



**Economic and Social
Council**

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/2003/NGO/1
30 June 2003

ENGLISH ONLY

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on the Promotion
and Protection of Human Rights
Fifty-fifth session
Item 6 (a) of the provisional agenda

**OTHER HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES:
WOMEN AND HUMAN RIGHTS**

Written statement* submitted by Jammu and Kashmir Council for Human Rights
(JKCHR), a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[20 June 2003]

*This written statement is issued, unedited, in the language(s) received from the submitting non-governmental organization(s).

Human Rights are Women's Rights' a statement which carries with it both huge responsibility and complexity. Women's human rights issues range from gender inequality, forced marriage, trafficking, displacement, rape to the impact of armed conflict.

However one key issue traditionally associated with men is that of the impact of armed conflict. This area raises two further aspects the first being the role and impact of women during conflict and secondly their role in the aftermath of armed conflict.

It is most encouraging to have seen the adoption of security resolution 1325) October 2000 on women, peace and security. It highlights the central role that women and girls must play in order to participate both in the peace process and that of the impact of the conflict.

It is of fundamental importance that the impact of armed conflict on women is further studied, researched and that the recommendations are implemented. In today's day and age with the changing nature of warfare, as well as the advancement and use of technology changing so to has the role of women.

The role of women in armed conflict is both a differing and complex one. In many cases women have to take on numerous roles, with women sometimes having to take up the role of the provider and head of the family. At the same time many women become victims of rape, torture, genocide and mutilation and some are combatants themselves. It is therefore imperative that the impact and consequences of armed conflict are explored and acted upon in order for women to participate fully in the reconstruction of their nation.

Taking the issue of rape, this is a tool used very often and inflicted upon in the majority of cases on women from 'both sides' of the conflict and in both international non-international armed conflict. Furthermore the consequences of this instrument of war are degradation, humiliation, pain and suffering both physically and mentally. The impact of which go beyond the various tribes, traditions cultures and religions, as well as the conflict itself.

A further issue for consideration is that of the role of women as combatants and is also essential in providing redress for them in post conflict, with greater focus on training and reintegration in to society being needed. Programmes for reintegration need to be made more available and implemented. This is an area, which should not be neglected at any cost if long term national building and reconstruction are to take to be achieved. The reconstruction can only take place if the women, many of whom are mothers responsible for the family and therefore the future generation, are given the necessary help and facilities. Mothers are very often regarded as a key figure in many cultures and traditions can only help if there are mechanisms to help them and to address their specific needs and problems as a result of the conflict. Practical and far reaching steps to provide counseling, shelter, compensation, medical care as well as legal redress need to taken. A network of

support therefore needs to be established to meet the needs of the specific communities for effective rehabilitation and reintegration.

Another key aspect of armed conflict are the peace processes and post conflict reconstruction which have never before been given as much importance as they are being given today. Women therefore can play a vital and pivotal role in the aftermath of the conflict if the adequate training programmes and mechanisms are provided. Essentially women must not be viewed as just the victims of armed conflict but also be seen and act as negotiators, peacemakers and mediators working around the table and actively participating in the reconstruction of their nation. By bringing women to the fore front of negotiations would strengthen the peace process and long-term success. By involving women in the planning and implementation stage at all levels of the community would enhance the reconstruction process. Women therefore can play a key role and bridge the gaps of the various, by going beyond the traditional rivalries of tribe's cultures, which may exist. For long-term success and to prevent return to conflict education therefore must be at the very heart of any reconstruction and rebuilding process.

Another important area to recognize is the involvement of women in the immediate aftermath of the conflict. An example is that of distribution of relief and aid, which is an aspect, women must be involved with and to liaise at a local level. It is at the immediate aftermath that liaison must be initiated to bring women in for their input and participation. Women NGO's are therefore vital particularly to deal with the gender specific issues, to provide training and assistance as well as counseling and care to deal with psychological trauma, healthcare and other training programmes. By bringing these facilities and help at such an early stage will build the necessary trust for future development and reconstruction.

In achieving the above it is also vital that help is given to allow confidence and skill building measures to take place to promote participation and interest and to provide the transition from a feeling of being a victim to one of empowerment. Consequently there needs to be awareness and understanding that armed conflict and its impact affect women in many ways including physically, psychologically as well as socially and economically. This can only be achieved by increased participation in conflict resolution and decision making stages.

It is important to stress that in order to ensure lasting peace and security a balance needs to be struck by ensuring that women's human rights protection is afforded to them and that their roles extend to government and judiciary levels so that their contribution is embedded for the future be it at a local, national or international level.