EXPLORING THE STRUGGLES AND RESILIENCE OF CAMEROONIAN WOMEN:
THROUGH THE INTERSECTIONALITY OF GENDER, RACE, AND COLONIAL LEGACIES

Health and Human Rights: Gender and Racial Equity
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Exploring the Struggles and Resilience of Cameroonian Women

- **Cameroon's Diversity:** Cameroon in West Africa, consists of over twelve million women representing diverse ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds, with English and French as the official languages.

- **Historical Context:** From the precolonial era to the present day, Cameroonian women have navigated a landscape marked by shifting political dynamics, economic structures, and cultural norms.

- **Theoretical Approach:** This analysis is approached through the lenses of feminist theory, postcolonial theory, and intersectionality.

- **Key Arguments:** The challenges faced by Cameroonian women are deeply rooted in colonial and patriarchal structures, perpetuated by historical legacies and contemporary socioeconomic and political systems.
Colonial Legacy and Historical Context

- **Precolonial Times:** Women held significant economic power alongside men.
- **Colonial Impact:** The introduction of patriarchal and capitalist structures undermined women's status and economic power.
- **1920s-1950s:** Women navigated social shifts from urbanization and colonial capitalism.
- **Underdevelopment and neo-colonialism:** Exploitation of women's labor, leading to increased dependency on men compared to pre-colonial times.
Continuation of Colonial Legacy: Land Rights Violations

- Patriarchal Laws restrict women's ability to inherit, own, and control land.
- Corporations exploit legal loopholes for land control.
- Women's well-being and food security are jeopardized without land control.
Human Rights Violations Faced by Women and Girls

**Human Rights Violations**
- Sexual and gender-based violence
- Reproductive rights violations
- Exploitation
- Denial of resources and opportunities
- Human trafficking
- Psychological and physical abuse
- Forced early marriage

**Impact of Anglophone Crisis**
- Colonial divisions fuel demands for autonomy, escalating conflict
- Increased Sexual and gender-based violence, and denial of resources
- Displacement of women and girls
- Precarious masculinities lead to increased domestic violence.
- Women balancing new economic roles face heightened tensions and risks
- Conflict-induced fear intensifies domestic violence and brutal acts

In 2023, 5 women were killed each month in Cameroon
Pursuit of Better Lives

- **Deceptive job opportunities abroad:** Promises of jobs overseas with false assurances of safe travel.

- **Dangerous journeys:** Many women risk their lives crossing the Sahara and Mediterranean, facing overcrowded and unseaworthy vessels.

- **Forced Domestic and Sex Labor:** Upon arrival, passports are confiscated and women are forced into domestic servitude or sex work.

- **Debt bondage:** Traffickers demand high sums for passage, trapping women in exploitative labor until debts are repaid, often lasting years.
Intersectional Exploitation

- Current culture reinforces patriarchal norms, upholding male dominance and relegating women to subordinate positions.
- The historical legacy of colonization in Cameroon has led to enduring inequalities, marginalizing women.
- Patriarchal structures limit women's autonomy, making them vulnerable to exploitation and abuse.
- Socioeconomic factors such as poverty and limited opportunities exacerbate vulnerability.
- Exploitative individuals and organizations exploit economic disparities to prey on vulnerable women.
- Globalization and transnational networks facilitate exploitation, with trafficking networks taking advantage of porous borders.
- Weak legal enforcement and political instability in Cameroon create environments where exploitation thrives, with corruption exacerbating vulnerability.
Cameroonian women are key agents of change in peacebuilding efforts.

Transnational movements and networks amplify Cameroonian women's voices.

Digital activism, grassroots organizing, and cross-regional collaborations challenge oppressive structures.

Efforts raise awareness about gender-based violence and promote women's rights globally.

Empowering women to become self-sufficient through education, skills training, and access to resources.

Transnational Movements and Solidarity
Making A Difference

- **Education and Awareness**: Understanding and addressing the challenges faced by Cameroonian women.
- **Digital Activism**: Using social media to amplify their voices and raise global awareness.
- **Economic Empowerment**: Supporting women-owned businesses and fair trade initiatives for sustainable opportunities.

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**CSPPS**
Global network to support peacebuilding and statebuilding in fragile situations

[Cspps.org](http://Cspps.org)

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**WEADA**
Women-led organization providing access to transformational socio-economic development

[Girlsnotbrides.org](http://Girlsnotbrides.org)

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**AWEC**
Empowers women and awareness-raising initiatives in all spheres of life.

[Awecameroon.org](http://Awecameroon.org)

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**HSR**
Advancing human rights, rule of law, access to justice, democracy, and peace in Cameroon and across Africa.

[Hisrcameroon.org](http://Hisrcameroon.org)

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**ICAN**
Connecting women peacebuilders worldwide to share experiences and break isolation.

[Icanpeacework.org](http://Icanpeacework.org)

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**WFAC**
Feminist advocacy organization that focuses on women’s sexual and reproductive health rights, leadership, and development

[Wfaccameroon.org](http://Wfaccameroon.org)
THANK YOU