

**Revisiting Gender in International Relations: A Study on
Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa**

A Thesis Submitted
To
Sikkim University



In Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Reena Joseph

Department of International Relations

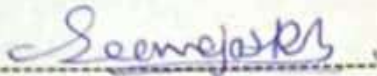
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 _____

Reena Joseph

Reg.No:21/Ph.D/INT/02

Department of International Relations

School of Social Sciences

Sikkim University

6, Samdur, Tadong -737102
Sikkim, India
Ph. 03592-251212, 251415, 251656
Fax -251067
E - www.cus.ac.in



सिक्किम विश्वविद्यालय
SIKKIM UNIVERSITY

6th Mile, Samdur, Tadong -737102
Gangtok, Sikkim, India
Ph. 03592-251212, 251415, 251656
Telefax: 251067
Website: www.cus.ac.in

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All the assistance and help received during the course of investigation have been duly acknowledged by her.

We recommend this thesis to be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

Handwritten signature of Dr. Ph. Newton Singh in black ink.

Supervisor
Dr. Ph. Newton Singh
Assistant Professor
Department of International Relations
Sikkim University

Handwritten signature of Dr. Ningthoujam Koiremba Singh in black ink.

Co-Supervisor
Dr. Ningthoujam Koiremba Singh
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
University of Delhi

Handwritten signature of Dr. Ph. Newton Singh in black ink.

Head -in-Charge of the Department
Dr. Ph. Newton Singh

साम्दुर, तादोंग -737102
सिक्किम, भारत
92-251212, 251415, 251656
-251067
www.cus.ac.in



6th Mile, Samdur, Tadong -737102
Gangtok, Sikkim, India
Ph. 03592-251212, 251415, 251656
Telefax: 251067
Website: www.cus.ac.in

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Submitted by **Ms. Reena Joseph** under the supervision of **Dr. Ph. Newton Singh**, Assistant Professor, Department of International Relations, School of Social Sciences, Sikkim University, Gangtok, India, 737102 and Co-Supervision of **Dr. Ningthoujam Koiremba Singh**, Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Delhi, New Delhi, India, 110007.

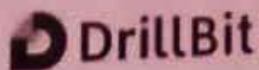
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Reena Joseph

Supervisor
Dr. Ph. Newton Singh

Co-Supervisor
Dr. Ningthoujam Koiremba Singh

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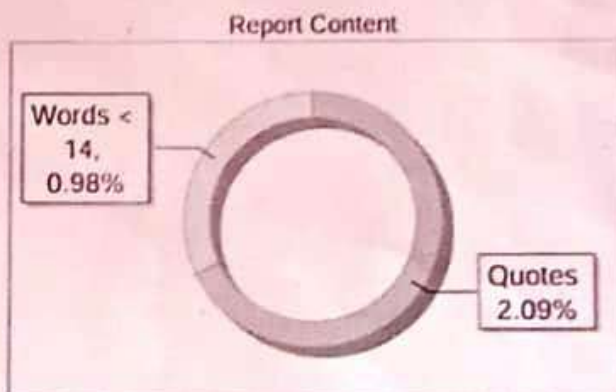
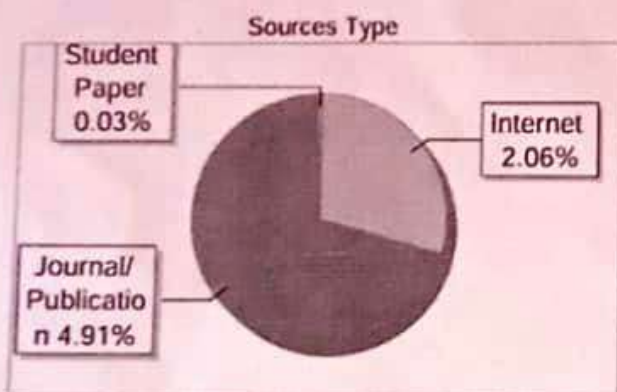
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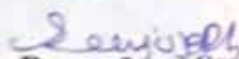
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Reena Joseph

ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
COHRE	Centre of Housing Rights and Eviction
CFS	Committee on world Food Security
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ESCWA	Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organisation
GAD	Gender and Development movement
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICBT	Informal Cross Border Trading
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IASC	Inter Agency Standing Committee
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDLO	International Development Law Organization
IFPRI	International Food Policy Research
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IGOs	International Governmental Organizations
IPE	International Political Economy
IRI	International Research Institute for Climate and Society
IR	International Relations
LDC	Less Developed Countries
LGBTQIA	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex and Asexual
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MNCs	Multinational Corporations
NBFO	National Black Feminist Organization
NFSA	National Food Security Act
NTS	Non-Traditional Security

NGOs	Nongovernmental Organizations
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Centre
OXFAM	Oxford Committee for Famine Relief
POST	Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology
SEA	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
SRCD	Society for Research in Child Development
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
SOFI	State of Food Insecurity in the World
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
SNCC	Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee
TWWA	Third World Women's Alliance
TRIPS	Trade Related aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commission for Refugees
UNHR	United Nations Human Rights
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNFPA	United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNPF	United Nations Population Fund
UNAIDS	United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCTAD	United Nations Trade and Development
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VSC	Variations in Sex Characteristics
WFP	World Food Programme
WID	Women in Development
WFS	World Food Summit
WHO	World Health Organization
WTO	World Trade Organization

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1. Introduction

International Relations is an academic discipline which has its origin after the First World War. Ever since its origin, the discipline has been dominated by mainstream theories or traditional/conventional theories such as Realism, Liberalism and their variants, with a dominant methodological approach of Positivism rooted in empirical study. Mainstream knowledge in International Relations has been criticized as the outcome of those concepts and theories constructed with mental models of human activity by men through an elite male point of view and appreciated through an elite male sensibility (Grant et.al.,1991). In the conventional International Relation, important areas of debates and discussions are centred on power, sovereignty, war, security, international conflicts and international institutions, all from a masculinist perspective. With this dominant male/masculine perspective that shaped the foundations of the discipline, women and other marginalized group's experiences or gender as a determinant aspect to understand various aspects of International Relations is neglected. These rigid characteristics of mainstream theory made it difficult to understand what really happens in International Relations. This paved the way for rethinking International Relations from a gendered or feminist perspective.

The developments since the end of cold war and emergence of the third debate in International Relations during late 1980s and early 1990s, popularised post-positivist approach in International Relations academy which resulted in shifting focus to those neglected issues of human security, environmental issues, migration and refugee problems as a matter of urgent concern in the security debates in IR. This compelled scholars to include gender lens in debates and discussions in International Relations, particularly its methodology and epistemology (Sjoberg et al., 2012). This was further boosted with the publications of Women's Studies Journals, and launching of Women's Studies courses in various parts of Europe, Australia, USA, Asia and Africa.

Many academic conferences were held in different parts of the world on Women gender and the study of International Relations. Cynthia Enloe, Ann Tickner, Spike Peterson,

Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland, Christine Sylvester Jindy Pettman, Sandra Whitworth, Jacqui True, Cynthia Weber, Jean Bethke Elshtain, and Anne Sisson Runyan have made critical contributions in popularising gender perspectives in International Relations¹ (Enloe, 2007). Consequently, the understanding of gender and its role in shaping knowledge has become an important area of discussion within the discipline of International Relations.

Gender is a broad term having different connotations such as a social construct with special socio- culturally assigned masculine and feminine roles and norms, behaviours upon male and female (WHO, 2025). Gender identity may not be necessarily in accordance with the designated sex by birth, which leads to the identification of people as LGBTQIA+. Even though gender is a large spectrum, in this study, it is focusing only on Women as a gendered category to engendering the discipline of International Relations.

It is essential to use gender epistemologically, methodologically and ontologically to study International Relations (True, 2005). Feminist scholars in International Relations prefers looking at world politics/international system from a gendered lens, which was absent in the mainstream International Relations because of the false assumption that male experiences can count for both men and women and other marginalised groups. Such debates and discussions are identified as hegemonic masculine debates as they are marked by the language and knowledge which are based on certain men's life and experiences and use of a gendered lens has opened the opportunity to deconstruct the existing patriarchal hierarchical structure in the production and dissemination of knowledge in International Relations.

Through using the gendered lens in each issue, questions, concepts and discourses in IR, feminists have uncovered the gender bias of mainstream IR knowledge. Critical analysis of existing masculine epistemology and methodology in International Relations helps to place women as 'knower' or agents of knowledge rather than only as the receiver of malestream - constructed knowledge. It also opened the chance for

¹In fact, Cynthia Enloe is considered as the founder of feminist International Relations with the question of 'where are the women in International Relations?' (Haskins,2016).

validate the knowledge in IR through the ideas and day to day experiences of women who constitute half of the world population. Feminists in International Relations see gender not just a category, but a concept, nature and practice to study International Relations (True, 2005; Peterson et al., 1993).

The study of International Relations from a gender lens helps us to understand how the global politics and the systems/structures and institutions that shape it are gender biased and also where are women and other marginalised groups in the mainstream discourses in the discipline based on certain fixed ontological epistemological and methodological framework. Besides, the Feminist International Relations investigates how gender and other hierarchies of power affect those at the margins of the system. According to Ann Tickner, core to feminist perspective on International Relations include identity issues such as race, culture as well as gender inequality which is related to the everyday life experience of concerned people, all are neglected by conventional knowledge in International Relations. Feminist International Theorists tries to make the invisible visible, bring the women's lives to the centre, put the women as competent actors and understand women as subjects and not objects (Reizharz, 1992; Tickner, 1999; 2005).

The important concepts in IR are centred on masculinist perspective which are exposed by feminists by emphasising on the gendered nature of such concepts. According to the gendered perspective, war and peace keeping operations are gender blind which can be explored through a critical analysis of the vulnerability and sufferings that war creates, the causality of war, how rape is used as an instrument of war, and discrimination and exploitation of women in refugee camps. Attributes of peace 'only as the absence of war' that is using in International Relations also problematic from gender perspective as peace cover assurance of socio- economic justice. Similarly, the concept of power in International Relations conceived as 'power over' or control over and attribute of rational man, which place women in power politics at the margin, thus makes power politics gendered in International Relations (Enloe, 2007; Sjoberg et al., 2012).

Likewise, State naturalises the gendered order as assigning men to play the role of protector, and women taught to be remained protected and provide emotional,

economic, social support system for men. State implicit violence against women by its no-intervention in domestic violence, definition of war and rape from male standpoint, hetero-sexist ideology that promote in education, media image, military indoctrination, welfare policies and the formation of patriarchal laws. Besides, through devaluation of the work of women who protect home, and their role in families and communities, masculinity is preferred by state (Peterson, 1992; Elshtain, 1982). Gender remains as a key determinant in war, peace, state, and power security. Therefore, Feminist International scholars want to reconceptualise these from gendered perspective or feminist perspective.

The reconceptualization of security put forwarded by feminists in IR from gendered perspectives. For example, Christian Sylvester, Ann Tickner and Spike Peterson, criticize the state centric project of security in mainstream IR. They emphasise on global security, and bring environmental and economic issues, human right violations, refugee problem, human trafficking and sex trade into conceptualisation of security. They argue that security can be understood only through a gendered lens (Tickner, 1993) as all these issues have gendered face which challenge the arguments of the mainstream International Relations theoreticians like Robert Keohane who state that ‘Security is a settled issue’. In short, human security aspects of security, not state security, has become crucial for feminist scholarship in IR.

Food security is an important variable of Human Security debate in IR and a crucial element of Non-Traditional Security debate in International Relations. Food security is essential for ensuring the economic and social development of all states, achieving global stability, and assuring a healthy population. “Food security exists when all people, at all time, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (FAO,1996). According to the report, State of Food Insecurity in the World 2024 (SOFI), between 713 and 757 million people live in hunger. The discussions on food security especially on why and how intensively hunger and mal nutrition prevalent globally is crucial in security debates in contemporary International Relations.

The gender dimension of food security is also important for feminist scholarship of IR. But the fact that, compared to their male counterpart, women are more undernourished and food insecure (SOFI, 2023) which underlines the need to apply gendered lenses to food security in the field of International Relations. Gender perspective on food security highlights how people have gender-differentiated experiences within the global food system. It also helps to conceptualize the factors that affect our everyday relationships with food and food systems, which are gendered (Avakin et al., 2006). Allen et al., (2006) and Quisumbing (1996), note that feminist food studies help us to examine connections between gender and the material, socio-cultural, psychological and corporeal dimensions of food, and gender dimensions of productive and reproductive labour, the household responsibilities tied to food, and the gendered dimensions of food consumption. Gendered food studies develop an understanding of how identities are formed and shaped by everyday experiences of women on food (Collins, 2018). Gender differentiated practices and norms, intra-household distribution of food, political environment, economic opportunity are all significant in the gendered perspective of food security (ADB, 2013; Ghale et al. 2018). Therefore, considering gendered aspects of food is essential to ensure food security to all.

Studies reveal that the number of people affected by issues of food insecurity are disproportionately high in the Sub-Saharan African region (FAO, 2023), an area situated in the South of Sahara Desert. In Sub-Saharan Africa 67 percent of people are living with extreme poverty. The region also accounts for two-thirds of those who suffered from extreme poverty all over the world (World Bank, 2024). The low agricultural productivity, usage of primitive tools, techniques and methods, lack of access to credit facilities, poor investment in infrastructure development, inapt governmental policies, corruption, economic backwardness and dependency due to the colonial structures have resulted in widespread poverty, malnutrition and chronic food shortages in Sub-Saharan Africa. The impact of colonialism in food security caused reduced food production, loss and replacement of traditional sources of nutrition, diminished productivity and food reserves, and regression of domestic economy. International developments and trade policies, World Bank and Structural Adjustment Program, commercial land acquisition by international companies and unfavourable financial governance contributed into

food insecurity in the region (Dixon et al., 2001; Pinstруп-Andersen, 2001; Bjornlund et.al. (2022). All these interconnected factors together make the region a hot spot for the study of food security, a variable in the study of human security under nontraditional security in International Relations.

The application of gender lens, especially from the perspective of the marginalised in International Relations, can be further emphasized through the Black Feminist perspective on food security in Sub-Saharan Africa. In spite of the fact that women constitute half of the agricultural producers/food producers in Sub-Saharan Africa, they are subject to gender-based vulnerabilities with regard to food security (Habtezion, 2016). However, the common parameter of 'gender' alone is not adequate to study the food (in)security among Black women in Sub-Saharan Africa as it cannot expose the intensity of their lived experiences on the issue. Their everyday life experiences are entangled in an intersection of class, race gender and culture. Therefore, the food security issues must be studied by taking these matrix of intersection into account, which this study highlights. How far the Black feminist, intersectional perspective brings out the experiences of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa on access to food, availability, utilization and stability of food is the central question that this study explores. While doing this, the study aims to unravel the gender bias of the discipline IR and engender and broaden the boundaries of the discipline in order to make it more inclusive with the marginal experience and perspectives.

In sum, it is observed that, the mainstream academic discipline International Relations (IR) is not inclusive because of its fixed masculine epistemological, ontological and methodological framework, which make it gender blind. This urged those Feminist International Relations scholars to emphasis on the importance of inclusion of gender lens in IR in order to broaden the boundaries of the discipline. The gender-blindness of the discipline and the importance of inclusion of gender lens in the discipline can be highlighted through a study on the gendered perspective with the food security as a variable because of the existence of gender differentiated characteristics of food security which makes women food insecure. This will broaden the concept security in International Relations by making it more inclusive. The importance of using gendered perspective of food security in International Relations can be further emphasized by

highlighting the intersectionality of class, gender and racial aspects, - which constitute the basis of Black Feminist perspective of food security in Sub-Saharan Africa. Such an approach would encompass the marginalised issues for engendering the discipline.

1.2. Review of Literature

A number of literatures are reviewed to comprehend the available knowledge on the area under study and to identify the knowledge gap to be addressed in this study. The literature available are categorised under four topics as follows for review; 1) Gender in International Relations, 2) Gender and food security, 3) Black Feminist Perspective and 4) Gender perspective of food security in Sub-Saharan Africa.

1.2.1. Gender in International Relations

The history of the origin of feminist International Relations and causes why women remained under represented in International Relations and struggles of feminist theorists to stand with masculine world is discussed in detail by Ann Tickner and Laura Sjoberg (2012) in the book *Feminist Perspectives on International Relations*. The core concepts of the discipline IR such as war, security and conflict are discussed from gendered lens and they challenge the 'protection myth' and the masculinist orientation of conventional theories. Gendering of global economy and gendered critique of realism and neo realism are also highlighted in the work. The different aspects of feminist methods and methodology are necessary in analysing the problems of International Relations from gendered lens, according to authors. In the book *The Growth and Future of Feminist Theories in International Relations*, Ann Tickner et. al (2004) explains the experience and struggles of a feminist theorist in International Relations. The milestones in the growth and development of feminist International Relations, existing gender stereotypes, hegemonic masculinity and problems while introducing gender lens in issues of International Relations are the focal discussions in this book. The need of feminist methodology, which emphasis on the everyday life of people is proposed by author to make the discipline more inclusive. The works of Kathey Moon, Jindy Pettman, Jacqui True and Elizabeth Prugl are analysed in the book. The work of Ann Tickner (1988) *Hans Morgenthau's Principles of Political Realism: a Feminist Reformulation* is a feminist critique of the hyper masculinist International

Relations, which undermines women entirely from the realm of global politics. The criticism of six principles of Hans. J. Morgenthau's realism and reformulation of it from a feminist point of view which is discussed in the article is of great significance as it is a milestone in the gendered analysis of International Relations. In *Gender in International Relations: Feminist Perspectives on Achieving Global Security* (1992), by Ann J. Tickner, criticise liberal, realist, neo- realist as well as Marxist theories from gendered point of view while analysing international relations and world politics from feminist perspective. The gendered construction of state and citizen responsibilities, gendered aspects of environment economy, military and politics are to be considered within the term security in IR, according to Tickner. This paved the way for rethinking security in international relations from feminist viewpoint.

The question 'where are the women'? in International Relations that Cynthia Enloe (1989) raises in her classic feminist IR work *Bananas Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* and her argument that gender makes the world go round have paved the way for development of feminist perspectives in International Relations. Through chapters on Nationalism and masculinity, women around military bases, tourism destinations and banana plantations, and women as textile workers, diplomatic and undiplomatic wives, domestic servants in world politics, and source of cheap labour, Enloe uncover women's critical role in both intellectual and strategic evolution of international political movement. Here, Enloe describes how gender, ethnicity, and class are linked in everyday lives of women and how they are undermined by the masculine frame of the discipline International Relations.

The book *Feminist IR-An Unfinished Journey* by Christine Sylvester (2002) has divided into three sections with headings 'sightings', which emphasis on the effects of gender in international politics, 'siting' on importance of innovative feminist methodologies, which can locate gender in international relations and 'citing' on the future of journey of feminist international relations. The relevance of the works of Cynthia Enloe, Jean Elshtain, and Ann Tickner are acknowledged in this book. The need for including gender lens in IR is also highlighted by the author. Christine Sylvester (2010) in the book *Contributions of Feminist Theory to International Relations* explains how the leading International Relations scholars like Robert Keohane undermines the emerging

feminist scholarship in International Relations by raising questions like ‘what do you propose to contribute to already established International Relations’. Sylvester argues that the theoretical vacuum and politics of exclusion in International Relations must get exposed and rectified. Feminist theorizing will help to understand what the field is up to and how it should be studied. Everyday experiences of people, especially women, will help to form a more inclusive theorization in International Relations. A Genealogical beholding of gender in International Relations is explained with use of gender lens in International Relations scholarship.

The need for inclusion of gender lens to the study of International Relations and how the first and second generation feminist International Relations scholars successfully used gender as a variable to study issues in mainstream International Relations are discussed in the chapter *Feminism* in the book *Theories of International Relations*, by Jacqui True (2005). Author explains how the structures, history and knowledge about International Relations is gendered. Gender as a variable in global politics, gender as constitutive and transformative of International Relations, and how sovereign man and state constitute core in International Relations theories are explained along with masculine character of the key concepts such as power, security, rationality and sovereignty in International Relations discourse is discussed. The demand for deconstructing mainstream/malestream International Relations theories from gender lens is explained by the author.

In the book *The Radical Future of Realism: Feminist Subversion of IR Theory*, Anne Sisson Runyan and Spike Peterson (1991) argues that women have no place in the grand narratives of IR which are centred in anarchical nature of state and international system. How women are considered as site of disorders and to be controlled by man and state has been discussed in this book. They claim that world politics is gendered in nature and they criticise that International Relations theorists and practitioners recognize ideology of realism as sole truth about International Relations. The concept of power, security and sovereignty which are core aspects in realism is critically studied here. The developments that contributed to the growth of feminist International Relations is another subject matter of this book. The way Feminist International Relations scholars emphasis on everyday experience of women is highlighted in this writing.

In the book *Feminist Theories Within, Invisible To, and Beyond IR*, Spike Peterson (2004) explains the three overlapping feminist knowledge projects in International Relations such as a) exposing the extent and effects of masculine bias, b) adding women and their experiences to existing framework, and c) reconstructing theory to show how International Relations discipline is elite, masculine and invisibility of women in it. Author opines that prospect of feminist theories in IR looks unpromising as long as the discipline remains in the hegemonic rationalist-empiricist framework, which is masculine.

In *Gender and International Relations* Terrell Carver, Marysia Zalewski, Helen Kinsella and Charli Carpenter (2003) discusses about the gender framework in International Relations and also how feminist International Relations is side-lined. How conservatism and gendered construction of knowledge is relevant in International Relations discussions and the importance of adding gender lens to the discipline are visible in the work. The importance of feminist methodology in conceptualising gender, sex and sexuality while discussing various issue in International Relations is emphasised by the authors.

In *Seeing Sex, Gender and Sexuality in International Security*, Laura Sjoberg (2015) explains about how sex, gender and sexuality are important in international security. The questions 'where is the gender' and 'where are the queer' are important to ask while dealing with International Relations according to the author. How gender dynamics influence war and conflict is worth to enquire as feminists have argued that gender dynamics do not happen only to people within the institutions but also among institutions like state and different sorts of actors in global politics.

The book, *International Relations Theory and Non-traditional Approach to security*, by Siddarth Mallavarapu (2008) addresses highly debated issues in contemporary international Relations theory and praxis, such as a rethinking of conventional state centric security debates. The end of the Cold War as well as the process globalization have accelerated rethinking of traditional security debates in International Relations discipline. According to the author, even though state security is crucial, it fails to incorporate human needs, social welfare and identity concerns within its theoretical

aspects. Buzan, Waever and Jaap provide conceptual map to take non-traditional security threat more seriously, according to the author. He also mentions Amitav Acharya's theoretical arguments on human security. According to author, Critical theorists place human being as the central referents of a dynamic security discourse. For Constructivists security is ultimately a social construct. Gender identity and its impact on security is discussed through the arguments of Gunhild Hoogensen and Sevin Vigeland, Miranda Alison, and Heidi Hudson, who claim that gender as a unit of analysis of security reveal complex and fluctuating mix of interlinked gendered knowledge construction and practices within all sectors of security at all level, thus emphasizes the need for gender critique of security studies.

1.2.2. Gender and Food Security

Food and Agriculture Organization, and *WFP* (2017) summarize basic aspects of food security into four dimensions such as, a) *Access*, which refers to physical and economic access to resources needed to procure food. b) *Availability*, which refers to the physical availability of sufficient amounts of food, includes food that is produced, imported, stored, traded, or provided by government or aid organizations. c) *Stability*, refers to the economic, social, and political context in terms of the access to food and associated with variations in the level of food security over time, and is influenced by severe climatic events, high food prices, and political instability. d) *Utilization* refers to the way in which food is processed as well as the nutritional quality and safety of food, which involves factors, such as quality of diet, preparation, storage, and processing of food, individual health status, intra-household distribution of food, and access to clean water and sanitation facilities.

The BRIDGE Report (2014), describes the need for focus on gender and food security and the need for achievement of nutritional security. Access to food and nutrition discussion includes gender inequalities in access to food at household. Causes and impact of malnutrition through gendered lens is looked under the category of utilization of food in the report. Stability of food and nutrition, care work and food security, gender-based violence and food security are discussed in the report. It also discusses policy response to achieve gender just food and nutrition security.

In *Women and the Gendered Politics of Food*, Vandana Shiva (2009) argues that politics of food is gendered in multiple ways, such as food production, processing, and provisioning. Through corporate globalization driven by capitalist patriarchy, the control over the food chain from seed to table is shifting from women's hands to global corporations. Women make the most significant contribution to food security. According to author lack of women's property rights is a major constraint on women's capacity to feed the world. Intellectual Property Rights, TRIPS and WTO through means of patents, exploit seed and knowledge of women and indigenous people's rights. Globalization, agribusiness corporations, application of monoculture, all inversely affects women and food security, according to the author.

Bina Agarwal (1998), in the book *Disinherited Peasants, Disadvantaged Workers: A Gender Perspective on Land and Livelihood*, examines why the land right is important in the context of gender relation as land right may provide security to women. Various aspects of land rights, inheritance law and how it affects women are discussed here. Access to land is crucial to ensure food security within women's perspective, as several factors such as the traditional patrilineal opposition to the land ownership to women and daughters, forgoing their share for wellbeing of brothers, economic, bureaucratic and institutional frameworks that prevents women's access to land right, according to the author.

Women's Empowerment in the Context of Food Security and Nutrition (2017) of CFS Forum argues that food security and nutrition cannot be achieved without gender equality. Besides, the role of women as knowledge bearers and agents of transformation in food sustainability is emphasised here. The work also discusses issues like the relevance of eradication of structural discrimination and gender stereotypes to achieve equality in all walks of life, the inclusion of gender disaggregated data to incorporate women's real-life experiences particularly in achieving food security, the factor of paid and unpaid labour or productive/reproductive work, and the incorporation of nutritional factor in right to adequate food.

The reports such as (1) *Gender Equality and Food Security- Women's Empowerment as a Tool against Hunger* of Asian Development Bank (2013) (2), *The State of Food*

Security and Nutrition in the World of FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2019) (3), *State of Food Security and Nutrition Report 2022, 2023, and 2024*, (4), *Women and Food Security* of SIDA (2015). (5), *Facts and Figures: Poverty and Hunger* of UN Women (2012)., (6), *Gender Inequalities and Food Insecurity: Ten Years after the Food Price Crisis, why are Women Farmers Still Food -Insecure?* of OXFAM (2019) explored ample data on the reasons for women suffer from food insecurity. They also discuss the socio economic, cultural, political and environmental factors that affect food availability, stability women's access to food and utilization. The key role women play in ensuring food security has been analysed in these reports. Similarly, the need for structural changes to improve nutritional status to achieve food security among women is also emphasised in these studies.

Scholarly works of Allen and Sachs (2006) *Women and Food Chains: The Gendered Politics of Food*, Andrea M Collins, (2018), *Old habits die hard: The need for feminist rethinking in global food and agricultural policies*, and Avakian, Arelene Voski & Haber, Barbara (2005) *From Betty Crocker to Feminist Food Studies: Critical Perspectives on Women and Food* explore the interconnections between gender and psychological, corporeal, the material, and socio-cultural, dimensions of food. They also examine the gender dimensions of household responsibilities tied to food, as well as food consumption. In all these works, emphasise is given to the need of gendered perspective of food studies in order to find out the formation as well as shaping of identities by women's everyday life experiences with food that spread across the collection of food materials, preparation and consumption of food.

1.2.3. Gender and Food Security in Sub-Saharan Africa

Why Food Insecurity Persist in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Review of Existing Evidence written by Vibeke Bjornlund et. al. (2022), explains the interrelated contributory factors such as low production and yields, primitive tools, lack of credit and investment in infrastructure, government policies, corruption and most importantly, the colonial system instituted economic dependency that result in widespread poverty, malnutrition and chronic food shortages in Sub-Saharan Africa. The post independent governments continue the non-value-added export to Global North, which inversely affects domestic

food production and small-scale farmers. The impact of colonialism in food security results in reduced food production, loss and replacement of traditional sources of nutrition, diminished productivity and food reserves, and regression of domestic economy. International development schemes, trade policies, Structural Adjustment Program, commercial land acquisition by international companies and the nature of global financial governance also caused food insecurity in the region. The authors conclude that colonialism and policies of post-colonial governments have played an important role in food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa.

UN WOMEN Policy Brief no. 11, *The Gender Gap in Agricultural Productivity in Sub Saharan Africa: Causes, Cost and Solutions* and *Africa Policy Brief 4 on Gender and Climate Change and Food Security*, (UNDP, 2012; 2019) explain that the agricultural sector which form the basis for food security of women is in trouble. The gender gap in access to agricultural inputs, less access to male family labour, lack of access to contemporary farm technology, and disadvantage in access to credit results in food insecurity of women. Apart from that, the briefs point out gender norms and customs, gender gap in agricultural productivity, profits, and many other social norms constrain sufficient time for women to engage in agricultural works which also shows gendered nature of food security in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Gender Inequality, Reproductive Rights and Food Insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa-a Panel Data Study by Deeksha Tayal (2019) also highlights that the gender disparities exist in Sub-Saharan Africa has negative impacts on food security of the region. Women face discrimination in the areas of food production, distribution, and consumption and role as income earners, which make food insecurity. Economic dependence, constraints to asset ownership, lack of control of resources, and the existence of various gender discriminatory practices within and outside household prevent accomplishment of food security in Sub-Saharan Africa from a gender perspective.

Gender Roles, Implications for Water, Land and Food Security in a Changing Climate: A Systematic Review, by Henry Bikwibili Tantoh et al (2021) examines the gender roles and its implications in food security, water and land issues in Sub-Saharan Africa in the context of climate change. The study observes that patriarchal culture exists in Sub-

Saharan Africa where control of resources and decision making remain with male members of the community. Women are subjected to physical, social and economic threats which creates food insecurity, lack of access to water and denial of land ownership. The inequality between gender roles and their approach to natural resource use and management have been culturally constructed as customary norms by and large restrict the ownership or control of land by rural women. According to this study, the gender blindness in ownership of land and control over natural resources make women most vulnerable to climate change.

The works of, (1) Brenton, Paul, Gamberoni, Elisa, & Sear Catherine. (n.d) titled *Women and Trade in Africa: Realizing the Potential.*, (2), Burchi, Francesco, Scarlato, Margherita & d'Agostino, Giorgio. (2016) titled *Addressing Food Insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa: The Role of Cash Transfers.* (3) Ferrant G, Pesando, Luca Maria & Nowacka, Keiko. (2014) titled *Unpaid Care Work: The missing link in the analysis of gender gaps in labour outcomes.*, (4) Teodosijević, Slobodanka (2003) titled *Armed Conflicts and Food Security.* (5) Stifel. D, Minten, B. (2017) titled *Market access, well-being, and nutrition: evidence from Ethiopia.*, analyse the causes of food security among women in Sub-Saharan Africa, such as lack of/limited access to market, access to labour, and gendered nature of political conflict that influence food security, the gendered aspects of structural, socio economic and cultural factors on food security.

The academic works of (1), Haddad L, Hoddinott J, & Alderman H. (Eds.) (1997). *Intrahousehold resource allocation in developing countries: Models, Methods and Policy*, (2) Njuki, Jemimah, Parkins, John R. & Kaler, Amy. (Eds.). (2016). *Transforming gender and food security in the Global South.*, (3) Abbas, J.D. (1997). *Gender asymmetries in intra-household resource allocation in Sub-Saharan Africa* and (4) Abubakari, Abdulai, Jahn, Albrecht, & Beiersmann, Claudia (2019). *Food beliefs and practices during pregnancy in Northern Ghana: Implications for nutrition counselling*, explain in detail, the constraints in utilization of food in Sub-Saharan Africa which is influenced by the patriarchal, socio, economic aspects in the society that create food insecurity to the women in the region.

In IFPRI Food Policy Statement titled *Women: The Key to Food Security* authored by Quisumbing et al., (1996), provides the statistics on share of women in food production in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to this report, women account for 60% to 70% of household food production in Sub-Saharan Africa, but the limitations compelled women to be out of access to food, land and nutrition. Women are kept out from availability of credit due to the restraints in access to land as along with other social and cultural barriers, and also their low educational status. Women do not get appropriate agricultural extension services due to the existing norms and cultural restrictions vested upon them. The family, and the predominant societal and cultural norms assign women the role to ensure all household members adequate nutrition/food which results in their malnutrition. Thus, gendered norms and values also contribute into food insecurity of women in the region.

1.2.4. The Black Feminist Perspective

The book *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment (2000)* by Patricia Hill Collins provide social construction of Black Feminist Thought. Black Women's standpoints are explored through interviews, oral history, poetry and fiction. The aspects of motherhood, family, work, oppression, and new areas of sexual politics are explored in this book. Collins challenge mainstream feminism, and emphasise on the Black feminist epistemology in this work. The book *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate Politics (2000)* by bell hooks explores the meaning of feminism as effort to end sexist oppression and sexism. The book discusses success and failure in the feminist movement, the crucial concerns of reproductive rights, marriage, family, sexual politics, and feminist class struggle through class and race prism. The emphasis in the power of sisterhood to end institutionalised sexism is also reflected in this book.

The book *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting of Politics of Sisterhood* (ed.) (2003) by Oyeronke Oyewumi is a collection of writings of African American women on issues of gender imperialism, female circumcision and criminalization of it, African woman and development policy, sisterhood with critical lens, and gender imperialism in academia. *Home Girls: a Black Feminist Anthology (1983)*, edited by Barbara Smith

is the collection of works of 32 Black Feminist writers/critics/theorists who are from different walks of life, but show similar experiences. Through this anthology, the lived experiences and struggles of Black Women in the spheres of culture, home, gender and sexual orientation is explored. The narrations and stories in this anthology are not in tune with the conventional ideas, norms and taboos and therefore, challenge the already constructed epistemological stand. *Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics* (1989) by Kimberle Crenshaw- develop a black feminist critique of the mainstream feminist theory which use a single axis framework to examine anti-discrimination law and anti-racist politics. She criticises the tendency to analyse race and gender as separate category as Black Women's life is intersectional of race, class and gender. This work act as a foundation to understand the concept intersectionality in Black Feminist studies.

The review of literature given above on gendered food security among Black women in Sub-Saharan Africa, makes it clear that there is hardly any work available on Black feminist perspective/intersectional perspective on food security among women in Sub-Saharan Africa. The absence of studies with an intersectional perspective based on four variables of food security identified for this study such as, *Access to food, Availability of food, Stability of food* and *Utilization of food* constitute the knowledge gap that the study aims to fill.

The study addresses the gendered aspects of food security among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa to highlights the need to engender the discipline of International Relations. Such an effort would make it more inclusive of peripheral views. The theoretical framework of this study is Black feminist perspective which is useful along with the common parameter 'gender', to explore the peculiar factors that determine the existence of food insecurity among women in the Sub-Saharan African region.

1.3. Statement of the Problem

The discipline International Relations is dominated by conventional mainstream theories which uphold the positivism which is hyper masculine, according to feminists. The masculinist mental models which dominate the theories, concepts and discourses

in the discipline results in sidelining of the views from the margins, especially women's perspective on important issues of IR. This gender blindness paved the way for demand for apply of gender lens in theories, concepts, debates and discussions within the discipline. As a result, the concept of security, which is always confined with physical/military security of state, is reconceptualised from gendered and human security perspective with the inclusion of social economic, political, environmental, food, health and personal dimensions of security in the discourse which makes the analysis and discussions on security complete. Within the traditional framework on security, food security or right to food has been neglected as it mostly concerned with women, children and other marginalized sections of the society. The undermining of gender perspectives caused by the domination of mainstream masculine perspective makes the discipline exclusionary/non inclusive. This partial view on the issues of security is reflected on food security makes the necessity of applying gender lens to study food security. Furthermore, the differentiated experiences of women of class, race, caste, religion, region etc. on security is relevant as the parameter of 'gender' alone cannot problematize the real aspects of it. Therefore, it is academically relevant to study intersectional aspects of food security of women in Sub-Saharan Africa from Black Feminist perspective as it helps to understand the influence of intersectionality of class, gender, and race that make Black Women food insecure. Thus, the study contributes into the search for a more inclusive International Relations which is engendered as well.

1.4. Objectives of the Study

The major objectives of this study are:

- 1.To discuss the importance of engendering security debates in International Relations.
2. To examine the relationship between food (in) security and gender inequality.
- 3.To explore the importance of inclusion of gender lens in International Relations with special reference to food security in Sub-Saharan Africa from Black Feminist perspective.

1.5. Research Questions

The following are the major questions addressed in the study:

1. How far gender perspective is competent in engendering security debate in the discipline International Relations?
2. Is gender inequality and food security/insecurity interconnected? And how?
3. How far the Black Feminist perspective on food security in Sub-Saharan Africa can be relevant in the inclusion of gender lens in the study of security in IR?

1.6. Methodology

At base, this research focuses on the gender dimension of food security in Sub-Saharan Africa and the framework of the study is Black Feminist perspective. Feminist (particularly Black Feminist) theories are used to examine the research questions of this study. As the study is qualitative in nature, qualitative methods, tools and techniques are predominantly used. Both primary as well as secondary sources of data has been used to explain the concepts and theories associated to the study. The primary sources of data used for the study include Government Reports, Census Reports, Research reports, statistical data, Reports of International and regional organizations and non-governmental organizations. Email communications, and informal discussions with women are also followed in the study for information and data collection. Secondary sources of data used in the study include Conference Proceedings, books, articles from research journals and magazines, newspaper reports, published and unpublished thesis/dissertation, and speeches. Data have also been collected from the official websites of many government institutions an organisations.

1.7. Chapterisation

Chapter 1: Introduction

This chapter provides a brief historical background of the focal aspects of the study, along with the structure of the thesis which includes a detail review of relevant literature, statement of the problem, objectives and research questions, methodology used, and knowledge gap addressed in the study.

Chapter 2: Feminist Perspectives in International Relations: Conceptual and Theoretical Aspects

This chapter examines the concept of gender, the development of feminism in International Relations, how gender blind the discipline International Relations is, and

the important arguments of Feminist theorists who applied gender lens to understand debates, and discourses in International Relations. Thus analyse the need of engendering the discipline of IR Through a feminist/gender perspective.

Chapter 3: Understanding Black Feminist Perspective

The chapter provides an overview of the historical development of Black Feminist Perspective. The chapter also discusses the core concepts of Black feminism and the intersectionality of class, race, and gender.

Chapter 4: Conceptualising Gender and Food Security: Understanding the Linkages

This chapter discusses security debate in IR, the Human security paradigm, and various aspects of food security. The conceptual connection between food security and gender under economic, socio-cultural (patriarchal norms), political, psychological environmental, as well as physical aspects are discussed by using the variables Access to, Availability of, Utilization of and Stability of food security.

Chapter 5: Gendered aspects of Food Security among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa

This chapter study the aspects of food security/insecurity among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa through Black feminist perspective, the theory which based on intersection of class, race, and gender to highlight the importance of applying gender lens to engender the discipline of International Relations. The analysis of access to, availability of, utilization of and stability of food are taken as variables along with socio-cultural, economic and patriarchal norms on food insecurity among women in the region.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This chapter presents the conclusion and major findings of the study.

CHAPTER II

Feminist Perspectives in International Relations: Conceptual and Theoretical Aspects

2.1. Introduction

International Relations was emerged as an independent academic discipline after the First World War. It is dominated by traditional/conventional theories such as Realism, Liberalism and their variants, and the dominant methodological characteristics of Positivism and empirical approach, even in the midst of emergence of non-traditional theories of the discipline. The rigidity of those conventional theories and approaches on world politics undermines the social aspect of it and alienate common people from happenings in world politics. This is the context in which feminist theorists developed a critique of the discipline International Relations as constructed overwhelmingly by men working with mental models of human activity seen through an elite male point of view and apprehended through an elite male sensibility thus masculinist epistemological standpoint (Grant et al., 1991). Within this dominant male perspective that shaped the foundations of the discipline, women or gender and other marginalized group's experiences to understand various aspects of International Relations has been neglected. This paved the way for rethinking of International Relations from gender or feminist perspective where, it is argued that, the use of gender as a variable in conceptual, empirical, and normative inquiry in International Relations make it more inclusive. So Feminist scholars in International Relations prefer to approach global politics and international system through a gendered lens, which was absent in mainstream International Relations on the false assumption that male experience can count for both men and women and also other marginalised. In this chapter, the need of

engendering the discipline IR for an inclusive growth and development is examined through a gender/feminist perspective of the discipline.

In order to understand the gendered perspective of International Relations, it is necessary to comprehend an overview of development of International Relations as a discipline.

2.2. Development of International Relations as a Discipline

Discipline International Relations (IR) is one of the youngest academic branches of knowledge. International Relations can be defined as “the study of relationships and interactions between countries, including the activities and policies of national governments, international organizations (IGOs), nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and multinational corporations (MNCs). It can be both a theoretical subject and a practical or policy-oriented subject, and academic approaches to it can be either empirical or normative or both.” (Jackson et al., 2013; p 4). The origins of the discipline can be traced back to the formation of Woodrow Wilson Chair of International Relations at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth after the First World War. Subsequently, Chairs for International Relations were established in the Hebrew University, Jerusalem (1929), Oxford University (1930), the London School of Economics (1936) and the University of Edinburgh (1948) (Zimmern,1939; Burchill et.al.,1996).

The scholars who were associated to the discipline IR initially were from law, politics and history. Besides, the practitioners of International Relations such as politicians, bureaucrats and diplomats were also first-generation scholars in the discipline. The theoretical foundations of the discipline were not of concern for them as they focus on substantive issues like war and peace (Sebastian, 2020). At this stage, the scope and debates of the discipline was limited to security, peace, power, state, interstate conflicts, and cooperation (Jackson 2010). Later, the discipline has grown to encompass different approaches, debates and methods to include plurality, diversity and changes in its knowledge spectrum (Booth et.al.,1995) that results in more engagements on theoretical and methodological aspects of the discipline (Sebastian, 2020).

Kenneth. W. Thompson (1952) has identified the following stages in the development of the discipline International Relations. The first stage, was dominated by the historians and diplomats who were interested in the descriptive - historical analysis of the events of international relations. The second stage started by the end of the First World War, and the emphasis was on the need for study and analysis of current events in world politics. The Third Stage of growth was during the war and inter war period where scholars emphasised on the need for international institutions like League of Nations to solve international problems, a more idealistic approach. In the fourth stage, particularly after the failure of League of Nations to prevent Second World War, focus of scholars turned to study military strategy, forces and situations that condition the behaviour of states. The primacy was given to Realist school of thought of Morgenthau. Later in the mid-Sixties and Seventies, the Neo liberal school of thought of Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye focused on trans national economic cooperations, interdependence as well as security, and multinational corporations (Malhotra, 2019) emerged to the centre of IR. The arguments of the dependency theorists like Andre Gunde Frank and Samir Amin's arguments on exploitation of poor nations by wealthy nations along with North South divide lead for demand for New International Economic Order. The Ninety Eighties witnessed the emergence of creation of a unipolar world and the environmental and ecological issues foregrounded in the discourses of the time. The dominance of western theories within the field of International Relations were criticised and challenged by scholars from the third world countries. The later phase has been marked by the ideas of cooperation against confrontation, disarmament, detente, internationalism, and peaceful coexistence. This has paved the base of the growth of post modernism and post positivism in the discipline IR. The challenges and effects of the disintegration of Soviet Union and domination of USA as power to unipolar world also important in the development of the discipline (ibid). Thus, various phases of development in IR facilitate diverse debates and discussions in the discipline. Concurrently, the great debates are a major mile stone in the development of intellectual horizon of the discipline IR.

The First debate occurred in the 1930s and 1940s, between liberal idealists and realists which centered around conflict or cooperation /war or peace through which state protect

its interest. While the liberal idealists were in favor of peace, realists emphasized on security of state by means of military power to ensure security in the anarchic world. The outbreak of world wars proved the dominance of realism which eventually led to the development of neoclassical realism (Sebastian, 2020). The Second debate in the 1960s/1970s focused on methodological aspects of the discipline International Relations, which is between traditionalist and behaviorists /between the normative approaches and positivism, where objectivity of knowledge has become the central question (Smith et al., 1996). The development of arguments resulted in the emergence of neorealists (who claimed the perpetuation of ‘overarching structure of international system exist which is determining states action’) (Waltz 2000) claim of possibility of empirical or scientific study of actions of state on the basis of existence of a common pattern that can be visible in the activities of state. This paved the way for domination of positivist methods in IR theorization (Waltz, 2000; Keohane et al., 1977).

There emerged an intra paradigm debates with in positivism, among neoliberalism and neorealism, on conflict, cooperation, anarchy etc. which led to Neo-Neo synthesis in IR. But, by 1980s the positivist domination which determine the epistemological and methodological aspects in IR was challenged by post positivist paradigm, that emphasized on norms, values and subjectivity in knowledge. Thus, inter paradigm debates of positivism and post positivist brought the methodological, ontological as well as epistemological issue to the center of discussions which set for the base of emergence of diverse views within the discipline in the era of Third Debate in IR (Cox et al., 2012; Sebastian, 2020). Along with the major debates, the development of multiple theories enhances the development of IR as a discipline.

The theories of Realism, liberalism, Marxism, Constructivism, Critical theory, Post colonialism and post structuralism/postmodernism are crucial to the growth of the discipline of IR. *Realist* ideas along with its versions of neo classical realism, strategic realism and neorealism, boosted the growth of discipline of IR by adding the concept of power to the center of state system along with the importance given to the structure of international system (Waltz 1990; Jackson et al., 1999). The theory of *liberalism* emphasized on the mutual cooperation, and mutual benefits among states than conflict to achieve the goals of states (Doyle, 1986; Macmillan, 2007). *Critical theory*, by

incorporating voice of the marginalized people in the studies of IR, furthered the development of the discipline. Their claim that knowledge cannot be neutral is a turning point in the epistemology of IR (Burchill, 2009; Linklater, 2007). The *Marxist* conception of state as institution of bourgeoisie oppression and analysis of colonialism, capitalism and class aspects in the IR domain along with the Neo-Marxist concept of hegemony has led to the development of social theory of world politics which explain how domination of capitalism is based on ideological hegemonical functions in the world politics (Sebastian, 2020).

Social Constructivism emphasize on the cultural, historical and social believes along with role of non-state actors and institutions in determining world politics (Smith et al., 2010) add new vision in dealing with issues of world politics. The existing knowledge realm of the discipline of IR was deconstructed through *postmodernism* or *post structuralism* (Agger, 1991) especially through the critique of objective truth, reason, value neutrality, universality which is product of modernity (Devetak, 2005; Edkins, 2007; Ashley, 1988). The *post-colonial* or Global south perspectives contributed to IR by exposing how the economic, social and political foundations of international system are deep rooted in colonialism (Abrahamsen, 2007). Thus, the development of different perspectives and theories contributed to the growth of IR as a matured discipline.

Even though the study of relationships and interactions between countries, including the activities, proponents of mainstream scholarship in IR claimed that attention has been given to different voices, diverse experiences, new actors and new issues in the knowledge in IR (Paolini,1999). However, while examining the main areas of discussions in the discipline such as power, security, war, peace, foreign policy, political economy, conflicts, humanitarian interventions, refugees, nationalism, environmental aspects, etc., the absence of the marginalized perspectives and epistemologies, especially gendered perspectives in the discourses and approaches, are very visible. This paved the way for efforts of assertion of the inclusion of feminist perspectives/gender perspectives within IR to place it more inclusive by engendering the discipline to broaden the scope of the discipline, which is analyzed below. In order to highlight the relevance of gendered perspective in IR, it is important to comprehend the concept of gender.

2.3. Conceptualising Gender

Gender discourse has its relevance in International Relations. “Gender can be defined as a multidimensional social and cultural construct that includes gender roles, expressions, behaviours, activities, power dynamics, and/or attributes that a given society associates with being a woman, man, girl, or boy, as well as relationships with each other. As a social construct, gender varies from society to society and can change over time” (NIH, 2024; p.1). Gender is treated as something natural because of its internalization in all domains of human life such as family, institutions, beliefs, social roles, day-to-day-interactions, lifestyles, food habits, politics, education, discourses, (re)productive roles, power relations etc., even though it is a socially constructed one.

Conceptually, there is a clear difference between sex and gender but they are generally used interchangeably. The biological categorisation with reference to the reproductive organs is termed as sex. “Sex is a biological descriptor based on reproductive, hormonal, anatomical, and genetic characteristics like male, female, and intersex²”, (NIH, 2024; p.1) whereas gender is socially constructed where social structures and cultural practices decide the differences, roles, duties based on the sex of the newborn. The construction and practice of gender is based on the exaggeration of biological differences of sex and carry forward the differences in human biology to the realms in which it is totally insignificant. So, the newborn is under the influence of cultural beliefs and social institutions for life long gendering process to become male or female, thus gender become a collaborative affair which is in need of assist from one’s surroundings for existence (Penelope et al., n.d).

Gender is understood as tool of oppression of cultural and social categories which is imposed upon others rather than self-determined. For example, to some people ‘Women’ as a gendered category is tied and defined with discriminations and oppressions upon them, but for others, gender categories are self-determined identities. For example, ‘women’ as an identity for empowerment for those people who identify

² Intersex and people with variations in sex characteristics (VSC) are people born with chromosomal hormonal, and/or anatomical characteristics that may not align with one another and/or fall outside of what is typically classified as male or female (NIH,2024).

themselves as ‘women’. Thus, gender becomes a contested term (Mohan, 2023). According to Ann Tickner (2001) gender, (masculinity and femineity) can be described as a constructed linkage between biological sex and associated attributes, such as autonomy and strength or dependence and vulnerability. The categorization of gender establishes and reinforce hierarchies that cause valuation to masculine characterizations while condemnation towards femineity (Tickner, 2001). Even organizations, events, institutions and states become gendered as gendering process deals with allocation of power and regard on the basis of attributed association with sex-based characteristics. In this regard, gender cannot be treated just as an attribute to individual or a group (Sjoberg, 2011).

As gender is a broad term containing various connotations and interpretations of categories, it is inappropriate to confine gendered categories into the binary of men and women. Moreover, gender identity may not be necessarily in accordance with the designated sex by birth. This leads to the identification of people with different sexual orientations named LGBTQIA+³ as sexual/gender minorities, a categorization which is growing. Sexual minorities also consist of those people who do not identify themselves with one among male and female, but their gender expression and identity, reproductive development and sexual orientation are identified with non-binary characteristics of sex or gender (NIH, 2024). Sexual and gender minority (SGM) populations include those who identify themselves as gay, bisexual, transgender, lesbians, asexual, intersex, Two Spirit, and queer as well as those who have same sex or gender attraction or characters.

The concept gender performativity of Judith Butler is important while dealing with the various connotations of the concept gender (Felluga, 2002). They propose that gender is performative rather than biological, a challenge to the essentialist arguments of gender that masculinity should be performed by male bodies and femininity by female bodies, and naturally these bodies desire the opposite. They challenge the assumption that femineity and masculinity are biologically given and argues that it is based on

³ *LGBTQIA+* stands for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and intersex. The plus sign includes other members of the community, such as asexual, genderfluid, nonbinary, or two-spirit etc. (NIH, 2024).

performativity, or the act of a performance, which is imposed by ‘normative heterosexuality’ (Szorenyi, 2022; Felluga, 2002). Even if the concept of gender has wide definitions and connotations this study focuses on women as a gendered category in the discussions and analysis.

2.4. Gender, Feminism and International Relations

Women’s voice is marginalised in all walks of life, which is reflected even in the discourses, analysis and theory building in the academic discipline International Relations as well. This necessitates the importance of applying feminist perspective or gender lens to the discipline to engender it. Theorists like Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland (1991) criticised that theories in the discipline International Relations are constructed by hegemonic masculinity based on male sensibility. According to R.J.B. Walker “International Relations is one of the most gender blind, indeed, patriarchal of all institutionalised forms of contemporary social and political analysis” (Walker, 1992; 179). With the dominant male perspective that shaped the foundations of the discipline, women’s and other marginalized group’s experiences is neglected by the mainstream knowledge construction in International Relations. This paved the way for a rethinking of International Relations from gender or feminist perspective. The theory and practices in International Relations (which are silent on the experiences of women) and those political and economic institutions are all gendered and therefore the IR to be theorised from a gender/feminist perspective (Whitworth,1994).

‘Gender’ is criticised by men as it ignores men’s perspective whereas feminists argue that the concepts and facts in IR begin with dominant masculinist epistemology that constitute it. In order to understand gender relations and position of women in IR, an inquiry of operationalization of masculinity that sustain inequalities in existing power relations is essential (Enloe, 2001; Steans, 2003). Feminist perspective of IR is not exclusively on/by women or adding women to issues, rather, as masculinist perspective can be held by women, feminist perspective can be held by men also. The reason is that these perspectives are not biologically but politically grounded (Steans, 2003). As Sarah Brown (1998) treats feminist perspective in IR as understanding world from the perspective of subjugated which an act of political commitment, there is immediate

need to identify the unspecified relations between construction of gender and construction of power in IR. The relevance of gender lens is emphasised by Jill Steans (1998) who projects gender as a peculiar sort of power relations. To find out those methods in which the centrality of gender in understanding international processes, a gendered lens is needed.

According to Spike Peterson and Ann Runyan (1993; p.18), “the knowledge claims we make, the jobs we work at and the power we have are all profoundly shaped by gender expectations. Through a gender sensitive lens not only the ‘what’ of world politics but also the ‘how’ we think about it also become different”. The speculations about gender become central to organizing our world. Besides, how and why the opportunities, social processes, and ideas are different for men and women can also analysed through gender lens (Mehrotra, 2017). Through gender perspective, IR is studied as not only from the angle of members of same biological group or sex, but also analyse the symbolic connotation it develops in social hierarchies on the basis of association with feminine and masculine characteristics. Even institutions, events, organizations and state display gendered characters (Sjoberg, 2009). With use of gender lens, feminist theorists expose the differences that exist between men and women in the evaluation of situations, or evolving approaches that are specific to any circumstance, events, institutions or programmes to implement (Sjoberg, 2009; ESCWA, 2022). Thus, Feminist theoreticians in IR states that as women’s everyday activities are based and determined by the social relations where they are situated, results in the emphasis on the enquiry that we should centres our study on gender rather than concentrate on locating/relocating women in IR (Zalewski, 1994; 1999).

In this backdrop, it is relevant to understand the milestones led to the development of feminist perspective/gender perspective in IR. Feminist approaches to the discipline IR started to be recognised in the academy, only in late 1980s, mainly because of the continuing domination of male perspective in conventional theories of the discipline (Byron et.al.,1998). Ann Tickner connects feminist debates in IR with the Third Debate in the discipline (Lapid,1989). During the Third Debate, in 1980s, feminist theoreticians deconstructed the dominant realist IR theory and contested the positivist as well as state centric character of the discipline. This has strengthened the post positivist debates in

IR (True,2001; Tickner,1992) and brought out the priority changes in security debates from its militaristic aspects to human security aspects. This paved the way for inclusion of a gendered/feminist perspective to address the nonconventional issues of drug trade, demography, ethnicity, economic globalization, environment, human rights, migration, and political freedom (Thorburn, 2000; Klare,1996; Sjoberg et al., 2012) as they all have a gendered face. As a result of this, there is a proliferation of academic works on economic development of women in third world countries.

Such works have unravelled the male biasness in international development process and brought attention to the need of placing women at the centre of development especially through Women in Development (WID) (Petman, 2001). Similarly, in environment, the masculinist gender biases reflect in the nature and functions of associated global institutions where the need for women's autonomy was emphasised, especially through ecofeminist theories (Tickner,1992). With regard to foreign policy, the existence of gender gaps in foreign policy making, and the reluctance to accommodate women in foreign policy institutions are highlighted (Randal,1982). In the realm of security, the male biasness, invisibility of women in national decision making, relationship between militarisms and structural violence, fate of women during situations of conflict, and peace process are discussed. The gender perspective on integrating women's role in Less Developed Countries (LDC)'s security aspects also highlighted which all are undervalued in the male stream discipline till then (Grant,1991; Zalewski ,1995; Enloe,1993; Tickner,1992; Byron et al., 1998; Lascuarin, 2016).

The postpositivist works of feminist theoreticians have been visible in IR academy since 1980s. The areas of international violence due to the culture and structure built on masculinity, systematic exclusion of women in IPE, sexual exploitation during and as a byproduct of militarism, gendered aspects of state etc. are important in the areas with post positivist approach used as a methodology along with gendered epistemology (Enloe,1989, 2000 ; Jones ,1994; Moon ,1997, Waring ,1988; Carpenter, 2003; Peterson, 1992; Tickner, 1992; Sylvester, 1994; Sjoberg, 2010, 2012, 2013; Tickner et al., 2011). This occurrence of late 1980s and 1990s was boosted with the publications of many new Women's Studies Journals, as well as the focus given to feminist debates

in the popular academic journals of the discipline like the *Millennium* (published from London School of Economics).

The launching of women studies courses in various parts of Europe, Australia and USA initially and later in Asia and Africa along with many conferences such as the Ford Foundation sponsored conference on Women, Gender and the Study of International Relations at London School of Economics, the Millennium Conference of the Journal of International Studies held at the London School of Economics (1988), Conference at the University of Southern California (1989) and Conference at Wellesley College (1990) have seriously addressed the importance of gender perspective in IR (Nanda, 2014). Similarly, conferences on the relations between development and women under the leadership of UN such as UN International Conference in 1975 (which declared 1975 as International Women's Year), Women In Development Movement (WID) (Which later evolved as Gender and Development movement (GAD), the Conferences in Copenhagen (1980), Nairobi (1985) and Beijing (1995) on Women and Development have also implanted the perspectives of women in core international issues. All these events were mile stones in the development of feminist perspectives in the discipline (Thorburn, 1997; Baylis et al., 2011).

The academic contributions of feminist scholars such as Cynthia Enloe, Rebecca Grant and Kathleen Newland, Ann Tickner, Spike Peterson, Jindy Pettman, Mary Caprioli, Marysia Zalewski, Gillian Youngs, Sandra Whitworth, Cynthia Weber, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Christine Sylvester and Anne Sisson Runyan created a new space for discussions in International Relations through a gender lens (Enloe, 2007). The contributions of Dara Cohen, Laura Sjoberg, Laura J. Shepherd and Jacqui True are also critical in the development of gender perspective in International Relations. Thus, gender has become an important area of discussion in the discipline International Relations.

Overall, feminist international theorists criticise mainstream theories of IR as malestream due to gender biased epistemologies. The masculine knowledge and experience on any issue are considered as valid knowledge to be considered as final in any discourse, which in fact undermines the experiences and knowledge of the

marginalised, including women. This realization compels feminist theoreticians to take into account a feminist ontology, epistemologies and methodologies that helps to develop better understanding on world politics.

2.4.1. Significance of feminist ontology, epistemology and methodology in IR

Ontology refers to nature of reality or existence, which deal with the question of ‘what is out there to know about’ or ‘what is the nature of social reality’ (Blaikie 2007; Grix, 2002; Kant, 2014). The ontological differences matter from feminist perspective as the conventional ontological aspects in IR have centred on aspects like conflict, military, state as well as international institutions that see the world from certain fixed attributes of it. But the feminist ontology revolves around the understanding of world on the basis of those social relations that are moulded by the historically unequal political, economic, and social structures that influence the lives of the people (Tickner, 2005 cited in Ackerly et al., 2006). As ontology forms the understanding of world, feminist ontology helps to understand gender attributes of something as it is constructed or reconstructed on the basis of gendered power relations (Maruska, 2010).

Epistemology deals with the type as well as source of knowledge, to examine how knowledge is created, what knowledge is, do we know thing, how and when we do, and how to distinguish between someone know something or cases in which someone does not know something (Moser, 2005; University of Sheffield, 2024). The discipline of IR is dominated by privileged epistemology of hegemonic masculinity, which feminist theoreticians in the discipline wanted to deconstruct. According to feminist theoretician Marysia Zalewski, “legitimacy of feminist work will only be recognised as part of ‘the discipline’ if ‘the discipline’ is rethought in ways that disturb the ‘existing boundaries of both what we claim to be relevant in international politics and what we assume to be the legitimate ways of constructing knowledge about the world” (Zalewski, 1996; 352).

In International Relations where the ‘logic of domination exist’⁴, feminist theorists use gender lens in their effort to move beyond the existing knowledge framework that give

⁴ According to Karen Warren (1990), it is oppressive conceptual framework which provide moral superiority of human or groups and use this superiority to justify the subordination of inferior groups.

less value to gender in constructing the 'international'. Thus, they make the invisible visible through bringing the lives of women to the centre, assurance of women as competent actor and to recognize women as subject rather than object in the study of IR (Reinharz,1992; Tickner, 2006). Feminist perspectives emphasise on the politics of knowledge construction and point out the views of those peripheral actors and marginalised people while mainstream scholarship hide the biasness and claim apolitical (Tickner,1992; Steans,1998).

Sandra Harding (1991) argues that in stratified societies, the experiences and interpretations of those at the margins of society can provide valid and rich starting points for thought for problem to be explained. But generally, women's experiences and point of views are considered as mundane, irrelevant and inconsequential in a patriarchal world where 'masculinization of conventional seriousness', exist which take into account the knowledge of male to be considered as universal in nature and shaping the world view on the basis of that (Mehrotra, 2017; Enloe, 2015; Murphy,1996). Therefore, the feminist perspectives in IR that constitutes the epistemological standpoint which are based on the everyday experiences of women, is used as a tool of analysis to understand the developments in international relations along with the process, causes, and prediction, for a transformation in the arena (Zalewski, 1995; Sjoberg, 2009).

Feminist in IR wants to unravel major concepts, theories, intellectual strands and other incidents which are 'strange' or 'what was earlier appeared as familiar'. They also problematise those basic assumptions and approaches that seems as 'natural' till now and considered as unproblematic and gender neutral by International Theories (Harding, 1991). According to Rebecca Grant, the male biased gendered nature of knowledge construction in IR has its trace to western political tradition where the main discussions and analysis are from the point of view of man's nature and priorities. The position of Aristotle that 'women were physically weaker and therefore intellectually inferior to the male' exemplify the gendered nature of intellectual aspect (Grant,1991). Likewise, Hobbes, in his idea of state of nature, undermines how the gendered relation and women affect the transition from state of nature to society. Rousseau states women should reign in the home as a minister reign in the State, by contriving to be ordered to

do what she wants (Rousseau,1763; Foxley, 1921). All these arguments have kept women out from public sphere, the intellectual domain of Reason, which is possessed only by men.

Feminist theorists in IR critique the traditionally bound definition of knowledge in the discipline for pushing the boundaries of the discipline to include those peripheral views, thus deconstruct the knowledge boundaries and scope of epistemological stand (Ackerly et al., 2008). For example, domesticity, passion and subjectivity of women which all are considered as ‘private’ have brought to the forefront in the studies by the feminist theoreticians against the dominant portrayal of the discipline IR as a field of ‘high politics’, realm reserved for men (Sylvester,1994). The dualistic otherness of international (outside)/domestic (inside), fact/value, public/private, universal/particular rational/irrational, mind/body realms which are reserved for men and women respectively based on masculine and feminine traits posit women as well as their knowledge as inferior/low. Thus, the gendered binary limits the knowledge in the discipline by excluding women and their experiences (Heckman, 1990; Tickner,1997; Steans, 1997) which is exposed by feminist theoreticians through feminist epistemologies.

The gendered discourses through feminist perspective in IR not only focus on women or the addition of women to the male stream constructions of knowledge, but also on the relevance of the way of knowing and being of women in any context (Peterson et al., 1998) even in the midst of existence of hegemonic masculinity. According to Ann Tickner, hegemonic masculinity is an important feature of mainstream IR as that considers the voices of women contemplate and therefore inauthentic. IR as a discipline had and still have preference to ‘maleness ‘in the form of ‘hegemonic masculinity,’ or upholding the notion masculinity as superior. This overwhelmingly reflect in the discourses in the discipline and women’s knowledge that is gained from their everyday experiences are neglected/not considered as a determinant in the study of IR (Narain, 2014). The presence of women as a gendered category constitutes daily operations as well as scholarship in the discipline but the gendered perception of the discipline which claims gender neutrality and objectivity undermines this (ibid).

Due to the domination of hegemonic masculinist epistemology of the discipline, the failure to recognize the existence of gender hierarchy make the IR scholarship partial and therefore problematic. The perception and knowledge of men is solid knowledge (Pettman,1993) that make IR a conservative discipline which undermine/ignore the feminist epistemology. This prevents access of complete reality of any issues of IR, Therefore, the feminist thinkers in IR prefers feminist epistemologies for a better understanding of the discipline.

The recognition of the existence of gendered perspective for rethinking what is 'reality' apart from the perspective of 'Men know everything', expose the real interconnected aspects to be considered in any issue can be possible through the use of feminist epistemology ⁵. The hidden nature of women in IR means that either because of IR as MEN's business that made them hide or IR is gender neutral on the basis of the argument that everything affects both men and women same way.

Feminist wants to move forward from the existing masculinist knowledge frame work in IR that pay little attention to gender biases and wants to go deep into the roots of gender hierarchies and structures that promote and sustain inequalities between men and women in international politics. For this, feminist theorists position gender at the centre of analysis, not just by adding women but understanding the fact that men and masculinity is also central to inquiry as experiences of women cannot be studied in isolation from men (Tickner,1997). By acknowledging themselves as active producers of knowledge, the position of women is changed in knowledge world from being 'object' to 'subject' of knowledge. Women becoming the agents of empowerment, have challenged the epistemological foundation of mainstream theories in IR. By developing perspectives on behalf of women, it has opened the possibility of creation of counter knowledge that challenge the existing male biased epistemology (Grosz, 1988 as cited

⁵ While considering the argument that feminist theoreticians in IR paid no attention to men but fact is that men's perspective and experiences and epistemological stand point been for long time privileged at the expense of that of women. For example, the IR theoreticians Stephen Walt while publishing top ten books in IR, no books on gender or books by women is listed there. And all are authored by White men (Walt, 2009 as cited in Remkus, 2012). Thus, male biasness exists in knowledge world itself by undermining the perspective, experience and epistemological stand point of women.

in Mehrotra, 2017). Thus, the effort of feminist theoreticians to bring the experiences of women as agents of knowledge opened new horizons in IR even in the midst of its masculinist epistemological orientation.

Feminist theorists criticized that the dominant positivist theories of International Relations are elite male constructions rooted in the masculinist epistemology. According to feminists, the visible absence of women and gender perspective in the field of IR is the consequence of androcentrism and the patriarchal structures in the discipline. Consequently, the knowledge on world politics carries the experience of men who possess power and reflect that International Relations shape men as much as men shape IR (Hooper,1999; Runyan et al.,1991).

According to Ann Tickner, the central points of feminist perspective on International Relations include identity issues such as culture, race and gender related to the everyday life experiences of concerned people. The validity of these experiences as knowledge is neglected by conventional International Relations theories due to the dominant male perspective that shaped the foundations of the discipline (Tickner, 2005). According to Ann Tickner, IR scholars must understand that, there is an urgency of speaking from the point of view of disempowered because the marginalised are the sufferers of socio-political and economic issues. Therefore, analysing such issues based on the assumption of 'universal objective knowledge' derived only from the experiences of men remain incomplete and invalid (ibid). Through using gendered lens/feminist perspective, they provide a different epistemological stand to the issues and discourses in IR, which was conventionally gender neutral, thus, unravel the inequality exists in the discipline (Zalewski et.al.,1998; Youngs 2004; Tickner 2011; Sylvester 1994). By revealing gender disparity that exist in the social and historical context and construct knowledge that aim to replace this disparity and invisibility and bringing up women's experiences and knowledge as agents of change, feminist epistemology aims a total emancipation. Thus, the feminist perspective in IR is emancipatory in nature (Reizharz, 1992; Tickner,1997, 1999).

The *methodology* that feminists have used to uncover the gendered nature of the discourses in IR is 'unusual' for conventional theorists in the discipline. For Tickner,

gender doesn't fit with the methodologies of mainstream International Relations because social relations in the real world (which is prime concern of feminist theories) is hidden from the state and statesman centred mainstream International Relations. The everyday life experience of ordinary people which form the foundation of feminist analysis of the discipline is treated as illegitimate and unscientific ways of building knowledge by the mainstream theorists in International Relations. For feminist theorists, the specific location of knower is crucial as, in the society, people have different experience that is important to be counted as their perspective on outside world. So, it is important to build up the base of analysis from their own experience (Eisenstein, 1979) for which feminist methodologies are more apt.

Feminist theoreticians in IR are not simply understanding international phenomena, but explore and expose the injustices that exist within it and also searching for the means to change it. For asking different questions that are 'unusual' in conventional IR, application of different methods as hermeneutic, historically contingent, sociological, or ethnically based narratives, observations, cross cultural ethnographic analysis and discourse analysis that are reformulating, reflective and revealing one (Tickner, 2001; Steans, 2005) have been used in feminist IR. Robert Keohane, in the debate with Ann Tickner, states that the acceptance of feminism in the domain of IR happens when it takes into account the mainstream discipline's methodological, epistemological identities (Keohane, 1998). Even though there is a claim that primacy is given to post positivist methodology in mainstream IR, a survey conducted in 10 countries of Europe prove that all those who are selected as 'most influential in the field of IR in the past 20 years' follow positivist epistemology in research (Jordan et al., 2009 as cited in Muruska, 2010).

Ann Tickner, critique the quantitative research method rooted in the positivist approach used by mainstream IR theoreticians. She highlights the distinct features of the feminist methodologies such as 1) "asking feminist questions that often challenge core assumptions; (2) using women's experiences to design research that is useful for women; (3) reflexivity in the sense of problematizing the position of the researcher; and (4) seeking to produce emancipatory knowledge, i.e., knowledge that is not merely

geared towards solving problems within existing power structures but that pushes towards transforming such structures” (Prugl, 2014; p.3).

Feminist methodologies can be used by women and the marginalised to alter the oppressive situation they face (Tickner, 2005). Annica Kronsell, used method of ‘studying silence’ in IR which employ deconstruction as a method to find out what is not within the text or what is in between lines of the text to make invisibility of gender visible (Ackerly et al., 2006). Bina D’Costa use method of ‘centring the marginalized’ or documents the stories of lower castes, refugees, rape victims or illegal migrants to help to find out undervalued experiences of the marginalised to broaden our theoretical understanding. Likewise, Christine Sylvester chooses the method of ‘world-traveling’ or travel into and recognize the things and difference in the things, living with lessons as methods to find out the truth (ibid). Christian Sylvester (1994) argues for empathetic cooperation as a feminist method to approach issues in IR, especially in their epistemological stand by recognizing that those who study issues in IR has identities that are not static. It helps to understand and listen the voices of those who are unprivileged and also make women visible where their invisibility was accepted as a standard, particularly in mainstream IR theories. Feminist research methods assume that, focus on women’s lives are important to make the invisible visible as well as bring the margins to the centre. Emphasising women as important actors in IR by understanding them as subjects own their own identities and rights rather than objects of study (Reinharz, 1992) is needed.

Feminists in IR believes in the mutual connection of constitutive and sustaining of emotion and intellect rather than considering them as oppositional in the construction of knowledge. The research of them take place within the life process, rather than detachment of ‘research object’ from real life circumstances (Code, 1991; Mies, 1991). Feminist research focuses on the assumption that, in order to produce distortion free understanding and explanation, the inquirer of the matter of study must be placed in the critical place as subject matter where dialectic between researcher and researched happens to get more objectivity (Tickner, 2005; Harding, 1987).

While study the subject matter in conventional IR, due importance is given to how questions are answered (method) rather than on the merit of the question which undervalues the perspectives of the marginalised. Here, the scientific method is followed and importance is given to testing of hypothesis (Harding, 1987). But for feminists in IR, the questions that are asked or that are not asked is detrimental in the inquiry of subject of discussions (Tickner, 2005). For example, in order to understand the state behaviour, feminist IR theoreticians ask questions such as why women remain as disempowered in military and foreign policy (Tickner, 2005). Similarly, rather than relay on hypothetical question of -is women are more peace-loving than men as makers of foreign policy, Feminist ask questions as why there are less women in power position (Sylvester, 1987) and thus formulate a different perspective from marginalised point of view. While theorizing, feminists go beyond just adding women in knowledge by providing social construction of meaning, and try to uncover the hidden power relations that exist in every context.

The belonging of the researcher is important for, framing of research questions, choosing the method of data collection, choice of data in feminist research (Ackerly et al., 2008). Going beyond positivism and empirical approach, feminist scholars use post positivist method and reflectivism which aim to open up/unravel the biases of knowledge in each aspect of research. This makes it possible for a wide analysis of the variable gender in research and thus, disturbs the conventional methods of analysis (Hooper, 1999). Feminist researchers want to expose the silence, question the inclusion and exclusion and break the biases that are already constructed and potential to marginalise the powerless in discourses. Feminist methodologies help to reveal the power differences that exist in the political social and economic actions and having critical impact on the lives of women and the creation of their identity and subjectivity. Thus, feminist theoreticians deconstruct the already biased knowledge in IR by incorporation of perspectives and experiences of women which ultimately unravel the relationship power and knowledge in the discipline (Peterson, 1992). In short, through feminist epistemological stand as well as methodological assertion, feminist research in IR exposes the fallacies in the mainstream knowledge in the discipline and come up with ways to make the discipline more inclusive and unbiased.

Feminists in IR wanted to expose the masculine bias in the construction of knowledge (theories, concepts and discourses) which sideline the efforts as well as experiences of women in IR. They try to reconstruct the existing theories/build new theories, by taking into account all oppressions. This is possible through challenging the conventional differences and boundaries of the discipline, questioning the usual explanations, and reconstruction of the foundational concepts of the discipline like state, power, war, sovereignty, autonomy, anarchy, security, political economy, foreign policy, globalization and so on from a gender lens (Peterson, 2004; Young, 2004; True, 2005). An analysis of feminist perspective on such foundational concepts of the discipline are as follows:

2.4.2. Gendered/Feminist Perspective on War and Peace Keeping

According to the feminist perspective, war and peace keeping operations are gendered in nature, especially in the vulnerability and sufferings caused by war, because of the use of rape as an instrument of war and discrimination and exploitation in refugee camps which all are undermined by the conventional IR theorists. Going beyond the discussion that men are aggressive than women, or women are peace-loving than men, feminists in IR raises much serious questions on conflict and war from a gender frame like the issue of military prostitution, rape as an instrument in war, physical abuses of women in refugee camps etc. This is different from conventional male perspective in IR on war and conflict, that is rooted in militarized masculinity (Seifert,1996). Militarization is process that took place step-by-step through which something become dependent on, controlled by and attain its validity from militaristic criteria or military as an institution (Enloe, 2000) which can be visible through war and conflict especially with regard to relation with women. In ancient times the militarised masculinity on citizenship exists as citizenship is assigned based on heroic performance and sacrifices in war which is symbol of maleness and as a virtue. Within this aspect slaves and women were excluded from citizenship because they are those to be protected because of their femineity and by which they are out of high politics (Tickner,1992).

Feminists in IR question the construction of link between military and masculinity (Eichler, 2014). War and conflicts are made based on the militarized masculinity where

it is assumed that the stereotypical traits of masculinity to be acquired and proven through military action or service in combat. The reproduction of notion of militarised masculinity is fixed by the military as well as state leaders through recruitment of masculine male citizens as soldiers (Tickner,1992; Eichler, 2014). The asserted characteristics of such a militarised masculinity are violence, courage, domination and control with a notion that the real soldiers are men and real men are soldiers (Eichler, 2014).

According to Cynthia Enloe (2000), masculinity and militarism are interlinked. Militarism is gendered as it creates dichotomies of ‘battlefront’/ ‘combat (expression of masculinities or manhood) and ‘Homefront’ (femininity with women’s readiness of services including prostitution). Thus, the dichotomies perpetuate the justification of the concept of patriarchal notion of male superiority in social order (Young, 2004). According to bell hooks, (2000; p.65), “as long as sexist thinking socializes boys to be ‘killers’, whether in imaginary good guy bad guy fights or as soldiers in imperialism to maintain coercive power over nations, patriarchal violence against women and children will continue”. The sexist thinking fostered by dichotomous characteristics of masculinity and femineity provide legitimacy to the conception that masculinity to protect and femineity to be protected. Due to this gendered protection myth, women are excluded from all decision making on war, such as how to conduct, prepare and define war (Stiehm 1983; Runyan,1990; UN Secretary-General, 2002; Sjoberg et al., 2011).

Rather than joining debates about aggressive men and peaceful women, IR feminists are striving to have a better understanding on unequal social hierarchies, including gender hierarchies, related to conflict which cause oppression. Even though, generally women do not fight in the wars, gender reflects in it and patriarchal norms guide it. Women constitute majority of refugees produced by war and they suffer sexual and psychological abuse and the body of women is treated as something to be conquered (Hudson, 2005). During war and conflict children and women are vulnerable to sexual and gender violence, torture, hostage taking, and disappearance as well as forced recruitment and displacement.

Even when there is disruption of food supply during and after war, women have to suffer disproportionately as the decisions in this regard are taken by the male members in the camps (MacKinnon 1993; Karam 2001) because of the glorification of masculinity in the existing patriarchal structure. Apart from direct victimization of women in wars, the gendered impact also exists when they have to face severe economic constraints due to war. The destruction of infrastructure, the difficulty in finding alternative means of livelihood, disruption of food supply, lack of even basic necessity of cloth and medicine and the special needs of women are also constrained (Vickers 1993) due to their exclusion. All these are core concerns for feminist in IR while dealing with the concept of war.

According to Cockburn (1998), as a continuation of violence which starts from bedroom to battlefield, war encircle various forms of violence as it includes domestic violence, rape, and sexual assault on women. Studies prove that, in military families, the intensity of violence against women such as rape and domestic violence are higher (Kwan et.al.,2020; Alves-Costa et al., 2021). *Militarization of domestic violence* is a crucial aspect, when soldiers express their frustration at home as expressing masculinity in the form of violence against members in family make them capable of shooting at enemies (Enloe, 2000). Even *marriage become militarized* as and when a woman is married to a veteran soldier or a soldier, it become support structure to those who are to be in forefront of military readiness (ibid). Besides, *childbearing is also militarized* when state considered wombs of women as ‘breeding ground and recruiting station for soldiers. Through emphasising on gendered patriarchal reproductive role of women, state also support masculinity of soldiers by proposing that properly socialized military wives are needed to give emotional support for male soldiers to act manly in the battlefield. There also exists the assumption that the socialised military wives through their feminine duties must provide support to military to exhibit it to be less brutal institution to civilians (Enloe, 2000).

In the manner that *prostitution also militarised* when hired sex is considered as essential service for soldier’s recreation process and even for preparedness for battle. Established prostitution as a strategy for women in survival in the combat zone (ibid) has also been recognised as normal. Thus, war and militarism are not a heroic act but a gendered

question for feminists. Even *rape become militarized* as a tool of demoralizing enemies. During conflicts, women are forced to become wives of insurgent fighters and subject to rape, because of their gender, which are undermined by mainstream IR (Reiter, 2015). According to feminists, women's body have unavoidable place in battleground as women as rape victim are essential part of the war strategy for demoralizing and conquering enemy (Mardorossian, 2002).

The patriarchal notion of women as the symbolic bearers of socio-cultural norms and biological reproducers or protector of honour of community itself exacerbate violence against women during war, as attack on women become attack on community, especially when rape and forced impregnation is used as a weapon in war. Through rape as a weapon of war men inflict psychological harm on women as well as their community to establish that it is shame for the victim as well as their male relatives or husbands who failed in the protection of women (Cohen,2013). It is also to prove that enemy men are inadequate protectors, thus to demoralise enemy (Goldstein, 2001; Stern et al., 2006; Nystrand, 2006) for all which women's body is targeted.

In patriarchal societies, women are not able to speak about the sexual violence they suffer as this attracts punishment to them for bringing dishonour to family and community. They may later suffer from HIV/AIDS for which women and girls face social ostracism. Women are raped at their homes, or in refugee camps, by the rebel forces, military as well as government personals, or from those internally displaced fellow persons, and from those members of human right services during war and conflict. Gang rape also used as a means of psychological benefits to provide bond among the preparators to improve group morale (Card 1996; Benard 1994). Even pregnant women have to suffer a lot during war or violence by their abdomens pierced with guns or sticks (Koen, 2006) where women are confined to be docile bodies. The glorification of motherhood promotes destruction of foetuses and mutilation of women's body especially reproductive organ to create psychological/physical harm to women (Adler et al., 2023; Human Right Watch, 2016; Juma, 2005). Thus, Feminist theories on wartime rape critically challenge dominant discourses, gender binaries, and one-dimensional narratives that are constructed around militarised masculinism.

Because of gendered norms and lack of legal support for abortion, many women and girls who are victims of rape adopted informal methods of abortion that risks their lives (WHO, 2000). Even if such means are not always successful, they have lived in terms with the complications. Many women who are rape victims become prostitutes and children of those women who are forcefully infected with HIV/AIDS through rape (which is another method of demoralize enemy) suffers a lot with psychological health complications (Mazurana, 2003). Even the child born with psychological and physical challenges as a result of mother being rape victim may face issues such as abandonment, social stigma, identity crisis, discrimination, statelessness, lack of nutrition, poverty, and trauma by terming 'unwanted child' which all are concern for feminist theorists (David et al., 2003; Carpenter, n.d).

There exists domination of masculine perspectives in International Relations on war which uphold the justification of war and conflicts by establishment of concepts as 'just warriors' (men and soldiers) who held to the protection of 'beautiful souls' (women) who are to be the protected (Elshtain,1987). The just warrior concept provides a notion that those who are not fighting are not 'good men' as good men fight in wars to protect women and thus war/fighting become unavoidable characteristic of masculinity whereas, women is defined by their relations with these heroes of fighting (Barker 1998; Sjoberg, 2006). On the other hand, women are considered as 'good mothers' when they raise good men to be just warriors which, again fastened gendered roles in war and conflict (Sjoberg, 2006; Tickner,1997). Thus, the patriarchal gendered norms facilitate women's body as means to furthering ideological, political goals (MacKinnon 1989; Alison 2007; Niarchos 1995).

Even in political protests, women leadership and participation are undermined on the notion that women are out of high politics. For example, media undermined the role of women in Arab spring that Shirin Ebadi states that "the true 'Arab Spring' will only dawn when democracy takes root... and when women in those countries are allowed to take part in civic life" (Sjoberg, 2015; p.22). Likewise, in spite of take into account the role performed by women during the war time rebuilding, mediation and conciliation, as well as the role of nurses, soldiers, doctors, and volunteer workers, the mainstream discourse treat women only those vulnerable to conflict (OCHA Online, 2004c)

similarly in the just war narrative. Due to gender stereotypes women become liability as men in just war responsible to protect their women which decrease the merit as well as respect on women and girls during as well as after wartime (Sjoberg,2006; Elshtain, 1987b). The gendered differences in militarization are based on the notion of masculine nature of soldiers who express natural aggression and makes effort to protect their women (Tickner,1996).

The masculine and feminine nature of war is visible by men as heterosexual citizen soldiers who are for killing and warring and women as those who needed protection of men soldiers (Higate et al., 2005; Enloe 1990; Goldstein 2001). Enloe coins the word 'ramboization' to indicate the masculine macho terms in war. The depiction of enemy and their strategy with feminine terms like 'hail Mary strategy'⁶, the debates over denial of admission of lesbian/gay to military on the pretext that it destroys the masculine character of army, advertisement of picture of women with guns during war to attract army recruitment of men, all expose the importance given to masculine characteristics to army (Solomon et.al.,1998).

The terming of slow or underperforming men as 'girls' represent gender subordination in military (Enloe, 2000). The language and sexual imagery used in military and arms manufacturing, such as 'a man of the world'; 'join the army, see the world'; 'conquest of virgin territory' 'penetration aids and advertisement of new weapon in Air Force Magazine's Playboy as a catalogue of men's sexual anxieties and fantasies depict the misogynistic attitude reflected even in military. India's Nuclear explosion was termed as 'losing her virginity' by USA. similarly, the US Air force chief's expression on refusal of nuclear-powered ships of USA in New Zealand as 'withdraw goods and services to see how long she is able to hold on virtue' (Cohn,1987) also implicit it. It is clear that, masculinist militarism is not confined to warfront but it has far-reaching effects through things and ideas as films that depict and glorifications of actions equate it with war, the fashion celebrations of brass buttons and epaulettes⁷, designing laundry

⁶ General Norman Schwarzkopf's description of the plan to destroy the Iraqi military during the Gulf War is in terms of a 'Hail Mary' strategy. Hail Mary is term used to indicate to any last effort where little chance of success (L.A. Times Archives,1991).

⁷ Decoration of piece of cloth in military coats shirts which especially worn on the shoulder (Cambridge Dictionary, 2024).

umbrella girdles, designing of condoms looks like army camouflage which all are purposefully created and propagated by someone, according to Enloe, 1990.

Military training is all about disciplining as well as construction of masculinist bodies as ‘the individual body and the self that is identified with that body are shaped into the collective body of men’ (Morgan,1994). The training of soldiers is also in accordance with norms of masculinity which celebrate masculine coded domination, order, and violence that equate with discipline. It is to not to become feminine, effeminate and inferior. The indoctrination also in the manner that not to become feminine or killing ‘women within them’ to become macho soldiers /militarized manhood. Even to regain masculinity and power, rape is performed as a method among soldiers. In order to foster militarized manhood, the methods of group bonding like shared experience of group rape among soldiers also used (Card, 1996: p 7; Alison, 2007; Cohen, 2011; Whitworth 2004; Baaz et al., 2013). Thus, hegemonic masculinity has its influence on military also which is a matter of concern for feminist in IR while dealing with war and conflict from a gendered perspective.

Women suffer sexual violence such as rape, international trafficking, transactional sex, pornography and prostitution during the peace keeping operations which is, according to gendered perspective, relevant in dealing with the concept of peace. The UN investigation in 2013 declared Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) as the most challenging threat to peace keeping operations (Thelma et al., 2013). The studies conducted in the regions like Haiti, Guinea, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and Sierra Leone proves that even if sexual violence is used as weapon of war or practice of war, soldiers and those deployed as peacekeepers, private contractors, and aid workers involved in peace keeping operations also act as the perpetrators of violence (Westendorf, 2017). Moreover, the prominence given to the concept of equating peace with the absence of war in International Relations also problematic from gender perspective as for feminists, peace covers wider aspects like socio- economic and political justice, (Enloe, 2007; Sjoberg et al., 2012) and efforts for reducing inequality in these field is of prime concern to ensure peace in a society.

Feminist scholars in IR, through the use of gendered perspective, highlights the unequal gendered power structure that badly affect women in conflict, war and peace and providing a different angle on who endure mostly the sufferings of war/the difficulties caused by war, and various aspects of physical and emotional sufferings that is not possible while looking through the hegemonic military masculinist framework of traditional/positivist IR.

2.4.3. Analysing ‘Security’ from gendered/feminist perspective

Security is another core concept to be analysed from feminist perspective in IR. According to Christine Sylvester “security is elusive, partial and involves struggle and contention; it is a process rather than an ideal in which women must act as agents in the provision of their own security. Speaking from the margins, feminists are sensitive to the various ways in which social hierarchies manifest themselves across societies and history. Striving for security involves exposing these different social hierarchies, understanding how they construct and are constructed by the international order, and working to denaturalize and dismantle them.” (Sylvester, 1994b).

Ann Tickner (1992) points out that feminist view of security is essential to find out how gender hierarchies are source of dominance as well as creating barriers to provide an inclusive meaning of security. The security discourse which is mainly centred on the security and survival of state requires combatable state with brave masculine civilian soldiers, and justify the notion of war and conflict in IR discourses. But, the feminist perspectives on security are based on a completely different epistemology and ontology as the meaning they give to security, and insecurity are different from the conventional attributes based on political and military aspect of security (Wolfers, 1962).

Leading feminist scholars in IR such as Christian Sylvester, Ann Tickner, and Spike Peterson, criticize the state centric project of security. They emphasise that environmental security, economic security, human right violations, refugee problem, human trafficking and sex trade are also to be brought into security debate in IR which is possible only through a gendered lens (Tickner, 1993). This questions the argument of the champion of mainstream IR security discourse Robert Keohane who made the categoric statement ‘Security is a settled issue’ (Cohen, 2013). Thus, those

nonconventional and human security aspects which need serious attention in IR security debates become crucial concern of feminist scholars in the discipline.

The questioning of the role of state as the security provider leads feminist analyses of power and military capabilities different from the conventional international relation's standpoint on the subject. Rather than seeing military capability as an essential element to address threats from outside, militaries are frequently seen as antithetical to individuals'(particularly women's) security due to rape associated to military action, domestic violence, and glorification of masculinity. They put forward the impact of conflicts on women as economic supports of family care givers and mothers. In short, feminist analysis of security is centred around what is happening at the time of war than what are the causes of women's insecurity (Pettman, 1996; Sjoberg, 2006; Tickner,1997; Tobias, 1990).

The question raised by Cynthia Enloe, 'Where are the Women in International Relations' exposes the space of women in places which are not normally considered relevant to International Relations and national security debates. The Filipino prostitutes in military bases, Caribbean chamber- maids in resort hotels, U.S. military wives, British diplomatic wives, Sri Lankan domestic workers in U.S. homes, Mexican women garment workers in export- processing zones, and Carmen Miranda, are all political actors who are invisible but make the world politics and influence the national as well as international security through their services (Enloe, 1989). Therefore, the socio- economic and cultural issues that constitute their lives become security concern for feminist theoreticians.

Contrary to the conventional state centric debates on security, all forms of inequality between men and women constitute security concerns under the feminist perspectives as they try to include security inside and security concern outside the state to encompass socio economic, political, environmental and corporal concerns on the lives of people (Tickner,1997). For example, economic inequality has become a security concern for feminists, where the security issues of economic sanction caused by war affects the quality of lives of people in which women have to suffer disproportionately (Tobias,1990). The disproportional economic divide between men and women are

security concern for feminists which is reflected in the data which indicates that 70 percent poverty affected are women (Tickner,1997; Human Development Report, 1995; Solomen et al.,1998). Women makes two thirds of the work in the world but constitute only one third of paid labour force globally because of the huge disparity in remuneration or underpayment. All these gender aspects are serious obstacles to achieve economic equality. So, economic security is an important variable for feminist theoreticians in IR, while addressing the question of security (United Nations, 1995; Tickner,1997; Solomon et.al.,1998).

The cultural-social norms that harm freedom of women are also security issues for feminist scholars in IR because they are rooted in the patriarchal structure of the state and society and therefore influence the notions of state security and personal security. Likewise, gender domination has been expressed through the direct and indirect restrictions on women in public sphere, employment, education, and access to public services. The ban of women in public places unless accompanied by men relatives in Afghanistan for protection of cultural purity is a security issue for feminists, even though it is contrary to the conventional definitions of security (Hans, 2004; Tickner,1997). The rituals followed in Africa like lobola or bride wealth, and the system of inheritance of land on the relation of women to male as property of husbands, uncles, fathers as well as old brothers which all make women as depersonalised, (Sircar et al., 2018; Quisumbing et al., 2001) also constitute security challenge to women.

The violence against women is considered as private matters or customary or cultural tradition which is undermined in the international human rights conventions. For example, when a person is assassinated due to their politics, the response of world is with justifiable outrage. But, if a woman is beaten to death, world disperse it as ‘cultural tradition’ (Zlewski,1995). The attitude toward dowry death, genital mutilation, mental torture, female infanticide and bride burning, marital rape, and sexual harassment in the workplace (Solomon et.al.,1998) are resultant of the patriarchal notion of domination and exploitation over women which are also ‘domestic matters’ but, security concerns for feminist theoreticians. The reasons and effects of such violences can be exposed through approaching these concerns from a gendered perspective of security. According to feminist theoreticians, unless all these security issues are addressed, it will be like

that security of state is achieved by sacrificing security of their own citizens, especially women (Tickner,1997).

Thus, in short security become a concern for feminists in IR to encompass multidimensional aspects ranging from not only violence and wars, but domestic violence, poverty, rape, gender subordination or structural violence and they claim that security become comprehensive when all forms of domination and discrimination are brought into the analysis (Tickner, 1992). Hence, state security must begin from those of the margin of political and social life (Ackerly, et al., 1994).

2.4.4. Gendered/Feminist perspective on State and Nationalism

Another concept which needs to be analysed from feminist perspective is state. While conventional IR scholarship conceptualise state as an atomic unit and the protector of rights, the feminist ontology projects that it is based on the unequal hierarchical structure of social relationship (Tickner, 2005). The knowledge on state and its behaviour is based on men's experience in IR, which is biased because that completely ignores the experiences of women who constitute half of the human beings (Tickner, 1992). The existence of relationship between gender violence and state violence is also exposed by feminist theoreticians. In those states where domestic violence is considered as normal for conflict resolution within the family, the state depends on violent forms of responses such as war and militarism for conflict resolution within the state and outside (Caprioli, 2000; Caprioli et al., 2001). Studies also prove that states with higher gender equality displays less violence in international disputes, as they keep military action the secondary option for dispute settlement (ibid).

According to feminist scholars, state is the most threatening actor due to its monopoly over the legitimate use of force (Runyan 1991). The notion of masculinist protection created by the dominant patriarchal conception promotes the superior position of state and foster the idea that weaker sections to be dependent on the protector. Here, the 'bad man' is those who are not protecting women and nation and 'good man' is the one who protects them. The glorification of 'masculine heroes' or warriors for their efforts to defend 'mother country' also promotes the hegemonic masculine narration of security.

Similarly, the ‘good women’⁸ who remain obedient to and enjoy protection of male relatives, husband and father and providing emotional, economic, and social support system for men makes the justification for the gender-based exploitations of state. Thus, the masculinist protection role of state reinforces the gender-based power structure that dominate women (Young, 2003).

Sometimes, state implicit violence against women by their no-intervention in domestic violence, legitimise the definition of war and rape only from male standpoint, promotes hetero sexist ideology through education, media images, military indoctrination, welfare policies, formation of patriarchal laws, and through devaluation of the woks of women who makes home, families and communities (Peterson, 1992. Elshtain, 1982; Tickner,1997), which all are in contrary to the popular image of state as actor with obligation of protecting rights of citizen, according to feminist point of view in IR.

According to feminists, state is a masculine construct which excludes women from the power structure (Pettman 1996) as power is associated to masculinity in the conventional understanding of the discipline. Similarly, conventional IR assume state rational, autonomous, competitive and sole actor in IR. But Ann Tickner criticised the hegemonic masculinity of state which delegitimise cooperation, and other less power centred strategies in IR as they are projected as womanly/feminine characteristics (Tickner et al., 2004).

Origin of gendered power differences can be traced back to Enlightenment tradition and particularly in the theories of social contract. There was no place for women in the ‘original contract’ as women are subordinated to male household, alienated from public sphere or high politics and lacking legal rights (Peterson, 1992a; Pateman, 1988; Tickner, 2001). More than that, the very construction of state is based on gendered dichotomy of masculine/feminine which is reflected in the statecraft also as-public/private, outside/inside, self/other, where lives of women are confined within the framework of private/inside/other sphere of the dichotomy and men monopolise public space and perform the duties as citizens. The underlying cause of exploitation and

⁸ Whereas ‘bad women’ is one who refuse the protection by acknowledge of their own right to life or those ‘unlucky enough to not have men to protect them’.

exclusion of women from social and political sphere is constituted by the public/private dichotomy in which private is secluded and confined to women with less/no value while public is reserved for men and valued high and has become central on discourses in IR (Runyan, 1991).

Mainstream IR theorists consider women as domesticated character who are not capable of understanding and addressing the harsh realities of the public sphere or that the men engage on a regular basis. The dualism of rational/emotional projects women emotional and therefore not capable of engaging rational things which is the trait beholds by men. This pseudo notion popularised by mainstream IR scholarship underscores the right of men to 'domesticate and tame women and to bring her under control as she is never able to think rationally. Thus, women are constituted as 'outsider and other' within the state as well as international politics by the proponents of the positivist-rationalist framework in IR (ibid). While consolidating state power, men gain authority, status and control over resources because of the privileges as citizens, patriarchal head of the household/social arrangements and through their participation in the masculine spaces of public sphere (True,1996; Boyd,1997; Pettman, 1996).

In feminist point of view, the origin and existence of modern state is based on the premise of gendered/sexual division of labour and patriarchy that lead to the subordination of women (Grant,1991). Women had little role to play in the process of state formation and the consolidation of it. Therefore, men grab control over women through the policies and laws that are governing the gendered spaces like sexuality, reproduction and division of labour (Staudt, 1997; Tickner, 2005). Through its policies, State express gendered subordination. For example, the gendered labour market and wage policy make women dependent on individual male members as the existence of gendered division of reproductive and productive labour stabilize the subordinate position of women by making them more dependable on state welfare policies thus become more economically dependent on man/state.

Even the inheritance laws and property rights are also gender biased which makes women financially dependent (Peterson,1993; Dietz,1987) and therefore, are all concern for feminists in IR. Thus, the status of men is further strengthened by laws and

policies, women are losing their status and authority because of entrusting social reproduction and biological reproductive capacity with in the private sphere which is confined to women (Runyan et al., 1991 as cited in Aydin, 2016) that cause alienation of women from public sphere/high politics. Through the hierarchical structures and gendered definition of role (which promote gender inequality), the oppression of women by state and other institutions such as family become invisible. Hence, according to feminists, state remains an institution that perpetuate women's subordination, even though it claims non-discrimination and protection of all citizens (True, 2001).

The role of women is undervalued in the conduct of international politics, which can be exemplified through analysing diplomatic practices of states. The crucial role played by the wives of diplomats in arranging informal contacts that enable male diplomats to fulfil their diplomatic political tasks indeed pave the avenue for maintain trustful relationship between men in the belligerent world. Through gatherings at outside official places like home hosted by Diplomat's wives, work as smooth channel of communication/negotiations between man to man (Enloe, 1990; Lascuarín, 2016). Cynthia Enloe argues that, 'personal is not only political but international and international is personal' as the interactions of state and global economic forces shape daily lives of women and men. Similarly, women's private relations with men shape/influence the conduct of foreign affairs and international commerce, through the roles that they play as mothers, daughters, wives, prostitutes, secretaries and maids. Here, women offer their physical, emotional or sexual labour for international organizations, militaries, foreign ministries and multinational corporations (Enloe,1989) and thus play a crucial role in shaping/conduct of international politics.

State Sovereignty, one of the foundational concepts of mainstream IR is also criticised from feminist perspective as the single supreme authority of decision-making rejects space for other voices. Feminists question this exclusiveness of single authority which systematically undermine/undervalue the voice of the marginalised (Elshtain 1981 as cited in Nanda, 2014). The manipulation of gender or gendered symbolism in the nationalism/national struggles is also questioned by feminist scholars. Such moves comprise of identifying women as the agents of cultural authenticity and mothers of

the nation, and gendered division of labour through women's womb as birth place of soldiers ignore the consequence of war on women such as tragic victims of loss of protection, rape, and homelessness on the one hand and glorify men as those embrace heroic death while protecting nation and /women on the other hand thus cultivate the image of superior role of men in the nationalist struggles (Kumari,1986; Peterson,1993).

Furthermore, nationalism become problematic for women, according to feminists, when nation is assumed as female and state is imagined as male (Pettman, 1996). This imagination led to gendered representation of sexual danger when nation is under threat or colonialization which is termed as heterosexual rape on nation. The depiction of 'rape of Kuwait' by Iraq indicates identification of invader as male, and the invaded as female. Even at the time of mobilised nationalism, it become a national obligation on women to produce 'right children from right men to improve the stock' as well as responsible for upbringing them as nation's men in turn act as agency of cultural transmission (Pettman,1998). The patriarchy of nationalism assigned women with new responsibility of stabilizing and maintaining harmony of family life and unanimity with kin group for which men are not able to pay attention due to national struggle (Kasturi et al., n.d). Hence, the reproductive right of women also under struggle because of nationalism in those gendered patriarchal society. With all these reasons that strengthen/promotes a gendered notion of power structure and masculinity, the analysis of state and nationalism from gendered perspective is vital (Enloe,1990; Pettman, 1996; Parker, et al., 1992; Cooper, 2008).

So, the analysis of state through gender lens provide exposition to effect of gender in its depth and breadth thus prove that gender is not only a characteristic of individual but an institutionalised aspect of day-to-day social life to be included in theory as well as in practice (Peterson,1993).

2.4.5. Analysis of 'Power' from gendered/feminist perspective

The concept of power which is treated as a masculine trait can be visible from the day-to-day life. The gendered power structure dominating the masculine institutions like states pose hurdles to women to reach high level in the power structure. The socially

constructed role of men and women, as i.e, men to rule, women to be ruled (Tickner 1997) which are based on the dualism where masculinity is equated with reason and power whereas femineity to emotion and weakness⁹ (Enloe 2007), form the base of this. Thus, the core aspects of power - how power operate, perpetuate and is legitimized in IR, which based on public and private dichotomy is criticized by feminist theorists from a gendered perspective (Brooke et al., 2008). The concept of power which is understood and use in IR as power over i.e., the power to influence or force to do something that otherwise they would not do, is criticized by feminists (True 1996). The concept of power by realists, especially by Morgenthau, is termed by Tickner as androcentric because it becomes one sided by declaring 'power over other' (which reflect masculine experience) while ignoring concept of power as 'empowerment' or 'power with' (which reflect and emerged out of female experiences) (Tickner 1988,1992).

Thus, feminists have a different notion on power rather than the mainstream notion of 'power over'. Hannah Arendt defines power in terms of communication rather than coercion, control or domination that cannot be applied over someone, rather, it can be exercised with others in the means of communication and cooperation (James,1987). Thus, feminists in IR prefer persuasion as a method of power acquisition through coalition building rather than coercion which is usually preferred in mainstream international relations. On the basis of this approach to power, Ann Tickner suggests that, considering power in a cooperative manner than coercive method will result in finding out solutions to many security issues (Tickner 1992, as cited in Aydin, 2016). In this manner, feminists in IR wants to deconstruct the masculine nature of power with a different perspective that make it more inclusive.

2.4.6. Analysis of political economy from gendered/feminist perspective

Unequal economic relations which are mainly invisible in theory making and discourses are exposed by feminists in IR through a gendered perspective. According to feminists in IR, gendered economic inequality must be taken into account while

⁹ Francis Fukuyama states that the prominence of women in global politics leads to a world in which less use of military force and defence spending or to less military power world that is not good. Feminized policies in the world politics could be a liability thus totally problematic (Fukuyama,1998).

dealing with economic relations in society. Through this, feminists wanted to expose how patriarchal power relations embodied in practices and institutions allow men to exercise power over women (Whitworth,1994). The fact that women earn only 10% of household income but engage 64% of total workings hours (Jackson et al., 2013) is undermined by conventional/mainstream studies. The widening income inequality as a result of globalization is analysed by feminist through the concept ‘global feminization’. There is an argument that globalization gave an opportunity for women to get access to men-oriented jobs, but feminists challenge this. According to feminists, the demand for flexible and low paid labour without commitment to major social benefits are the hidden reasons for choosing women in the labour market (Chatterjee,2018; Kanji et al., 2001) and this reflects the exploitation of women in the gender biased economic structure. Likewise, women’s labour is crucial in the export processing, in agriculture and industrial sector but they are underpaid (ibid) and unprotected workers (Ejardin, 2008).

The financial instability, due to deregulation of capital movement, and Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) affect disproportionately women which is exposed by feminist research by using the gendered lens. It reveals the fact that abolition/reduction of welfare and social service schemes have impacted in employment, health services, consumption patterns, and the role of women as food providers to family, especially poor households, are undermined by the mainstream perspectives on globalisation (Waylen, 2006). The consequence of globalization on women can be visible in growing trafficking of women and girls who are the victims of transnational prostitution. Many third world countries benefited to foreign exchange from growth of sex tourism as a business and the ‘pleasure marriage’¹⁰ that is growing in Indonesia boosts the local tourism is another kind of exploitation of economically impoverished women who struggle to find out means of livelihood. This ruthless exploitation is undermined by

¹⁰ It is a temporary marriage, where a male tourist looking for a temporary bride by paying bride price. The marriage last for the duration of stay of tourist and dissolve as soon as he left the country. The women provide sexual service as well as engage in domestic duties throughout this time period. During this time many are subjected to psychical as well as sexual exploitations (Sengupta, 2024; The Economic Times, 2024).

the governments concerned because of the benefit to local economy (The Economic Times, 2024; Sengupta,2024). All these exhibits the gendered face of IPE.

The gendered nature of economic exploitation of women labour is exposed by Cynthia Enloe (2000) while discuss the plight of female workers in Nike and Reebok factories in South Korea, China and Indonesia. The companies hire unmarried young women with an intension to maximise productivity and profit. The companies provide them low payment, and fire them, if they become pregnant or get married. The productivity of female as a family member is based on the notion that they are economic supports for the families rather than considering them as household bread winners, the title is assigned to men with in patriarchal gendered society (Quintero-Ramirez,2002). The case of female home based or part time labour are also not so different, as companies hire them as more flexible labour force who can be easily hires and fires (Pruigl, 1999).

Similarly, the reproductive labour in the global economy is also important for feminists which is undervalued and undermined while the primacy given to productive labour. The advent of global capitalism fosters the private/public dichotomy which alienated women (confined to private sphere of reproduction) from participating in the public sphere of economic production (Peterson, 1992; Tickner, 2005). The unpaid works, especially domestic work or social provisioning works, is also excluded from the mainstream analysis which is exposed by feminists (Steans et al., 2010). The unpaid labour of women especially in agriculture, as caregivers, and workers in the family business are undervalued while making statistics on labour, even if the female participation in reproduction and production contribute to the creation of background for the male world (Acker et al., 1991).

The traditional notion of women's role as housewives who provide their labour freely in the disguise of care duties (with in poor working conditions) but which are not considered as 'real work' because it is done in the private reproductive sphere of household than in the public, is also relevant to be analysed for feminists. Even if women entering the so-called public sphere of workforce, they have to bear the double burden of household care duties which is reproductive in nature (Acker et al., 1996).

The inclusion of service of reproductive labour to mainstream discourses make us to understand how important is reproductive labour to global economy that helps to women more visible in International Political Economy (Tickner, 2005).

The concept of feminization of poverty needs serious attention, according to feminist theorists in IR. It indicates disproportionate share of poverty burden by women and female headed household, who incidentally constitute world's most poor. This is caused by the economic and social subordination of women with in a patriarchal society where control over the income as well as its use is mostly entrusted to men. This indicates that, even the general increase in income or employment does not wipeout poverty or result in empowerment of women (Kanji, 2001) which contribute to feminization of poverty. Thus, political economy has a gendered face which can be exposed through using gendered lens to the various aspects.

2.5. Conclusion

The discipline of IR is masculine in nature. The absence of the perspectives and epistemologies of the marginalized, especially gendered perspectives in the discourses and approaches, are very visible in the discipline. This paved the way for rethinking of International Relations from gendered or feminist perspective. It is argued that, the use of gender as a variable in conceptual, empirical, and normative inquiry in International Relations make it more inclusive, engendering the discipline and thus broaden the scope of the discipline. This is analysed through the gendered perspectives of the core concepts of the discipline such as power, security, war, peace, foreign policy, political economy, and nationalism. This helps to explore the false claim of mainstream scholarship in IR on the importance given to diverse experiences and different voices along with new actors and new issues within the knowledge domain in IR which is highlighted in this chapter.

CHAPTER III

Understanding Black Feminist Perspective

3.1. Introduction

Feminist scholars in International Relations prefer to approach global politics and international system through a gendered lens, which was absent in mainstream International Relations because of the false assumption that male experience can count for both men and women and also other marginalised. In the same way, the perspectives of marginalised, especially whose life is intersected with class and race along with gendered aspect is important while analyse the discourses and issues in the discipline. Such a critical analysis from gender lens/black feminist lens led to the re-construction of the epistemological, theoretical and methodological aspects of the discipline and helps to overcome its masculinist orientation.

The intensity of influence of socio economic cultural political and environmental structures and institutions in the life of men and women are differed according to their power position within the gender spectrum. The voice of the marginalised and everyday life experiences which constitute the epistemologies of ‘undervalued people’ have become decisive factors in the theoretical discourses in IR through feminist intervention in the discipline. But in order to analyse how far the marginalised perspective is relevant in widening the scope of the discipline, and provide different angle to any issue, concepts, theories and discourses in IR, the so-called generic categorization of ‘women’s experiences lack a common platform to analyze any issues as the multiple aspects of experiences of women may vary from identities formed by aspects of class, caste, race along with gendered structure. This necessitates the need of applying different perspectives to deal with such issues of women according to their peculiar context of existence.

According to Ann Tickner (2005), core to feminist perspective on International Relations include identity issues such as race, culture as well as gender inequality which

is related with everyday life experience of those concerned people. So, through research, it is intended to enquire what is the significance of applying Black Women's perspectives or Black Feminist Perspective to the issues of food security among women in SSA. Such an effort would help to find out the factors that place them as food insecure within a context where women's lives are under the influence of reciprocal relationship between class, race and gender trio. This is taken as an example to examine the relevance of engendering the discipline to make it more inclusive in nature by providing voice to those voiceless or marginalized. Against this backdrop, the next section of the chapter analyses the variables, development and significance of the Black Feminist Perspective to understand the question of gender and food security.

3.2. The Black Feminist Perspective: Origin and Development

Even though females are facing gender-based oppression in male dominated patriarchal system, the degree varies according to the impact of race, class, colour, and caste identities on their lives. This reality of intersectional exploitation on women leads to the analysis of (everyday life) of women from a Black feminist standpoint/perspective. Black feminists unravel the discrepancies of treating 'women' as a single category in general and the Sub-Saharan Africa in particular. This notion of identification of the differences in epistemological standpoint has made the Black Feminist Perspective prominent.

The origin of Black feminism dates back to the Afro-American women's struggle for liberation and survival (Smith,1983) which is reflected in the works of Elizabeth Cady Stanton Sojourner Truth. The formation of separate Black feminist groups like *National Black Feminist Organization* (NBFO) in 1973, along with Civil Rights movements like *Black Nationalism*, and the *Black Panthers* had played a major role in the broadening of Black feminist consciousness (Smith,1983). The existence of intersectionality and struggle of Black Women for asserting lived experiences from Black feminist standpoint was also reflected in the movements such as *Combahee River Collective* (Strongman, 2018). The Combahee River Collective, a group of radical Black Lesbian Feminists, highlighted the overarching triple oppression suffered by Black Women and argued that the murder of Black Women in Boston in 1973 was not only a racial issue

but interlocking class and gender elements involved must be taken into account (Combahee River Collective, 1977). It demanded for inclusive commitment to eradicate simultaneous elements of oppression and domination that exists in the lives of Black Women. It also put forward the larger issues related to imperialism, capitalism and White supremacy, and invited attention into the intersection of class based, gendered, racial and heteronormative oppression which all related to Black Women's liberation (Collective T.C.R., 2014; Brewer, 2020; Combahee River Collective, 1977).

The movements like Black Lives Matters 2012¹¹ also provided a platform to deal with the problem of injustices and inequalities that the Black Women confront in America (Bridewell, 2016). The Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) politically organized on the issues of race and sexist oppression and discrimination faced by Black Women in daily lives. Similarly, Third World Women's Alliance (TWWA) also focused its attention on exposing capitalism as well as the battle against simultaneous oppression faced by the Black Women on sex, race and class (Burnham, 2020). The movements like Women's March¹², stands to overcome multifaceted struggles of Black Women. These movements altogether stand for the mitigation of issues varies from classism, heterosexism, neocolonialism, racism, transphobia, xenophobic nationalism, Islamophobia, ableism, ecological destruction and ageism (Runyan, 2018) which all are interlinked. Thus, these movements are pro-intersectional in character, which demands multidimensional, intersectional perspectives while addressing the issues brought into mainstream academic engagements by Black feminists.

The backdrop for the emergence of discourses and movements on Black feminist consciousness and emancipation was set within the existing dominant paradigm of White - Elite - Male - Eurocentric knowledge which completely undermines Black Women's lived experiences countable as knowledge (Collins, 2000). But, the invisibility of Black Women in the White -Euro centrist Feminist theory building also

¹¹ It is a social movement in 2013 in USA, against police brutality, anti- Black violence and racism (Britanica, 2023).

¹² It was a protest against victory of Donald Trump as President of USA in January, 21, 2017 on his misogynist, racist policies, immigration, LGBTQ rights, reproductive rights etc (Highsmith, 2017).

boosted up the marginality of Black Women from discourses concerning their day-to-day life which are intersectional in nature. The contemporary nature of Black feminist perspective based on Black feminist thought is developed against First (in the late 19th and early 20th Century) and Second (1960s-1980s) wave feminism as they were dominated by white narrative and their focus was limited to right to vote for women, equality, public private injustice, reproductive right, and family (Anand, 2018). bell hooks observes that second wave of feminism which is dominated by the Western feminists who fought against sexist oppression, has ignored and undermined the elements like race, religion, class or sexual preference that are highly significant to have a proper understanding of the question of gender discrimination (hooks,1984). The critical aspects initiated by Black Feminist thinkers on the life of women in the non-Western world could provide a unique epistemological base through the inclusion of classism, racism and sexism in the feminist discourse.

3.2.1. Black Feminist Perspective as a Critique of Western Feminism

Prominent Black feminist theoreticians like Patricia Collins, Angela Davis, Kimberly Crenshaw, and bell hooks have criticized the mainstream feminism for addressing the experiences of Western White women, who are privileged due to their race even though suffered gender discrimination (Brewer, 2016). The privileges - class and racial - of White women persuade them to focus only one attributes of oppression, i.e., gender. They failed to understand or interlink class, race and sexism that together create oppression of women of colour (Brewer, 2016). White women themselves sometimes act as oppressor of Black Women through upholding the privilege of race and not counting the experience of racial discrimination of Black Women (Collins,1990). Through emphasizing on the common history of oppressional experiences within the sex/gender hierarchies that can exceed various sexual orientations, or class, race, religion and ethnic factors, and arguing for a common feminist epistemology and consciousness (Collins,1990), White women undermine the lived experiences of Black Women. Intersectionality of class, race, religion and ethnicity remain crucial in the oppression of black women and therefore, black feminists' advocates for an alternative Afro centrist feminist epistemology that is needed to strengthen the feminist standpoints (Collins,1990).

White women's reluctance to recognize, combat and deal with the issue of racism/racist experiences of Black Women institute racism within feminism (Combahee River Collective, 1977; Walker, 1983). White feminists remain the sole speaking subject as they pretend to be talking on behalf of all women and generalizing their own experiences while neglecting Black Women's experiences in feminist knowledge (Michie, 1991). For them, the ideas, theories, observations and experiences of White Women, is universal experiences applicable to all women whereas experience of women from global south is invisible and placed outside the knowledge experiences, according to the Western feminism. bell hooks (1984) criticized Western feminists, especially Betty Friedan, for speaking on behalf of White women who are upper-class educated married one having a family, but failed to speak for poorer Black women who are absent in the commonly accepted concept of family¹³. The homogeneity assumption of White feminists that 'all women are oppressed' based only on the experiences of them exemplify the refusal of feminists to accept the differences of live experience of women based on class, race, sexuality and religion which in turn silence the Black Women (Lorde, 2007).

The identification of women everywhere as single entity which come from a 'white gaze' made Black Women a mute visible object and which silence the identity and interests of Black Women (Casey, 1993) and Black woman always remained as the 'silenced partner in feminist criticism' (Showalter, 1991). The issues that Western feminists discuss are connected to the experiences of educated White women such as reproductive rights and class based under privileges whereas, the issues of forced sterilization, racial discrimination, physical abuse, religious patriarchy, post colonialism which all are concerns of women from economically marginalized countries in the global south are undermined in such debates (hooks, 2000; Izagarjan et al., 2012). African women have unique experiences based on race, religion, educational and economic status, and culture, that can be counted as knowledge along with the general experience of oppression that is universal for all women across the world (hooks, 1984;

¹³ Even the concept of family is different in Africa which is large or even extended to a whole village (Siegel, 1996).

Oyewumi, 2003; Mikell, 1997). Such assertions of Black feminists have prepared the ground for need to address intersectionality emphasized in the Black Feminist Thought.

3.2.2. The Black Feminist Epistemology

Knowledge and experiences of Black Women based on multidimensional oppression constitute the core theme of Black feminist epistemology, a self-defined standpoint emerged from Black Women's consciousness (Collins,1990). It is considered as subjugated knowledge within the Euro centrist knowledge paradigm. The sturdy domination of Western perspective on knowledge, which intentionally placed Black Women invisible in the dialogues. Even though Black Women possess enough knowledge to outstrip the knowledge of elite White men (Collins, 2000), they are not able to articulate their knowledge and experiences because of denial of power, position and authority.

According to Collins, Black Women stand at the intersecting point of two overpowering and predominant systems of gender and race oppression. This made the necessity to search for alternative Black feminist epistemologies to understand the nature of oppression and overcome it (Collins, 2006). Hence, an alternative space which provides opportunities to be as themselves, to be with determination, for self-identification and empowerment and to overcome the 'outsider within'¹⁴ status, is inevitable for Black Women. This alternative space having the features of relationship of Black Women each other, the Blues tradition of Black Women¹⁵ and writings of Black authors which are more cultural in character, provides an opportunity to Black Women to come out of the vicious conceptualization and objectification as 'Other' (Collins, 2000) and also to find out a voice from a 'subjugated' world.

¹⁴ The 'outsider within status' is explained by Collins (1990) to indicate lowest status occupied by African American women in the academic scenario, where Black Women are summoned in the dominant people gatherings, but are remained as outsider because they have no voice when discussions going on, thus remain invisible. This shows the marginality of Black people.

¹⁵ Blues is a form of folk music which is more lyrical rather than narrative, presented by African American in 20th Century which influenced Western music. This music come from real life, emotions, and social aspects etc. (Britanica, 2023).

Black feminism which is build up on the Black Feminist epistemology has centered around the basic bread and butter issues concerning Black Women, ranging from public education and quality health care to all, unbiased legal system and legal help to women and children, right to organize (particularly on labor issues and against racism), wipe out of all kinds of discrimination against Black Women and children, rights of the disabled, housing facilities, environment preservation, anti-nuclear mobilizations, anti-imperialist struggles, equal employment opportunities, sexual and reproductive rights, and LGBTQA issues (Smith, 1983). All these together constitute the everyday life of Black Women and in turn stipulated for an independent Black feminist consciousness formation.

The independent Black feminist consciousness possessed by those individuals who are female and Black is formulated through daily conversation, music, everyday behavior, political activities and literature (Collins,1990). This paradigm of consciousness that emphasizes on Black Women's experiences is central to further interpretations. The everyday experiences, the use of that challenge/resist domination, the ethic of caring which value individual uniqueness, emotions, and empathy, ethic of personal accountability which constitute dimensions of alternative epistemology by Black Women, but considered as invaluable knowledge by the dominant positivist-masculinist-Euro centric- - knowledge system (Collins,1990). Accordingly, through their alternative Black feminist epistemology, Black Women develop and circulate counter discourses/narratives that help them in the creation of oppositional interpretation for their needs, and interests as stated in 'hidden counter public' spheres¹⁶ (Mirza, 2018). Thus, the Black feminist consciousness that constitutes an alternative space for dealing with everydayness of Black Women form Black feminist perspective.

Black Women's understanding and theorization of their experiences grow out of the interactions between race, gender and class of their existence, or 'place of pain', which assist them to identify whom they are, without any external influence (hooks,1994).

¹⁶According to Nancy Frazer, counter public sphere are platforms where those people in subordinated social groups formulate and circulate counter discourses, which allow them in the formulation of oppositional interpretations of their needs, identities, and interests (Frazer,1994).

This multiple oppressive spheres of lives of Black Women constitute ‘intersectional’ aspect of life or intersectionality which needs to be considered while dealing with the experiences of Black Women. Intersectionality proposes an alternative thought on equality, agency, consciousness and subjectivity from the standpoint of epistemological as well as political transformation (May, 2014; Phoenix, 2006; Gedalof, 2012; Lugones, 2005; Bilge, 2010; Sandoval, 2000). This is focused on different ways of knowing as well as living, that promote changes in social relations which is materialised through ‘coalitional dynamics’ than based on the idea of sameness (Combahee River Collective Statement 1983; Mohanty, 2003 as cited

in May, 2014). It believes that the social location and lived experiences related to institutionalised practices are epistemically significant as they derive from the knowledge acquired from marginalization (Lorde, 1984; Collin, 1998; Beal, 1970; May, 2014). Thus, it forms counter hegemonic knowledge which is located in marginalised space (May, 2014).

3.2.3. Intersectionality or Intersectional Oppression

The denial of existence of multidimensional aspects of oppression and its influence on Black Women was described in Sojourner Truth’s declaration ‘Ain’t I woman?’ in the 1851 Women's Rights Convention, in Akron, Ohio, and the concept is referred by Fran Beale’s ‘Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female’ in 1969 and later by Kimberly Crenshaw (Beale,1969). Even though, Frances Beale introduced the term “double jeopardy” to highlight the existence of dual discrimination of sexism and racism suffered by Black Women, this conceptualization was also incomplete, owing to the fact that these two discriminations are related to the economic disadvantages. With in this backdrop, Kimberley Crenshaw (1989) coined Intersectionality as a concept for public discourse. The perspectives and arguments of scholars such as Angela Davis, Anna Julia Cooper, Audre Lorde, Barbara Smith, bell hooks, Fannie Lou Hammer, Hazel Carby, Ida B. Wells, Pauli Murray, and Toni Cade Bambara are rooted in Intersectionality (Nwakanma, 2022). It emerged from the understanding that, in the case of Black Women, there exist discriminating and exclusive social categories both as Black people and as women, which in turn place them under the effects of

racism *and* sexism, classism or multiple marginalization (Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 1981; Collins, 2004).

According to Kimberley Crenshaw, “Intersectionality is a conceptualization of the problem that seeks to capture the structural and dynamic consequences of the interaction between two or more axes of subordination. It deals specifically with the manner in which racism, patriarchalism and class oppression along with other discriminatory systems create basic inequalities that structure the relative positions of women, races, ethnicities, classes and others” (Crenshaw, 1989). She considers intersectionality as a framework of analysis or a perspective of interlocking or multiply oppressive system of inequality, subordination and discrimination which are dominant in Black Women’s lives (Nwakanma, 2022). She criticizes the single-axis framework¹⁷ that limits the areas of investigation only to the privileged member’s experiences while ignoring Black Women’s experiences that are rooted in race, class and sex or impact of overlapping of such social identities on their everyday life (Crenshaw, 1989). In order to explain how multiple intersection become oppressive to Black Women, Crenshaw used the metaphor of traffic intersection “Consider an analogy to traffic in an intersection, coming and going in all four directions. Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination” (Crenshaw, 1989; p.149).

Crenshaw disagrees to Western feminist thinkers for emphasizing solely on gender and undermining the interconnectedness of sexual orientation, class and race. She claims that one aspect is deeply shaped by another as race is shaped by gender and class or vice versa (Crenshaw, 1989). Patricia Collins considers intersectionality as a system of

¹⁷ Kimberle Crenshaws argues that black feminist theorists seem to continue to find themselves in many ways "speaking into the void" even though their works are celebrated. According to Crenshaw Single axis framework meant that "dominant conceptions of discrimination condition us to think about subordination occurring under a single categorical axis" which meant that usually there exist notion that discrimination is caused by being in single identity (Crenshaw, 1989).

mutually constructing peculiarities of social class, ethnicity, race, gender, nation, sexuality and age, which constitute Black Women's experiences and, are consecutively shaped by Black Women (Collins, 2000). The interlocking or simultaneous system of oppression, or Triple Oppression (Angela Davis, 1983) mold the daily lives of Black Women in all institutions of society such as family, religion, education, politics, health, judicial system and media, and also the social structure in which Black Women interact, their identities and experiences are intersected with race, class and gender which determine their marginal position (Barnet, 2003). Through emphasizing the interconnection of race, gender, and class as the basis of oppression, Black Women tires to redefine the social relation of resistance and domination. They consider the variables of social class, age, religion, sexual orientation, race, and gender are part of broad dominating structure (Collins,1990).

Black Women are considered as 'mule of the world' because they are carrying burden everyone else refuse to carry (Alice Walker,1983). This highlights the oppression and intersecting discriminations that they are facing in all walks of life compared to others, particularly the White women (who only consider single axis framework of oppression as relevant). The reality is, interlinking class, race and gender widens the understanding on the real-life experience of Black Women. The three types of oppression - class, race and gender - are three faces of a single enemy so that they cannot be separated with regard to Black Women's experiences (Martinez, 2003).

In general, Black Women are overlooked, misrepresented, ignored, and silenced which, in turn, compels them to take up and address the stimulating issues of discrimination and exploitation by themselves (Crenshaw,1991; Combahee River Collective, 1977). According to Deborah King (1988), race, gender, and class which have no isolated effects but has compounding effects on Black Women's lives and therefore, must not be treated separately. Thus, the concept Intersectionality clearly negates the established universal notion that 'all women are same because we all are women and our experiences are same' (Collins,1990; Kamunge, 2018). It put attention on the need of addressing how class, race and gender are interlinked in the lives of Black Women, in any discourse.

3.2.3.1. Intersectionality of Class, Race and Gender in Black Women's life

The Black Women's everyday life confrontations must be addressed simultaneously because, if we plan to address and end racism before dealing with sexism, we have to wait for a long time (Barbara Smith, 1983). The denial of the existence of sexual oppression until racism or capitalism to be ended is perilous, as all replicate the gravity of simultaneous oppression on Black Women's lives. As Sojourner Truth states, mere the adding up of racism and sexism together is not sufficient to explain the experience of subordination of Black Women, but the intersectional analysis or intersectional experiences must also be taken into account in such contexts (Truth,1851)¹⁸. The class, sex and racism intersect Black Women's lives so that one cannot be separated from another explains how each element have collective influence on their lives.

With regard to the *intersection of sexism and racism*, Sojourner Truth (1851) sees sexist oppression as peril to Black Women similar to that of racist oppression, which can be visible by the suffering of Black Women under Black men. Black Women are forced to assume both masculine and feminine roles such as toiling in the fields and domestic care works while no Black men are not forced to assume feminine role. Black Women's body is differently gendered as, even if colonialism and external factors attributed to the concept of 'good respectable body' but, the black masculinity which is an internal factor, results in more subordination as well as control over the black women's sexuality or body (Brown University, 2019). While depicting sexuality of Black women as White men as either asexual as Mammy type or Jezebels who are promiscuous results in the internalization of these into their identity by which some Black women doubt themselves as categorized either with in these groups (West,1995). Black men tried to regain their authority and masculinity which suffered under slavery and racism through establishing dominance over family as well as body of Black women. In this regard, bell hooks (1981) argue that, Black Women are suffered by the domestic violence orchestrated by Black men, who see home or domestic sphere as the

¹⁸ As Truth states, "There is a great stir about coloured men getting their rights, but not a word about the coloured women; and if coloured men get their rights, and not coloured women get theirs, there will be a bad time about it. So, I am for keeping the thing going while things are stirring" (Truth,1851).

only place of ventilation of frustrations and anger which turned out from the humiliation and discrimination that they suffer because of racism in the public sphere.

hooks also criticizes Black men for not supporting inclusion of Black Women in civil right movement as well as efforts on struggles for their rights just because of 'being women'. Anna Julia Cooper harshly criticised the double standard of Black spokespersons on while stands for struggle against racism not speak for the rights of Black Women, but they propagate that "Only the *BLACK WOMEN* can say, when and where I enter, in the quiet, undisputed dignity of my womanhood, without violence and without suing or special patronage, then and there the *whole Negro race enters with me*. When Black men claims that whenever he was allowed in public place, only the race will enter with him" (Cooper, 1969 as cited in Crenshaw, 1989). Likewise, in her *A Voice from the South*, Cooper (1969), explains by citing the example of a court room trial that, Black client (male) is at least consulted even if it with 'ignorance' and 'misapprehension.' But, the most important witness, i.e. the Black woman was never consulted as she was not treated human being. Cooper points out that, even if White man doesn't speak about Black men's experiences, the more serious concern is that, Black men don't speak Black women's experiences. This implies that Black Women are discriminated on the basis of their race as well sexuality while Black men suffer racism.

The sufferings of female Black people are related to their sexuality also, as they are living on the fear and awareness of sexual vulnerability that they subject to, not only from the White male but also the Black male (hooks, 1981). Black Women are objects of male fantasy as they are considered as 'horses and mules' to breed for producing workers, and 'sexual temptresses' who compel white men into sin (hooks, 1981). Identifying Black Women as sexual savage, immoral and sexually deprived by White people can be visible through labelling them as Sluts, making discriminatory laws on intermarriage and rape assaults, assigning single toilet to both male and female, denial

of title of Miss, Mrs. to Black female etc., along with the use of rape as a weapon for suppressing Black Women who are ‘docile bodies’¹⁹(hooks,1981; Foucault,1975).

Black women are made invisible in the discourses as they are excluded from the category ‘women’, which solely meant for White women. Similarly, they are also excluded from category Black which is meant for Black men only (Crenshaw, 1989; Smith, 2017). Because of being female and of being Black denies the protection for African women from sexual exploitation (Prather et al., 2018). Racist policies of Black population control such as racist sterilization programs and denial of reproductive right are used as means of control over Black Women’s sexuality. Hence, sexuality is intersectional with racism as far as the Black Women are concerned (Davis, 1982; Ferguson, 2005; hooks,1981).

With regard to the *intersectional influence of classism, gender and racism* on Black Women’s lived experiences, Angela Davis (1981) observes that Black Women are considered as both producers (who were exploited in the plantations because of their productivity) and are reproducers (who are exploited on the basis of their childbearing and reproductive labor in the slave economy). Thus, economic exploitation of Black Women is embedded in productive and reproductive labour and defined through their identity as Black Women (Barnett, 2003; Jones 1985). As bell hooks (2000) states, the difficulty in dealing with class identity is that, it is not easy to identify class like race or gender as it takes so long for people to identify themselves with a class or creation of class consciousness. Consequently, class is considered as an uncool subject of oppression while people talk about gender and race in a cool manner.

Within the existence of race, sex, class and institutional social system, Black female always remain at the bottom of the economic structure. The assumption ‘if White privileged working-class women can attain economic self-sufficiency or entering into workforce that can be treated as positive sign of economic self-sufficiency for all women’ sidelines the existence of the interlinkage of sex-class-race aspects of Black women. Mere entry into the working force is not a sign of economic liberation of

¹⁹ Docile body act as an object that may be subjected, used transformed and improved for contribute to power of discipline for controlling discourse (Foucault, 1975)

women as the feminization of poverty is a major feature exist among women of colour and the women in lower income groups/class women because they are not able to take independent decisions in a male dominated world (ibid). Many impoverished women remain poor and getting exploited as part of racial oppression, class position as well as gender roles. Hence, recognizing the influence of class and race on females along with domination and discrimination of evil of patriarchy is important (hooks, 2000; Burnham, 1985).

bell hooks has criticized that the way of approaching racism, class and sexism as isolated phenomena having no impact on each other leads to inaccurate, biased and distorted views (hooks,1981). According to Linda Burnham, “the dynamism of the relationships among race, class and gender arises from the fact that, while each has its own unique social logic, polarizes different social forces, and generates distinct, characteristic institutional and cultural modalities, each is also, simultaneously, a constituent and formative factor in the development of the others” (Burnham, 2020; p.1). In short, the everyday lives of Black Women, which are molded by multiple identities and oppressive factors like race, gender and class are heading towards the fact that the simultaneous dealing of multifaceted oppressions in the lives of Black Women is an absolute necessity, in acknowledging real life experiences of them.

As the everyday lives of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa is stigmatised with multiple oppressions, approaching such issues from social, economic political, cultural, environmental and security spectrum need an intersectional perspective. Because of the multifaceted nature of oppression, they ever remain at the bottom of the social hierarchy, with poor access to land, health, education, employment, and an equal marriage norms. Under such disfavoured social norms and traditions, they face setbacks during wars, pandemics, and environmental disasters. Their disproportional economic backwardness due to lack of access to economic resources, and their political inequality leads to lack of decision-making power (Mundume, 2005; Liani et al, 2021; Jousse, 2021; Udo &Naidu, 2023) and disadvantaged, marginalised position in all walks of life with no scope for achieving gender equality. So, study on any aspect of the lives of women in Sub -Saharan Africa from an intersectional perspective rather

than from a universal generic perspective, only can provide the real magnitude of the surrounding issues.

The study on the concept of security in IR is also need to be reformulated as intersectional²⁰. Therefore, in this study, it is planned to analyze food security (which is one aspect of human security under nontraditional security debates) within the frame of intersectional experiences of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa with the objective to find out how intersectional matrix influence the everyday experience of Black Women on food security. It is understood that unitary perspectives are vague to cover issues of food security on people who are tied to complex multiple oppressive social positions (Bowleg, 2012).

3.3. Conclusion

The perspectives of those who suffers from multiple oppression due to the intersection of class, race and gender which constitute a different epistemological standpoint also must be understood (as it constitutes different epistemological standpoints) while dealing with the concepts, theories and discourses in IR. So, to understand the intensity of issues from their multiple oppressive identities that are peculiar to the lives of women in Sub-Saharan Africa or Black Women, an intersectional perspective is preferred. Hence, in the middle of debates, concepts, discussions, theories as well as discourses in the discipline of IR which are dominated by hyper masculinist epistemology, it is necessary to bring the everyday life experience of women as a variable to study international relations from gendered and marginalised perspectives. Such an approach would help to engender the discipline and also to achieve its inclusive growth and development.

²⁰ the concept of security entangled with military and state security with all its masculinist character that marginalize gendered nature of security or human security which has relevance in the day-to-day life of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

CHAPTER IV

Gender and Food Security: Understanding the Interlinkages

4.1. Introduction

Security is a core concept in the discipline International Relations, which is mainly centred around traditional or conventional dimensions of it. Therefore, it focuses on such aspects national power, military or political security, threat of war, all state-centric. Such discourses are challenged by many scholars as it is insufficient to comprehend the ever-changing security environment of International Relations. In this juncture, this research stress upon the importance of applying gender lens, especially the inclusion of multidimensional issues connected to food security, a nontraditional security element which is neglected in the mainstream security discourses in IR. Such an analysis of security debates in International Relations is necessary to find out the relevance of including food security in the mainstream security discussions.

4.2. Debates on Security in International Relations: An Overview

Security is a contested term having multidimensional character, ranging from very common way of relating it to collective as well as personal situations in daily activities like crime, war and threats, job, economy on the one side and security related to positive conditions of freedom, good life, and democracy on the other (Heurlin et al., n.d). There are distinct views on security for Realists, Social Constructivists, Marxists, Critical Theorists, Feminists, and Postmodernists. The Realist view on security is deeply rooted in military and national security as reflected in the writings of neoclassical realists like E. H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau and neo-realists like Kenneth Waltz. The Social Constructivists see security as “being constructed and re-constructed through intersubjective human understandings” (Smith, 2002; p.7). The referent object of security is a dynamic concept for them and its scope is varying according to “the historical mix of factors that throw up certain dominant ideational understandings” (Mallavarapu, 2008; p.61). In the Marxist view, the global capitalism is the major

security concern as it causes conflicts and wars, treaties, and international events (Hobden, 2005).

Under the critical traditions of IR, the Critical Theories on security focus on the security of individual, not the state, as the centre of analysis, because state itself is a security problem than solution. According to critical theorists, security can be achieved through ensuring liberty and achieving emancipation of all. The scholars like Andrew Linklater, Ken Booth and, Richard Wyn Jones popularised the critical perspective on security (Baylis, 2008). The Feminist view on security emphasises the inherent masculinist understanding of security by traditional IR scholarship. They, while disagreeing with state centric military security as only referent object, criticise the ignorance of gendered aspect of security in the discussions. Feminists Ann Tickner and Cynthia Enloe emphasises on the need of inclusion of ‘women’ as referent object in the study of security (Muhammad et al., 2021). Post-modernists further expand the referent objects in security perspective to non-state actors (individuals, non - governmental organizations, groups, cultural minorities, and multinational corporations) and they consider security of individual superior to state security (Lasan, 2012). In International Relations prime discourses and debates hitherto on security is divided under Traditional and Non- Traditional Security.

The Traditional security or conventional security discussions in IR which were predominant during the cold war had focused on state centric control of force, threat to national security as well as use of force against enemies (Nye et al., 1988). It expresses the narrow view on security within the framework of Westphalian system, where the sovereign state was responsible to protect territorial integrity, political independence, and security of people. The discussions were mostly on the causes of war, consequence of war and the ways to avoid war. Traditional security narratives are focused on the anarchical character of international system where defence of national interest is supreme. National resources are chiefly dedicated to the assurance of military strength and the non-military aspects of security like health, education, environment,

employment or gender equality are neglected here (Ohta, 2009; Degaut, 2015; Buzan et al.,1998).

Non- Traditional Security (NTS) and Human Security

According to Consortium of NTS Studies in Asia, “NTS challenges are defined as challenges to the survival and wellbeing of peoples and states that arise primarily out of non-military sources, such as climate change, infectious diseases, natural disasters, irregular migration, food shortages, smuggling of persons, drug trafficking and other forms of transnational crimes” (Kim et al, 2012; p.1). The main aspect of Non-Traditional Security is that the referent object of security is not state (survival and integrity of state), but the people or individual, their well-being survival and dignity (Caballero-Anthony, 2016). It is concerned along with the wider aspects of national as well as human security threats and the responses to that. With the end of bipolar world order/Cold War, a paradigm shift has happened in the practice and discourses on security (Mbadlanyana, 2012). Resultantly, apart from those geopolitical and military perspectives which narrow down the scope and discussions on security in IR the socio-economic and environmental challenges along with identity and transnational crimes have also become important in the security debates in IR by 1990s. This paved the way for growth of Non-Traditional Security elements in the security debates in the discipline.

Meanwhile, the contribution of Copenhagen School on securitization theories, especially the works of Barry Buzan, was a turning point in security studies. The Copenhagen School proposed a combination of state as well as societal security or non-militaristic security as referents of security by sharing the Traditional security theorist’s ideas on state centric security with Non-traditional aspects of political, economic, social and environmental security (Buzan, 1997; Goetschel, 2000). Thus, Since the end of Cold War, it came to the understanding that referring security as state centric is undermining the non-military threats or individual aspects of security and such issues connected to society, economy, environment, health and food need to be brought within the security debates in IR to make it more comprehensive.

The expansion of the concept of security from traditional concept to NTS concept paved the way for development of the concept *Human Security* which became very influential in the security discourses since 1990s. The primacy given to security from threats of disease, hunger and repression and safeguarding people from any immediate hurtful disruption of daily life emphasised in the United Nations Human Development Report 1994 emerged as the core aspect of Human Security. Roland Paris identifies seven elements of Human Security such as (a), health security (like, protection from diseases and access to health care); (b) environmental security (e.g. protection from threats as depletion and environmental pollution); (c) economic security (such as freedom from poverty); (d) personal security (like physical safety from criminal attacks, torture, war, domestic violence, drug use, suicide and traffic accidents); (e) political security (e.g. enjoyment of civil and political rights, and freedom from political oppression); (f) community security (such as psychical security for cultural as well as ethnic groups and protection of their traditions and (g) food security (eg; access to food) (Mallavarapu, 2008). This has brought food security to the centre of International Relations as part of the human security debates.

4.3. Relevance of Food Security

An analysis of what constitute food security is important for further understanding of the concept. The definition of food security given by The World Food Conference 1974, focused only on food supply. According to this, it is the “availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices” (FAO, 2006; p.1). In 1983, FAO, in order to bring a balance between the supply and access parts in the definition, further specified food security as “ensuring that all people at all times have both physical and economic access to the basic food that they need”. Later, the World Food Summit 1996 also emphasized on multidimensional nature of food security. According to the Summit, “Food security exists when all people, at all time, have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food that meets their dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life” (p.3).

The summit further highlights four dimensions of food security such as, *Access to, Availability of, Stability and Utilization* of food. The first one, *Access to* food refers the economic and physical resources for food production. The access to food also determined by way of food acquired by a household or individual that may differ in the sources such as from where it is purchased, bartered, hunted, produced or given as a gift. The second, *Availability* of food indicates the adequacy of physical availability of food that may be produced, traded, imported, stored, or supplied by governments or non-governmental aid organizations. Third, *Stability of food* indicates access to food in different social, political and economic contexts and corresponding to various level of food security over time. The fourth, *Utilization* refers to the way in which food is processed, safety of the food supplied and its nutritional quality while processing, storing and preparing food along with the quality of diet, individual health status, intra-household distribution of food, access to sanitation facilities and clean water (FAO, 2008; WFP, 2009).

Hunger and malnutrition are two major problems in food security. According to FAO, 1 out of 8 people in the world are suffering from food deficiency and therefore, not able to maintain good and active life. Many children below the age 5 are under stunting because of the undernutrition. Globally, 2 million people are under the grab of hidden hunger or micronutrient deficiencies (FAO, 2014). Wars till date causes heavy loss of human lives. But ‘malnutrition kills more people than bombs, missiles and bullets’ (Human Security Centre, 2005; p.185). Poverty results in malnutrition, starvation, illiteracy, hunger, social unrest, feeling of unhealthy, low level of energy, high level of maternal mortality, lower cognitive inability, and low level of immunity (FAO et al., 2019).

Hunger and malnutrition also lead to marginalization, environmental degradation and political conflicts. Thus, every socio psychical, psychological as well as political wellbeing of the people are under threat (FAO, UNTFHS, 2021) due to food insecurity. It is detrimental to incorporate healthy population with enough nutritious food for a peaceful and developed society for ensuring the economic and social development of nations, as well as global security. Hence, approaching food security from the

perspective of human security helps to eliminate the fear of lack of at least basic level of food for all people along with proper utilization and sources to access it. Through attaining food security by ensuring access to, availability, utilization and stability of food resources, the main goal of human security - 'freedom from fear' and 'freedom from wants' can be materialised. Human security aims a society with individuals free from fear of adequate nutritional food for every time (Sharma, 2013). Hence, situating food security of individual as a referent object while considering it from human security perspective, rather than highlighting state as a referent object, reveals the relevance of food security with in the new paradigm of security (Shepherd, 2012).

All people are not experiencing food insecurity in similar way. The power asymmetry in the society creates differences in the impact of food security to different sections. The imbalances in demand and supply of food are not the only factors that contribute to food insecurity. The societal structure that disadvantages major sections of the population also contributes to food insecurity in a significant way. Within the conventional framework on security, food security or right to food has been completely neglected which disproportionately affect women, children and other marginalized sections of the society.

The groups like gay, lesbians, transgenders, intersex, and bisexual people are also facing food security challenges because of the societal stigma. Because of the socially constructed gendered norms, they face social exclusion, economic disparity, and lack of support from family and society in access to as well as availability of food. The access of proper food needed for a healthy mind and body is affected by social stigmas. The stability of food also under trouble through discriminatory rationing of food via food bank and assistance programmes (Agrilinks Team, 2022) that also contributes into the food insecurity of sexual minorities.

Children are the other marginalised group who are suffered by food insecurity. The behavioural, emotional, social and cognitive development of children is adversely affected by lack of proper access and utilization of food. The physical problems like compromised immunity, low birth weights, anaemia, and birth defects and

psychological problems like anxiety, aggressive behaviour and depression (Kansanga, 2022) among children are the outcome of malnutrition. Children of single parent and unemployed parents are more susceptible to food insecurity. This is because of the limited purchasing power that prevent them to afford nutritious, diverse diet to ensure food security for the family (SRCD, 2018).

Similarly, indigenous people are also suffering from food insecurity because of poor diet and food shortage. Environmental degradation, climate change, contamination of natural resources and displacement from land adversely affect their livelihood and thus create food insecurity. The ignorance of nutritious value of traditional food and labelling traditional indigenous food as ‘poor food’ by the market forces who promotes modern cuisine culture resulted in undermining the need to protect traditional food pattern to ensure stability, accessibility, and availability of food for indigenous communities (Sidiq et al., 2022). In short, the marginalised groups like children, tribal population and LGBTQIA+ people are the disproportionately suffered due to food insecurity.

Women are another marginalised category who are suffered by food insecurity. Women/girls constitute 60% of the severely hunger people in the world and their number is much higher in the low- and middle-income countries (UN Women, 2012). Equivalent to the negligence towards food security by conventional security debates, women are considered occasionally as inadmissible in food security aspects which also compel to apply gender perspective on determinants of food security which helps to attain food security in its real sense. According to an Oxfam Report (2019) ‘Women are vulnerable on all dimensions of food security: availability, access, utilization and stability’, despite their contributions and efforts in assuring food security. Hence, the analysis of the interlinkages between food security and gender (in the research women is considered as gendered category) is important to have a proper understanding of the question of security.

4.4. Conceptualisation of Gendered Food Security

The persistence of hunger and malnutrition even in the midst of efforts for poverty eradication at the local, national, regional and global levels is a crucial concern regarding food security ²¹. The Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, held in 1995 put forward the global agenda for gender equality in 12 crucial areas of concern including women and poverty, women and economy, and women and environment (UN Women, n.d). Prior to that, the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women had emphasised on equal opportunity for women in those crucial elements connected to the right to food for women such as getting access to land, credit, income, work and social security (UN et al.,1996). In the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Goal 1 - ‘No poverty,’ Goal 2 - ‘achieve zero hunger and eradication of malnutrition’, Goal 5’ - ‘gender equality’ and Goal 6 - ‘clean water and sanitation for all’ emphasise on food security of people, especially of those at vulnerable positions (UN Women, n.d).

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights 1966 mentions women’s specific role in rural development. Article 14 in the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), gives special attention to the issue of gender gap in nutrition. Likewise, in 1992, The Global Plan of Action on Nutrition proposed by the International Conference on Nutrition has given

²¹ There are many international conventions that emphasis on the need of food security or right to food to all. United Nations Conference on Food and Food and Agriculture in 1943 which proposed for establishment of permeant organization for food and agriculture resulted in establishment of Food and Agriculture Organization in 1945. In Universal Declaration of Human Rights, of 1948 Article 25 emphasised on right to a standard of living including adequate food. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in 1966, emphasised on the primacy of the right to enough food as primary necessity for the right to an adequate standard of living. The first World Food Conference on 1974 emphasised on global food production and consumption issues. The World Food Summit held in 1996 or Rome Declaration on World Food Security call for global efforts to renew the fight to combat hunger. The Millenium Development Goals adopted by General Assembly in 2000 with Goal 1 to reduce the hunger people’s number by half by 2015 and Goal 2 of emphasised on the mission of ending all forms of malnutrition and hunger by 2030 was referred in UN Sustainable Development Summit that held in 2015 (UN, 2024; UNHR et al., n.d). There are national initiatives for assuring food security for all, the National Food Security Act or Right to Food Act 2013 in India is an example, with provisions for adequate quality and quantity of food with affordable price for people to live with dignity (NFSA, 2013).

prime importance to put an end to the root cause of gender inequality through women's empowerment where achieving food security is a key means (SIDA, 2015). Despite all these global conventions and efforts, hunger still has a feminine face as women are suffering than men due to food insecurity in almost two third of countries (Andrews et al., 2019; UN Women, n.d).

Women play crucial role in the production, processing, preparation, and distribution of food (Fekad,2020; Quisumbing et al., 1995). They are 'progenitors of our food chains' with traditional knowledge that they possess on biodiversity, their role in the protection of forests, waterbodies, environment, on the one side and their struggle against capitalist interests on natural resources that cause ecological degradation on the other (Andrews et al, 2017; Bellows et al., 2016: Federici, 2004). But, the intensity of food insecurity disproportionately affecting women in Sub-Saharan Africa compared to developed countries like United Kingdom and the percentage of huger among women is higher than that of men in SSA (UN Women, n.d).

Though, most of the production of food and preparation of household meals are done by women and girls, only 13 per cent of women in the world are land holders and therefore the ownership and utilization of land without gendered barriers are crucial aspects to achieve food security. Even during crisis, in spite of their hard work to ensure food to families, girls and women are suffering by malnutrition (UN Women, n.d). In comparison to 131 million men and boys who suffer from food insecurity, the number of food insecure girls and women are 236 million which indicates the deep gender biasness in food system (UN Women et al., 2023). Food insecure adult women constitute 26.7 per cent against 25.4 per cent men and there exist a difference of about 47.8 million. In 2/3 of the countries in the world, the most food insecure people are women than men and the ratio is that 122 extreme poverty ridden women for every 100 men of the age group of 25-34 (UNDP, 2022). While taking into account the current rate, it needs 137 additional years to eradicate extreme poverty among women (UN Women et al., 2024). Therefore, it become necessary to find out the reasons behind the higher level of food insecurity of women that can be possible through the use of gendered lens or developing a gendered perspective on food security.

Gendered food perspective can help us to understand how identities are formed and shaped by our relations to food and everyday experiences of women (Collins, 2018). Gender differentiated practices, norms, intra-household distribution of food, political environment, and economic opportunity are matters while considering gendered perspective of food security (ADB Report, 2013; Ghale et al., 2018). Gendered food security advocates for more attention to women's labour - formal, informal and caregiving; structures of discrimination; and the need to 'incorporate women's real-life experiences', in the collection of data related to food systems (CFS, 2017). Gender lens on food security is also necessary to understand how people have gender-differentiated experiences within the global food system and how relationships with food and food production can 'reproduce, resist and rebel against gender constructions' (Avakian et al., 2005). In this regard, Allen et al., (2006) and Quisumbing (1996), note that feminist food studies help us to examine the connections between gender and the material, socio-cultural, psychological and corporal dimensions of food, and gender dimensions of productive and reproductive labour, the household responsibilities tied to food, and the gendered dimensions of food consumption. Thus, it unravels how the existing unequal power relations in the society which reflects in food security experiences.

All these arguments expose reality that the mainstream narratives and discourses on food security which are unidimensional and based on the premise that all are equally affected by food insecurity, is meaningless. Therefore, a deconstruction is necessary from a gendered lens to find out the gendered factors in food security such as opportunities and constraints in access to resources, availability of resources, utilization of resources, and stability in achieving food security and also the contribution towards food security as a whole by women. That will broaden the concept of food security more inclusive and make it relevant in the study of International Relations. Through the application of a gendered lens on food security, this chapter analyse the multi-dimensional aspects of food security which intersect with socio-cultural (patriarchal norms), economic, political, environmental, psychological as well as psychical aspects related to it in order to find out how far food security is gendered in nature.

4.4.1. Patriarchal Socio - Cultural aspects in Gendered Food Security

Patriarchy subjugates women in all fields of life, which have influence on food security as well. The number of women who are food insecure in moderate or severe level constitute 47.8 million which is more than that of men (UN Women et al., 2024). In patriarchal societies, lives of women are dictated and directed by the gendered roles entrusted upon them by men. According to Adrianna Rich (1977; p. 57) “Patriarchy, is the power of the fathers: a familial, social, ideological, political system in which men - by force, direct pressure or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education and the division of labour - determine what part women shall or shall not play, and in which the female is everywhere subsumed under the male”. The influence of culture in social access of food is exhibiting through upholding misogynistic attitude and belief towards social groups such as women and this led to the marginalization, structural exclusion and differentiation with regard to their food security (Alonso, et al., 2018). The patriarchal socio- cultural norms govern society ultimately determine the gendered aspects of, the access to, availability, utilization, and stability of the food.

The right to *access of land* by women is crucial to food security and to promote gender equality as equal access to productive resources can lift 100 -150 million people from hunger (UNDP, 2022). The advantage of land holding is that, women can intervene-and influence the decision-making process on what crop to grow, what to consume, what technique to be used, and the selling of the products which can contribute into their food and nutrition security. Women’s access to land also ensures the production of food for household consumption and the surplus production mobilises additional income for the other livelihood needs which all in turn facilitates overall gender equality. Thus, the land holding results in assertion of bargaining power of women and growth of household economies (Copeland et al., cited in Gatobu, 2020). With regard to the connection between land ownership and nutrition status of children, studies conducted on Papua New Guinea (Rodgers et al., 2018) reveals that, those women who hold land are able to participate in the decision-making regarding purchase of nutrient food and its consumption which results in higher birth weight and less malnutrition among the babies (IDLO, 2017).

The existing socio-cultural norms and patriarchal structures prove that the land access is depending on the status assumed in the family (FAO 1997). The lower position of women in the family results in landlessness or hold of minimal land by them (Romero, 2021). Bina Agarwal (1998) argues that, patriarchal constraints on or land ownership restrict women/ daughters and favours men/boys. The patriarchal norms that shape the legal institutional frameworks also prevent women from getting access to land, even if they have the right over land and generally, the right to disposition, utilization and the decisions over it are kept under male discretion (FAO 2011; MFA, 2013; Deere et al., 2003). This is clear from the studies on those countries where the ownership of land by women is framed in such a manner that they are either mediated through male relative or less likely to hold the land.²² The reality is that the landholding of men is almost more than 3 times to women (IMF, 2007). In Nepal, women constitute only 14 per cent of the land-owning rural households and in China, 70 per cent of farm operators are women without their own land. Similarly, in Bangladesh and Pakistan, the land holdings of male-headed households are more than twice the size of female-headed households (Agarwal, 2012; UN Women, 2014).

The societal and patriarchal barriers to get legal aid and awareness on provisions for ownership of land is another important factor in this regard. In Tanzania and Mozambique, formal courts support women's rights, including those divorced and widow, on land, but their compliance has been challenged by community due to the influence of patriarchal socio-cultural norms. Besides, the males who are relatives of women and chiefs of society represent their clan's interest about land ownership and thus undermine the legal aspect of it (IDLO, 2017). Moreover, those women who speak for their rights are considered as disobedient, disrespectful, and against will of the community and family, and become victims of domestic violence and social isolation (ibid).

²² Even though the inequality in ownership of land is found globally it is notable specially in the developing world that less than one-third of landowners in Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America and South Asia, are women (Agarwal, 2023). According to Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO, 2011) in developing countries if the women farmers get the opportunity to access productive resources, same as men, particularly land, the increase in their farm yields will be by 20 to 30 percent thus, raise total agricultural output by 2.5 to 4 percent of the countries (Agarwal, 2023).

In Uganda, many women who purchase land register it under their husband's name because of the customs as well as their limited awareness on property rights (Bikaako et al., 2015; USAID, 2013). In India, only less than 10.34 percent of private land belong to women, despite the fact that the law ensures equal right of men and women to hold land (Choudhury et al., 2017; USAID, 2013). In Pakistan, women's right on property is based on Muslim Personal Law as well as customs. The Sharia law assures women's right to inheritance (that half of men's), but customs and family pressures prevent them from exercise this right (Rubab et al., 2018; USAID,2013). In China, the Rural Land Contracting Law assures equality of land rights to men and women, but mostly women cannot enjoy land right as it is assigned to household head who are mostly men (Zhang, 2024). All these indicates the predominance of socio-cultural norms and customs which stand against the interest of women, while addressing the question of land/property rights of women in these regions.

The socio-cultural factors that constrain women's *access to labour* too. The patriarchal norms tend to exercise greater control of the male over the family and also over the labour of the female in agriculture production (Mascarenhas, 1983). Even though women actively participate in agricultural production, their contribution is undervalued as they are considered as that of 'subordinate helpers' or 'wives of farmers' who are assisting the family' (Rao, 2005; Devasahayam, 2018; Blackwood, 2008; Place, 1994; Peterman et al., 2011). For example, the role of women workforce in food production is not considered and valued equal to the men work force in many parts of Asia²³ (Romero, 2021) because of it.

Women are not considered as heads of the household by due to the gendered norms which in turn secure the privilege of men to take most of the decisions on farm management and financial transaction. For example, in Serbia, women constitute 19.4 percent of farm holders, but they involve only in 5.3 percent of decisions on farming (Devasahayam, 2018). With regard to the access to agricultural resources in food

²³ Through the informal conversation with women by the researcher as part of this study with regard to agricultural labour, it is stated that even if they are paid wages for their work, but disparity exist with that of men in the payment for the same work, as women are considered as psychically weak irrespective of their work out come, which is resultant of biased societ al notion on labour of women.

security of several developing countries, there exist many structural and cultural barriers that prevent women from access to it. The preference of extension officers on men labour over women labour or male household over women household also remain as a barrier for the labour performance of the women (Kassie et al., 2014 as cited Romero, 2021). The authorities of agricultural development or agricultural resource supply prefer male over female as ‘farmer’ because of the headship of the household is with them (Devasahayam, 2018).

Similarly, the cultural factors influence sexual division of labour as male labour is preferred for direct productive activities and female labour is preferred for supportive activities like less intensive works or domestic services and unpaid family labour especially in the jointly cultivated fields. In jointly cultivated farms, women have less decision-making power on the disposal of the products, even though they work as labour force in the field (Romero, 2021). The culturally restricted sexual division of labour is also visible in choosing crops for production as cash crops are treated as men’s crops and food crops for subsistence as women’s crops. Therefore, if women cultivate cash crops, they get very less support from men. In Kenya and Tanzania, the agricultural labour that women put in the fields remain invisible because they mainly produce for household consumption, not for market (Fatma, 2009). This also underlines how women are disadvantaged by socio cultural norms with regard to access to labour for food production.

The masculinist perspective based on what to be counted as relevant in studies, discourses and analyses is reflected in the engagements on food security also as there is insufficient data and information available on the role of women’s labour in agriculture and food security efforts. Moreover, this issue is not even counted factored in the mainstream discussions and research data collections, official surveys and census. Only through enumerating what is considered as ‘proper work’ of a person, the multiple engagements of women in everyday life like involvements in family plot, fetching water, gathering fuelwood, small livestock fishing, processing of food, transportation of products for marketing, preparing of food for family members, can be accounted sufficiently. The significance of the works that they do at home or outside for food security remain invisible in the ‘formal economic yardsticks’, Therefore, the policy

making and planning on agricultural production takes place with gender blindness because of the dissemination of data on the role of women in agricultural production as well as food security is ignored/undervalued (FAO, n.d).

Time burden or time poverty is a socio- cultural aspect that influence food security among women. The role of women in food security efforts varies from that of man, but seldom recognised in the economy. The assignment of many socio-cultural tasks on women that consumes more time increase their burden. For example, in sub-Saharan African countries like Tanzania, Ghana, and Zambia, fetching water and fire wood on foot from far way places for domestic use are done by women and girls (IMF, 2007) that affects their participation in agriculture production. Even the landlessness prevents women from implementation of time saving modern agricultural technologies or water and soil conservation (Tenge et al., 2004; Agarwal,2018; Reemer, 2014 as cited in Burgin,2021).

In the rural societies of Asia, the time spend by women on unpaid reproductive household works and care works such as cleaning, collection of fuel, water collection, cooking, look after the children and sick and elderly people is 2.5 times more than that of men. This also reduces the contribution of women in more productive engagements in agricultural food production (Mathew 2019; ILO 2020; Rubiano-Matulevich et al., 2019; ILO, 2016). In countries like Cambodia, Pakistan and India, it is estimated that, women are involved in unpaid household works which is 10 times more than the time men engage. However, few such works like cooking and care of the house are not even considered as productive works to be counted in economy or in the data (FAO, 2016; FAO, 2011; GRF, 2017; Charmes 2019 as cited in Akter, 2021). The situation in Nicaragua, Bhutan, Laos and Thailand is not different as women spend more time on assigned domestic duties along with agricultural activities. They involved in informal as well as small scale production of food and trade to ensure availability of food in the small least valued markets. They have longer work hours than men and no leisure time (Milosavljevic, 2003; UN, 2004; GRF, 2017).

The developed countries are not different as far as gender inequality in time spending is concerned. In the United States, women spend average 4.5 hours on domestic duties

while men spent only 2.8 hours. In the most gender-equal countries such as Sweden, women have to spend 50 minutes more than men daily (Miller,2022). All these cases prove that, the time poverty is mainly an outcome of the patriarchal norms which are socially constructed. Such norms place men as chief bread winners of the family and women as persons who provide supplementary caregivers or other services and duties based on gendered division of labour (UN Women Asia and the Pacific,2017).

Another social determinant of gendered food security is *education and literacy*. The cultural norms prevent women and girls from access to education. More than that, in many societies, the existing patriarchal notions push that men deserve education to become bread winner for family and women do not need education as she ultimately engages in domestic work. All these have influence food security. The advantages of access to new agricultural technology, extension services, and even knowledge on nutritious diet is extracted by educated women farmers and thus contributed into food security. The illiterate women are not able to understand and read instructions on the use of fertilizers that is causing harm to health and that adversely affect their agricultural activities. Illiteracy may prevent women from participation in the decision making on agriculture and nutrition (McKenna, 2014).

Lack of educational opportunities also increase child malnutrition, as many studies prove that, if women are educated, the rate of reduction in child malnutrition is 43% even though food availability improvement is only 26% (Smith et al., 2000) as educated women tend to spend more on child nutrition (CFS, 2011; Quisumbing, 1996; Strauss et al., 2000; World Bank, 2007). In Philippines, mother's education enriched the health of children as literate women's interaction with healthcare providers and dietitians on nutrition benefitted the young generations (Hudson et al., 2012; Burroway, 2016; Okoli et al., 2001; Russel, 2019). So, the less opportunity for education and literacy for women due to the socio-cultural norms is a vital factor that contribute to food insecurity.

Socio-cultural norms based on patriarchal notions can be taken as a determinant of *access to markets* by women. Market accessibility determines the sustainability and welfare of the family as it will be the main avenue for the availability of products for consumption, source of income and assets. But the successful engagement with market

depends on power to control capital, the cultural and social factors in the society and mobility, which are gendered in nature (IMF, 2007). Female farmers have gender specific constraints to the access to market, mainly because of time constraints due to gendered division of work, and also because of lack of education which prevent them from access to the information on market fluctuations and market risks. Hence, women farmers are unable to seek best price for the agricultural products. If the fluctuating price is prevailing in the market, women even face marital conflict which leads to harassment and domestic violence from husband who suspect that wives withhold money (McKenna, 2014).

Sometimes, women have less control over the utilization of income even within the household because even though women participate in the agricultural production, sale of products is determined by men ²⁴ (ibid). The lack of access to finance capital as well as credit needed for entry into market transaction also put constraints on women as they depend on male for these services. Mobility or transportation is a cultural issue for women and the gendered constraints in access to assets such as transportation also a hindrance for them to receive income through market transaction of the products (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2014). For example, bicycle ride and use of ox-carts which are common means of transportation is restricted to women in Africa and Asia as they are reserved for men (Romero, 2021) thus remain as barrier to women's access to market.

Agricultural Extension services and access to technology are essential for uninterrupted agricultural production and ensuring food security. Women need knowledge on method of agricultural production, and processing for increasing their productivity. The socio cultural believes that women are dependant or just helpers to husbands and male family members barred them from receiving proper communication on agricultural technology transfer. Even though the extension officers and agencies impart technical knowledge with the assumption that it will reach to women through their husbands and other male members of the family, mostly that may not happen (IMF, 2007). The gendered norms also prevent women from participating in technical or

²⁴One of the women conveyed the researcher in a discussion that, though she has done all the works in the plantain cultivation and produced the yield, her husband has done marketing and he has utilised the entire income.

extension services and training sessions as domestic duties create time burden on them. Similarly, attending training programme needs travel and sometimes stay outside home which are considered culturally inappropriate for women in many traditional societies (FAO,2022). All these assumptions and constructions on gendered roles of women affects their agricultural productivity and economic independence (Agarwal, 2015; Abidi, 2018).

The examples from Europe and Central Asia also indicate that cultural and gendered roles also prevent women from using technology and machines in agriculture. In Georgia, the use of fertilizers/pesticides, machinery and water management are treated masculine in character and therefore assigned to men. Similarly, in Uzbekistan, female farmers have to hire machines from male farmers as they cannot own it. With regard to the gendered differences in use of technology in Republic of Moldova, the Seeders, Tractors, Harvesters and Plough which constitute 90% of machinery are men's property. In Cambodia, the ownership of hand tractor by male headed households are 7 times more than that of female headed households (FAO, 2010; UNESCAP, 2017). In Lao People's Democratic Republic, the ratio of male who owned small business and who have got motorized or electrical equipment is 48% whereas it is only 5% for women who owned small businesses (UNESCAP, 2017; CFS, 2011). Likewise in Turkey and Azerbaijan, male dominate in the use of heavy machinery, control irrigation facilities and handling machinery which requires 'strength' (which is masculinist in nature). Also, many irrigations related works like pumping are done during night (FAO, 2022) and therefore women are restricted from such works. All these make it clear that socio cultural norms dominate in the gendered access to agricultural inputs and technologies as well.

The *access to credit* for purchasing agricultural equipment, and making use of new technologies is crucial for agricultural growth and food security. But women are disadvantaged in this regard due to lack of ownership of land or other collateral that are needed to get credit. The lack of bank accounts and reputations for credit as well as absence of histories of independent credit holding are preventing them from getting credit and they are mostly dependent on men for finance. The constraints on keep the saving safely or opportunity to save money also hamper their efforts to access to cash

at need which in turn create obstacle for women to become food secure (McCarney,1991).

Stability of food which is the assurance of food supply throughout the seasons, to address price rise, or food emergencies or food crisis is also gendered due to the socio-cultural reasons. Price instability adversely affect the purchasing power of women because of their unequal power on economic decision making and weak bargaining position within the household (UN Women, 2014). Thus, what to purchase and sell become a crucial question. During less affordability of food due to price rise women has to sacrifice her share of food or nutritious diet for the sake of family because of their gendered roles and cultural norms which in turn, impacts on proper utilization of food that ensure stability of food among women (Oxfam, 2024; Kumar et al., 2013). At the time of crisis or even during crop failures, socio cultural practices allow men for searching employment outside or migrate, whereas the domestic duties and care burdens place women to struggle to feed and protect their families (SIDA, 2015). They have to find avenues for access to food which even results in sexual abuses. Thus, the structurally assigned gendered roles based on socio cultural norms affects stability of food.

With regard to the ***availability*** of food, cultural and social norms prevent women from equal access to resources for food production. It is estimated that, if women have the access to agricultural productive resources as men have, the farm yield would increase from 20% to 30% (especially with the vast indigenous wisdom of women on local species of plants that benefit more nutritious food for family) and thus reduce hunger by 17% (Abass, 2018). But globally, women are disfavored in getting access to the productive resources of food such as land, labour, livestock, agricultural technologies and input, credit, and extension services because of the structural barriers based on patriarchal socio-cultural norms (ADB, 2013), that reduce food production and keep the agricultural productivity among women low.

The assurance of supply of food during crisis to ensure availability of food is also not exempted from gendered cultural restrictions. From the experience of charitable food

supply in Australia, it is clear that, women are not able to access the small cost food supplied because of the time allotted for access to food as well as the remoteness. The domestic duties, child care timings, gendered roles, cultural stigma and power relations exists in the society make men more preferred for access to food and decision-making on distribution of food. The insecurity of women during travelling, especially at night, prevent or reduce their accessibility of food from charitable organization or emergency food relief (Lawlis, et al., 2016). Thus, patriarchal norms influence in availability of food among women.

Utilization which is, another variable of food security is also gendered. Women and girls suffer from high rate of hunger and malnutrition than men as “twice as many women suffer from malnutrition as men, and girls are twice as likely to die from malnutrition as boys” (FAO,2009; p.10). The value of different types of food, order of serving and the fair share is determined by cultural factors (Gittelsohn et al.,1997; Harris-Fry et al., 2017). For example, fair share of food or proper diet to be served is based on the contribution and need of the household which is defined by the cultural belief on the ‘strength’ that is needed for various types of works and responsibilities (Haddad et al.,1996; Harris Fry et al., 2017; Alonso, et al., 2018) (which is always favoured to male members of the house in a patriarchal society).

The quality of diet and quantity of consumption are under question at the times of crisis. The intrahousehold distribution of food which is also gender biased compel women to sacrifice their share of food, especially at the time of scarcity, as women and girls are considered less valuable than the male members in the household. At the time of price rise and food crisis, women reduce food consumption by eating lesser quantity of nutritious food, and purchase cheaper products for them. In Afghanistan and Bangladesh, during the COVID -19 pandemic, women shortened and sacrificed their food consumption for balancing the savings for household benefits and skipped their meals in favour of male members in the family (CARE, 2020). As households adopt coping strategy to deal with climatic shock by reducing food or changing diet, it is the women in the household become the scarifier by choosing cheaper diet, or reducing the number of meals because they eat last (Suda, 1991). This sacrifice has long term effect

on the health of women, particularly the pregnant and lactating women (CFS, 2011) and their offsprings. The deprivation of food results in increased malnutrition, anaemia, child mortality rate and maternal death (Abdi, 2018).

The nutritional needs of women, girls and even pregnant women in many countries are culturally determined. For example, in countries of South Asia, the special nutritious food such as meat and fish are consumed mostly by male members of the household than women (IMF, 2007). Studies conducted in Bangladesh prove that, even the girls in puberty who need more nutritious diets also sacrifice their share of food for male members in the family during food scarcity. In many societies, it is culturally valuable to sacrifice food by mothers/wives/girls for other household members and thus prioritize the food needs of the family members over themselves (FAO et al., 2018; James et al., 2009; Keenaan et al., 2009; Bisi-Amosun, 2019) as a part of ritual purity compelled by patriarchal culture.

The food preference to sons and boys is based on the cultural belief that they need more nutritious food to become stronger to work and earn for family (Morrison et al., 2023). For example, in Sri Lanka poor women take it as pride to feed and sacrifice food for husbands and sons even though they are suffering from food scarcity (Wandel et al., 1984). Women in India²⁵ feeds their husbands first, then boys and last girl children and themselves (Katona–Apte, 1975) which in turn, results in sacrificing the most nutritious food for males. Likewise in some parts of Pakistan, preference for healthy food is to men (Romero, 2021). All these proves the existence of socio-cultural and gendered roles and characteristics of societies regarding food utilization.

²⁵ The informal conversation by the researcher with women as part of the study among women from different parts of India exhibit the existence of gendered nature in food distribution and food preferences. They state that there exist biases in utilization of food especially male preferences to nutritious food, non-vegetarian food, delicacies, large quantity of food, last to eat policy by women as well irrespective of caste, class, religious differences. Girls and young ladies in the families are taught by even older women under patriarchy, to carry on this biased notion for the wellbeing of family. Some areas it continues as a ‘sacred ritual’ to feed menfolk first with quality of food. Even the practices of eating leftover from husband’s plate are practiced still. Some have experiences that the well-cooked well looked parts of food are given to menfolk while the same food with colour changed, those stick to the pan, stale is consumed by women.

Even after the marriage, when women move to husband's house, the decision on what to cook, and the amount to be cooked is constrained by men as they buy food resources for household even though women prepare food. The adolescent girls in Haryana, India are not allowed to move out of their house for access to nutritious food because of the cultural barrier on the girls who attain puberty (Ravindran et al., 1986; Romero, 2021). In India many girls were told not eat too much that makes her fat and eating too much is a sign of laziness. Hence, they are prevented from eating outside in disguise of protecting family honour set by the masculine society (Morrison et al., 2023). In Ethiopia, those girls who are already facing lot of discrimination also biased in food consumption as preference is given to boys based on the preference of cultural value of the society which prefers men/boys over women/ girls (Hadley, et al. 2009; BRIDGE, 2014). Thus, food consumption has a gendered nature with socio cultural base.

Food taboos based on socio cultural norms in a society toward women act as barrier to the proper utilization of available food. The gendered social norms and food taboos determine the access to nutritious food for women. According to the UN World Food Program, compared to men, women are more likely to be food insecure than men even though female need more nutrition because of their biological features, especially pregnancy, lactation, and menstruation (World Hunger, 2019). Even though food taboos have little nutritional importance, lactating women and pregnant women who are in need of nutritious protein food inversely affected by it globally. The malnutrition affects mortality rate of mother, child development, and lactation. Even child hunger become an inherited aspect as a mother who is suffering from underweight or stunning because of inadequate diet give birth to children with lower birth weight, an unhealthy person in future (SIDA, 2015; Shiva, 2009). In Mexico, women avoid eggs during pregnancy on the belief that it can make the baby with bad smell. Pregnant women in China avoid carbs in the belief that it will make the bay mischievous or born with 11 fingers (Adamson,2015). In Southern parts of India pregnant women avoid raw papaya to prevent abortion (Puri et.al.,2006; Ferro-Luzzi,1980). The menstruating women in Malaysia are prohibited from consumption of cooking oils, salt, and wild or domesticated animals on account of prevention of heavy flow of blood (Abdullah,2022). Such taboos which have no scientific base has been passed as

knowledge from mothers to daughters as they are not strong enough to question the power of gendered taboos (Olum, et al.,2017).

In short, the socio-cultural norms which are based on the patriarchal structure of any society constraints to the achievement of food security among women. This is vital while dealing with food security because every aspect of women's life is chained and determined by the socio-cultural, patriarchal structure.

4.4.2. Environmental Factors in Gendered Food Security

Environmental factors have also been influential in food security among women and therefore, it is relevant to bring environment in the analysis of food security. Due to the environmental crisis, food security is at stake. At the time of climatical crisis, women are facing food insecurity than men because of prevailing gender inequality. It is estimated that, by 2050, the number of women and girls suffer from poverty due to climate change will be 158.3 million, which is 16 million more than that of men and boys (UN Women, n.d.). The women who constitute majority of world's poor are highly reliant on natural resources for their livelihood as they are already at the disadvantaged position with in the family/society (UN Women Watch, n.d). The role of women in agricultural production and their crucial role in household food supply management have become less effective because of the gendered restrictions which cause lack of avenues for attaining credit and capital, restrictions in access to resources, control over the resources for proper utilization of climate change resilient crops, adaptation of climate change agricultural practices and access to weather information (Huyer et al., 2021; Rao et al., 2017; FAO,2011a). For example, an FAO-study on India concludes that the opportunity for access to information on weather changes is 47% for men whereas it is only 21% for women (Lambrou et al., 2010; FAO, 2015).

The barriers to travel/movement at the time of crisis or during displacement along with the extra time burden and domestic duties on women exacerbate food insecurity to women (CARE, 2020a; Visser, et al., 2021). This can be evident from the study of Latin America and Caribbean countries (Welsh, 2018). The exacerbation of time burden on women due to the depletion of natural resources and climate change and contamination and degradation of water compel them to travel a long way for water collection. This

affects the proper utilization of water resources for hygienic practices in food preparation and proper nutrient absorption (IMF, 2007). Likewise, deforestation also cause psychically draining task for women and girls of poor countries as they need to spend more time for fuel collection which affects timely preparation and consumption of food (UN Women Watch, n.d). The heavy workload due to climatical crisis is also affecting their capability to look after their children and infants properly and thus results in chances of malnutrition among them (Gonzalez, 2011).

Droughts disproportionately damage the harvests and results in scarcity of enough food to the family members throughout the year. So, women in poor household works extra time to find income to meet food security of their family. They reduce their food intakes which have negative consequences on their own and their baby's health (ibid, 2011). The scarcity of food due to climatical crisis also have negative impact on women as it put their life at danger. Sometimes, they have to travel long in search of resources for food where they may be subjected to sexual assaults, or they may be forced to engage in transactional sex for money to buy food that will create chance for violence and serious health problems like HIV and AIDS (De Walque 2014).

Thus, environmental /climatical crisis have clear gendered elements in it as it has more negative impacts on women than men. Also, this needs to be considered seriously while dealing with food security.

4.4.3. Impacts of Conflicts and Political Crisis on Gendered Food Security

The conflicts and political crisis have influenced the food insecurity of women. Even though violence and conflicts affect all, due to the patriarchal - gendered nature of society, women and girls are suffered more than men. Their utilization of food is at stake by sacrificing the food intakes (the availability and access to food is already in question during the crisis) for other members in the household especially boys and men. They shift their option of high-quality food to cheaper/lesser quality diets which often result in the reduction of key nutrients necessary for pregnant and lactating mothers. Thus 'More often than not, the face of malnutrition is female' (IMF, 2007; Oxfam, 2019).

The right to food by the women is constrained in the ethnic crisis ridden society. Even the ethnic violence has a gendered aspect while dealing with food security. In the Kurdish region, women are discriminated in access to and control over food and nutritious resources as they lost their livelihood because of ethnic conflicts (Leyesa, 2019). At the time of conflicts, the culturally imposed gendered responsibility of women as family's food providers is also a crucial concern. As the engagement of men in fight during conflicts by leaving behind women with household responsibilities has entrusted women with finding means to livelihood where it is very difficult to get proper access to, availability and utilization of food. This in turn create negative impact on stability of food within household as well as themselves (FAO et.al.,2018). The conflicts also affect their capacity to grow food crops for the need of family (Sinclair et al., 2022).

The production, distribution, and marketing of food which are gendered in nature by the existence of certain socio-cultural norms. This gendered nature also reflected in lack of proper access to land, credit, extension services and labour as well as gendered constraints which are visible in inequalities within the intrahousehold distribution of food., All these exacerbate food insecurity among women during conflicts (UNDP, 2012; BRIDGE, 2014).

The displacement of people to refugee camps due to political crisis exacerbate the unavailability of food among women and girls, as they constitute majority of the people in the camps (UN WOMEN Africa, 2021). The channels of food aid during conflicts to ensure stability of food is also under threat of hijacking by conflicting parties (FAO, 2015). The weaponization of food by cutting of food supply channels to starve the opponents to death has been used as a war strategy which also reduced the chances of getting access to food by women and girls in the refugee camps and conflict zones that can be visible from Somalia. This is through the control of access, utilization and distribution of food in the refugee camps by men under the hegemony of patriarchal norms (ICRC, 2004).

The crisis created by pandemics have their influence on food security. The domestic food supply was badly hit by the pandemic Covid-19, especially in the middle- and

low-income countries where women mostly dependent on agricultural related food supply for their livelihood (Visser et al., 2021). The restrictions of movement interrupted the mobility of women traders for market transaction as well as closure of markets destabilized their economic balancing of food consumption within the family. Many girls are compelled to marry early to help their family from burden of feeding one more stomach during the pandemic (ibid).

The closing of food markets as a precaution to stop the spread of virus has also impacted the income of women. In Papua New Guinea, rural women's main source of income was marketing of fish, meat, fresh food and live animals (Davies et al., 2023). The market closure has negatively impacted on women through restricting rural and urban women's access to fresh food, increase of the food price, and limiting rural women's capacity to gain income from selling of products (ibid). In Philippines, the female farmers were under constrain in access to agricultural products as the subsistence farming, the main domain of women farmers in the country, was significantly reduced due the spread of Covid-19 and affected their food security (UN Women, 2020).

The changes in food intakes and dietary pattern of women during Covid-19 is reflected in food consumption, choosing cheaper diets, cheaper brands of products, less nutritional food which can be visible from the studies in Myanmar, and Philippines (Davies et al., 2023). The care burden also increased for the women as many women has to struggle in search of markets for selling products, to feed their children and family along with the domestic and care work that create strain on them. As example "one farmer in Papua New Guinea explains Father is just sitting down and we mothers, we struggle to go find market and sell to get money to feed the children. We really struggle. Fathers just relax and mothers, we really try our best to feed the children, put money for school fees so it was like a burden to us mothers during this COVID-19" (ibid; p.548). In short, conflicts and crisis have gendered dimensions on food security which need to be considered in the debates over food security.

4.4.4. Economic Aspects of Gendered Food Security

Economic factors are detrimental to women's food security as mostly, women are put economically disadvantaged position due to the patriarchal structures of the society.

The globalization process that pushed economic changes under neoliberalism, structural adjustment policies and privatization negatively affected women's role in food production, marketing, and their consumption pattern. Due to the agricultural marketing policies and new market regulations, agribusiness corporations push for export-oriented monoculture. As the production is not meant for the local market, it inversely affects women's access to market (Oxfam, 2019; Shiva, 2009). The land grabs for food production by big plantations cause displacement of rural women from their land, employment opportunities, and means of livelihood (Andrews et al., 2019; Leyesa., 2019).

Likewise, the instability of price of products also affects the purchasing power of women because of inequality in economic decision making, weak class position and their limited bargaining power within the family (Oxfam, 2019). This in turn in favor the male in decision making with regard to what to sell and purchase (UN Women, 2014). When women control little resource, then they will have limited bargaining power in the household (Quisumbing et al., 2006). Income inequality also matters in food security because, even if there is availability of food, lack of economic means to purchase it, the economic dependency of women and no role in decision making on what/how much to purchase also contribute into malnutrition of women (Lawlis, et al., 2016).

It is clear that, if women have sufficient income and a role in the household regarding decision making on the utilization of food, that will have a major impact on food security at household (IMF, 2007). The earning of the women in the poor families would improve their food security as they can spend for nutritious diet for the entire family (Manzoor et al., 2021) because they are more aware of what kind food is needed in the family and at what quantity because of the gendered roles of food preparation²⁶. The

²⁶ The undue importance given to cooking as a feminine quality, without treating it as a life skill irrespective of gender foster the growth of assigning care duties to woman. This causes them time poverty and double burden. As one woman while in the informal discussion with the researcher on utilization of food state that projecting the action of a man who cooks at home as something glorified by stating that *'he is also cooking and helping the women in the kitchen'* by media, family and society. This naturally undermine the fact of cooking as basic skill for all human being. The men who enjoy cooking in the hangout parties treat kitchen within their household as an exclusive area for women which come out of the notion of gendered division of labour that structured by the institution of patriarchy. As Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2016)

income of women empowers them to make decision on intra household distribution of food as economic empowerment increase the bargaining power of women on food, and as and when the access to power increase, their chance to be more food secure also increased (Njuki et al., 2016.)

The deficiency in nutritious food for the needs of women especially, the lactating and pregnant women have been affected by the economic aspects of food security. The shock absorbing or coping strategies during price rise such as quitting nutritious food or share of their food, finding out risky jobs to meet economic needs and search for wild food by women are all having adverse effects on women are the outcome of the gendered socio-cultural roles that they have in the society (Oxfam, 2019; Kumar et al., 2013). All these indicates that the economic dimensions of food security are gendered.

4.4.5. Psychological Dimensions of Gendered Food Security

Food insecurity has psychological dimensions also as the food insecure persons are prone to mental health problems like psychological and emotional disorder (Griffin et al., 2002). Even though both men and women are subject to psychological disorders due to food insecurity, the socio-cultural roles based on gendered norms make this impact on women more compared to men. Less chance of access to food for themselves and nutritious diet for children cause worries and depression among mothers (Helle et.al.,2024). They are also subjected to emotional breakdown, if they are not able to get, and prepare and provide well balanced nutritious food. According to Foodbank Hunger Report 2019, those women who experience food insecurity are more stressed than men and the mothers who fail to meet the needs of their children feel bad, than fathers (Mamat et al., 2019) because of the internalised gendered notion of role of women as food providers for the family. Their pride and self- worth are hurt when the availability of food is runout (Pineau et al., 2021). In such situations, they experience stress, anxiety, alienation, pessimism, guilt feeling, and sense of shame (FAO, 2015). This is visible not only in the countries in Global South, but also in developed countries like Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, the U.S. and Europe (Pollard et al., 2019).

states “The Knowledge of Cooking does not come pre-installed in the vagina. Cooking is Learned.”

The socio-cultural norms which play an important role in determining the power structure within the society which has major influence on the access and utilization of food also create psychological stress on women. For example, a study on Nepal, reveals that the priority of men over women with regard to the consumption of food within the family and denial of nutritious food like milk and milk products to women during menstruation has led to undernutrition of women that contributes psychological problems among them (Updhayay, 2017; Ghale et al., 2018). Similarly, the nutritional requirements of women throughout their lifecycle are undermined in the food security debates (Sparling, et al., 2020).

A study conducted in Britain (Power et al., 2017) reveals that mood changes, depression, anxiety and stress among the pregnant women who are food insecure is much higher than those food secured. Food insecurity can be of specific concern to the mental health of pregnant women (Weissman, 2017) as malnutrition during pregnancy have physical and mental health consequence on both mother and babies. The breastfeeding mothers get anxious on the availability of enough breast milk for their baby's mental and psychical growth and food insecurity would increase their worries (Pineaua, et al., 2021). The societal expectations with regard to their care duties also affects the mental health of women. The unpaid labour in food preparation, cleaning, child and elder care cause mental stigma, anxiety and depression among women. When the frequency of such works increases, their mental health become worsened, according to a meta-analysis of 19 studies conducted globally, covering 70,310 people (Ervin et al., 2022). Thus, the role strain²⁷, which is based on the gendered role of unpaid care works affect mental health of women in their efforts to food security (Miller, 2022).

The limited decision-making ability of women on resources utilization, food purchase, land use, health and diet also create mental stress for women. Sometimes women have to prioritize health of their children and family over themselves. Thus, they shoulder emotional or psychological burden or maternal guilt while there is inability to provide

²⁷ 'Role strain,' a term coined by Sociologist William J. Goode, describes what happens when someone's multiple roles interfere with their performance in others — when long hours of unpaid domestic work make people feel less able to do their paid work, or vice versa (Miller, 2022).

food (Pineau, et al., 2021). In short, food and nutritional security have psychological dimensions too which are gendered.

Major discussions and academic debates on food security/insecurity is centred around the elements of food security such as access to, and availability, utilization and stability of food from a unidimensional perspective which maintains that, all are affected by food insecurity alike. But an in-depth analysis of the persistence of food insecurity among women, emphasises the necessity to address the gendered aspects of food security in policy making as well as in the initiatives to end food insecurity. It is clear in the above discussions that, food security has gendered dimensions connected to environmental, economic, patriarchal, socio-cultural corporal and psychological aspects which need to be considered while approaching the question of food security.

4.5. Relevance of Intersectional Approach to Food Security

Even though food insecurity has gendered dimensions, class, age, religion, caste and race also have significant impact on the access to, utilization, availability, and stability of food among women. Intersection of two or more of these factors make women more vulnerable to food insecurity within each specific context. The intersectional feminist approach on food and nutritional security explains that, “women’s lives and experiences, and their relationship with and access to adequate food (or lack thereof), are shaped not just by their gender, but also by their race, ethnicity, caste, class, sexual orientation/identity, geographical location (urban/rural, North/South), and (dis)ability, among other factors” (Andrews et al., 2019; p.8). For example, in India, the access to land and agricultural extension services to a *Dalit* women head of the household is more difficult because of her multiple identity of being in lower caste, being a female household head, and being a women intersect with food security. With regard to the elderly *Dalit* women, her age also become a factor in this intersectionality which remain a hurdling achieving food security (Leyesa, 2019).

Studies on the nutritional inequality faced by the women and girls in Nepal also exhibit the ethnic and social aspects of food security as those women of lower caste get limited access to agricultural resources which cause poverty and malnutrition (CROPS, n.d). Even, lower caste women get no/limited access to water resources as higher caste

women have access to sources of water whereas Dalit women need to depend on community water taps where they have to wait for other upper caste women to take water because of the caste discrimination (Clement et al., 2019). In Canada, the studies prove that, class act as an element that intersect food security with gender because the low-income women who live in poverty are food insecure than the women who are in high income family (Che et al., 2001; Raphael, 2007).

Likewise, race and gender act as detrimental factors in food security in United States as women of African American descent and Hispanic community experience high rate of food deficiency (Alaimo et al., 2001; Rose et al., 1997; Siefert et al., 2001; Collins, n.d). The Black women in Missouri lost employment and faced high food insecurity than White women during Covid-19 (Coats et al., 2022). Location also disadvantages women in access to food security as, in Brazil, the indigenous women living in rural areas have suffered from lack of access to land and resources for agricultural production (UN Women, 2014). In short, the class, race, ethnicity, regional difference and caste intersect with gender in the food security of women.

Intersectionality is a determining factor in food security which prompt to adopt an intersectional specific lens to the issues of access to, availability of, stability of and utilization of food. According to African American Black feminist lawyer Kimberle Crenshaw, “intersectionality is a tool for practice and a framework for analysing the intersections of race and gender within the complexity of power, systemic racism and other structural oppressions, such as class, age, sexual orientation, and disability” (Leyesal., 2019; Crenshaw,2002; p.177).

4.6. Conclusion

The security debates, especially the traditional security debate, in IR is centred around the military and state centrist aspects of it and therefore undermine the need of bringing individual to the centre of analysis. It led to the neglect of non-military aspects of security or human security in which food security is important one. Even though food security is relevant for healthy life of any person, the intensity and proportion of food insecurity is not alike to all sections of the society. Compared to men women face more food insecurity. There exists gender gap in food security which prompt us to investigate

the issue through a gendered lens, apart from approaching food security from a unidimensional perspective that conclude that all face food security in a same pattern. Applying of gender perspective in food security reveal that gender differentiated experiences are visible in access to, availability of, utilization of and stability of food. Feminists argue that, food security studies need to address material, psychological, physical, political, environmental, economic and socio-cultural factors and how are they shaped by patriarchal structures. It is important for the scholars of IR to understand and analyse the gendered specific aspects on food security. Such debates and discussions are essential to engender food security and to widen the scope of the discipline. As the present study highlight the need of applying gender lens in International Relations through a focus on food security among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is necessary to apply the intersectional perspective on food security in order to unravel those multidimensional issues of food security which has been neglected by the mainstream discourses in the discipline.

CHAPTER V

Gendered Aspects of Food Security among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa

5.1. Introduction

As explained in the previous sections, the security debates in IR usually centered around the military or political aspects of it. However, the need to address emerging new security challenges push for a redefinition of security agenda in the discipline in order to address the non-traditional aspects which have become very crucial in the past few decades. This chapter examines the interconnection between food security - a key constituent of non-traditional security - and gender, a determinant factor that is ignored in the traditional security debates. The chapter uphold a Black Feminist perspective and focuses on the food security of the Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa²⁸.

As discussed in earlier chapters, applying a generic unidimensional perspective to understand the experiences of women in food security is not adequate to explore the multi-dimensional factors that affect the food security/food insecurity among Black Women in Sub-Sharan Africa. This is because of the fact that, the everyday life experiences of women in the region are entangled with their multiple identities of race, class and gender. Therefore, this chapter highlights the importance of the use of the concept intersectionality to analyse the multidimensional issues which are relevant in food security debates and also largely neglected by/in the mainstream discourses on security in IR. How the institutionalisation and routinisation of those socio - economic and cultural, norms rooted in the patriarchal-gendered structures and how those colonial, political, racial, class and environmental aspects act as antecedent to food insecurity of Black Women in the region are discussed and analysed in detail in this chapter. Such an approach is necessary to broaden the discourses on security in International Relations as well as to make it inclusionary. It helps to factor the diverse

²⁸ Highest level poverty and hunger necessitate special attention on food security in the region.

lived experiences of different categories of women in the construction of knowledge in IR and thus make it more valid.

The working definition of the term 'Black Women' employed in this study encompasses those females in Sub-Saharan Africa belongs to African descent who have collective social experiences and identity, but have been oppressed under the racist concept because of their skin colour. The region Sub-Saharan Africa is the hub of diversity with certain unifying features. Hence, the region can be counted as a single unit for the purpose of this study.

5.2. Sub – Saharan Africa: A General Profile of the Region

The region Sub-Saharan Africa (or Africa as a whole) has been overlooked in the discussions, discourses and theorization of the discipline IR. The experiences of Africa are undermined because of the existing knowledge and power nexus which always favor the West and other voices were unheard/ignored (Nkiwane, 2001). The specific socio-cultural, economic, political and environmental milieu of Sub-Saharan Africa, which is different from other regions of the world in fact necessitates the need of endorsing perspectives from Sub-Saharan Africa in International Relations discourses for making the discipline more inclusive.

Sub-Saharan Africa is a land of diversities with its own unifying features. The area of Sub-Saharan Africa which consists of parts of Eastern Africa, Western Africa, Central Africa and Southern Africa in the African Continent, and covers 48 countries located at the South of Sahara Desert (Maino et al., 2022). It is a hub of diversities, such as diverse climatic zones, linguistic diversity, multicultural, multiethnic population having diverse economic, political and ecological conditions. While the Sahel region has semi-arid climate, South of Shael has Savanna region. While West and Central Africa have rainforests, woodland and grass land is there in East Africa, has and Tropical rainforests in Tropical Africa (ibid) All these together constitute the climatic attributes of the region. Out of total Seven Thousand languages in the world, Two Thousand of them are in Sub-Saharan Africa (Council of Foreign Relations, 2017-2023). Similarly, Sub-Saharan Africa comprises of Hundreds of ethnic groups and many religious groups

which includes traditional African religions, Christianity and Islam. The region encompasses several ethnic and linguistic groups. While Botswana has 9 prominent ethno-linguistic groups, Lesotho has 7, Mauritius has 4 and Madagascar has 6 (Baldick, J. 1997; Council of Foreign Relations, 2017-2023). Sub-Saharan Africa has got countries having varied human development indexes - Very High - Mauritius, High -Seychelles, Low -Somalia correspondingly (Kumo, 2011; UNCTAD, 2024).

In spite of these diversifying aspects prevailing Sub-Saharan Africa, there exist several unifying aspects too, which form a common platform to consider Sub-Saharan Africa as single unit. One of the common features that interconnects countries of Sub-Saharan Africa is its legacy of colonialism (except for Ethiopia and Liberia) which caused oppression of people, introduction of new administrative/governance systems and the exploitation natural resources (Hansungule, 2000; Mengang, 1998; Evans, 2020). The upsurge of population is another common feature of Sub-Saharan Africa as, it is projected that the region will contribute half of the new adding into the world population until 2050 is from Sub-Saharan Africa (Molotoks, et al., 2021).

Apart from this, the gravity of gender inequality is highest in the region, Sub-Saharan Africa, which is reflected in the rates of poverty, employment, health, and level of economic participation and women empowerment. The gender discriminatory practices and provisions reflect in the rights of women in property and inheritance, and practices of marriage and divorce, where gendered laws, social institutions, and norms and practices dominate. All these are the indications of the grave gender inequality persistent in Sub-Saharan Africa (UN Women, 2020; OECD, 2014; WHO, 2023). The health, education and social position of women in Sub-Saharan Africa are at a lower level across the region. The number of HIV/AIDS affected people in Sub-Saharan Africa is higher than any other parts of the world and three out of five among them are women (Philipose, 2007; UNAIDS, 2006). The low enrolment rate of girls from primary school to higher level also exhibits the gender gap in education in Sub-Saharan Africa (Dube, 2015). There is a gender gap in literacy where in the region the literacy rate between men and women shows a significant gap which is 12.4 (World Bank,

2023). The rate of female mortality²⁹, child/early marriage and the rate of pregnancy among adolescent girls under the age of 18, are much higher in the region than the global average, (UNFPA, 2017). The high rate of female genital mutilation is another serious gender issue in the region as over 90% of women/girls in Guinea and Somalia are victims of this crime (UN, 2022; UNICEF, 2023).

With regard to the education status, the number/rate of Primary and Secondary school dropouts in Sub-Saharan Africa is also very high where nearly one - third of the children are school dropout (Gueye, 2018). When compared to developed countries, the children die before reaching the age five are ten times more in Sub-Saharan Africa (United Nations 2004 as cited in Gebremariam, 2011). Also, the health inequality, which is implied through indicators such as low life expectancy and infant mortality rate, which are common in in the region is much higher than the same in global level (Wami et al., 2022; World Bank, 2023; WHO, 2015).

The challenges such as poor access to financial resources, the weak infrastructure development, uneven economic growth, improperly structured land tenure systems, the limited access to agricultural inputs, improper trade policies and trade barriers, and low level of industrial development are common indicators of economic inequality in Sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, et al., 2014; Fraval et al., 2019; Kunauskaite et al., 2022; World Bank, 2013; Milanovic, 2003). The region is also identified with the common insecurity issues such as increased ecological and environmental problems, elevated rate of global warming and climate change adversities (which have their effect on agriculture and population), violence, ethnic conflicts, unstable and inefficient governments, food and nutritional deficiencies, and political instability (Akokpari, 2007; Bager, 2014).

With regard to hunger and poverty, 19 of the top 25 poorest countries in the world are in Sub-Saharan Africa. 1 out of 9 people reside in Sub-Saharan Africa suffers from lack of sufficient food for a healthy and vital life. The highest rate of hunger in the world prevails in Sub-Saharan Africa where, one out of four people in the region are

²⁹ The region's maternal mortality rate stands at 536 deaths per 100,000 live births, significantly higher than the global average of 225 deaths (Davis et al., 2024).

undernourished (Dutta, et al., 2016). The Sub-Saharan Africa consist of 1.4 billion people in which around 429 million (a third of Africa's population) live in extreme poverty, below 2.15 U.S. dollars a day (Statista, 2024). The low agricultural productivity and lower food production, economic dependency due to colonialism, lack of access to credit and investment in infrastructure, corruption, unsuitable governmental policies and programs, loss and replacement of traditional sources of nutrition, regression of domestic economy, widespread poverty, malnutrition and chronic food shortages are common reasons to food insecurity in Sub-Saharan Africa (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2001; Bjornlund et al., 2022).

This is intensified by commercial land acquisition by international companies. Poor financial governance, Structural Adjustment Program, World Bank Policies, and international development and trade policies are adding to food insecurity in the region (Pinstrup-Andersen, 2001; Bjornlund et al., 2022). In the context of increase in hunger and malnutrition to alarming rate in Sub-Saharan Africa, the analyses of state of food insecurity and the need to find out a solution to that and assure basic right to food to all is crucial. The gendered face of food security prompt to give special attention to the food insecurity of women. The gendered factors constitute the commonalities that bring the region Sub-Saharan Africa as single unit, while addressing the question of food security of women.

5.3. Food Security among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa: An Analysis

The people of Sub-Saharan Africa are suffered by hunger and malnutrition much more compared to other regions on the world (FAO, 2023). Moreover, it is the Black women in the region who belong to the lower strata of the society suffer disproportionately, despite their contribution in agricultural sector/food production and efforts for food security. In contrast to other regions, a distinguishing feature of Sub-Saharan Africa is that women have very high participation in labour force, which is 62.5%, compared to the global level which is only 36.4% (in fact the highest average level women agricultural labour force participation of the world is in Sub-Saharan Africa) (Adenidji et. al., 2022; UN Women, 2019a.). They, contribute 90% of the labour for collection of fuel and water, 80% for food storage and transportation of food from farm to village.

Similarly, in Sub-Saharan Africa, 90% of the hoeing and weeding works are also done by women (McCarney, 1991).

There is huge agricultural productivity gaps exist in the region which led to income inequality between men and women (FAO, 2011). Data indicate that, in 2021, 249 million women and girls in Sub-Saharan Africa suffer from poverty (Aderonmu et al., 2022). The UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals³⁰ emphasise the role of women to materialise food security and ending poverty in all its form (UN Women, n.d). It is estimated that, 62% of world's extreme poor women, are living in Sub-Saharan Africa (World Bank, 2024). The above factors underline the need to identify, investigate and mitigate the reasons of food insecurity, hunger and malnutrition among the Black Women in Sub Sharan Africa.

Though food security can be better analysed/understood through the gender lens, applying such a common parameter while analyse food insecurity experiences of women alone cannot explain the intensity of the issue because the everyday life of women is constituted by multiple identities of class, race along with gendered structure, which all have critical impacts on their food security. Therefore, it is important to look into such factors as well while analyse the experiences of food insecurity/security of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa. With in the paradigm of food security debates and discourses, very often, women are considered as inadmissible and such debates on food security/insecurity has become gender biased (Allen et al., 2006). But the unidimensional generic categorization of gendered experience of food security rooted in the Eurocentric White Feminist perspective which tend to ignore/undermine the innate intersectional experiences (of class, race and gender aspects) is not appropriate to study the experiences and explore the constraints of food security among Black women in Sub-Saharan Africa because of the intersectionality.

Against this backdrop, this chapter analyses how those patriarchally influenced socio-cultural, political, environmental, physical, and economic factors constrain the major

³⁰ Goal 1 which emphasize - End hunger, achieve food security improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Goal 2-which emphasizes gender equality, eradication of malnutrition especially of those at vulnerable positions for sustainable development.

determinants of food security³¹, i.e, *access to, availability of, utilization of, stability of food* - among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa and the intersectional aspects of class, race and gender influences their food security.

5.3.1. Access to Food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa

Access to food is an important determinant of food security. Here ‘*Access to*’ refers the accessibility of economic and physical resources for food production for sustainable healthy life. The access to food also determined by the way a household or individual of food acquire food such as from where it is purchased, bartered, hunted, produced or gifted (World Food Summit, 1996). These determinants of *Access to* food are gendered in socio-cultural, political, environmental and economic aspects (Peterman et al, 2011, Doss et al., 2012; Quisumbing et al. 2001; Udry et.al.,1995; Saitoet.al.,1990; Njuki, et al., 2016; Farnworth et al., 2013; FAO, 2011; von Braun et.al.,1989; Meinzen-Dick et al., 2019a;). But the question, how far the gendered socio cultural, economic, political, corporal and environmental aspects determine/constrain the access to psychical/economic resources of food of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa is very relevant, particularly because their everyday life experiences with food security is under multi -dimensional influences of class, gender and race etc.

Access to land, access to labour, access to agricultural inputs and technology, access to credit, access to agricultural extension services and access to market are the important sub-variables of the determinant *access to food* in food security debates and it is essential to discuss them in this context. ***Access to land*** is a major physical

³¹ Even though there exist many definitions on food security and its determinants, the World Food Summit 1996 definition and determinants are using in the study. *Access to* refers to the resources i.e. economic and physical for food production. The access to food also determined by way of food acquired by a household or individual that may differ in the sources such as from whether it is, purchased, bartered, hunted, produced or given as a gift. *Availability*, of food especially means the adequacy of the physical availability of amounts of food, that may be produced, traded, imported, stored, or supplied by government or aid organizations. *Stability of food*, indicates access to food in different social, political and economic, context and corresponding various level of food security over time. *Utilization* refers to the way in which food is processed along with the safety of food and nutritional quality as processing of food, storage, quality of diet, preparation, individual health status, intra-household distribution of food, access to sanitation facilities and clean water (FAO, 2008; WFP, 2009).

resource for assuring food security and it is not gender neutral in Sub-Saharan African context. The terrestrial production of food constitutes 93% of the required calorie per day, 83% of the 697 kg of consumption of food per person per year, as well as 80% of the 81 gm of protein to be eaten per day (FAOSTAT, 2018). Given the role of agriculture as the major source of national income and ensuring food security, land rights and efficient use of land are critical (IAEA, n.d). Women own less than 15% land in Sub-Saharan Africa as there are many restrictions exist for women to own/inherit land (Allendorf, 2007; Perez et al., 2015; Doss et al., 2015; Daley et al., 2013) which is incomparable to the White women who are superior in class and race. Only 5% women own land in Kenya, 10% in Ghana and 15.5% in Nicaragua (CFS, 2011).

The Black men, through the re-occupancy of colonial land are cultivating a feeling of ‘back-in-charge’ because they are able to control the land once again (McFadden, 2007). This is a gendered act as it is projected as a symbol and expression of reclaiming their manhood as well as masculinity. But still the black women are not ‘back in charge’ of land because of the gendered norms that shape the social believes and practices, patriarchal values and marriage like structural obstacles create barriers to access, control and own land by women in the region (Sircar et al., 2018). Even though there exist variation with regard to right to land (Matrilineal or patrilineal) among countries and ethnic groups in the region, the patriarchal cultural norms remain as a common factor stand against women with regard to their right to land.

In patrilineal societies in the region, the right of women to hold land is implemented only through the male kin, and in most cases, a marital breakdown or failure to give birth to a son end the right of women on land (Cooper, 2012; Gray et al., 1999; Quisumbing et al., 2001). In matrilineal societies like Western Ghana is also not exempted from such socio-cultural constraints as women do not have inheritance rights and legal ownership of land. In this case, the right to land pass to nephew (sister’s son) or brother of an expired male, which is decided by the matrilineal clan and women has no say on it (Quisumbing et al., 2001). In short, by and large, the decision makings on rights over land is rest with either husbands or sons or exercised through men only. A

popular notion in Kenya – ‘A wife is next of skin, not next of kin’ underlines this fact that women have no independent right over resources (Farnworth et al., 2013)

Similarly, in the states in Sub-Saharan Africa such as Senegal, Tanzania Zambia, and Ethiopia, women who are married, divorcees and widows have no customary right to use land as they are considered as dependent of their male relatives. With divorce or death of their husband, women are forced to move away as her access to husband’s land or even livestock³² is denied because of giving them to other male members in husbands family (Holden et al. 2001; Koopman, 2009; Fafchamps et al., 2002; FAO, 2011). It is a fact that, through the access of women to psychical and economic resources for food production, the share of household income generated by women can be improved and lead to food security in the region. Despite that, the agricultural policies and land laws disfavored Black Women’s rights (Mariwah et al., 2019 as cited in Borda et.al.,2023; Kennedy et al., 1992; as cited in Fonjong et al., 2021).

Women in Kenya and Ethiopia have better chances of access and ownership of land due to certain provisions brought under land reforms³³, but the practice of unequal distribution of land is institutionalized under the disguise that, the fertile land is ‘*yewand maret*’ (male earth) meant for men and the arid land is ‘*yaset maret*’ (female earth) meant for women (Lvova, 1997). Similarly, in many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, the land which is difficult for preparing for cultivation and need heavy labor and the land situated near forest area prone to wild animal threats or situated far away from home are normally given to Women for cultivation (FAO, 2011). All these indicates that, even though women have access to land, the rights to lease it, sell it, and mortgage it exercising such rights is a difficult task for women (Saito et al., 1994).

³² The large number of urban cattle farmers in Sub-Saharan African countries such as Nigeria, Uganda and Kenya are women. But because of the lack of property right over livestock / they are exploited (Flintan, 2011; Kristjanson et al., 2010).

³³ In Uganda,2022 Succession (Amendment Act) tries to remove the gender imbalances existed in the country with regard to inheritance right of women as well as son preference over daughter and even the denial of widow’s right over husband’s land (World Bank Group,2024) but still face problem with its lack of proper gender perspective in the implementation (Kabonge,2022).

The socio-cultural norms which put women just as helpers to husbands in food production prevents them from owning and dispose the agricultural land independently, (Place,1994; Peterman et al, 2011). Gender determines the relation to land through the differences in assigning roles to female that vary from water and fuel collection to agricultural production for household consumption. Whereas, male's gendered roles are assigned with authority in decision making regarding land and agricultural outputs and agricultural production for market purposes (Claassens, 2009; Daley, 2010). This discriminatory practices towards Women in Sub-Saharan Africa are rooted in the patriarchal belief that land, its output and women in the society are to be owned by men (Akinola, 2018). Together they contribute in determining Black Women's access to land.

Access to labour which is another source to access to food which is manipulated by patriarchal power dynamics that shape the productive role of women in the Sub-Saharan region. Earlier, African women had ownership on land, especially in the pre-colonial period. But colonialism and capitalism brought constraints over their access to land, ownership and control of it, and right to inheritance. The institutionalization of gendered division of labor under masculinist patriarchal system in Sub-Saharan Africa was another outcome of it (Amusan, 2017; Mbilinyi et al., 2009). The gendered division of labor or sexual demarcation of agricultural production had been entrusted upon the people of Sub-Saharan Africa under colonialism through entrusting cash crop³⁴ production with men (the crop which was for export), and substance food production with women. Such a sexual division of labour still continues in the region (Hovorka, 2006; Boserup,1965). In short, the scenario of both men and women equally participating in household fields has been changed under colonialism and new gendered roles are assigned in agriculture, where women are forced to provide their labour to men controlled agricultural land (Dorward, 1987).

³⁴ Men and women often 'control' different crops. Maize is considered a 'male crop' when it is sold at market (men are responsible for selling it) even if women contribution to labour for its production they have no right over it. Because of their centrality to the family diet, Groundnuts are considered a 'female crop' in many parts of Africa. But when 'female crops' become attractive in the market, that time men became its owner (Farnworth, 2013).

Apart from the treatment of women as passive illiterates and ignorant, they are used extensively as cheap source of labour for agricultural production that can be claimed any time (Saito et al.,1992). In Malawi, more than 50% of women share their labour for agricultural production, whereas, it is 53% in Uganda and 75% in Cameroon. In all these cases, they are denied access to land for agricultural production in proportion to their labour force, because of the socio-cultural constraints and that led to underutilisation of this potential resource (IMF, 2007; Palacios-Lopez et al., 2017; Ali et al., 2015; Evans et al., 2024). Any society that claims power over women's labour due to gender bias constrain women's participation in agricultural production because of their dependence on men (Abbas,1997). This is clear from the experiences of Mali and Ghana, two states in Sub-Saharan Africa, where women contribute more in agriculture, but their agricultural productivity is lower than that of men. This productivity gap clearly exposes the existence of certain socio-cultural barriers for the access of women to smaller holding of agricultural plots, resources like agricultural inputs, fertilisers, seeds, credit, labour and technology (Thornton, et al., 2019). Even in agricultural decision making, the intra household power dynamics which is masculine in nature prevalent in which men are considered as more knowledgeable and experienced (Ngoma-Kasanda et al., 2016; FAO, 2022).

The socio-cultural norms also assume men as the sole authority of agricultural knowledge and the married women are forced to be under the guidance of their husbands on agricultural matters (Devasahayam, 2018). Along with primacy given to the knowledge of men, and their status as bread winner of family made women's role secondary. Studies on Southern Ethiopia indicates that, the patriarchal dominance in male households which influence the decision-makings on agriculture production inversely affect the utilization of labour force of women. The decision on using oxen for ploughing is made by men as it carries the exercise of masculinist element of psychological strength. On the other side, women's activities are primarily restricted inside the home and agricultural field where the works which are less productive and need less efforts such as harvest, collection, weeding and selling of products in the market (Gebre et al., 2021).A study conducted in Kenya also tends towards this as the title of 'household' as well as individualised holding and the income generated from cattle, and

big animals are to go to male members even though women peasants have to work hard and maximise production (Wilfred, 2001). In this unequal relation women's role remain subordinate, as helpers in agricultural production.

Thus, social -cultural norms also create economic constraints to Black Women's access to labour for ensuring food security in parts of Sub-Sharan Africa. In short, women constitute half of the labour force and directly or indirectly depend on agriculture in Sub-Saharan Africa. Therefore, not taking them into account in development debates is important for the food security and growth of the region (Korir, 2023).

Access to agricultural inputs and technology is another important variable of access to food. But there exists gender gap in access to new agricultural technology such as tools, machines, equipment, pest control methods, high yielding plant varieties and animal breeds and new agricultural management technologies which remain as obstacles in the enhancement of agricultural productivity efforts among Black Women in Sub-Sharan Africa (FAO, 2011). For example, the socio-cultural norms prevalent in the region makes that equipment like tractors and modern technology are restricted not meant for women. This is due to the patriarchal notion that, women are not be considered as 'farmers' because of the gendered labour which assign the role of household caretaking for women. Such gendered norms also prevent women from the usage of oxen³⁵ for ploughing (Fafchamps et al., 2002; FAO, 2011), as strength and power required for this task is also 'manly' in nature. Use of agricultural technologies are considered as 'man thing' and only men are considered as 'farmers' (McKenna, 2014). Many studies prove that, because of the discrimination that women face in access to technologies, fertilizer, tools and other inputs, the agricultural production is seriously affected (World Bank 2007; UN Women, 2019).

³⁵ Likewise, the power to decide which trees to be planted is entrusted with men by cultural taboos in Kenya and South Eastern Nigeria. They believe that when women plant tree that results in death of her husband or she becomes barren. Taboos also prohibit women from climbing on coconut and palm trees on account of disgrace. All which consciously prevent women from abstain in tree plantation activities that will ensure food security (Chavangi, 1994; Nwonwu, 1996 as cited in Ramachandran et al., 2012). In such a way the customs and taboos that are cultural restrict women from Argo forestry, a main source of access to food. But some parts of Sub-Saharan Africa such as Southern Zambia and Mali women are found to use modern plough technology (Wright, 1983).

Due to the lack of access to land and inheritance of property³⁶, insecure land tenure, and difficulties to own their labour independently, women are facing inequalities in access to agricultural tools and technologies which leads to significant agricultural productivity gap of male and female in countries like Kenya, Zambia, Burkina Faso and Nigeria (World Bank 2007; Lee-Smith et al, 2006; Manuh, 1998; UN Women, 2019). Many women in Sub-Saharan Africa undertake their works manually due to no access to appropriate farm and processing technology. For instance, women in Burkina Faso use 3–4 days to prepare biglobasa or fermented seeds, where extraction of shea nut butter is a physically tiresome and time-consuming exercise (Teklehaimanot, 2004) without access to advanced technology. It is observed that, in case of Kenya, if the women were considered as farmers and provided with similar access to agricultural inputs and education, there would have been an increase of more than 20 % in agricultural production. Similarly, in Zambia, if women get access to capital investment in agricultural inputs same as that of men, the agricultural input will increase up to 15 percent (IMF, 2007).

There exist wide gender differences in owning tools and machines by male and female farmers. In Kenya, the value of farm equipment owned by Female Headed Households was found to be half of that owned by Male Headed Households (Saito et al., 1994). In Gambia, under 1 per cent of women farmers own a multiuse agricultural equipment, weeder, and seeder, comparing with 18 per cent 12 per cent, and 27 per cent, respectively by the male farmers (Peterman et al., 2009). Thus, the gendered differences restraint access to agricultural inputs and technology to Black Women.

The access to agricultural inputs and technologies is mainly depends on *Access to credit*, which is important to materialize access to food. Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa face constraints in getting access to credit because of the socio-cultural barriers such as low educational status which results in their unfamiliarity with credit proceedings, cultural restrictions to contact male credit officers, and non-membership

³⁶ In rare context, acknowledging women's right in property is visible such as in cattle-keeping Lozi ethnic community in Barotseland (Farnworth, 2013).

in male dominated farmer's groups (Saito et al., 1994). Only 8% women in Uganda get approval of loan, whereas men in the country got even smaller loans that denied to women for same purpose. The loan is approved only for those women who is married but, no such condition is there in case of men (Burjin, 2021). Similarly, the holding of an independent bank account for women or women engaging in financial contracts are also under socio cultural restrictions (Fletschner, 2009). Mostly the financial institutions accept only land as collateral to loan, and sometimes, due to small size and unequal distribution of land, the Women in Sub-Saharan Africa are barred from attaining agricultural credit and also from acquiring services and technologies. Even access to credit is denied to women because the valuable assets like jewelry that they held are unacceptable for collateral. Thus, the requirement of land and possession of assets for collateral for attaining credit from financial institutions become an 'assets trap' on women in the region (Njobe, 2015; Carter, 2000; Saito et al. 1994: COHRE, 2004).

Compared to men, Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa are to spent more time and money to get credit for agricultural purposes (Saito et.al.,1994). The transportation cost (that can't be affordable due to the lack of financial control within the family) time cost, time for paper works, and time spend for waiting at institutions cost more for women than men because of the socially assigned gendered roles. Due to gender and class inequality in access to land, inheritance rights on land, agricultural inputs and credits which are fostered by power dynamics within and outside household, the investment in health and nutrition of children are also reduced (UNHRC, 2010). The nutritional status of children can be improved by empowering women through access to and control over financial resources (Olney et al., 2015). In short, due to gender biasness based on socio-cultural norms, women in Sub-Saharan Africa are not able to take the advantage of existing financial/credit services for attaining food security.

*Access to agricultural extension services*³⁷, is as important as access to technology and credit for agricultural development. Several studies proved that women have less access to agricultural extension services compared to men in every country in Sub-Saharan Africa. In Malawi, 81% of men get access to extension services, it is only 19% for women (Gilbert et al., 2002). In Zimbabwe and Benin, 70% of the agricultural works are carried out by women, but only 10% of the agricultural extension staff are female (UNEP/GRID, 2008). In Uganda, 2.03% men have access to extension services, only 1.13% of women have such access (Katungi et al., 2008). This is particularly important for the region in a cultural context where communication of women with men outside family are highly restricted which become an obstacle in access to extension services for women as 80–95% of extension agents are men (FAO, 2011; Udry et al., 1995; UNEP/GRID, 2008).

Here also, the patriarchal notion of not treating female as ‘farmers’ and consider them as weaker in farming related activities also become a reason for not sharing knowledge /information on agricultural inputs and technologies with them. The gendered notion that men are sole decision makers regarding agriculture in a family restrict in passing of extension service messages only to men in the region. Moreover, extension services are mainly available for so called ‘Men’s Crop’ (mainly cash crop) rather than ‘Women’s Crop’ (that centered on food and subsistence crops) (UNEP/GRID,2008; Udry et.al.,1995; Saito et.al.,1990; Gilbert et al., 2002; Katungi et al., 2008; Quisumbing et al., 2010; ILO, 1998). The reluctance of husband to share extension service information with their wife is also a reason for access to poor extension service to women (Oniango, 2005; Okwu et al., 2009; Saito et.al.,1992).

Similarly, social constraints on female education and illiteracy, barred women from training and education on agricultural productivity activities, tracking of agricultural input services, seed purchases, and even the use of fertilizers. Providing educational opportunity and skill training in agricultural activities would help them to extract more

³⁷ It is “the entire set of organizations that facilitate and support people engaged in agricultural activities to solve problems and to obtain information, skills, and technologies to improve their livelihoods and well-being” (Davis, 2009; p.1).

from extension services. As agricultural extension service providers do not use local/indigenous languages which also prevent women from proper communication. All these are factors to be considered while discuss the food security of women in Sub-Saharan Africa (McKenna, 2014; Oluoch, 2024).

The time constraints due to gendered role of women also remain as an obstacle to get access to extension services for women in Sub-Saharan Africa because, the male extension service agents give little consideration to the household responsibilities of women such as childcare, fuel gathering and food preparations while fix their meetings for extension service purposes (Bassey, 2022). The highly gendered socio-cultural taboos exist on domestic responsibilities also restrict women from moving out from home to get extension services and training. Attending meeting on time or, longer time and faraway places are also difficult for women because of cultural taboos. All these contributed into the underperformance of women in Sub-Sharan Africa in introducing/adopting high yield varieties which affected their food security. (Saito et.al.,1992; Oniang'o, 2005; Okwu et al., 2009; Doss, 2001; Twyman et al., 2014). As it is evident from above discussions, existing socio economic and cultural norms that fix gendered roles constrain Black Women's access to agricultural extension services and limit/reduce their agricultural productivity. This also contributed into the food insecurity of women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Accessibility to market for agricultural products is also crucial for assuring food security of women. In Sub-Saharan Africa, the limited access over productive resources bar women from production of market-oriented crops. Similarly, the household responsibilities and household food needs also force them to engage in the cultivation of food crops for domestic use. Thus, the chance of producing marketable crops is limited for women along with their accessibility to market (Baada, et al., 2023; UN, 2014). Illiteracy is another disadvantage of women traders that prevent them from effectively intervening in the market. Due to illiteracy, women are subject to exploitation by middlemen. Because of the lack of correct information on market fluctuations, women are not able to take appropriate decisions on products to be

cultivated, for whom, when and where to be purchased and sold (Abbas,1997; Kinkinginhoun-Medagbe et al. 2010; Franzel et al., 2002a). All these aggravates the issue of food security of women in the region. The socio-cultural restrictions that exist in Sub-Saharan Africa on mobility and participation of women in public sphere also restricts their effective acquisition and selling of agricultural products in the market (Agarwal, 1994; Uduji et al., 2018; Doss, 2018; Sharaunga et al, 2015; Collins, 2015).

The societal norms restrict the means of transportation of women in the region. The common modes of transportation like bicycle and ox-carts are prohibited to women due to societal-cultural reasons and their use is reserved for men (Romero, 2021). The distance of the market is also a major problem as there are cultural restrictions exist on the mobility of women. In Cameroon, those women farmers who are nearer to paved roads have three times higher chance of agricultural production than those who have no road facilities because of the difference in cost of transportation and other issues like constraints to overnight stay which affect their household responsibilities (Romero, 2021). In many parts of Nigeria, the most important method of transportation of agricultural products for women to market is headloads, which is time consuming physically challenging. Lack of storage facility (They store their produce in their house only) also force them to sell agricultural products immediately after harvest. The socio-cultural constraints made it difficult for them to engage in bargaining or hard negotiations with men commercial agents for fair price while selling the products in the market (García, 2013). All these shows that how market remain as a difficult place for the effective engagement of women of Sub-Saharan Africa.

Most of the women living in the border areas of states in Sub-Saharan Africa have engaged in cross-border trading. The time constraints prevent them from proper engagement in trading as acquiring customs clearance and negotiating at borders is time consuming. Gendered cultural norms and traditions also trouble women here, as some Customs Officer's demand male family member's written permission for women to engage in border trade (UNCTAD, 2022). Apart from all these, women, while approaching market, face verbal violences such as intimidation, threats, and insults from their male counterparts. They even face sexual violence such as molestation, rape,

groping, black mail to obtain sexual favours etc. Corruption, theft of goods, and confiscation of goods by officers are other type of violences faced by women in the market. Common gendered attitudes towards women traders such as treating them as disrespectful when they raise voices or question unnecessary troubles during paper works results in imposition of huge fines or seizure of their goods (ibid.). Thus, the gendered socio-cultural gendered norms remain as major constraint for women's access to market in Sub-Saharan Africa.

The gendered division of productive and reproductive roles, political factors, diseases like HIV/AIDS and climate change are also influence the access to food among women in Sub-Saharan Africa. The *gendered division of productive and reproductive role* assigned upon Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa have crucial impact on their economic and physical access to resources for food security especially because they are of entangled within multiple exploitation. The prevalence of assigned obligations on women within the household/towards society remain as a barrier to the effective use of their time for agricultural production. The prevailing socio-cultural norms make their works un paid which become double burden for lower-class rural women in Sub-Saharan Africa, whose productivity in agriculture affects due to the run between household chores and agricultural works (Grantham et al., 2021).

The time constraints of women affect food security of the region. According to a study (Henn, 1988) on time allocation statistics, in the Centre province of Cameroon, men's total weekly labour averages 32 hours, where as it is 64 hours for women. With regard to domestic labour, while women spend 31 hours a week for women and it is just 4 hours for men. Gender difference is also visible in time spend for agricultural labour as it is 26 hours for women and 12 hours for men per week (ibid). Village transport surveys conducted in Tanzania and Zambia show that, women spend nearly thrice more time in transportation activities compared to men (Malmberg-Calvo, 1994). This time constraints also contributes into poor yield due to lag in fertilization and agricultural works on time and application of new technologies and varieties of plants, use of extension services, and timely marketing of products (Anam, 2011; Liru, 2014; Anderson et al., 2015; Merttens et al., 2012; Dassanayake, 2012; FAO, 2011).Lack of

resource-based infrastructure like water and energy also exacerbates the time constraints as it increases the amount of time spend on household chores or to materialize other family obligations. In many cases, 90% of the women labour is dedicated for collecting household water and fuel (McCarney 1991; Njobe,2013). A survey conducted in Somalia by Friederike Bellin Sesay (2019) regarding on access to food sourced on firewood collection reveals that Somali men go for collection of firewood only if the donkey cart is available, otherwise WOMEN should do that. She argues that the works of women are treated equal to those of donkeys, which depict the intensity of the time burden and assigned domestic duties on women. Such time constraints caused by gender norms divert the labour to be spend on agricultural activities to household activities. It is found that, in Tanzania, the reduction in time burden on women in domestic works could increase the production of banana and coffee by 10 per cent (IMF, 2007).

Apart from time consuming household chores, reproductive responsibilities like pregnancy, breast feeding and child care also limit their mobility and engagement in agricultural activities significantly (Blackden et al., 2003; Peterman, et al., 2011; Komatsu, et al., 2018). Because of patriarchal socio- cultural norms, heavy burden of domestic as well as outside works also create a situation where women get less time for cooking and consumption of food. Studies conducted in Burkina Faso, and Gambia also reveal that, there are many incidents of women skipping lunch because of works in the agricultural fields without break (Romero, 2021), that negatively affects their nutritional requirements.

Thus, Black Women in most of the Sub-Saharan African region are forced to work in their fields as well as at home disproportionately due to the structurally built socio - cultural standards which are highly gendered. Therefore, the gendered productive and reproductive roles of women make it harder for them to get access to economic and psychical resources to food.

Political factors also influence in getting access to economic and physical resources to food for Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa. With regard to the applicable laws and regulations on land, women in Sub-Saharan Africa are disfavored to own or inherit land

as the practices are more influenced by local customs which favors men than the civil law (von Braun et.al.,1989). The patriarchal social norms that govern most of the societies in the region treat women as properties like land can be owned and used by men. 75 percent of land in the region is governed by the gender biased traditional - cultural norms and customary practices rather than the legal system (Farnworth et al., 2013; Odeny, 2013). In many instances, the coexistence of statutory laws and customary laws create obstacles for women in the region to access to land and inheritance. In this regard, The Rural Land Code (2007) of Benin has granted gender equality in land ownership rights; but customary laws grant land inheritance rights only to men which is mostly in practice. Similarly, the Property Law in Liberia grants equal land and non-land ownership rights for women and men, but customary laws that favors male ownership of land is still dominant, even though, that is against the equality provisions in the constitution (van den Bold, 2015). As it is evident in such cases, even though the statutory law ensures equal rights over land to men and women, the law that determine the land rights is customary law which emphasize the gendered practices and roles regarding access to and ownership of land (Duncan, 2014).

Many states in Sub-Saharan Africa, through land reforms and amendments of laws provide land rights to women, including inheritance right. But the materialization of this become problematic due to the precedence of traditions and customs especially for those economically backward rural Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa (Richardson, 2004; Sida, n.d; FAO, 2011) This is because of the fact that, they are lacking power in economic decision making and subject to the gendered norms dominant in the society. In the region as economic and political decision making which is dominated by men, The limited opportunity that the women in Sub-Saharan Africa have to take decisions regarding land access and inheritance rights, mainly due to their absence in economic and political decision making, is also remained as a constraint to access land. Even if women participates in decision making process, their voice is treated casually or with a contempt that 'making noise' (Kaarhus et al., 2005; Yeboah, 2014; Farnworth, 2013). Even the political decisions for privatization and commercialization of land as well as other government policies favors and promote cultivation of crops for export/cash crop

(that are mainly cultivated by men) without considering women's involvement in agriculture, their management of farming techniques, practices, and even women's labor (Ntaky, 2018; Hall et al., 2017 as cited in Fonjong et al., 2021; World Bank, 2009) which troubles women's efforts on materialization of food security.

Apart from such gender biased laws and government policies on land and agriculture, the issues of border wars, civil wars, refugee crisis, conflict, political instability and ethnic violences also affect the women of the region disproportionately as these cause price rise, and food scarcity. Being responsible for subsistence farming to household consumption, women are left with no alternative source of livelihood to handle the situation (Oniang'o, 2005; IFPRI, 1995; UNDP, 2012). Thus, the political factors which is rooted in gendered constraints affects access to food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Apart from socio-cultural political constraints on access to food, spread of *HIV/AIDS* also obstruct the food security of women in the region. In 2011, 69% of the total 23.5 million HIV/AIDS infected people in the world reside in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2012). In 2022, 25.6 million people were infected by HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa (WHO, 2024) in which young women and adolescent girls constitute more than 77% of new infections (UNAIDS, 2024). Women who are affected by HIV burdened more because of the gendered roles on them. The disease has implications on nutrition and poverty among women. The additional care duties due to sick and orphaned children force them to leave routine agriculture labour and therefore affects their contributions in food production and food security (Shapouri et al., 2001; Addati et al., 2008).

Studies in Tanzania reveals that, there is significant reduction in household earnings because women are not able to go for work, and incompetency of work in land due to the disease which all affected the food security of the region (Clover, 2003). The disease has negative impact on the food security of the widows of AIDS victims because, they are not able to access the land and other assets of the family when their husbands die due to the HIV/AIDS infections (UNAIDS, 2002; United Nations Department of

Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division, n.d). The cultural division of labour which assign different agricultural duties to men and women, prevent women from continuing those farming activities earlier performed by their husbands and they are compelled to abandon farming which affect their access to food (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs/Population Division n.d).

The region Sub-Saharan Africa suffer by severe effects of *climate change* and food insecurity, and the Black Women are the major victims of this. In Sub-Saharan Africa, women contribute to 60 to 80% of the food production in the region and 50% of the agricultural labour force. But they are the most vulnerable section in the society due to climate change (Njobe et al., 2015; AFDB,2011) because, women are disadvantaged by their responsibilities and roles during climate change and environmental degradation. In many parts of Sub-Saharan Africa, women depend on forest products for ensuring food security. They add forest products as supplements for daily household uses and use it as an alternative source of income (Ibnouf, 2012). But fast forest depletion due to climate change have limited such possibilities and affected food security. The climate change induced crop failures and limited access to other livelihood methods and their inability to purchase food due to limited resources and the high price rise due to scarcity of yields placed women in a condition of serious food insecurity (Mbowet al., 2019; Steady, 2014).

The decision makings during climate change on resource management, access to land, inputs, technology, livestock, extension services, climate resilient adaptation methods, and mitigation strategies for better agricultural productivity, are all traditionally rest in male member's discretion due to socio cultural norms constrained upon women's access to resources to agricultural production activities (Flintan, 2011; Terr Africa, 2011; Djoudi et al., 2011; Fletschner et al., 2014; Antwi et al., 2015; Phiri, 2022; ADB, 2009d). Along with their socially assigned domestic responsibility and care work, the depletion of forest, natural resources and water resources due to climate change exacerbate the double burden on Women which reflect in negative growth in food production activities. The scarcity of resources for food production also worsens time constraints on women. The time needed for gathering water and fuelwood is increased

due to water shortages and depletion of forests. Reduction of time³⁸ available for women for food production and preparation as well as their participation in income generating activities, affects household food security and nutritional well-being (Stevano, 2019; African Development Bank, 2009d). Thus, effects of climate change are not only gendered in nature, but also causative to food insecurity among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Apart from gender biases and socio-cultural norms that intersect access to food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa, the class factor also remains important. “Food insecurity not only threatens the health and wellbeing of the whole family, but also disenfranchises and disempowers women from earning income which result in greater poverty for the community” (Wakhu, 2019; p.1). In the region, poverty rate of women is much higher than of men and women constitute up to 70 per cent of the poor in some countries. Their financial dependence on men positioned them in the lower strata of the society (Boudet et al., 2018; Batist, 2019; Mutume, 2005).

The women farmers of rural areas of Africa are among the poorest in the world and they belong to the lowest level in the social status even though they provide financial support to themselves and their families (Hyder et al., 2005). The class subordination also influences in food security among Black Women in the region as they lack economic resources for food. The little voice in economic decision making affects their access to agricultural productive resources and their voice in agricultural product’s transaction, purchasing and lower access to trade and commerce to women in the region. Thus, affect access to agricultural productive resources (Baada et al., 2023; UN, 2014; Saito et.al.,1994). A wife has to seek permission or consent from her husband in making any decision with regard to access to physical and economic resources for food, use and control of their own labor and access and transactions in market. This cause

³⁸ About 80 percent of the work in food storage and transportation, 60 percent of the work in harvesting and marketing and 90 percent of the work of hoeing and weeding are done by Women (Blackden et al., 2003). Women’s average daily hours in agricultural work in four Sub-Saharan African countries is almost 467 minutes a day, compared with about 371 minutes a day for men. Study by Leplaideur (1978) in Cameroon reveals that women spend more time on agricultural tasks as they spend 348 minutes a day on production of food crops, while men spend 270 minutes a day on food and export crop production.

physical and mental stress on women (Hyder et al., 2005; Compaore et al., 2021; Francis et al., 1989; Chavangi,1994). The lack of independent decision-making power place the labour force of women as a cheap resource to be appropriated any time without any cost/by least cost. Under the dominance and discretion of men on women's labour, women are bound to work in men owned fields while taking precedence over theirs. This also affects women's participation in agricultural production (Abbas,1997; Saito et.al.,1992).

Along with gender, class also brings constraints on women's access to credit and agricultural inputs such as fertilizers, seeds and advanced technology which are essential for successful agricultural production. Attain credit for purchasing agricultural inputs, is difficult for women belong to lower classes as it is difficult for them to get independent bank accounts and they don't have land as collateral (Daman, 2003; Dolan, 2004; Saito et al., 1994). Similarly, due to the combined time burden, the economically lower-class women in Sub-Saharan Africa who engage in agricultural production, are not able to produce for selling in the market to attain economic stability needed for their food security, as they have the burden of household duties along with the works in their farm (Amusan et al., 2017; Lindsey, 1997; Ellis, Manuel et al., 2006).

The rural women farmers of Africa are the lowest in social status among poor in the world and they are often expected to support themselves and their families (Hyder et al., 2005). Any discussion on improvement of household food security in Sub-Saharan Africa should primarily focus on the role of women as they are the major producers of food as well as income earners of their family (Price et.al.,1990; Liru, 2014). They are holding triple burden with regard to food security such as; (a) income providers with socio economic constraints, (b) responsible for household chores and care works, and (c) issues related to single income provider in the family (Fuwa, 2000; Kebede, 2009; Silvestri, et al., 2015; Akinsanmi et al., 2005). So, it is important to consider the influence of class and economic determinants on food access of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

In short, from the above analysis on access to food, it is clear that, there exist socio-cultural, economic, political, and environmental constraints which are fostered by patriarchal system which acts as an obstacle to attain food security of Black women in Sub-Saharan Africa. With regard to the access to physical and economic resources to food security, the everyday life experience of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa is influenced by the intersection of class, race and gender. The low economic status, subjugated position in economic decision making, Black racial identity and socially constructed gendered roles in society ultimately determines women's access to food in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is a vital component to achieve food security in the region.

5.3.2. Utilization of Food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa

Utilization is one of the major aspects of food security. *Utilization* refers to the way in which food is processed, safety of food, nutritional quality, storage, quality of diet, preparation, individual health status, intra-household distribution of food, access to sanitation facilities and clean water (FAO, 2008; WFP, 2009). Like access to food, it is important to analyses from intersectional perspective, whether or how the utilization of food among Black Women in Sub-Sharan Africa has been regulated by certain socio-cultural, economic, corporal and environmental factors as they determine various levels of utilization and dimensions in assuring food security.

Nutritional and quality diet, intra household distribution of food, and clean and hygienic availability of food resources constitute the *utilization dimension* of food security. The assurance of consumption of sufficient *nutritional and quality diet* is vital in utilization of food. Even though women play an important role in the production of food for household consumption in Sub-Saharan Africa, still their nutrition status remain very low in the region. Access to resources is important to determine the nutritional status of women. Lack of access to land and ownership of land, and limited access to technologies and agricultural inputs are severe constraints faced by women in Sub-Saharan Africa that inversely affect their food and nutritional security. The programs to enhance gender specific technologies in agriculture like irrigation, seed preferences, and vegetable cultivation increases nutritional status and dietary diversities

among women and decreasing anemia³⁹. According to a study of United Nations, when women control and use resources for household consumption, it helps in the reduction of malnutrition within the family than men (FAO, 2011; Duflo, 2003).

In reality, Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa lag behind in access to resources for assuring food security. The denial of access to land fostered on the patriarchal socio-cultural norms affects their access to credit, technology, and their role as provider of nutritional diets and their own utilization of food (Leslie et.al.,1997). They face 'hidden hunger' or struggle with malnutrition that arise out of deficiencies in iron and vitamins or suffers anemia due to insufficient intake of micro nutrients (Quisumbing et al., 2001; von, et.al. 2017; FAO,2018; Golden et al., 2019). The socio- cultural norms which promote gender inequality in the household decision makings with regard to purchase of food according to nutritional demand of household (where men are little aware of food requirement with in household) along with lack of control or ownership of resources to ensure food management in household act as barriers to achieve proper utilization of food with in the households.

Effective ownership of resources, not actual ownership, is important for women's empowerment and nutrition outcomes (Eissler et al., 2020b) For instance, in Burkina Faso, regardless of ownership, husband takes the decisions on sales of the poultry flock owned by wife, but never vice versa. When women earn higher incomes from any such activities, control over the activity or resource is transferred from women to men (Mwaseba et al., 2015). Thus, the control of men over women's decisions on utilization of products, what to produce, what to purchase and even how to distribute food with in the family undermine the proper nutritional diet of women (Mkandawire et al., 2018; Nyamwanji, 2016).

³⁹ One third of the world's women of reproductive age suffer from anaemia, because of iron-deficient diets that risks the health and nutrition of their children. Across worldwide, anemia cause of 20–40% of maternal deaths. Anemic women are twice as likely to die during or shortly after pregnancy as non-anemic mothers. Because anemia results in reduced learning capacity and less productive workers thus reduce gross domestic product (GDP) by 4% annually, especially in African and South East Asian countries (FAO,2018).

Likewise, restrictions on movement from household, lack of education, and constraints of care works which stop women from acquiring training in nutrition and quality diet which has critical impact on utilization of nutritious food. The information attained from such nutritious training can lead to changes in household preference to food by mothers and improve the dietary habit of the household, especially the pregnant women. Studies conducted in Senegal clears that nutrition literacy among women can improve undernourishment and stop anaemia (Giguere-Johnson, et. al., 2021). Similarly, nutrition training can improve children's diets and reduce stunting which is proved from the studies on Ethiopia (Fonjong, 2022; Chakona et al., 2019; Burchi, et al., 2016).

The *intra household distribution of food* that determine utilization of food is also gendered in the region Sub-Saharan Africa. The gendered social norms with regard to allocation or intra household distribution of food impact equal nutritional diet availability among women and girls as they favor the male members of the family who get it. The special nutritional and caloric needs of women and girls in their life cycle during childhood, adolescence, pregnancy, nursing mothers and those at menopause are undermined due to social preference of nutritional food to male members and affects the reproductive health of women in the region (Dercon, et.al.,2013; Mukuria, et al., 2005; Kim-Godwin, 2003; Piperata, 2008; Helman, 2007). The social norms as well as food taboos on who should consume which food in which quantity also has negative impacts on the nutrition status of women before and during pregnancy. For example, in countries like Nigeria, Gambia, Ethiopia, Gabon, and the Democratic Republic of Congo, pregnant women are usually forbidden from consuming those richest food-sources of iron, animal proteins, carbohydrates, and micronutrients because of the belief that the child may born with diseases, or develop bad habits after birth. There is also the fear of delayed labour due to large babies, and certain foods stimulate continuous menstruation, leading to infertility in women (Ekwochi, et al., 2016; Cherkos, et al., 2013; Zepro,2015; Vasilevski, Carolan-Olah, 2016; Ugwa,2016).

All this results in the birth of malnourished children with low birth weight and low immunity or neo-natal and infant mortality. This in turn not only negatively impact the health of next generation, but also the food security of the society as a whole (Bain et

al., 2013; Brown, 2011; Hoddinott, 2012). Women in Karamoja region of Uganda, suffers with cultural restrictions in food consumption⁴⁰ as consumption of certain food is restricted to male members of the family which also create pressure on women's nutrition status (Olum et al., 2017) and ultimately contributes into improper utilization of food. In Tanzania pregnant women abstain from meat eating in the fear that babies might get the characteristics of animal they consumed (Patil et.al.,2010). In parts of Ethiopia, food that are whitish in colour such as fatty meat, milk products are prohibited to pregnant women , because of the fear that plaster will cover the body of the newborn (Zepro,2015). Similarly, in Ghana, pregnant women are denied to eat certain nutritious food on account of religious taboos as they believe that instructions in the taboos on food are send from heaven and carried for generations to protect people against evil (Abubakari, et al., 2019; Yakubu,2021).

Along with cultural taboos on the consumption of food, there exist a gendered order exist in the region on what share of food and what type of food or the q2uality and quantity of food to be served to family members. This order is in favor of those male members of the family who are the 'bread winners for family' (Gittelsohn et al., 1997; Engle et.al.,1993; Alderman, 1997). Women and girls are positioned lower in the existing food hierarchy in the region, where they get very less amount of food for their consumption, especially at the time of low agricultural production (Blaikie et al., 2014). The fact that, those who are handling the kitchen and cook food are undernourished unravel the existence of unequal power relations between men and women in the utilization of food along with prompting questions on the politics of food (Kamunge, 2018).

Normally, women eat last/after men and eat least amount or lower nutritional quality food whereas men consume high quality and quantity food within the household after. Ensuring enough food for male members has become the duty of female members

⁴⁰ Foods prohibited for consumption by women is generally offals/animal intestine for married women because on belief that they were spoilt by the first women who ate them. Likewise Wild dodo or Amaranths is believed to makes somebody run mad. If the Testis of animal eat by young women, she will not reproduce. Liver of animals causes the woman will fail to deliver but when they deliver the baby will defecate in the house always or her other child will die. Pancreas of animals make the woman to bleed after delivery (Olum et al.2017). In that manner food consumption is determined by cultural taboos.

in the households (Lentz, et al., 2019; Bonatti, et al., 2019; Neogy, 2012; Hadley et al., 2008; Coates et al., 2018). In this way, the evil of food apartheid⁴¹, - existence of a division between those who have and those who do not have access to sufficient nutritious food due to the prevalence of systemic injustice - (Brones, 2018) is remained as a reality in case of intra household distribution of food for Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Utilization of food is also connected to, how nutrients are absorbed as well as utilized properly in human body. Therefore, availability of *clean and hygienic food resources* for preparation and consumption is also crucial because lack of adequate sanitation facilities adversely affect proper utilization of food. It depends on how nutrients are absorbed as well as utilized properly in the body. But unclean water and unhygienic sanitation affect the proper absorbance of nutrients to human body (Basu et al., 2021). In most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, people live under extremely unhygienic conditions with inadequate excrete disposal facilities (FAO, 2018; FAO, 2008; Oloruntoba, et al., 2014). It is the region with lowest access to handwashing stations, sanitation facilities, and clean water in the world. 400 million people have no access to basic drinking water facilities and 709 million people have no access to basic sanitation amenities in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF et al., 2019).

The chemical contamination from pesticides, biological contamination from microbes and psychical contamination from minerals present in in foodgrains water cause negative impacts which also affects proper utilization of food (Akabanda, et al., 2017). Cooking and eating of food in an unhygienic environment by following unhygienic methods and drinking unsafe and contaminated water is the source of diarrheal diseases (Oloruntoba et al., 2014; WHO,2015). The gendered division of labour made fetching of water, and ensuring sanitary facilities for food preparation the responsibility of women in the region (Wenham, et al., 2020) which is also a constraint for proper utilization of food.

⁴¹ The word is proposed by Karen Washigton, the food sovereignty leader for highlighting the limited access to healthy and affordable food which is limited by racism thus lead to chronic disease among Blacks, and people of colour and indigenous community.

Adult girls and women are responsible for collection of clean water more than twice of the male counterparts in Sub-Saharan Africa (UN, 2010). In households who lack direct access to water collection, 80 percent of women and girls are responsible for fetching water from far away resources (World Bank, 2024). Women have to spend more time to find out the sources of clean water and to make hygienic conditions for food preparation. This affects their health and thus the risk of diseases. Traveling for collection of clean water creates vulnerability to women through gender-based violence, including sexual violence (Kayser et al., 2019). When men feel that women fail to deliver the socially constructed expectation with regard to fetching water for household purposes, there is a risk of violence at home as well (Pommells et al., 2018). Consumption of poor-quality water affects women's health, which creates issues in meeting their gendered roles like childcare, cooking as well as cleaning (Graham, et al., 2016). Moreover, carrying heavy buckets with water for long distance affects their spines. Around 30% of the daily calorie intakes of girls and women are expended through such risky water collection methods only (OECD, 2021).

The scarcity as well as the use of contaminated water leads to an increase in maternal mortality, complications in pregnancy and foetal development (Ataniyazova, 2003) which can be visible from the water scarcity caused by the Aral Sea Crisis (Waehler et al., 2017). The unavailability of hygienic sanitation facilities for food preparation as well as water contaminated through toxic pollutants like pesticides, and water having high concentrations of minerals increase the heavy metals concentrations in the blood of pregnant and breast-feeding women which is dangerous for the health of mother and the newborn (Benova, et al., 2014; Dankelman et al., 2008). Therefore, these constraints hinder proper utilization of food among women as well as children.

Apart from intra household distribution of food, availability of sanitation facilities, clean food resources and nutritional diets which are already discussed as the determinants of utilization of food in food security, the gendered division of labour like *care works*, and health issues like *pandemic of Covid -19 and HIV/AIDS* and *environmental factors like climate change* also play an important role in the utilization of food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa. The time constraints due to

gendered role like *care works* in the households or unequal division of labour in agricultural works limit women's food intake to two times a day. Gendered social norms view unpaid care work as the duty of women. Women, irrespective of regional, class and cultural differences are to spend average three to six hours a day on unpaid care activities, whereas for men, it is half an hour to two hours only (Ferrant, et al., 2014). Further, the reproductive and productive role of women positioned them at the center of food security, as their dual role as home makers and farmers are crucial in nutritional status, diet pattern and feeding habit in the region (Fonjong, 2022).

Men are exempted from long hours of intensive household works which are time consuming and requiring more energy. Before leaving for work at farm women deal with household care works and mundane practices of preparation of food, collecting water, fuel and other sources, which affects their food consumption and nutritional status throughout the region (Kadiyala, et al., 2014; Komatsu, et al., 2018; Leslie et al., 1997). Lack of enough nutrition and health care is a challenge for women in the region to perform robust productive and reproductive labour and the reason for inefficient labour productivity of women in the agriculture fields in the region which have direct implications on food and nutrition security (Leslie, et.al.,1997; Quisumbing et al., 2010; USAID, 2011; Hyder et al., 2005).

The *Pandemics like HIV/AIDS* also become a determinant of utilization of food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa. It became the sole responsibility of women/girls in the household to take care of orphans, relatives, elderly people and sick because of AIDS. This unpaid care work for HIV/AIDS affected women as it is having opportunity cost because the income generating, skill building as well as leisure time activities of such women are reduced drastically (UNPF, n.d). In poor countries, more than 90 per cent of AIDS-related care and support services (that is unpaid work) are performed by women (UNAIDS, 2004). Studies reveal that, in Tanzania, when a family member is sick with AIDS, the care and follow-up care takes 29 per cent of the time allocated for women to household chores and other production activities (Nduwimana, 2000). In majority of the cases, at least two women always engage with nursing duties (Tibaijuka, 1997). During HIV/AIDS infection, with unequal intra household distribution of

resources, the assigned reproductive care works of women are largely affected because even-though the AIDS affected women need enough nutritious food get less food. Others in the household who suffers from the disease also under trouble because of the ill-health of women who are supposed to be the care providers and food preparators for all (WHO, 2009). Even though women contribute 60-80% into the food production in the region, the task of providing care to infected people in the family prevents them from active participation in produce crops for subsistence (Williams, 2002), which affect food and nutrition security of women (UNPF, n.d).

In order to ensure food and nutrition to other members in the household, many women and girls of the region engage in transactional sex that increase the risk of HIV/AIDS⁴² (PHIA, 2022). The resource scarcity which leads to food scarcity along with burden of care work on sick and the old-age people affect Women's health (ICAD, n.d) especially those women who need special attention and nutrition, i.e, pregnant and lactating mothers. They are more vulnerable with lack of proper nutritious food or from enough and appropriate substitutes with breast feeding (as the children of AIDS affected women are also under threat of disease through breast feeding) (Franworth, et al., 2011). As it is clear, the traditional gendered roles intersect with food utilization during pandemic in the region Sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, 2005).

Environmental crisis also affects the utilization of food, in case of women in Sub-Saharan Africa. Climate change leads to scarcity of resources, aggravates time constraints, and poor food consumption practices among women and thus lead to food insecurity (Stevano, 2019). Even though countries in Africa are responsible for only 3% of global carbon emission, the impact of climate change is very high in the region (Joe et al., 2022). Climate change leads to draught, water and fuel scarcity, fire wood scarcity, and scarcity of forest products, and therefore women and girls are forced to

⁴² In Sub-Saharan Africa women also suffer from higher rates of HIV infection as the HIV prevalence rate among young women is more than four times higher that of young men in the same age group (Temin, et al., 2009).

spend more time for gathering inputs for food preparation⁴³ (ADB, 2009d) that also affect their proper utilization of food.

In order to deal with climate change, when people in poor households/with low income adopts diet change and less food intake strategies, it is the women who are the worst suffers as they are forced to choose cheaper food with low nutritious status or even reduce the quantity (Olumakaiye et al., 2006; Suda, 1991). The patriarchal norms which define the role of women as wife and mothers rather than active actors in food security efforts restrict the resource access, limits their role in processing of food and storage of food during climate change by using innovative technology, and access to method of protection of live stocks and provision for agricultural extension services with regard to climate resilience during climate crisis. All these negatively affects proper utilization of food (Omari, 2011; Fletschner et al., 2014; Kilic et al., 2015).

Apart from those socio-cultural norms which are gendered, class element also intersects with gender and race and together remain as a major hindrance to acquire proper nutritional status and food security among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa. Economic backwardness and lack of financial autonomy also contributes into their poverty and malnutrition (Olumakaiye et al., Suda, 1991) in such a way that women's access to nutritious food is under crisis by the economic violence of male partners who alone determine what food to be purchased or how much money to be vested for food for a family (Sethuraman, et al., 2006). This undermines the special nutritional need of women who lack economic freedom even though they have own income. Studies conducted in the Western part of Cameroon proves that the independent control of income along with high educational status and access to agricultural production such as land, labour, services, credits, and technologies can increase decision making power of women within the family and that in turn effects nutritional status diets through the use of quality food within the family (Wenda et al., 2024; Razavi, 2007b; Landesa, 2012; Denney et al. 2014; Daman, 2003). The economic and socio-cultural constraints limit this possibility in in the Sub-Saharan region.

⁴³With regard to water collection, girls and women spend 250 million hours per day which is over 3 time more than boys and men who spend time on water collection (UN Women et al.,2024).

It is observed that malnutrition/undernutrition among women are exacerbated during economic and environmental crisis, that cause price rise and increases poverty. During calamities, food become less affordable due to asset loss, that disproportionately affect women who are declined food due to their limited/no role in decision making on spendings on food and intra- household distribution of food. The surveys conducted in Burundi and Gambia shows that anaemia among poorest women in these countries are 50.3% and 68.4% respectively (Jiwani et al., 2020) mainly due to the gendered nature of utilization of food. A close examination in this regard leads to the fact that women in Sub-Saharan Africa have to suffer gendered restrictions on access to nutritious diet, because of their economic backwardness as most of them belong to landless poor families in rural areas and lacking financial autonomy (Jiwani et al., 2020; FAO, 2015; Quisumbing et al., 2011). They face hidden hunger or struggle with malnutrition and anaemia that arise out of iron and vitamin deficiencies due to insufficient intake of micro nutrients (von, et al., 2017). The diet of women gets compromised very often because they are the one sacrifices their share of food or opt low nutritious and cheaper food despite their special needs (Quisumbing et al.,1996).

Studies prove that the food insecurity due to malnutrition among women in Ethiopia, Tanzania, Ghana and Zambia is very high and they are also suffering from anxiety and depression (Weaver et al., 2021; Hadley et al., 2008; Cole et al., 2011; Atuoye et al., 2017). Preferential treatment for male members as ‘income generators and absence of enough nutritious food for their special needs on account of the cultural taboos on food also put pressure over women. By choosing cheaper diet and sometimes reducing their own consumption of food, women feed others in the family by spending their time and money disproportionately and they remain undernourished (Holmes, et al., 2009; Botreau et al., Cohen, 2019). This is because, even though women produce for household consumption they still remain at the lower strata in the food hierarchies due to socio-cultural and economic norms and their lower position in the class structure. In order to cope-up with the issue of food scarcity during economic or environmental crisis, women seek wild food or do dangerous job (such as works in gold mine) or even opting prostitution for earning to purchase food (Oxfam, 2019; Quisumbing et al., 2008).

Studies on Uganda also show that women are forced to engage in abusive relationships or in transactional sex to assure food security of their family. Widow women state that "it usually happens when my children are very, very hungry and I have no money to buy food. 'Why am I rejecting the men, after all, I would be able to feed my children'" (Burgin, 2021; p.29). Mostly, women act as 'shock absorbers' within the household during food crisis by reducing their food intakes for family and spending more time and energy for the assurance of enough household food by risking their health, and even life (Oxfam, 2019; Quismbing et al., 2008; Quisumbing et al. 2011; Holmes, et al., 2009; Cohen et al., 2011). Thus, poverty and unequal intra-household distribution of food results in malnutrition among women (Botreau et al., 2019) mainly due to lack of economic empowerment and power to intervene in the economic decision makings in the household regarding food security.

Thus, the gendered norms and their identity as Black Women remain as hurdles for decision making power and financial autonomy of women which also shape their role in the society. Therefore, Black Women from comparatively low-income households of poor countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, suffers by the gendered norms formed under the patriarchal structure, and their day-to-day interactions are determined/defined by the intersection of multiple identities of class, race and gender which has an impact on their utilization of available food.

5.3.3. Availability of food as an issue for Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa

The variable *Availability of food* is vital to achieve food security. Availability of food indicates the adequacy of physical availability of food, that may be produced, traded, imported, stored, or supplied by government or aid organizations (World Food Summit,1996). It includes sufficient quality and quantity of food imported or domestically produced or received through food aid programmes (FAO, 2006). The supply side of food security is addressed by the component availability which emphasizes on continuous and effective supply of food (World Food Summit,1996). At the national level, food availability is combined of domestic food production, food aid, commercial import of food, along with food stocks at domestic level, whereas

household level food availability include food bought from market and the food production by household (OECD, 2012). As the Access to food and Utilization of food are gendered and intersectional, an analysis of, how far the availability of food is intersectional from the point of view of Black Women is important to study.

Domestic production of food, accessibility of market and food assistance are the key determinants in *Availability* of food. The availability of food is mainly depending on the *domestic production of food* (Odunze, et al., 2016). Studies in this regard prove that, if women have the opportunity to get access to agricultural productive resources as men have, the yield would increase 20% to 30% (especially by the utilization of vast indigenous wisdom on local species of plants that ensure more nutritious food for family) and thus contribute into the reduction of hunger by 17% because unlike men, women use the income generated from agricultural production for their household (Abass, 2018). But in Sub-Saharan Africa, where women are disfavored to access and use productive resources of food such as land, labour, livestock, agricultural technologies and agricultural inputs, credit, and agricultural extension services because of the structural barriers based on patriarchal socio-cultural norms (ADB, 2013; Sircar, et al., 2018), the rate of agricultural productivity among Black Women in domestic production of food is significantly low.

Accessibility of market is also a key determinant of availability of food. The availability of food which is based on accessibility of market for selling and purchase products (or trading) also disfavors women in Sub-Saharan Africa. Access to market can ensure availability of food with enough choice, ensure micro nutrient rich products for food security and better price for the agricultural products (Abu et al., 2016; Haile et al., 2015; Abay et al., 2017; Sibhatu et al., 2015; Stifel et al., 2017). This ultimately benefits the Black Women who heads 31 % of the rural households in Sub-Saharan Africa and belongs to lower income and poor strata in the society (FAO, n.d.). But in reality, the limited access to financial resources, unequal obligations of household responsibilities, disproportional involvement in agricultural activities, extensive unpaid care duties and housework, which are all time consuming negatively affect women's accessibility to market. In addition to that, lack of access to transport facilities also remains as an

obstacle for women's mobility and their participation in market, especially for those women at the low-income strata. (Budlender, 2004; Hyder et al., 2005; Renkow et al., 2004; The World Bank, 2008). Even if they get access to market, the control of income from market is with men who are the economic decision makers (Usman, et al., 2021) at households.

In this regard, a study conducted in Somalia reveals that, when one women trader has to take economic decision making, her husband feel that his authority is undermined which is expressed through some common responses like “who is the man of the family, you or me? or don't be deceived by your money, you are still a woman” (Warsame, 2004;126). This expose the masculinist patriarchal belief of economic superiority of male over female which is the reason behind the discomfort of male dominated society on the economic independence of women or women own economic resources which that make them capable to make economic decisions. Thus, the socio cultural patriarchal norms prevent women from access to market and economic decision making.

With globalization, the preference for processed food and ready to eat food purchased from shops over food cooked at home have resulted in a shift in the pattern of market access (demand and supply elements). This also affected the pattern of food availability in the market (Labonte et al., 2008) that constrained the purchasing power and nutritional quality of food of women in Sub-Saharan Africa because most of them are economically dependent on men. The increasing private sector involvement in trade and marketing due to globalization, trade and commercial activities are also moving out from state intervention. The poor women who are at economically lower class along with lack of access to transportation facilities, are at the receiving end due to non-access to competitive prices for their products (Lambrechts et al., 2003). Thus, the production, sale and purchase of food of women in Sub-Saharan Africa are intersect with the economic or class position and gendered socio-cultural constraints.

Food Assistance is another determining factor in availability of food. It is defined by World Food Summit as, “all actions that national governments, often in collaboration

with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and members of civil society, and with external aid, when necessary, undertake to improve the nutritional well-being of their citizens who otherwise would not have access to adequate food for a healthy and active life” (World Food Summit, 1996). Even in the emergencies caused by natural calamities as well as war and crisis, food assistance is a key source for solving hunger and malnutrition (ibid). As women play an important role in solving hunger by sharing their household responsibilities for ensuring food security, experiences indicate that, ensuring such assistance to women results in greater nutritional value to family because, they spend their income more on food needs of their family than their male counterparts (ibid; Pena et al., 1994). But in Sub-Saharan Africa, the prevalent socio-cultural and gendered norms prevent women from easy availability of food received through different assistance programmes. Lack of information on where to receive the available food aid, the distance to distribution centres, restriction for registering for food aid because of their gender (Aderonum et al., 2022; Lawlis, et al., 2016) are all act as barriers to get access to food assistance for women.

Even the war and conflict exacerbate the restraints over food assistance to women and girls. During conflict, when food production is under constraint, dependency on food aid become crucial. The hijacking of channels of food aid during war and conflict, and cutting food supply for starving the opponents as a war strategy interrupt the food assistance and inversely affect availability of food among women in the region (Aderonum et al., 2022; FAO, 2015). The distribution and control over food resources received through food aid are by and large controlled by men which lead to less efficient and gendered decisions on distribution of food during crisis (Nduwimana, 2000).

The shortage of fund for food assistance also affects economically backward women as they have depended on forest for food and fuel, which results in risks of physical extortion due to as well as sexual violences as it is reported in Ethiopia (UNHCR, 2022). Because of the food scarcity caused by conflict and violence, women and girls are to travel far distance in highly insecure situations to get access to food and many such instances, they become victims of sexual violence and rape and even they are force to

use their bodies as part of barter system⁴⁴ which further the chance of disease like AIDS (Rehn et al., 2002). Likewise, the cutting of food assistance resulted in gender-based violence in Sudan as many women remain in abusive relationships on account of losing opportunity to get food and pay rent (ibid). Thus, food assistance in Sub-Saharan Africa also shows the influence of gender and class.

Similarly, *Political conflicts, wars and adverse climatic conditions* also affect the availability of food as draught, flood or natural calamities also results in the disruption of agricultural production, its trade and marketing. The civil wars and ethnic conflicts fragment domestic production of food as well as food aid from outside (FAO, 2017) and thus results in price rise that adversely affect availability of food for women in Sub-Saharan Africa (FAO, 2021; UN Women Watch, 2009). For example, the war in Ukraine caused spike in food price across the world/globally and very badly affected poverty ridden women and girls in Sub-Saharan Africa. The impact of this on the female headed households in the region was much severe than the male headed household because of their limited access to assets and less income and persistent economic insecurity. This also results in the decline of nutrition among women as well as children. More than that, due to price rise, food become scarce and young girls are forced to get married early and become the victims of gender-based violence (Aderonmu et al., 2022).

During environmental crisis and political crisis, where displacement of people to refugee camps takes place, women are in a dependence position with regard to food availability in such camps due to the patriarchal hegemony. Such displacement of people to refugee camps exacerbates the unavailability of food among women and girls, who constitute majority in the camps (for example, in 2021, women constitute 8.2 million refugee people in Sub-Saharan Africa which is 40 % of the global average of totally internally displaced people) (UN WOMEN Africa, 2021). The investigations on the reasons of food insecurity of women and girls in the refugee camps unravel the existence of patriarchal hegemony in such camps, where women are in a dependent

⁴⁴ The report of US General Accounting Office (2001) describes many girls sell themselves even for US10 cents to buy food that not enough to buy only a handful of peanuts.

position with regard to food security. They are depending on food aid where the distribution and control of food are with men, whose decision prevail with regard to access, availability and distribution of food in camps (ICRC, 2004).

Women are vulnerable to health problems, physical and sexual violence, unhygienic conditions, and nutritional deprivation in the camps (Cohen et.al.,1999). The proper availability of water, shelter, community services, sanitation facilitates and access and availability of proper food become a crucial concern for women in the refugee camps who are less powerful in decision making. In Sub-Saharan Africa, even in the midst of their vulnerable situations in refugee camps, women are to continue their societ.ally endorsed gendered roles like care giving and other household tasks. They have to perform almost all domestic duties, look after the cleanliness, and many other needs of displaced persons (men and children) in the camps, even-though, they are excluded from all types of decision makings, including that on the utilization of food. These experiences of women in Rwanda indicates how men in the patriarchal society use food as a source of power (Benjamin, 2001; Nduwimana, 2000).

In this way, the special needs and avenues for proper availability of food to women has been neglected. Therefore, food security of women has become a crucial concern during political and environmental crisis. Hence, the discussions on availability of food in the context of experiences of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa clearly indicates that, their everydayness, is determined by class, race and gender identity and they are constrained by many socio-cultural, economic, environmental and political factors which are crucial in achieving food security.

5.3.4. Stability of Food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa

Stability of food is vital to ensure food security as a whole. It indicates the access, availability and utilization of food by an individual, population or a household remain stable over time in different social, political and economic contexts, such as political instability, conflict, economic crisis, price fluctuations, climate crisis or epidemic. It emphasizes on adequate food availability in all time that can be accessed and utilized uninterruptedly (FAO, 2006; Fahy, 2021). An analysis of how far the stability of food,

which is a crucial component of measuring food security, is connected to the experiences of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa is important.

Environmental factors like **global warming and climate change**, economic factors like **price fluctuation**, political factors like **political instability and conflict** and **spread of pandemics** influence stability of food in general and the women in particular. The region under study is vulnerable to *global warming and climate change* as this affect agriculture and livelihood of people in the region critically (Bager, 2014) But, it is important to mention here that the intensity of the crisis is disproportionately perilous to women as, 80 % of those displaced by climate change are women and girls (World Economic Forum, 2024). In Sub-Saharan Africa, the pattern of weather largely determines kind of crop to be produced. The catastrophic weather patterns such as extreme temperature, droughts, destruction of water resources, floods and tropical climate threaten agricultural production (ICA, 2015), particularly the one produced by women. This is the result of the gendered reproductive and productive roles of women as they have to spend more time on care and household works especially during draught and flood, along with management of farm activities (Nelson, 2010).

In Sub-Saharan Africa, due to the cultural, class and social norms and male dominance in decision making, women's access to climate resilient crops and livestock are seriously affected. This limits the agricultural productivity of women, especially those at lower economic class, during climate related crisis situations (Tanoth et al., 2020; Namubiru Mwaura, 2014). The food consumption among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa is also affected by climate crisis. With regard to food consumption and utilization during climate crisis, the socio- cultural food taboos which prefer the need of food of men over women remains a major challenge to women's food security. The limited economic decision-making powers at the household restrict women from the decisions on what to purchase, cook and how much to consume. Thus, the unequal distribution of food as well as the negligence of special nutritious need of women in the region push them to high vulnerability in terms of food security. (UN Women, 2014; Yakubu, 2021; Oxfam, 2024; Martinez, 2017).

Price fluctuation is another determining factor to stability of food. The higher cost of food due to conflict, high depletion of natural resources and rapid population growth adversely affect the purchasing power of people (ICA, 2015). It also affects the stability of food of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa as price instability reduce their purchasing power as well. As it is already discussed, women are out from economic decision making and they have got very less/or no bargaining power within the household (UN Women, 2014). During price rise, the affordability of food to family is reduced. Due to this, women have to sacrifice their share of food or the nutritious diet available for other male members of the family which impacts their food security at the times of price instability (UNICEF, 2022; Kumar et al., 2013). Sometimes parents prefer early marriage of their daughters (a practice common in South Sudan and Uganda) for ‘bride money’ or to save from spending on food as it reduces the members to be fed by the family (Fraser, 2020). Thus, stability of food become a socio- economic issue as well.

Global pandemics such as Covid - 19 also affect stability of food among women in Sub-Saharan Africa. Concerning economic access to food, the stringent restrictions on economic activities and human mobility affects the income of people and food price rise where women are forced to choose cheaper food (CFS, 2021). The restrictions due to pandemic mostly affecting women because of the existing gendered norms and economically weak position that place women as shock absorber and sacrifice during calamities/crisis like pandemics (Quisumbing et al., 2011). The regulations on Informal Cross Border Trading such as closure of borders, or even very strong restrictions with regard to border crossing during pandemics also create difficult to get access to market, particularly to women in Sub-Saharan Africa where 70% of ICBT are women (IFPRI, 2021). The banning of street vending during such situations also affects psychical access of food of women in the region (CFS, 2021).

Apart from access to economic and psychical resources to food, social distancing, restriction to remain at home, restrictions of movement and restrictions in engaging productive works during pandemics like Covid also creates crisis in food production, processing of food, food preparation, and storage of food. All these have negative

impact on quality of diet and utilization of food among women in Sub-Saharan Africa as gender remains as a crucial element in all these situations (FAO, 2020b; Holmes et al., 2021). With regard to access to the safe water and basic sanitation facilities which are needed for proper utilization of food, Pandemics exacerbate the use of unsafe water and poor sanitation facilities which results in unhealthy and unsafe food preparation methods. This in turn results to malnutrition (WHO, 2020b; CFS, 2021), especially to women because of their gendered duties and gendered food preferences. In short, pandemic inversely affect the uninterrupted access to and availability of food for proper utilization all time or the stability of food.

Likewise, *political instability and conflicts* also remain as obstacles in achieving stability of food. The stability of food is impacted by conflicts such as civil war, political instability, war, terrorism, arm robbery, and banditry that exist in many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (Onwujekwe et al., 2021) The disruptions in the channels of transportation of food from major food-exporting countries create shortage in the markets of those countries which is reliant on food import. The domestic conflict and instability in the exporter and transit countries also affects the availability of resources of food as well as food distribution system (ICA, 2015). Due to conflict, 50.3% of women suffers from malnutrition and 80% of female headed households are suffering from food insecurity in Tigray. In Sudan 1.2 million of women are under malnutrition due to conflict (OCHA, 2022; OCHA, 2024).

The analysis led to the conclusion that cultural and gender aspects as underlying factors for disproportionate food insecurity impacts on women in the region. The culturally imposed gendered responsibility of women as family's food providers during conflicts and the engagement of men in fighting by leaving behind women with household responsibilities are important elements here. They create negative impacts on stability of food for women individually and within the household (Otieno, 2023; FAO et al., 2018). During food scarcity caused by conflict and violence, travelling outside home for food resources cause sexual violence and rape. Thus, political instability causes multiple obstacles to materialize stability of food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa. In brief, stability of food which is affected by economic political and

environmental factors are gendered as well as intersected with experience of class and race among as far as the Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa is concerned.

5.4. Conclusion

Food security, which is essential for the survival of humanity is understood as the key factor that ensure food and nutritional security to all people all time. Food security cannot be looked from simply achieving *Access, Utilization, Availability* and *Stability of food* which is exemplified in many conventions in the security theories in International Relations and institutional efforts by organisations like the UN because of the existence of multiple factors that constitute food insecurity, irrespective of the unidimensional approach to it. Even though food security is gendered in character, the gendered lens alone is not sufficiently uncovering the food security problems and issues which are faced by the Black women in Sub-Saharan Africa. The environmental, political, health, economic and socio-cultural elements that act as constraints to achieve food security among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa is exacerbated by intersectionality of class, race and gender.

Similarly, the concrete experiences of influence of race, class and gender in food security/insecurity in the region exemplifies the black women's perspectives on food security based on black feminist epistemologies. The powerful structure of intersectionality within the patriarchal society of Sub-Saharan Africa, is demonstrated in the *access* to land, resources, agricultural inputs, agricultural extension services and credits, *utilization* of food for ensuring nutritious status, the *availability* of food for consumption and utilization and assurance or food for long term or *stability*, along with the environmental, political, health, economic and socio-cultural aspect in achieving food security among Black Women in the region.

The generic Euro centrist- White Feminist's emphasis on sole significance of gender as a unidimensional perspective to explore the diverse aspects of food security/insecurity impair the investigation of the issue from a multi- faceted constructed identity of Black Women- being placed in the lowest economic class status, caught within socially and

culturally assigned roles along with exploitation and discrimination of being Black. Hence, food security constraints can be better analyzed and understood through the use of Black Feminist Perspective, which provide a self -defined and self -identified consciousness while generating a standpoint based on intersectionality.

To conclude, revisiting analysis of food security from the experiences of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa through a Black Feminist intersectional perspective is a necessity to include the marginalized peripheral and peculiar aspects with in the debates of food security in academic disciplines like International Relations. Such an approach would help to understand the issue of food security/insecurity comprehensively while ensure and mitigate it.

CHAPTER VI

Conclusion

At base, the discipline International Relations deals with the interplay of states, nations as well international actors. It is relatively a young discipline and its origin dates back to 1920s, and the events like First World War and establishment of international institutions like the League of Nations. The epistemological, ontological and methodological aspects as well as the articulation of the concepts and theories which largely form the base of discipline's discourses expose the masculine nature of the knowledge in the discipline. This is very clear while analyzing the way the discipline marginalizes the views and exclude the perspectives of women on IR. The undermining of the knowledge and experiences of women as invaluable and useless by mainstream scholarship of International Relations has been questioned by feminist theoreticians in IR during late 1980s, in the Third Debate in IR. According to them, the male biased approach in the theory building in IR and the unidimensional perspectives rooted in masculine understandings of the discipline uphold men's experiences as the only relevant variable of knowledge in IR. The feminist scholarship in the discipline emphasis that the existing knowledge based on men's experience failed to address those multidimensional aspects of knowledge in IR. Therefore, it limits the boundaries of the discipline and make it no inclusive/exclusionary to diverse perspectives and understandings on various issues, concepts, theory constructions and discourses that are emerged from those unique experiences and knowledge of women who constitute half of the human world.

According to feminist scholars, the 'gender-neutral' theories are not capable of engendering the discipline until and unless the discipline is open to the concept gender and accept it as a tool of analysis in IR. Gender which is a socially constructed and culturally shaped element that exist in all walks of life, but not addressed by traditional scholarship in IR. However, the critical theories/thinkers, particularly the contributions of feminist theoreticians such as Ann Tickner, Cynthia Enloe, Rebecca Grant, Spike Peterson, Marysia Zalewski, Kathleen Newland, Jindy Pettman, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Sandra Whiteworth, Mary Caprioli, Christine Sylvester, Gillian Youngs, Anne Sisson

Runyan, Charli Carpenter, Laura Sjoberg, Dara Cohen, and Jacqui True have uncovered the gender bias of mainstream knowledge in IR. In fact, they have shaken the masculine foundations on which the knowledge in IR (which they call malestream knowledge) have been constructed. From the epistemological stand point, they highlight the need of taking seriously the so called 'irrelevant, mundane, invaluable, illegitimate' everyday life experience of women while study/analyse IR, which is a clear deviation from the conventional positivist methodology that emphasis on objectivity, followed by mainstream realist and liberal traditions in IR. Feminist scholars embraced the post positivist method that is rooted in subjectivity and ideational elements that shape International Relations. While doing this, feminists in IR dare focuses on those unrecognised exploitative experiences of marginalised people in general and women in particular.

The feminist re-interpretations of major concepts and unidimensional perspectives in IR by emphasising on the everyday life experiences of the marginalised sections in the society, especially that of women, have significantly contributed into the engendering of the discipline and have expanded the knowledge base and scope of inquiry in IR. In this context, the gender perspectives which question the generic masculine perspective provides a distinctive approach to the discipline that demanded fresh analysis of war, security, militarization, power, state and political economy through gendered lens. Thus, feminist theoreticians in IR have opened up serious debates on the creation of new knowledge in IR where women are not an object to be studied within the framework of hegemonic masculinity, rather, women as a competent actor and subject whose ideas, norms, interests, experiences, perspectives and understandings are knowledge/part of knowledge in IR. Thus, through emphasising on gender perspective, feminists reconstruct/deconstruct theories, discourses, and concepts in IR to engender the discipline.

Security is an important concept in IR which is understood from a masculinist theoretical orientation by the mainstream IR scholarship. The scope of security is narrowed into state by the conventional IR theorists who focused only the physical aspects - political and military - of it. The traditional discourses on security in

International Relations has been challenged by feminists due to its inability to comprehend the ever-changing security environment of International Relations. Feminist theoreticians, by using the gender lens, proposed the categorization of multi-dimensional aspects of security such as, - poverty, domestic violence, gender subordination or structural violence, rape, wars and violence, refugee problem, human right violations, environmental crisis, economic instability, human trafficking, sex trade and food security, to explore how gender hierarchies are a source of dominance as well as barriers to develop an inclusive meaning of security (Tickner,1992).

The significance of food security, which is ignored in the hyper masculinist traditional security debates in International Relations become crucial in Non-Traditional Security debates because, right to food is bedrock for sustaining healthy population, ensuring the economic development and social progress of nations, and achieve global security. Food security, which is one among the key determinants of human security, is mainly determined by the *access to, availability of, utilization and stability of food* to all people, all time. The efforts and initiatives of international institutions, and Governmental and Non-governmental organizations are proved not sufficient to wipe out malnutrition, hunger and poverty by achieving food security.

It is clear that, there exist many unattended factors underlying that remain as hurdles for the materialization of food security. The existing studies and analysis that are rooted in the dominant knowledge paradigm and unidimensional in nature is exclusionary as they focus only on such aspects like access to food, availability of food, utilization of food, and stability of food - which are not adequate to explore/examine or answer to the question why certain sections of the society remain food insecure everywhere/every time and why women constitute the majority of the food insecure globally. This points towards the need for engendering food security through a gendered approach/lens which is essential to address the gender-differentiated experiences within the global food system. As the discussions and analysis in the chapters of this study proves, such an approach would help to explore how the existing unequal power relations in the society reflects in the food security experiences of the marginalised groups in the society, particularly women (Allen et al., 2006).

In this study, gendered perspective on food security has been taken as the reference point to examine the importance of applying gender lens in the study of IR. Detailed discussions and analysis in the chapters of this research underlines that the use of gender lens is helpful to make IR more inclusive on the one hand and also helpful to address such crucial issues like food security more effectively. In this regard, following are the major findings of this study.

First, the constituting factors of food security/insecurity among women are rooted in the structural violence caused by Patriarchal socio-economic and cultural norms and customs/rules/regulations that determine the access, availability, utilization and stability aspects of it. Second, the gendered socio-cultural norms exacerbate the vulnerability due to environmental factors that affect food security among women. Third, different types of conflicts and violence and pandemics also have a gendered face that influence negatively on the food security of women. Fourth, there exist gendered economic aspects that indicates how women are dependant and sidelined in the decision making and also how they are subject to poverty and malnutrition that inversely affect their access to, availability of, stability of and utilization of food. Fifth, the physical and psychological dimensions of food security also have a women face because of the prevailing norms, roles, duties and societal conditioning which are all gendered.

This research focuses on Sub-Saharan Africa, where the issues of security/insecurity concerns are varying. The existence of gender inequality is in its grave form in the region, which is reflected in high level of female mortality, the child/early marriage, and large-scale denial of basic human rights of women in social, economic and political life. The common insecurity parameters like population growth, ecological and environmental degradation, ethnic conflicts and political instability are also critical for Sub-Saharan African region. Moreover, the region is struggling from malnutrition and hunger which is very high, compared to other regions in the world. All these place Sub-Saharan Africa a suitable area to study food security.

This research is highlighting the importance of applying gender lens in IR which is exemplified through food security. It is further emphasised through a detail analysis of gendered elements in the food security of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa. For examining the gender dimensions in food security, this research is framed within the Black feminist perspective because, using the common parameter of gender in the analysis of food insecurity experiences of women alone cannot explain the intensity of the issue for the Black women in Sub-Saharan Africa as their life is constituted by multiple intersection of class, race along with gendered structure. This rationalises the use of Black feminist perspective to study food security in the region. Such a study on food security through Black Feminist Perspective shows how to make the discipline IR more inclusive and/accommodative to those excluded and marginalised perspectives and experiences while constructing knowledge and thus engender the discipline from its masculine biases.

As the research clarifies, Black women are placed at the lower strata in of the food security ladder of the region Sub-Saharan Africa, in spite of their significant contributions in food production and their efforts to ensure food security. As discussed, the unidimensional generic categorization of gendered experience of food security is not enough to explore the constraints and experiences of food security among Black women in Sub-Saharan Africa, even if we use gender lens. This is because of the innate intersectionality of class, race, and gender that shape the everyday life of Black women in the region. Intersectionality, which is based on self-defined standpoint of Black Women's consciousness to include diverse identities of class and race along with gender, constitutes the core theme of Black feminist perspective. Therefore, an intersectional perspective rooted in Black Feminist approach is found the most suitable approach to study food security of women in the region under study. Consequently, this study has explored the intersection of class, race and gender on the determinants of food security such as *access to food*, *availability of food*, *stability of food* as well as *utilization of food* among Black women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

All these emphasises the relevance of gendered specific aspects to be taken into account, especially in the debates and discussions on food security within the discipline

International Relations for engendering security debates. By using intersectionality in the context of food security of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa, the discussions and analysis of this thesis makes it clear that, race, class and gender differentiated experiences are visible in all the key variables of food security such as, access to food, availability of food, utilization of food and stability of food.

Following are the main findings of the intersectional exploration of food security in Sub-Saharan Africa

First, with regard to **Access to food** among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa, the gender biased cultural norms on property rights or *access to land*, male control over productive and reproductive *labour of women*, the gender barriers to *access to agricultural inputs and technology*, the cultural norms that prevent women from holding independent bank accounts or *access to credit*, the socio cultural factors that constraints Black Women's *accessibility to agricultural extension services*, the socio-cultural and gendered restrictions on the mobility and public participation of women or *accessibility to market* are all remain as hurdles to access to food. Similarly, due to the inherent gendered nature, issues like the division of productive and reproductive roles, impacts of political instability, health issues, impacts of diseases like HIV/AIDS and climate change critically influence the access to food among women in the region.

Apart from gender biases and socio-cultural norms that intersect, the class status also plays an important role in access to food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa. The Black Women in the region are subject to class and racial subordination which affect their food security because of lack of economic resources and any role in economic decision making within the family and society. The research makes it clear that, access to food among women in Sub-Saharan Africa is intersect with patriarchal culture, race (being black) gender (being women) and class (being poor and landless).

Second, with regard to **Utilization of Food** among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa, the study concludes that, gendered cultural and social norms that prevent women from decision making at household, and lack of control or ownership of resources to ensure food management in household, are the barriers to assure nutritious diet, and utilization of food. While analyzing the *intra-household distribution of food*,

which is a major aspect of utilization of food, there are culturally determined discriminatory order visible in serving food to members in the household that undermines the special nutritional and caloric needs of women and girls. Concerning the *clean and hygienic availability of food resources* for food preparation and consumption which is important in the utilization of food, the culturally determined gendered roles or care works in and agricultural works outside the household impacts utilization of food. Besides, the gendered role or care works, pandemic of HIV/AIDS, and environmental crisis, which all are gendered in nature, also influence utilization of food among women in the region.

A close examination of utilization of food among black women in the region Sub-Saharan Africa reveals that, economic backwardness and class position and lack of financial autonomy of women in Sub-Saharan Africa affects the effective utilization of food. The patriarchal gendered norms embedded in socio cultural economic and corporal factors of food utilization which intersects with their racial identity is also critical in determining utilization of food and food security/food insecurity among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Third, the *Availability of food* among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa is mainly depends on the *domestic production of food* where the cultural and socio-economic norms prevent women from equal access to resources for food production such as land, labour, livestock, agricultural technologies/inputs, credit services, and agricultural extension services. The class status and cultural restrictions disfavors women in Sub-Saharan Africa in selling and purchase of food products and therefore their availability of food. The limited access to financial resources, the unequal obligations of household responsibilities and care duties, agricultural related works and unpaid housework, and lack of access to transport facilities prevent women's *access to market*. The gendered nature of *food assistance*, another determinant of availability of food, prevent Black Women in the region from easy access to and availability of food assistance.

The Political conflicts, wars and adverse climatic conditions results in food price rise, disruption of agricultural production, disturbances in supply chains and channels of

trade and marketing, failure of proper utilization of food aid from outside, which also affect availability of food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa who are in lower-class position as well as the victims of gendered societal norms. Thus, availability of food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa is shaped by their everyday experiences which are determined by economic status or class position, cultural and social elements, racial and gender identity, and environmental and political factors in the region.

Fourth, with regard to *Stability of Food*, the phenomenon *Global warming and climate change* disproportionately hazardous and affect the stability of food of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa due to gender bias and their low-class position. Because of their gendered reproductive and productive roles, the women in Sub-Saharan Africa needs to spend more time on care and household works which affect their food security efforts. The socio-cultural taboos on food that prefer men on women in deciding the need and share of food also disfavors women. It is also clear from the discussions that, *the price fluctuations* also affect the stability of food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa. Price instability adversely affect the purchasing power of women because of their weak bargaining power due to low class position and non/limited participation in the economic decision-making within the household due to the gender and cultural norms. In this situation, women have no say on deciding what to purchase, what to cook and what to consume or the quantity of consumption which results in the unequal distribution of food as well as the negligence of special nutritious need of women.

Political instability and conflicts are other obstacles in achieving stability of food. The stability of food is impacted by conflicts such as civil war, political instability, war, terrorism, arm robbery, and banditry, among most of the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. These are also disproportionately affected women/girls who suffers maximum due to the cultural and gender aspects involve in such happenings. Thus, stability of food become intersectional among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa because of the role of gender, class, culture and racial elements that determine it.

6.1. The Major findings of the study

Following are the major findings of the study:

1) The gender bias of the dominant state centric conventional theories of security in the discipline International Relations limits the scope of the studies on security. It requires to engender the discipline IR through deconstruction and reconstruction of its mainstream knowledge, major concepts and discourses by using the gender lens so that those marginalised/excluded perspectives can also be brought into the knowledge in IR.

2) The gendered aspects of social, economic, political, cultural psychological, physical, and environmental, factors prevail in food security is visible in the *access to food, availability of food, utilization of food* and *stability of food*, which are the determinants of it. The gender-food security interlinkages can be exposed through applying feminist methods and through the use of gender lens which can also contribute into engendering security debates in the discipline.

3) An analysis of the gendered perspectives on food security which is explored through more specified marginalised lens of using Black Feminist perspective reveals that, intersectionality remains as a unique influential factor in *access to, availability of, utilization of* and *stability of* food among Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa.

4) It is also clear from the study that, the gender specific constraints trusted upon women in Sub-Saharan Africa is exacerbated by their other identities like class and race. They together contribute into the food security status of Black Women in Sub-Saharan Africa, which is evident from this study. These experiences which are taken as relevant factors to emphasise the need of inclusion of gender lens by placing women as a subject to the knowledge frame of IR would broaden the scope of security debates in the discipline. It also underlines the necessity of revisiting International Relations for engendering the discipline.

To conclude, the domination of unidimensional masculine knowledge paradigm of the discipline International Relations remains as a challenge to the inclusion of different perspectives or epistemological standpoints in it, which could have provided a holistic picture of issues that are studied in IR. The dominant knowledge in the discipline is

biased to masculine power that shapes politics and society and play an important role in all aspects of women's life. Therefore, the use of gender lens and application of feminist approach, by focusing on the experiences and everydayness of women, is important to engender the dominant mainstream knowledge in IR on security. This study argues that, the admission of diverse lived experiences of women, especially marginalized women whose life is entangled in multiple identities, into the knowledge of the discipline IR is important to make it more inclusive and valid. It is also essential to broaden the major concepts, theories, debates and discourses in IR through the use of gender lens and intersectionality, so that the discipline can be unfettered from its highly masculine orientation.

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