

Challenges to Sustainable Peace and Conflict Situation in Southern Sudan: Gender Perspective

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Abstract

This study set out to investigate the challenges of sustainable reintegration in post-conflict situations using a gender perspective and case studying the South Sudan experience. The study objectives were: (i) To establish the problems of economic empowerment of women and how these can limit the sustainability of refugee reintegration; (ii) examine how access to land and its ownership pose challenges to the sustainability of refugee reintegration; (iii) analyse how marginalization of women limits the sustainability of refugee reintegration, and (iv) to elucidate how lack of social rehabilitation limits the sustainability of refugee reintegration. Review of literature was done in accordance to the study objectives. The study used both qualitative and quantitative approaches in the process of data collection and the main tools of data collection were respondents' questionnaire, interviews with key informants, and focus group discussions. A total sample of 170 respondents was covered. The findings indicate that the social economic empowerment profile of the women returnees is a set of intertwined, counter-reinforcing issues that places them at a disadvantage right from the outset yet reintegration programmes are not adequately addressing these vulnerabilities. There is widespread lack of access/ownership to land by women due to gender, cultural discrimination and most critically due to the peculiar post-war circumstances. Moreover there is fluidity in land policy and administration between the different levels of government, which places the 'gender and land' issues far off the national policy discourse. There is therefore a gender-blind, supply driven approach to reintegration by the government and aid agencies, which is worsening the above vulnerabilities. The recommendations therefore suggest practical solutions for empowerment of women such as micro credit, skills training/capacity building; land reform to address the post-conflict land challenge that women find themselves in. At policy levels, there is need for aggressive gender mainstreaming with specific target to women in governments efforts to service delivery such as affirmative girl-child education to promote female gender participation / representation in leadership positions among others.

Keywords: Conflict management, re-integration after war, women based re-integration after war

1. Introduction

War and conflict are unwanted elements in any society. There is however a challenge in relation to these two concepts since it is impossible for all people to agree about a given situation or scenario. The disagreements breed into conflicts and fights which may later lead into social chaos. This chaos, if not well managed, war may break out leading to loss of propriety and money in a given locality. These are events that any peaceful society wouldn't like to see. End of this war allows re-integration of the war affected people who are mostly located in refugee camps in neighboring villages and countries. The process of effective re-integration of refugees forms the centre of this study with main focus on the influence of female and women in the re-integration process.

2. Theoretical review

The theoretical review has been prepared to capture information in relation to the objectives of the study but based on the review of literature prepared by previous researchers. The review is presented in four sections as indicated in the subsections below.

2.1 Economic Empowerment of women

The centrality of the economic, political and social participation of women in development has been widely acknowledged (Zpevakova, 2011; Coleman, 2004; Nzomo, 2002; Lazaris, 2002). This is particularly true in post-conflict societies where women often make up the majority of the population and have primary responsibility for raising the next generation (Coleman 2004). Economic revitalisation is one of the key ways of achieving sustainable reintegration of populations in post-conflict situations.

Women as a social category share certain experiences and interests that may generate a level of solidarity that mobilizes them to rebuild, displaying courage, fortitude and great resiliency in seeking to pick up the shattered pieces of their lives (Nzomo, 2002). Nzomo (2002) further argues that whether before, during or after conflicts, women remain important economic actors, as individuals and as participants in self-help groups and extended networks. Women do not only make a contribution to the economic recovery of their families, but also play a major role in revitalizing the economic sphere at large. Lazaris (2002), in this regard, has illustrated that men and women have different roles and relationships to peace-building and violence reduction; women and

men have different needs, interests and strategies in peace building. The women have however been marginalized in the peace rebuilding process regardless of their importance in it (Zpevakova 2011). This is mostly considered to be a result of women being less empowered economically compared to men (Kemirere 2007).

2.2 Land: The Fall Back Capital for Returnees

In many countries where development has recently been curtailed by armed conflict, agriculture is always the primary form of livelihood and the major source of income for a majority of the population (Nzomo 2002; Sorensen 1998). Wandia (2009) and Kindi (2010) highlight the importance of women in agriculture noting that they contribute 60-90 per cent of the labour used to produce food but own only 20% of land. This is a challenge to their full contribution towards eliminating hunger in their communities. Because of this fact therefore, access, control and ownership of land by women are key factors in eradicating hunger and rural poverty. Lastarria-Cornhiel (2005), on her part, argues that resources controlled by women are more likely to be used to improve family food consumption and welfare, reduce child malnutrition, and increase overall wellbeing of the family.

The United Nations has contended that if women's enjoyment of their rights to land, housing and property is obstructed during times of relative peace, their enjoyment of these rights during conflict situations is nearly prohibited (UN Habitat 1999). Women who return to their homes and land in the post conflict time either face the same lack of access as they did in pre-conflict or, if widowed or if their spouses are missing, they are confronted by male relatives who rely on custom or power to deny and usurp women's claims to stand in their spouse's position (Rooij 2005). This presents a serious social challenge towards the women.

2.3 Post-conflict Marginalization of Women

The social domain is important to understand the sustainability and status of women's economic initiatives, as these are judged and responded to according to social attitudes prevailing among other local actors, especially male authorities (UN DESA 2004b). While some men accept and even encourage women's engagement in the new economic activities, many others reject the implicit challenge. Women obviously share many interests and problems with their male fellow citizens, but they also differ on a number of issues (Sorensen 1998). Sorensen continues to say that specific concerns of women are shaped by their social roles as daughters, wives and mothers as well as by the economic positions and obligations which they have within a family and a community as well as by the prevailing cultural conceptualizations of gender roles and relationships. Sorensen further notes that women's post-war position will be partly determined by their former positions in the landscapes of conflict, as internally displaced persons, widows, single breadwinners, victims of rape or torture, ex-combatants and even refugees.

These different positions play a decisive role in defining the motivations as well as the constraints to women's involvement as social actors in the various processes towards sustainable peace. These may be intentional or inadvertent as well as institutional or cultural. A repeatedly made observation is that although women play essential roles in Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) processes, they are consistently almost never included in the planning or implementation of these processes (Lastarria-Cornhiel 2005; Farr, 2003). They are thus unable to ensure that their interests are addressed.

The position of women in re-integration process is further highlighted by Security Council Resolution 1325 (UN 2000) which begins with the recognition that women's visibility, both in national and regional instruments and in bi- and multi-lateral organizations, is crucial. It goes on to call for gender awareness in all aspects of post-conflict initiatives including reintegration and calls for informed and active participation of women in these exercises. It also insists of the right of women to carry out their post-conflict reconstruction activities in an environment free from threat, especially of sexualized violence.

The above observation emphasizes the fact of women marginalization in post conflict reconstruction and confirms international resolutions calling upon stake holders to involve women in rehabilitation activities. This research therefore sets out to investigate whether such forms of marginalization caused by state planners existed in the South Sudan reintegration process or not and if they did then find possible ways to rectify them.

2.4 Social Rehabilitation

According to Ghanem (2003), voluntary repatriation and return has been promoted by governments, NGOs and UN agencies as the most durable solution to refugees' displacement. Ghanem further contends that returnees are perceived differently from refugees. She says, "While refugees are seen as *uprooted* and *displaced*, returnees are considered to be naturally 're-rooted' and placed back in the right order of things". Ghanem (2003) indicates that this assumption is highly problematic. She further ponders: "*how are returnees expected to 're-connect' with 'home' after the experience of life-threatening situations in their country of origin, years of exile in a different social environment and the return to a changed country?*" The material dimensions of reintegration tend to overshadow the short and long-term emotional problems refugees experience upon return. However, most

programmes aim at only ensuring the returnees are back home and given a package to sustain them for only a few months. This means that the programmes leave out social issues like counseling them and enabling them go over trauma suffered in the previous times during the conflict or while in the foreign country.

In today's warfare, 90 to 95 percent of the casualties are civilians, and the majority of them are women and children (ISS, 2003). Other estimates reveal that 80 percent of the world's forty million refugees are women and children. These victims of war and aggression are often deprived of the most basic needs of existence. In addition to ordinary health care problems and relief, intra-state wars produce a number of specific health problems known as psychosocial traumas (ISS, 2003; Sorensen 1998). These traumas may stem from experiences of forced displacement and separation from their loved ones, torture, rape, violence as well as witnessing killings. In many cases, women have been particularly vulnerable to this kind of assault in mind and body. In developing countries where many systems including health, security, social systems are still not strong enough, very few programmes have implemented the social reconstruction projects that include counseling and family building. This leaves a lot of physiologically hurt people yearning for someone to listen to them which calls for interventions that this research is aiming at finding out whether they exist or not in the case of South Sudan.

Other beneficial sets of information gathered from research in Sierra Leone by the DAI group stipulate that Stigma is an important factor that affects adequate resettlement into communities. The DAI report cites scenarios from War zones in Uganda, Sierra Leone and Sudan and cautions that victimized returnees or those that may have engaged in atrocities in one way or another, especially women, will always be stigmatized and rejected by civil society because of the atrocities, deaths, and destruction that have occurred because of the years of fighting. "Women especially may be stigmatized, whether or not they were abducted or raped by the combatants. A girl or woman who is pregnant or has borne a child while with the combatants is even more stigmatized, as are her children" (DAI Report, 2012). This stigmatization may result in women being abused by their families and home communities.

While the above researchers acknowledge the need for psychosocial support in return and reintegration, this particular study considered their work to be a stepping stone to the next level by investigating what kind of traumas were experienced by the women and what such psychosocial services are available within the areas to which refugees are returning. The study in so doing will check if traditional African systems for support are still working and providing needed psycho-social support to victims with specific interest in South Sudan.

3. Methodology

The study was conducted following a combination of qualitative and quantitative research designs together with explanatory research design. This was as a result of a need to obtain a snapshot view of the responses in relation to the study. A total of 302 respondents in refugee camps in South Sudan were considered to form the study population out of which only 170 were selected as the sample study using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) Sampling table. These refugee camps were mainly located in Yei County of South Sudan. To cater for bias, the respondents were stratified into women returnees, men returnees and government officials. The strata of women and men returnees had equal numbers of sampled respondents which was 80. Only 10 government officials were sampled for inclusion into the sample. For this study, self administered questionnaires, interviews, focus grouped discussions (FGD) and observations were used to collect the relevant data from respondents.

Questionnaires were used for literate men and women returnees. The interviews were administered to the government officers part of whom were UN agency officials as well as NGO leadership. Focus grouped discussions were conducted with the leaders of different women and men returnee groups to gather more information for the study. Observation was also used alongside the other three mainly capturing information of how the refugees lived and interacted as well as the condition that they were in.

4. Data analysis, results and discussion

A review of the questionnaires that were returned from the field was conducted to establish whether the respondents participated as expected. Basing on the review, a total of 136 questionnaires were found to have been fully filled and returned out of the 170 questionnaires issued out. This represented 80% response rate which was good for this study. For the case of interviews and FGDs, 100% response rate was registered. In the analysis of the collected data, the SPSS software was employed to analyse mainly quantitative data. For qualitative data especially in relation to involvement of women in re-integration process, there was a use of Harvard Analytical Framework on Gender to perform analysis on the data.

4.1 Results

Findings of the study present information relating to the study objectives and discuss how these pose a limiting factor in the sustainability of returnee reintegration. The issue is explored from both the perspective of the returnee women and the reintegration programme implementers.

4.2 Social-economic characteristics and empowerment of women

The study explored available livelihood options that women were engaged in. It was revealed that 31.7% of respondents were housewives while 25.6% were carrying out business (or trade) and 24.4% were into agriculture and farming. The remaining group of women respondents (18.3%) was employed in cheap labour in people's homes

Findings indicate that agriculture comes second in place as means of survival for returnees in general and women in particular. This may be explained by the mere fact that most returnees were found settled in Juba town and did not return to their original villages outside Juba claiming lack of confidence in the capacity of government to provide security and secondly, lack of social services in their villages (where they were supposed to be).

For those who reported that they were engaged in some type of businesses (trade), there was further probing into the kind of business the women were involved in. This inquiry revealed that businesses that these women reported to be involved in were simple petty businesses which did not require skills or large capital investment. The income generating activities recorded included buying and selling grass, making and selling local brew (alcohol), selling small quantities of food stuff and selling wood fuel (charcoal). There are also women who were engaged in sex trade though this is something that is not openly discussed. This clearly indicates that the women had a challenge of getting capital to do more useful business for survival. Lack of support from the South Sudan government further worsens the situation of women returnees in South Sudan.

These findings indicate that the reintegration programmes were lacking. The main focus of such programmes has been to ensure that the women come back. Support towards such women to ensure long term survival was not exhibited.

In addition, the study sought to know the level of dependency towards the women. It was found that 35% of respondents had over 5 children to look after while 29% of them had three to five children to cater for. 24% of the respondents have one to three children to look after and only 12% of them did not have children.

While the numbers of children reflected above seem normal in the African societies, the challenge is that in this particular case of South Sudan, these were families returning to a weak government, poor infrastructure and limited social services. The economic, physical and social burden for the woman as a key stakeholder in rebuilding the household and society life was therefore aggravated by this situation of having many children to cater for.

The study also sought to know which groups of women have the highest level of child dependency. Correlation tests revealed that generally the less educated (or uneducated women) had more children than those who were educated. The correlation statistic of 0.7 indicated that low educated women have more children than educated ones. This is because the less educated women are more likely to get married earlier than the educated ones. Findings further revealed that those without education were the majority at 60.71% of the selected respondents. This puts the educated women at 39.29% of the respondents. The group of the educated women is composed of those who were educated up to primary level education (32.14%) and those who were educated up to secondary level (7.15%).

Findings further revealed that out of the women who had three to five children, 55% had no education, 40% were educated only up to primary level and 5% were educated up to secondary level while there was none with above secondary education. Of the women who had one to three children, 29.17% had no education, 54.17% were educated up to primary level, 12.5% were educated up to secondary education level while 4.17% attained above secondary education. Out of the number of women who had no children, 40% never went to school, 20% attained primary level education, 10% had secondary education while 30% had attained above secondary education. In this group, the high percentage of those who never went to school was constituted by older women who never remarried once they lost their husbands during the war and as well, young girls who had become of age but never got any opportunity to go to school.

Lack of education and the resulting high number of children for the uneducated returnee women significantly limits the alternative sources of income that they can access. The two factors of low levels of education and high numbers of children/dependants are counter-reinforcing and interrelated in limiting the chances of women to better their social-economic status. This makes it extremely hard to help the women returnees as they need a lot of support and yet their government has limited resources.

4.3 The land issues in reintegration

In this study, agriculture was found to be the second most important source of livelihood for women returnees. This was outside the norm in away because usually agriculture comes first. However for the particular case of returnees to Yei, majority chose to stay within the town rather than return to their original areas (villages) of origin.

Findings indicate that more than half of the women who were respondents to this study do not stay with their husbands (widowed, divorced and single) which indicates that a lot more women may never have

access to land due to their marital status. This becomes even more complicated for those women who lost their husbands while in combat or those who lost their husbands while seeking repatriation in other countries. The findings overall revealed that women can have access to land but the land is seen as solely belonging to their husbands or family with the women simply having the “the right of use” while as wives or children to the family they belong to.

Basing on the findings obtained in this research, 39% the women do not own any land whereas only 17% reported owning some land. Furthermore, 29% have no access to land for agriculture in any way whereas 15% use land owned by husbands. In general, only 30% of women have access to land, which is either owned by husbands or by themselves; an indication that the 70% have no influence on land use. Considering the fact that most of families of returnees are headed by women, most families are put at stake as a result of 70% of women failing to access land.

Now the question is that; since females as found out in this study head more households, and most of the women are not educated past primary education, how do these families survive? Looking at the state of South Sudan, even if the traditional mode of land ownership through the communal system was maintained, such land has to be demined first which has not yet been done. This means there must be a big proportion of families that are hardly surviving on one meal a day due to the facts of the demographic characteristic of South Sudan women and this is breeding to a big economic problem that may turn into a calamity soon. This lack of access or ownership of land poses a critically limiting factor in the economic empowerment of the women, as land for agriculture is one of the most important forms of capital for the Sudanese refugee returnees.

To probe this issue further, women were asked about the possibility of inheriting the husband’s land in case he died. While 65% of women respondents said they are allowed to inherit the land belonging to their husbands upon their death, 23% said they are not allowed. The remaining groups of women were not sure. One of the responses of these women has been extracted here below.

“For me I was allowed to take over the land where I used to live with my husband before the war broke out. I am happy I managed to get it though it was very hard. I went through very many steps to convince the authorities that the land was actually ours (me together with the children). In fact, it was the presence of the children that helped me to access the land. Otherwise, I was supposed to go to my parents’ land” [From an interview with Florence Justine]

Therefore, economic empowerment through land ownership is still a challenge especially among the families stricken by poverty. This makes the whole situation complicated for non-married women with no money to buy land and no husbands and no skills at all. This may also explain why some women resort to sex trade given the lack of alternative sources of livelihood.

The land ownership situation is further complicated by the fact that most returnees including women, have chosen to stay in the urban areas where land is limited and expensive to buy. Additionally, those who went into refugee camps when they were young may have difficulty to re-trace their original homes or even have claim on the land of their ancestors. This is a common characteristic and a challenge of all refugee returnees in post conflict areas world over.

Reports from different sources have come up on land and property rights taken over by government institutions for public use without compensation. Such reports include cases of land grabbing by top government officials and oil companies bypassing local authorities and communities and embarking on drilling; and incidents of taking land without consultation by mining and oil companies, as well as investors using land for commercial farming have been reported (Forojalla and Galla, 2010). In the midst of all this, the biggest losers are the women returnees. At the policy level it means that in the wider land question the main concern is about finding the right ideological fit – between the free market development paradigm and the communal approach – in which case the issue of gender and land ownership is relegated into non-issues, brushed aside by the high stakes in the ideological battle.

4.4 Placing women in the wider reintegration process

Under this section, the Harvard Analytical Framework was used to assess how women are faring in the reintegration process. The analysis involves identifying the most important economic activity and then examining within this identified economic activity what role, control and influence women have in it and its proceeds. The analysis further examines whether development agencies are undertaking gender-sensitive approaches to the reintegration process.

Findings indicated that although the women do all the activities, there are activities which under normal circumstances, (i.e. in marriage) would be done by men and those that would be done by women. One of the main economic activities, for the majority of the women, was agriculture. It was chosen to be the point of analysis for this purpose. Although a significant number of women in the survey indicated that they are engaged in trade, the actual trade many are engaged in (*cutting and selling grass and firewood*) was seen as a transient and unsustainable and therefore not very relevant for this purpose of the study. The following table shows the

gender-disaggregated tasks done in agriculture.

Table 1: Showing who does what in agriculture

Time based outline of tasks	Women	Men	Both
Clearing the field		✓	
Tilling the field			✓
Planting	✓		
Tending/weeding	✓*		
Harvesting			✓
Post-harvest handling	✓		
Sale/marketing (in case)		✓	

Source: Primary Data

* Sometimes men also participate, but it is mostly the women who do.

The next aspect of the gender analysis is the *access and control profile*. The task is to identify the resources used and needed to carry out the work identified in the activity profile, which in this case is agriculture and access to and control over its use, by gender. The aim was to know whether women and men have access to resources, who controls their use, and who controls the benefits of the proceeds of these resources.

The main requisite resource for agriculture was identified as land as well as inputs such as seeds, implements like hoes and financial capital. As it has already been illustrated, the majority of the women either do not own any land or do not have access to land for agriculture. The post-conflict situation of South Sudan poses even more tensions in relation to land. A problem of conflict over land between IDPs and returnees who came and are trying to claim the land they left behind are a daily occurrence. Secondly, 45% of the women said that one of the struggles women returnees face is that some of them were chased off the land. All these issues are hitting the women hardest with regard to access to land.

The control of land is derived from the local traditions or cultures. Usually, it is the men who own and thus control the land. This can also be observed even in case a man (husband) dies. One out of every four women in the survey indicated that they do not inherit their late husband's land; even when they do; it depends on whether she bore her husband children.

The third aspect of analysis is the *influencing factors* that determine division of labour and the differential access and control of the resource. The main influencing factor for the gender division of labour, access and control was again derived from culture. In a family, the boys inherit property while girls or their mothers remain without the same privileges. This causes a longer-term disadvantage to the women within their own families and in their marriages as even in a marriage; the family land is the property of the husband.

The fourth aspect is *project cycle analysis*. This examines a project or intervention in light of gender-disaggregated information and capturing the effects of social change on men and women. It examines the project from the stage of planning (how it incorporates the needs of the different genders especially the women) to the implementation stage (how women are involved and/or their peculiar needs addressed).

An analysis of several programmes of development and aid agencies in South Sudan using this analytical framework in focus group discussions revealed that these organizations do not have gender-sensitive programmes. They provide assistance in a blanket form without due regard to the different gender needs. The UN OCHA national field coordinator acknowledged the lack of specific focus on women. It is also reflected in the fact that women are unaware of organizations that are supposed to help returnees. It was found that 73.2% of the women surveyed said they did not know any NGO or governmental programmes helping women returnees. Basing on the responses from interviews conducted, one of the excerpts was extracted as documented below.

"I have been hearing from my colleagues that there are organizations that can help me but in reality I have never contacted them and they have never contacted me. They are even some of the people I am with in this camp that do not even know that these organizations exist. These are actually the majority. I think, in my opinion, there is need for these organizations to come to the camps and meet the refugees whom majority are we, the women" [Interview response from Christine Daa]

This probably explains why there is no visible participation and involvement as well as ownership of the decisions taken in respect to post war reintegration program in South Sudan by women and yet it is a requirement by most project donors to have a gender perspective in implementation of all projects. Women were asked where they themselves or others they know who have business got their start up assistance. Of those who do some form of business or who knew someone who does, the biggest number said they got help from their relatives; others got from micro-finance institutions and others started up out of their own effort.

4.5 Social rehabilitation

One of the greatest issues has been that often mechanisms for recovery are not (well) applied. It was found that over one third of women returnees have been victims of traumatising incidents directly or indirectly related to

the war. The majority of these trauma victims reported having been victimised during the war.

The findings from analysis revealed that 35% of women indicated that the source of their trauma was violence. However, 19% of the respondents said that their source of trauma is as a result of witnessing horrific killings. Although the respondents indicated different sources of their trauma, the majority (54% *i.e. the combined victims of violence and those who witnessed killings*) were affected as a result of the war. This is an indication of a hurting population which needs solace, support, and needs love to get back into normal life worth living and if unattended to will keep communities of disgruntled people looking at life in different ways.

The results further indicate the different timings when trauma was experienced by the returnees. They mirror the level of how widespread the traumatic experiences are among the returnee women. Overall, respondents show that 80% of the women suffered some form of trauma (*whether before, during or after the war*). Additionally, 40% of the respondents experienced trauma during the war. In the focus group discussions this issue was explored further. It was reported that the forms of trauma suffered during the war included rape, witnessing helplessly loved ones die due to avoidable deaths from even simple disease due to breakdown of social services, witnessing killings and general constant state of acute fear. However, in the focus group discussions there were women who never experienced the war trauma by moving early to take refuge in northern Uganda.

Findings further reveal that 14% of respondents said that they experienced trauma just after the war. In the group discussions it was noted that this group faced social problems like being unable to repossess their property, losing loved ones or finding that they had been infected with HIV/AIDS as a result of the war. What can be noted here is that there remains continuing forms of trauma even in the aftermath of the war.

To make this situation worse is the fact that there is a conspicuous absence of the state institutions and a breakdown of social services. It was widely reported in the group discussions that many of the women returnees did not receive any counseling or assistance prior to, during, or following the resettlement apart from that provided through individual interviews at the refugee transit points. Moreover, the staff conducting these interviews did not have adequate skills to recognize and cope with trauma. As such, there were no mechanisms or capacity in the different agencies for detection of trauma at the basic level but much less the facilities or provisions to handle it.

The absence of means or mechanisms for handling psychosocial issues could be reflected in the source of psychosocial support, which those who have been traumatized have got. The survey results show that the majority of the women were getting psychosocial support from relatives with the least number reporting that they got this support from government or non-governmental organizations. This is captured in the table below;

Table 2: Source of psychosocial support to women returnees

Source of support	Frequency	Percent
Government	1	5.6
NGOs	1	5.6
Relatives	14	77.8
Other	2	11.1
Total	18	100

Source: Primary Data

The results in the above table (Table 2) indicate a large majority of 77.8% of the women respondents were getting psychosocial support from relatives. But it is important to note the form of psychosocial support that people were reporting to be getting. In group discussions it was reported that the support people were getting from relatives was basically in form of shelter, food, and some medicine; it is mainly physiological involving only medical care, sometimes shelter and feeding. But even in such cases, it was noted in group discussions that the relatives who have been supporting vulnerable returnees are themselves barely able to fend for themselves. This finding confirms earlier discourse in the literature review where previous published pieces of work indicate that women are forgotten and marginalized (Degol, 2011). The results in Table 2 utterly indicate non-existence of psychological support for trauma victims even among NGOs which show that the community of women is still hurting and unattended to by all stakeholders in South Sudan.

The extra burden imposed on the women by those who need special assistance has been enormous. In the survey respondents were asked an open-ended question as to why trauma victims did not get support for overcoming trauma. Among the respondents who answered the question, the majority said that they didn't know about psychosocial support. Others said that there was no one to help while others simply had no access to such assistance. What is apparent from these responses is that most victims or their relatives probably did not know that trauma victims could be supported to overcome it and therefore never bothered to seek for assistance. The lack of a programme aimed at addressing psychosocial issues during reintegration was a major gap. As such the underlying psychological traumas were still unhealed for the victims and the resettlement process was affected.

5. Conclusion

The findings clearly indicate the effects that the women have gone through in the resettlement process. They

have been marginalised, denied of their rights to own land and even reported to be the less educated which even reduces their chances to access the services that were supposed to be their rights. They are however reported to head most of the families that have been resettled in South Sudan. From a general point of view therefore, if the challenges that women faced and are still facing in South Sudan in relation to re-settlement of returnees are solved, there would be an improved re-integration process in the region.

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