

Gender Mainstreaming in International Relations: A Case of Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy

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ABSTRACT

In 2014, Sweden initiated a new approach to foreign policy based on feminist ideals and called it Feminist Foreign Policy. Through this approach, Sweden aimed to prioritise the gender equality and human rights of women and girls in all levels of its external action. This new experiment created immense interest among policy practitioners and academicians. After Sweden, at least six countries have adopted the feminist approach to their foreign policies. The present study aims to explore how gender is mainstreamed in Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy by examining the strategies and main thrust areas of the policy. The study makes use of the qualitative method of analysis through qualitative content analysis of both primary and secondary sources. In the primary source, the article analyses Swedish policy documents, and in the secondary source, the study makes use of various studies conducted by scholars on this new policy. The study finds that Sweden has systematically mainstreamed gender issues through the strategies of rights, representation, resources and, research, and reality checks mainly in foreign aid, trade, diplomacy, and defence, but the policy is not all-inclusive as it does not include the gendered minorities like LGBTQ+ communities in its scope. The present study encourages prioritising the issues of women, girls, and gendered minorities in international relations.

Keywords: *Feminist Foreign Policy, International Relations, Gender mainstreaming, Human Rights*

INTRODUCTION

Feminism is a socio-political movement and ideology that advocates for the social, political, economic, and cultural equality of the genders (Mohajan, 2022). It seeks to address the gender-based oppression, discrimination, and stereotypes that disadvantage women and other marginalized gender identities

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by achieving ideals like gender equality, human rights, and social justice. These feminist ideals have emerged as responses to systemic injustices and inequalities perpetuated by patriarchal structures throughout history. These ideals gained momentum through waves of feminist activism. From the suffragette movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to the contemporary intersectional approach of third- and fourth-wave feminism, these ideals have advocated for equality and justice for all, regardless of gender, race, or class. Foreign policy refers to a national government's strategy, principles, and actions concerning its interactions with other countries and international organizations. It encompasses the diplomatic, economic, military, and cultural action of a nation, aimed at promoting national interests, security, and influence on the global stage (Holsti, 1970).

Feminism and foreign policy are two distinct streams that have developed with little interaction with each other. Feminist voices have argued that traditional foreign policy is male-dominated, and by challenging this, feminist scholars advocated for a more inclusive and gender sensitive approach to foreign policy. The interaction between these streams has increased in recent times. Especially since the 1980s, feminist approaches have been increasingly applied to foreign policy (Tickner, 1997). These approaches highlight the crucial link between gender equality and international relations. They recognise that the empowerment of women has profound implications for international peace, security, the protection of human rights, and the development of the world. Gender issues have come into mainstream international relations in a prominent way since the adoption of the Women Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) in 2000. The agenda set by the world's highest body, having the responsibility to maintain world peace and security, called for the protection of women and girls in armed conflicts and involvement of women representatives in peace processes to resolve these conflicts (Shepherd, 2016). The next prominent experiment is the advent of Feminist Foreign Policy which started mainstreaming gender issues in international relations on a greater scale. The world's first Feminist Foreign Policy was adopted by Sweden in 2014 (Aggestam & Bergman Rosamond, 2019).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Feminist Foreign Policy is a new approach to foreign policy. Since the adoption of this radical turn to the country's external action by the Swedish government, many scholars have shown interest in it. Gardell, Wagnsson, &

Wallenius (2022) studied Swedish people's perceptions of security arising from the adoption of feminism into public policies and found people were more sceptical about the use of feminist perspectives in security. In a master level thesis, Berg & Valentina (2021) compared Swedish Feminist Policy with France and Spain and found that all these countries have used liberal feminist perspectives to devise their foreign policies, and there are not many differences in these policies. Sundström, Zhukova & Elgström (2021) compared the norm translation in Sweden and other countries and found the Swedish government has socialist welfare policies. Petersen (2020) in her master level thesis studies norm institutionalisation in Swedish foreign policy and argues that UNSC resolution 1325 on the WPS agenda has influenced institutionalisation of norms like gender equality in the Swedish case. Gashi (2020) investigated Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy using Feminist International Theory and concluded that Swedish policy is not completely in accordance with Feminist International Theory as its arms export policy to non-democratic countries like Saudi Arabia has violated the feminist ideals. Aggestam and Bergman-Rosamond (2019) in a case study, analysed gender security-nexus and its politicisation in Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy and found that the de-politicisation and re-politicisation have created contradictions in policy making and implementation. Isaksson (2018) studied Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy in relation to its security and foreign policies and found that both policies were not compatible with each other and have created many issues and flaws in its practical implementation. In a Bachelor thesis, Apelgren (2018) using right based and instrumentalist perspectives analysed Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy, and found that Sweden uses both perspectives to promote rights of women and girls at the international level. Möllerop (2016) in her case study, tried to construct a framework to assess the foreign policy of Sweden, and by using the first National Action Plan of Sweden 2015-18, she concluded that it is possible to construct a tool to assess the action plan.

RESEARCH GAP AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

From the above literature review it is evident that the research and studies conducted on the topic confined to the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy and its relation to feminist theory, peace and security concerns and challenges may arise at the implementation stage. Little attention was paid on the gender mainstreaming in the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy. Promotion of gender equality is one of the important objectives of the Feminist Foreign Policy (Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2015) and there arises a need to study the issue of gender mainstreaming in this new Swedish experiment. The present

study aims to explore how gender is mainstreamed in the policy by examining the strategies used to implement gender equality and the main thrust areas in which these strategies are implemented to mainstream gender issues.

METHOD AND MATERIALS

The article uses a qualitative method of study. For the purpose of analysis, qualitative content analysis has been undertaken. The study relies on both primary and secondary data sources. In the primary data, the study analyses Swedish Feminist Foreign policy documents released by the government of Sweden from time to time. In these documents, the Handbook Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy is an important document released in 2018. The handbook displays the objectives and strategies of the policy. Sweden has developed two National Action Plans to implement the policy. National Action Plan documents are also important sources for this study. In secondary data, the official interviews of the Swedish officials, especially the inputs provided by its then Foreign Minister Margot Wallstrom are valuable. Apart from these, study uses various press releases by the governments, research articles published by the scholars, and the studies and research conducted by the institutions. Especially, the study made use of the publications of the ICRW (International Centre for Research on Women) located in Washington D. C. (USA), which is a pioneer in the research on Feminist Foreign Policy.

SWEDISH FEMINIST FOREIGN POLICY

A new coalition government formed after the 2014 elections in Sweden declared itself a champion of women's rights. Minister of Foreign Affairs, Margot Wallstrom, was a former UN special representative on sexual violence. Wallstrom declared her government a feminist government, and immediately after assuming office announced the radical shift to Swedish foreign policy with a feminist approach and called it Feminist Foreign Policy. Initially, it created scepticism among the scholars, and many expressed their concern about the applicability of the feminist ideals to practical world affairs as they still consider realism rules the world (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016). Some experts even expressed their apprehension about what Wallstrom means exactly by this new turn to foreign policy. Wallstrom tried to clear the doubts of both scholars and policy practitioners through a series of interviews with the media. The policy was studied by many scholars, and papers were published. Soon, the new policy created interest among governments in many countries, and it created a ripple effect on policy making processes throughout

the world (Kouvo, 2019). After Sweden, at least, six more countries have adopted Feminist Foreign Policies till date. Those are Canada in 2017 with Feminist International Assistance policy (FIAP), France in 2018 with a focus on Feminist Diplomacy, Luxemburg in the same year, 2018, with the approach of 3Ds-Diplomacy, Defence, and Development, Mexico in 2020 with its comprehensive and intersectional approach, Spain in 2021 by focussing on the economic prosperity of women and girls, and Europe's largest economy, Germany in 2021, which bases its approach on Sweden. Apart from this, some more countries expressed the desire to adopt one, for example, New Zealand, Libya, Norway, and Malaysia (Standfield, 2020).

Sweden is considered a humanitarian superpower (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016), and it has had gender sensitive policies and laws for centuries now. The laws to protect women date back to 13th century Sweden, and it has one of the most progressive legal mechanisms to protect women from violence. A law of 1734 criminalised rape, and Sweden was one of the earliest countries to give women the right to inherit property in 1845 (Dribe & Lundh, 2005). The Act of 1974, which criminalised rape within marriage, and the Gender Equality Act of 1979 are some instances where Sweden leads the world towards equal rights for women. In the international field, Sweden also actively promoted rights of women and girls. Sweden played a crucial role in adopting the WPS agenda by UNSC in 2000, and it was one of the first countries to adopt National Action Plan in 2006 to implement it. Continuing its commitment, it showed another way for the empowerment of women around the world in 2014 through its Feminist Foreign Policy.

Feminist Foreign Policy is the application of feminist ideals to every external action of a country to promote the rights of women and girls throughout the world (International Center for Research on Women, 2023). Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy bases its argument on the idea that women's rights are human rights and promotes their rights throughout the world. It strives to end the subordination of women by providing them equal opportunities in every aspect of social action (Nordberg, 2015). Further on the line of the WPS agenda of United Nations Security Council resolution 1325 and other resolutions, the Swedish policy aims to protect women and girls from violence in both conflict and normal situations, including domestic violence. The policy asserts that for world peace and security, gender equality is a necessary condition, and so the policy pushes the link between gender and peace (Aggestam & Bergman Rosamond, 2019). Through this policy, Sweden aspires to become a gender

cosmopolitan state by voicing the gender equality and rights of women and girls at the global stage (Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 2015).

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles, behaviours, and expectations that a particular society attributes to individuals based on their perceived sex (Francis, 2006). There is historic inequality between genders that marginalizes women and other genders by limiting their access to rights, resources, and opportunities. Gender mainstreaming is an important approach of promoting gender equality and addressing the historical marginalisation of women by incorporating this approach at the centre of public policies. The concept mainly emerged in the last decade of the 20th century through some international instruments. The 1993 Vienna World Conference on Human Rights declared women's rights as human rights and paved the way for a gender mainstreaming approach (Boyle, 1995). The Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action adopted in 1995 at the fourth World Conference on Women which acknowledged the role of women in Peace and Development and re-enforced gender mainstreaming (Abedin, 1996). Gender mainstreaming aims to make women the agents of peace and development rather than just objects or beneficiaries.

Raunaq Jahan, who is a Professor at Colombia University, first coined the term gender mainstreaming. Jahan identifies two strategies to mainstream gender in public policies and practices: first one is the traditional add and stir approach, where gender issues are incorporated into existing policy frameworks, and second one is the agenda setting approach where women are made agents of change and not only objects of change. Gender mainstreaming aims to dilute the traditional power structures like patriarchy, which perpetuate existing gender inequalities (Valenius, 2007). Gender mainstreaming bases its arguments on the concept of gender essentialism. Gender essentialism proposes that women have innate qualities, and putting them at the centre of action can bring novelty to the process. Essentially, gender essentialism stresses the need for women's participation in the implementation of public policies as agents of change. Gender mainstreaming is one of the features that Feminist Foreign Policy brought to practise and is making the issues of gender equality at the centre of the policy making and implementation. In the next section the present article analyses how gender is mainstreamed in Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy, what strategies have been used and in what action areas these strategies are implemented.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN SWEDISH FOREIGN POLICY

Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy aims to introduce gender mainstreaming in its approach (Government of Sweden, 2018). Gender mainstreaming has been the main guide to planning and monitoring the implementation of Feminist Foreign Policy. The Swedish government has initiated a programme of gender mainstreaming of government agencies under the GMGA (Gender Mainstreaming in Government Agencies) programme (Chakraborty, 2019). The initiative covers around 60 agencies of the Swedish government. In 2018, the government established a separate agency to look into the gender mainstreaming efforts in these Swedish agencies.

The Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs is continuously working for gender mainstreaming in Swedish Foreign Service and allocating budgets for this purpose. Gender mainstreaming budgeting covers international humanitarian and development cooperation. The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), a nodal agency to implement Swedish international assistance, has developed a gender mainstreaming plan for the period 2016-18, focussing mainly on gender equality. The agency also continuously reviews the implementation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is conducting training programmes to train its staff to implement the gender mainstreaming programmes effectively. The ministry also stresses gender mainstreaming in European Union Foreign and Security Policy. The ministry has played a prominent role in the European Union Action Plan for gender equality and women's empowerment 2021-25. The Swedish government extends gender mainstreaming to achieve world peace and security, including disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, the Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy aims at positive economic impacts of gender mainstreaming. In the backdrop of this, the article explores gender mainstreaming in implementation strategies and main working areas.

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

The Government of Sweden has devised an innovative strategy to implement gender mainstreaming in its Feminist Foreign Policy. The government calls it the 'Strategy of 3Rs', which is based on the 'Fourth R'. In this strategy, 3Rs stand for Rights, Representation, and Resources (Thompson & Clement, 2019). The rights of women and girls, the representation of women, and the allocation of resources to achieve the goals of the policy, the fourth R on which the first 3Rs are based, stand for the 'Research and Reality Check.' This

includes a review of the policy based on authentic data to improve the planning and implantation of the policy.

Rights: Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy aims to protect the rights of women and girls all over the world. The policy bases its argument on the view that women's rights are human rights. By giving normative reorientation (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016) to Swedish external action, the policy started a gender sensitive approach in the international relations. The policy aims at removing both cultural and structural constraints that are preventing women and girls from enjoying their basic rights. Sweden also stresses the reproductive and health rights of women. It advocates for the full rights of women over their bodies and reproductive choices, which is controversial in many countries (Government of Sweden, 2018). The policy aims to protect women and girls from all forms of violence. This includes domestic violence, sexual and gender-based violence, and also the protection from violence during armed conflicts. Based on the Women and Peace Agenda (WPS) of the United Security Council, the policy stresses the participation of women in conflict resolution along with their protection in such situations. The women should also be involved in post-conflict reconstruction and development. The Swedish Action Plan 2015-18 to implement the policy also covers the violence caused against women and girls by extra state groups like terrorist groups, human trafficking networks, organised crime syndicates, etc. Sweden as a non-permanent member of the United Nations Security (2017-18) Council succeeded in including sexual and gender-based violence as the basis for UN sanctions.

Representation: Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy strives to promote representation of women in all decision-making areas all across the world. Women's representation in national parliaments and their representation in conflict resolution and peace building is promoted. Women's representation in the peace process can lead to long lasting peace and development (Apelgren, 2018). Women are under-represented in these areas, in 2017 only 17 heads of state were women, only nine percent of women were represented in the 31 peace processes between 1992 to 2011 and only four percent signed the peace accords (Government of Sweden, 2018). Sweden wants to change this position and promote women's representation all over the world through its external action.

Sweden created a group of women negotiators called 'Mediation Networks' in 2015. The network consisted of 15 women who are experts in mediation talks. The network intends to fill the gender gap in diplomacy in

general and peace negotiation in particular. The network assists the women to lead peace processes in Sweden's neighbouring countries (Andersson, 2020). These networks are instrumental in ending stereotypes regarding the women's participation in peace and security issues which traditionally excluded women from these areas. After the adoption of Feminist Foreign Policy Sweden has increased the number of women officers in its departments and agencies especially in the Ministry of External Affairs (Niklasson & Robertson, 2018).

Resources: Resources play an important role in achieving any goal. Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy believes in allocating resources to promote the rights and representation of women globally. The policy also promotes the ownership of resources by women. As for the ownership of resources, women lag far behind men. Many countries don't even think women are eligible to own property legally. Data shows more than 80 percent of the world's land resources are owned by men (Villa, 2017). Around 30 crore more men own mobile phones than women. Less mobile phones hinder the women from accessing the information (GSMA Connected Women Commitment Initiative, 2013). Sweden believes in investing in women empowerment. It is one of the leading donors among OECD countries².

Sweden promotes the economic empowerment of women for the realisation of their rights. Equal distribution of economic resources will have a gendered impact (Kirby & Shepherd, 2016). Owning resources could have a positive impact on women's access to health and education facilities. Swedish policy promotes women's participation in the labour market, which will allow women to become economically independent which in turn improves the overall wellbeing of women. SIDA promotes women entrepreneurship by providing easy credits to women and women-led business organisations. Sweden succeeded in promoting gender equality through the World Trade Organisation's declaration in 2017 (Hannah, Scott, & Wilkinson, 2018). The declaration, signed by over 120 countries, also known as Buenos Aires Declaration, called for inclusion of more women in trade and making gender responsive trade and development policies. Sweden is instrumental in collecting information regarding discriminatory legislation against women across the world. The report is called the Women, Business, and the Law' report.

Research and Reality Check: Research plays a very important role in the planning, formulation, and implementation of a policy. Reality on the ground will be known from the data collected and analysed through systematic research, which will be useful to promote rights, representation and providing resources needed without any wastage. Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy added

a 'fourth R' to its implementation strategy as Research and Reality Check in 2018. This strategy aims to support the first 3Rs. This makes the policy more practice oriented. To improve the lives of women the policy believes in meaningful change on the ground. Through the fourth R it intends to evaluate the progress made by the policy. Sweden has used this strategy to address the violence in armed conflict situations and to plan the humanitarian response in such situations (Shi, 2021).

Sweden's strategy of 3Rs+R has helped Sweden systematically implement its foreign policy goals based on feminist ideals. The strategy has strengthened Sweden's commitment towards women and girls all across the continents. The strategy provided a meaningful framework and scope to implement the policy both in and outside Swedish borders. These strategies are implemented in four action areas, namely aid, trade, diplomacy, and defence. These action areas cover majority of the areas of Sweden's external influence and promote gender mainstreaming to empower women in both the developed and developing world.

ACTION AREAS

Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy aims to apply the strategy of gender mainstreaming to all levers of external influence of Sweden. The strategy of 3R+R has identified mainly four action areas to execute gender mainstreaming. The gender mainstreaming has been executed in Aid, Trade, Diplomacy and Defence (Thompson & Clement, 2019). Gender mainstreaming is not just a matter of justice for women but also achieving sustainable peace, security, and development. By applying gender perspective to these areas, Sweden aims to foster an inclusive, peaceful, secure, and sustainable world for women and girls. With the comprehensive understanding of the intersectional identities among the women girls like ethnicity, class, race, etc., the Swedish policy undertakes systematic efforts and it ensures that the gender perspective is mainstreamed all across its foreign policy actions areas (Aggestam & Bergman-Rosamond, 2016).

Aid: Sweden has a long history of providing international humanitarian aid. The Swedish Red Cross has a name in providing medical assistance in wars and conflicts. Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy aims to provide aid to promote rights of women and girls all across the world. SIDA is a nodal agency to provide international assistance. Gender perspective was added to the scope of SIDA in 2016 through an ordinance (Verezhak, 2022). SIDA has also developed an action plan to provide gender assistance with a 'Gender Tool

Box' to provide technical assistance to the Swedish departments and agencies working promoting empowering women all across the world. Sweden has developed a gender equality strategy for the years 2018 to 2022 through which women and civil society organisations working in the cause of women are funded (Mazurana & Maxwell, 2018). The Folke Bernadotte Academy (FBA) is another Swedish public agency which works in protection of rights of women and girls during the armed conflicts and assists other agencies working in the field of peace and security of women and girls (Verezhak, 2022). Sweden is also working in multilateral spaces to mainstream gender issues in the working of the international organisations. Sweden is a pioneer in providing financial assistance to international organisations working in the promotion of women's rights. It is the second biggest donor to UN Women, a United Nations entity promoting gender equality and women's empowerment (UN Women, 2019).

Trade: Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy aims to promote gender rights through its trade relations with the outside world. Sweden believes traditional trade policies are gender neutral and motivated by only national interests and profit-making. Sweden strives to develop an international system that is gender-friendly. In 2017, Sweden amended its arms export policy so that arms could not be given to non-democratic regimes and countries that violate the human rights of women and girls (Thompson & Clement, 2019). Sweden did not renew its arms deal with Saudi Arabia, which has a poor record of promoting the rights of women. Further, Sweden is empowering women in international trade and finance through an export credit agency and also promoting women entrepreneurs through the 'We-Fi initiative'—the Women Entrepreneurs Finance Initiative. Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy is promoting gender equality laws in trade relations throughout the world. Sweden also promotes women's rights in multilateral forums like the European Union. Sweden ensured the gender equality clause in the free trade agreement of the European Union with Canada in 2017.

Diplomacy: Diplomacy is an important part of any foreign policy. Traditionally, diplomacy is gender-blind and dominated by men (Aggestam & Towns, 2018). Swedish feminist foreign policy promotes the participation of women in diplomatic practices. Margot Walstrom intended to lead Sweden through feminist diplomacy. The gender mainstreaming in diplomacy started with the appointment of women staff to foreign offices in Sweden. The number of women in diplomatic positions outside has also increased, and it reached up to 40 percent in 2018 (Niklasson & Robertson, 2018). Sweden is conducting training programmes for foreign office staff to make them sensitive to gender

issues. It can be seen as a concrete effort towards gender mainstreaming. The Swedish policy also aims to promote ‘Peace Diplomacy’ for a peaceful and secure world. Studies have shown peace is more enduring when women participate in the peace process. Sweden pushed the participation of women in the Colombian peace process of 2016 (Kjelsaek & Tryggstad, 2020), and on the insistence of Sweden, a gender clause was added to the peace accord. Sweden is one of the major countries that pushed for UNSC Resolution 1325 of 2000 to protect women in armed conflict situations.

Defence: Defence sector is traditionally considered masculine in nature, and women and their views are neglected. Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy wants to change this scenario. The policy intends to mainstream gender in the defence sector. Sweden aims to gender sensitise the defence forces. Major violations of the human rights of women and girls have happened during the armed conflicts (Smulovitz, 2013). Defence forces need to be sensitised on gender issues. Even post conflict reconstruction needs a gendered touch. Sweden has developed a policy to train military, police, and peacekeeping forces on gender sensitivity. The essence of these training programmes is to make soldiers and officers working in peace and security gender sensitive and convince them that conflict affects women and girls disproportionately. Sweden has devised a training module for this purpose which includes issues like gender violence and the need to counter it during armed conflicts.

Sweden Feminist Foreign Policy strives to improve the participation of women soldiers in defence forces. There was 5 percent increase in the number of women soldiers in Swedish army between 2017 and 2021 (Statista Research Department, 2022). The Swedish policy also proposes gender perspectives for ‘Nordic Battlegroup’- a multinational military unit formed by several Nordic and Baltic countries, including Sweden. It is designed for rapid deployment in crisis management operations, peacekeeping missions, and humanitarian interventions. which will ensure gender equality in these 18 battle groups of Europe (Valenius J., 2020). Sweden is also working with multilateral agencies like UNO to promote the participation of women in UN peacekeeping missions. Sweden is one of the largest donors to these peacekeepers, and it has sent 15 percent of women to its peace mission in Mali- Multinational Integrated Stabilisation Mission in 2018 and it has sent all women helicopter crew to this mission (Dahl, 2021).

From the above findings, it is evident that Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy mainstreams the gender issues in foreign policy with a systematic implementation strategy of Rights, Representation, Resources, and Research

and Reality Check. These strategies were implemented in all levers of Swedish foreign policy, in that aid, trade, diplomacy and defence are major thrust areas. By mainstreaming gender perspectives in these major areas of foreign policy Sweden seeks to challenge the traditional gender norms, address gender inequalities, and promote an inclusive environment for women and girls both within and outside Swedish borders. The Swedish case of gender streaming stands testament to its commitment to the empowerment of women all over the world. This effort may foster an environment that benefits to harness the potential and talent of half of the world's population. Further from the above findings it is also evident that even though Swedish policy mentions gender mainstreaming in its policy documents but only focuses on women and girls. The Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy Handbook, a major document of the Swedish experiment, lacks significant focus on gendered minorities such as LGBTQ+³ communities, except for a few mentions. Swedish Foreign Policy would become more inclusive and entirely gender-sensitive if the concerns of gendered minorities were also significantly addressed.

CONCLUSION

Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy has succeeded in bringing gender issues to the international field. It has become a role model for the rest of the world, and many countries have shown interest in this new approach and some have followed the Swedish path. Scholars have also shown interest in this new Swedish experiment and studied it from many angles. Present article explores how gender is mainstreamed in Swedish Feminist Foreign Policy. The study finds that gender is mainstreamed in Swedish policy systematically with the strategy of 3R+R and it has been applied to four major areas of foreign policy namely aid, trade, diplomacy and defence effectively but the policy is not all-inclusive as it neglects the other gendered minorities (LGBTQ+). The study recommends the inclusion of the needs of the gendered minorities in the Feminist Foreign Policies. Future studies may focus on the ground level impact of gender mainstreaming by the Swedish policy. The study made use of some of the primary and secondary documents which are mechanically translated from Swedish language to English. Future research may use human translation as some minute details may be missed out in machine translation. As the world continues to grapple with multifaceted challenges for women, girls and gendered minorities, this Swedish perspective offers a road map for gender equality and empowerment of women.

NOTES

1. Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda refers to the path set by the ten United Nations Security Council resolutions. First and basic resolution 1325 adopted in 2000. Further nine resolutions called sister resolutions of 1325 are adopted between 2008 to 2019. These resolutions call for protection of women and girls in armed conflicts and equal participation of women formal peace processes.
2. OECD (Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development) is an intergovernmental organisation of 39 industrialised countries which follow market oriented economic system for sustainable growth.
3. LGBTQ+ refers to gender non-conforming communities like Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer and Questioning. Here Queer has been added recently that means anyone who is non-cis-gender. Questioning refers to one who is not sure about their sexual orientation and plus denotes all other gendered minorities not covered in these categories.

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