

Wanga Odhiambo, Godriver, *Resilience in South Sudanese Women: Hope for Daughters of the Nile.*
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BOOK REVIEW

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The many issues related to refugee phenomenon have occupied much attention around the world during the 20th and 21st centuries. Understandings of the refugee experience in Africa are concern with civil war. In this book it is described that how refugee continuous displaced across international borders and how the international agencies, NGOs, and host countries dealing with these challenges. This book primary emphasis on female refugee from southern Sudan who moved out because of civil war and related violence in search of safer and better life. This book is resultant of author's research, involved a case study of Sudanese women refugee in Kenya and challenges of stressful environment faced by them. Other important aspect of this book is a case study of Sudanese refugee in central New York.

In the first chapter it is stated that the underdevelopment of Southern Sudan was partly a result of the British colonial period. Biasness became the main reason for socio-economic and political injustices that marginalized the south. The independent state restricted education in south by removing all the missionaries and mission schools. This chapter also shows the determination by Khartoum government to repress the south by denying the region basic needs which was used as a weapon of control that increased disparity. The growing disparity exclusion of southern Sudanese in the independent state acted as a push factor for the refugee women. The Khartoum government denied its southern citizen from accessing basic social service, and sharing resources equitable. The marginalization show dissatisfaction, apathy, and strong tension based on race, regional, and religion difference which led to civil war. This became a kind of severe diseases that bled the country and resultant a liberation struggle by the people of southern Sudan led by SPLA, demanded more comprehensive policies from the government and this encourage more refugees.

Africa has historically been a place of forced migration from the slave trade of the 16th to 19th century. More than half of southern Sudan's population was uprooted by the civil war. Author argues that economies of money, space, and power have shaped the movement of people unevenly. This could be applied to the Sudanese refugee women, who primarily relocated because of domestic geopolitics. In the second chapter it is shown that the civil war caused the women migration to different countries in Africa. All refugee women have their own horror story of this migration which differed from one country to another. In case of migration to Egypt was not good as they were treated as servant by rich families. Those who went to other countries were placed in inhuman condition in camps where inadequate food supply and scarcity of basic needs of women. There was also a security issue in many camps of Rwanda as LRA attacks on the refugee camps. Many overcrowded camps in other neighboring countries led to outbreak of diseases. Because of these problems many Sudanese refugee women were unwilling to stay in the camps. They believed they could do better for their children and took up challenge to gain control over their lives, dignity, freedom, and self-reliance.

"It is not the strongest of the species that survives, or the most intelligent that survives. It is the one that is most adaptable to change." Charles Darwin.

Chapter three is showing the illegal settlements of Sudanese women in Nairobi. What they were expecting from across the border was totally different. They faced problem of employment due to refugee policy in Kenya that did

not supportive in nature. There were others problems also regarding shelter and education for their children, adaption to new food, learning a new language, lacking sufficient medication that needed to fight with the various diseases. However, apart from above challenges, this chapter has shown the resilience of the women and how they engaged in some activities amidst adversity and complexities of town life. Despite of challenges of the town their lives were on the balance but no source of income makes them needy or poor. Only because of these sufferings many organizations in Nairobi could not ignore these problems and stepped up to provide help and aid to the urban refugee included the Sudanese refugee women.

There has been a long tradition non-governmental organization (NGOs) and religious organization which have made various forms of assistance available to refugees in the city. This chapter four has discussed about the Kenyan government's co-operation with the refugee including Sudanese women, but we can say that the effects which made by a government was not enough, due to lack of refugee policy. Apart from that Kenya was flooded out by many refugees that coming from war-torn eastern African zones also. The capacity and limitation of the government to cope with these increasing numbers of refugee was going out of control. In this context other organizations and churches were assisting with the situation which was going worse to worsen as more and more refugees came in from Sudan, the DRC, Rwanda, and Somalia.

The co-operation and assistance were given in form of medication, food supply, burial expenses, and counseling among other assistance by the organization such as UNHCR, JRC, NCCCK, and various churches. But the assistance given by the various organizations were not adequate, because there was no clear co-ordination among them, they were helping only the register refugees, means the many refugees women especially from Sudan in Kenya fell outside the aid of umbrella and continued to suffer, the continuous inflow of refugees into Kenya made things more complex for the Sudanese women with various complicated issues. What does it seems to us that, despite the efforts of these agencies situation was still complicated. The need of the Sudanese women refugees were not fulfilled because they were not the only refugees in this country. Therefore, the thoughts of cooperation among them to come together by helping each other make suitable mechanism that enable them to survive in a foreign country outside from home.

However, despite the good intension of the helping agencies and inadequacy of the assistance which tried to given the Sudanese refugee women in Kenya and Egypt forced them to adopt various co-operating strategies to deal with their problems. The chapter five shows how these women came up with the coping strategy of social network, what was their response and taken initiatives, these effective social ties and networks were established at three levels; among themselves, with host community, and internationally. The Sudanese refugee women in Kenya organized by SWAN helped them cope with trauma of being homeless; they become like big sisters to fellow suffering women. At the formal level, they established network with some Kenyan organization where they learned very important issues on political and economic empowerment of women. They also worked closely with Kenyan women lawyers who offered them legal assistance in need. This chapter also gives idea about sensitization of world in this context. Through UN and African women parliamentarian group, they were able to sensitize the world about the curse of civil wars and sufferings of women and children. However, regardless of their initiatives in establishing the various social networks in own effort to alleviate their problems, these were not sufficient and so the women were forced to look for other avenues. They once more turned to business as a second coping mechanism because of their perseverance and resolve.

Sudanese refugee women did not find employment in Kenya due to refugee policy and unemployment problem. Under the umbrella SWAN they were having entrepreneurship which was individual as well as collective. Together with, the women embarked on projects which earned them a good income. Individually, each woman did what was affordable where some sold secondhand clothing, some did hair care, while other sold locally made brew. This only showed the determination of the Sudanese refugee women to survive in the host country despite the problems that they faced. Needless to say, though the women came up with entrepreneurship strategy as a coping mechanism. But they remained as stateless, as they were not citizen of the host countries which was a daunting situation. Many applied to the UNHCR for resettlement to countries such as Canada, Australia, and the United States; countries that would become their permanent homes after years of temporary sojourn host countries.

During civil war many of the Sudanese refugee women first went to host countries like Ethiopia, Uganda, Egypt, and Kenya where life was difficult as many lived in camps or settled illegally in towns. It was a dream that the most women had; a promised land to call home. It did not matter where they would be resettled; all the wanted was a peaceful place to raise their children. This chapter seven shows how they made efforts to be resettled in various

receiving countries like the US. Process was tuff for them, they had to face two interviews and passing it they were resettled either in Canada, Australia, or the US. This chapter has focused on those who settled in New York in the USA. There was the difficulties experienced related to seasonal change and learning English language. The problems were surmounting but the determination of the women was strong. It has also shown in this chapter that how several organization churches and individual helps them to settle down. It has also described how the women overcome the challenges and eventually were able to get employment which enabled them to take care at their families. Needless to say, many saw the paradox of staying in a foreign country and found it difficult to discipline their children. They also had to grapple with culture-clash and expectation especially challenge from their young teen-age daughters. Back at home in their country many are of the view stated that they should borrow from the two cultures. The chapter also describes the fears and betrayal that some of the women felt, betrayal at individual level by some of their spouses and by the new country of southern Sudan. Perhaps it is just too early to judge the young nation. This chapter has also show how the women despite the challenges, have excelled, many worked hard and bought houses together with their husbands, while many have graduated from colleges. Other contributes immensely to their country as custodians of retention of their cultures and history or through their various roles which makes them heroines.

Sudanese women, the real heroines and the daughters of Nile have emerged at the end of the prolonged civil war. The women faced great challenges, painful experiences and overcome many issues. Challenges have come their way but they have remained focused as a community, helping one another. This chapter talked about the strength of the Sudanese women and the footsteps of success that they attained after civil wars in their country. It shows the various roles played by them to create a new history of their country. Despite their efforts, these women recognized the role played by various groups and people who made their lives in the US. 'Mary' one of the Sudanese leaders, beautifully summarized their gratitude towards America. Saying with tears of joy in her eyes that "I cannot thank America enough, America is the mother of the world, just like children run to their mothers when injured, sick, or hungry: people all over the world run to America when faced by great tragedies like that which faced us. God bless America for the good things they do, god bless America the mother of the world".

At lastly it could be said that, this book could not deal with the political approach deeply towards refugee women issues. After the civil wars situation of the gender inequality issue is not presented in this book which could present the gender inequality problems in the now born country. Role of the government towards rehabilitation of the refugees was not describes here in this book which is very important. Co-operation and the steps of neighboring countries government was not deal with in this book which seems like a gap of understanding about the resettlement of the refugee women.