



ASSESSING THE STATE OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The roots of the women's movement in South Africa are closely tied to the struggle for liberation, the labor movement, and student activism. Amid the fight for independence, it was important for gender equality issues to find their voice, and political party women's leagues facilitated this. Post-independence, however, as many prominent feminists who had pushed this agenda were absorbed into political positions, this significantly weakened the movement. The movement, however, did achieve many successes in the legal and policy framework for gender equality, particularly in the constitution, but this is yet to reflect in the lived realities of women and girls fully. In its current state, the movement was described as being sectorized and stratified. This phenomenon was traced back to the early post-apartheid era, when women were left out of mainstream issues such as HIV, and the women's movement took these up. The means of organizing have also changed in South Africa. There is a need to structure and consolidate the gains of hashtag movements so that they keep the momentum and their meaningful impact is fully documented. At

the heart of the issues that the present-day women's movement must address is intersectionality, particularly race, class, and gender intersections. Reenergizing the movement building from the bottom is necessary to ensure it is genuinely inclusive. The realities for black poor women in South Africa are not so for white or Indian middle-class women, and these have taken center stage above the issue of feminism. Poverty, safety, and security must be seen as intersecting with gender for the movement to make real progress. Challenging the structural inequalities and the normative system that perpetuates gender inequality, as opposed to the individual issues of the different strands, is still an area where the movement is challenged in South Africa. There may need to be a coordination system that will bring all the various players in the movement, in all their diversities, together.

There is a need for purposive and strategic empowerment of feminist organizing from the old to the young generation. There is need also to create space for healing and support for feminists wounded in battle.

METHODOLOGY

The study used both primary and secondary sources of data. The researcher located various essential writings on the women's movement in secondary research. The documents reviewed and relied upon are listed in the bibliography.

The study employed individual interviews, key informant interviews, and focus group discussions for primary data collection. The study also drew from online media, such as YouTube, on feminist organizing in South Africa.

The study was carried out using a semi-structured approach to primary data collection. The researcher preferred this approach to ensure a structured yet flexible approach, as there was recognition that much of what was being gathered relied heavily on the interviewee's

interaction with the movement - either in the past or present. This approach allowed the interviews and discussions to evolve organically while remaining robust and reflective. The fact that the researcher was not South African but had knowledge of at least one of the local languages made access and discussion more accessible.

A focus group discussion was held with Witwatersrand University students' movement members who played a central role in the #FeesMustFall Campaign. There was also a focus group discussion with members of SAWID and some of the ANC Women's League members.

CONTEXTUALIZING THE STUDY

The study comes at a time when dialogue around issues of intersectionality has become vital in the movement. The traditional movements have been challenged to change their perspectives, particularly regarding gender non-conforming persons and acknowledging their space within the movement. Many of the 'movements' in South Africa are driven by the need for the LGBTQIA+ community to find space as part of the women's movement. Unlike in many other African countries, South Africa though it has progressive laws on issues to do with discrimination, has a reality that is a far cry from what the law provides vis-à-vis the enjoyment of those rights for gender non-conforming persons. As such, the LGBTQI movement has been driven by reaction to the hate crimes against this community.

South Africa has alarming rape statistics, and the country is emerging from the controversial presidency of Jacob Zuma, who was accused

of rape, though he was later acquitted. The country is now at a place where it has the potential to chart a new path and begin a fresh discourse under a new President. This study was carried out just days before the #TotalShutdown Campaign that was held on the 1st of August 2018 as a way of protesting against the high level of gender-based violence in the country and, in particular, that women's bodies have been the site of violence.

The study also comes at a time when land redistribution debates have brought to the fore racial, elitist, and gendered concerns around land ownership in the country. The discussion has primarily been crafted along racial lines, and yet the reality is that women hardly own any land. This presents a unique opportunity for the women's movement in South Africa because 'any promise for the future lies in movements engaging to make claims and hold the state accountable.'

HISTORY AND EVOLUTION OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

The history of the women's movement in South Africa is intricately intertwined with the discourse around nationalism and race. Before the 1980s, women played a crucial role in drafting the Freedom Charter of 1955, side by side with men. In fact, the Federation of South African Women was the bedrock of this process. Fast forward to the 1980s, at the height of the repression, when there was tiredness and almost a giving up, students came onto the scene and reenergized social movements. At this time, trade unions were revamping, and women like Emma Mashimani, who was the first woman to lead a trade union, set the scene for the role of women on the socio-political stage. Mama Sisulu and young women like Nomboniso Gasa began to develop the transformational agenda.

During the 1980s, there was a tendency to bundle all progressive organizations under the banner of the anti-apartheid struggle. This limited the issues taken up to those that advanced the national struggle and the socialist struggle. Therefore, building the autonomy of women's rights organizations became centered on ensuring that the battle for gender equality remained significant in the long run. It is important to note that the impact of the struggle on women was not considered, as men largely drove it. Without the explicit language of feminism, activists in the country and the ANC in exile increasingly challenged the nationalist frame of discourse, articulating political demands regarding gender equality, and this is how the voice of women began to creep into the struggle agenda.

In the 1980s, several organizations established themselves along with other social movements. In exile, the ANCWL began to play a more active role in defining women's mobilization strategies. Women in the league fought for recognition of women's political concerns and demands for representation. By the 1990s, the national liberation movement declared that women's emancipation had to be addressed in its own right—strong relationships formed between the progressive sectors of the women's movement and the ANC. The lifting of the ban on the ANC in 1990 saw the re-establishment of the ANCWL as a national women's organization in the country, integrating both women from ANC Women's Section in exile and internal women's organizations. Any autonomy gained in the 1980s was abolished in favor of a rationalized notion of unity and of the ANC as the only home for progressive gender policies.

ANCWL was behind the Women's National Coalition (WNC) formation in 1992. One of the key objectives of this Coalition was the development of the Women's Charter based on the concerns and priorities of women in South Africa from all walks of life. The Coalition brought together the women's wings of the parties engaged in the negotiations and other women's organizations such as the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA), church women, Jewish women, and Afrikaans women. In 1994, the WNC completed the Women's Charter for Effective Equality and handed it over to Nelson Mandela, whose release from prison had been pushed for by women. Two years later, with the inclusion of the voice of women in the drafting process, the South African Constitution came to life. As part of this constitution-making process, the WNC and the Rural Women's Movement overturned a clause that would have allowed the traditional authority to be exempt from the equality clause, which enshrines gender equality even in customary law. However, after the Women's Charter had been drawn up, the WNC was weakened not only by the fact that there was nothing left to keep this large, diverse group together but also that many in its membership had been co-opted into Parliament. This crossing over affected the WNC, trade unions, and other NGOs.

Through critical processes such as the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), women relegated to being secretaries and serving were pushed back. They declared that women were not just statistics and needed seats at the negotiating table. From this move by women, political parties were compelled to have lists to ensure the meaningful inclusion of women in the democratic era. However, even to date, the private sector still lags in the significant involvement of women in decision-making, with some companies feeling it is better to be penalized than put women in leadership, suggesting that the penalty is not harsh enough.

Since then, the women's movement has experienced fragmentation and stratification of women's organizations within civil society. Hassim characterizes the post-apartheid women's movement as having three distinct arenas: national policy advocates, networks and coalitions, and community-based organizations. The first category of organizations is mainly concerned with the broader legal framework issues. They are concerned with ensuring the implementation and elaboration of the rights-based democratic framework, and their role is seen as strategic rather than representative within the movement. They have had to maintain strong party and state ties (the upward linkage) to record some of their successes, particularly with the successful passing of the Termination of Pregnancy Act. However, they are seen as removed from the mass base and unable to develop that linkage as other NGOs have in different sectors, such as the Treatment Action Campaign in the HIV sector. This has widened the gap in knowledge and awareness of women's rights between the urban elite and poor rural women.

At the next level are the issue-based networks and coalitions that coalesce around common issues. These networks often have an identifiable constituency though they are mostly urban-based. Unlike the first category, which international donors mainly fund, they have garnered financial support locally. Because of the shift in discourse from nationalism to citizenship, these types of organizations can tackle issues that in the 1980s would have

been seen as too 'feminist' and, therefore, problematic, especially those concerning women's sexual and reproductive autonomy. Numerous community-based organizations are concerned with improving citizens' day-to-day lives through associations and cooperatives. They tackle issues at what can be seen as practical need level, such as providing social services to communities and sometimes addressing issues such as the rape of children in communities. These organizations are most distant from the state and women's organizations that engage with the state. However, some organizations are bridging these divides, and one example is the South African Women in Dialogue (SAWID), which is a platform committed to hearing the voices of every woman and improving the status of women by engaging government, private sector, civil society to shape community, provincial and continental agendas.

Over the past few years, there has begun to emerge the #hashtag movement which is seen as a 'flash movement' often cutting across these three arenas. A flash movement is defined as one that unites for a cause and is primarily an issue-based initiative, and as soon as this is completed, it dissipates. It addresses issues of particular concern that sometimes need urgent action, but it takes months to plan and strategize at other times. Among these movements are the following:

#Fees Must Fall – the largest, most widespread student protest since the Soweto uprising was led by women and young female students

#Total Shutdown campaign – inspired by the 1966 march to the Union building against passing laws, a group of organizations and activists mobilized 100 000s of women and gender non-conforming persons in all nine provinces in South Africa to march against gender-based violence and femicide, particularly the rape culture. Twenty-four demands to match the 24 years the government has failed to deliver for women since independence were articulated and handed over to the government.

#One in Nine Campaign, which is a collective of organizations, was started as a show of

solidarity with survivors of rape at the beginning of the trial of President Jacob Zuma and is now running as a coalition

The Soweto Women's Forum was started early this year in response to the gender-based violence plaguing Soweto women. The organization played a significant role in the **#SafeTaxisNow campaign**, which addressed the increasing violence against women and LGBTQIA+ people on taxis.

Afro-taming protest – What started as a protest against the Pretoria High School Code of Conduct against Afro-hair became a national and widespread protest against cultural and racial discrimination in schools.

The women's movement has evolved in the breadth of issues it has taken on. There has been a lot of progress in efforts to end gender-based violence, specifically violence against women. South African activists have pushed for greater private sector involvement, with some private sector organizations funding and technically supporting violence survivors through economic empowerment initiatives. For example, POWA has received support for skills training for survivors supported by Loreal, a beauty company. It was noted that the skills training may not go far enough, but support is welcome. There is scope to expand the horizon on the funding spectrum. While acknowledging that some female and changed male executives have been interested in efforts to end violence against women, few are engaged and sufficiently aligned with efforts to end said violence.

There have been efforts for substantial policy shifts to let survivors stay at home while perpetrators leave. While an innovative idea, there has been pushback on it, based on the vulnerability of survivors where perpetrators can force their way back home and harm the survivors.

There have been significant developments in the religious sector, too, where these institutions are beginning to engage in patriarchy in religion negating women's equality. There is a rising circle of feminist theologians applying a critical eye to theology. Several churches and mosques in South Africa have recruited

specialist theologians to call out, deal with, and provide guidance on dealing with gender-based violence in their places of worship. There is an exciting trajectory of deliberately building

an inclusive theology that respects gender justice. The momentum of this work is building beyond the borders of South Africa.

THE CURRENT STATE OF THE WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

The women's movement in South Africa was described as being 'sectorized and splintered.' This is because when mainstream issues such as HIV were taken up through campaigns such as the Treatment Action Campaign, women were missing from the discourse, and thus it became urgent for HIV to be taken up by the women's movement. The violence against women also emerged strongly and grew from the early post-apartheid era. The sex workers' movement has also gained much traction through organizations such as the Sex Workers Education and Advocacy Taskforce (SWEAT), advocating that sex workers are workers whose

rights must be protected and, among other issues, that sex work be decriminalized.

The movement does have successes, particularly in the legal and policy framework for gender equality, including the enactment of laws such as domestic violence laws and abortion laws referred to above. The South African Constitution is hailed as one of the most progressive in the world. It provides for important institutions like the Gender Commission, an achievement of the women's movement advocacy.

THE ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH IT OPERATES

South Africa is still experiencing the effects of the apartheid era, which created an environment of two worlds: the elite living in and experiencing first-world conditions and people experiencing poverty, mostly rural experiencing third-world conditions. As a result, there have been clear distinctions and divisions between the white middle-class feminists and their poor, black, mainly rural counterparts. South Africa also has an embedded rape culture wherein rape and sexual violence are 'normalized' by its pervasiveness. A crude estimate of 138 women raped for every 100 000 women is one of the highest in the world, and thus South Africa has been labeled the rape capital of the world. Global movements such as the #Me Too movement have not gained as much traction in South Africa as expected with such high levels of rape in the country, but there has been some success recorded. The judiciary is also seen to be letting down survivors of rape and sexual violence. The outcomes at the end of the judicial process are unsatisfactory to survivors

and activists. Not enough work is being done to challenge the normative order that supports the perpetuation of rape and other violence against women. Thus very little progress has been noted over time in this area.

During the high prevalence of violence against women, the government is perceived as not prioritizing violence survivors. They are not prioritized in allocating houses, so when women are released from shelters, they have nowhere to go. Some end up overstaying, making the community reintegration process all the more difficult after overstaying at shelters, noted some respondents. Some respondents expressed the same concern for older women who need protection and are not prioritized and end up moving from pillar to post in search of shelter. Some respondents noted that women experience challenges in their quest for housing.

There are not enough shelters for survivors, and some available ones are not well-resourced, noted some respondents. Some respondents felt that the government was not listening to women's needs as it did soon after independence in 1994.

In response to the challenges faced, the women's movement is championing a national shelter movement that will ensure the standardization of sheltering services and provide learning and experience-sharing opportunities for shelters nationwide.

Young women were navigating patriarchal institutions and working under pressure, especially in the workspace. Some noted that the corporate space lacks mentoring spaces for young women. Feminism has not challenged patriarchy in the boardroom, and it does not help that older women are not always facilitative in those spaces. With all these pressures surrounding young people, some noted that they are experiencing significant mental health challenges. Some buckle to pressure to conform, creating internal tensions and stress. Young women noted the dire need for spaces where they can focus on their inner peace and healing.

REALITIES FOR WOMEN IN SOUTH AFRICA

The legacy of white apartheid rule is that South Africa remains one of the most unequal societies in the world. 95 per cent of people with low incomes in South Africa are black, 5 per cent colored, and less than 1 per cent white and Indian. Black women continue to be the face of poverty and the people who shoulder the social burden emanating from high levels of poverty and inequality in the country. Women are an exploited labor force marginalized from the formal economy, paid less than males for the same work, and performing minimally paid or wholly unpaid social reproductive labor. In a vast majority of cases, women are workers and not employees. Women are often primarily engaged in unpaid care work, caring for the sick and aging.

Some respondents described many initiatives for women's economic empowerment as being superficial and that deep-rooted initiatives are isolated. An example was when Oxfam commissioned a meeting for domestic workers in Johannesburg. This was aimed at giving them access to skills development because research found that domestic workers saw

that as an opportunity and a stepping stone to economic opportunities, but it does not always translate into that. Respondents noted a need to uproot how the economy is structured. Women are laborers even on farms but are not paid at the same level as men. Other efforts cited by respondents included giving women access to land and making it sustainable has had pockets of success but not at a national level. In the mining sector, cooperatives have opened up, but respondents described the impact as negligible. Respondents noted that there needs to be a shift in which women get meaningful access and control of the means of production.

The upliftment of women was described as having been overstated in a capitalist, patriarchal, and racialized manner. Therefore, there is a need to look at economic empowerment in an informal economy where most black women operate from.

EMERGING ISSUES WITHIN THE MOVEMENT(S)

Activism as a profession' - The NGOization of the movement

Respondents noted that the primary role of the movement should be to bring women together into a well-organized force, but, at the moment, the movement is fractured, weakly mobilized, and lacking clear leadership.

A challenge affecting the movement is that the different strands or movements quickly organized into civil society organizations. In the last decade, these organizations have faced challenges in fundraising as South Africa is not considered a low-income country. Many organizations have had to fold, and the leaders of organizations have been coerced into government or joined politics, leaving a leadership vacuum in NGOs. The departure of feminists into Parliament, though a positive by entrenching the principle of equality in

representation, is seen by many as having tamed the movement. Feminists also went into the political arena hoping to make a difference, but it became evident that the space was limited by bureaucracy and red tape. Hope was placed in liberation movements that they would address gender inequalities. Still, respondents noted that the ANC Women's League has nothing meaningful to offer women in South Africa. In fact, one respondent pointed out that the movement has become further divided along political party lines, and within the political party lines, there is further division along faction lines. So strong is some women's allegiance to political parties that one member of the ANC is quoted as saying she would have considered it an honor if Jacob Zuma had raped her, which statement was made during his rape trial.

"When I visit ANC constituencies, I experience a feeling of guilt about my privileged position, about my claim to represent their interests as women. I have grappled with my feminism and have questioned how it articulates the urgent needs of poor women". Thenjiwe Mtintso, former ANC Member of Parliament and Chairperson of the Commission on Gender Equality

Although respondents highlighted that activism is now a profession rather than a passion, they also acknowledged the reason behind that. One cannot do the required work and not get paid for it at the end of the day. There is no longer any agency or innovation because activists are 'bolted by chains' in that they cannot ruin the organization's name by taking potentially controversial actions that could bring the organization into disrepute. Respondents lamented that 'when you register a space, something happens' and moments are lost through consultation. With structure comes red tape and rigidity. Funding models under which NGOs operate were also said to be crippling feminist organizing, and thus the idea of organizations developing ideas on how to fund themselves was raised. 'A lot of time is being wasted on developing proposals instead

of doing the work of activism', remarked one respondent.

Some respondents noted that funding challenges have meant organizing around events, and that has not facilitated feminist movement building.

That said, the movement in South Africa has been able to operate outside the confines of the NGO sector in that the movement is more comprehensive than just the registered women's organizations. Ordinary women consider themselves part of a broader movement, particularly black working class and rural women who coalesce along racial and social lines, providing a much greater pull than feminism.

'The Alumni-Mamas'

Some respondents expressed that there is a suffocation of younger activists by older activists whom they referred to as 'alumni-mamas', meaning the alumni of the movement. The older activists are seen as gate-keeping and not giving space to the younger women, thus crippling the movement. Some respondents also noted that perhaps the younger activists are slightly impatient and hard on the older activists.

Respondents also noted that the older activists mainly made up of the ANC Women's League, have become irrelevant to issues facing the movement of today. Examples were given of issues such as sex worker rights and LGBT rights, which were not prominent during the struggles against apartheid but have become topical today, and the other activists are unwilling to engage with them.

Lamenting the weakening of the women's movement, some young women asked what the ANCWL is for, noting that no movement is dominant enough to appeal to many young people. They said that very few young women in their circle have an appreciation or reverence for the women's movement. Their biggest lament and source of dismay was that they felt angry that older feminists were watching young women endure the same pain and abuse they endured, yet they had not adequately reached out to young women. They expressed dismay that older women do not believe them when they tell their stories of being raped when they were raped themselves. A consequence of this, the young women said, is that they do not know of any female stalwarts they can revere as young women.

Some discontent was expressed towards UN Women in this regard that, in the light of the challenges highlighted, it should be clear on its role as convener, upscale, and enhancer of women's voices. It was felt that this role is not being played effectively.

Discussing the older and young women relationship, one young activist described it as an abyss between the old and the young. They noted that some older activists see themselves as perfect, and unfortunately, you

cannot learn anything from someone perfect. They indicated that many older activists carry layered and multi-dimensional burdens placed on them by patriarchy, such as bruised egos, ethnic discrimination, and violence in their personal and private space, which are then loaded onto young activists. Black women carry an added burden of being socialized to hate their skin color and hair type, and all these issues need spaces to be dealt with.

It was noted that, in the workplace, young black women are belittled and humiliated, while some end up resigning because of white privilege while others go on anti-depressants. Boardrooms are littered with toxic masculinity, patriarchy, ageism, racism, and the work. So, while the feminist struggle has to deal with personal and political issues, the individual problems are often not attended to and mitigated against the more significant socio-economic and political issues of the feminist struggle. Some respondents stressed the importance of having appropriate and honest conversations in workplaces as women and black people.

Some older activists also stated they did not have an embedded sense of activism because the younger ones were born after the struggle. However, the younger generation also highlighted that they have also had their fair share of struggles with poverty and race issues.

To break the barrier between the old and the young, respondents noted the importance of introducing young girls early enough to the discourse of gender equality and feminism, with some suggesting establishing girls' clubs in schools. Leadership opportunities need to be given even at those early stages while deliberately trying to create the space in which it can be done. Respondents also highlighted the importance of dialogue across the age divide, with one respondent referring to them as 'cleansing conversations' where the stalwarts of the movement embrace the younger activists; where there is calling out of one another, apologies where they are needed, and an acknowledgment of each other, which will then lead to the passing on of the baton.

The LGBTQI movement

The 1996 Constitution of South Africa has been hailed as one of the most progressive on the African continent. One of its key features is the equality clause, which prohibits discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation. The LGBT movement has made many strides in getting the legal framework to facilitate that non-discrimination. These laws include laws on state recognition of same-sex marriage, adoption rights, child custody, immigration, inheritance, and alteration in sex description, to name a few. However, there is a considerable gap between the law and the lived realities, particularly of black, economically, and socially vulnerable lesbians and transgender men. Those living in rural, peri-urban, and township areas have different experiences resulting from their sexual orientation.

Social media movement

Social media movements have gained traction in South Africa, with some prominent examples already having been cited above. However, some respondents noted that this kind of organizing assumes that it has and can garner a huge following of women, but it does not. One respondent gave an example of when she was engaging with a mixed group of women. The women from the rural area had no idea of

In these circumstances, respondents noted that women in the women's movement make the space uncomfortable for gender non-conforming persons, and thus there is still a lot of insecurity. Gender is more complicated than just the delineation of men and women, so there is a need for the movement to unlearn and learn about matters of intersectionality and what it means for the way the women's movement is structured. Women in the margins have been pushing those boundaries and ensuring they are included in the mainstream dialogues around feminism and gender equality. Still, respondents noted that that space was not as welcoming, particularly from the cisgender feminists.

the #hashtag or social media movement she was talking to them about. This then led to the criticism that though social media movements have opened up new spaces for organizing, there is a risk that they will eventually leave out a large section of the population of women in rural areas who do not have access to smartphones and data and then fall into a middle-class only movement.

WAYS OF OPERATING

The lack of an umbrella organization

Some respondents said they would not necessarily advocate for a women's movement umbrella body. Still, the lack of it creates and perpetuates 'flash' or 'spark' organizing, which dissipates as quickly as it comes together. Reference is made to organizing around key political moments such as the #Remember Khwezi protest, where four lone protestors supported the 31-year-old young woman known as Khwezi, who former President Jacob Zuma allegedly raped. The former head of state stood trial for the alleged crime in 2006 and was acquitted. This is an example of what some respondents called an increasing difficulty in mass mobilization.

Some respondents acknowledged that women's organizations have not done enough to consolidate issues. There is a need for a robust leftist federation or organization. However, what is missing may not necessarily be an organization but a base for a common ideology. The strands of the women's movement have been torn further apart by the lack of a shared ideology across racial, age, geographical, tribal, and ethnic lines in South Africa.

Respondents referred to a group of men as 'men who patriarch well' as a group of men who should be taken on board the feminist agenda. As evidence of this group of men,

respondents shared an example of how the He for She Campaign has been localized in South Africa through previous perpetrators' conversations that are being held with men self-correcting and building a body of men who are challenging the status quo, particularly on issues of rape and sexual violence. It was described as a more protracted process but the only way to effectively deal with violence against women. However, some respondents expressed that working with men takes us back into the terrain of patriarchy.

With rising levels of poverty and inequality in the country, the movement will not change things using the same old tactics. Respondents noted a brewing dissatisfaction, though protests are not coordinated, so coordination is necessary for better and more sustained results. One respondent pointed out this is the only way to build a back-breaking movement'. Respondents noted that there is a role for UN Women to play in creating spaces for collaboration within the movement and providing the pull that would bring different players together.

Safety and security for women

'In 2030, people living in South Africa will feel safe at home, school, and work and enjoy community life free of fear. Women walk freely in the streets, and children play safely outside.' South Africa National Development Plan 2030.

The safety and security of black women in institutions and even on the streets remain a significant concern. Black women are always prone to the danger of physical assault, rape, or even murder. Respondents raised this as a concern, particularly for students in tertiary institutions while on campus. This reality is exacerbated when one is a gender non-conforming person. Lesbian women and transsexuals are subjected to violence that has

been called corrective rape to 'correct' their sexual orientation or identity. Respondents shared harrowing stories of the rape that gender non-conforming persons face, particularly in township areas where law enforcement agents turn a blind eye or may even participate. The fear of violence has hampered women's participation in typical community life and development.

Documentation

Some respondents celebrated how the women of South Africa have a history of championing, leading, and producing profound writings like the Freedom Charter (1955) that articulated the vision of a South Africa they want, and that vision has shaped the country. Women produced this document from across the political formations.

Some respondents noted a high reliance on technology and cyberspace for documentation. There is an emergence of a radical feminist voice on social media. While this is a good development, some felt that the downside is that radicalism has been reduced to male bashing. So to that extent, some respondents

saw social media and the rise of technology as a double-edged sword giving space to reach more people using limited resources and yet not available for those offline. To that extent, they saw social media and new technologies as potential tools to perpetuate injustices and inequalities further. It was also noted that access does not necessarily translate to impact.

It was noted that women in academia are doing their part but that there is a need for more stories on the lived realities of women. The importance of women's own stories told by them was underscored, doing it for themselves and posterity. A respondent noted there are just not enough stories by women themselves.

Some respondents noted the importance of affirming women as knowledge holders. Feminist artwork is being installed in some spaces, depicting women's lived realities, including the setting up feminist art archives.

Respondents highlighted the importance of empowering survivors of violence and other effects of inequality to be able to document their own stories. One respondent noted that there is now a significant reliance on technology and cyber-information, but sometimes this information needs to be 'discerned'. The idea of feminist labs where feminists can come together and work to develop the African feminist voice was raised.

Much of what is available through documented materials is very Eurocentric. In a way, there is a control of knowledge by design to silence the voice of historical feminist struggles on the African continent. Respondents noted that feminists in Africa and, most notably, in South Africa need to document their work and not be too busy working to write down what they have achieved.

Some respondents celebrated work done

Spaces for healing in the movement

Respondents noted that there are many wounds that activists get while doing the work of fighting for gender justice and pushing back on patriarchy. There is a need for space that allows activists to be human and weak without being judged. A lot of work is still needed in framing what self-care looks like and what it means in the context of this kind of work. There has been an expectation that feminists are 'superwomen' and are not allowed to make mistakes.

Some young activists noted that in their

Reenergizing the movement

Respondents noted that the first thing that will be needed by way of reenergizing the movement is a re-invoking and rediscovery of the movement because there is a broad recog-

by Gender Links and like-minded organizations. The Gender Barometer produced by Gender Links was noted as necessary by some respondents.

It was also celebrated that one of the significant ways of feminist organizing has been using recent research results. An example has been a range of studies on gender-based violence where the women's movement has mobilized around key messages on multi-media platforms, including social media. Examples have been on issues of taxi murders and femicide. It was noted that although some of this work might not have been coordinated, it could still push the agenda.

Some young activists noted that it is a great injustice to all young people that they do not know the history of the women's movement in South Africa. They said it is essential to have a collective documentation of the work and achievements of the women's movement; otherwise, the young activists are not building on solid ground because they are out of touch with their history. Lack of a solid struggle history has disadvantaged young women, they noted.

journey of activism, they have realized that the movement is littered with broken people trying to fix something broken. They stressed the importance of the women's movement figuring out how to deal with its brokenness so that it does not harm itself and others. They noted that activists need to be able to hold each other up at their lowest points. There was an acknowledgment by respondents that these conversations have begun within the movement, but there is a need for more of them.

ognition that the movement is receding. There is a call for a 'women's movement'. There is a need for dialogue platforms. For women's organizations to stop operating in silos and

compartments, there is a need to listen to each other within a space for discussion. Respondents referred to SAWID mentioned above, which Mama Mbeki had set up for women across divides to talk about themselves.

Because there is such strong allegiance to political parties and divisions and fights along political lines, there may be value in civil society engagement of progressive political parties to reenergize the women's movement.

There is also a need for more grassroots engagement if the movement is energized. Respondents note that this will ensure that the movement addresses issues that affect the real communities of women instead of engaging in misguided work that can be seen as elitist. Respondents noted that there is a need to move away from the top-to-bottom approach but rather to tap into the indigenous knowledge and experiences so that there is an authenticity to the work of the movement. There is a need to cross divides, for example, being inclusive of all workers, whether in formal or informal employment, when needed. The strategies used to accommodate both the majority and minority groups of women.

One of how the movement can be reenergized is by going back to the traditional ways of organizing door-to-door, home-to-home, and community-to-community to raise the political consciousness of the structural inequalities that transcend individualistic needs. Each strand of the movement is engaged in issues that are central to it. Still, some problems are overarching, the normative environment that fuels gender inequality and remains unaddressed. As one respondent put it, we need to address the WHY. Why is gender-based violence, among other manifestations of gender inequality, so rampant? This approach will move the women's movement away from a reactive mode where women *toyi toyi* outside the courtroom during rape trials to reflect on why rape is happening in the first place. This will also allow advocates in the GBV sector to be conscious that GBV is happening in the context of broader violence, including state violence and high levels of crime and corruption.

However, respondents further noted the need to employ new ways of organizing because the traditional types of organizing are no longer enough on their own. The movement needs transparent follow-up processes while operating under straightforward action programs.

ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

There is a stratified women's movement in South Africa which, in the early years post-apartheid, achieved a lot of gains in terms of the legal framework for gender equality. The South African constitution is unparalleled in its provisions for equality based on gender and sexual orientation. Yet, there remains a massive gap between the law and lived realities of women. Rape and sexual violence and the general safety of women and girls remain significant drawbacks to the advancement of women in South Africa in this legal environment. The movement needs to intensify its work in challenging the normative order that supports this abuse and subordination of women. The women's movement needs to address male preference values urgently.

The movement right now is not operating under a clear ideology and a plan of action after the shift from the nationalism discourse to the citizenship discourse, which should ultimately see women as equal citizens in the country. The different strands of the movement operate along issue-based strands, and there is no clear linkage among the various players. The report shows that race, class, and gender concerns are intertwined forms of oppression of women, and the movement has begun to engage with those issues as interrelated. Until the primary concerns of poverty, poor health care, and social service delivery are robustly addressed for impoverished, black women who are in the majority, the gains of gender equality will not be fully realized.

The report notes that the movement lacks clear, overarching leadership, perhaps because of the lack of an umbrella organization. This sometimes results in positive spark organizing through protests on topical concerns, but results are unsustainable as there is no precise follow-through mechanism. The role of UN Women was seen as providing the pull or the binding force for the movement's different facets by providing or facilitating that leadership. No 'back-breaking movement building' can have a lasting impact without this.

This report notes how the current funding models for donors are crippling feminist organizing. It was pointed out that rigidity comes with the structure of many organizational structures.

The report also notes the need to move away from binary views of men and women within the women's movement. The LGBTQIA+ community still has a lot of insecurity. There seems to be ownership of the women's movement by cisgender feminists who are not giving room to gender non-conforming persons. In the same way, the alums of the movement are seen as godmothers who are not allowing room for the younger feminists who are coming up. Again the role of UN

Women was noted in creating spaces for dialogues between the older and the younger feminists to create a vibrant and sustained movement. Linked to some of the damages in the movement, space for healing and self-care was raised as a critical issue on which more dialogue is needed. It was noted that the lack of common space for sharing and mutual learning among young and older women has seen older women fail to share their experiences and coping mechanisms in the face of the rape culture. Regrettably, young women are reliving the very experiences of their older sisters and mothers. This has resulted in pent-up anger in younger women who feel exposed and betrayed by older activists who have not shared their experiences, coping mechanisms, and how they have resolved their hurts and abuses.

The report raised a critical point on documentation of the work and achievements of the movement. With the rapid advancement of technology, though there is a lot of material to be read on feminist theory to fuel practice, it was felt that it is biased towards Eurocentric feminism and not the African feminist theory, which is seen to be more relevant in South Africa. In this documentation, a clear ideology will be spelled out, enabling the movement to deal with issues of diversity which seems to be a sticky point.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Energizing the Women's Movement

1. Ideologically: It is recommended that there be deliberate efforts within the movement to build on and entrench a commonly shared feminist ideology and political consciousness to drive gender equality and women's empowerment work. This must be in the context of a clear understanding that women are not a homogenous group and that inequality affects them differently. Ideological reenergizing will galvanize all women under the banner of women's inequality. They can locate their specific issues under that agenda as they recognize that broad assignment to fight for women's equal humanity.
2. Through Feminist Mobilizing: Support women at the community levels to form platforms where they come together to solve their problems - tapping into indigenous knowledge and energizing existing platforms. These must empower grassroots-based initiatives that enable women to identify and test their own suggestions and alternatives and ensure solutions are not imposed on them.
3. It is recommended that the platforms be the engine for 'back-breaking' movement building in South Africa across sectors.

Dialogue and Strategizing Platforms

1. It is recommended that UN Women support the Women's Movement to set up dialogue and strategizing platforms. UN Women was challenged to be clear about its mandate concerning the Women's Movement, i.e., realizing that it is a thought leader, convener, enhancer, and upscale of the agenda of the women's movement and with that understanding, the following is recommended:
2. UN Women support the women's movement by thinking through and addressing structural poverty and classism in the country for women and girls as a matter of priority. This means breaking down and bringing clarity and understanding to the movement of feminist economic empowerment of women as well as supporting the advancement of girls' and women's education.
3. UN Women support the Women's Movement dialogue and strategy for advancing an agenda of norms transformation to dismantle the ideology that promotes the furtherance of patriarchy and subordination of women. It is also recommended that the dialogue platforms become an engine for driving change towards norms transformation; that this dialogue platform also be used to build consensus and shared understanding of male involvement and what that means in feminist mobilizing and movement building.
4. UN Women facilitate dialogue platforms bringing together old and young women for mentoring and experience sharing and exploring avenues for synergies in and among different generations of feminists. There must be willpower on both sides of the table to acknowledge each other and share experiences mutually. This would help create a vibrant and sustained movement.
5. It is recommended that the women's movement deliberately prioritize documentation to build a solid body of knowledge on the movement's herstory, gains, and progress. This will guide the women's movement to the next generation and provide clear evidence of its achievements and experiences.
6. UN Women needs to consider facilitating the emergence of an overarching leadership structure or coordinating body for the women's movement in South Africa through a nationally led process so that the outcome is not perceived as a UN imposition.
7. It is also recommended that women of South Africa take a bottom-up approach in building a movement that genuinely embraces women in all their diversities without making gender

- non-conforming people, in particular, feel like they do not belong and making the space hostile.
8. A strategy is needed to build on and follow through spark protests and #hashtag movements and the momentum they bring to issues of concern. A challenge of these types of movements is that, without clear follow-through, they can quickly fade away without any lasting impact being recorded.

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LEGISLATION

Constitution of the Republic of South Africa Act 108 of 1996

Termination of Pregnancy Act No.92 of 1996

Domestic Violence Act 116 of 1998

Endnotes

- i. To the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transsexual abbreviation has been added the Queer, Intersex and Asexual as well as other communities which have often been forgotten and left out of discourse.
- ii. Meer, Shamim, Which Workers, Which Women, What Interests? Race, Class and Gender in Post-Apartheid South Africa' in Democratizing Democracy: Beyond the Liberal Democratic Canon edited by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, Verso, 2005.
- iii. Hassim, Shireen. Voices, Hierarchies and Spaces: Reconfiguring the Women's Movement in Democratic South Africa. Political Studies, University of Witwatersrand.
- iv. Thiipe, Thuto Seabe, "A Rock Strikes Back: Women's Struggles for Equality in the Development of the South African Constitution"(2010). Political Science Honors Projects Paper 25.
- v. See Note 2.
- vi. See Note 2.
- vii. Hassim, see note 3.
- viii. Among these organizations are the Gender Advocacy Programme, Gender Research Project, Black Sash
- ix. Such organizations include the Network Against Violence Against Women, Gauteng Network for Violence against Women, Shelter Network, Ilitha Labantu, POWA and the Reproductive Rights Alliance.
- x. See www.dev.starshipsystems.com/sawid2/index.php/86-about-us for more information about SAWID.
- xi. Among many organizations working to end violence against women are coalitions such as 'We Will Speak Out South Africa' which aims at advocating for human rights for all with a special focus on making faith communities a safe space for women and girls while challenging faith leaders to speak out against this violation of human rights.
- xii. The Domestic Violence Act 118 of 1998
- xiii. Crime against Women in South Africa: An in-depth analysis of the Victims of Crime Survey Data 2018. Crime Statistics Series, Volume V. Accessed at <http://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/Report-03-40-05/Report-03-40-05June2018.pdf>
- xiv. The case of film maker Khalo Matabane was cited as an example.
- xv. See note 2.
- xvi. Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Act 108 of 1996).
- xvii. 9. (3) The state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth.
- xviii. We'll Show You You're a Woman': Violence and Discrimination against Black Lesbians and Transgender Men in South Africa. Human Rights Watch, 2011.
- xix. <https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/woman-in-zuma-khwezi-protest-speaks-out-2054518> accessed on 09/09/18
- xx. The HeforShe solidarity movement was created by UN Women to provide a systematic approach and targeted platform where a global audience can engage and become change agents for the achievement of a gender equal world through innovative, inclusive approaches that mobilize people of every gender identity and expression as advocates for both locally relevant solutions and globally transformative approaches.
- xxi. See note 16.



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