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DEFINING JUSTICE AND DIGNITY THROUGH GENDERED PEACE BUILDING

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Abstract

After signing the Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) in November 2006, Nepal entered into a post-conflict era (Government of Nepal, 2006). However, the prolonged phase of political transition has led to increased anger and frustration among women who survived gender-based violence (especially the women who were raped and physically assaulted) during the Nepalese armed conflict, 1996-2006. They are still waiting for justice a decade later. The Citizens' relief, compensation and economic assistance procedure formulated after the war does not recognize women who were raped and physically assaulted in the category of conflict victims (Ministry of Peace and Reconstruction, 2009). Even 13 years after the CPA, the transitional mechanisms formulated on the basis of weak Act in February 2015 have not been able to implement their activity effectively, nor have an explicit plan to address such a large amount of human rights violation (Government of Nepal, 2014). The prolonged transition phase and changing political landscape of the country also side-lined the issue of gender-based violence of the conflict era of Nepal.

Using a critical theory framework and case study methodology, the primary goal of this research was to understand how the women who faced gender-based violence during the conflict era of Nepal define dignity and justice from their own lived experience and, consequently, their needs for reparations. Ultimately, the aim is to make possible the presentation of these women's voices and needs to the Truth-seeking commissions, other government bodies, and national and International organizations working with conflict -affected women. This research's findings have also expanded the body of knowledge and best practices for reconciliation in contexts where gender-based violence has been used as a weapon of war.

Key words: Nepal's armed conflict, women who faced sexual violence, transitional justice.