GENDER, CONFLICT AND SECURITY: PERSPECTIVES FROM SOUTH ASIA

CONFERENCE DETAILS
Dates: 23rd & 24th April 2015
Venue: South Asian University
Time: 9am-5 pm

ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE AT SOUTH ASIAN UNIVERSITY
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The changing reality of contemporary armed conflict in South Asia and its intersection with Gender pushes disciplinary confines of International Politics beyond conventional/ or given analytical templates both in theory and practice. While there have been gender incursions into the core domains of International Relations and its subfields, the path to subvert the dominant analysis of state, conflict, and security still remains long and arduous in South Asia. The discipline of International Politics in South Asia still largely remains masculine and state centric where space for alternative ways of thinking still remains narrow. Gender intersects with conflict and security yet remains at the margins of academic theorizing, policy priority and practitioner perspectives in South Asia.

Current gaps in knowledge emanating from the region nudges to re-interrogate the complex interplay between Gender, Conflict and Security in South Asia. This is undergirded in the assumption that women's 'lived experiences' in South Asia are different and there is need to push for making the ‘everyday political’ (Enloe: 2000), and bringing it to the ‘international’ realm of high politics. Enloe (2000: 300) writes: “Femininity as a concept and women as actors need to be made the objects of analytical curiosity when we are trying to make sense of international political processes.”

From the standpoint of International Policy with the UN Security Council adoption of Resolution 2122(2013) focusing on women, rule of law and transitional justice in conflict affected situations it has been a slow but a steady commitment to the Women, Peace and Security agenda. This had its beginnings with the landmark U.N. Security Council Resolution 1325(2000), which for the first time addressed the unique impact of armed conflict on women. The resolution recognized the need to bring more women on the peace table and highlighted the contributions women make to conflict prevention, peacekeeping, conflict resolution and peacebuilding. However from the standpoint of
implementation of these UN led policy frameworks, South Asia poses a critical challenge.

While the conference would be anchored to the core terrains of International Politics and Peace Studies, it would attempt to strike conversations across disciplines, particularly drawing on contributions from anthropology, sociology, political science and economics. It would engage with three broad themes: How does gender intersect with conflict and security discourse in South Asia? How would perspectives emanating from South Asia enrich the Women, Peace and Security discourse at the global level? How would this push to re-imagine the women, conflict and security discourse from a South Asian perspective?

It is underlined that the year 2015 is significant as the UNSCR 1325 celebrates its fifteenth anniversary this year. The proposed conference also attempts to explore the key gaps in terms of International Policy on Women, Peace and Security agenda, and how it ‘speaks’ or ‘not speaks’ to the contextual reality of the region. In the process it would attempt to bridge the gap between academic and practitioner discourse on Gender, Conflict and Security.

More specifically the conference would invite scholars and practitioners, to make theoretical and empirical contribution on the following subthemes:

1. How does contemporary armed conflict in South Asia blur the boundary between ‘local’, ‘regional’ and ‘global’? What implications, does this have for women?
2. Why and how are women’s ‘lived experience’ different in the region? Why is there a need to re-imagine the conflict and security discourse?
3. How is women’s ‘agency’ constituted and re-constituted during and after conflict? How does it impinge on power and security?
4. How does ‘political masculinity’ impinge on women rights and agency in South Asia?
5. How does ‘militarization’ and ‘demilitarization’ impact men and women differently in the region?

6. Why and how does ‘Gender’ intersect with Governance and Development in transitional societies in the region? How does this push to re-imagine the security discourse?

7. Why are women missing on the peace table? Do the negotiations agenda or peace agreements in the region reflect women’s issue adequately? If not, why?

8. What are the challenges to bringing about National Action Plan’s within the framework of UN1325 to the region?