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**THE TALES OF THREE ASIAN COUNTRIES:
HOW INDONESIA, INDIA AND THE PHILIPPINES RECRUITED WOMEN
FOR UN PEACEKEEPING MISSIONS**

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Abstrak

Tulisan ini mengkaji perbedaan tiga negara dalam merekrut perempuan untuk berperan di bidang keamanan. Tulisan ini bertujuan untuk menjawab masalah umum dalam studi keamanan: Dimana perempuan? Khususnya, dimana perempuan dalam mendukung pasukan perdamaian Perserikatan Bangsa-Bangsa (PBB)? Walau jumlahnya setengah dari populasi dunia, namun kurang dari lima puluh persen perempuan bekerja di sektor swasta, lebih sedikit yang bekerja di sektor publik, dan sangat kurang yang berkecukupan di sektor keamanan. Jika keamanan benar-benar inklusif, maka perlu ada penelitian untuk menetapkan alasan di balik tidak hadirnya perempuan, dan untuk mencari alasan dibalik ketidakhadiran mereka. Dengan demikian, artikel ini berusaha untuk mengeksplorasi kontribusi beberapa negara anggota PBB dalam operasi perdamaian PBB, yaitu Indonesia, India dan Filipina. Artikel ini berfokus pada partisipasi perempuan dalam penjagaan perdamaian karena PBB saat ini sedang berusaha untuk meningkatkan jumlah perempuan dalam misi-nya. Studi kasus beberapa negara Asia ini untuk mengkaji bagaimana negara memosisikan perempuan sebagai aktor keamanan, apakah berada di tingkat yang sama dengan rekan-rekan pria mereka, atau apakah negara masih memosisikan mereka sebagai pihak yang selalu membutuhkan perlindungan.

Kata kunci

Indonesia, India, Filipina, Misi Perdamaian PBB, Partisipasi Perempuan,

Introduction

In running its peacekeeping missions, the UN does not have its own troops, but it relies greatly to member states' contribution of their professional defence and security personnel 'lend' to international mission. Therefore, it is important to understand how

contributing countries deploy women peacekeepers to peace operations, because this understanding will assist the UN authorities to increase the numbers of women involved in peacekeeping missions, as well as making the presence of these women more meaningful. The strategy of increasing the numbers of women peacekeepers is part of a gender-balancing approach to foster diversity and equality of access. From its establishment until today, the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (UNDPKO) is facing serious problems in increasing the proportion of women in total peacekeepers to meet the policy target of 20 per cent by 2014; hence, the target date was recently postponed to 2020.¹ Across 2009 and 2011, the number of policewomen grew by only 3 per cent and by just 0.3 per cent for military women.² Meanwhile, the strategy of making women peacekeepers' presence more meaningful is part of the UN gender mainstreaming approach to foster female leadership and involvement in decision-making, but is presently done through window dressing or tokenism, a facade for female inclusiveness. This study's academic contribution is positioned from the perspective of feminist internationalism, focusing on the emergent literature on gender in International Relations.

Feminist Internationalism

Different with the other type of feminism that works 'bottom-up' through focusing women issues and oppressions within the local context then argues specific solution, feminist internationalism elaborates transnational principles and standards to improve women's globally disadvantage situation.³ The establishment of United Nations in 1945 is perceived by women groups as an avenue to solve problems of marginalisation through a 'top-down' strategy, persuading states to develop and adopt resolutions and treaties to improve women's welfare, such as allowing women to keep their nationality after marriage, standardising working condition and endorsing women to vote. Effort by feminist internationalism to provide an international standard of respecting women's rights has received its share of antipathy from states with differing perspectives spanning from 'liberal' to 'religious' state that would deny those rights because they challenge national culture, tradition and policies.⁴ However, with international lobbies from women's groups and 'peer-pressure' from advanced democratic and developed states, more and more international treaties on women were signed.⁵ This approach of feminism is not exclusive from the feminist thoughts previously elaborated but rather a wider

expansion, bringing gender inequality from social issue to the level of state and international issue.

Notable contributors of feminism internationalism perspective are, amongst all, Jean Elshtain, Cynthia Enloe, Ann Tickner, Martha Nussbaum, Christine Sylvester and Laura Sjoberg.⁶ Feminists internationalism has a rich and wide focus and, thus, they sometimes contradict each other and also perceived nonspecific, this is arguably because there are many issue they aim to counter and there is no one-size fits all solution. For this research in specific, the author examines the reality in the field using the work of Elshtain's dualism of women's 'beautiful soul' and men's 'just warrior', Tickner's approach of questioning where are the women, what do they do, who are they represent, and Nussbaum's approach to focus on women abilities to overcome artificially enforced social hierarchy which will be explain in the following. Elshtain and Enloe have argued the masculine international relations realm, with men are doing all the action while women are watching or following of men's policy outcomes, hence giving women the voice to assert themselves is not only a necessity but an imperative.⁷ The stereotyping of women as the weak and innocent was highlighted by Elshtain when she referred to the oversimplified 'binary' – of women as 'beautiful souls' and men as 'just warriors', contextualising the differences of masculine and feminine as a working framework.⁸ Men are pushed to be brave warriors to protect the less strong women, who in turn are seen as procreators of children. Other types of action, different to the binary, will be considered as unnatural, even sometimes outlawed. Elshtain adopts her term from Hegel, who viewed women as beautiful souls protecting "the appearance of purity by cultivating innocence about the historical course of the world".⁹

Other feminist internationalism, Tickner is inquiring where women are in international relations and began to raise feminism theory in international relations, asking the notion of security rather than only military strength.¹⁰ Nussbaum was acknowledged for her exploration on how sex and sexuality have been enforced as source of artificial social hierarchy and how they are used to deny social justice to certain parts of the society, offering the focus on women's abilities and to value those abilities.¹¹ As the nation-state practice has been apathetic, the lack of women's involvement in the armed forces, obliges international organisations, like the UN, to call for increased female participation, constituting a strong push-factor for raising the importance of equal access and increased opportunity for women in the security sector. Although due to its male-dominance the peacekeeping operations may not be the successful example of UN

push to increase female presence, the effort of endorsing women's agency and participation in peace-creation could be appreciated.

Where are the Women?

According to World Bank 2012 data, women accounted for fifty per cent of the global population, but only half have access to jobs, compared to 77 per cent of the male population.¹² Female participation is even lower in the governance sector, with only 21 per cent of women occupying positions as national parliamentarians,¹³ and just 17 per cent as government ministers.¹⁴ Yet, female participation in public roles is increasing compared to a decade ago,¹⁵ except that, arguably, in defence and security sector (the sector includes institutions that manage and provide security for the state and its people, including the police and military forces)¹⁶ remain a male domain. Data on women in the security forces worldwide are not yet available, and only a few countries care to calculate the presence of women in their forces, making it difficult to assess the rate of women participation as well as their welfare in terms of equal pay for equal employment, career track and retention.

Nira Yuval-Davis emphasised that women fulfilled vital roles in the defence and security sector, but often not contributing on equal basis to that of the men.¹⁷ This is because the sexual division of labour in defence security is often more rigid and more focused on physical power than in the civil sector. History records that there have been women warriors since ancient times, and there are women currently serving in conflict, but men still outnumber women as armed forces personnel, and women are historically rendered suitable only as cooks, nurses and aides of war, those positioned as civilians, rather than fighters. There is a low advocacy to support women to obtain equal work in the defence and security sectors compared to support for women entering politics and economics. This likely reflects society's uneasiness about accepting women into the security environment, most often because women are stereotyped to fill domestic roles tied to housekeeping and child-rearing.

Female and male stereotypes reflect the differing roles, expectations and aspirations associated with the term gender; hence, it is a matter of situational culture.¹⁸ Meanwhile the more universal biological difference between males and females is termed sex.¹⁹ Gender is based on cultural perception, and thus changes over time, place and situation; while biological sex, by contrast, exhibits relatively more stable characteristics. Gender perception affects biological women and men during their daily

lives, in pursuit of jobs and security. Women are often perceived to rule the domestic/household realms due to their perceived biological ability to give birth, rather than the gathering and hunting of food; hence, they are valued less in the business and security domains compared to males. This is reflected in the 16-30 per cent lower wages that women receive compared to men, an imbalance coined as a ‘motherhood penalty’.²⁰ Such differentials can also be extended to the broader security context. More than 100 million women worldwide are held to be ‘missing’ due to inadequate care, particularly amongst girls, and sex-selective abortion; and, worryingly, this is occurring in times of peace, not war.²¹ In the time of conflict, where rule of law is non-existence and legal enforcement could not be found, the security of women decline from bad to worse.

Women in Conflict and in Peace-Creation

Women and girls endure specific experiences in conflict linked to their ‘secondary’ status in societies. UN Beijing Platform for Action acknowledges that even though entire communities suffer consequences of armed conflict and terrorism, women and girls are particularly affected because their status in society and their sex.²² It also recognises that women do not enjoy equal status in any society, and when the discrimination against them exists in peacetime, it will be exacerbated in conflict. Gender stereotypes are evidence that the combat forces are generally male-dominated, reinforced by the long-standing societal attitude that men are the warriors, and women are the protected. In the long term, this stereotype of weak-women categorises them as meek and vulnerable, deemed unsuitable to protect themselves along with the things they cherish, and thus dependent on male protection. In the face of continuing armed conflicts occurring in many parts of the world that are predominantly internal, the victims are disproportionately civilian, with no military training.²³ Countries in conflict generally deploy men to conduct military action, while women are normally positioned in supporting roles, such as caring for the sick, undertaking clerical administrative duties, and for the provisioning of male ‘pleasure’.²⁴

Arguably, international norms perceived women as ‘weak’. The Fourth Geneva Convention (1949) regulates the protection of civilian in times of war includes additional passage that stated “women shall be especially protected against any attack on their honour, in particular against rape, enforced prostitution or any form of indecent assault” (Art. 27, para 2, C. IV; Art. 75 and 76, P.I). This statement presented due to the experiences of World War II where women of all ages, as well as children, were

subjected to inhumane acts including rape in occupied territories, brutal treatments, mutilations and enforced prostitution. Yet two decades afterwards the world's situation did not seem to have changed as the UN in 1974 adopted and enforced the Declaration on the Protection of Women and Children in Emergency and Armed Conflict. The Declaration proposed by UN Economic and Social Council stands on the ground that women and children are often became the victims of wars, civil unrest and other emergency situation that subjugate them "inhuman acts and consequently suffer serious harm." With international norms provide 'protection' especially for women, it is difficult for women, even the strong ones, to be seen as able to provide security and protection. This reality maintains countries to push men to enter defence and security roles, while women out of there. In effect, such international norms keep the number of women participating in security and defence sectors relatively small.

Women active participation in war began by helping behind the frontlines. They were canteen-keepers, nurses and comforters with humble acknowledgement. In times of conflict, states mobilise both men and women were equally, even women images were reconstructed as able to perform effectively in various combat positions to fill in demand of fighting positions. However, when the peace arrived, women contributions are forgotten as "cultural amnesia" had happened.²⁵ One example is Eritrea, where women were fighting together with men to separate their area with Ethiopia since the 1970s. When the independence was gained in 1993, conscription was still kept for both male and female, however, the women joined military service for the compulsory 1.5 years were forced to fulfil senior officers' need rather than trained for combat.²⁶ Many other developing countries imposed different barrier, stopping women from entering the high-rank military forces by limiting access to their defence academy, a prestigious institute that commonly male-only until recently. Example for this are Pakistan started to accept female cadets to its academy in 2003,²⁷ Serbia commenced in 2007,²⁸ Colombia in 2009,²⁹ India follow suits in 2010,³⁰ Nigeria in 2011,³¹ Indonesia in 2013,³² and even Thailand not yet allowing women to enter its military academy until today.³³ The percentage of women trained in dealing with conflict situation in state militaries ranges from between 0.3 per cent (Bangladesh) to 24.3 per cent (Finland).³⁴ Similarly, female police forces range from 0.4 per cent (Italy) to 30 per cent (Rwanda).³⁵ This small number of women serving in the national forces compared to men, meaning that there is small number of women able to serve in the international peacekeeping missions, such as those organised by the UN. Moreover, despite the UN's multi-dimensional activities,

peacekeeping is still military heavy, as evidenced by the fact that as per October 2015, some 85 per cent of UN peacekeepers were uniformed, and 73 per cent were military.³⁶

Lack of Women in UN Peacekeeping

The UN organisation main purpose has always been to maintain international peace and security using human rights value, including gender equality. However, the UN reason to recruit women peacekeepers is less pro-equality altruistic than it might seem. Arguably, the international organisation is trying to rebuild its reputation that has been undermined by peacekeepers misconduct.³⁷ The UN credibility has been tarnished after the report on sexual abuse perpetrated by peacekeepers was published in Mozambique in 1992 and soon after similar concerns were voiced in Cambodia, Somalia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.³⁸ Between 2004 and 2006, there have been 316 UN peacekeepers worldwide investigated for sexual abuse and misconduct, resulting 144 military, 17 police and 18 civilian officers dismissed and sent home.³⁹ The predominantly male profile of the UN secretariat and peacekeeping missions' has given challenges to the UN legitimacy, receiving complaints for mishandling sexual abuse and harassment cases by dismissing them unless they get caught by the media.

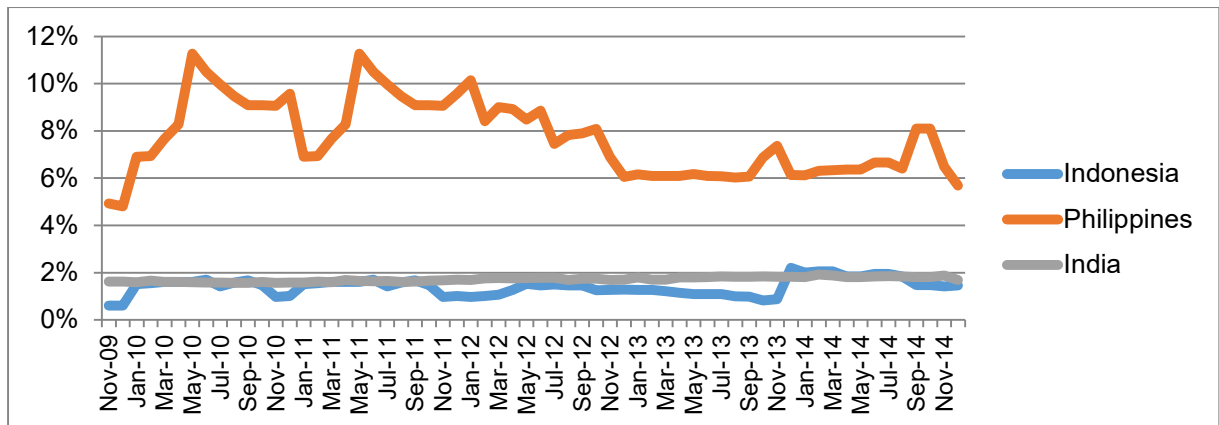
Due to the sexual exploitation cases often, if not almost always, perpetrated by men, the UN devised new strategies to remedy its credibility. To change its male-majority staffing, since mid 1990s the UN has been aggressively trying to recruit more women with the purpose of increasing the multi-national troop ability to provide assistance to the diverse local population, constitute of men, women, boys and girls.⁴⁰ In 2000, UN Security Council Resolution (UNSC) 1325 on Women, Peace and Security was adopted to call women active participation in peacekeeping and peacebuilding. In 2005, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan instituted mandatory training course for peacekeepers to address sexual exploitation and abuse in UN peacekeeping operations and also sending more women peacekeepers.⁴¹ Women have been long involved in UN peacekeeping operations since 1957 but only after the case of sexual abuse perpetrated by male peacekeepers, their role finally recognised and considered important. In the first three decades of UN peacekeeping operations, only 20 out of 6,250 military peacekeepers were women.⁴² In the 1980s, female UN peacekeepers amounted to just 1 per cent of total peacekeeping personnel, growing to 1.63 per cent one and half decades later.⁴³

The 2011 World Peacekeeping report written by Lee Katz, he mentioned the UN difficulties in seeking more women officers, from foot soldiers to high-ranking officers.⁴⁴ Up to the end of 2014, UN Gender Statistics indicated that peacekeeping operations comprise only 3.2 per cent military women and 9.5 per cent policewomen, making uniformed women participation of just 4 per cent of total UN forces.⁴⁵ The difficulties for increasing the number of women peacekeepers perhaps lies in the limited number of women working in the member states' security and defence forces. But even if the UN member states have the human resource, the question is whether they would be willing to deploy men and women equally. The UN International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (UN-INSTRAW) assigned Bertolazzi to investigate the reasons behind why there is very few female participation in peacekeeping operations. His research revealed that women peacekeepers faced sexual harassment, gender discrimination and biases in the UN missions.⁴⁶ Hence, it is no wonder that contributing countries are reluctant to deploy their women to UN missions, as the challenge is greater than deploying their male peacekeepers. The states' hesitancy to deploy women, in the same manner as men, would be examined in the three case study countries.

Reasoning Behind the Selection of Case Study Countries

The empirical case offered by this study focuses on the women peacekeepers from Indonesia, the Philippines and India. The reason why Indonesia is an interesting case study is because the country contributes the highest numbers of peacekeepers to the UN PKO amongst the Southeast Asian countries, ranking 18th in the world in April 2014, but deployed far fewer women peacekeepers in terms of numbers compared to the Philippines and India.⁴⁷ What is puzzling is that according to the Democratic Index assessment, Indonesia has a higher democracy level and higher GDP compared to the Philippines, despite it is lower than India.⁴⁸

Figure 1. Percentage Women Peacekeepers against Total Peacekeepers Deployed by Indonesia, India and the Philippines.⁴⁹



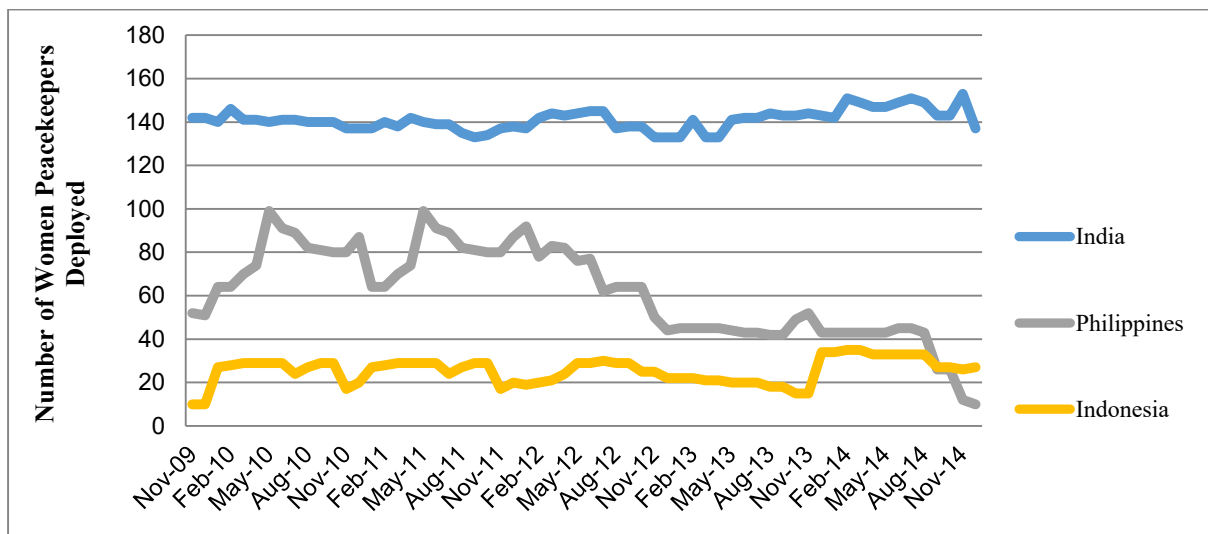
The Philippines, meanwhile, deployed the highest percentage of women peacekeepers per total country deployment compared with India and Indonesia that are more or less the same. Democracy and economic welfare should enable Indonesia and India to allow higher women participation in society, including the security sector. However, this is not the case as UN PKO deployment statistics show that Indonesian women are not engaging in international security. India, meanwhile, was applauded by the UN for its contribution in deploying the first all-female peacekeeping unit,⁵⁰ yet the level of deployment is relatively stagnant at 2 per cent of males deployed.⁵¹ This case study will examine Indonesia efforts to recruit, train and deploy women as part of its UN peacekeeping operations, with the Philippines and India as comparative evaluations. The Philippines and India can offer lessons learned to other developing countries eager to participate in UN PKO, including Indonesia, but suffering from a low rate of women participation and lack of experience on deployment into failed states.

How Women Becomes UN Peacekeepers? A Comparative Case Study of Indonesia, India and the Philippines

Given official UN recognition of the importance of women in peacekeeping operations, research is essential to trace how member states support their women citizen entering security and defence forces, and involving them in the national contingent for UN peacekeeping mission. The UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon highlighted the importance of women peacekeepers in supporting women survivors of sexual violence, who find it difficult to report to male UN peacekeepers and officers. Aside from improving the role of peacekeepers to provide security for all, the existing research on

UN peacekeeping operations finds that women peacekeepers play a significant role in educating local women and raising their involvement in the creation of local security.⁵² These findings will be tested in the case study of Indonesia, with comparative countries of India and the Philippines through interviews with women peacekeepers that have returned from deployment to provide training at the West Java, New Delhi and Quezon City Peacekeeping Centres.

Figure 2. Women Peacekeepers Deployed by Indonesia, India and the Philippines in Comparison with ASEAN Average (1999-2014).⁵³



Indonesia

In Southeast Asia, Indonesia contributed the highest number of peacekeepers, but also the lowest numbers of women peacekeepers within the total. From the UN PKO statistics that were compiled by gender since November 2009 to December 2014, Indonesia on average deployed between one to two women for every 100 peacekeepers deployed.⁵⁴ It is interesting to investigate the underlying cause of this relatively small number of women in the Indonesian peacekeeping missions, and to examine country efforts of increase women’s participation rate. Indonesia has been publicly requested by the UN Secretary General Ban Ki Moon to increase its women peacekeepers at the opening of Indonesia Peacekeeping Training Centre (IPTC) in 2012.⁵⁵ Based on the 2014 field work research done at the IPTC, it was known that the UN request same qualifications for women and men, as the organisation does not differentiate between the two sexes. However, author observed that Indonesian women are limited with barrier of entry, namely getting access to education in which the military academy only open for

women in 2013, and to be selected for deployment because women are not allowed to enter all roles in the military. The combat positions, such as infantries and commandos are still barred for Indonesian women to apply, making them having lower experience compared to their male colleagues.

The call to be UN peacekeepers are announced to every military and police district, to which, ideally, all personnel can apply. Yet, based on the field interviews to 18 personnel that were successfully became peacekeepers, they were appointed by their unit, rather than apply as individuals.⁵⁶ With the low number of women working in the defence and security sectors, approximately five per cent both in the military and the police forces,⁵⁷ it is difficult for the district commandant to endorse women as the office may need it and the competition is high. There is also a need of women personnel to obtain consent from their husband, but not *vice versa*. “Married women need their husband’s written consent and this is Indonesia regulation, not the UN. Our reasoning is because women have greater family roles and they are the support system for their children. So we do not want to violate the social values Indonesia has, we need to check with the family first,” stated in one interview with Indonesian military decision maker that was in charge of the Peacekeeping Planning and Operation Directorate at the IPTC on 11 August 2014.

In terms of deployment, Indonesia sent women peacekeepers in both individual and contingent/unit deployments. Individual deployment is more challenging as the personnel is sent to work individually with multinational field unit and not allowed to bring arms, meanwhile in contingent/unit deployment the personnel is deployed in a group and allowed to bring their equipment, including protective armaments. Nevertheless, based on UN Archive, Indonesia did not deploy women to all of its peacekeeping missions.⁵⁸ The missions that were deemed unsuitable for women peacekeepers were Liberia (UNMIL) and Nepal (UNMIN). When the sex-segregated data became available in late 2009, until December 2014, Indonesia consistently deployed over 1,500 peacekeepers and at times even reached 2,000 peacekeepers, yet the highest number of women peacekeepers deployed by the country was only 35 or less than two per cent.⁵⁹ The former IPTC’s Chief I Gede Sumertha stated that the reason for women candidates failing peacekeeping recruitment test, besides not having husband consent is also because of their inadequate English skills.⁶⁰ He did not disclose any effort his institution made to solve the problem. This signify the relatively lacking political willingness in supporting women in the same way as men to become UN peacekeepers.

India

The country is one of the top five UN peacekeeping contributing countries for the last seven years, sending on average 8,000 uniformed personnel with only around 140, or less than two per cent, of them are female.⁶¹ The reason why India sent relatively low percentage of women to peacekeeping missions is that, similar like Indonesia, the country imposes barrier for women to enter the security and defence forces. As per February 2016, there is only 2.5 per cent of over one million defence personnel are female.⁶² The reason of such low number is because women only inducted to the military in 1992, allowed to enter the academy in 2010 and not yet allowed to apply for permanent jobs in the forces, except in nursing, dental and medical services.⁶³ India also restrained itself from deploying women to several UN missions, namely Abyei between Sudan and South Sudan (UNISFA), Ivory Coast (UNOCI), Cyprus (UNFICYP) and Golan Heights Syria (UNTSO), although the country deployed male personnel there.⁶⁴

Despite the shortcomings, India is applauded as the first country that provide the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operation with all female unit.⁶⁵ The first UN all-female police unit was sent by India in 2007 to fulfil the demand of Liberia, where peacekeepers had been alleged to trade food aid with sex with teenager.⁶⁶ The head of the new unit, Commander Seema Dhundia, stated that the women selected to be in her unit have had extensive martial experience in insurgency, are adept in sports and have basic communication skills, making them ideal for peacekeeping work.⁶⁷ However, it is unclear whether martial training is the norm in peacekeeper pre-deployment training in general, but to be a peacekeeper it is usually appointed by unit or selected by senior officer. In an interview with Commander Dhundia in April 2015, she selected the peacekeepers working with her and formulated the pre-deployment training herself.⁶⁸ Therefore, it is arguably more difficult for a female personnel to register herself to be a peacekeeper if not endorsed by her senior or the unit head.

The interview with Commander Dhundia revealed that India all-female contingent was able connect with the local women better than the previous mixed-contingent as they can talk more freely with women and girls about domestic violence, rape and abuse related with conflict. However, the approach is not always straightforward to talk about it, as she recalled:

“As part of civil-military cooperation, we also provide yoga and meditation trainings to the local population. The training improved the interaction between local population and UN peacekeepers. After we gain their trust, the local women could confide with us with issues of domestic violence and rape. However, the number of local women police officers was low, so we encourage them to register as police member to help them solve their own problem.”⁶⁹

The India all-female contingent provide training for Liberian National Police, as well as mentorship to female police recruits. The presence of all-female contingent increased the number of women police increase from six per cent in 2009 to 17 per cent in 2016.⁷⁰ Different with the traditional unit, the all-female unit brought along men as the cooks, mechanics and drivers.⁷¹ Obviously, this unit is not a common unit, it is difficult for India to increase the number of all-female unit it deploy as the personnel is sourced from Central Reserve Police Force, a paramilitary police organization, not a traditional military and police forces where peacekeeping personnel is usually recruited from.

Aside from the altruistic values to increase UN peacekeeping capacity and to better help local women in the mission areas, the reason for India move to deploy the world’s first all-female peacekeeping unit is arguably due to the country’s interested in gaining a bigger stake in the UN. Former and current Indian Prime Ministers Manmohan Singh and Narendra Modi are hoping for their country to secure a permanent seat in the UNSC.⁷² As India is seeking membership of the UN Security Council, along with Brazil, Germany, and Japan (the G4 countries), the country has increased its UN peacekeeping contribution three-fold between 2004 and 2007.⁷³ This, arguably, is because higher force contributions in UN peacekeeping operations increase the member states’ legitimacy to a seat in UNSC and India ability to deploy all-female unit is unmatched by other countries bidding for the permanent seat. However, India unwillingness to deploy its women peacekeepers to relatively dangerous UN missions of Abyei and Golan Heights amongst all, showed that the country not yet have the stomach to treat their women in the same way of their men.

The Philippines

The country is the only Asian country listed on “Best place for women to live” and it has managed to do so for seven consecutive years between 2009 and 2015.⁷⁴ Philippines ranked better than New Zealand and Switzerland in terms of women empowerment. According to the report compiled by the World Economic Forum, women

in the Philippines have enjoyed greater economic participation, improved job opportunity, increased wages and led the region in terms of political empowerment.⁷⁵ The country has also shown similar achievement in its international involvement in sending uniformed women to join the UN peacekeeping missions. Compared to its Southeast Asian neighbours, including their most populated country in the region – Indonesia, the Philippines provided the highest contribution of women peacekeepers since the UN began to present sex-segregated data in 2009. At the peak of the country contribution to UN peacekeeping operation, the country deployed 99 women peacekeepers and maintain the consistency of sending eight per cent women out of the total peacekeepers deployed.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, since the Philippines peacekeeping troops were attacked and taken hostage in Golan Heights (UNDOF), border between Israel and Syria, end of August 2014, the number of women peacekeepers deployed by the country experienced a drastic decline due to Philippines' decision to withdraw its peacekeepers due to safety reasons.

Philippines women equality in the security and defence sector started earlier in comparison with Indonesia and India. Although Filipinas were involved in the country's revolution against Spanish colonial power between 1896-98 in both frontline battles and in support roles, only as late as 1963, were women finally admitted into formal police and military support roles in the auxiliary force, helping in non-combat duties, such as clerical work, logistics and health assistance.⁷⁷ Only in 1993 women were allowed to enter the military academy and their roles expanded to include pilots, infantry and members of special force. The 2009 Magna Carta for Women asserted there should be no wage discrimination between women and men in the military and police forces, and women can be leaders if they can prove they are capable. Due to this supportive policy, the numbers of women in the force has gradually grown. Pre-Magna Carta, the number of female cadets was limited to five per cent, both in the Philippines military and police force, but in 2015 the number had slowly increased to 18 per cent of the women accepted.⁷⁸ When it comes to peacekeepers recruitment, all personnel, men and women, are allowed to register themselves to undertake the exam and the result is decided by merit. This arguably allow the Philippines to recruit and deploy higher number of women peacekeepers than Indonesia and higher percentage than India.

Following the footsteps of India, the Philippines has trusted a woman leading peacekeeping unit, with Navy Captain Luzviminda Camacho commanding a contingent in Haiti. The difference is Commander Dhundia led 125 all-female unit, while Captain

Camacho led 155 mix officers.⁷⁹ From the interview with Captain Camacho, she said that the Philippine's Peacekeeping Operation Centre conducted the training, and she, as well as the members of her contingent, were selected by the institution through a fair and rigorous process, as the country only sent its best personnel overseas.⁸⁰ Similarly, Philippines women selected as peacekeepers felt like they provide increase capacity and additional dimension to the UN mission. In the field interview in the Philippines, a female peacekeeper recalled her experience:

“My commander told me that before, kids and women were afraid to approach our unit because the team members were all male. I think my presence, with my smile and long hair at the time, was making it easier for the population to accept us. My commander said that my ‘hair diplomacy’ worked better than his ‘moustache diplomacy’ (she laughed)”.⁸¹

Although the Philippines provided a greater chance for women to become peacekeepers, it still chooses which missions women can be deployed. Based on UN Archive, the Philippines did not deploy women to peacekeeping missions in the border between India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP), Abyei (UNISFA) and Western Sahara (MINURSO).⁸² When the decision-makers were asked about the reason why they would not deploy women in these missions, it is because “it is not safe for them” and “they could get killed, leading to bad publicity”.⁸³ These statements arguably show that even in the most equal country in Asia, the state would still prefer to protect its women.

Conclusion

The UN efforts to increase the number of women peacekeepers was intended to improve the local women situation in conflict and post-conflict area where the UN mission deployed, highlighting women peacekeepers' unique contribution in community outreach and trust building. Since the 1990s case of peacekeepers sexual abuse toward the local population, the UN is determined in adding women peacekeepers. However, with the women peacekeepers deployed in relatively small number, around four per cent from total, their impact is still limited. Yet their presence in peacekeeping and peacebuilding is significant to increase the UN capacity in working in conflict and post-conflict areas, where the population constitute of men, women, boys and girls having differing needs.

The empirical research conducted in Indonesia, India and the Philippines gathered data on how the countries deployed women peacekeepers half-heartedly. For example, Indonesia imposed restriction for women to enter military academy until recently and for them to be deployed women need to obtain husband consent. Meanwhile, India does not allow women to obtain permanent job posting, making it difficult for them to gain the experience needed so they can be deployed as peacekeepers. The sheer number of human resource available in India, as well as its national interest to be permanent member of UN Security Council, allow the country to deploy the first all women peacekeeping unit in 2007 to Liberia. The Philippines, on the other hand, due to population difference does not have such high number of women to deploy all-female contingent. However, the Philippines made a bolder move by appointed a women contingent commander to lead mix peacekeeping unit to Haiti in 2013.

If grade needs to be made in the level of support the countries provide for their women to contribute meaningfully to UN peacekeeping mission, the first country out of the three that win the top position is Philippines, followed by India, and lastly Indonesia. Philippines arguably is at the forefront of equality movement since it was the earliest in opening its military academy in 1996 and allowing women to access all defence and security positions in 2009. This elimination of barrier for women is arguably what made the Philippines able to deploy higher number of women peacekeepers compared to Indonesia, as seen in Figure 2. The Philippines and India both encouraged women to be the head of contingent representing their countries, while Indonesia has not done so. Unlike the Philippines, both India and Indonesia still impose barriers for women to enter combat positions. Despite these differences, the three countries are similar when it comes to differentiating deployment of women peacekeepers, not sending them to UN missions deemed too dangerous. This signify the lack of confidence from the national decision-makers to protect women, as the argument proposed by Elshtain that states positioned women as 'beautiful souls', not as 'just warriors'. Although international organisation like the UN is at the forefront of gender equality programmes and it can request member states to contribute women and men in similar manner, the reality is national interest still the one that decides.

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