenging gender roles in the context of war. The role of men and women in the Sri Lankan civil war crisis (maintaining tradition, challenging tradition gender roles) can be further explained through the themes of family (and female headed household), combatants (political), gender and sexuality, and peacemaking.

For this study I used secondary data, such as articles, journals, newspaper article that based on gender role to the deliberate suppression of women within the division of labor in Tamil society, particularly during and after periods of conflict. It highlights the mechanisms through which the patriarchal structures of Tamil culture have systematically marginalized women's roles and contributions in various socio-economic contexts. It is important to understand the role changes during the war on the basis that Tamil-speaking women and men in the north have suffered more from the conflict and its aftermath than any other group in Sri Lanka. Since almost all societies have war as part of their social structure, war provides a better understanding of gender roles. Lunna, Harr, and Hilhorst (2017) argue that changing gender roles need to be understood under the everyday practices of gendered divisions of labor and power that emerged during and after conflict. And Sonal et al (2020) argue that war shapes gender roles. The findings of the study of several rich scholars are integrated here to understand the subject thoroughly. A number of rich scholars (Sonal et al., 2020; Alison, 2004; Hyndman and Alwis, 2003) have explored how the Sri Lankan civil war has altered gender roles. Thus, in this study, I used thematic analyzed on the basis of secondary data. As such I analyze the effects of war on gender in this chapter under two headings: (i) War reinforces traditional roles: Women in particular are expected to perform roles such as preparing food for the family, taking care of children, and tending to the sick in the family. Instead, men are expected to fight for the country. Here femininity is seen as a caring role and masculinity as a heroic role. (ii) War Challenges Traditional Gender Roles: In civil wars, women assume new roles not only as combatants but also in charge of daily life and as heads of their families. Families previously assigned men the role of economic

breadwinner and decision-maker. However, the war changed this role and empowered women. On the other hand, men who lost their limbs during the war are paralyzed at home. And men who lost their wives during the war are working as food preparers and housekeepers.

Methodology

This research is predicated on the utilization of secondary qualitative data, which can be sourced in various formats, including pre-structured and structured forms that necessitate the aggregation of multiple sources. The analysis of secondary qualitative data has emerged as a reputable methodology for knowledge generation (Heaton, 2008), particularly within the field of nursing (Szabo & Strang, 1997), as it circumvents the challenges associated with primary data collection, such as recruitment difficulties and the burdens placed on both interviewers and interviewees. Consequently, this study relies on previously conducted research articles and journals authored by various scholars. Additionally, this study employs a qualitative secondary analysis methodology, which involves the use of qualitative data that has been collected by other researchers or gathered for different research inquiries. This approach is applied through thematic analysis in alignment with the objectives of the current study. The secondary analysis of qualitative data facilitates the integration of diverse data sources, particularly when engaging with populations that are challenging to study or when addressing sensitive topics. This methodological framework was selected due to the sensitive nature of the research. Ethical considerations were rigorously upheld throughout the application of these methods.

Analysis and Discussions

Family and gender division of labor

During periods of conflict, traditional gender roles are often reinforced within societal structures. In the context of Sri Lanka's civil war, women frequently left the country to care for their children, migrated from their homeland, or

disappeared in search of sustenance for their families. They assumed the responsibility of preparing meals for their households using available resources. Following the conclusion of the war, these women emerged as agents of peace, while men were predominantly engaged in combat for the nation. Such delineation of roles underscores a societal perception that views women as inherently weaker than men. Concurrently, women's roles during this period involved maintaining familial stability and contributing to societal peace. Linda (2014) posits that women were omnipresent in the domestic sphere, managing family care during wartime. However, once the conflict subsided and the celebratory narratives of victory emerged, these women often receded from public view. Similarly, Cantrell (2018) observed that American women utilized food as a means to articulate their beliefs and defend their interpretations of American culture during World War II. This included instances of illegal food procurement and household hoarding, as well as manipulation of food rationing systems. Such actions reflected a broader objective of preserving the home amidst the upheaval caused by the war. Women's magazines and cookbooks of the era supported these endeavors through numerous articles, menus, and recipes, thereby encouraging women to embrace their domestic roles during times of crisis. For American women, these activities were fundamentally about sustaining the home and ensuring family stability in a rapidly changing environment. Thus, across various nations during wartime, many women adhered to their traditional roles of food preparation for their families, demonstrating a willingness to undertake significant risks to provide for their loved ones during periods of crisis.

Non-combatant women experience significant transformations in gender roles as a consequence of conflict. Various factors, including the death, disappearance, detention, or disability of their husbands due to war, have compelled these women to take on leadership roles within their families. A notable outcome of Sri Lanka's protracted thirty-year civil war is the emergence of women as heads of households. In this capacity, they serve as primary income earners, decision-

makers, and leaders within their families. Currently, women constitute 24% of heads of households in Sri Lanka, shouldering domestic responsibilities. The majority of these women who have adopted this new role post-conflict are predominantly from the Tamil community, particularly in the Northern (63,345 female-headed households) and Eastern (40,000 female-headed households) provinces, with the Jaffna district alone accounting for 20,000 female-headed households (Jeevasuthan et al., 2014). Consequently, this internal conflict has facilitated a reconfiguration of women's leadership roles within the evolving family social structure, occurring within a predominantly patriarchal context characterized by stringent cultural and social norms. As a result, women's roles are transitioning from traditional domestic spheres into political, economic, and social domains (Rajasingam-Senanayaka, 2004). This shift challenges established gender norms and poses a threat to conventional gender roles. Similarly, Lunna, Harr, and Hilhorst (2017:190) examine how women's entrepreneurship in the aftermath of the Maoist conflict in Nepal has enabled them to assume comprehensive family responsibilities, thereby fostering their leadership capabilities. Women have engaged in various economic activities, including operating restaurants, tailoring shops, farming, selling vegetables in local markets, and participating in local NGOs and financial institutions. The aforementioned studies indicate a movement of women's gender roles from the confines of the family into the public sector.

The perception of women who assume the role of family heads in the aftermath of war is a complex issue that warrants examination. This inquiry raises questions regarding the extent to which patriarchal societal structures have acknowledged and accepted the evolving roles of women. In this context, various scholars provide insights that contribute to a deeper understanding of the situation. The societal expectation for women to fulfill both traditionally male and female roles has resulted in a dual burden, particularly for families led by women, which encounter a myriad of economic, physical, and psychological challenges. Raksha

Vasudevan (2013) investigates the circumstances of female-headed households in Northern Sri Lanka, highlighting several significant issues. These include the economic difficulties faced by women in leadership roles, particularly in relation to asset loss and the challenges associated with asset recovery. Furthermore, the prevailing discriminatory practices within the economic sphere, which favor male dominance, exacerbate the situation. Women also confront limited employment opportunities in a society that traditionally positions men as the primary breadwinners. Additionally, the physical repercussions of these dynamics manifest in increased risks of sexual harassment and abuse within the home environment.

In a similar vein, Gowrinathan and Cronin-Furman (2015) examine the experiences of Tamil women in the post-war context. The safety of female-headed households, which emerged as a consequence of armed conflict, is a subject of ongoing discussion. Specifically, issues such as violence against women, the absence of effective legal remedies, and various socio-economic challenges significantly impact the safety of these individuals. Furthermore, Bould (1977) highlights that the economic instability faced by female-led families has long been acknowledged as a critical issue. This situation is characterized by high unemployment rates among women and their engagement in low-wage employment, which perpetuates poverty. Additionally, unemployed women often rely on government assistance and child welfare programs. In the United States, for instance, families led by women are reported to be three times poorer than those with two parents (Encyclopedia). Conversely, Berardo (1969) and Bronfenbrenner (1976) argue that the dual responsibilities of mothers in fatherless households can lead to familial disintegration. When women are preoccupied with domestic duties, their ability to supervise their children diminishes, potentially increasing the likelihood of juvenile delinquency, as the mother's involvement may be compromised (Bould, 1977:347). Based on these secondary data analyses, it is evident that while the role of women as heads of households following the

war represents a novel development, entrenched societal norms and values pose significant barriers to their effective participation in this role. Consequently, these women often encounter restrictions in their engagement with social and cultural events, face challenges in securing employment, and are vulnerable to sexual harassment. Rayasingham Senanayake (2004) articulates that identifying a cultural framework through which women who have assumed the role of family head due to war can assert their authority and autonomy is a complex endeavor (Thambiah, 2004). In essence, these female heads of households, often viewed unfavorably by society, may be perceived as responsible for their husbands' deaths due to societal beliefs regarding female virtue. The absence of a male figure to regulate their sexual conduct leads to suspicion from relatives and the broader community, resulting in the proliferation of rumors surrounding these women (ibid). Thus, the war has compelled women to navigate their traditional gender roles within the family structure. However, those who have taken on the role of family head as a result of the conflict often face rejection from both their families and society, which hinders their acceptance of this new role. Consequently, these women are subjected to stigmatizing labels such as "widows," "unattractive," and "impure," which obstruct their ability to embrace new gender roles. This situation underscores the notion that Tamil society has constructed the male-headed family as the ideal model of a healthy and pure family unit.

Combatants and gender division of labor

Tamil society has always suppressed women into a subservient position.....

It was the war that had the liberating role (Direct quoted from Manoranjan, 2010:142).

The reinforcement of traditional gender roles during wartime can be elucidated through historical analysis. The three wars that ensued after the French Revolution in Europe serve as a framework for understanding the delineation of gender roles for men and women in the context of conflict. Initially, a militant and

virile conception of national masculinity emerged, fundamentally rooted in warfare. Simone de Beauvoir (1953) posits that war and conflict have significantly reshaped numerous societies, often through a masculine lens, while advocating for a re-evaluation of these constructs by incorporating a gender perspective. In wartime, the male body operates in dual capacities: (1) as a catalyst for violence, exemplified by LTTE militants, and (2) as a mechanism of terror directed at minority populations. Consequently, the male body assumes a role as a body politic during periods of conflict. This integration of the male body into the political sphere effectively marginalized women, who were mobilized by patriarchal societies to fulfill domestic roles, support male combatants, and bear and nurture future generations of combatants (Virgili, 2020).

Similarly, Prabhakaran, the leader of the Sri Lankan Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, articulated in various speeches that "the ideology of our liberation struggle was born from the womb of our liberation struggle" (Sonal et al., 2020). Throughout the Napoleonic Wars, the latter stages of World War I, and the mid-point of World War II, women predominantly occupied auxiliary roles, such as laundresses and weapons cleaners, in support of male combatants. The establishment of a women's nursing corps towards the conclusion of the nineteenth century, following the Crimean War (1853–1856), further exemplifies this trend. Known as the "White Angels," these women provided care for injured soldiers, assisting amputees and offering companionship to the dying. Many of these nurses ventured onto battlefields to rescue wounded soldiers and transport them to field hospitals. During this period, men typically engaged in roles such as policemen, railway workers, and ammunition manufacturers, while women contributed by knitting uniforms, fundraising for charitable organizations like the Red-Cross, and corresponding with soldiers in the trenches (ibid). By the conclusion of World War II, over 640,000 women were employed in non-combat support roles. In a contemporary context, Khullar (2022) notes that Russia's

invasion of Ukraine has resulted in the destruction and closure of childcare facilities, elder care centers, and hospitals, thereby significantly increasing the caregiving responsibilities of women for family members, including children and the elderly. Supporting this observation, a gender analysis published by UN Women and CARE (2022) reported that "Women in Iraq have been involved in volunteering and providing aid since the onset of the war."

In a similar vein, Allison (2004) asserts that women have assumed diverse roles within the Republican and paramilitary factions in Northern Ireland. The tumultuous socio-political climate of the 1970s prompted numerous nationalist parties to advocate for women's participation in political and social spheres. By the late 1960s, female members of the Irish Republican Army (IRA) Women's Sub-section began to voice their dissatisfaction with their subordinate positions, leading to their integration into the IRA. Consequently, women were subsequently admitted to the IRA on an equal footing with their male counterparts. Conversely, within loyalist groups, female involvement is predominantly linked to supportive roles, such as aiding male prisoners and their families, providing first aid, and engaging in activities related to the handling and concealment of weapons. Leaders of these militant organizations have strategically employed conservative gender norms and stereotypes to further their objectives against governmental authorities or rival factions.

Similarly, Tamil nationalist women within the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka utilized cultural expectations regarding their comportment and attire to disguise suicide bomb vests beneath their saris, a tactic reminiscent of the 1991 assassination of Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (Alison, 2001). Furthermore, in the context of Sri Lanka's history, 30% of Tamil women joined the LTTE in 1983 under the banner of the 'Women's Front.' This organization emerged as a platform for advocating the removal of societal restrictions imposed on Tamil women, striving for gender equality. They employed various

socialization techniques, including theatrical performances and songs, to campaign for legal protections against dowry practices, caste discrimination, and sexual violence (Alison, 2003). When evaluating the effectiveness of the actions undertaken by Tamil women during the civil conflict, it can be concluded that they were largely unsuccessful. The caste system continues to be rigorously upheld in matrimonial practices within society. Thus, while women may assert demands for equality and challenge societal constraints during periods of crisis, such initiatives often dissipate post-crisis, leading to a reinforcement of established societal norms. Historically, during wartime, men predominantly assumed the role of combatants, whereas women were relegated to the roles of caregivers and nurturers, fulfilling traditional expectations of family care, particularly in relation to men and children, as well as food preparation.

Furthermore, historically, the archetype of the "real" or "perfect" man has been associated with the expectation of engaging in various forms of warfare. This notion suggests that different constructions of masculinity often fulfill specific functions within the context of war (Goldstein, 2001). The experience of war is characterized by chaos, noise, and terror, including significant loss of life, and societies have traditionally anticipated the involvement of strong men in perpetuating such terror. Consequently, there has been a concerted effort throughout history to integrate men into military endeavors. Goldstein (2001:380-396) posits that masculinity is not an inherent trait but rather a status that must be attained through the demonstration of toughness. In certain cultures, this may necessitate that men kill an enemy to be deemed worthy of manhood (and thus eligible for marriage); in others, it may involve physical feats such as lifting heavy stones or taming wild animals. Only those men who successfully navigate these rigorous trials are regarded as achieving perfection. In the context of the Tamil community in Sri Lanka, the ideal of masculinity is embodied by those who advocate for the rights of Tamils and the nation. This cultural expectation has led to a significant number of men from Tamil families joining the Liberation

Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) as combatants, trained to defend the rights of the minority Tamil population. Post-conflict, Tamil society has shown respect and recognition for these warriors, as evidenced by the establishment of 'Duhilum Illam' (Graveyard) to honor Tamil men who lost their lives in the war. Additionally, 'Maveerar Nal' (Tamil Soldier's Day) is commemorated annually on November 27 by the Tamil community in Northeast Sri Lanka. On this day, women who have lost male relatives prepare traditional dishes such as porridge and Pongal to share with others, believing that the spirits of their deceased loved ones will partake in the food prepared in their memory. Similarly, the Sinhalese community has its own customs for honoring fallen soldiers, which include saluting the deceased with gunfire and raising the national flag. These gender roles illustrate the societal expectation that male bodies are designated for combat and sacrifice for the nation, while women are tasked with the remembrance of that sacrifice within the family unit.

Numerous feminist scholars concur that there exist inherent biological differences between men and women. This perspective posits that men possess a genetic predisposition towards violence, influenced by testosterone, which contributes to their greater propensity for aggression. Additionally, men are often characterized as physically more formidable than women, and their neurological development is suggested to be aligned with these aggressive tendencies (Goldstein, 2001:5). In a similar vein, Adams (1983) argues that women's exclusion from warfare can be attributed to disparities in aggression and physical strength, as well as historical tensions between the institutions of war and marriage. Their investigations indicate that a combination of biological, cultural, and social factors serves to inhibit women's involvement in military conflict. On the other hand, some historical evidence indicates that women have occasionally engaged in combat roles; for instance, women in certain Native American communities participated in warfare alongside the Southern Apache. Furthermore, during the 18th and 19th centuries, the West African kingdom of

Dogomi integrated women into its military forces, establishing a female militia for minority groups (Goldstein, 2001). During World War II, approximately 8% of the 800,000 women serving in the Soviet military held positions as fighter pilots, gunners, and infantry personnel. Goldstein (2001) also notes that since the Cold War and into the post-Cold War era, various studies have documented women's involvement in combat across numerous nations, including Vietnam, South Africa, Argentina, Iran, Northern Ireland, Lebanon, and Israel. Conversely, women were prohibited from enlisting in the armed forces in countries such as Yugoslavia, Italy, Greece, Poland, Denmark, and France during World War II. Additionally, there is substantial evidence of women's participation in guerrilla warfare, notably among the Vietnamese Communists, the Sandinistas in Central America, the Revolutionary Guards in South Africa, and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in Sri Lanka (Goldstein, 2001:112).

It is noteworthy that Tamil women, who were immersed in the Tamil cultural tradition in Sri Lanka, assumed significant roles as combatants within Tamil militant groups, particularly the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE). Initially, their involvement was primarily in non-combat roles such as propaganda, medical assistance, intelligence gathering, fundraising, and recruitment for the LTTE. However, they were subsequently provided with military training and assigned responsibilities related to social security. In 1983, the LTTE established a dedicated women's wing, and by 1985, women received combat training in Tamil Nadu, India, followed by additional training in Jaffna in 1987. In 1989, Velupillai Prabhakaran inaugurated a training center for women in Jaffna. The inaugural military engagement for this women's contingent occurred in 1986 against the Sri Lankan Army. Throughout the mid-1980s, the LTTE actively sought to recruit women into their armed forces. Although the number of female fighters remained relatively small until the 1990s, their presence became increasingly prominent. The LTTE's female units, such as the 'Kadalpulikal' (navy) and 'Karumpulikal' (Suicide Squad), were characterized by their

organization and discipline (Alison, 2004). A notable figure among these women was Tamilini, who served as a leader within the political wing of the LTTE and highlighted the evolving perception of women's decision-making capabilities within the LTTE-affiliated political party (Manchanda, 2005). From 1983 onward, Tamil women engaged as combatants on par with their male counterparts, maintaining this role until the conclusion of the conflict in 2009. This involvement challenges traditional gender roles, as it calls into question the established male-female dichotomy shaped by biological, social, and cultural factors. Shekhawat (2015) posits that when women globally participate as combatants in armed conflicts, they often transcend conventional gender norms, assuming new roles and responsibilities that are typically associated with men (Luna, Harr, and Hilhorst, 2017: 176). The experiences of LTTE women were shaped by various adversities linked to their gender and minority status, as they sought to transcend familial constraints and embrace new identities as fighters. Factors contributing to their experiences included historical repression by the Sri Lankan military, nationalism, the trauma of losing relatives, educational disruptions and discrimination (particularly in university admissions), sexual violence, and the influence of women's liberation ideologies (RajasinghamSenanayaka, 2001).

The experiences of women who served as combatants in Sri Lanka during the sixteen years following the conclusion of the civil war in 2009 warrant critical examination. Klimesova and Premaratne (2015) contend that female ex-combatants in post-conflict Sri Lanka encounter a dual form of marginalization. They are isolated not only from male counterparts but also from other women who adhere to conventional gender roles. Many of these women were separated from their families, a situation that persisted even after the cessation of hostilities. Numerous scholars have noted that ex-combatants were compelled to live in isolation due to concerns that interrogations by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) could adversely affect their female relatives. Furthermore, the

persistence of unequal gender dynamics in the post-war context has resulted in female ex-combatants in the Northern Province facing significant barriers to employment and social justice. The societal and familial structures that previously enabled women to transcend traditional roles during the conflict have subsequently resisted their reintegration into familial and societal frameworks post-war. Consequently, these women often remain silent regarding their wartime experiences. Moreover, reintegration programs for ex-combatants are primarily designed to facilitate their return to traditional roles. Both governmental and private entities have engaged in such initiatives, which often manifest as spiritual pacification activities, including meditation and worship, as well as community engagement. Sonal et al. (2020) observe that many former members of the LTTE have successfully established new lives outside their original communities through these reintegration programs. However, similar opportunities have not been extended to non-combatant women associated with the LTTE, as they are already aligned with traditional roles, thereby negating the necessity for reconciliation efforts on their behalf. In contrast, the societal imperative to reintegrate ex-combatants into conventional roles has become increasingly pronounced. This aligns with Alison's (2001) assertion that many post-conflict programs for women implicitly expect them to revert to the reproductive sphere and domestic responsibilities.

Alison's (2004) work examining the role of women in nationalist paramilitary organizations in Sri Lanka and Northern Ireland reflects a tension between women as violent yet the role of women fighters is ambiguous and social security concepts. Women are increasingly excluded because security implies a traditionally masculine military ethos. However, the gender role of women fighters challenges traditional notions. And women involved in nationalist conflicts sometimes face resistance from their men—because they perceive these women fighters as a threat to the security of their masculinity (ibid). Also in the article 'Cogs in the wheel women in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam', armed

Tamil women have become public actors by participating in armed struggle, a group that rejects traditional notions of femininity. However, Alison (2001) has revealed that there is uncertainty in the nature of women's role change by raising several questions, such as whether this public activity is temporary. Whether it ended in war? Can this activity be integrated with peacetime? To further explain this I consult the study of Lunna, Harr, and Hilhorst (2017). They have explored gender roles during and after the Maoist conflict in the Chitwan and Kathmandu districts of Nepal through Connell's theory of gender and power. His findings differ from the findings of the studies carried out in Sri Lanka. During the Maoist conflict, women and men were given the same roles—platoon commanders; providing training; fighting; Handling firearms and ammunition. Also, both sexes were engaged in service-oriented work—providing health care; Involved as cooks and cleaners in canteens; acting as ambassadors; tree climbing; Carrying logs; Participation in guard duty; hard military exercises; Engaging in construction works; and organizing cultural events and festivals. She adds that women fighters who assumed a new role within the Maoist movement after the war were forced back into traditional roles by governments – seeking traditional jobs; they depended on their husband's income. And some of them are enjoying the dominance of their husbands when it comes to access to property. Likewise, the role practices of men who participated in the war and men who left home during the war changed after the war. He found that women and their wives held liberal views—in a post-conflict context, men do housework; help their wives clean the kitchen; fetch water and Childcare work.

Consequently, these analyses demonstrate that transient shifts in gender roles have occurred during times of crisis. But following the crisis in Tamil society, women are expected to fulfill their traditional roles and be excluded from the harmonious social structure.

Sexuality

In the context of ethnic conflict, sexual assault has ramifications for the entire community, according to Radhika Coomarasawamy, the United Nations rapporteur on violence against women. "In ethnic conflict, raping or mutilating women is to raid the inner sanctum, the spiritual core of ethnic identity, and to defile it," she says. "The female body is a symbol of the community's honor and its inner sanctum.". to freely sexually assault women. "It's to assert domination and to symbolically assault ethnic identity in its most protected space" (Direct quoted from Manoranjan, 2010:142). The traditional gender roles that society has constructed that portray women as weak are expressed through violence against women during times of war. This context highlights the cries and cries of women during the war. However, sexual harassment of male soldiers during times of war is a significant aspect of their job. Numerous pieces of evidence support this. Thus, many Tamil women have experienced sexual violence during the bloody civil war in Sri Lanka between the minority Tamil separatists led by the LTTE and the Sinhalese-dominated government. It was believed that women could be raped at the checkpoint in Sri Lanka (Manoranjan, 2010). "Nationalist and ethnic conflicts, often based on assumptions about 'natural' hierarchies, tend to see women as the 'weaker sex' in addition to producers and defenders of ethnic or national heritage," claims Goldstein (2001) regarding ethnic conflicts (Sonal et al. , 2020).

Additionally, during the Sri Lankan civil war, women in camps suffered from sexual violence (mostly anal sex violence), extrajudicial executions, and torture, according to the OHCHR (2014) report. Outside, women also experienced gender-based and sexual violence during this time. As a result, in order to obtain information, Sri Lankan military personnel coerced Tamil women into performing sexual favors. In other words, Sri Lankan military personnel at the time demanded that women use their bodies as sexual objects because they believed that doing so would jeopardize the women's or their loved ones'

safety (ibid). Similarly, after their husbands were executed after the Russian invasion, more women were raped in front of their relatives (Khullar, 2022). Additionally, modern nations like France and Germany sexually assaulted women from adversary nations during World War I (Virgili, 2020). The bodies of women were tortured at the Ravensbrück Women's Concentration Camp during World War II (1939–1945). Consequently, 90,000 European women perished in the camp, despite the fact that 130,000 were imprisoned there (ibid). Numerous historical records demonstrate that male soldiers engaged in military prostitution in addition to rape during times of war (Goldstein, 2001). The Roman Empire ran brothels for its soldiers in this sense. The German and French armies established brothels under military control during World Wars I and II. Three-quarters of American soldiers served during World War II.

Therefore, aggression and sexual violence are expressions of male dominance in war. That is, wartime rape by an armed, violent patriarchal society with the aim of controlling and connecting with the territory/country leaves women weak or vulnerable. Sri Lanka's history of ethnic conflict has resulted in many women being suffocated by the Sinhalese majority's sexual harassment of women in military camps and testing booths. It is said that these women took up arms in the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam movement to eliminate this. However, in the last war, women fighting in the LTTE, such as Tamilini and Izaipriya, were raped and killed by the army. Therefore, in the context of war, women are only seen as weak, regardless of whether they are armed or fulfill the traditional female role at home. This secondary data shows that in times of crisis, women view themselves as sexual objects. Therefore, the patriarchal society avenges sexual abuse on women who have taken on the role of armed women. Because they expect to take on the traditional gender roles of patriarchal society.

Women's Roles in Peacebuilding

Peacebuilding or reconciliation is seen in the process of empowering post-war women. This is what peacemakers say, there is no peace without women (Mathew, 2010). The concept of peacebuilding came to the world's attention in 1992 with former UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's 'A Practical Agenda for Peace'. Thus identifying peace-building structures to avoid a relapse into conflict leads to stabilization and strengthening of peace. However, the traditional view of women as non-political citizens underestimates women's contribution to politics. In this way, women who are subjected to violence and are more affected in times of war led by men are called to make peace. Women increasingly bear the brunt of the conflict. Women have often suffered differently than men in the Sri Lankan civil war. It is in this context that women are empowered in peacebuilding. Thus, the role played by women in building peace in Sri Lanka in the past years can be explained in four periods. (1) Pre-conflict period (2) First period of conflict from 1983 to 2009 (3) Cease-fire or inter-conflict period from 2002 to 2006 (4) post-conflict period seeking sustainable peace and reconciliation (Aryasinha, 2015). I will explain the above four phases based on the report presented by Aryasinha, in 2015 for the Geneva Peace Conference.

Women's involvement in Sri Lankan politics was seen in the pre-conflict period, especially in the pre-independence period. Thus, Sri Lankan women were involved in voting for the first time in 1931. Following this, these women worked as voters, party workers, and campaigners. Following this, Ruvanwella and Naisum Saravanamuthu became involved in politics in Colombo North. Following this, various women's movements emerged in Sri Lankan civil society. Thus Ivanka (2008) mentions that women's movements like 'Kulangana Samiti' and 'Makhila Samiti' engaged in social service activities - considered Sri Lanka's first women's social movement - helped women enter public life and advance the

interests of society. This was followed by the 'Women's Sun Flower Movement' - which used the proceeds from the sale of sunflowers to help the poor and ex-soldiers and to provide relief for malaria epidemics (Aryasinha, 2015). The peace-building activities of these women's organizations in Sri Lanka were also part of the country's independence. Thus, the role of Sri Lankan women in the pre-independence era was a stepping stone to building a peaceful and sustainable peaceful society at the micro level (ibid).

During the period of protracted conflict (from 1983 to 2009), the country has had social, economic, cultural, physical, and psychological impacts on women as a result of civil conflict in the northern and eastern regions and southern regions. As a result, women in the north raised their voices to establish peace through the 'Mother's Front' organization formed in the north in 1984- It was about seeking truth and justice about the missing persons. Samuel (2006) points out that 'AnnaiyarMunnani' (Mother's Federation) was the first women's organization from the North to call for political dialogue to resolve the ethnic crisis. This was followed by the formation of the 'AnnaiyarPeramana' in the south - an organization that protested against the disappearance of young men and women who had died due to the political violence of the time between the soldiers and the JVP (Aryasinha, 2015). Emmanuel et al (2009) mention that one of the strategies used by some women's organizations in their peace-building activities is 'international lobbying'. Made by networks (Aryasinha, 2015). In this way, the Association for War Affecters of War (AWAW) established in Kandy in 2001, the 'Women's Peace Alliance' at the local level, and international organizations like 'Women Waging Peace', 'Women Thrive World Wide' WISCOMP', 'SAFHR' and 'ICRC' were connected. The Center for Women and Development was established in 1988 in Jaffna. Internationally the 'South Asian Peace and Caucus' was linked to the 'CHA', the 'Women's Peace Alliance', and the 'National Peace Council' domestically. 'Suriya Women's Development Centre' established in 1991 in Batticaloa was affiliated with 'SANGAT' and 'APWLD' (Aryasinha, 2015). On

the other hand, the 'Women and Media Group' established among Sinhalese women in Colombo, 'Linga's Mothers' and 'People' locally, 'Sri Lanka Women for Peace and Democracy', and internationally 'North East Direct India', 'South Asian Nations for Human Rights', 'International Women's Rights' Action Watch (IWRAW)', 'Women for Peace Worldwide', 'International Women's Tribune Centre', 'Women's International League for Peace and Freedom' and 'Dawn South Asia'. How have these women's organizations worked to build peace operations? Dharmadasa (2010) has revealed that in 2001, a women's organization of 7 women entered the LTTE-controlled area and facilitated a cease-fire in 2002 through an operation carried out by the Association of War Afflicted Women (AWAW). Thus, three decades of war and conflict led to women's peace-building activities (Aryasinha, 2015).

A 'gender sub-committee was formed during the ceasefire or conflict period (from 2002 to 2006) consisting of women appointed by the government and representatives of the LTTE - a body that brought women into formal dialogue and led to consensus. Samuel notes (2011) that 'the sub-committee on gender issues is a unique mechanism created for the full consultation of the peace process'. Also during this period, women's organizations such as International Centre for Ethnic Studies (ICES), Surya Movement, and the Muslim Women's Action Forum went to the conflict areas to collect information and help the victims of the problem to access legal aid. For example, Surya Movement Association help to women whose family members have been missing or killed has been able to access aid. Similarly, the Muslim Women's Action Forum helped to talk about wartime experiences and present demands for an end to the war (ibid). In the post-conflict period (after the end of the war in May 2009), women's concerns in peace-building have been making alternative statements for meetings. The report included a section on women and conflict and was submitted to the UN's Global Periodic Review process. Also, during this period, women in civil society and feminist activists attracted domestic and international attention.

Particularly in relation to violence against women, gender-based violence, and post-conflict discrimination-based violence; they are also working towards seeking relief for the victims. Women are working with international organizations to bring issues to the Human Rights Council and other international forums. In such a way, the affected women are conducting campaigns and protests for the disappeared people together- headed by Ananthi Sasisatharan, the wife of the deceased former leader of the LTTE. Why were these women involved in peacebuilding or reconciling work? Because women become more vulnerable during times of crisis and take part in peace processes. I.e. carrying huge burdens - wartime sexual violence, loss of family members, migration, destruction of property, and the resulting socio-economic setbacks are the reasons for women to search for ways to prevent the recurrence of violence. Thus, in the wake of the conflict, women in civil society are working with political and non-governmental organizations to promote peace and reconciliation. Similarly, Rehn and Johnson Sirleaf (2002) state that women in Afghanistan are involved in activities for the well-being and security of their communities. Thus, during the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, women held secret meetings and created maps of underground schools and hospitals. Likewise, women from opposing ethnic and religious groups in Sudan have come together to discuss peace. Similarly, Mathew (2010) states that Indian women are involved in peace activities. In this way, since the outbreak of violent conflict in Kashmir, they are looking for ways to overcome it and hold talks. Based on this, they are now above suffering. Also, the states of Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Tripura experienced political unrest, and various activities by women's groups and collectives helped to bring about reconciliation and peace among these communities (ibid). This is what Das Gupta (2001) has said as these women are seen as able to cope with violence from terrorists and security forces. This role helped them to break out of the traditional boundaries constructed by the patriarchal society and the result of violence empowered them (Mathew, 2010). Therefore, when we look at women's peace-

promoting activities during and after the war, it is a process of social upliftment. Here the word “reversion” refers to a return or restoration (reconciliation) to a state with a traditional structure that expects women to assume their traditional roles.

Conclusion

Therefore, when armed conflict ends, societies are interested in returning to normal pre-war gender roles. As a result, many women lose the power and freedom they gained during the war. Society does its best to protect it. This is what Karen Anderson says: “Although the war challenged traditional gender practices, it provided only a temporary retreat from the practice of women's skills and roles” (Yesil, 2006). Similarly, Ruth Milkman notes that at the end of hostilities, women “gracefully” withdraw from male roles (Yesil, 2006). In other words, women in male-led families are viewed as valuable in society. Because they are under the control of men. On the other hand, female heads of families, former combatants, etc. are excluded from the family and society. Because society rejects their role at the political level (armament) and economic level (women-led work) beyond the limited dairy status within the traditional family. Since the education and careers of men and women are severely restricted in the war environment due to exclusively Sinhala law, they continue to expect women who are traditionally considered the best Tamil women. Post-conflict Tamil men are still expected to work outside the home. Thus, although women took on a new role as combatants, it was a temporary role change in terms of the postwar reconstruction process. The social security that combatant women have built is thus threatened by post-war peace and reconstruction efforts, which represent a return to archaic roles. As a result, it is evident that during times of crisis, society expects men and women to assume traditional roles while also questioning new gender roles.

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